

# Leadership in Difficult Times



I have the privilege to work with many large organisations within South Africa in my capacity as a Life and Business Coach. It is a very rewarding profession as we are provided a platform to make a significant positive impact on people's lives through helping them understand themselves and their business and supporting them to grow from strength to strength.

I have the opportunity to engage with staff at all levels and the one constant challenge we face currently is correcting and counteracting negative mindsets due to poor Leadership. There is an old saying that goes something along the lines of "If money walks out the front door, love walks out the back". We are experiencing a very similar phenomenon in the workplace, only we deal with "If money walks out the front door, support and motivation walks out the back". When times are tough in the workplace instead of providing our staff more support and encouragement, we start hammering them with public insults, threats, humiliation, etc. All this to detrimental effect.

In recent research that I have done into the mindsets of people, I came across a TedX video of Dr. Alia Crum where she talks about the impact of mindset. In her talk she makes reference to 4 studies that was conducted to test the impact of mindset on an individual. In the one study done by Dr. Benedetti half the patients who have undergone surgery had their morphine administered through a machine and drip, whilst the other half had their morphine administered by the doctor through an injection into the drip. The difference that this simple 2 second action had was that the half who had the doctor administer the morphine experienced less pain and discomfort than the half that had the morphine administered via a machine and drip. This should get you thinking.

In another study conducted, Dr. Crum and her team interviewed 84 hotel housekeepers. They were asked if they exercise regularly. Two thirds said they do not exercise regularly. Of the two thirds, one third said they get zero exercise. All the staff was measured and weighed to determine their current health status. They have then done a 15-minute presentation to half the group, pointing out the amount of exercise they were getting whilst doing their job. When they returned 4 weeks later to do a health assessment again, the half that attended the presentation showed a drop in weight, blood pressure, body fat and even reported liking their jobs more.

In a third experiment, the exact same milkshake showed different result in the body depending weather it was said to be a health shake, or a sugar loaded shake.

In the fourth experiment they had two groups, the one group was shown a video clip of how bad stress is for you and the other group was shown benefits of stress. Opposing results was recorded: the group that was told stress is bad for you showed no health improvement and the group that was told stress is good for you showed improvement in both health and performance.

All these experiments are clear indications that what we perceive, or belief has a direct impact on the human being in totality. The smallest of actions can have a big impact. A 2 second injection or a 15min presentation changed people's mindset and ultimately changed people's being.

If we take this back to the working environment where business is struggling and slow. What is the effect of the daily or weekly meetings on your staff? What is the effect of the belittling, public insults, threats, and humiliation on the mindset of your staff? From what I have witnessed first-hand the results include reduced motivation, reduced drive, reduced sales, top performing staff resigning, lack of respect for superiors, and more.

If we should turn those meetings around and we acknowledge our employees for their skill, effort, passion, drive, knowledge, and abilities what would the result be?

I have personally seen the effects that acknowledgement has on staff. Staff that was reluctant to perform their own duties turned around and have gone above and beyond their duties when they were acknowledged and had the right mindset. A company that was 6 months from closing their doors, turned around to produce in excess of R3 million profit in year one, and in excess of R6 million profit in the year two.

I challenge the Leaders of businesses that are struggling: change your own and your staff's mindset. Give recognition, give praise, give encouragement. What do you have to lose?

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Reference:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tqq66zwa7g>

