

Introduction to leadership humility

The highlights

Recently, researchers have discovered a **specific mental state or attribute** that resolves most problems in life—such as addictions, aggression, bullying, and other social problems.



- What is this state or attribute? In essence, when people experience this state, their primary goal is to learn from other people and experiences.
- This state or attribute roughly corresponds to the quality we call humility.

The benefits of humility

When people are humble, their resilience, relationships, and reputation all improve. In contrast to some misconceptions, humility often coincides with a sense of conviction, passion, and curiosity rather than a low self-esteem or a meek personality.



Resilience

If humble, criticisms and challenges feel like opportunities to learn & not as threats. Negative emotions abate swiftly.

Relationships

People assess the humility of other individuals to decide who to trust. So humble people are trusted, facilitating relationships.

Reputation

Humble people are less defensive and more informed, enhancing their credibility.

Initial attempts to foster humility

Here are some practices that foster humility. If you want to foster humility in other people, such as your children or colleagues, perhaps apply these practices yourself first. These activities will enable you to role model humility and inspire other people to follow.



- Visualise occasions in the future in which you may be able to acknowledge some of your limitations or faults to other people.
- Whenever you express a suggestion, attempt to highlight at least one drawback of this proposal (Xu & Petty, 2022, 2024).
- Set the goal to learn at least one lesson a month from a failure—and then record this lesson. Failures thus feel like opportunities.
- Occasionally, convey the benefits of humility to other people. After people advise someone to apply some practice, they feel motivated to apply this practice too (Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2018).
- About once a month, deliberately engage in an activity that elicits modest levels of anxiety or stress, such as speaking in public.

Did you know



Before attempting an activity that elicits anxiety or stress, seek the advice and encouragement of someone in your life who is consistently supportive rather than judgmental. After this conversation, you will be more likely to perceive this activity as a challenge or opportunity to grow—a feature of humility—and not as a threat to your perception of yourself (Gillman et al., 2024).

Initial attempts to foster humility continued



- Over time, gradually increase the number of people—such as colleagues or friends—from whom you occasionally seek advice.
- Occasionally, express genuine rather than feigned compliments to people, especially people who differ appreciably from you.
- After a conversation, refer to what you learned from the other person, expressing phrases like “Until now, I had not realised...”



Limitations of these practices



These practices are not sufficient to sustain humility—or to generate the benefits of humility—in stressful and challenging circumstances. That is, these practices alone will not instil in people the profound motivation to learn from other individuals and experiences

Practices that foster humility sustainably

Here is a limited sample of practices that, when repeated over time, can gradually entrench humility. These practices can boost resilience, relationships, and reputation considerably and enduringly.

- Again, perhaps apply these practices yourself first before you inspire other people.
- Later sections will extend these practices & present evidence to validate these activities.



Enduring activities

When individuals perceive their future as vivid and certain—as well as feel their values and interests in ten years will be like their values and interests now—they feel motivated to learn from other people and experiences. They show humility. To foster this state

- identify activities, interests, or goals you naturally pursue—and then convert these pursuits into a very ambitious, and perhaps unattainable, aspiration,
- imagine yourself in some future roles that are compatible with this aspiration,
- record some practice or activity that you would like to complete every week or so for decades ahead and improves your capacity to secure these roles in the future.

For example, your aspiration might be to help disadvantaged people use AI more efficiently. Every week, you could read about more efficient methods to use AI.

Practices that foster humility sustainably continued

To develop humility, individuals need to enhance their resilience—their tendency to recover in response to distressing or upsetting events, such as failures or criticisms. Otherwise, they will seem defensive rather than humble. These activities help foster this resilience.



Here are some practices that foster resilience. Later, we will discuss why these practices may be more powerful than many people realise.



- Whenever you feel distressed, attempt to smile, at least briefly. You could try to remember a joke that tends to elicit some laughter.
- Whenever you feel stressed, imagine your romantic partner—or a fictional partner in the future—touching you gently to comfort you.
- After some failure, generate as many ideas as possible—even vague or unrealistic possibilities—on how you could prevent a similar problem in the future. You can use AI to complete this task.
- Perceive feedback, failures, and similar challenges as opportunities to derive lessons you could impart to other people.
- Close your eyes. Repeat to yourself, about five times, a statement like the following:

Whenever I feel distressed or upset, I will say to myself—or to someone else—"Let me think about this matter for a while, and I am confident I will think of a solution later"...

How to change defensive or narcissistic people

Often, we need to interact with defensive, arrogant, or narcissistic people—at work, at home, and in our daily lives. Fortunately, we can apply a range of strategies to gradually shape the behaviour of these people over time. Here is an outline of these strategies:



During a conversation with this person, incidentally ridicule someone this person does not know who seems obsessed with his or her status or importance

Example: “The person you criticised sounds annoying Reminds me of someone I know who always exaggerates his skills, boasts about his car, and never admits to any mistakes”.



Subtly encourage this person to acknowledge a fault or mistake

Example: “I did not perform well at work today. Have you ever committed a mistake at work?”



When this person shows a moment of humility, reward this moment with admiration

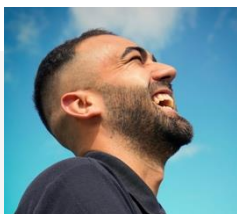
Example: “I think you would be a much better leader than bosses I have seen who are unable to acknowledge their mistakes or limitations”

Why is this approach effective?



In short, you may, over time, be able to temper narcissistic tendencies in other people if you

- ridicule a defensive or arrogant person they do not know,
- encourage these individuals to demonstrate moments of humility, and then
- show admiration to reward this humility



These strategies may be effective because

- narcissistic people often engage in conversations in which they can ridicule or mock someone else,
- references to the word “ever” or “any”, such as “have you ever committed a mistake at work”, tends to promote some admissions,
- defensive or narcissistic people are especially likely to repeat behaviours that had attracted some admiration or respect.



The perceived drawbacks of humility

In the following space, list what you feel might be some drawbacks of humility. For example, you might assume that humble people do not feel assured and confident.



Some of these perceived drawbacks might be indicative of servility rather than humility. Here is the difference between humility, servility, and arrogance.



Humility

Inspired by a motivation to learn and develop

Feels confident they can overcome their limitations

Perceives other people as sources of insight—and thus respects diverse individuals



Servility

Inspired by a need to be liked because of a low self-esteem

Feels unable to overcome their flaws and limitations

Perceives other people as sources of approval—and thus fears other individuals



Arrogance

Inspired by a need to be admired and glorified

Often denies their limitations, even to themselves

Perceives other people as instruments to fulfil their goals—and so does not respect their needs

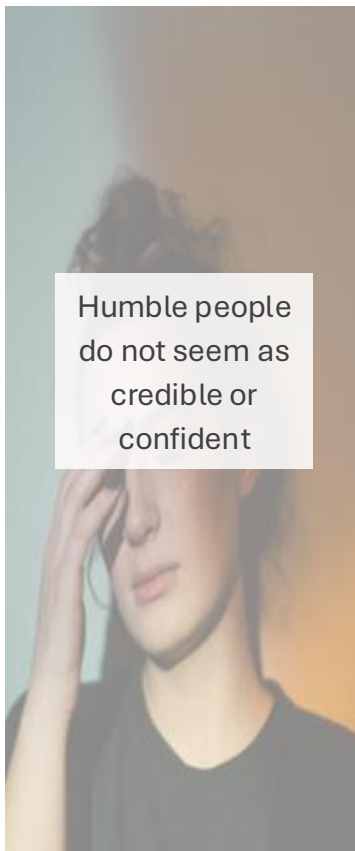
Which of the perceived drawbacks you wrote may reflect servility rather than humility?

Misconceptions that explain these concerns

Other perceived drawbacks of humility emanate from misconceptions that have been invalidated. Which of these misconceptions do you perceive as most interesting—and thus may inform other people about in the future?

Misconception

Reality



Humble people do not seem as credible or confident

Humble people tend to seem more credible and confident because


- they do not appear as defensive, and thus as fragile, as arrogant or servile individuals—and thus can seem more assured,
- they have usually considered diverse perspectives and, therefore, their arguments tend to be more nuanced and convincing,
- they may even acknowledge conflicting perspectives about an issue—a tendency that increases the extent to which the audience feel their opinions are understood (see Xu & Petty, 2022, 2024),
- they are more aware of their strengths, because they seek, respect, and embrace feedback from other people—feedback that clarifies their attributes and limitations.

Did you know



People who are humble are often willing to ask questions and to seek advice. Interestingly, after people seek advice, especially about complicated matters, their credibility improves (Brooks et al., 2015).

Misconception



Unlike humble people, narcissistic, arrogant, or entitled people sometimes contemplate or fantasise about unrealistic aspirations—and these fantasies might spawn remarkable innovations.

Reality


Humble people can also contemplate or fantasise about unrealistic aspirations. But,

- unlike other individuals, humble people can activate or disable these fantasies in the appropriate circumstances (Zhang et al., 2017),
- in contrast, some people become attached to these fantasies and, therefore, distressed, frustrated, or enraged when unable to achieve these aspirations.

Did you know



People who fail to fulfill achievements they strongly expect often experience mental health concerns (Sendroui et al., 2021). So, to manage your expectations, identify 2 or 3 reasons this goal may not be as feasible as you first assumed.



Humble people are not as confident or competent as narcissistic, arrogant, or entitled people in negotiations or other challenging conversations.

When negotiating, narcissistic, arrogant, or entitled people tend to belittle the product or service the other individual is offering, expressing statements like “That product is not worthy of this price”. In contrast, humble people may indicate they cannot afford the product or service, expressing statements like “I cannot afford this amount at this stage”.

The strategy that narcissistic, arrogant, or entitled people adopt, however, tends to be less effective. The other individual is more likely to experience unpleasant emotions, diminishing the likelihood of compromise (Bhattachary & Dugar, 2023).

How to become a humble leader

After learning about the benefits of humility, many leaders assume they can readily become humble. Indeed, at least to some degree, humility is simple to develop. For example, to demonstrate humility, leaders should utilise variations of the following phrases more often:



Phrases that epitomise humble leaders




- Can you advise me on how I can support you better—to help you achieve your goals? For evidence on the benefits of this question to customers, see Owens & Heckman (2012, 2016).
- What are some ideas you want me to pilot or trial in the future?
- What is your intuition or hunch about the key obstacles in this organisation—and how can we address these obstacles?
- I would like some people to complete these tasks...Who do you think would benefit most from this experience?
- What have we learned from these challenges?
- If you were me, how might you solve these challenges?

Although you can exhibit some humility almost immediately, leadership humility demands significant time—often weeks if not months or longer—to develop fully.

How to cultivate a humble workplace: Helpful practices

Below is a catalogue of workplace practices that foster and maintain humility:

- Individually choose five workplace practices that you most like,
- Of these choices, individually select three practices that could be readily implemented,
- As a team, collate this information to decide which two workplace practices you would like to entrench in the organisation collectively. Devise a brief plan to achieve this goal.



Managers acknowledge their personal shortcomings—and admit when they are unsure.



Managers and supervisors feel pressure to improve the wellbeing and development of staff.

Managers and supervisors occasionally attempt the same tasks their staff complete to understand these activities better.



Managers seek opinions, feedback, and advice from inexperienced or quiet staff.

Staff are encouraged and rewarded if they can diminish the workload of their colleagues.



Staff understand the skills and responsibilities of their colleagues.

Humble staff are more likely to be rewarded, such as granted more opportunities.



Innovations to improve the organisation, even if unsuccessful, are somehow rewarded

Staff are granted opportunities to develop personal attributes, such as their resilience.

After completing projects, teams discuss the lessons they learned and perceive mistakes as opportunities to learn.

How to diminish the extent to which staff feel rushed and overloaded

Measures to stem time pressure



Whenever people feel inundated with work, they tend to become irritable. Their primary motivation, thus, is to complete their tasks as expediently as possible. They do not therefore feel as motivated to develop or to extend their knowledge, skills, and attributes (Beck & Schmidt, 2013). Consequently, they may not be as receptive to feedback or advice. So

- as a team, identify opportunities to diminish the degree to which staff feel rushed at work,
- derive these suggestions from the following table as well as personal experiences and ingenuity.



Arrange conversations in which staff are granted opportunities to negotiate with their colleagues the tasks they would like to complete. During these conversations, staff might discover that one person enjoys a task that another person likes and vice versa.

Explanation. When staff complete tasks that utilise the skills they want to develop—or are compatible with their interests—they are not as likely to feel exhausted afterwards. They do not, therefore, feel as rushed or harried (Dong & Sun, 2025).



If permitted or possible, staff should devote at least an hour a day to personal development—and enter this hour into their online diaries.

Explanation. This strategy also increases the extent to which staff seem busy to other people—because their diaries are more occupied. People who seem busy are often perceived as important (Bellezza et al., 2017).



Organise times in which staff may complete their work uninterrupted, without disruptions. For example, the team might agree not to contact or disrupt one another during the morning—or might consider some other suitable arrangement.

Explanation. When staff are seldom interrupted, they feel more immersed in their work. When immersed, people are not as likely to feel mentally exhausted and thus feel they dedicate more time to work. Hence, they do not feel as rushed (Dong & Sun, 2025).



Organise Pomodoro sessions that staff can attend. Perhaps once a week, arrange a session, lasting three hours, in which staff are collectively encouraged to

- work silently for 25 minutes,
- break for 5 minutes.

Obviously, these sessions are applicable only to staff who can complete their tasks alone.

Explanation. If staff feel they can decide when to rush and when to work at a more leisurely pace, called time control, a heavy workload is not as likely to elicit feelings of irritability (Baethge et al., 2024). For research on the benefits of these sessions, see Biver et al. (2023).

Did you know



Sometimes, organisations might arrange some competition between subgroups of a larger team—such as a competition to develop some skill. During these competitions, the staff learn about the capabilities and preferences of another, enhancing their capacity to coordinate efficiently in the future (Ching et al., 2024)



Staff should, if possible, attempt to check emails only three times a day. Staff who often email each other could meet once a day or so to discuss issues instead.

Explanation. When staff check emails only three times a day, they are generally not as likely to feel overwhelmed with work (Kushlev & Dunn, 2015).



Goal harmony: A technique that diminishes time pressure and boosts effort

Sometimes, our goals seem to conflict with each other. At other times, our goals seem to facilitate one another, called goal harmony. For example

- our goal to work hard might seem to conflict with our goal to socialise more frequently,
- but our goal to eat healthy food, potentially diminishing our medical expenses, could also facilitate our goal to save money.

Did you know



When people feel their goals are compatible with one another, they do not feel as rushed, as overwhelmed, or as mentally exhausted (Wang & Fishbach, 2026). Instead, their motivation to achieve their goals—especially goals that demand effort—increases.



To foster goal harmony, attempt these activities iteratively over time.



Transcribe some work, leisure, health, financial, family, social or other goals. Refine this list over time.

Examples: To be promoted. To visit Japan. To eat more vegetables. To save enough money to buy a new car...



Slightly modify these goals over time so your achievement of one goal may facilitate progress on another goal.

Example. My goal to cook with vegetables more often could help me save enough money to purchase a new car



For each goal, identify a few activities you could undertake that could help you facilitate your progress on this goal.

Example: To receive a promotion, I will seek opportunities to complete more work assignments overseas or interstate.



Over time, gradually consider how you can adjust each of these activities so they facilitate progress on multiple goals.

Example: To receive a promotion, I will seek opportunities to complete some work assignments in Japan—helpful to my goals to receive a promotion and visit Japan

The planning fallacy

Did you know



One of the reasons that people feel overwhelmed can be ascribed to the planning fallacy—the tendency of people to underestimate the duration they need to complete some task. For example, tasks that people believe they can finish in 2 weeks often demand 3 weeks. So, individuals often feel rushed.

Fortunately, to prevent the planning fallacy and to diminish time pressure, researchers have uncovered a series of strategies that could be effective. Here are some strategies to adopt **when planning a task and estimating when the task will be complete**



Identify the subtasks that must be completed, but in reverse order. That is, first stipulate the last subtask that should be completed, then the second last subtask, and so forth. Attempt to outline each subtask in detail.

Reason: When people consider the subtasks in reverse order, they become more attuned to the challenges that might transpire, diminishing the planning fallacy (Wiese et al., 2016; see also Min & Arkes, 2013).

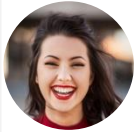


Imagine each subtask from the perspective of someone else—as if someone is watching you or your colleagues undertake all these activities.

Reason: When people imagine the task from the perspective of someone else, they feel a sense of detachment from these activities and may thus be more willing to consider obstacles (Buehler, Griffin, et al., 2012).

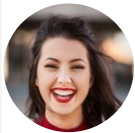


At the end of this project, insert a subtask that, if necessary, could be deferred. For example, the last subtask on most projects could be to review the implementation of all subtasks and identify how these subtasks could be completed more efficiently in the future.



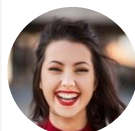
Identify which of the subtasks have been completed before. Attempt to recall one to three obstacles or complications that individuals experienced in the past that could unfold again. Imagine the frustration that leaders may express if these problems delay the task.

Reason: When people feel empowered, they often divert their attention from potential complications, amplifying the planning fallacy. Direct instructions to consider these complications overrides this tendency (Weick & Guinote, 2010).



Identify which one to three subtasks might demand the most effort and concentration. Record a reason why these subtasks might be challenging.

Reason: When people orient their attention to a challenging subtask, the deadline feels closer, diminishing excessive optimism (Hadjichristidis et al., 2014; Jiga-Boy et al., 2010)



When ready to estimate the time that is needed to complete each task and subtask, first record an optimistic estimate. Then record a pessimistic estimate. Finally, consider the most likely estimate.

Reason: When people consider both an optimistic estimate and pessimistic estimate, they recognise these forecasts are uncertain (Bordley et al., 2019). This uncertainty may dampen their optimism and, therefore, diminish the planning fallacy.



When people estimate the duration they should devote to a sequence of tasks in a project, they seldom allocate enough time to the last one to three tasks (Ariely & Wertenbroch, 2002). So, to decide the duration you should devote to these later tasks in the sequence, collect objective information, such as a pilot or trial.

The previous approach, in which individuals strive to uncover the obstacles to each subtask, is suitable when the project is scheduled to end soon, such as within a month or two. However, if the task needs to be completed later—such as in a year—this approach may need to be adjusted (see Peetz et al, 2010).



When projects are likely to be completed 6 or more months in the future, while planning these projects



- individuals should dedicate more time to consider all the methods, and opportunities they could utilise to facilitate performance,
- in these circumstances, excessive discussion about obstacles can even magnify the planning fallacy.

If the project and timelines are developed in a team setting, people often want to seem upbeat and thus feel reluctant to underscore possible obstacles or complications.



Therefore, to offset this tendency in team settings, leaders should



- remind staff that experienced and insightful employees often recognise possible complications that other people overlook
- encourage staff to identify possible complications and challenges, both publicly and anonymously.

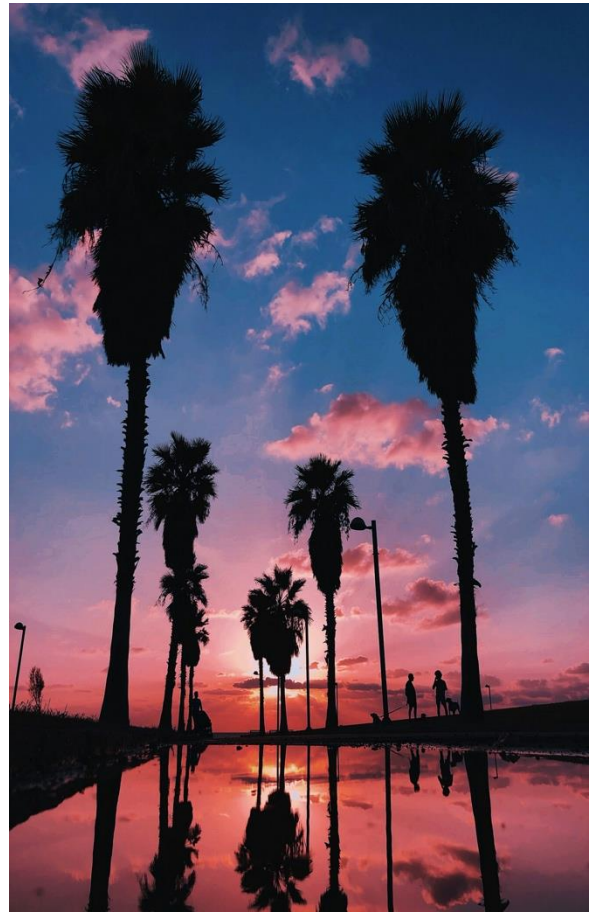


Did you know. Managers are more likely to underestimate the duration that a large team, rather than a small team, needs to complete tasks, called the team scaling fallacy (Staats, Milkman, & Fox, 2012). Managers often underestimate the complications that large teams experience

Exercises to temper perfectionism

Some people set lofty standards for themselves, such as the goal to prevent all mistakes during a speech or essay. These lofty standards can boost motivation and enhance performance. However

- lofty standards, especially if unrealistic or unfeasible, often culminate in disappointment, shame, depression, and other problems.
- Indeed, unrealistic standards also seem to impede humility (e.g. Thornburg-Suresh & McElroy-Heltzel, 2024).
- That is, if people are perfectionistic, they do not want to acknowledge their flaws and limitations to other people or even to themselves.



The following list outlines practices that may curb perfectionism and perhaps foster humility. After you skim this list

- brainstorm and insert other practices that may curb perfectionism,
- if you have recently experienced perfectionism, from this list, identify three practices you might attempt in the future,
- initiate at least one practice every week,
- in each instance, observe your emotions: you may feel awkward at first but then calmer hours later.



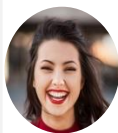
Commit some intentional mistakes.

Example: You may deliberately insert a typo into an email, arrive later than usual, or wear mismatched socks



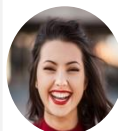
Set and fulfill a modest goal

Example: You could, on one day, set the goal to complete 5% fewer tasks than usual.



Replace perfectionistic thoughts with more nuanced alternatives (see Egan, 2014; Suh et al., 2019)

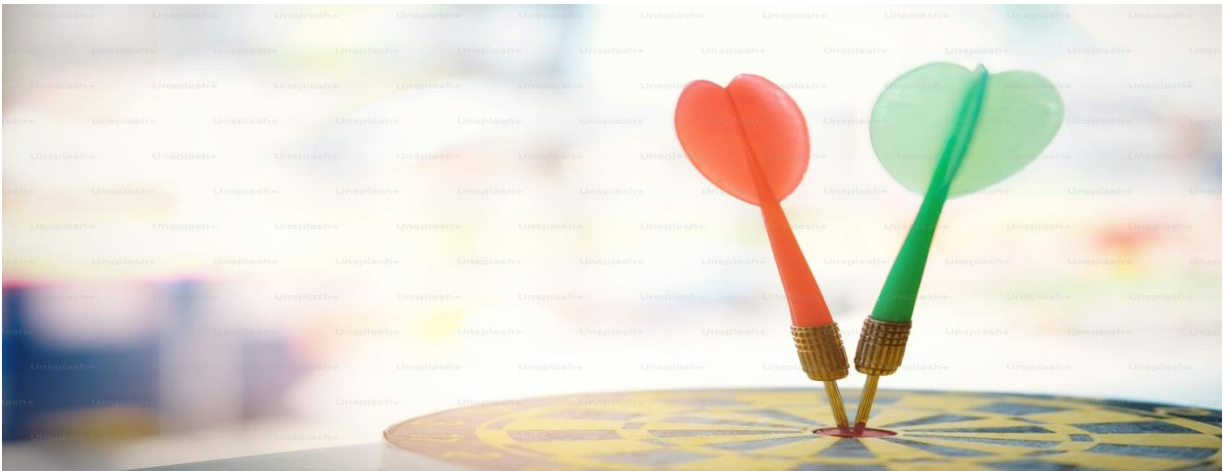
Example: If you ever experience the thought “If I commit a mistake, people will think I am incompetent”, instead consider a more nuanced perspective, such as “People direct less attention to my mistakes than do I, called the spotlight effect. So, they may not notice my mistakes or not change their opinion of me”.



Engage in a mindfulness exercise; mindfulness limits the extent to which perfectionism impairs humility (Thornburg-Suresh & McElroy-Heltzel, 2024)

Example: You could listen to a mindfulness video on YouTube for about 20 minutes

How to model behaviour that deters perfectionism

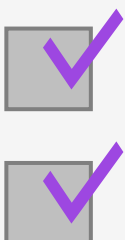


Sometimes, important people in your life—such as your staff—exhibit maladaptive perfectionism. They may, for example, check their work excessively, shun unfamiliar activities, or exhibit intense despair in response to minor errors. Interestingly

- if you exhibit signs or traces of perfectionism, people who respect you are more likely to develop this maladaptive perfectionism too (Carmo et al., 2021),
- therefore, you might strive to suppress or conceal these signs of perfectionism,
- unfortunately, this approach is hard to maintain over time and is exhausting,
- a simpler alternative is to occasionally, but regularly, express information that deters perfectionism or to initiate behaviours that conflict with the signs or perfectionism.



To express information that deters perfectionism,



- skim the following list of beliefs you could express,
- scan your diary to identify at least three scheduled events in which you might be able to express one of these beliefs to your staff or other people who respect you.

Information that conflicts with the signs of perfectionism

Here is some information that deters perfectionism. Consider settings or topics of conversation in which you could share this information, such as when someone you value seems concerned that perhaps they may be mocked.



The zero-risk bias (e.g., Mezzio et al., 2018). Companies often spend vast sums of money to translate a minor risk—such as the risk that someone might steal toilet paper from the bathrooms—into no risk.



The spotlight effect (Gilovich, Medvec, et al., 2000). Individuals overestimate the percentage of people who will notice their errors or faults. A lot fewer people direct attention to the flaws of someone else than anticipated.



Excessive monitoring (Lam et al., 2011): People should not evaluate themselves—such as assess their weight, skills, or attributes—too often. Otherwise, their effort and performance tends to decline. They overreact to trivial fluctuations or set unrealistic expectations, culminating in disappointment.



The Perfectionism Social Disconnection Model (see Sherry et al., 2013). Perfectionism tends to elicit aloof or hostile behaviour towards other people as well as increase the sensitivity of individuals to rejection, impairing relationships and thus wellbeing.

Here are some quotes you might share as well



Perfectionism is internalized oppression [Gloria Steinem, American feminist author]

Perfectionism is the ultimate thief of time [Mitta Xinindlu, High rights lawyer & author]

Perfection is a dream for the uninspired [J. T. Wright, author of speculative fiction]

To be a learner, you've got to be willing to be a fool [George Leonard, American author]

Perfectionism sucks the air out of ...uniqueness and leaves you empty, away from who you could become [Darryl Stewart, wellness practitioner]

Perfectionism is not as much the desire for excellence (but) the fear of failure couched in procrastination [Dan Miller, American author]

Behaviours that conflict with the signs of perfectionism

Here are some actions that may deviate from perfectionism.

- Skim the following list of actions you could undertake.
- Scan your diary to identify at least three scheduled events in which you could perhaps initiate one of these actions—while your staff or other people who respect you are nearby and watching.



Intentionally complete about 80% to 90% of a task or goal. To justify this behaviour, indicate that sometimes the final 10% to 20% of a task or goal demands huge effort but offers limited benefit.



Rather than attempt to fulfill a specific, ambitious target, such as to learn 50 foreign words this week, set a range, such as to learn 30 to 50 foreign words this week—and share this strategy to other people. As research suggests, this approach enhances motivation and performance (Scott & Nowlis, 2013).



Brainstorm a range of opportunities to deliberately embrace imperfections—such as leave the house wearing unironed trousers, slightly dishevelled hair, or some other flaw. Then, each week, experiment with another perfection.



Delegate tasks to other people who are not proficient on these activities—such as collaborate with your staff to present a workshop—to demonstrate that you prioritise their development over perfection.



Exhibit fascination and excitement immediately after you commit an error or fail to achieve a goal, expressing phrases like “Great; I learned a lot from that” or “I feel proud that I tried this task”.

How to communicate confidently and persuasively

Boosting your credibility despite your uncertainty

To be a humble leader, you should admit when you feel uncertain. Yet, when leaders admit they feel uncertain, they may be less likely, at least initially, to be perceived as competent and effective (Alzahawi & Flynn, 2025). So, how can you acknowledge uncertainty but maintain, or even bolster, your credibility? To fulfill this goal,

- read the following email, written by a humble but credible manager,
- identify how this person bolstered credibility despite acknowledging uncertainty,
- the next two pages will outline the strategies this person applied,
- to practice these strategies, outline a plan you may want to implement in the future that concedes uncertainty but maintains credibility.



This year, we have learned a lot about how our market is shifting towards online services. Our existing model will not work. Yet, because the market is shifting rapidly, we do not know which digital services will attract customers: we are still collecting data from our beta tests to learn about the market.

So, to advance during these uncertain times, we will pursue two priorities over the next 90 days: we will strengthen our existing offerings and pilot some digital services with selected clients. From the information we have received so far, I am 80% confident this direction will help us succeed. But, to refine this plan, I will need your insights and suggestions.

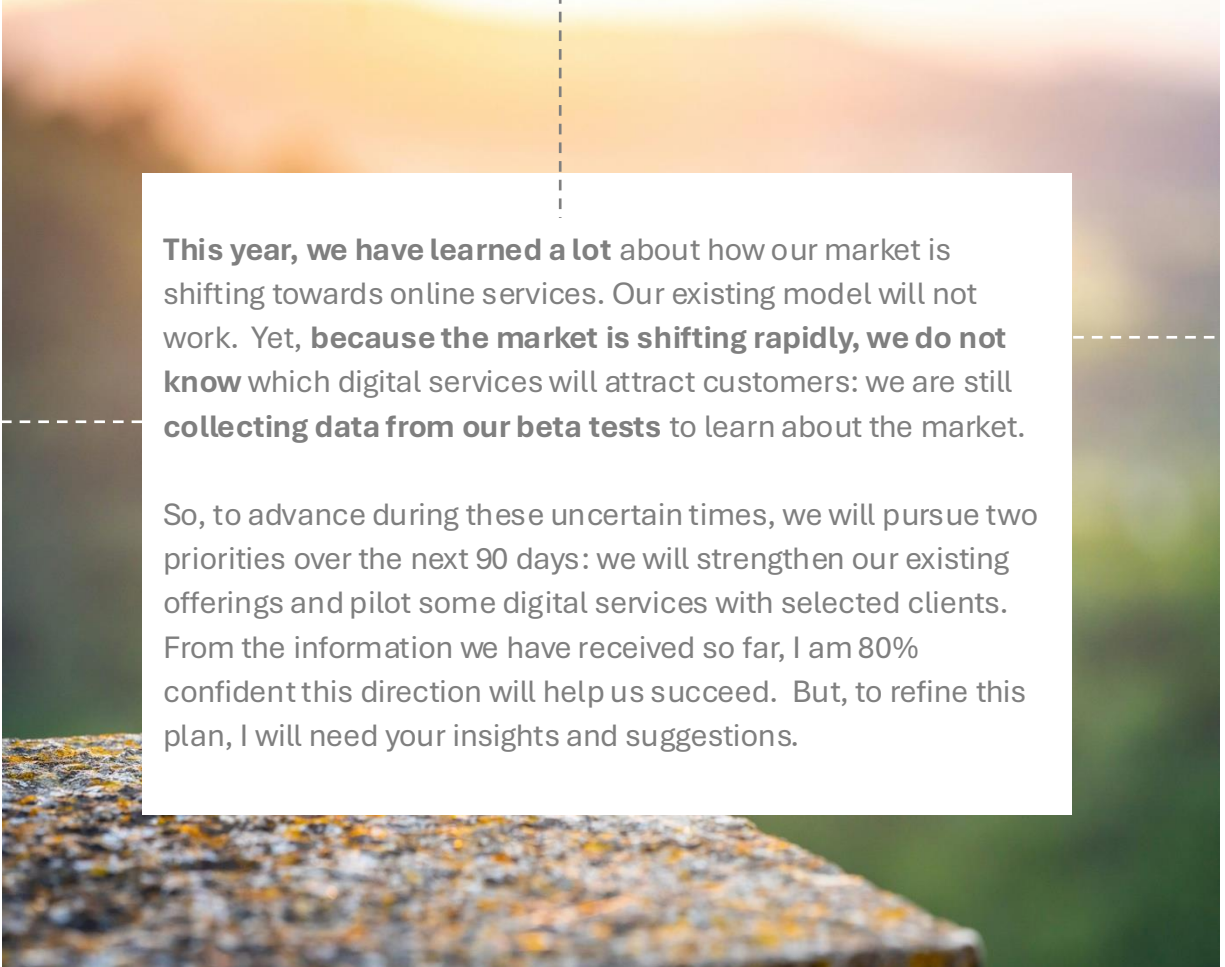
Did you know



To display humility and confidence simultaneously, adopt a more confident and dominant posture, with your elbows away from your chest, your legs apart, while you lean back slightly. In response, the other person may feel and behave more submissively (Tiedens & Fragale, 2003).

3 To imply the uncertainty is subsiding, clarify how you are learning about this matter. References to learning diminish concerns about competence (e.g., Hong et al., 1999).

1 Specify what you know first and what you do not know next. Your initial confidence can bias how other individuals perceive you (Sullivan, 2019).



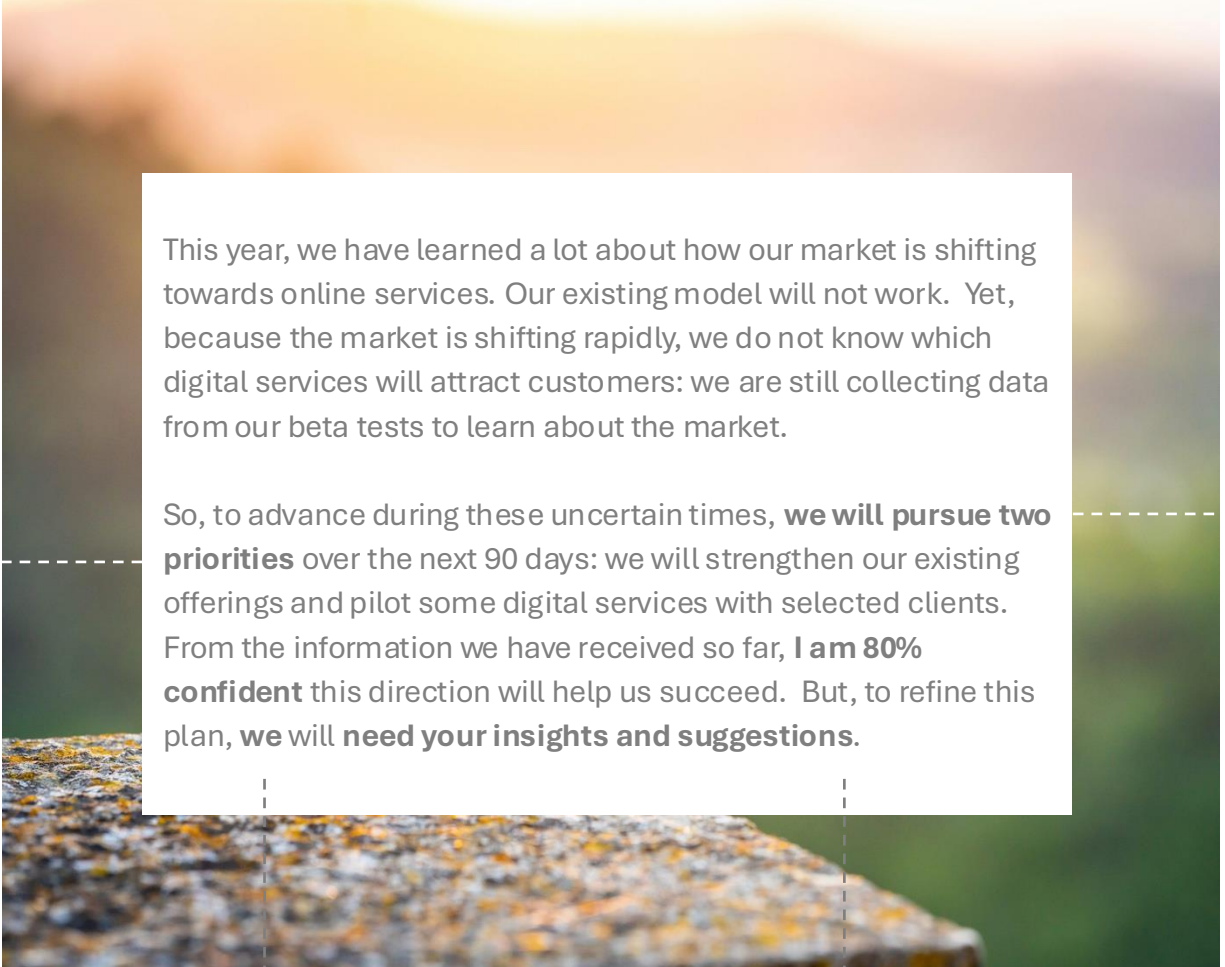
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2 While conceding your knowledge is limited, indicate the circumstances are shifting rapidly or especially intricate, so that individuals do not ascribe this uncertainty to incompetence (see Graham, 2020 on attribution theory).

4 After you acknowledge your uncertainty, propose a plan on how to proceed—a plan that will be refined iteratively in response to more information.

5 When you acknowledge uncertainty, refer to your confidence, perhaps numerically (for evidence, see Gaertig & Simmons, 2018)



This year, we have learned a lot about how our market is shifting towards online services. Our existing model will not work. Yet, because the market is shifting rapidly, we do not know which digital services will attract customers: we are still collecting data from our beta tests to learn about the market.

So, to advance during these uncertain times, **we will pursue two priorities** over the next 90 days: we will strengthen our existing offerings and pilot some digital services with selected clients. From the information we have received so far, **I am 80% confident** this direction will help us succeed. But, to refine this plan, **we will need your insights and suggestions.**

7 Consider first-person plural pronouns, such as we or us, rather than first-person singular pronouns, such as me or I. These pronouns evoke a more cooperative mindset (see Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005).

6 Seek the insights of staff. When staff feel a sense of control, they often prefer leaders who seem uncertain rather than leaders who impose their convictions forcefully (Mirisola et al., 2014)

A confident style

The importance of confidence when promoting humility: Vocal cues

If you want to promote humility in your teams or organisation, you need to appear confident, albeit humble. As research has revealed, people who acknowledge their uncertainty, but with confidence, are more persuasive: They are more able to inspire other individuals to change (Gaertig & Simmons, 2018). To seem confident, while acknowledging uncertainty and demonstrating humility,

- skim these helpful strategies,
- each week or so, choose one strategy to practice.



To seem confident, vary your **pitch** as you speak (e.g., Oksenberg et al., 1986). In general, lower, rather than raise, your pitch as you end a sentence (Guyer et al., 2019).

How to practice: When alone, practice an exaggerated variant, in which you read a sentence, commencing very high and then gradually lowering the pitch.



To seem more credible, vary your **volume**, often speaking louder than usual, but occasionally soft to accentuate an important argument (Van Zant & Berger, 2020).

Caveat: This tendency to lower your voice, especially to accentuate an argument, is more useful when you are perceived as an expert or leader (see Klofstad et al., 2012, 2015).



To seem intelligent (Guyer et al., 2019; Smith & Shaffer, 1995), learn the material you need to present so well that, at least sometimes, you can speak rapidly—faster than a typical person.

How to practice: While preparing a speech, practice articulating some of the sentences you will express in the first couple of minutes as rapidly as possible—faster than you will speak during the speech.



When you want the audience to appreciate a key argument, present this argument slowly. People can direct more attention to arguments that are expressed slowly (Smith & Shaffer, 1995)

How to practice: If preparing a speech, practice articulating the key arguments as slowly as possible—about twice as slow than you will speak during the speech.



When speaking, try to replace hesitations, such as “um”, with silence or a short breath. Short pauses are perceived as more confident than hesitations (Kirkland et al., 2022).

How to practice: When practicing a speech, deliberately insert a few pauses. These pauses will gradually feel more natural. Then, imagine you are just about to say “um”, but replace this sound with a pause.



Your stories

If you can tell compelling stories—rather than merely present a series of facts—members of the audience often feel like they have been transported into your narrative. They imagine themselves in the setting you describe. When transported into a story, people tend to evaluate the speaker and content favourably (Green & Brock, 2000). Here are some strategies that can absorb an audience into your narrative.



First, imply the story is special and important. Then, as vividly as you can, outline an interesting setting or situation as well as a struggle or problem you must solve.

Hook and situation: I seldom tell this story. But anyway, after working at a company for three years, a restructure was announced

Struggle: On the new chart, my role had disappeared. Nobody was responding to my emails either.



Then present a solution to this struggle—a change that either you or someone else initiated to solve the problem

Solution: My manager then told me that she had arranged a better role for me—but had not communicated this change until she was certain



Outline the aftermath of this story—such as what you learned or gained

Resolution: The role utilises my strengths. I have now learned not to catastrophise in silence.



When recounting a narrative, you can begin with a vivid event that unfolded later in the story, such as “I will never forget how my voice trembled when I knew my life would change”.

Justification: This strategy enables you to evoke suspense immediately, overcoming the need to present the background first



Describe the setting vividly—such as the features you saw, heard, smelled, and felt. You can even say “Imagine this scene...”

Example: I was standing outside an imposing building, with small towers on the roof and the sound of a gentle breeze.



Refer to your thoughts or emotions, such as thoughts around a struggle or problem you need to resolve

Example: I was thinking “How can I possibly encourage this person to change?”

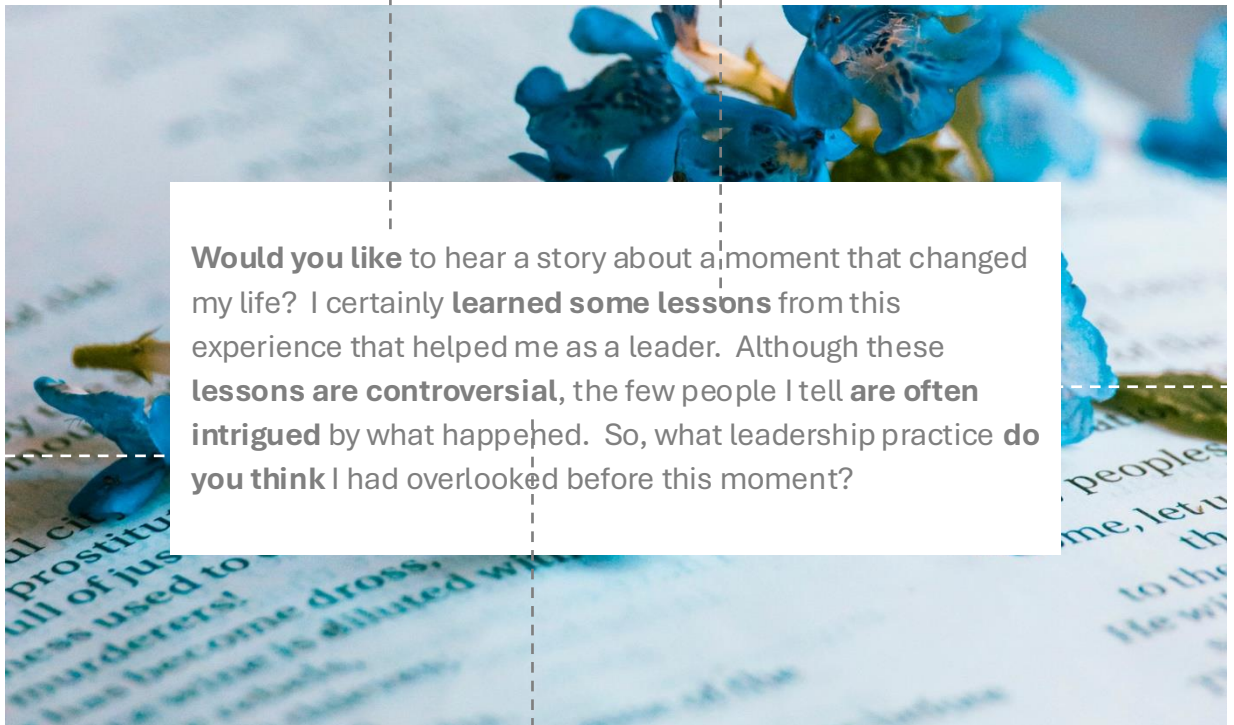
Preambles to stories

Some phrases spark curiosity. Listeners who experience curiosity feel more immersed and engaged in the stories or arguments you express (Garrosa et al., 2017), potentially manifesting as humility (Leary et al., 2017). And, when they listen, you feel more humble too (Lehmann et al., 2023). From the following example, identify or adapt the phrases you might like to express in the future. Then

- identify one phrase you would like to adapt and to practice each week for a month,
- when the opportunity unfolds, first smile, pause for a moment, and then express one or more of these phrases before you recount a story or argument.

When granted choice, people become more curious (Verdugo et al., 2023)

When people feel they will learn useful information, they feel more curious (Liquin & Lombrozo, 2020)



People tend to be curious when they learn that other individuals had been curious (Dubey et al., 2021)

A sense of controversy fosters curiosity (Lowry & Johnson, 1981)

After individuals predict how a story might unfold, they become more curious (Brod & Breitwieser, 2019)

Online communication

Physical cues during videoconferences

For several reasons, if leaders want to foster humility in their workgroups or organisations, they need to be credible speakers online:

- First, online meetings often diminish time pressure in staff—and this diminished time pressure tends to inspire people to learn and thus promote humility.
- Second, when online, staff are especially inspired by visionary leaders (Whitford & Moss, 2009)—and thus may be more receptive to a vision around humility

Below are some validated practices on how to communicate effectively online during videoconferences. Identify the practices you feel you could apply more often in the future—and then skim these practices before a future online meeting.





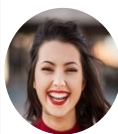
In Zoom or similar platforms, reposition the other person so the eyes of this individual are slightly below the camera lens. Then, when speaking, maintain eye contact.



Shift the computer screen slightly away from you, so the audience can, at least partly, see your arms.



Position the camera to be below your lips so you are peering slightly downwards rather than upwards.



The background, whether real or actual, should be simple and static, devoid of clutter or distractions.

Evidence: People seem more credible when they direct their eyes close to, but slightly below, the eyes of person to whom they are speaking (Gao et al., 2025; see also Basch & Melchers, 2025).

Evidence: People seem more likeable and prominent online when their gestures seem to match the content of their speech. So, provided individuals are sincere, they may seem more credible if the audience can observe their gestures (Du et al., 2025)

Evidence: When individuals are peering down towards the camera rather than staring upwards, they seem more persuasive and influential (Gruber et al., 2023)

Evidence: Clutter in the background can increase the likelihood that observers may overlook key information, such as gestures or signals (Semizer & Rosenholtz, 2025).

How to communicate change effectively

How to communicate changes effectively

To introduce strategies, initiatives, and practices that improve the organisation or foster humility, you need to be able to communicate these changes persuasively. To achieve this goal, identify which of the following insights you could apply.



To communicate this change, articulate some of this plan yourself but arrange other staff to articulate the remainder.

Justification: Some leaders can reconcile paradoxical or conflicting needs effectively, such as the need to assume rather than shirk responsibility as well as the need to share credit with other staff. These paradoxical leaders tend to enhance the cohesion and performance of teams (Zhang et al., 2024).

Collaborations



When conveying a change, deliberately obscure a few details initially and then reveal these details afterwards. Perhaps present an acronym first—or some letters in a hazy font—before revealing these key words.

Justification: If you obscure and then reveal some information, listeners experience a sense of curiosity. When people experience this curiosity, their scepticism tends to subside (Hüttl-Maack et al., 2024). They associate curiosity with activities that feel inherently significant and valuable.

Words and details

How to communicate changes effectively continued



Refer to failed attempts to implement similar changes in the last. Then clarify how your plan diverges from these attempts, such as “One team failed. But we can achieve this goal—because we are using a more advanced LLM”.

Justification: After leaders refer to workgroups who failed to achieve similar plans, staff often feel inspired to embrace this challenge. They feel the need to mobilise additional effort to this pursuit (Jeworrek et al. 2021), enhancing motivation and performance.



When communicating a change, refer to a personal narrative, tale, or story that

- exhibits some vulnerability, such as problem that you or your family experienced,
- explains why this vision is important to you and helpful to other people.

Justification: Leaders who disclose a personal narrative that reveals their vulnerability and explains why they support a specific approach are more likely to be perceived as trustworthy and credible (Hagmann et al., 2024).

How to communicate changes effectively continued

When communicating a change, imply the life and experience of staff will improve gradually and iteratively, rather than abruptly and suddenly, over time—as the change evolves from both feedback and consultation



Did you know



The belief that life will improve greatly often coincides with the inclination of individuals to fantasise about the future rather than address existing obstacles. So, when people feel their satisfaction with life will improve greatly rather than just modestly in the future, they tend to feel ill more often and also perceive their social networks as inadequate (Busseri et al., 2008).

Did you know



If leaders change the organisation too dramatically, staff cannot as readily withstand other unforeseen demands, impairing performance. This observation may explain why rate of growth or profit often decline a couple of years after a CEO is replaced (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2004).

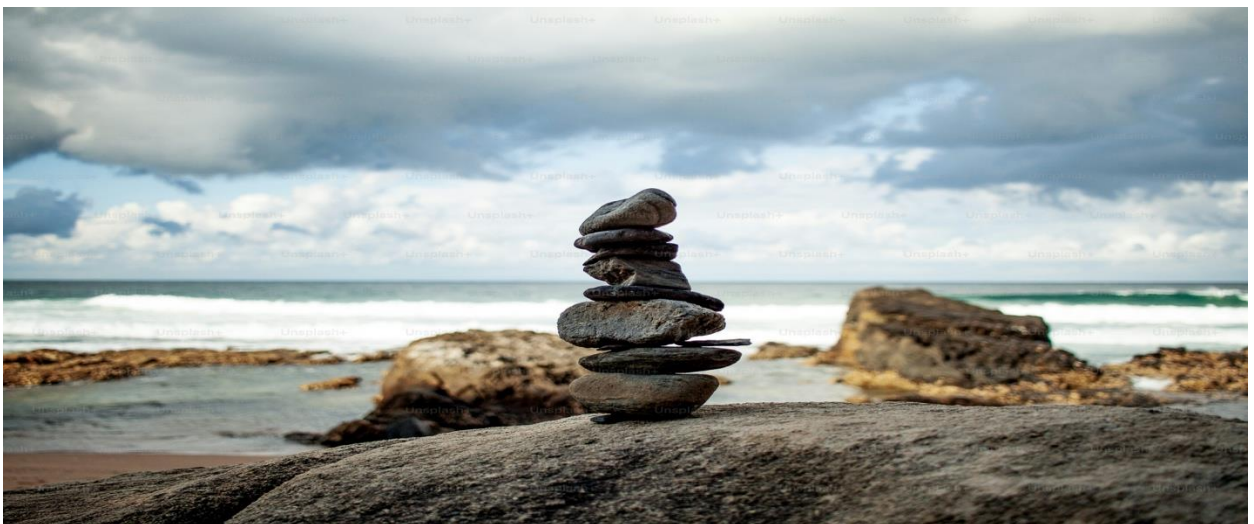
How to reach effective decisions as a team

Decision making

Limitations to multiple-criteria decision making

To reach decisions, individuals utilise a variety of tools and techniques. One of the most sophisticated approaches is called multiple-criteria decision making. To illustrate this approach, suppose you need to decide which job applicant to select. The following table presents some numerical information about each applicant.

| Name | Years of work in this industry | Years of uni study in this industry | Score on psych tests | Score from referees out of 10 |
|-------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Adam | 5 | 3 | 105 | 6 |
| Betty | 4 | 4 | 92 | 8 |
| Carl | 12 | 0 | 103 | 7 |
| Donna | 4 | 3 | 112 | 9 |
| Ernie | 8 | 2 | 89 | 5 |



To apply a simple variant of multiple-criteria decision making, you could

- standardise the scores—so the values range from 0 to 1, perhaps by dividing each value by the maximum score,
- identify the weight or importance of each attribute, in which the weights sum to one,
- to calculate an overall preference score for each applicant, multiply each value by the weight and then sum.

The following table illustrates this approach. In this instance, Carl generates the highest preference score and would be chosen.

| Name | Years of work in this industry | Years of study in this industry | Score on psych tests | Score from referees | Preference score |
|--------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Weight | 0.5 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.1 | |
| Adam | 0.42 | 0.75 | 0.94 | 0.67 | 0.61 |
| Betty | 0.33 | 1.00 | 0.82 | 0.89 | 0.62 |
| Carl | 1.00 | 0.00 | 0.92 | 0.78 | 0.76 |
| Donna | 0.33 | 0.75 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 0.62 |



Limitations of deliberation

Scholars and practitioners have introduced many advances to optimise this approach. For example, they have developed techniques to choose suitable weights. Nevertheless, this approach—and indeed most quantitative approaches—are not useful in a variety of circumstances. The following table outlines these circumstances.

Circumstances in which formal decision making is not useful

Examples



The options differ on characteristics that are not quantifiable.

The degree to which an applicant seems to fit the culture is hard to quantify.



The options differ on too many characteristics to delineate.

So many other attributes differentiate the applicants, such as their confidence and so forth.



The implications of these characteristics are very uncertain

Whether you should choose confident applicants is uncertain—because confident applicants might be competent or arrogant.



The various implications of each characteristic depend on other characteristics

Whether you should choose confident applicants might depend on the experience of these individuals.

A blend of deliberation and intuition



Instead, another approach, that blends deliberation and intuition, is particularly effective when

- the options, such as applicants, differ on many interrelated characteristics in which the implications are hard to quantify or predict,
- you have needed to reach many similar decisions in the past—and thus can utilise your experience.



1 Obviously collect and read information about the relevant options.

Example: If deciding which applicant to choose, read the application and social media profile of each individual.



2 Although optional, you could complete a rough variant of multiple criteria decision making

Example: If deciding which applicant to choose, you could roughly rate the applicants on five or so measures—such as experience, fit, and so forth—on a scale of 1 to 10.

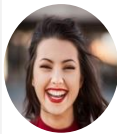
You could then weight and sum these ratings. But you would need to recognise these sums do not encompass all the key attributes of these individuals and, therefore, do not accurately identify the best option.



3 As vividly as possible, imagine each of the most likely alternatives in sequence.

Example: For a minute or so, you could first imagine a typical meeting with the first applicant.

You could next imagine a typical meeting with the second applicant and so forth.



4 Defer your decision for at least a day if possible.

Example: While you defer this decision, distract yourself with other activities. That is, if possible, during this time, refrain from contemplating this decision.



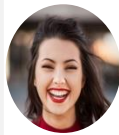
5 In a familiar setting, imagine a circumstance in the future in which you feel empowered and confident. While you maintain this image for several minutes, touch your chest.

Example: You might imagine yourself in a position of power, but in a role that is not too stressful.

Your intuition is likely to be accurate if the setting or circumstance seems familiar to you. So, perhaps complete this activity in a location that feels cosy—perhaps in a quiet corner of your bedroom, with your favourite blanket and soothing music in the background.



6 Close your eyes and visualise the alternatives—such as the five applicants—as vividly as possible, one more time.



7 Imagine the impact of these alternatives several years from now. For example, you might imagine one applicant, working at the company, three years now and the changes this person has introduced.



8 Finally, you may experience a strong hunch or intuition about which option seems more suitable. Trust this hunch or intuition.

Explanation: After people consider the future impact of the various alternatives, they can more readily predict which options are likely to be effective in the future (Berg, 2019).

Otherwise, some people are biased towards the option that generates immediate, but not future, benefits.

Clarification: If you do not experience a strong hunch, roll some dice to determine which option to choose.

When you roll the dice, you might experience a strong hunch as to which option you prefer. Choose this option.



Although this literature is contentious and complicated (see Newell et al., 2008), many strands of evidence indicate that hunches and intuitions often culminate in astute decisions or choices, at least in particular circumstances (e.g., Dijksterhuis & van Olden, 2006; Fetterman & Robinson, 2013; Remmers et al., 2024). The following table outlines some of this literature.



When intuition is helpful

When individuals feel empowered and calm, reliance on intuition tends to be more helpful (Sharpley et al., 2014; see also de Vries et al., 2009).

Leaders who tend to trust their intuition tend to enhance the performance of their teams—but only if they feel they need to consider extensive data and information to reach decisions (Sleesman et al., 2024). This intuition is especially beneficial when leaders are introverted.



Practices that enhance the benefits of intuition

Intuition tends to be especially likely to improve decisions if preceded by careful, methodical deliberation (Nordgren, Bos, et al., 2011).

Intuition seems especially beneficial after a delay (Shin & Grant, 2020).

Vivid images tend to activate intuition (Lee et al., 2009), and closing your eyes increases the degree to which images seem vivid (Nash et al., 2015). Interestingly, when individuals point towards their heart, they tend to be more sensitive to their intuition (Fetterman, 2013).



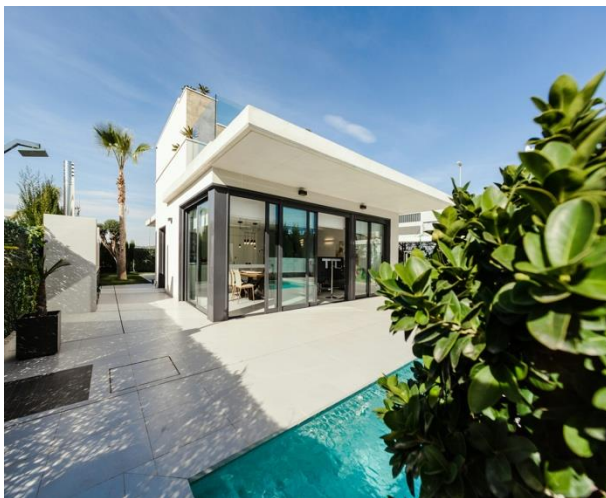
Other benefits of intuition

After people trust their intuition and reach a decision, this choice tends to feel natural and easy, improving their mood (Remmers et al., 2024).

Leaders need to justify their decisions somehow. But they cannot announce that “I have decided to retrench half the staff because this decision intuitively feels right”. So, how can people justify decisions that were largely intuitive?



1 List at least three reasons



Fortunately, after people reach a decision, they become more aware of the benefits and merits of this choice (Harmon-Jones, Harmon-Jones, et al., 2008; Schindler & Tomasik, 2010). For example, suppose they need to decide which of two houses to purchase. After they choose one house

- their attention naturally shifts towards the benefits and advantages of the house they chose, such as the larger kitchen or convenient location,
- their attention naturally shifts away from the benefits and advantages of the house they did not choose, such as the lower price.



This tendency, called splitting of alternatives, diminishes the likelihood that people will incessantly shift their preferences. So, after you experience a strong your intuition,



- distract yourself for a few minutes with an enjoyable task,
- then brainstorm 5 to 10 benefits of your choice over the other alternatives.

2 Utilise a template to communicate these reasons

To communicate your decision effectively, you need to present these reasons but also acknowledge that no one decision can be substantiated definitively—to show and to foster humility but confidence. To achieve this goal, you may adapt this template:

I have decided to implement this change because of several reasons.

First...

Second...

Third...

Fourth...

And fifth...

I am aware of some drawbacks of this decision too, such as ...

Nevertheless, nobody can predict the outcome of all the options with absolute certainty and thus we cannot depend on some formula or algorithm to guide these choices. So, I need to utilise my experience to integrate the vast range of conflicting pressures and considerations. And this decision, I believe, is the right option for now and for the future.

Contemplate biases

Although your intuitions may be accurate when you feel calm, people who depend on their intuitions can be susceptible to various biases or errors. So, before you trust on intuition,

- read about some or many of these biases,
- consider whether these biases could affect your decisions.

Over time, your intuition may adjust to accommodate these biases. The following table outlines a sample of biases to consider when reaching decisions.

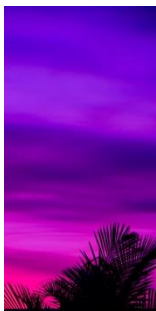
Illusion of control



People tend to overestimate their capacity to shape or control an outcome (Gino et al., 2011).

Application: When deciding between two or more alternative plans, assume you may not be able to shape or affect the outcomes or circumstances to the degree you hope.

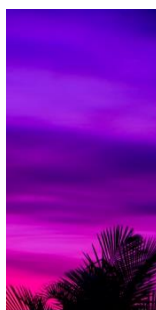
Consensus bias



People overestimate the degree to which other individuals are likely to agree with their position (Marks & Miller, 1987).

Application: When deciding between two or more alternative plans, assume that you will receive more resistance or disagreement than anticipated.

Temporal discounting



People tend to underestimate the value of delayed benefits—and instead choose options that attract more immediate benefits (Soman et al., 2005)

Application: When deciding between two or more alternatives, imagine the future benefits as vividly as possible—diminishing the likelihood you discount these benefits.

Shared decision making

The blend of deliberation and intuition enhances the decisions of individuals in many circumstances. However, even if all leaders and directors apply this approach, they may not arrive at the same decision. So, teams and boards often need to reconcile conflicting decisions. To achieve this goal, leaders and directors often incorrectly assume that



- if a team considers a decision carefully enough, the consequences of this decision will always be favourable,
- when debating a decision, the most experienced or accomplished individuals should speak first,
- conflict always impairs team performance.

Interestingly, all these assumptions—and many other beliefs about how to reach decisions—have largely been refuted. Instead, teams tend to be more effective when they apply the principles in the following tables.



Assumptions



Assume that whatever action the board chooses will generate some unforeseen complications—and introduce some measures in advance to manage these complications.



Because complications are inevitable, test these actions as soon as possible rather than seek consensus.



Indeed, embrace actions in which the consequences are most uncertain—because these choices are likely to enhance learning or, if successful, are likely to be the most profitable.



Practices



To diminish conformity, occasionally ask staff to anonymously present their position on these actions before each debate; use generative AI to summarise these positions.



For every debate around these decisions, assign one person the role to investigate likely problems or complications; rotate this role after each decision.



If the matter as important—and each member has acquired distinct knowledge about this matter—these debates should be convened in person, rather than online, whenever possible. In person, individuals can interpret the mannerisms and thus comments of another more accurately, improving discussions and decisions (Javalag et al., 2024).



Identify the % of members who should agree before an action is initiated; for example, perhaps 75% should agree if the action consumes significant resources and 50% should agree otherwise,



How to resolve conflicts and discord effectively

Assumptions about interpersonal clashes



On these two slides, which one sentence is incorrect?

- The degree to which any specific person is humble—and thus motivated to learn from other people—varies appreciably over time (Zachry et al., 2018).
- The degree to which any specific person is narcissistic—and thus more concerned with their immediate status or importance than learning or helping—also varies appreciably over time (Giacomin & Jordan, 2016b).
- Hostile disputes are considerably more common and prolonged while people are narcissistic rather than humble (Koetke et al., 2024; Lynch et al., 2022).
- If people conceptualise an interpersonal clash, dispute, or disagreement as an opportunity to learn, and not as a battle, they are more likely to uncover opportunities to resolve the matter effectively (e.g., Stout & Dasgupta, 2013).
- If people feel resentful towards someone else, rather than learn to forgive this person, their health is likely to deteriorate (Worthington & Scherer, 2004).





- If people imagine how they might feel about a clash, conflict, or disagreement in ten years, they are more likely to forgive this individual (Rizvi & Bobocel, 2016).
- After an interpersonal clash, dispute, or disagreement, individuals are more inclined to forgive someone if they feel the other person has been punished in some sense (Strelan & Van Prooijen, 2013; Wenzel & Okimoto, 2010).
- If individuals learn to convert blunt thoughts—like “This person is arrogant” or “This team is toxic”—to more nuanced and optimistic thoughts—like “This person can seem defensive if disrespected” or “This team would benefit from greater understanding between members”—hostility subsides (Thiel et al., 2019).
- The levels of trust between team members after they solve a conflict effectively can be higher than were the levels of trust before the conflict (Thiel et al., 2019).
- If people believe that interpersonal relationships can significantly improve after a difficulty, their relationships are more likely to improve (Knee et al., 2003, 2004).

Conflict resolution

Introduction

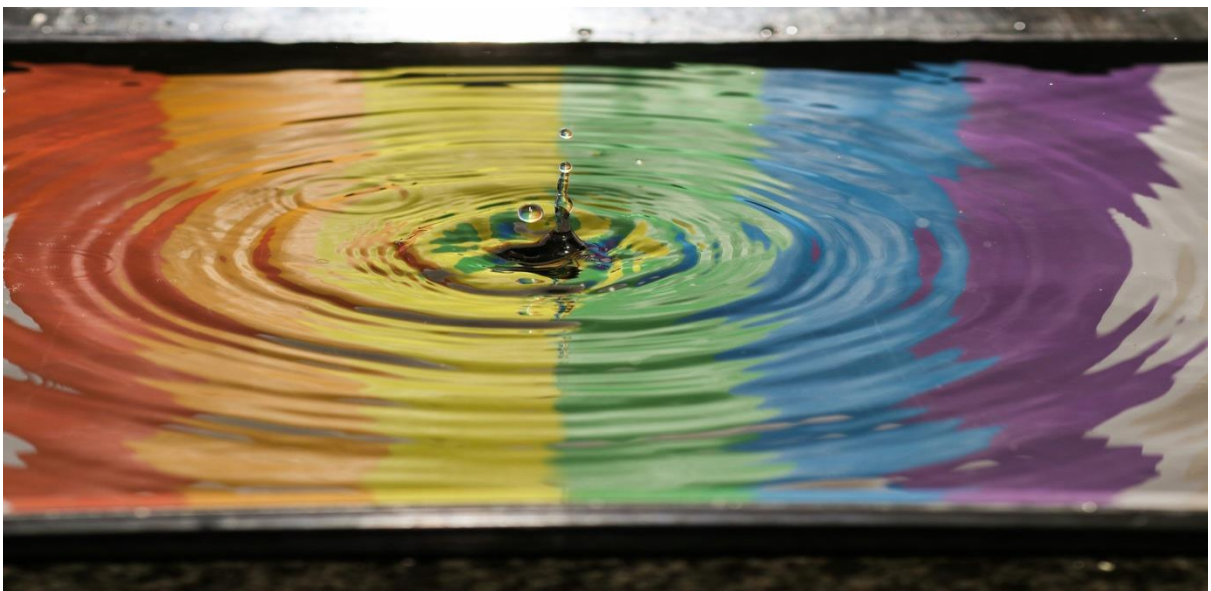
Besides delivering unfavourable feedback, leaders and boards may also need to manage other challenging settings and conversations. For example, they often need to resolve conflicts. To illustrate

- leaders may need to address a disagreement between themselves and other colleagues or directors
- or they may need to reconcile a conflict between two other individuals.

How to resolve disputes respectfully

Unless people demonstrate some humility, conflicts tend to endure. Yet, conflicts often preclude rather than foster this humility. The following table outlines a sequence of practices you can apply to resolve conflicts effectively and to foster humility at the same time. To develop this skill

- identify a minor, trivial, or even contrived difference of opinion with another participant,
- with this person, apply the practices in turn, customised to your conflict,
- then, identify a slightly more significant difference of opinion or conflict and apply the practices again,
- in the future, gradually apply this approach to more vital conflicts.

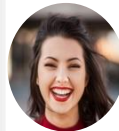




Set up a meeting, preferably in person, to initiate this discussion.

Rationale: Individuals tend to develop better rapport and trust in person.

Clarify your feelings and beliefs



Allude to the emotions you have experienced since this matter transpired.

Example: “Thanks for meeting me about this matter. I have felt a bit disconcerted as well as regretful about this issue”.

Did you know: After individuals are informed of the emotions that someone else is feeling, especially the emotions that only humans experience, they are more likely to feel empathy to this person (Vaes et al., 2002).



Outline the differences of opinion as fairly as you can

Example: ““From what I understand, I believe we need to purchase this equipment to improve efficiency, whereas you believe this equipment is not worth the cost”.

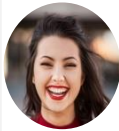


Indicate this matter is not easy to resolve—because the options vary on many interrelated attributes and these attributes are hard to measure and prioritise.

Example: “I am aware, of course, that I cannot definitively verify that my option is better than your option—or vice versa. After all, the benefits and drawbacks of this equipment are hard to articulate, measure, or weigh.

So, rather than a numerical answer, we will need to trust our intuition and experience to some extent”.

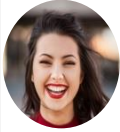
Did you know: If individuals appreciate they might need to depend, at least partly, on their intuition, they might become more flexible; otherwise, they may choose options that are easier to justify but not necessarily superior (Wilson & Schooler, 1991).



Indicate that you may not be able to resolve the matter today but may need more time to contemplate.



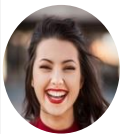
Listen to one another



To commence the discussion, each person, in turn, should outline the benefits of their position as well as at least one drawback of this position—to demonstrate impartiality. Do not interrupt, if possible

Example: “Perhaps each of us should listen to the other person in turn. Maybe each person can discuss three benefits of their position and, to show they are impartial, acknowledge at least one drawback of their position. For example, I can discuss three reasons to purchase the equipment as well as at least one complication”.

Did you know: If you show you are listening genuinely, the other person is more inclined to recognise the complexities of this matter, eradicating any resentment or anger they may feel. Unfortunately, many people instead feel the inclination to challenge a person who is angry—a tendency that often amplifies this emotion (Itzchakov et al., 2017).



Each person, in turn, should share their worries or concerns about the position the other individual proposed—and clarify why this matter feels so important.

Rationale: “So, I think now each of us should articulate what really bothers us about the other alternative. For example, you could discuss what are your main worries if we purchase this equipment”.

Did you know: After people consider why a matter feels so important, their resentment tends to diminish (Huynh et al., 2016).



Each person should then identify up to three arguments they feel have not been raised yet.

Example: “Perhaps now we should articulate three or so other arguments that could be relevant to this decision but have not been raised”.



One person should attempt to summarise the key arguments thus far.

Rationale: When individuals recognise the differences in priorities between themselves and another person, they are more likely to adopt the perspective of this individual (Todd et al., 2010), potentially increasing the likelihood of resolution.

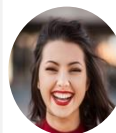
Often, arrange another meeting



Unless one person is willing to concede immediately, the matter should then be deferred to another meeting.

Rationale: If individuals defer their decision, the delay sometimes increases the likelihood these individuals will uncover insights that integrate more considerations (e.g., Dijksterhuis & Nordgren, 2006)

Did you know: The second meeting should perhaps be conducted online. A sense of distance tends to orient individuals towards underlying concepts rather than specific details, often enabling individuals to recognise shared opinions (Sanna et al, 2009).



The aim of this meeting is to uncover a course of action that integrates the conflicting options or grants the individuals an opportunity to test or pilot one of the options.

Example: “I feel our goal now should be to consider whether we can uncover a solution that reconciles our conflicting needs—or enables one of us to test our preference. For example, could we purchase the equipment for 2 months only and test whether this equipment is worthwhile”.