

Figure 1: The Four Ps for analysing a problem

Precipitating	What are the most recent factors involved in or influencing the problem?
Predisposing	What historical factors might be influencing the problem? What innate traits might a leader have that are negatively impacting their ability to be an HHL?
Perpetuating	What keeps the problem there? What keeps coming up, being repeated or reinforcing the issue?
Protecting	What support mechanisms and resources does the leader have in place that they could access to resolve the problem?

So now you have a basic understanding of the Four Ps, I want you to go through each of these for yourself.

Precipitating

Have a look at your list of top fears. What was the straw that broke the camel's back and led you to buy this book – what are the current stressors in your life getting in the way of you being an HHL? Has something specific happened in the past few days, weeks or year that has resulted in you not feeling happy or healthy about your work and leadership career?

Predisposing

What has happened in the past that may be contributing to the problem?

WHERE ARE YOU NOW ON YOUR LEADERSHIP JOURNEY?

Examples:

- Were you given some negative feedback some time ago about your approach as a Leader and have been overly cautious since?
- Like me, did you try to be 'mates' with people you manage and it backfired, so now you keep a huge distance?
- Were you told at some point that you were not good enough or felt you were not good enough, so now you get defensive easily or avoid disciplining for fear of being rejected?

Do you have some noted personality traits that are a block to success?

Examples:

- Are you a born worrier, or always late, or struggle with detail, or perhaps ask for too much detail?
- Do you prefer to leave things to the last minute, or are you always ahead of schedule, which means others struggle to keep up?
- You may have done a personality test to discover you have more of a leaning towards hard facts and therefore struggle with team members who prefer to solve problems using abstract ideas and concepts. Or you may know you are an anxious person, and when anxiety gets hold of you, you micro-manage or lose your sh#t.

Look, we all have them. I am a born worrier, self-confessed control freak and often ahead of schedule!

Perpetuating

What is causing the issue to reoccur? You may feel you have tried everything to 'fix' the problem or be an HHL. You may have read

books, listened to podcasts, gone on retreats, had a coach, walked the Inca or Kokoda trail where you felt you finally had peace, only to return to work and find that two weeks later, after the inner glow has worn off, the same thing keeps happening.

There are also likely to be external factors that are outside your control keeping the problem there.

Examples:

- Your boss has a communication style that you struggle with.
- You turn up to work most days feeling like you are checking your values at the door as you walk in.
- You may be trying to meet unrealistic goals or expectations not set by you.
- You may have financial obligations you cannot immediately change (e.g., mortgage, kids' schooling, debt), which may mean you feel trapped in a job you don't enjoy or a toxic environment.
- Bad health of a family member may require your time, attention and financial support.
- Any unexpected event – pandemic, cyclone, bushfires, bad health, company shutdown or buy-out that was not shared with you – could be having an impact.

Protecting

What do you have that is helping and supporting you?

Examples:

- Who is in your corner at work?
- Who supports you at home or socially? Who is your go-to person?

WHERE ARE YOU NOW ON YOUR LEADERSHIP JOURNEY?

- What skills, knowledge and training do you have to solve the problem?
- What are your inherent strengths?

Why are the Four Ps important?

While I don't analyse my leaders as I may a clinical client, I have found using the Four Ps has helped leaders themselves to uncover blocks that they had missed or buried. This process also helps you identify what supports you do have and may not be accessing.

You can use them to unpack the issue to fully appreciate the obvious and not-so-obvious underlying factors (the latter often being key to solving the issue – a bit like the missing piece of evidence in a crime show that leads to discovering the perpetrator).

I don't expect you to have all the answers to all these Four P questions. The purpose of considering them is to help you understand fully where you are now. It is important to be honest with yourself, even though that might not feel great. It's time to look below deck and below the iceberg. Even though it may sting, once aired it will mean you are able to move towards being an HHL.

You may also like to summarise your Four Ps into 100 words or less. This formulates your current state so that we can then move on to your 'intervention'.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Understanding (and not avoiding) the facts around happy versus unhappy leaders and how these manifest is an important first step towards becoming an HHL.