The Mindset Advantage For Leading Change

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Why?

1. Change is a journey that demands specific mindset leadership
2. Leaders need to target the team with the right solution at the right time
3. Staff engagement and wellbeing demands it
4. Business performance demands it

Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic many individuals and organisations have recognised the need for mindset, mental health and resilience support.

Most of this demand was placed at the door of HR and leaders. The field of mindset and mental health support is relatively new and awash with mixed language and solutions.

This paper looks to help to put structure and definition to the ambiguity in the market and help leaders to target the right solutions at the right time during the change curve response. The ‘change curve’ comes from the work of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (On Death and Dying, 1969) and was adapted for organisational and social change. The curve explores the thinking and feeling journey that people go through as a response to change:
When change is imposed or received by people not involved in the design of change, humans will go through this change curve response. Mindset solutions are intended to flatten the curve and accelerate people through it but this only works if the mindset solutions are delivered at the right time along the curve.

This paper explores 6 different types of mindset development and support:

1. Leadership and Team Care
2. Wellness and Wellbeing
3. Resilience
4. Growth Mindset
5. Thriving Under Pressure
6. High Performing Teams Mindset

The paper also looks at the stage before change has occurred.

The anticipation or dread in that moment between the old and the new needs to be managed just as much as the mindset response to the change once it is announced. Leading and managing the unknown transition between past and future is critical in setting the future up for success and for leadership credibility.

Throughout the change process ALL of these mindset solutions are in demand and required by leaders and employees alike. However, what we see is that we need to specifically ‘dial up’ specific mindset support at specific times as the teams are:

- Anticipating Change
- Receiving Change
- Reacting to Change
- Responding to Change
- Driving Change
Let’s look at the Neuroscience of Change

The Change Response

*(Disruption / Letting go of Old Habits/ Early Change Curve Responses)*

When the disruption happens we lose automatic response capability (driven by the loss of and inapplicability of our implicit memory).

In grief this is the comfortable everyday relationship of a loved one. When this happens the feelings and comfort generated by the triggering of that memory are not there, and so it leaves a void. For a change in job it’s the loss of instantly knowing the right response to guide behaviour, and again replacing it with a void.

In these circumstances the brain reverts back to a safe response model, which is to think (use cognition) all the time. This is exhausting and full of awareness, tenseness and discomfort.

As a result we make mistakes, look slightly awkward and don’t give a high performance impression. Reactions of our colleagues in the changed environment are probably negative and this makes us feel even worse. Even our own evaluation of ourselves is full of negatives, so we lose self-esteem. We are much more likely to become highly sensitised and reactive.

This stage specifically requires leaders to care, focus on giving rather than taking and for individuals to take care of their wellbeing and mental health.

Developing the New Behaviour that Change Demands

*(New Habits / Later Change Curve Development)*

As any new relationships and awareness of the new environment become more familiar we start to learn new implicit memories.

The first time we do something that results in a good social outcome (it works) we have a surge of connections driven by dopamine that sets pathways into the new memories. The next time we want that behaviour pattern we have access enabled quickly. It is still imperfect, but it’s better than just using pure cognition.

As each repeat happens the model is subtly refined by a type of neuron that refines synapse connection strength (we know these as climbing fibres). This is termed “supervised learning” as the learning is not done by pure plasticity (unsupervised learning) but by this very precise tailoring of the connections. We improve quite rapidly getting the dual benefits of precision and speed in our social responses and behaviour.

In order to accelerate the return to normality this MUST be managed in conjunction with the GOAL so that unresourceful activities are not developed!

At this stage leaders and individuals must be clear about the goal and the values/behaviours required to drive them forward.
Relationships

(Trust / Teams / Client Relationships)

A relationship is an implicit memory that governs our response system to an individual or groups of individuals. It allows us to communicate faster, more precisely and more effectively with them. This would allow us to react appropriately to their interactions; show concern; respect priorities and give them the comfort of knowing that they are understood (message received).

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is the ability to sense and respond in a way which increases reciprocity, but also steers and influences us to modify the direction that our automatic response would have made. In this way EQ allows us to improve the natural responses to our implicit memories. This means occasionally interrupting our automatic behaviour to steer the interaction in a more productive direction.

This new sense of direction needs to prove worthwhile, but having done so it initiates supervised learning in the other party or parties of the relationship and as a result builds deep respect and becomes a basis for trust. To put it simply, the members of the team have learned together and improved together.

When people are in teams, intentionality towards each other develops. This is particularly important to your understanding of how your fellow team members will interact with each other in response to your behaviour.

This is the basis for a sense of comradeship in which the team enjoys deeper knowledge of its colleagues’ intentions and actions in response to events.

Peak Performance

(Super Confidence / Elite Performance)

Elite performance relies on our ability to combine deep skills from implicit memories, with cognitive focus and interrupts.

For example, a tennis player needs to adjust their game in response to their opponents. But they find this difficult when their responses are so fast and automatic in their normal model.

Nevertheless their coach tells them that they need to adjust their shots from a tactical point of view as they are suffering in the existing model, against this particular opponent.

These interrupts are very disruptive at first. They will initially result in lower performance.

However, over time they become automatic themselves with only the smallest of interrupts. So it’s like changing a gear in a flash and moving to a slightly different mode of operation.

By practicing the shift it becomes easier to effect at will. The tennis player can now adjust to apply the tactics and modify their “natural game”.
Create a mindset of safety, belonging, and acknowledgement with EQ, presence and giving (time, attention, energy, advice) without a demand for reciprocity.

Promotes a culture of learning, experimentation, innovation and continuous improvement.

Building personal and team strength through established self care rituals of work/life balance, family, health, nutrition and exercise.

Using the pressure of change to create upward positive energy and high performance outcomes.

Strategies to stay sane and cope with change, the unknown and the unexpected.

Ambitious team performance standards built on trust, agility and openness.

We’ve developed a ‘Mindset Advantage Index’, where each mindset is scored on a scale of 0-5. Each of the 6 mindsets are given an importance rating for each of the stages of change.

The following sections in this paper outline the individual stages of change and the corresponding Mindset Index which is summarised in the below diagram:
Pre-Change Anticipation

Disciplined Care

“The void created by the failure to communicate is soon filled with poison, drivel and misrepresentations.” C Northcote Parkinson.

Colleagues know it’s coming. Following a new CEO, merger, market disruption or simply the announcement of business results the team knows that change is on its way.

The challenge for leaders is that the specifics of the change haven't been formulated yet and as such they can't necessarily communicate to the troops what the change is or what it means. This leaves the team in the dark.

Minds that are left in the dark go one of two ways: Optimism or fear and a resultant fight or flight response.

The absence of communication can seriously affect productivity, wellbeing and morale and can begin to be conveyed across teams, geographies and externally to clients and consumers. This in turn not only damages existing performance but also damages the future change being planned.

The challenge facing leaders is how to ensure that the team are disciplined and focused on the present strategy execution and operating as a high performing team whilst being empathic and engaging about the ‘unknown’ known of the future change.

The anticipation or dread in that moment between the old and the new needs to be managed just as much as the mindset response to the change once it is announced.

The mindset that the team needs is ‘my business understands me and my anxiety’, ‘everything will be ok’, ‘I am future proof’, ‘the best approach is to focus on the controllable present’, ‘success now is the best preparation for the change coming down the track’.

Leading and managing the unknown transition between past and future is critical in setting the future up for success and for leadership credibility.

Filling the Void

Leaders cannot absolve themselves of filling the void with ‘I can’t tell you, I don’t know myself’ or ‘I’ll tell you as soon as I know myself’. These statements are true when it comes to the specifics of the change but they need to work hard on leading the present and understanding how the unknown future makes the team feel.
The void will be filled with the fear of losing my SCARF.

David Rock, Co-founder & CEO Neuroleadership Institute developed the SCARF model. This essentially is 5 social domains that are either rewarding for us or threatening for us.

**S.C.A.R.F**
- Status
- Certainty
- Autonomy
- Relatedness
- Fairness

The unknown at work puts into jeopardy our SCARF. Essentially what will the future change mean for my status (relative social position in the team), certainty (ability to predict, sequence and routine my interactions), autonomy (the degree to which I have choice and can operate independently), relatedness (how this affects my relationships with other people and things and sense of fairness (the extent to which the change is fair and equitable)). Each of these domains matter to a greater or lesser extent in each of our colleagues and team members.

Leaders need to know their people, empathise with the jeopardy they are experiencing and create safety as it relates to their SCARF. Essentially they need to have emotional intelligence and demonstrate active leadership care.

The best defence is attack and performance. Protecting our SCARF is best served by driving performance and growth. So whilst there is an unknown future, leaders need to provide the focus, discipline, goal setting and motivation for team members to concentrate of the controllable. The known and the present rather than hypothesising about the future. Performance will provide strength in whatever the future holds.

The focus for leaders is Leadership Care as it relates to the future and High Performing Teams as it relates to the present.

Control the feeling, the narrative and the fear about the future and the focus, discipline and goals of the present.

### Disciplined Leadership Care

- **Connection, Care and Empathy** – Increase frequency and consistency of connection with all colleagues and listen to their concerns
- **Understand colleagues’ jeopardy**
- **Pivot conversations to the things people can control**
- **Focus on clear, short term goals**
- **Prioritise deliverables over the short term**
- **Control the narrative, the gossip and speculation with facts**
Stage 1 - Immediate Change Response

Mindset Advantage No. 1 - Leadership and Team Care

*Create a mindset of safety, belonging, and acknowledgement with EQ, presence and giving (time, attention, energy, advice) without a demand for reciprocity*

*‘People don’t care what you know until they know that you care’*

This is especially true in the immediate response to change, whether the change is imposed or designed.

COVID-19 revealed the importance of leaders showing that they cared and were supporting their team and employees. Individuals need to know that their leaders have their back and that they still have whatever they were getting from work e.g. status, certainty, autonomy, relationships, fairness, belonging and security.

With each phone call, Zoom meeting, involvement in team activities, recalled personal story and connection with the leader, the bond between team member and organisation grows.

In the early stages of the ‘change curve’ people are scared. There is little information to make them less scared. It results in classic fight or flight responses of ‘denial’, burying our heads in the sand until it goes away or hyper defensiveness, sceptically challenging everything. Now is not the time to leave anyone isolated or excluded. Leaders must value and practice diversity and inclusion, create safety and belonging and acknowledge the emotions that the team may be feeling.

Leaders don’t always know the answers either so they must lead with care, giving and building trust through intimacy, reliability and selflessness rather than credibility.

Intimacy demands knowing how the change is affecting people’s personal experiences (home, kids, family, social life etc.) and being interested in their world.

Reliability means delivering on promises, on time and being a responsive servant leader. During change, ambiguity and ‘not knowing’ adds to the fear. Not responding to emails, voice messages makes this worse. Respond even if it’s with an ‘I don’t know’. Selflessness means giving (time, energy, attention, resources, development, information, recognition, support, care) rather than taking (immediate performance, task completion, requesting time, energy and resources!).

Leaders need to adopt a giving style to reciprocity. As per the ‘Give and Take’ book by Adam Grant, focus on giving value to others without expectation of receiving or taking of equal value.

On our ‘Mindset Advantage Index’, Stage 1 is all about leadership care, wellness, resilience and of course the support of the team.
Stage 1 & 2 – Immediate and Short term Change Response

Mindset Advantage No. 2 – Wellness and Wellbeing

Building personal and team strength through established self care rituals of work/life balance, family, health, nutrition and exercise.

‘You cannot give what you do not have’

Crucial to our response to change is the need for self care. Change is a journey of trials, challenges and set backs. It requires us to be at our strongest mentally and physically. Leaders need to enable their colleagues to access the necessary physical and mental health support. Whether it is meditation, exercise, connection with friends, walking, work/life balance.

Leaders will need to role model their own expectations e.g. be mindful of email exchanges at night, being judgmental if team members are on a lunch time walk or adding stress to the team in anyway.

Deloitte research of 18,000 Millennials and Generation Z, highlighted that 40% - 50% of them spent most or all of their time in a state of stress. This means that stress is chronic and not just episodic around a deadline or important presentation, but all the time. Change adds to this stress. Leaders need to make sure that the mental health of their team is enabled.

6 areas of Wellbeing management include sleep, breathing, meditation, access to nature, nutrition, exercise / activity, and mindfulness. The key is for the body to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system with Dopamine, Serotonin and Oxytocin and to quash the Cortisol stress hormone stimulated by the sympathetic nervous response to change.

Leadership Care Top Tips

- Connection – Increase frequency and consistency of connection with all colleagues
- Value and practice diversity and inclusion to create safety and belonging
- Team connection – Enable the team to connect/hangout without you
- Care – Go beyond ‘how are you?’
- Be a GIVER – Of time, energy, care, resources, support without demanding reciprocity
- Over index on the time spent talking about the person vs the task in conversations

The focus must be on Wellbeing. Stress is increasingly seen as a legitimate reason to take time off work. Change is difficult to execute if the team are stressed or absent!
Stage 2 – Dealing with Change

Mindset Advantage No. 3 – Resilience

*Strategies to stay sane and cope with change, the unknown and the unexpected.*

The word resilience comes from the word ‘resile’ meaning to ‘jump back’ or the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape. For most of us it means to be able to cope, absorb pressure and setbacks and to be able to bounce back.

Resilience is learned and can be taught. Techniques in sport and military environments can be developed for corporate environments. If these are taught on an ongoing basis they can be useful for both preventing stress in the first instance (Stage 1-2) as well as enable people to be more resourceful as the change journey unfolds.

“*It’s not the lack of resources that causes failure; it’s the lack of resourcefulness*."

Tony Robbins

A huge part of resilience is physical resilience, wellness and wellbeing: being active, healthy, sleeping well. Whilst at work and during the stage of change where we are making mistakes, finding the new world uncomfortable we also need a resilient mindset.

Humans can be prone to catastrophising, being overwhelmed, finding blame and excuses when they are under performing during this stage. Helping team members to focus on solutions, ‘learn not lose’, manage perspective control the controllables.

Leadership Wellbeing and Wellness Top Tips

- Create a Wellness Action Plan
- Implement flexible working plans
- Role model your expectations
- Measure wellbeing and wellness as much as you measure revenue and share prices!
- Create TEAM belonging activities (‘cook along’, workout sessions, walking meetings)

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*Fear of failure, rejection and judgment leads to losing perspective, giving up and finding blame. Resilience provides the ground work for future growth.*
The brain is a little like a head torch. What your brain sees is determined by what you focus on. Focus on the negative and that is what it ‘sees’ and it’s hard to access the positive. Focus on what can’t be done and it’s difficult to ‘see’ what can be done.

Leaders need to control the narrative and the focus of the team in order to remain positive and yet at the same time, face the reality of the change. This is often known as the Stockdale Paradox, named after Admiral James Stockdale.

Stockdale was a prisoner of war in Vietnam for seven-and-a-half years. Stockdale survived whilst those around him perished. When asked how he survived whilst others didn't, Stockdale answered: “I never lost faith in the end of the story. I never doubted not only that I would get out, but also that I would prevail in the end and turn the experience into the defining event of my life, which, in retrospect, I would not trade.”

When asked about those that did not survive the ordeal and the personal characteristics of prisoners who did not make it out of the camps. “The optimists,” he replied. “Oh, they were the ones who said, ‘We're going to be out by Christmas.’ And Christmas would come, and Christmas would go. Then they’d say, ‘We’re going to be out by Easter.’ And Easter would come, and Easter would go. And then Thanksgiving, and then it would be Christmas again. And they died of a broken heart.

This is a very important lesson. “You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end—which you can never afford to lose—with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.”

Leadership Resilience Top Tips

- Provide narrow focus goals
- Practice re-framing situation
- Develop a ‘good vibe tribe’ of colleagues to maintain spirits and connectedness
- Manage the narrative, gossip and inputs of information
- Control the controllable vs. focussing on your concerns
- Balance the belief and hope of the team with the necessary action required to deal with the reality of the change

“To fight for change tomorrow we need to build resilience today”

Sheryl Sandberg
Stage 2-3. Building New Responses

Mindset Advantage No. 4 - Growth Mindset

Promotes a culture of learning, experimentation, innovation and continuous improvement.

As individuals and teams get past the initial shock of change and beyond the resilient ‘coping’ phase we look to them to build new responses, adopt new behaviours, take on ‘ways of working’, innovate and create new value and better results. This demands a fundamental belief in a growth mindset.

For years we have been told that change projects fail because of low human adoption and, in part, that’s very true. Recent discoveries, (largely based on the work of Stanford professor Carol Dweck) have found that having a Growth Mindset is key to transformation, engagement and innovation.

A Growth Mindset is based on a belief that our core qualities can be nurtured, developed and improved upon and that our performance does not measure our future potential.

Dweck also discovered the opposing mindset, which she has labelled as Fixed. A Fixed Mindset is based on a belief that our core qualities are pre-determined and that our performance is the best measure of our potential.

Both of these mindsets shine a light on how our beliefs about our capabilities exert tremendous influence on how we learn and how we adapt to organisational transformation.

From a brain perspective, our mindset impacts the cognitive mechanics which shape how we think and deal with events.

So when we look at 6 key factors that are ever present in times of change, the decision making criteria for someone who has a Growth Mindset is in stark contrast to someone who has a more Fixed Mindset bias.

These 6 factors are as follows:

- Challenges
- Obstacles
- Effort
- Skill
- Feedback
- Success of others

Someone who has adopted a Growth Mindset or is more orientated towards that Growth Mindset and their primary cognitive reasoning is to ‘learn and develop’, that blood sweat and tears, coupled with grit and perseverance, will get them to the answer and increased performance.

They regularly venture into what we like to call the ‘dynamic zone’ to feel the fear and experience the unknown.

Fixed Mindset individuals however, have a bias towards ‘protection’. “Why risk losing what I have by taking unnecessary risk and potentially looking bad” good enough will often do.

This thinking throws up huge challenges to industry and commerce, especially in times of change, because we need people who are ‘comfortable with the uncomfortable’, enjoy challenge, seek feedback and are OK with leaving the relative safety of the comfort zone.
Building a Growth Mindset culture can be achieved through targeting the adoption of winning behaviours that support this movement. Primarily, our dialogue is an inward and outward expression of our beliefs. Training to put in a ‘stop’ before we speak and filter our prose through a Growth/Fixed filter, is one of the ways we can, over time, learn to converse with others in a more growth orientated way.

Malcolm Gladwell, in his book ‘The Tipping Point’, talks about how cultures shift and tip. He talks about “continuous examples of contagious behaviour”, being a catalyst for change. Essentially this is what is needed – ‘contagious growth orientated dialogue’.

For a Growth Mindset culture to flourish, the leadership and environment must support personal development, risk taking and challenging the status quo, inspiring and motivating others to innovate without fear at work. Fear of failure is one of the largest contributors to a Fixed Mindset culture.

Lastly, encouraging staff to leave the comfort zone stimulates inward reward, promoting a higher self concept and identity. This reduces limiting self beliefs and the connections to a protection mentality.

Leadership Growth Mindset Top Tips

▪ Focus on dialogue (internal and external) that builds a change and winning identity
▪ Promote a Win, Learn Change continuous learning and improvement culture
▪ Inspire and Motivate others to innovate without fear
▪ Encourage risk taking and comfort zone busting
▪ Focus on progress more than focus on results
▪ Invest in developing others
▪ Celebrate quick wins, share these wins and make them visible to increase collective belief

“I never lose. I either win or I learn”
Nelson Mandela
Stage 3-4 Driving the future
Mindset Advantage No. 5 - Thriving Under Pressure

*Using the pressure of change to create upward positive energy and high performance outcomes.*

Peak Performance Mindset and Mental Toughness is about utilising the pressure of the change or situation to perform even better than had there been no pressure. We see in life, sport and business that some people are able to thrive under pressure and, rather than need wellbeing or resilience programmes, are being more innovative, creative, energised and focussed under the changing context.

In his pioneering work Dr Cory Middleton explored the characteristics of these peak performers to understand what sets them apart and how they develop their mental fortitude alongside their technical expertise, bring mind and skill together to perform at their best when it mattered most.

His study identified 12 distinct and critical characteristics. All measurable. All developable. All that make a difference during change now and for future change. In essence, if you develop these 12 indicators you will perform better now during whatever change you’re experiencing as well as future proof yourself for change that is coming down the line! In essence ‘fit for the moment’ and ‘being fit for the many and varied moments’.

*Developed by Dr Cory Middleton the Fortius-Mindset Method™ explains the energy you bring to a situation (Self belief and Motivation) and the energy you have during change (Focus and Coping)*

Imagine you have a forthcoming event or you are in a change transformation that is spread over 12 months. How do you feel? What do you believe? Critical to your performance is your self belief, belief that you can deliver, that you can thrive, that you have more potential to grow, develop and gain. These beliefs energise you. Critical also are your motive sources. Are you motivated by the value of what you are doing? Its purpose or meaning? Are you motivated by the result (if so, that may cause excess stress) or by the desire to master your craft and the joy that development of expertise brings?

If you lack belief or are scared by the ignorance of a situation and the pressure of the need for results then this may have a detrimental impact on performance, ironically when you need it most.
Imagine you are at or continually at a key moment in your business performance, maybe a presentation, pitch, or execution of an operational change. In that moment of the utmost pressure and when you face setbacks, challenges and even failure, can you use that to perform even better?

The ability to stay focused and not be distracted by setbacks, ambiguity or pressure enables the individual to deliver outstanding performance levels whilst all of those people around them flounder.

Critical to this focus is also the requirement to learn quickly and find the value of learning to be stress reducing in itself, so both beneficial in that it provides information but also the experience (emotional or psychological) of the failure is calmer and more productive. Peak performers in these circumstances access a level of inner strength, perseverance and positivity that makes them stand out at the top of mountains or top of their field.

Leaders who operate in this way are like magnets to those who need inspiration, optimism or support.

“I don’t fold under pressure, great athletes perform better under pressure, so put pressure on me.” Floyd Mayweather

Leadership Thriving Under Pressure Top Tips

- Tell stories of journeys and not just destinations
- Inspire motivation with purposeful goals, personal bests and high performance standards
- Create quick wins and share success stories
- Provide reward and recognition to maintain belief and momentum
- Over communicate on new initiatives to build optimism
- Invest in mental toughness development
- Practice adaptation in advance
- Build ‘skills for the future’ and future proof your people
- Focus on ‘mastery’ of the task over the result itself
Stage 4 – High Performance Execution and Productivity

Mindset Advantage No. 6 – High Performing Teams

*Ambitious team performance standards built on trust, agility and openness.*

The premise of any vision and strategy is that it creates value and would outperform the ‘old way’ of working, product, market or business. This demands teams that execute at a peak performing level. It demands agile adaptation to the market, competition and innovation.

The mindset shift is towards interdependence, team work, collaboration, peak performance standards, stretch goals, driving for results, discipline and accountability.

Building on the ‘journey’ of change and the growth in mental toughness, self belief and resilience, teams drive further performance through being open to new grade ‘A’ talent, marginal gains of innovation and culture. This is founded on deep trust in self and deep trust in each other.

Trust is an implicit memory. It is a feeling of predictability and an understanding of intentionality. This stems from trust in alignment of goals, trust in each and every team member’s contribution, value and experience to those goals, trust in each other’s motives and motivation or commitment, trust in their sense of ownership and accountability and a trust in each other’s openness, candour and feedback. Again, leaders must value and practice diversity and inclusion of all team members. Each brain has ideas and innovative suggestions. They all need to have access and equity in the high performing team culture.

High performing teams leave clues. They have attitudes and mindsets around being bold and ambitious in their goal setting. They have mindsets around the rigour with which they challenge each other and discuss the execution of strategy. They have a mindset around failure being an accelerator of learning and progress.

Feedback is the food of champions and is delivered with radical candour. At the same time it is evident that they coordinate and collaborate for ‘total team’ success over individual success. They have each other’s backs, support each other and also the courage to step down or away if individual performance drops below the standard.

Finally they are in a constant state of reinvention with top talent and HiPO’s joining the team and being developed into the peak performers rather than simply maintaining existing peak performers.

Interestingly, research by the Corporate Leadership Council studied more than 20,000 HIPO employees at more than 100 organisations worldwide, revealing that just 30% of high performers are high potentials and 63% of organisations don’t communicate HIPO status to their high-potential employees, and 95% of organisations fail to follow through with HIPO development plans.

This stage of change cannot be bought. It is developed. The previous 3 stages of change are an investment into this stage. The journey of change and the togetherness in that journey is what enables this high performing team to happen.

As such, leaders need to understand how to get to this point rather than start at this point. Trust the process and be patient.
“It’s amazing what you can achieve if you do not care who takes the credit” – Harry S Truman

Leadership High Performing Teams Top Tips

- Build the drivers of TRUST between team players – Credibility, Reliability, Intimacy, Selflessness
- Drive for results and set stretch goals
- Build in new high performance standards
- Recruit new ‘A’ players with potential and add them to the performance of existing players
- Create a no blame and high accountability culture
- Ensure there are high levels of radical candour, openness and honesty
- Drive continuous improvement with marginal gains
Future Proof the Mindsets for your Next Challenge

Mental strength today often relies on successful journeys through change in the past. Some teams have positive past references, some negative and some teams and individuals don’t yet have any anchors. It often shows up in language e.g.

“I am able to thrive in these circumstances because when I was at .... (insert company name/ family moment), we went through.... (insert challenge or change) and I managed to.... (insert successful outcome or experience)”.

If we change the sentence to ‘I am not able to thrive because.......and amend the last parentheses to (insert negative outcome or experience) we find someone who has unresourceful past references that are impacting them now.

The final scenario is “I don’t know if I can thrive in these circumstances because I have never gone through anything like this before”.

Leaders would be well served to tell stories of the journeys their team and organisation has gone through, previous changes they have been through, survived and thrived. The ongoing folklore builds institutional mindsets for not only thriving during change but the demand to ‘bring it on’, innovate and instigate and be leaders of change rather than just responding to change.

If we build Mindset Advantages and mental toughness today it will pay back in all future change agendas as well as helping teams to perform better now.

This development needs to start with leaders.

Leaders with mental strength are seen to create, enjoy and perform better during change and can create an atmosphere and culture of change, continuous improvement, adaptation and growth.

Leaders without mental strength resist situations where that is revealed. As such they create an atmosphere or culture of fear, performance rather than learning, current results rather than future growth, status quo rather than status update.

As Joseph Campbell outlined in the 8 steps of a hero’s journey from ‘The Call’ to ‘The Return’ there is inherent growth in self awareness and contribution. They don’t simply ‘resile’ and bounce back to their original shape but instead they contribute more and transform.

Mindset Advantages ensure that they take up the journey of change, grow from the change and come out at the other side of change with new found wisdom and strength.