

Dare to Lead

One of the primary tenets of solid leadership is the ability to present as vulnerable, and transparent while recognizing that properly oriented leadership is not weakened by the ability to be vulnerable. Discovering this issue, among others, as obstacles to be overcome for the sake of success of any organization is vital for future success.

Research indicates that the following ten issues are identified by leadership and rank and file as established obstacles to organizational success.

1. **Tough conversations are avoided.** Whether this is attributed to lack of courage, lack of skills or otherwise, it means organizations are crippled when it comes to improving organizational and personal performance. The research also indicates a culture of terminal niceness contributes to an increase in problematic behaviour including passive aggressive activities, gossip, and back-channel communications. Other complications include lack of clarity, loss of trust, and reduced engagement. This is a major issue.
2. **Rather than spending a reasonable amount of time engaging with fears and trepidation regarding change, we spend far too much time managing the accompanying problematic behaviours.**
3. **Trust diminishes due to lack of connection and empathy.**
4. **Groupthink and status quo are cultivated in environments in which actors are fearful of ridicule when creating new ideas and taking new and reasonable risks.** The lack of safety stifles creativity.
5. **When faced with setbacks and failures, we spend too much time managing the feelings of those who have failed and not enough time doing cleanup and repair.**
6. **Shame and blame are prevalent when we should be focused on accountability and learning.**
7. **When faced with conversations that may include diversity and inclusivity issues, many are afraid to express an opinion for fear of saying the wrong thing.** Maintaining personal comfort in these conversations creates opportunity for the erosion of trust and lack of connection.
8. **When problems arise, too much time is spent on early responses and unsustainable solutions.** Rather, actors should stick to troubleshooting the problem and applying an appropriate fix.
9. **Organizational values can become fuzzy and looked at as aspirational, rather than behaviours that can be evaluated, measured, and taught.**
10. **Perfectionism and fear are keeping people from growing.**

Furthermore, **the Rumble with Vulnerability** has become a term that indicates the difficulty of becoming a transparent leader who shows vulnerability at appropriate times while still maintain a solid leadership perspective and gravitas. Without the Rumble, we lose connection with those we supervise. Lost connection and empathy will lead to loss of trust, a rise in fear, and a drop in engagement. Working through the “**tunnel of chaos**” of the vulnerability rumble is vital to effective leadership and organizations. *(The tunnel of chaos is the rough time in relationships when actors are becoming more vulnerable, known, and honest with each other).*

As Brown indicates, integrity is choosing honesty over comfort, truth over safety, and clarity over excessive diplomacy. Without daring to lead in the way of honesty, clarity, and vulnerability, we risk an alienated team, disconnected staff, and fearful employees. As is generally known, happier teams perform much better.

(Credit to Brene Brown, Dare to Lead, Random House, 2018)