

Is Energy the New Leadership Currency?

How is energy used while managing people in workplaces? Can we make a better use of energy? Find out from the views of Angus Ridgway, Gautam Kumra, Deepak Garg & Jagdish Mitra on Leadership, Energy & Organizational Dynamics.

The conversation about leadership has significantly shifted in the last 10 years from leadership skills giving feedback and having difficult conversation to leadership attitudes in the sense of “leadership mojo”, or “being on fire,” said Angus Ridgway, CEO, Potentiallife & former Global Leader for Leadership Development for Partners at McKinsey & Co. Angus shared insights from his book “Joy of Leadership” at the Potentiallife roundtable in Gurgaon.



Dimensions of energy

“You are responsible for your own energy,” affirms Gautam Kumra, Managing Partner of India office, McKinsey & Co and Founder of McKinsey Leadership Institute. “Today, most of us are victims of our calendars; managing time has its benefits, but has its own limitations too. It is more important to manage energy.” Energy needs a more holistic definition. Mental energy is about managing mental complexity. Most professional jobs have a good doze of mental complexity. Physical energy is about being fit, which becomes critical for energy; emotional energy is about spending time with friends and family.

Purpose of energy usage has to be personal. It can be aligned to the vision of the organization, like for Deepak Garg, CEO at Rivigo, “Making Logistics Human;” it can be an adaptation of the company’s vision to the context of the leader. For McKinsey’s Kumra, it is to help build world-class home grown companies in India that in turn advances growth in emerging economies. Or, it can also be doing a role to support one’s family, as Ridgway concludes. What matters is that the purpose needs to be personal.



Energy inside out

Personal energy has implications across the organizational. Rivigo’s CEO shares the importance of “boundless energy” at Rivigo. “We operate from that energy,” shares Garg and energy is built with daily practice. Management practices have been conditioned by the ways of working in the earlier industrial era – “managing” people, “reviewing” work, fitting people in “boxes”. That does not work anymore. Ownership

drives performance and generated energy across levels in the organization. Jagdish Mitra, Chief Strategy Officer at Tech Mahindra shares how the organization is redefining leadership in the world of AI. “Leaders accept no boundaries, drive positive change and think alternatives; that are the new dimensions we expect in leaders. For us, those leadership traits are across the 120,000 employees at Tech Mahindra.”

Focus on inputs & not outcomes

At Rivigo, Garg shares that the business focus is on inputs and not on outcomes. Constant focus on outcomes, constant reviews and rigid processes constrain the ability for people in the team to take ownership, to dream big and achieve higher goals.

Potentiallife Ridgway reinforces the point by asking the question: “Do you want 10% increase in productivity OR do you want 10X? Leaders that build trust and energy in their teams achieve disproportionate value for their business.” “It is not easy,” Garg admits. “Every time we have focused on inputs, the process has worked, transparency, trust and ownership are built when you let go of the outcome. We know it works.”



What should leaders do?

The Joy of Leadership provides a framework for leaders to navigate in the new paradigms of leadership. Co-authored Angus Ridgway shares key take away for leaders to implement: Firstly, focus on “being human,” being the best form of your personal self comes from few elements that Ridgway simplifies in the acronym “SHARP” – focus on your Strengths, prioritize Health, Absorb yourself deeply in everything you do, build Relationships & find your personal purpose.

Secondly, Ridgway reminds us that change is a process and change does not happen by “thinking” but by “doing,” so get started in smaller doses but start. Finally, leadership is not for the “leaders,” but for everyone. Organizations need the leadership energy across levels and that is what drives disproportionate value to the business.

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