Great leaders inspire people to follow them. As we move through and hopefully out of this period of uncertainty, your voice and actions will have a powerful effect on those around you, particularly on those whom you lead. It is a position of privilege and honour, though without awareness, we can be blind to the challenges before us. Together, we will explore the opportunity to be better leaders. A summary of our discussion is below and following that you'll find detailed links and references.

Introduction

Today's challenges include

1. Loneliness was reported by 61% of workers before the pandemic.
2. Change in social connectedness – 50% less connected, 20% more connected
3. The prevalence of major depressive disorders and anxiety grew by 28% and 26% respectively in 2020.
4. Longer days and blurred boundaries – + 48 minutes to 3 hours
5. Burnout increased across all generations.
6. Causes of burnout include workload, lack of clarity and expectations, and challenges 'balancing' work and personal life.
7. Senior leaders are at risk of burnout, too

1: Refresh Your Leadership Mindset

Showing up to have a more positive impact on people's lives

1. 4 key leadership skills to practice and build
   i) **Awareness** - cultivate an Integrative Awareness – become aware of the changing reality *and* how you are responding emotionally and physically
   ii) **Vulnerability** – share personal stories about fears or failing that you are comfortable sharing
   iii) **Empathy** - our ability to take the perspective of and feel the emotions of another person
   iv) **Compassion** - when those feelings and thoughts include the desire to help

2. 5C's ways to show up as an effective leader when addressing team challenges.
   Take a coach approach. Employ active listening, appreciative inquiry & encourage accountability.
   Be:
   a) **Compassionate** – motivation to help others
   b) **Curious** – check bias
   c) **Creative** – broaden thinking
   d) **Collaborative** – work with others
   e) **Courageous** – bravely try new things

3. Keep both **task-focused** and **team-focused**. Both are important.

4. **Reflection & Group Discussion:**
   What steps can you take to cultivate greater awareness?
   Which ways do you want to show up differently?

   _____

   _____

   _____

2: Expand Inclusivity

Your goal is to invite the richest contributions from every member of your team. This means respecting their diverse talents and uniqueness. It also means recognizing the challenges each individual faces and providing support as appropriate.
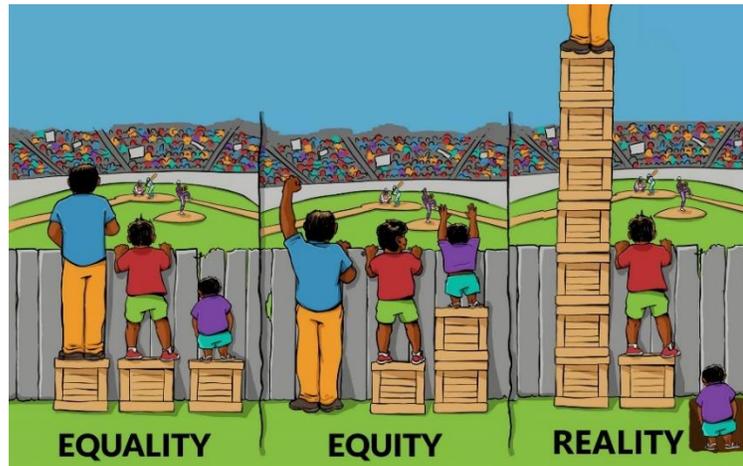

Image: Original – Angus Maguire, Interaction Institute for Social Change; Reality panel – Andrew Weizman

Explaining Equity

Click on image to hear third grade teacher, Aimee, explain how she used "Band-Aids" to teach her students that giving everyone the same thing isn't fair, rather, it's about giving everyone what they need to be successful.

1. **The Canadian Human Rights Act** prohibits discrimination on the following categories:

    a. race
    b. national or ethnic origin

c. colour
d. religion
e. age
f. sex
g. sexual orientation
h. gender identity or expression
i. marital status
j. family status
k. disability
l. genetic characteristics
m. a conviction for which a pardon has been granted or a record suspended

2. **Respect temperament, preferences, and situational challenges**

a. Temperament – introversion, extroversion
b. Sensitivities – sensory processing sensitivities
c. Illness
d. Caregiving responsibilities
e. Life transitions – death, divorce

3. **Three Safeties**

a. Physiological
b. Psychologicl
c. Neurological

4. **The ASK Model™**

Stay compassionate and collaborative in your efforts to support your team. In researching inclusive approaches for leaders of those with invisible disabilities which respect privacy, an effective question to help guide efforts stood out. Ask your team:

 "What do you need to succeed?"

Further, you can think of ASK as an acronym standing for:

A – anticipate – Think ahead to the barriers someone may experience. Avoid fixating on diagnoses and labels and instead think about removing challenges.

S – suggest – Offer solutions you are already aware of and being willing to explore unfamiliar accommodations.

K – know – Commit to learning about and better understanding your team members

3: Create a Supportive Culture

1. **Build trust**

   Inspire the confidence of your team by being
   a) Transparent
   b) Consistent
   c) Following through

2. **Demonstrate flexibility**

   Determine what is truly necessary (i.e., core hours, team meetings) and where you can be flexible. If you are feeling resistant to something, pause to examine your core beliefs and if they are still valid. Research has shown that creativity and collaboration can continue when people work remotely. Flexibility combined with inclusivity leads to offering the differing supports people need.

3. **Facilitate creativity and experimentation**

   Allow for mistakes and learning. How you react will encourage or stifle people taking risks.

4. **Role model and reward**
   a) Exhibit the behaviours you would like to encourage, such as setting healthy boundaries.
   b) Recognize and celebrate those behaviours in others.
   c) Be careful not to encourage actions which promote extreme choices (work OR family) or a "culture of hours". Promote a culture of sustainable performance and care.
   d) Right-size workload. This may involve making tough decisions and demonstrating saying 'no'.

5. **Provide concrete support**
   a) Team rituals encouraging looking out for each other. i.e., "I've got your back."
   b) Corporate programs - Employee Assistance Programs
   c) Other available programs - government & other initiatives i.e., Bell – Let's Talk

4: Communicate Effectively

1. **Formal communication**

Develop formal communications to avoid people filling in the blanks. Be sensitive to the situation of the company and whether it is surviving, adapting, or thriving. Regular team and 1:1 meetings are even more important now that spontaneous interactions are not possible. Inclusivity matters – make sure to solicit input from those who might be attending remotely by video or phone. Out of sight cannot be out of mind.

2. **Informal communication**

Develop informal communications to build connection. Include virtual water-cooler meetings, meeting drop-ins, random cross-level and cross-functional connections. Create an expectation of reaching out to connect.

3. Presence matters

Communicating with your full attention helps people understand both the content of your message and conveys your respect. It is also tiring! Recognize that video fatigue is real and give the option for participants to turn their cameras off when they feel the need. If you wish to have video participation, request it clearly in your invitation so attendees can plan for it. Introverts may find the camera particularly taxing. Everyone finds lengthy meetings tiring, and if someone has several meetings without a break, it can simply be too much.

4. Choose your method of communication wisely.

Use the richest communication method (currently video) for the most important and the most sensitive communications. Chat can be ideal for a quick confirmation but rarely effective for transmitting sensitive information. Emoji's have taken a while to catch on in the corporate world but do help convey tone and intent. Be aware of communication fatigue, especially that of video calls. When sharing an agenda, be sure to include your preference for cameras on or off. I encourage people speaking to always have their cameras on yet allow autonomy when listening.

5. Communicate availability

Share your availability specifically and clearly with your team. You may also do the same with clients. A note in your email signature can be effective. Detail open office hours and communicate boundaries. Role model defending those boundaries with grace.

6. Get comfortable having difficult conversations.

Become comfortable talking about emotional topics in the workplace. With everyone going through challenges be prepared to discuss sensitive topics with care and honesty. It takes practice and not every conversation will go smoothly. If a discussion felt uncomfortable, spend some time reflecting and identifying what might have made you feel more at ease without avoiding the topic.

7. Celebrate all the wins!

Notice and comment on positive events and behaviours. With so much loss, the wins, both big and small can help fuel us. Pay attention to personality styles and preferences as some will appreciate recognition in front of the team whereas others may revel in quiet word or a phone call.

Notes & Resources

For those of you who want to dive deeper into the research shared or explore topics we touched on in more detail, here is a comprehensive list of sources and books I have referred to during our conversation. I hope you find it helpful.

Introduction

Loneliness

Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World, by Vivek Murthy. 2020
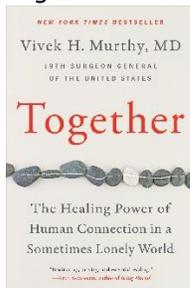
61% of people feeling lonely
Loneliness and the Workplace: 2020 US Report, Cigna. Ipsos-Reid online survey of 10,441 adults.

Change in social connection
Eagle Hill Consulting "Burnout is on the rise amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Employee Burnout Survey, April and August 2020.

Increase in depression & anxiety
Global prevalence and burden of depressive and anxiety disorders in 204 countries and territories in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic
The Lancet Volume 398 Issue 10312 Pages 1700-1712 (November 2021)
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140673621021437

Longer workdays and blurred boundaries
NBER – *The Impact of COVID-19 on the Nature of Work*, Working paper 27612
https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w27612/w27612.pdf

NordVPN Research
https://www.martechcube.com/us-employees-spending-an-extra-3-hrs-working-during-covid-19/

Burnout growth
Employee Burnout Report: COVID-19's Impact and 3 Strategies to Curb It
https://www.indeed.com/leadershiphub/preventing-employee-burnout-report

Causes of burnout

Eagle Hill Consulting "Burnout is on the rise amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Employee Burnout Survey, April and August 2020.
https://www.eaglehillconsulting.com/insights/employee-burnout-on-the-rise/

Burnout in senior leadership
Deloitte and LifeWorks Research, 2021
Well-being and resilience in senior leaders: A risk to post-pandemic recovery
https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/ca/Documents/consulting/ca-senior-leader-well-being-resilience-report-2021-en-aoda.pdf

Part 1: Refresh Your Mindset

4 Leadership Skills for a Positive Impact

https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/tuning-in-turning-outward-cultivating-compassionate-leadership-in-a-crisis

Integrative Awareness
https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/how-to-demonstrate-calm-and-optimism-in-a-crisis#

Examples of Compassionate leadership

Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister, New Zealand
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/31/jacinda-ardern-political-leaders-can-be-both-empathetic-and-strong

Dr. Bonnie Henry, BC's provincial health officer
https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/bonnie-henry-coronavirus-1.5490495

Alice Eagly, an Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Northwestern University
"The most robust sex differences that I found in leadership style are women's greater tendency toward participative, relational leadership, and men's toward more top-down, autocratic leadership."
https://www.forbes.com/sites/kimelsesser/2020/04/29/are-female-leaders-statistically-better-at-handling-the-coronavirus-crisis/#a2242b539cb9

Satya Nadella, CEO, Microsoft
"There's no doubt that the workflow of all our jobs is changing fast, with many of you doing so much of your work remotely for the first time, some while also caring for young children at home," he wrote.
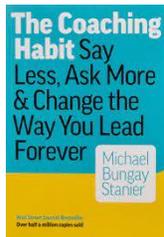"There is no playbook for this, and we need to have deep empathy and understanding for each other's situations."
https://www.seattletimes.com/business/microsoft-ceo-satya-nadella-to-employees-on-coronavirus-crisis-

we-need-the-world-to-do-
well/?fbclid=IwAR0PVeh2TSrVMQ4W2FBxw3iRqjdkwijIBAg56ArhNB0nl05ZaKViGSGCOxc

5 Cs of Effective Leadership

Take a Coach Approach
The Coaching Habit: Say Less, Ask More & Change the Way You Lead Forever, by Michael Bungay Stanier.
2016

Cultivating Compassion
https://zenhabits.net/a-guide-to-cultivating-compassion-in-your-life-with-7-practices/

Compassionate Leadership Skills
*Awakening Compassion at Work: The Quiet Power That Elevates People and Organizations, Quiet Power
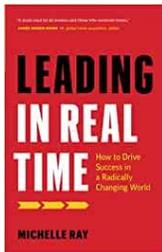That Elevates People and Organizations,* by Monica C. Worline, Jane E. Dutton. 2017

Dare to Lead: Brave Work, Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts, by Brene Brown. 2018
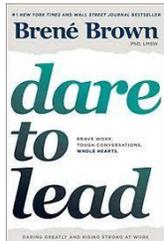
Lead. Care. Win. How to Become a Leader Who Matters, by Dan Pontefract. Figure 1 Publishing, 2020
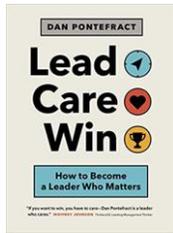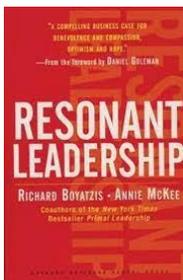
Leading in Real Time: How to Drive Success in a Radically Changing World, by Michelle Ray. Page Two Books, Inc. 2021

Focus on Task and Team

Richard E. Boyatzis, Kylie Rochford, Anthony I. Jack. *Antagonistic neural networks underlying different leadership roles.* 2014

https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24624074/

Sacrifice Syndrome

Resonant Leadership by Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee (Harvard Business School Press, 2005). Reviewed by Steve Gladis, Ph.D. December 2010

https://libraryofprofessionalcoaching.com/wp-app/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Resonant_Leadership.pdf

Part 2: Expand Inclusivity

Original Equity versus Equality Drawing

Angus Maguire, Interaction Institute for Social Change

https://interactioninstitute.org/illustrating-equality-vs-equity/

       www.clarekumar.com

Teacher explains what equity means using Band Aids

https://www.tiktok.com/@aimeesedventures/video/6997110232950328581

Modified Drawing – Addition of Reality

Andrew Weizman

https://www.flickr.com/photos/136820825@N05/26798396924

Canadian Human Rights Act

https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/what-discrimination

Why People Hide Their Disabilities at Work

https://hbr.org/2019/06/why-people-hide-their-disabilities-at-work

The ASK Model™

Clare Kumar developed this model after researching inclusivity for invisible disabilities in the US.

Part 3: Create a Supportive Hybrid Work Culture

No additional notes

Part 4: Communicate Effectively

Communications Regarding Return to Work

https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/communications-get-personal-how-leaders-can-engage-employees-during-a-return-to-work#

Unmute: How to Master Virtual Meetings and Reclaim Your Sanity by Lauren Sergy, FriesenPress, 2021
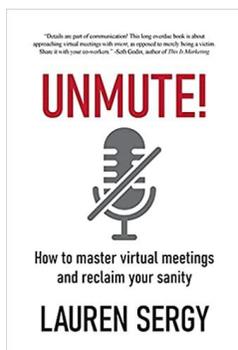
ABOUT CLARE KUMAR

As a speaker, highly sensitive executive coach and podcast host, Clare is committed to inspiring and encouraging *inclusive* and *sustainable* performance. She's seen too many people forced to burn out or opt out of work, sometimes because of toxic cultures and the pressure to overwork, and sometimes because of repeated poor choices in self-care and setting limits. It is hard to say 'yes' to oneself and 'no' to others when you're a people pleaser.

Clare spent fifteen years in the corporate world as a leader and practitioner in marketing, finance, sales, product development, and internal communication. Her experience was primarily in telecommunications and loyalty marketing with leadership roles in Toronto, Montreal, and Tokyo. Her work experience also included volunteer work for a start-up, handling a wide range of tasks in a 300-person company, and navigating the complexities of a 30,000-employee firm.

For the next fifteen years Clare dove into entrepreneurship inventing, designing, and bringing a patented clothing management product to market across North America, developing a consultancy offering organizing and productivity services to business and residential clients and earning her place as subject matter expert and brand spokesperson on organization, productivity, and work-life integration.

Clare continues to serve as a brand ambassador for select companies with products and services that support sustainable performance, investing most of her time speaking and coaching with organizations looking to invite the richest contributions from their teams.

Clare is a mom to two young adults, two cats and a very distinguished, loving, and somewhat needy miniature dachshund. You can find out more about Clare and her work at www.clarekumar.com. You can reach her at clare@clarekumar.com or on social media @clarekumar. Find out about the Happy Space Pod – podcast and line community at www.happyspacepod.com.