

The World needs less Super Heroes and more authentic leaders

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Waking up in a cold sweat

Leaders, admit it, we've all done it. We've all found ourselves waking up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat, wondering when someone is going to realise that we don't know what we're doing.

After all, we are meant to be the experts, the leaders, those who know the direction in which we should be going.

And yet we find thoughts of inadequacy, insecurity, and to be honest, blatant fear keeping us awake at night.

Sometimes the burden of responsibility can be so great that it just burns into us and leaves us feeling overwhelmed and confused.

Most of the time, of course, it's ok. It's ok because we manage to muster enough courage and strength to get back up off the floor, or the bed, and walk back into the workplace.

Because we are meant to be courageous and strong – right? We are meant to be those who know where we are going and are really secure in ourselves and able to articulate clearly the direction of travel and able to take other people with us on the journey. Aren't we?

We are the Super Heroes who are going to save the day!





Let's stop kidding ourselves

Isn't it time though that we started taking off these Super Hero masks and started becoming the people we really, truly, authentically are.

You see the trouble is that we think that being a Super Hero is brave and courageous and the way we ought to act. It's the way to succeed and to be successful. It's what people need from their leaders. Its how we've seen others lead.

But actually it just displays our weakness and inadequacy in dealing with and exposing our true humanity which is utterly flawed and yet outstandingly beautiful.

You see as leaders we want others to follow us, we want to be respected, we want to bring out the best in people and to create an environment in which they and we can succeed, blossom and excel.

However, whilst we continue our Super Hero act, we just create an environment of blame, mistrust, power plays and threats. Every time we show our strength, others back off, and every time we try and cover up our weaknesses others opinion of us diminishes. The more capable you are, the more likely that you will suffer from this dis-ease.

The better way

The problem is that the solution actually sounds counter-intuitive and weak. If I said that the solution was to ask your people for help because you don't know what the solution is, you would probably run a million miles.

But the truth is that the very vulnerability that is required is actually bravery not weakness

And the act of being vulnerable – of asking for help – is what your team have been waiting for you to do.

You see, they see your weakness much more keenly than you do. They know what you are good at and what you are faking.

And, remarkably they want you to succeed and be the best that you can be as well.



Let's start asking for some help

So here are some very simple steps that you can take to stop being a Super Hero Leader and start being yourself.

- Find someone close to you, who you trust, who will be honest and truthful with you about your weaknesses
- Choose a topic that you really don't know that answer to and that has been troubling your team.
 - a. Bring your team together and ask for their help to solve the problem.

- Try to really listen to their creativity and ideas.
- c. Praise the great ideas and choose together to act on them
- d. Make this a regular way of working
- 3. Choose one of the weaknesses that your close friend has revealed to you and that was a blind spot. Talk openly with your team about it. Don't be surprised if they go "Yeah, we knew that, thank goodness you now know it maybe we can make some progress". Laugh about that!

Results

The results I experienced and the results I have seen in Senior Teams have included

- Increased trust
- Increased credibility for the leader
- Increased creativity in the team
- Retter ideas
- Improved business outcomes

Give it a try