4 December 2018

Let’s talk about Heart-led leadership

This rescued speech poem draws on the words of Simon Moutter, Chief Executive of Spark NZ, spoken during his 2018 Reeves lecture. His words tell an inspiring story of heart-led leadership which he has embraced and evolved over recent years. These ideas resonate closely with the work of Adventurous Conversations. If you want more heart in your organisation contact us today.

A heart-led approach to business

Days of businesses measuring themselves only by the numbers are behind us
Awakened, responsive leadership is needed more than ever
Getting the best out of our people is critical
Requires more than a rational mind-led approach
Lead with our hearts
Encourage people to move towards each other

Begin by uniting our people behind a common purpose
Setting a long-term direction
Including everyone
Demanding respect
Awakened leaders respond with a heart-led as well as mind-led approach
As much emphasis on values and behaviours as on systems and processes
Steer their organisations toward a higher purpose.

People want to be highly engaged in meaningful work
A clear sense of purpose
Ask tough questions
Demanding that we lead with our hearts
Refuse to accept a dichotomy between businesses who make money and businesses who do good.
Do both of those things

Being responsive

1 Drawn from narrative therapy approaches, rescued speech poems are a selection of evocative or meaningful words and phrases taken verbatim from stories people tell. They are then re-presented in poetic form and offered back as a testimony to the story told.
Adapting your leadership approach accordingly
Maintaining authenticity, listening deeply and getting things done
Real emphasis on values and behaviours
Think deeply about creating an inclusive culture for our people

Inclusivity is about how people are made to feel in their workplace
Feel they can bring their whole self to work every day
Involves taking a heart-led as well as mind-led approach

Drew together people from across the business to re-look at our company purpose and values
Empowered our people to rewrite them
Our people took over
Groups formed
We looked closely at our language
Swearing and aggressive language were unacceptable
Stopped always using the All Blacks as the go-to example of a successful team
Dropped the war analogies
Ended up with something far more meaningful as a result

Embracing Te Reo Māori
Brought a whole new level of meaning
Far more heart to our company purpose and values
Hits them at a deeper level and speaks more to their hearts

We should strive to be a truly diverse organisation
It’s simply the right thing to do
It is about fairness and respect for our people
Encouraging New Zealanders to move towards each other

Diversity and inclusion
Makes things better
Better for all of us
Gives us all the space to be ourselves and respectfully allow others to be themselves
Diversity is hard
Differing view-points challenge
Not comfortable
Almost always produces a better result in the end
Enriching.

Accept unconscious biases at play.
A platform for difficult conversations to be had in a respectful way
For every voice to be heard

When you lead with your heart conflict can be harnessed for good
You don’t just hear opposition
You hear the anxiety or frustration behind that opposition.
Don’t look to silence people
Look to create ways for them to express their views constructively and respectfully because they know they will be genuinely heard.
Look to find a way through it together by harnessing the different view-points
To create a stronger more open and more engaged productive work-place

Caused us to completely rethink what leadership means
Role of leaders is very different
Redefine it as your contribution to the business and the mastery of your craft as a leader

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Still set clear strategies and execute well  
Don’t tell people what to do.  
Squads decide for themselves and get on and do things  
Role-modelling is the most powerful force  
Be authentic  
Say it how it is  
Transparency exposes talent  

Lead with our hearts  
Encourage people to move towards each other

References


Adventurous Conversations Ltd work with organisations to develop values driven, people centred, relational and collaborative culture and relationships. Call, email, or book a no obligation 30-minute introductory consultation if you want to turn the tide towards more relational organisational culture and approaches.