

## How can leaders provide stability in unpredictable times?

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We are living in a fast paced, ever changing world with tumultuous socio-political events. Our economic models have been disrupted by organizations that own nothing except people, algorithms and compute power, our energy demands are higher than ever before, and yet we have a responsibility to reduce our impact on the environment. The globalization of markets and technology has made all of us more aware of the challenges we face and the unpredictable times we live in.

To me, these global developments are exciting times. But exciting to me can be unsettling and scary for others. In this unpredictable world, we need people who can give guidance, direction and steer. We need leaders who are there to support us, to provide answers and to be caring and understanding. Who are these leaders, where are they and what should they be doing?

I believe that we need and have strong leadership in any layer of society. I am a leader, and so are you, in different situations and with different groups of people. We need leadership both at work and in our personal lives.

Beginning with leadership in the workplace; In my case, I lead a virtual, global group of scientists and I manage and lead a technology team. As that leader, I am the person they look to for answers, guidance and direction. I have built their trust through experience, caring and understanding. I can sometimes advise them what to do, because I have been through similar experiences myself, then at the other end of the spectrum – I too need advice, need support and guidance. This is the most exciting part about being a leader, but probably the hardest. This is where real leadership skills are required. Being honest about what you don't know and showing vulnerability makes you a leader who is humble, open to learn and improve and not always has the answers. I feel that in these unpredictable times, leaders in the workplace are there to help, guide, coach and truly understand what team members need, while also being honest and open about their own needs and development.

What about the role of strong leadership in our personal lives? Outside of work I am a parent and lead a girl's cricket team as their manager, where life is full of unknowns and unpredictability. Yes, we can look at what worked well for others and do things in a similar way, but will that work on a different situation, with a different child, with different desires and ambitions? We are all leaders in different moments and times in our lives and we all have a responsibility to our company, teams, friends and colleagues.

I believe that by understanding people's needs then guiding them through it, leaders can co-create a vision and plan together. Whether this is a personal development plan or a team strategy, leaders should be curious to know what other people want, why they want it and then bring them along as part of that journey.

We all have different aspirations, perspectives and desires, and leading a group of diverse people will lead to differing opinions and ideas of how things should be done. There will be times when your style or perspective will get feedback, so embrace it and show humility.

In summary, these leaders are all around us and are just like you and me. What we all need to do is to be bold and curious, be vulnerable and open to improve, be strong and resilient; Make it personal, but don't take it personally.