

Humility a quality to be cherished

Debbie Nicol

August 2, 2015 Updated: August 2, 2015 05:10 PM

Tweet 1



Related

Bold initiatives can come from dismay

Paint a convincing picture to motivate

More than team-building events required to bring a workforce together

Corporate accountability lets us all move ahead

Integrity is the best shield for tough jobs

Topics: [Management](#)

The forum's compère had clearly done her research, sharing details of the accomplished leader who was to be the next speaker on stage. Facts flowed about measurable achievements while anecdotes added a unique flavour. Upon its completion and with the audience's curiosity piqued, the leader stepped on to the stage saying how the introduction was so interesting, that for a while she was wondering who was being introduced.

Such humility is evident in many great leaders, when the level of consideration for one's own impact has reduced importance or significance, with judgment never being clouded by position. During that forum, I pondered one question: with all those credits to her name, what made that leader so humble?

Great leaders facilitate change in trusted and trusting environments, and to cultivate trust the show must be about "us", not "me". This can be achieved by:

1. Sharing credit

A humble leader is willing to share results, giving credit where credit is due.

In some cases, that means credit to people. What better way to influence a band of followers and ambassadors than to reward effective behaviour, great ideas and incremental progress of others.

One great example of that would be when the pilot Chesley Sullenberger landed a flailing aircraft on the Hudson River in New York with all passengers surviving unscathed.

All credit was given to the years of training: "One way of looking at this might be that for 42 years, I've been making small, regular deposits in this bank of experience, education and training. And on January 15 the balance was sufficient so that I could make a very large withdrawal," he said.

2. Sharing vulnerability

When we are humble, there's more room for others to share the space. Do leaders ever make mistakes? Absolutely, and with that shared space collaborative lessons can be learnt.

Take the example of Enron's downfall, with poor financial fundamentals and an intolerable competitive clash between two senior stakeholders.

Inappropriate decisions were taken with "entitlement" mindsets, irrespective of the damage that was occurring. Not only was trust destroyed but also any possibility of getting the company back on track.

3. Sharing understanding of human behaviour

Humble leaders are aware that there will be always be opposing views at any time. With an understanding that behaviour and personal circumstances are inextricably linked, a humble leader will recognise the spectrum of responses and ensure options are available.

When Mother Teresa was spat on when asking for funding contributions, she replied: "I'll take that for me, now please contribute for the children".

The UAE is undergoing change with the abolition of petrol subsidies. The normal reaction to change is resistance and we are seeing some deal of that. During this transition phase, are we also witnessing the above-mentioned traits of humble leaders?

- **Sharing credit.**

The situation of decreasing global oil prices, and increasing desire to continue the creation of public infrastructure.

- **Sharing vulnerability.**

The reasons for the removal of the subsidies which have been gleaned from researching the situation.

- **Sharing understanding of human behaviour.**

The indication that public transport systems are mature enough to now be a viable option for those not able to adjust to the new pricing scales.

Great leaders have nothing to prove. People around them feel connected when feet are firmly planted on the ground, and trust is organically growing. It is probably a safe bet our pilot is sleeping well these nights while the two ex-Enron officials are still living in the land of justification.

And for those less evolved in the arena of humility who may be looking for some personal growth, why not ponder upon C S Lewis's quote: "True humility is not thinking less of yourself but rather thinking of yourself less". Humility is indeed not a weakness but rather a strength.

Debbie Nicol, the managing director of Dubai-based business en motion, is a consultant on leadership and organisational development, strategic change and corporate culture.

business@thenational.ae

Follow The National's Business section on [Twitter](#)



Add your comment | **View all comments**

Related

Bold initiatives

| Paint a

| More than team-

| Corporate

can come from
dismay

convincing
picture to
motivate

building events
required to bring
a workforce
together

accountability lets
us all move ahead

More The Life



Huawei Honor 6
Plus review: Like
a cheaper
Android version
of iPhone 6 Plus

Beirut's rubbish
crisis piles up
evidence of
Lebanon's
political failings



How UAE firms
deal with grief in
the workplace

Humility a quality
to be cherished

MOST VIEWED

BUSINESS | ALL

- 1.** Falling prices don't mean property market maturity
- 2.** Etihad starts daily Dreamliner flight to Singapore
- 3.** Emirates Reit to spend Dh208m on new school at Akoya by Damac
- 4.** Low oil prices hit UAE job growth, new report shows
- 5.** Samsung Galaxy Tab S2: World's thinnest and lightest tablet launched in Dubai
- 6.** Huawei Honor 6 Plus review: Like a cheaper Android version of iPhone 6 Plus
- 7.** Emirates starts daily A380 flight to Madrid
- 8.** UAE fuel-price increase: Tips on how to minimise your petrol bill
- 9.** Oil prices slip again amid bearish environment
- 10.** How UAE firms deal with grief in the workplace

[More Most Viewed](#)

ADS SECURITIES

SECURE TRADING

TRADE FOREX, CFDs & EQUITIES

OPEN AN ACCOUNT

Regulated by the UAE Central Bank



EDITOR'S PICKS

Where Dubai rents have risen and fallen, Q2 2015 – in pictures



Where Abu Dhabi rents have risen and fallen, Q2 2015 – in pictures



Emirates A380 800 business class review: Pleasurable except for unruly children



Leaving the UAE? Here's how to do so the right way



Safari Power Saver
Click to Start Flash Plug-in



FOLLOW US

Like us

Like 174k

Tweets

Follow

 **The National** 20m
@TheNationalUAE
Abu Dhabi pharmacy offers free delivery to patients in need news.ae/1HluGO4
pic.twitter.com/P8fsUhzzH8



Expand

 **The National** 1h
@TheNationalUAE
Men caught drinking in public while wearing women's clothing must see out jail sentence news.ae/1MGyiRP
Show Summary

 **The National** 1h
@TheNationalUAE
Cocaine smuggler caught at Abu Dhabi airport has ten-year jail term upheld news.ae/1leWHj1
Show Summary

Tweet to @TheNationalUAE

SPOTLIGHT



Heatwave: the world goes on red alert

Joint missile defence is target for
Gulf Arab countries