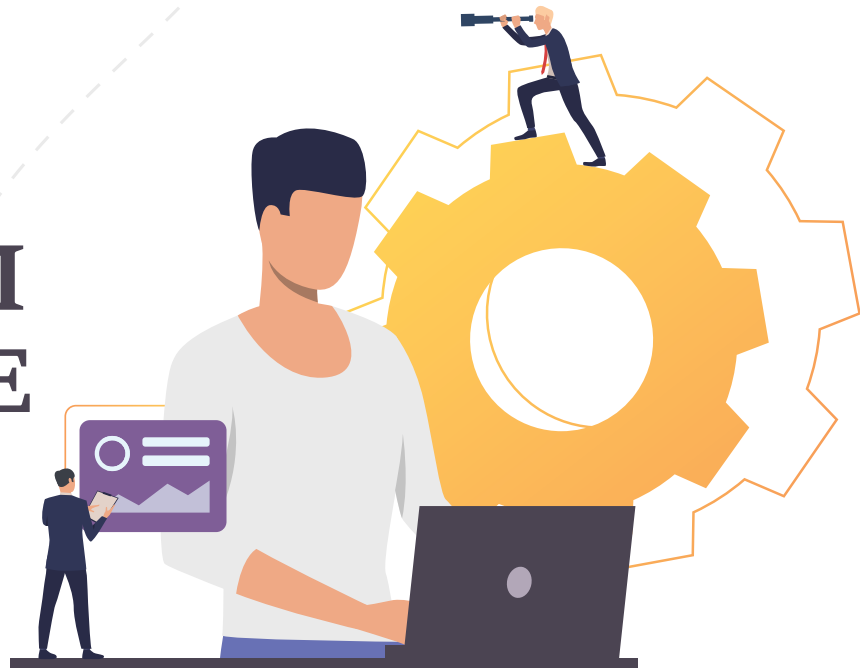


THE PROBLEM LEADER GUIDE

4 KEY PROBLEMS

4 KEY SOLUTIONS



01 LOW SELF-AWARENESS

Several studies regarding **MULTI-RATER(180°)** and **360° FEEDBACK** have indicated that on **AVERAGE 90% OF LEADERS** are surprised by their results.



These statistics suggest that most Leaders may lack self-awareness regarding their Leadership style.

These results can be explained from two different perspectives.

1. Positive feedback. If the Leader receives more positive feedback than expected they are more likely to have high self-awareness but possibly are too critical of their style and performance. This can indicate a lack confidence in their abilities to do their role which needs to be explored.

2. Negative feedback. If the feedback is more negative than the Leader expects this more often indicates low self-awareness regarding leadership style. This can be a more difficult problem to solve at first. You need the Leader to acknowledge and process the feedback in order to then move towards a plan for change.

FEEDBACK LOOPS

If you are not doing any formal or informal feedback loops you are likely to have many Leaders unaware of their impact. This makes it very hard for the Leader to change, particularly when the feedback is negative.

All of these are protective behaviours



This is considered a normal initial response. However, if the Leader is not able to move past

this initial response a Leader can get “stuck” in their thinking and not develop self-awareness. This is a problem.

So how do we work with Leaders who lack self-awareness?

I recently worked with a group of 11 Leaders, where only 2 of them were not surprised by their 360 feedback. I worked with these 2 Leaders to go from “good to great”. The remaining 9 took longer to move towards “great” as they needed to go through a process to increase self-awareness and acceptance before making the change. Personality type can also influence this process. It is therefore important to consider all factors that impact Leadership style. Do not be surprised if a Leader’s response to feedback is aloofness, arrogance, defensiveness, or even tears.



SOLUTION:

1

Firstly, get the feedback.

Use several data points so it isn't just one person's opinion.

These can include **360 SURVEYS** employee engagement surveys and observing the Leader in one-on-one and team interactions.



IF YOU ARE NOT SURE WHAT FEEDBACK PLATFORM TO USE, EMAIL ME

info@margieireland.com

AND I CAN POINT YOU IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.



If you have already delivered the feedback, I am guessing this was a difficult conversation (see next point) for you and the Leader.

If you haven't delivered the feedback yet, it is best to have 3 of you in the room. Another person may be able to provide a new perspective about this Leader and be your scribe, so you can maintain eye contact (and not appear to be more concerned about your notes, than them!).

The Leader



HR Representative



Have the feedback in a visual or written form that is easy for the Leader to understand. Even the most self-aware of Leaders can be defensive. Give the Leader up to a week to absorb the feedback. In most of the 360 sessions I have delivered, the Leader is processing the information, and sometimes appears to look like a deer in headlights. I have often found myself saying “Sarah, did you hear that suggestion?” OR “Chris, did you just hear that?”.

Follow up with a meeting approximately a week later, so the Leader has time to consider the feedback and then come back with a plan to address it. In most cases this results in the Leader taking ownership of the feedback so it can be addressed. However, if this doesn't happen, read on. This next problem and solution may help!

02 AVOIDING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Every single Leader I have worked with has admitted avoiding a difficult conversation at some point. Just part of being human! However, when this becomes a habit it leads to many problems, the key ones being:



- ✓ Breakdown in communication
- ✓ Underperforming staff continue to underperform
- ✓ Gossip, trust issues, destructive conflict, lack of accountability and bad performance out of those that used to perform
- ✓ Unwanted resignations

SOLUTION:

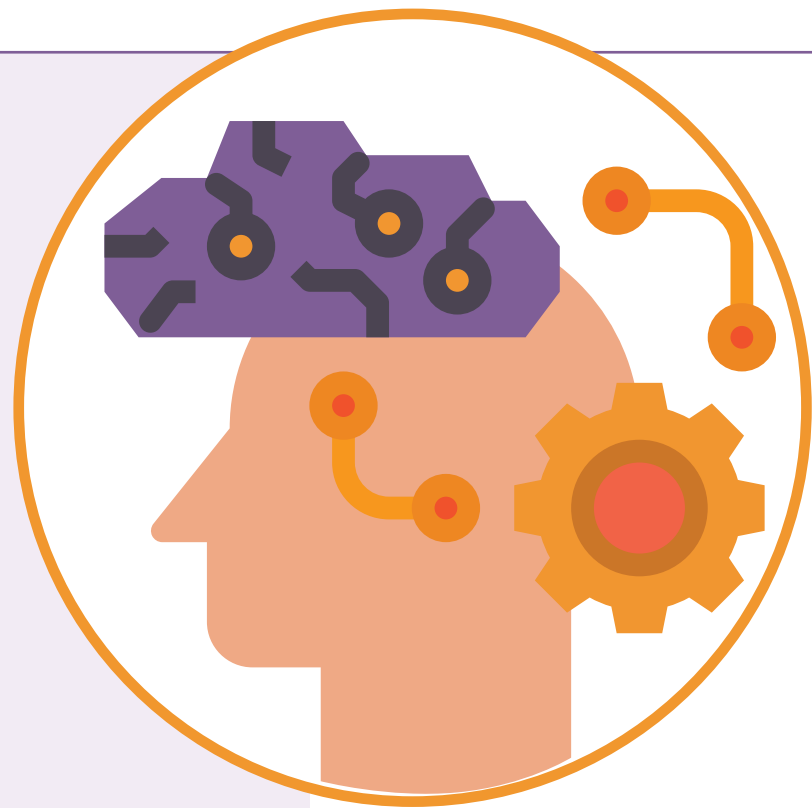
2.

In the movie “The Wizard of Oz,” Dorothy and the gang were terrified of the almighty powerful wizard. But as soon as Toto pulled the curtain back, and they saw it was just a man, he lost his power over them.

I invite your Leader (and maybe even you) to pull the curtain back on what is being avoided. Sometimes our “thinking about our thinking” is what gets in the way. Huh? Try this....

1. Firstly, see what your thoughts are telling you.

2. See how desperate and persistent and clever your mind is at getting you to focus on negative thoughts and feared outcomes. Know that the goal of your mind, it’s ulterior motive is to terrify you or frustrate you or preoccupy you in some way so you don’t have the difficult conversation.



3. Right now, make a conscious choice and a conscious effort not to buy into these thoughts. Take their power away.

4. Have the conversation anyway. The fear will follow you but once you face this fear, the great news is you have started to rewire your brain, creating a new “pathway” for your mind to follow towards new thinking and behaviour. The more you choose this pathway the more effortless and automatic the thinking and behaviour comes. **This builds your skill and confidence to have important conversations.**

Stress is also associated with difficult conversations. The next problem and solution explains more about why we prefer to avoid difficult conversations and any other “yucky” tasks! Stress...!

03

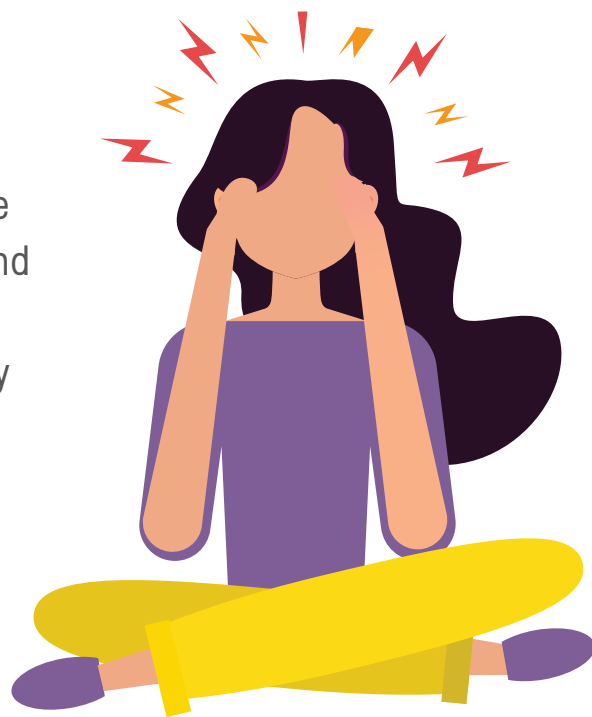
STRESS

Feeling stress is okay.



Let's face it, it is a daily experience for many of us. But, how we respond to stress can make a huge difference. What I discovered in my CEO Dissertation research and

20+ years working with Leaders is that during stress, most Leaders at some point will want to avoid anything that is perceived to increase discomfort and therefore stress (such as difficult conversations as explained above).



FACT

Our brain has a negative bias.
I WAS QUITE SAD TO DISCOVER THIS!

Back in the day this negative bias protected us from being eaten by a lion. See Lion, feel stress, and respond with “Fight, Flight, Fright”.



Flight (i.e., Avoid)

This is also why we avoid difficult conversations as our brain sees it as a lion about to eat us.

NOW IN 2019

A Leader is behind on budget or has had some negative feedback or has some personal challenges (or all of these) and therefore feels stress. To minimise the experience of stress and fear of being eaten by a lion, a Leader may avoid (“Flight”), procrastinate (“Fright”) or defend or micro-manage (“Fight”).

REMEMBER, LEADERS ARE HUMAN TOO!

SOLUTION:

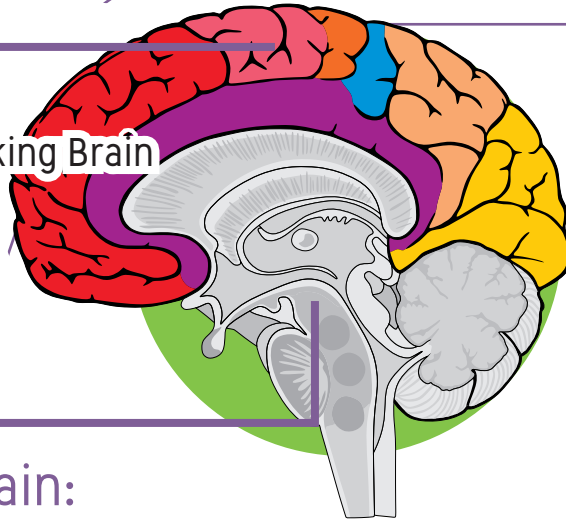
3.

1: EDUCATE

Help Leaders and their teams recognise early signs of stress and how to intervene. Run workshops or round tables and agree on simple strategies that Leaders and their team members can do when stress starts to show up. One of my client's decided to send a time out 😊 to the team's messenger channel. The team agreed that no matter who or when this was posted, everyone would stop and take a 5-minute break as a team. Simply sharing the experience of stress can release its hold.



Neocortex:
Rational or Thinking Brain



Reptilian Brain:
Instinctual or Dinosaur Brain

2: TURN ON THE SMART BRAIN

If we take 3 slow deep and say “It is okay to feel stress, I am okay” we let our reptilian or caveman brain know it is safe, allowing our “smart brain” (the Neocortex) to take over.

3: RE-ENGAGE

Help Leaders decide on something small they can do when feeling overly stressed. I call it my “5% move”. What is a micro-step they can do today that will move them towards what is important rather than move them away?



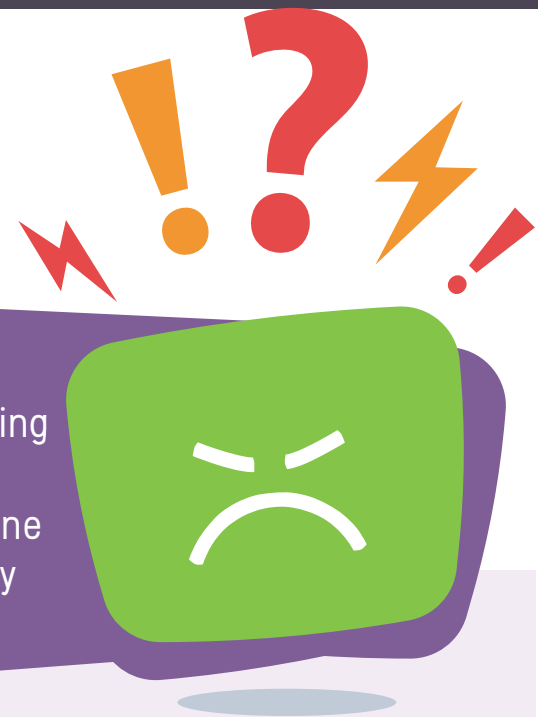
Here is really cool study on how Milkshakes have helped us understand how we react to stress.
A bit off topic but interesting!

04

Exiting a Leader

So, you have tried everything and a decision has been made and you are about to exit the Leader. Lucky you! Read point 2 and 3 again for your own benefit!

I have done lots of career transition coaching with Leaders and many of these folk indicated a negative experience leaving their employer. This is bad for the exiting Leader and your employer brand. I am sure you have heard that when someone complains about a restaurant they tell 10 people while if they have a great experience they only tell 2 or 3.



Exiting a Leader can be a positive experience

1

Early intervention is best. As indicated above having regular feedback loops and sometimes “difficult conversations” reduces the shock for the Leader being exited. It gives them time to prepare mentally and emotionally.

BIG TIP HERE. I have worked with some Leaders who realised they had more to offer elsewhere. This process with them enabled them to recognise the problems and accept that another role or organisation would better play to their strengths.

2

Allow time for the exiting Leader to express their experience. Yes, this may be difficult to hear, and yes they may get angry or cry. Just accept that might happen so you are prepared. Remember you have a human being in front of you not a lion. Set some ground rules such as ending the meeting if voices are raised or someone is too upset to continue. But agree to come back to the conversation within 24 hours if that happens. It is very important you let this Leader express their views. It will minimise the damage during and after exit. They will feel heard.

3

If possible provide support to the Leader. Be it some financial assistance or redundancy, Employment Assistance Program (EAP) support or Career Transition Coaching.

4

Communicate with impacted team members on the day, the following day, the following week, and each week after until you are certain they are okay. While it may be a good decision, it creates uncertainty and anxiety for those left behind. A climate or team trust survey for that group a month later could be helpful too. I have a free trust survey email me info@margieireland.com to get it.

Lastly, if the problematic Leader is your Leader or one you believe you need more help with [book in a 15-30min call with me here](#) (it's free) and we can have a quick chat about some other steps that could work.



I hope my Problem Leader guide has given you even just one idea to help you, while I hope it has provided many more.



I believe most people desire to reach their potential. My passion is to help as many as I can achieve this, so more of us can have greater prosperity in our work and lives. If you share this belief and passion please spread the word and this information.

LOOKING FOR SOME FURTHER IDEAS OR SUPPORT?

FIRST STEP IS TO

Organise an initial 15 minute phone consult with me

OR

Check out my approach [HERE](#)

Warmly,
MARGIE IRELAND

CREATOR OF THE PROSPEROUS MIND, LEADER AND WORKPLACE™