

The Conscious Leadership Series: Introducing an Inspiring New Style of Leadership to Hong Kong

Shocking news: 65% of Americans would rather fire their boss than get a raise.

That's according to some research that Judy Xu, Balance Potential CEO and co-founder of the Conscious Leadership Series, was introduced to at the 2017 Mindful Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C.

The situation here in Hong Kong is not that much different, Xu said. "I've heard that in Hong Kong, only 10% of people feel that they are doing purposeful work. That's not surprising, given the traditional pressure here to work hard, the peer pressure to look good, and the unhealthy focus on money to the exclusion of meaning, purpose, and wellness."

It's a global issue: the business world is facing increasing uncertainty as old models are challenged by changing values of human capital, disruptive technology, the stress of information overload, greater diversity in work styles, and the dizzying speed of change, all of which add new complexity to strategic decision-making and the processes for hiring, training and managing people.

So it demands a different style of leadership.

Welcome to the Conscious Leadership Series

With a vision to introduce a new kind of transformational leadership into Hong Kong that is people-centric and rooted in personal authenticity, the team at Balance Potential recently launched the "Conscious Leadership Series," a series of practical workshops offering forward-thinking senior business leaders the opportunity to self-reflect; to learn and embody science-based strategies for personal and group effectiveness, and to lead teams and their organisations toward greater wellness and success – on every level.

The workshops in the series are a deep dive into the changing dynamics of corporate culture, the implications for the future of leadership, and what it means to be a Conscious Leader. As Judy explained, "If you want your business to stay relevant, you have to keep innovating and allow your team to be creative, especially if you're working with millennials. Top-down, fear-driven, command-and-control leadership focused on short-term results doesn't work anymore. What we need instead is 'inside-out,' purpose-driven, service-oriented leadership, where you go inwards and connect with

your heart, your inner wisdom, and your purpose. Only *then* can you lead authentically and inspire people. This approach is growing in the Western world, and we want to bring it to Hong Kong.”

One example of how this approach is making a bottom-line difference in business is the story of Mike Salvino, the CEO of global firm Accenture Operations from 2009 to 2016. Following disastrous results in his first year in the position, he implemented a people-centric strategy that focused on acknowledging people, inspiring them to take pride in their work and the business, and nurturing innovation.

He explained: “When people are happier personally, they make a greater impact at work and are more innovative. They have less personal anxiety and stress and are more excited to be at work. They often work longer because they want to be there, not because they have to; and they have better ideas, because they themselves are better, psychologically and emotionally.”

The results of the company’s new people-centric strategy were impressive: Accenture Operations bounced back from Mike’s first disastrous year to posting 20% growth on US\$7 billion revenues, and the team’s employee-engagement success contributed to Accenture being named in *Fortune* magazine’s “100 Best Companies to Work For” list for several consecutive years.

Cultivating Coherent Leadership to Own the Future

The Conscious Leadership Series was launched in Hong Kong on October 26, 2017 with the one-day “Cultivating Coherent Leadership to Own the Future” workshop, led by visiting trainer Tyler Mongan.

Based in Hawaii, Tyler is the founder of Haku Global, a company that supports individuals, teams, and organisations alike, including Fortune 500 companies, in effectively exploring innovativeness and new future possibilities, unlocking creativity while maintaining practicality, and promoting a business culture that sustains organisational coherence through mindful practices.

Tyler researches the science behind brain-heart communication, cognitive behaviour, mindfulness practice, and how they may powerfully integrate into “Coherent Leadership,” which he defines as a state of physiological equilibrium which enhances cognitive function, creativity, and decision-making, while inspiring the same in organisational teams.

Using his Coherent Leadership model, Tyler trains leaders around the world on science-based and human-centred approaches for dealing with business challenges. “Ultimately, business ideas, decisions, and actions are a result of physiological states in our nervous system and physiology,” said Tyler. “Recent scientific and technological advances have provided new insights into the workings of the human mind and body, and how the physiology of a leader sets the tone of the work environment.”

Tyler has observed that when a self-aware leader operates with coherence, the physiology of the whole team synchs up, stress decreases, and people communicate better, come up with better ideas, and get excited about a shared vision for the future. “I’ve worked with many different organisations and people and cultures around the world, and I see that we’re in a brain-centred survival state where we’re ruled by our emotions and social pressures. But that’s not working anymore. So the challenge for leaders is to move from the brain to the heart, to make peace with their emotions, and to create a safe space where their teams and shareholders are comfortable following them in that leap,” he said.

He shared the story of how he worked with a company in Hong Kong that was going through some challenges: “I discovered there was a lack of coherence in their leadership team – there was a lot of emotional discord, and inconsistency in their strategizing. So I helped them to envision a future that every member of the team wanted to get to, not just with their brain but with their heart and their whole body. That had a ripple effect throughout the whole organisation, and the company is now showing a profit.”

In the workshop here in Hong Kong on October 26, Tyler covered such topics as the limitations of top-down leadership, the science of brain integration and heart coherence, how to create a psychologically and physiologically safe work environment through coherence, how to develop team coherence to increase collaboration and innovation, how to overcome challenges and “own the future”. He also led the participants in some simple breathing and mindfulness practices that can be easily applied in their everyday life and work. “It starts with checking in with your body and feeling your heartbeat. It’s surprising how many people don’t do that – they live in their head all the time,” said Tyler.

One of the workshop participants was Lance Diaresco, Head of Brand & Creative Solutions - Asia, Google, who commented: “It was simple and very practical, and more

so imparts a technique for influencing others while actually attuning to yourself, and that will influence others in a very positive way.”

The event took place in the stunning setting of the Fivelements urban wellness retreat in Sai Kung. Participant Kay Ross, CEO of Kay Ross Marketing, raved: “It was wonderful! Yes, it was a trek from downtown, and that was worth it! The peaceful green environment and the beautiful space in and around the buildings helped me to relax and reflect. The food was amazing... and the warm, enthusiastic hospitality from Chicco, Lahra and their staff was delightful. I don’t think a venue downtown could match all of that.”

Join us for the next transformational journey within

If you’re a senior executive who’s ready to take the leap into a new, more heartfelt style of leadership, we invite you to join a group of like-minded peers at the next Conscious Leadership Series event. Stay up to date with all upcoming events on the Balance Potential event page.

In future modules of the Conscious Leadership Series, topics such as Creativity, Emotional Intelligence, Purpose-driven Strategy, Leadership Embodiment, and Innovation will be addressed. The Series organiser, Balance Potential, has plans to bring other world-class trainers and leadership experts to Hong Kong to lead some of these other modules. “I met several likely candidates at the Mindful Leadership Summit in Washington, so I’m very excited about the future of the Series. I’m even envisaging a live Conscious Leadership Summit in Hong Kong in two or three years,” said Judy.