**There’s not leadership without Integrity**

***“The Supreme quality for leadership is unquestionable integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office”***

***Dwight D. Eisenhower***

**There is currently a crisis of leadership.** Responding to the results of Edelman’s Trust Barometer, [Grant Clelland](https://www.edelman.co.uk/magazine/author/grant-clelland), Senior Director, Edelman, states “the UK is in an unprecedented grip of a crisis of trust in its core institutions. The confidence of Britons in their leaders “to do the right thing” has collapsed – and from an already low level”. In its 2016 [global CEO survey,](http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/ceo-survey/2016/landing-page/pwc-19th-annual-global-ceo-survey.pdf) PwC reported that 55% of CEOs think that a lack of trust is a threat to their organisation’s growth.

The question is, what are these CEOs doing to generate a trust-based culture?

What we have seen since 2016 is a rise in trust erosion within corporate cultures and their leaders due to factors such as senior executive pay, fears over immigration and automation. Add to this are growing stories of corporate leaders who either participate in, or who turn a blind eye to complaints of sexual harassment - Oxfam, Ted Baker and Mircosoft amongst others.

As stated by [Paul J. Zak](https://hbr.org/search?term=paul%20j.%20zak&search_type=search-all), founding director of the Center for Neuroeconomics Studies and a professor of economics, psychology, and management at Claremont Graduate University, building a culture of trust is what makes a meaningful difference. Employees in high-trust organizations are more productive, have more energy at work, collaborate better with their colleagues, and stay with their employers longer than people working at low-trust companies.

The problem is that trust is generated by leaders who are authentic and open about their weaknesses as well as their strengths. Trust is rewarded to those leaders who challenge bias thinking and corporate practices that lead to, or cover up inappropriate behaviours. And yet rather than promote speak-up cultures, too many corporate leaders create and reward – wittingly or otherwise – what I call ‘Zombie Leadership’. Zombie leaders:

1. Are influenced by dead ideas on what motivates employees
2. Hire for diversity but have a real preference for sameness
3. Have zero-limited insight of how outsiders experience work
4. Put pressure on diverse colleagues to conform to Zombie norms
5. Turn a blind eye to, or collude with behaviours that don’t align to stated values

Zombie leadership results in a decline in employee motivation, engagement and performance. Feeling of dis-empowerment from diversity colleagues together with the need to cover key aspects of who they are for fear of being seen as different and therefore, not one of the team, grow. Innovation and creativity decline.

Our reach has shown that without trust and openness integrity cannot be present. In our new report *Inclusive leadership by Design – The 6 Traits of Inclusive Change Makers* we set out the six key traits of inclusive leaders. Here I want to focus on the trait of Integrity.

We have found that inclusive leaders who demonstrate integrity do so in a number of ways. Firstly, integrity is underpinned by two key features:

* **Humility:** Inclusive leaders let go of their protective shields by sharing their vulnerability with their followers. Rather than seeing emotional connection as a weakness, the inclusive leader views emotional sharing as a source of strength; something to be nurtured and promoted in order to form strong team bonds.
* **Trust building:** As stressed by Paul Santagta, Head of Industry at Google, ‘there’s no team without trust’. Our research positions trust as a fundamental element of inclusive leadership. Without trust the relationship between the leader and team members simply breaks downs. Trust building aligns to humility, as leaders who are authentic through vulnerability, rank higher on trust than others.

From our research, here are 5 things that inclusive leaders do to promotes integrity:

1. **They share their vulnerability by admitting mistakes and personal limitations**: Being an inclusive leader requires individuals to simply let go of the protective body armour that they carry around daily. Inclusive leadership demand leaders to be open about their personal limitations as well as their key strengths.
2. **They encourage alterative perspectives and are open to changing their viewpoints**: Inclusive leaders build trust amongst diverse colleagues by challenging the dynamics of Groupthink and by promoting the merits of ‘thoughtful dissent’. They value diverse perspective as a source of business innovation and creativity, as a way of tapping into the needs to diverse customers.
3. **They don’t get hung up on hierarchy:** Inclusive leaders don’t get fixated on grading structures, positions within organisations and fancy job titles. They navigate the organisational hierarchy respectfully and seek to reach out and build relations with colleagues from all part of the organisation.
4. **They act in the wider interests of the organisation by aligning their everyday behaviours to organisational values:** Many organisational leaders, unfortunately, are driven by personal ambition. For many, the cultures in which they operate in promotes self-interested behaviours as these are aligned to historical reward structures. At their extreme self-interested behaviours move towards toxic leadership such as openly dis-respecting others and under-mining colleagues in front of others. Inclusive leaders see collaboration as central to the success of their organisation and they themselves more away from toxic leadership by aligning their everyday behaviours – especially under times of stress – to the principles of inclusive working.
5. **They speak up loudly when things are not fair:** Leaders who work within the principles of inclusivity use their power and privilege to role model inclusion at work by promoting a speak up culture that challenges bias and inappropriate behaviours. For them calling out bias and bad behaviours is a non-negotiable; it a sign of a shift from zombie leadership to inclusive leadership.

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