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To go or not to go. Relocation.

Ambition is a great quality to have. It is essential to achieving the goals we set in our work life. It is a key player when we chase promotion. It's a driver for us to aspire to greater things. It can be quite sobering when ambition and family needs come into conflict. Particularly when a promotion requires us to move to a different location. It really starts putting the things we value most into perspective.

People who opt not to go for a promotion requiring relocation often say:

- "It's too disruptive for the family"
- "My partner works and it would be too difficult to find similar work"
- "We're settled here and don't want to move"
- "The family just wouldn't be able to cope – it's too remote, too isolated, too far, too hot, too cold, too hard"
- "We're too close to the family to move"
- "We don't want to leave our friends"

These statements indicate someone is considering the consequences to their relationship if they make the decision to go. Many an ambitious person has been held back because they value their current life-style more or they put the interests of their relationships ahead of their ambition. Later on the question is often asked 'I wonder what things would be like now if I had taken that job?'

On the other hand, many relationships have been destroyed because individual ambition has been considered more important.

In some instances making new friends, setting up new networks, adjusting to a new culture is just too difficult. The loneliness and depression for family can have a devastating effect.

So, having said all that, just what can we do? How do we get a balance? Is it possible to get a balance? How do some people cope and others not?

Consider these scenarios:

1. The individual aspiring to promotion who is so dominant it doesn't matter what anybody else wants. "We will be doing this regardless". Consequently the whole family tags along and puts up with the life-style. More often than not they cope and settle into the new environment well. However there are the casualties along the way.

These manifest themselves at the time in the form of:

- Unhappiness
- Loneliness
- Depression
- 'Going home'
- Affairs



- Substance abuse
- Conflict
- Separation
- Divorce
- Suicide

And later, in the form of:

- Regret
 - Anger
 - "You owe me"
 - Feeling of loss – lost life, lost opportunity, lost relationships, etc.
 - "Now it's my turn"
2. The individual aspiring to promotion who assesses the situation and the likely consequences of the move. They discuss in detail the likely gains and losses to the family. Those who seem to cope best have a plan, a fixed period of time, a next step, a 'fall back' position. The decision to go is a joint one.

This is not to say they mightn't suffer the same fate as in the previous scenario but at least they have been thorough in their analysis. They will certainly know about more of what to expect when they get there.

The article, 'On the Road to Harmony' (next page), provides an assessment instrument for determining whether to go or not.



On the road to harmony. Relocation.

When deciding whether to relocate to further your career there are many things that need to be considered. In the main it will depend upon family circumstances and the needs and the personal aspirations of individual family members (including yourself). It will help to have an understanding of the needs driving the behaviour of all involved.

Here is a matrix that will assist your analysis. It will enable you to get answers to help make a final decision.

In a sense, it's an assessment of the services available in the new location and how well your family might be able to cope without them. It's application is more relevant in a situation where we are required to go to a place we might consider as a remote or isolated location or to another country or culture foreign to us.

Involve all significant people - if appropriate.

How to use this matrix:

N Is the degree to which this service is needed by the family unit.

A Is the availability of, adequacy of or access to, services that the new location is offering.

GAP = $N - A$

1. Read through each of the items / service listed.
2. For each item ask - How much does our family unit NEED to have each item. If the family has a high need rate it a '5'. If the family has a low need rate it a '1'. Or rate it somewhere in between (2,3 or 4). Place the figure next to the item in the N column.
3. Now for each item ask - to what extent are these services AVAILABLE, adequate or accessible. Use the same rating scale, i.e. 5 for high availability or access or 1 for low availability, adequacy or accessibility. Or somewhere in between (2,3 or 4). Place this figure in the A column alongside the item.
4. Now find the difference between the NEED (N) and AVAILABILITY / ADEQUACY / ACCESSIBILITY (A), i.e. $N - A = \text{GAP}$. Where the rating for N is lower than the rating for the A then score the GAP as zero (0).
5. Now total all the individual GAPS.
6. Write this in the 'TOTAL' space.

Understand Behaviour



SERVICE / ITEM	N	A	GAP
1. Education - primary / secondary / tertiary			
2. Medical - GP / specialist / hospital /alternative			
3. Leisure activities - sport / craft / repertory / arts / library			
4. Other services - church / TV / phone / internet			
5. Shopping - food / clothing / leisure			
6. Major centres benefits - restaurants / entertainment			
7. Family and friends - visiting / communication / child care			
8. Transport - frequency / type / road conditions / cost			
9. Cultural - language / religion / customs			
10. Long term financial rewards - bonuses / rebates / superannuation /allowances / concessions / career			
11. Spouse employment opportunity - professional / occasional			
12. Accommodation - quality / size / cost			
13. Low personal cost for relocation - vehicle / own home rental / transport of belongings			
14. Safety and stability of location - political / environmental / crime rate			
15. Comfort of location - weather / isolation / terrain			
16. Social - locals / ex-pats / like-minded people			
TOTAL			



YOUR SCORE: Do we go or do we stay?

- 0 - 16** Go, go, go, goThis is the place for you and the family.
- 17 - 32** Looking pretty safe, but some of your needs won't be fully satisfied. Just reconfirm it's what you want and you can start packing your bags.
- 33 - 48** Have a real hard think again. Is this what you really want to do? The potential consequences of relocation are not promising.
- 49 - 64** Don't even bother to start packing. You will find more happiness and maybe further opportunity right where you are.



One of the boys (or girls).Safety.

I am yet to meet a manager who has no concern about the safety of their workforce. But here's a tricky dilemma related to the human condition in the workplace. Most managers or team leaders prefer to be liked as opposed to disliked. And, at the end of the day, when all is said and done, we all have to front up the next day and resume our relationships.

In many instances, it is the best worker who gets promoted to the position of manager or team leader. This places him or her in the awkward position of having some power and authority over people with whom he or she was once on an equal footing. Now most of us like to be accepted not rejected in our workplace. So this can put the manager in the uncomfortable position of being torn between his or her responsibilities as a manager and a desire to be one of the boys (or girls). Some managers succumb to the latter and try to avoid saying or doing things that may make them unpopular with their people.

Dangerous Mindsets

Managers or team leaders may be reluctant to take effective action in matters of safety for reasons similar to these:

- Fear of embarrassment for you or the other person.
- Not wanting to stop production.
- By taking action, I may create a bigger industrial relations issue.
- Fear of conflict or of the other person's reaction.
- There is no consistency in how other managers and myself approach people who are acting unsafely or not complying with safety procedures.
- If I take action I won't get back up from senior management.
- Fear of being ridiculed.
- Being aware that no action has been taken to resolve this issue before.
- This person doesn't report to me. It's not my role to say something.
- The rules may not be clear or consistent. I might not be right.
- I may place myself in a position where I have to justify rules about which I have no knowledge.
- I may place myself in a position where I have to justify a rule with which I disagree.
- I don't want to be seen to be a nag.
- I don't see it as my responsibility. The worker is responsible for his or her safety.
- It is not worth the effort.
- Fear of being seen to be victimising the person.
- Too busy – I don't have the time.
- There are no consequences if I do nothing.



- I don't want to be seen as a 'wimp'.
- I don't want to damage my relationship with that person.
- I don't know what to say.
- It won't make any difference.
- I don't think it is important.

How would you justify your mindset if it is similar to these and it results in the death or injury of another human being – a father, a mother, a son, a daughter, a brother or a sister?

Here is a simple framework you can apply when you observe an unsafe act or non-compliance with a safety procedure.

1. Attention

Get their attention safely. Wait until the moment is safe to distract them from what they are doing unless they are in immediate danger.

"Steve. Excuse me for a moment. I would just like to get your opinion on what's happening here."

2. Observation

Comment on what the person was doing safely and unsafely. "I can see that you've given some thought to doing this safely because you are following the correct safety drill. That's good. I see that you are not wearing your safety glasses. I'm concerned that you might cop an eye injury and do yourself some serious damage – maybe lose an eye."

3. Explore

"You're an experienced worker Steve. You know the drill. You must have a reason for not wearing the glasses. "What do you say?"

4. Agree the action

"When you are doing this particular job, what do you reckon the correct safety drill should be?"
"Why do you reckon this is important?"

5. Ask for a commitment

"Steve. Can you give me a personal guarantee that you will always wear your safety glasses when required in future? Is that fair?"

6. Thank the person

"Thanks, Steve. I appreciate it. Sometimes it bugs me that I have to wear safety gear too, but I do it because I know that it is in everybody's best interests. We go lax on one guy then others start doing it and then one day...BANG! Someone is blinded for life."



Management by Jargon (MBJ)

Never underestimate the power of the word. Words have started wars and brokered peace. Many a career, marriage or friendship has been destroyed by ill-chosen words. And many careers and moments of joy and laughter have been created by the well-chosen word.

If you want to make it in the corporate rat race, you need to know the jargon. You have to be hip to the lip. Do you want to be one of the movers and shakers or one of the also rans. It might take a major paradigm shift and a re-alignment of attitude, but where would you rather be? Eyeballing the outplacement queue or having a stellar management career.

In today's ever changing world where the only constant is change itself, you need to be able to cut to the chase as you push the envelope and think outside the square. As you touch base with people to establish a dialogue about the shared vision, you want to create the right mindset. Don't be a stranger – get out there and walk the talk.

Look for opportunities for career re-adjustment for those people who have disconnected or are engaged in non-value adding activities. If you can't convince them that they are superfluous to requirements, see if you can get them to re-engineer themselves. If your people are not engaging in best practice, try for mutual exits before you enforce financial status re-positioning.

Keep doing this until you have downsized to the right size. It may not be a seamless transition but, let's face it, all market-facing organisations need to embrace economic rationalism in the quest for self-sustaining growth.

Now that you are lean and mean it's a good time to establish ideation groups from your cross strata teams. Ignore the no brainers and make sure that every project has a champion. Encourage lateral thinking, offensive thinking, parallel thinking, convergent thinking, divergent thinking, wholistic thinking, multi-layered thinking, systemic thinking and thinking about thinking as you strive for empowerment within the workforce.

Corporate renewal should be high on your agenda. You will need to foster a culture which is based on synchronicity and inclusivity as part of your governing values. Foster strategic alliances with knowledge management experts to give you a sustainable competitive advantage as globalisation kicks in. Find out your core business and stick to the knitting.

Personal mastery should be your driving force as you build leverage for your climb up the corporate ladder. Avoid all CLM's (Career Limiting Moves). Obtain 360° feedback to determine how you can save sequential time and synchronic time. Be prepared to shift your paradigm as you benchmark your own performance against other fast track managers. You will need to be able to demonstrate your superior emotional intelligence while keeping abreast of existential psychology to find out how hardwired you are.

Remember to use a balanced scorecard to measure organisation performance not just the usual integrated financial outcomes. Outsource everything and establish win win scenarios with your supply chain partnerships making sure that they are results driven. Network with customers and suppliers to ascertain the cornerstone markets and foster the rainmakers.

As your organisation undergoes transformation into a learning organisation propagate the lessons learnt and try to discard any excess baggage.

Understand Behaviour



Stay focussed on the key deliverables in your game plan and make sure you get all the ticks in the right boxes and pull the right technology levers. Look for strategic fit and synergies within the big picture. Maintain a sense check by proactively assessing worst case scenarios always being ready to pushback and restructure if market driven forces turn nasty or people seem to be getting settled.

If you are female or a cross dresser, smash through that glass ceiling by using a mentor and a well prepared career transition plan which focuses on the core competencies that fit the political agenda.

Stretch your people, initiate some creative and emotional tension, give them the context, open the space and you will be gobsmacked as the show-stoppers and pace-setters rise to the top of the corporate heap.



I think, therefore I am. Self-esteem.

Bullying within the workforce continues to be a major problem in many work places. The Productivity Commission found the total cost to the Australian economy of bullying and harassment was about \$14.8bn a year.

What have the bully and the coward got in common? Low self-esteem more than likely. Low self-esteem is the root cause for much aggressive behaviour and for most non-assertive behaviour.

Our behaviour is determined by our self-concept – by a blueprint or mental picture that we maintain of our strengths, our weaknesses, our awareness of the assets and liabilities of our personality. Our self-concept comes into play when we predict whether our performance will succeed or fail. It influences our hopes, aspirations, moods and actions. As René Descartes opined, “I think, therefore I am.”

Self-esteem is defined as: “The evaluation that an individual makes and customarily maintains in regard to him or herself. It is a personal judgement of one’s worthiness as a person, indicating the extent to which he or she believes him or herself to be capable, significant and successful”. Generally the path to self-confidence is built on self-knowledge, self-acceptance and self-esteem.

People who lack self-confidence tend to respond either non-assertively or aggressively in many situations.

We all acquire our self-concept in much the same way – from what other people tell us about ourselves and from our observations of our behaviour and its consequences. As we grow up, our parents, teachers and other adults gradually impart by instruction and example the values, norms and rules of conduct of their culture. The norms tell us what behaviours are considered appropriate.

Our fears and phobias and life-coping mechanisms are mainly learned from these sources with parents, if they have been in attendance, usually the prime source of our development. Of course, some of us rebel from the model of our parents, but the seeds of similar behavioural traits can be sown.

Negative Self-Concept

Our self-concept is wrapped up in a set of descriptions and images – of good success scenes or bad failure scenes that we have experienced. It is also carried in a set of personality trait labels we use to tell ourselves and others what we are really like. Our self-evaluations are important because they influence most areas of our behaviour, defining the limits of what we will attempt. We will avoid an activity if our self-concept predicts we will perform so badly as to humiliate ourselves.

If you could listen in to their self-talk, you would hear non-assertive or aggressive people saying all kinds of negative affirmations to themselves. They selectively remember some criticism of themselves, exaggerate it to monstrous proportions and repeat it over and over like a chant.

The fact is that people are often their own worst downers. We say to ourselves, “I am irrational, emotional, stupid, dull, ugly, shy, fat, cold, submissive, a failure and over the hill, ineffectual, insignificant, overbearing, bitchy, childish, a bully, a miserable mother or father, a lousy speaker ...”. We all have our own lists. People can be terribly brutal on themselves.



Out of the whole animal kingdom, only humans are endowed with this capacity to make themselves miserable. How many times have you thought that your dog or cat is in a bad mood? (If you have, it is more than likely a case of you projecting your mood on to your dog). How does the suicide rate amongst animals compare with that of human beings?

The toll of a negative self-concept is that it limits what we are willing to try, forestalling opportunities for growth and enjoyment. Doomsday prophecies about our social failures tend to be self-fulfilling. Negative self-talk and images continually inhibit people.

As a manager you can help a person with a poor self-concept by reinforcing how they act effectively and by amplifying what is good about them to counter the negative messages they will be giving to themselves.



Remember to use a balanced scorecard to measure organisation performance not just the usual integrated financial outcomes. Outsource everything and establish win win scenarios with your supply chain partnerships making sure that they are results driven. Network with customers and suppliers to ascertain the cornerstone markets and foster the rainmakers.

As your organisation undergoes transformation into a learning organisation propagate the lessons learnt and try to discard any excess baggage.



Look for the butterfly, not the grub. Self-esteem.

Many of us are guilty of saying and doing things to people in our workforce that may cause their self-esteem to be damaged. Most of us have good intentions, but sometimes our execution is flawed. Often we are unaware of the damage and hurt caused by what is said or done by us and others.

From a management perspective, it might be useful to identify the sorts of behaviours individuals display at work that impact on the self-esteem of others. Once they have been flagged you can then act to address them.

These unhelpful behaviours happen, to varying degrees, in every worksite, factory floor and office.

It is the constant and repetitious nature of these behaviours that has the damaging effect. Some are more damaging and blatant than others are. Some are not as obvious and, in many cases, managers may not even be aware they are contributing to self-esteem problems.

- Bullying the 'weakling'. This is the person who can be stirred up and won't retaliate. The experience for them is often frightening and embarrassing. Often they assume the role of victim because it is the only one they know. It can have devastating consequences.
- Teasing. This is another form of bullying. It is done so in a verbal sense. It can be devastating to individuals who are constantly barraged by taunts, innuendos, mockery, sarcasm, snide remarks and general 'leg pulling'. Often the victim does not have the verbal skills to fight back.
- Ridiculing competence or ability. Here the victim has to live with not only the fact that they are not good at what they do, but their work colleagues bringing it to their attention on a regular basis. You will hear names spoken like; moron, idiot, meat head, clown, and a range of others that label someone as being a poor performer.
- Providing unclear objectives or purpose. When the instructions provided to people are unclear it may lead to uncertainty, confusion and an unwillingness to take risks. Remember some people are already quite fragile and they need clear guidelines and boundaries in which to operate.
- Treating people inconsistently. This is a tricky one because for each individual situation there will be a best response. This response may not always appear to be consistent with other responses to similar situations. Talk through the rationale for your response wherever the opportunity allows.
- Lack of reward or recognition for the work done. Self-doubt creeps into one's mind if there is little or no feedback on performance for a job well done. Positive reinforcement along the way will significantly help develop the confidence of those with self-esteem problems.
- Lack of training to perform a task. Showing people how to do something and making sure they are competent before they start.
- Treating people's opinions as unimportant or worthless. This implies that people are not valued or appreciated. (What is not said can be as damaging as what is said).



- Telling people they are wrong every time they are wrong. Sometimes it doesn't matter if they're wrong. Help them grow from there. (Consider the impact if you told them they were right every time they are right.)
- Ignoring people. This can lead to mistrust and even paranoia. Work out ways you can acknowledge and communicate with all your people.
- Constantly comparing people to others. Telling them that they are different or not as good as some of the better workers will reinforce any uncertainties that may exist. As the title of this column suggests - Look for the butterfly, not the grub. Look for the things they get right not just the things they get wrong.

The whole concept of self-esteem is a complex one. One wonders just what the impact on productivity and profitability would be if all workers had a healthy self-esteem and a genuine belief that they are valued.



Suffer in silence. Stress.

How much stress can a manager take before he or she cracks? Our conditioning and culture does not encourage us to express our feelings honestly. It's not the done thing to own up to feelings of vulnerability, insecurity or anxiety. In fact and unfortunately, that would probably be the beginning of the end for many a career. It is not the sort of image a manager wants to portray – that of not coping.

For the sake of pride or to avoid being seen as a 'failure', most managers would never admit to their boss that they are having trouble coping with their stress load. They'd rather get ill than speak up. Stupid really, isn't it?

This is a true story. Jack (not his real name) was 34, intelligent, competent, had a good track record, well-educated with a degree in engineering and an MBA. Over a period of about 20 months, Jack experienced the following events.

He was promoted by his company to be in charge of a new manufacturing factory to be established in Newcastle some 3,300kms from his home in Perth. He and his pregnant wife relocated to Newcastle where they knew no one. Because his wife was 8 months pregnant, she went over alone one month before Jack did. They had to establish a new home while Jack was also setting up the new factory from scratch. Jack's wife had twins – their first children. During this same 20 month period, Jack was also completing his MBA – part time. From a staff of 3, the operation grew to a workforce of 43 inside 12 months. Jack had to manage the complete operation from start up to commissioning.

As in most newly commissioned operations, the focus was on production – getting the product out through the gate to the customer. Within 18 months, it was exceeding its projected production targets. Jack and his management group were quickly working 10 to 12 hour days plus weekends. The plant, initially designed for a five day operation, began operating 7 days, 24 hours placing heavy strain on plant capability.

The plant was very successful in terms of product volume and profitability. But many things – mainly if they were not immediately related to production – were put aside for fixing later. Later never came so that small issues grew into big issues. It was the familiar crisis management. Because he was involved in every facet of the business from start up, Jack was torn between a desire to stay 'hands on' and the awareness that he had to step back and work on the business, not in the business.

With all the things going on at work and at home, Jack was under huge pressure to perform. Jack's stress level during this period peaked at over 450 points on a scale where 300 points equates to a situation where most people exposed to this level of stress will fall ill.

Like most of us, Jack stuck at it keeping his feelings from his boss in Perth and from his management group. He was no quitter. But as time went on and Jack was nearing the end of his endurance, he started to believe that he could not cope. He started to think that he was letting down his employer and that his company would be better off with someone else in charge. He also realised that he wasn't really enjoying work anymore. He contemplated resigning so that the company could replace him with someone better equipped to cope.



Instead, he put his hand up. Jack rang his boss in Perth, the Managing Director, and told him that he was not coping with all the pressure on him. His boss sacked him on the spot. No – just kidding. The MD's response was genuine concern and he took immediate action to help Jack. (That's where I was involved and that's why I know this story.)

From the moment Jack made that call and spoke truthfully about his thoughts and feelings, he immediately felt a great burden lift from his shoulders. In fact, not only did he feel better, he was also able to think and act more effectively. Over time, under Jack's leadership, the factory became very successful.

Jack was no failure. He's no wimp. He's a very capable, very competent manager. He made a decision which was both intelligent and courageous. He decided not to suffer in silence. And fortunately, he had trust in his boss.



Cool it, man. Automatic reactions.

Ever had your buttons pushed and you've lost your cool? Ever kick yourself later for saying the first words that automatically popped into your mouth? Ever had the experience of knowing at the exact moment that you were saying something that what you were saying was not what you really wanted to say? And even though you knew this you kept right on saying it anyway. Ever felt your emotional temperature rise and words tumble out which were only going to make the situation worse? Well, if you answered yes to any of these questions then you are a hopeless joke as a manager, a worthless human being and an embarrassment to your country. Just kidding. Relax. Join the club - you're not alone.

As the adage goes, "Know thyself". What are your buttons? What are the things that people say or do to you which trigger automatic (and usually counter-productive reactions) from you? By having this self-awareness it will help you **respond instead of react**. These reactions probably stem from your subconscious desire to protect yourself. How do you react when people say, do or imply these things to you? And why do you react the way you do? Are there ways to respond that will actually serve you better?

Comments and implications that can trigger automatic reactions:

- You have not thought something through very well
- You have not considered other people
- You have not prepared well
- You have made an error
- You have made a poor decision
- You acted impulsively
- You didn't listen
- You don't know what you are talking about
- What you are suggesting won't work
- You are a fool
- You have no authority over me
- You have no credibility
- What you are saying is not relevant
- Your style is not effective
- There are better ways than yours
- Your opinion is poorly informed
- You are dishonest

Understand Behaviour



Or...

- They don't understand you
- They are making fun of you in public
- They are grossly exaggerating something you did
- They have misinterpreted your motives
- They are grossly undervaluing something you did
- They are making light of your effort



Workers behaving badly. Underlying causes.

The antics of workers (and managers) sometimes defy logical explanation. As a manager you may find yourself tearing your hair out in exasperation at the mind-boggling behaviour of some people. It may help your own confidence and reduce your own stress level by at least knowing that you are not alone. What is driving their behaviour? Why do they do what they do?



Here are a few of the 'reasons' why workers behave badly:

- They are trying it on to see how you react. To see if you have a weak spot.
- This is how they relieve their boredom.
- It may be the effects of constant over consumption of alcohol which can produce mood swings for no apparent reason.
- They think that this is their mission – to disrupt management. This can be just sheer bloody-mindedness. If management says one thing they will do the opposite for that reason only.
- Because they are frustrated at the perceived stupidity of management.
- They don't trust management because of past events experienced first-hand or through others.
- They are unhappy with their life. They have too many unmet wants and have not the awareness and/or the ability to do something about it. They rebel against everything because they are mad at everybody who is in their eyes better off than them.
- This is how they give meaning to their life without which their life may be fairly meaningless.
- They seek attention which they don't get anywhere else.
- They think it makes them popular with their fellow workers. Or to gain the respect of their fellow workers (although it is probably only the like-minded of their fellow workers who are impressed).

Understand Behaviour



- Their thinking is immediate and short term. They can't see the broader context or the wider connections.
- They have a major problem in their personal life with their partner, their parents, their children, their finances, etc.
- They have become disillusioned because they never lived their dreams.
- They are being influenced by 'behind the scene' agitators.
- It is their temperament. That's how they are psychologically wired.
- They are unbalanced. They are emotionally immature.
- They have low self-esteem and this is their way of expressing it.
- They were abused by authority figures when they were growing up and as a consequence they rebel against any sort of perceived authority.
- They have been damaged by other incompetent management.
- They genuinely don't understand the rationale behind what you are trying to do.
- They don't place any value on the action you seek.
- They believe that their dignity and self-worth is being threatened.
- Their perception of what you are trying to get them to do is different from your perception of what you are trying to get them to do.
- Their perception of the causes of the problem are different from your perception.
- They have no self-awareness of the impact they have on others.
- They are so self-absorbed or so conceited that they don't care about others.