

A woman with long dark hair is seen in profile, sitting at a desk and working on a laptop. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from a large window behind her, creating a soft glow. On the desk, there is a white coffee cup on a saucer and a pair of glasses. The overall mood is quiet and focused.

Part 5:
LEADING THROUGH
THE NEXT CHAPTER

Reflecting, Reimagining,
Relaunching

CLARITY^{VP}

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Reflect

As we move through this period of transition and face the next step on the journey to recovery, it is wise to stop, take stock and reflect on what has changed for us as leaders during this time.

Many of us will have experienced extremely difficult situations, and we have had to draw deep on our personal resources to get us through these challenges. We've come face to face with our resilience, and we've learned a lot about our inner strength. We've had to make tough business decisions, and follow through on them, and we have tackled our fears head-on. We've also had to reach out and seek counsel from others. There's no doubt, we have all found it hard to get through some days lately.

But we should also take heart from our actions, and our learnings, during this time. We have confronted huge adversity, we have dealt with it – and we will continue to do so until we come out the other side. We've gained perspective on this pandemic and assessed its impact on us. Most importantly, we have come to recognise that some of our previous ways of working no longer deliver on all fronts. In some instances, we might even question what we were delivering in the first place.

Slowing down or reflecting, mentally as well as physically, allows us to see things through a broader lens. It quietens the noise that we have grown so accustomed to – the frantic pace of life, endless commuting, long hours in the office – and it lets us see the toll this has taken on each of us. We might wonder: 'What is the trade-off, and is it worth it?'

In reconnecting with our families, with our home and with the world around us, we have been forced to stop and reconsider. For many of us, we might now be asking: 'Is there a better way for me and for my team to stay motivated, contribute, play to our strengths and be at our best?' Interesting questions indeed!

Reimagine

As leaders, we need to try to address each of these questions individually. And the answers we find might compel us to consider new ways to lead ourselves through this next phase.

In these situations, it's always a good idea to start with yourself and then build out to the people who can support you. As my old reliable Robin Sharma asserts, genius is less about genetics but more about:

- Rituals and routines
- Daily habits
- People around you
- Your working environment

These four areas provide a useful starting point in helping you to examine and reimagine how you and your business might look in the months ahead.

Ritual and routines

- Have you introduced any new rituals or routines that are helping you through this pandemic?
- Can you maintain them as you move forward, to benefit your health and reduce stress?
- Are there any other routines you can adopt to help you through the weeks ahead?

Daily habits

- Have you moved away from 'always-on' habits? Are you checking emails and newsfeeds less often?
- Can you impose new boundaries on your work practices that allow you to focus on key priorities and perform at an even higher level?
- Can you use this transition period as an opportunity to let things go, to delegate more and move up the value chain in your organisation?

People around you

- In terms of your ecosystem, have you surrounded yourself with people who can support you and your team through this transitional phase?

- Have you taken the opportunity to detach yourself from negative or unhelpful relationships and conversations?
- Can you connect with people who give you energy right now, not those who drain it?

Your working environment

- Has working remotely given you space and distance to really embrace your role?
- Have you created a comfortable environment at home that ensures you can work and contribute at your best?
- Will continued flexible working arrangements give you a more effective platform to reconnect with your team in the office while also providing you with space at home to strategise, plan and think like a leader?

Making just one or two small changes in each of these four areas can have a profound impact on you and on the way you lead. These simple tweaks can help to create the time, space and clarity you need to decide the next move for you, your team and your business.

Relaunch

Once you've had the opportunity to reflect and reimagine a new way forward, your thoughts are likely to turn towards relaunching your business. And while this might only apply to certain aspects of your operation rather than the totality, the following considerations should offer some practical food for thought:

Clients

- Just as your own habits and perspectives have changed, so too have your clients'. Their outlook may have shifted, and the way they purchase and consume may no longer be the same.

Delivery channels

- The virtual world and the physical world have struck a new balance. Having a digital presence and an online offering will be an advantage – and in many cases, a necessity.

Products and services

- You may need to consider a new value proposition in order to compete and stay relevant. Start by looking at what new problems your clients are trying to solve and see where you can help them.

Price point

- The 'new normal' might increase your competition and drive down your price point. Could the new products and services you've identified bridge this gap, or even enhance your profits?

Skills and competence

- Have changes in demand highlighted any gaps or oversupply in your team's current skill set? A retraining programme might be necessary, or your new value proposition might harness an existing team skill that has been underutilised to date.

Gaining clarity on these areas now will really help to put a strong shape on your relaunch plans. Having a better sense of what good looks like for you, leading yourself differently and ensuring that you and your team's strengths are being maximised are all invaluable as you move forward during this transition period. And, of course, leading yourself before you try to lead others is the key here.

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