

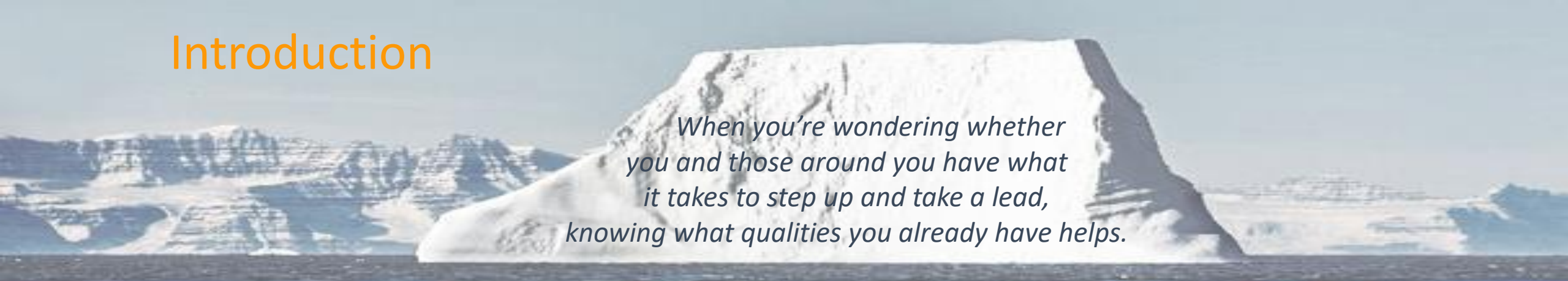


Insight Paper: Your Innate Leadership Qualities

THE MINDSET **DIFFERENCE**

Better discussions. New answers. Extraordinary results

Introduction



When you're wondering whether you and those around you have what it takes to step up and take a lead, knowing what qualities you already have helps.

Two states of mind we can all access

When you're in flow¹ the challenges you face don't feel problematic. Your intuition and capacity to collaborate effortlessly helps you work out what needs to be done.

But when you get caught up in a pressurised or worrying experience, it feels quite different. It becomes difficult to see the wood for the trees, hard to work out what's really going on and be clear on the options for the best way forward.

Everyone moves between these two states of mind.

However, the most successful spend more time in 'flow'. The challenge is to help a larger number of leaders and teams do the same, because in a VUCA context (a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous business environment) too many are getting caught up in unhelpful experiences. They're feeling pressure and don't know how to break out of it.

We all move in and out of a state of flow: it's when we're so involved in an activity it feels easy.

Yet in a more complex business environment being in 'flow' is a challenge that can seem difficult to overcome...until our innate qualities are rediscovered.

Above and below the surface

When you're wondering about your own and others' ability to take a lead, knowing what leadership qualities already exist below the surface helps. We all have these, even if their hidden from view much of the time.

When we don't look beneath the surface, we become embroiled in what's above it. That which is visible - our own and others' behaviour – occupies much of our thinking time.

So much so it can be difficult to see what's really happening.

This Insight Paper explores what's above the surface first before looking at rediscovering what's hidden and underneath.

Two Perspectives on Similar Problems

What we've noticed

In our work with hundreds of leaders and their teams we help programme participants look at situations with fresh eyes, as if for the first time. When we do two patterns emerge in what they observe. First, what they notice in themselves and others when they can see the wood for the trees and look at problematic situations dispassionately. Second, what gets observed when similar problems are approached from a clear mindset, one where people are in flow and performing well.

The table below summarises these patterns. Take a look at each half and see which happens in your context and which appeals to you.

What leaders notice in themselves and others in retrospect when they approach problematic situations with a busy mind:		What leaders notice in themselves and others when they face similar problems from a clear mind:	
People blaming circumstances or others for how they feel and perform. Judgements and frustrations show up	Blame	Collaboration	People taking ownership of their feelings and using differences to enable win-win solutions rather than division
People feeling anxious about the future and their capacity to do a good job	Worry	Freedom	People feeling unburdened by future concerns and enhancing their chances of performing well in the present
People under pressure, feeling overwhelmed with little time to think because of too many priorities	Pressure	Focus	People feeling in control of delivering priorities well and in less time compared to doing too many things at once
People stuck in one way of doing things that inhibits their ability to see new paths	Set ways	Flexible ways	People seeing problems from different perspectives and finding new answers that work
People feeling reluctant to speak up and tell it like it is for fear of being the bearer of bad news or a troublemaker	Reluctance	Openness	People feeling safe enough to open up and say what needs to be said so that decisions are taken knowing the whole story
People needing others to tell them what to do rather than trust their own ingenuity	Helplessness	Resourcefulness	People taking the initiative and insightfully creating their own solutions to problems
People longing for a simpler life and wondering whether to stay or go	Drifting	Purpose	People enjoying life at work and having more reasons to stay than leave

The Surprising Qualities Available When You're in Flow

Six innate qualities

With a clear mind, you feel in flow, or 'in the zone' as many athletes might say. It's from this state your innate qualities emerge. Though they're always with you, they're not always visible. Busy mindsets and unhelpful emotions frequently keep them well hidden.

The six qualities are:

1. Curiosity:

Asking questions to get to the root of what people think and how they're feeling so as to better explain how they're behaving and performing.

2. Listening:

Hearing what someone has to say fully, not just what you want them to say.

3. Empathising:

Seeing the situation from others' point of view, even when you disagree.

4. Suspending judgement:

Holding multiple perspectives in your head at any one time and not rushing to judge or dismiss any one of them too swiftly.

5. Accessing insights:

Seeing connections between the information that's been gathered and allowing new possibilities to emerge.

6. Deciding:

Helping people commit to a course of action because of the 5 other qualities above.

Everyone has these qualities.
They're part of being human.

Contrary to popular belief accessing them doesn't depend on lengthy skills training and the regular use of tools, techniques or methods. Nor does it require long sessions on a couch talking to a coach or therapist who's there to fix your personality!

You don't need fixing, you already have what you need - except for the thinking you do that stops your innate qualities being available to you when you need them.



Innate Qualities - The Fast Track to Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence is also innate

Emotional Intelligence or EQ became widely known following the publication in 1995 of Daniel Goleman's book *Emotional Intelligence – Why it can matter more than IQ*. Our own experience with leaders and senior teams concurs with the strong body of evidence that suggests leaders with EQ perform much better than those without it.

The four key concepts in EQ are:

Self-Awareness - understanding your emotions.

Self-Management - staying calm and being able to adapt.

Social Awareness - empathising.

Relationship Management - handling conflicts and teamwork.

In the past IQ was considered to be the main predictor of someone's capacity for leadership. As EQ (and similar models of what effective leadership behaviour consists of) has become another, a plethora of EQ skills-based training is now available. Lack of EQ capacity, so the theory goes, can be fixed by a range of 'how to' skills in each of the four EQ concepts above.

Though such skills can be useful, we question whether they're always sufficient in helping people change how they think and behave at key moments, in real time, when facing challenging situations. Moreover **the six innate qualities are the core of EQ**. Developing them is less about skills training and more about helping people understand how they move in and out of a clear mind and their flow state.

Inhibited thinking

Take the first quality being *curious* for example, a person's capacity for this is directly correlated to how busy or clear minded they are. If busy minded they may think they daren't ask a particular question or research a topic, or they may believe they have all the answers they need. This inhibits curiosity. Yet in a clear mind they realise when there's more to know and become naturally curious.

Similarly with *listening and empathy*, if someone's inner dialogue focusses on whether a colleague's words match or veer away from their own way of thinking, they won't fully hear their point of view. This mismatch typically affects peoples' commitment to action later on.

Some over think things too, this makes *suspending judgement* and *accessing new insights* trickier than it need be.

Enabling conversations

In conversations with themselves, inhibited thinking adds to people's already busy and full minds. But when they understand how the mind works, **they soon realise their potential to create inhibitive, busy dialogue is matched by their capacity to do the opposite.**

Enabling conversations focus on what's helpful. They head inhibited thinking off at the pass and get people connected with their innate leadership qualities. EQ therefore rises. Changes in behaviour and performance follow on naturally and authentically. And when discussions in teams reach this quality, the difference it makes to the results they want to achieve is extraordinary.

Further Information

See These Related Papers

And These Informative Pictorial Essays

<p>Insight Paper: <i>Discussions That Tell You If You're Heading Uphill or Downhill</i></p>	<p>Insight Paper: <i>Unhelpful Mindsets</i></p>	<p>Insight Paper: <i>Your Route to Extraordinary Results</i></p>
		
<p>Why meaningful discussions and great performance go hand in hand</p>	<p>How mindsets form, become unhelpful and change</p>	<p>How mindsets confound what's currently considered possible</p>

<p>InfoPic: <i>Better Discussions. New Answers. Extraordinary results.</i></p>	<p>InfoPic: <i>Clear and Busy Mindsets</i></p>	<p>InfoPic: <i>Increasing The Impact of Development Programmes</i></p>	<p>InfoPic: <i>Tailor-Made Development Programmes</i></p>
			

Notes:

¹ From Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) concept of flow – 'the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter.'

About The Mindset Difference

We help leaders achieve results that exceed expectations.

Our tailor-made programmes are built around a specific, and often persistent business challenge that needs to be resolved.

They are for leaders and teams wanting to raise their game to the next level, recover from a difficult period or set off on a sound footing soon after they've formed.

We help people understand how their often unnoticed mindsets work.

This helps them uncover new answers that remove what once felt like recurring blocks to higher levels of performance.

We make it easier to overcome obstacles that lessen commitment to new ways forward.

During implementation, we support leaders as they deepen learning and sustain breakthroughs.

There are many development approaches aimed at improving or refining leaders' skills. Others offer ready-made solutions to your challenges.

Ours is different.

We help leaders and teams realise for themselves the difference their mindset makes as they work on getting whatever needs doing done well.

This has four important benefits:

- It ensures existing skills get deployed more effectively and, if needed, new ones acquired more easily.
- It helps leaders uncover new answers and reach their own solutions.
- It increases levels of engagement and commitment to agreed actions.
- It develops leaders and teams more quickly.

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