

CPA Australia Podcast

Transcript – Episode 42

Intro: Hello and welcome to the CPA Australia Podcast, your source for business, leadership and public practise accounting information.

Jillian: Hello, everyone, and welcome to another episode of the CPA Australia Podcast. I'm your host, Jillian Bowen, and I head up the content and social media team here at CPA Australia.

In today's episode, we're exploring the idea that leadership is broken at all levels, and how can this be fixed? Joining me is Sebastian Salicru, the author of Leadership Results. Sebastian is a thought leader who regularly presents at national and international conferences and industry events on the latest developments on leadership. He's the founder and principal consultant at PTS Consultants and works with executives and organisations around the world to help them deliver exceptional results. Sebastian, welcome to the CPA Australia Podcast.

Sebastian: Thank you. My pleasure to be here.

Jillian: It's going to be my pleasure. I have loved your book.

Sebastian: Thank you.

Jillian: We've had a few tries to get together. We had a technology fail the first time we tried to chat. And the technology fail was a half glass full for me because now, I get the pleasure of having Sebastian in the studio with us. And I can tell you, it was well worth the wait. But on to today's topic, just when you thought you knew everything about leadership or I knew everything. I don't think I actually knew everything but we thought we'd heard everything. It had been written but then along comes Leadership Results.

Now, it's quite a challenging thing you're raising here, Sebastian, because you believe traditional leadership is failing.

Sebastian: I do.

Jillian: Tell me more.

Sebastian: Well, I mean, the first thing, I guess, is to ask your listeners if they happen to watch television at night and turn the news, international news in particular, what do they see? Even national news. So this is one thing, but let's get more scientific than that if you like and let's look at the figures. I mean last year, for example, the Centre for Workplace Leadership which is part of the University of Melbourne, found that 75% of people they surveyed believed that Australia needed more better managers and better leaders. And Gallup believes that the lack of engagement in Australia is costing the

country almost \$55 billion. Billion with B, B of blow up. So those are, I think, serious figures.

Jillian: They are very serious figures. Now, this is, as you say, a multibillion dollar industry as well.

Sebastian: Correct.

Jillian: How is it failing to deliver results?

Sebastian: Look, it is quite abysmal. Before I answer that question, I just also want to point out that just recently something is called Edelman Trust Barometer of this year 2017 has come out and the figures are quite alarming as well, because for example, only 26% of CEOs are credible in Australia at the moment. So I'm not going to throw figures around because we probably got better things to talk about but all I want to say to your listeners is that I encourage them to go online and look at those stats because they are quite-

Jillian: Well, you're saying the problem is real and the stats back it up?

Sebastian: Correct. They are facts and figures. I'm not coming here to tell you what I dreamed last night. So you asked me why? So there are a number of reasons why but I think the best way to explain it is that leadership and context are inseparable. Leadership is a way to mobilise other people to action, to address issues whether they are social issues, political or in organisations. But in recent times, the context has changed so much that the old ways of leading, if you like, or doing leadership are no longer working.

Today, we live in a world of fast paced, high velocity that I call it, turbulence and complexity. There's another term that is used a lot now, which is VUCA. Maybe your listeners have heard about it.

Jillian: I haven't, so you're going to have to fill me in.

Sebastian: VUCA, yeah. It means volatile, unpredictable, complex and ambiguous. It actually comes from the US Army that went to Afghanistan. So they used that word and a lot of, now, people right in management leadership they borrowed. That's why I don't like to use it. I prefer to use words like high velocity and turbulence and complexity.

But nevertheless, so what happens then is that the old ways of leading no longer work because those problems that we are facing today are adaptive problems, and we can talk more about this later if you like. But the other thing is that past experience plays a much lesser role like in the old days if you like, everybody wants experienced people which makes a lot of sense because you bring the experience on the table how to do things in a particular way.

But because things have changed so rapidly, and the complexity of the challenge we experience today, we haven't experienced them before, that experience doesn't exist, if

you know what I mean? Don't misunderstand what I'm saying. I mean, it's important to have experience but it plays a much lesser role. This view of the leader that knows everything, that is a guru sitting a mountain, basically, Marlboro man. Do you remember Marlboro man? I know you're very young, but do you remember?

Jillian: I know ... Well, you know I've read my advertising textbooks so poor old Marlboro man, he has gone the way of-

Sebastian: Exactly. So this pervasive and is very pervasive image is no longer valid, if you like.

Jillian: Well it's interesting because when I was looking at your book Leadership Results and one of the first things you talked about is the interpersonal focus of leadership and that has something that has now we're evolving past that. So I thought it was interesting because I found a lot of the detail ... We can't read the book word by word today but I do encourage people to read it because that discussion you have about interpersonal leadership is fascinating. Can you summarise for me what you mean by interpersonal leadership?

Sebastian: Yeah. There's two things in the way I look at leadership. One is self-leadership which is the individual and there is leadership which is about people. It's a collective thing. But the interpersonal piece is when we look at ourselves. And it is true that leadership starts from inside, from within, and it is desirable that we become self-aware and emotionally intelligent, all those things. But a lot of the models that are there today are based on very outdated ideas, and I don't want to get into technical terms with psychoanalysis and so forth, where we look at what's missing with people as opposed to what's working, the strengths. Today, we adopt in a strength approach as well.

So people get caught up with that and this can be very disempowering. The important thing is to accept yourself as who you are. I think it's important to try to change but it's being this wave of you got to change and transform yourself and we got a lot of research. I mentioned some people from Harvard University that unless you accept to love yourself, you're not going to have a great self-esteem, a strong self-esteem and confidence. It is very important, at least, to balance the two.

Jillian: Well, a lot of current leadership models are very focused on competencies.

Sebastian: Correct.

Jillian: You feel that that is something we have to move beyond.

Sebastian: Exactly. It's part of the same song if you like because we start to seeing leadership as something that people have inside of them and that's not true. Leadership happens outside of you.

Jillian: Do you think leadership can be taught?

Sebastian: It can. I'll get into that in a minute. So about competencies, competencies are the platforms. These are like the foundation. It's more about management, the competencies. Leadership is more about character. That is a quote from ... I want to make sure I mention him because it's, I think important that I do mention, Kevin Cashman, who is the CEO of Korn Ferry in the US. He was very kind to me. The back cover is one of his testimonies, this quote. He was very ... He says that competencies get you to the door of leadership but character gets you through the door of leadership.

So again, I think, people need to read a bit more about that because it's very important to remember. So I'm not saying, let's abandon competencies, but this is only the foundation. Leadership is more about character and just in case your listeners are wondering what character really is, it's about having a clarity of who you are, what are your strengths, where are you going, sense of identity and do the right thing despite of external pressures. That's very important.

So what was the other thing that ... I'm sorry, I didn't mean to brush you away.

Jillian: No, not at all. You just actually had my brain ticking at a hundred miles an hour, which is a good thing. It's a very good thing. Looking at that from that point of view, do you believe then that leadership can be taught?

Sebastian: Okay. We've heard that question so many times, are leaders born or made? I'll give you the answer in a minute. The current views that leadership can be taught and I agree with that. So let's settle this down here. Having said this is also the results or evidence that says that they are predispositions, maybe genetic predispositions.

But what I want to highlight to your listeners is this, is that when you ask that question, it's really a very close and misleading question. It's that either/or question. So it doesn't give options to another answer and what I would like them to consider is there might be another answer. It's not an either/or, or black and white. And what about if leaders are initiated?

Now, there's a whole research about initiation and again, this is perhaps the most controversial chapter of my book, Chapter 6 and I want to explain just briefly what I mean by that. One of the things that we see in today's world is a lot of abuse of power and corruption. Initiation is a term that is an anthropological term that is being used traditionally when societies assist young men and women to become responsible members of the society and they have rites of passage.

Today, there are kind of still there somehow like your 21st birthday kind of thing. Symbolically, it means now you got some wisdom supposedly.

Jillian: Getting your first car.

Sebastian: Yeah, getting the first licence at 18 although now you can drink. So those rites initially were put there to ensure that people that would become leaders and in positions perhaps of power would never abuse it. And it was to make sure that they will always

remember that initiation and this today, I think, has been lost a bit. So imagine a president of a state that maybe has never experienced what it means to fail because he always had anything. He's got a lot of money and he's running a country like it was his business kind of thing, and imagine an imaginative country where this could happen.

Jillian: Well, you sort of lead me to that question that you raised through the book of learning agility and adaptation. If people are not used to failing, do they really know how to be agile in their learning and how to adapt?

Sebastian: Yeah, because if people have never learned from, at least from their failures, is that they cannot understand what does it mean to be serving a power greater than yourself. Learning agility, it matters more than ever before because remember I said earlier, we experienced new kinds of problems. So learning agility is about having that ability to be able to transfer your learnings from the past and in other domains into what challenges you're facing today.

Imagine that some of your listeners are accountants, which is very likely, right? And one day, they decide to go into another field or become leaders, leaders in the sense that they might be leading a practise and they do less of accounting because now, as leaders, they need to look after a team. That's a classic. Subject matter experts, technical people are promoted to senior leadership positions and the big dilemma now is they need to lead a team. That doesn't mean staying in your office.

So it's how I can now transfer some of my experience in accounting, let's say, into now, my leadership into leading people. That's just an example, but that's what learning agility and adaptability is all about, to be able to transfer that knowledge. And also, becoming aware of in which areas you need more knowledge, you need new learnings.

Jillian: Look, we've been digging into the problem, the outdated models, some of the thinking isn't right. I want to jump forward to some of those solutions that you're proposing. But before we do that, the last thing I do want to ask you is, how do you actually assess leadership? Because it seems like such a vague thing in terms of measurement. Obviously, it can be assessed, but how do people assess whether leadership is working or not? And what are the best approaches to doing that?

Sebastian: The traditional approaches we're using today is more about assessing the impact that leaders have. We use 360 surveys. I use a lot of interviews. I find interviews are far more ... They give you much richer information. If I work with a leader, CEO for example, I'll ask him to nominate a number of the people, obviously stakeholders. I use the term stakeholders. I find the term followers to be outdated as well. Whoever he wants to influence and that could be direct reports. It could be people outside of the organisation, people from his team. I use the term stakeholders, I interview them. I say, "Well, what is it like for you to be a part of this team?"

Traditional approaches, they ask them a lot of questions like surveys about what they think about that person, what he thinks, and I think that's okay. But I also like to know what is it like for them to be working with them? And that's what I call relational

measures of leadership that my model looks at more deeply, not just about the attributes of the person. We're getting back to the competence because then we get too focused on the individual you know?

I'm fascinated how often I talked about leadership and very quickly, we'll talk about leaders talking about leaders. So I encourage people to look at leadership as the phenomenon that happens, that emerges when people are together as opposed to just leaders per se.

Jillian: Well, we can talk about this for a while because-

Sebastian: We could.

Jillian: ... there are other things I would like to ask you but honestly, not to sell too hard, get the book because it absolutely answers all of these questions in a lot more detail than I can do today, because I want to give you a bit of a solution, or I'm going to ask Sebastian to share his solution. I found it fascinating because I love your thinking in this way. Is that you're thinking that traditional leader was very much about their own development and as they developed, others would then follow?

Sebastian: Yes.

Jillian: And that's how it worked. And your solution is much more about how a leader works with all the pieces, the people, the stakeholders, the team around them.

Sebastian: Correct. And they do leadership together, if you like.

Jillian: Yeah. It becomes a collaborative, collective process.

Sebastian: Yeah, exactly.

Jillian: Very exciting. Now, this, you call your new model Leadership Results, so the LR model, is that's correct?

Sebastian: Yes.

Jillian: And I'm going to actually ask you to give a bit away today and just explain to me the key design features of the model and the benefits that people can get from it.

Sebastian: Okay, very good. So the model, well firstly, distinguishes between leader development and leadership development, which we'd been talking about. Once you've looked at self-leadership, and that's leader development is self-leadership, how you lead yourself in life. And it's got a lot of different components, and you could throw competencies in there. But then, the other piece, and this sometimes is referred to, maybe I'm getting a bit technical here but it might be good that your listeners know that. That's usually referred as human capital, the individual.

But what's more important and that's the other piece of my model is that the collective leadership piece and this is what we call leadership development and is a social capital. And this is a very important concept because the benefits of human capital are in the things that we have insight. It includes knowledge, skills and abilities and competencies. But leadership is more about the benefits embedded within the relationships with other people, and we call this social capital or relational capital.

So I'm sure that a lot of the partners in some of the firms that people work with or the organisation is the relationship they have with customers, the relationships they have with providers, relationships they have with people inside of the organisation. This is critical, whatever if it's in business, in politics or in communities. And this is what my book looks at in a lot of detail.

Jillian: My impression is it's not about the good salesperson. It's not about the slick person that can sell ice to Eskimos. That's an old leadership type. It's about the person you say has that genuine empathy and the ability to connect and understand and listen to others in the room.

Sebastian: Absolute. It's about, you with the team in the room and you might be the team leader, but allowing people to emerge as leaders at different times and actually encourage them to do that because this builds their confidence. And eventually, we know through research if you create, we call it a psychological safety where people are allowed to speak up, the team becomes much stronger. Google did experiments on that and they found that was exactly the case.

Jillian: Well, one of the risks we have out there is that the stronger personalities, the people that we might have called natural leaders in the past often dominate the group.

Sebastian: Very true.

Jillian: So this process is more about ensuring that personality or quietness or reserved personalities are not held back in the process.

Sebastian: Yeah. And also, this is a very interesting point you raised because some people, they think that leadership is about talking, just talking, inspiring others. Part of it is that, but it's not only that. Actually, that's a question that team leaders ask me when we do coaching. "I've got a guy or a girl, usually guys, but anyway, that talks a lot. What I do? And I said, "Well, ask the group. Defer it back to the group," or ask him, "When you talk so much, what do you think people are feeling and thinking about you in the group?" Or, how does the group feel and think when he talks so much? Let the group deal with it. Put it back to the group. Collective leadership is about encouraging people to take responsibility with what's happening.

Jillian: It's interesting that you actually had a bit of a gender example there because I am fascinated about this topic-

Sebastian: Marlboro man, I tell you.

Jillian: Yes. Male and female in leadership has often been seen as very different. And in this process, how do you think gender can actually be balanced and managed in your model?

Sebastian: Look, I want to be cautious when I talk about gender simply because-

Jillian: And fair enough. It is a hot button topic and I'm not trying to lead you down in dangerous road-

Sebastian: My model doesn't look at gender per se, but I can tell you now from my own experience because I work with a lot of groups, that I always ... For me, it's easier to work with the group without women, at least some women, because they are far better listeners. They are much better at acquiring concepts like soft skills related like emotional intelligence than, sometimes, with men and obviously, it depends what kind of men, what generations and what industries. There are some industries that are predominantly male dominated. I worked a lot in construction, infrastructure and so forth.

But I think by and large, a lot of the, let's say, competencies, abilities or dimensions that leadership looks at are feminine in nature, if you know what I mean. They're kind of soft. It's not the harshness that we think about, being a warrior or being a fighter. I'm not saying that that's not part of it but much less so. And it depends on the context again. Leadership can be being a fighter if you go to Afghanistan. But if you're in the office, it's more about listening and influencing and persuading and all these sort of things. That's what's very important. Leadership today is more contextual than ever before. So we need to ask ourselves leadership for what.

Jillian: Well, I like the way you look at that because to me, as we've said, gender is a tricky one.

Sebastian: It's very political in those days too.

Jillian: It's very political, and for understandable reasons. But the interesting thing about it, I thought when I was reading the book is that in many ways, what you're suggesting is trying to strip out all of that politics and instead, say in a team, find the best in each person. Naturally, we know that sometimes men and women can, in a general way, lean towards certain qualities and when you bring them into a team where the leadership is collaborative, it's no longer about worrying, "Is that person being strong enough," or, "Is that person listening enough?" The team works together to make all of those elements mesh together.

Sebastian: Absolutely, yeah. You got to establish trust before you have these deeper relationships. But a good way to approach that, that I've used sometimes is to ask people to be clear about their conditioning. Men, we have been conditioned in a particular way and so have women. And I talk about it in the book. I don't know if you remember the story of the father and the son driving with the car. But I was thinking about today when I just came from the airport now in the plane. I mean if I say to you, "And the pilot set these or that," and I ask you, "Was the pilot a man or a woman?" What would say? I think we

all know that pretty much 100% of people, well maybe 90% of people will say a man. When is the last time you saw a woman pilot? Let me ask you.

Jillian: I have seen them but it tends to be unusual. It's surprisingly unusual. It's increasing. Isn't there an old story about someone being told their child was in an accident and-

Sebastian: That's the story I'm telling you about in the book.

Jillian: Yes, that's the one.

Sebastian: The father and the son, they have a crash and the son is taken to the hospital. And the doctor walks in the room and says, "I cannot operate this child because he's my son." And people goes, "But hang on. Didn't the son die and all that?"

Jillian: And of course, the surgeon is the mother.

Sebastian: Yeah, exactly.

Jillian: It's a fabulous story.

Sebastian: So we have all these conditioning. And conditioning creates stereotypes, and it can be extremely damaging. So sometimes, it's very useful in a room to explore those things and then ask people to reverse roles. I want you to pretend to be a man and pretend to be a woman. I find sometimes, it's actually interesting. If you believe in that idea and I ask you to defend the opposite, then I ask you to the other one.

So at the end of the day, you want people to get closer to each other and to collaborate. That's what we need in the world today from my perspective. We need great deals of trust and collaboration to achieve great things together. It doesn't matter if it's in politics, in the community, in the business.

Jillian: Well, getting into some nitty-gritties of this. One of the things you talked about with the LR model is self-leadership as opposed to leader development. Now, I took that as a lot of the self-leadership, the self-development and people have done in the past has very much been focused on what other skills I need to learn. Just explain a little bit of this self-leadership.

Sebastian: Yeah. Well, self-leadership basically is the ability to you set direction in life and achieve your goals, and learning to understand to find out what do you need to empower yourself. It goes beyond technical competencies. It's more about ... I've mentioned it earlier, one is about strengths, what are your key strengths. I don't know for your listeners but when I was a kid at school, I knew very well what my weaknesses were because I was reminded of it constantly.

And I know as a fact that today, many managers do that with their teams. So we know today through research ... Again, I want to mention the amazing impact of positive psychology which is now we look at what's good about people and how to actually take

that to the next level. So it's about that, finding those strengths and leverage on that. It's all about Martin Seligman talks about virtues. Csik Mihaly talks about being in the flow that when you use your strengths for most of the time you lose notion of time. The days just go by. You're so absorbed in what you do. Imagine as a manager or leader, you could do this with your team.

And the other one I've mentioned earlier is strengths and character. So these are the critical things. Obviously, what goes with that are values for purpose and identity. When you package altogether, you put another expression that is used today is your personal brand, who you are as a leader. When you got that clarity and you need to keep ... This is an ongoing work as well. But when you got that clarity is when you're in the best position to engage people, and that's part of the leadership process.

Leadership happens outside of you. Self-leadership happens inside of you, but true leadership is about relationships. It's about that social capital or collective thing. It's also about engagement, so that's why engagement is slow if you don't engage with others and you're a leader.

Jillian: So the days of the leader sitting in an office with the door closed, never communicating, it sounds like a cliché but it still happens.

Sebastian: It happens, and happens because again, we keep promoting people that are very good technically. And this takes us to another distinction which is between management and leadership, power and authority, which is particularly in Australia, I find we confuse that a lot. A manager, someone that has a legitimate part in the organisation, can hire people and can fire you tomorrow. So he's got power, he's got authority, but he might not know how to lead. Leadership is independent of all that.

Those people that are then promoted because very good technically, they really struggle and that's pretty much a lot of the work that I've done in my career, help those people to become true leaders. It's very challenging because some of them are introverted. They've never done it, and the last thing they want to do is to go and sit with the group. They want to do things in the office, see what they like, be in their bubble.

Jillian: Well, that is the challenge because the traditional progress through a company, it is a hierarchy. It's very rare that people have managed to create a flat system and the hierarchy exists saying that as you go up a little, there is certain responsibility to take. Regardless of your own strengths or weaknesses, you must adopt different responsibilities so you can go to a manager level.

I think that's like quite a challenging scenario because you have certain people that may be incredibly creative or strategic but they're not necessarily good people leaders. They deserve to progress and gain more authority, but should they actually be taking management through as part of that journey?

Sebastian: Well, no, I think it's fine. They put them in there but let's be clear that those people might not ... In my book, we should not call them leaders, but we mix things up. We say,

"All the leaders in our organisation." Well, you mean the senior managers in your organisation?

Jillian: I have to tell you, I hear it too often. Everyone is a leader.

Sebastian: Well, if you lead, you're a leader. If you don't lead, you're not a leader. It's as simple as that. And if everyone is a leader, well then no one is a leader. I know that it's a bit funny. That's why I try to stay away from the term leader. I prefer to talk about leadership. And now, there is a term we use which is leadership as a practise. Let's talk about leadership as a practise, like when we're in a group when we're together and becoming a leaderful organisation.

And I'm not the only one. There's a number of practitioners around the world that follow that, so let's refocus a bit outside of leader. It's okay if they are senior managers that don't lead. That's fine. Let them do their job but those people should also allow others to exercise leadership in the organisation.

Jillian: So you can be a senior manager and not lead but can you be a leader and not be a senior manager?

Sebastian: You would be expected to lead. You would be expected to lead. What's the other one did you say?

Jillian: So if you can be a senior manager and possibly not be a leader, it's okay? What about a leader who is not a senior manager, could that work?

Sebastian: Yeah, anyone in the organisation could lead. I think it actually happens. I'm sure that there are always in organisations people are maybe charismatic or they're good at relationships but they are the influencers. They are the champions and when there is big change in organisations, they're always the people that the change managers look for. People that can influence others, people that have credibility, people that are looked upon with respect, high levels of respect. Those are the ones that are leading. Whether you want to call them leaders is just maybe ... That's what I'm trying to say that maybe it's not that important.

Jillian: It's interesting.

Sebastian: As soon as you put too many labels, it gets confusing.

Jillian: That is a problem that is a lot more universal, labels, titles. People find it very hard to let go of them.

Sebastian: And I would encourage senior manager to praise individuals in the organisation that they do have that ability to influence others. I think that's so important. Put them as examples of great leadership. People that can't do that, to me, they lack the confidence to do that.

Jillian: I had a really fascinating conversation with someone who was at CPA Congress recently who came on the podcast too, who was more in the team development area specifically and we were talking about high performing teams. He had a really interesting perspective on it because I think these days, more and more, every team is expected to aim to be a higher performing team. It's a requirement. People will have it in their job descriptions. How do you work towards reaching this goal?

And this gentleman was saying to me, "Well, how can you be a high performing team all the time," and that requires an incredible burn and energy and wouldn't be a better system if a team had its peak moment, had a high performing period and then they step back and then maybe another team step forward and had that energy and it gave everyone that ability to go, "I don't have to be at 120% 365 days a year, 24/7. I can have my peak moments where I jump up and shine and then I can step back and regroup and then someone else can have a turn." Is that something you think is possible?

Sebastian: I think it is and it sounds to me a bit like what I was saying before that leadership emerges. That's why sometimes we call it emerging leadership. Anyone in the group for a particular time will provide leadership. But you mentioned a couple of interesting things about performance. Actually, having said that, you've said the CPA Conference, you know what? Maybe, I don't know, 20 years ago, 15, I presented there about emotional intelligence. I was living in Perth. That was in Perth and so I haven't lived there for maybe 15 years.

Jillian: Well, EQ kind of emerged-

Sebastian: Yeah, exactly. Just to tell you how long this has been going very well.

Jillian: I think we'll have to have you back at the CPA Congress because I think what you've moved on from EQ to a much bigger topic now.

Sebastian: So going back to what you've just said because you've talked about high performance. And in the book, one of the things, the last chapter before the last one is devoted to high performance. And for most people, I think and I think somehow, you were indicating that to a degree at least, that when we think about high performance, we think about working very hard, working your butt off 12 hours a day and seven days a week. Obviously, that's one way to achieve high performance.

Jillian: Very tiring, right?

Sebastian: Yeah, very tiring, very exhausting and that's how people burn out. That's a lot of issues in the workplace today about mental health and burn out. So in the book, I present a five LR model and obviously, at the bottom is bad performance, low performance. That is what we call BAU, business as usual. The third one is the one you're talking about. That's what we call the stretched performance. So you achieve high levels of performance by working longer and harder. But this is unsustainable, that's what you said now somebody needs to take.

And then, I'm just going to jump into the fifth level. This is what we call pie in the sky. And it's in pink colour, because when you talk about that level is when people don't relate to it. You go over their heads. So managers and team leaders need to focus on number four and that's the real breakthrough or extraordinary performance, and that's the one that you achieve not necessarily by working harder or longer but they're saying smarter and that's when things about creativity and innovation come into play in my model. But before you get that, you need to engage people through credibility. If people feel satisfied and committed, then they'll put the extra effort but they also become creative and innovative.

All the research I did when I was working with alliances, which is the genesis of my book, I think that's chapter 1 or 2. It was all about that. People were stung. They didn't want to go back to the organisations to work because they experienced that extraordinary amazing thing of really getting like the one for all and all for one like the Three Musketeers. Once people experienced that, they can't go back to a workplace that doesn't have that. I'm sorry, I'm getting carried away.

Jillian: No, of course not.

Sebastian: But people need to talk about all those things, making all these things explicit because as soon as you say high performance, what we need to realise is particularly leaders, managers is that that means different things to different people. Like for most people, it means working longer and harder. So have a discussion about what high performance means, how we're going to get there because if people do not believe they can achieve that, it won't happen, I'm just telling you now.

Jillian: Well, ultimately, the goal is to deliver then extraordinary results.

Sebastian: Exactly, exactly.

Jillian: I think it's probably a very long answer but we'll try and keep it simple, how do people get to that point? How do you actually take people from this old outdated model without ... If we could answer this in two minutes, you would quite the genius but give me a bit of-

Sebastian: The simplest of all the answers is that you need to engage them and that's why employee engagement has become so topical because if you engage, people will give you the things that I've mentioned. They'll be satisfied. They'll be committed. They'll give you the discretionary effort which is going the extra mile way beyond they want and they'll actually be creative and innovative. In other words, they will move mountains for you but you need to then, first before all that, build that credibility. Be trustworthy. Be fair with others and fulfil their expectations.

Jillian: So it won't happen in two seconds.

Sebastian: No, no.

Jillian: It's an effort as it should be.

Sebastian: As it should be. Just people don't quite understand how the cycle works and in my knowledge like a chain of reaction that I call it and it needs to have that integrity and when I say integrity, I don't only mean moral integrity, I mean, the unbrokenness. The chain needs to be unbroken. That's what an integrity is. It comes from the Latin.

Nothing in this life works without integrity. Usually, the first place to begin is leaders need to provide some sense making, some meaning into the reality people experience. We're ending up a bit like at the beginning of the conversation, remember? The VUCA world, the change. A lot of people sometimes are confused. They can't comprehend what goes on. The task of the leader is to put meaning around that. That's what I was talking about the conference in Brussels.

Sense making has become critical and leaders do that through storytelling which I know we could spend another hour to talk about storytelling, but it's how you frame-

Jillian: We might have to get you back to teach us that.

Sebastian: How we frame that reality? If you want to influence other, if you're going to be a great leader, you need to be a good storyteller and tell a story of what was going on that will fascinate, will entice, will excite other people and then, you paint a vision of where you're going. Then you engage them for the relating thing and then you basically put things together. People want to do it usually the other way around you know?

Jillian: You're basically taking people on the journey with you.

Sebastian: Exactly.

Jillian: In the past, leaders would often have the vision in their head and that can be very challenging for a lot of people but if the first point is the awareness that get outside of our own head and share the story, share the vision, that's the stage one of building the credibility and the trust.

Sebastian: Yeah, and could sometimes your own story, but also our story or the story of what's happening. I know that organisations and probably yourself too are going for a lot of change, but what the senior leaders and senior managers need to look at is what meaning, what sense are people making out of this change. If you can't understand that, you're just going to have difficulty in any change. You need to be the change-maker, the sense-maker of what's-

Jillian: The sense-maker, I like that. So you're actually giving people an understanding.

Sebastian: Yes, you put meaning into what's going on. You provide an alternative meaning to the one they're experiencing and people then ... Because in times of change and confusion, people really ask themselves whether they're aware or not what is the story. What is the story?

Jillian: And then if they feel like they're not being told the story or they're making assumptions about the story.

Sebastian: One day, they'll invent their own stories. The leader needs to understand what's the story and make sure that there is a shared story. Provide a story that people can relate that takes everybody on board.

Jillian: We're going to start with that and then comes the engagement part of that process. I may be getting very simplistic with you but for me, there are some amazingly clever, talented, inspiring people out there that are so close to what you talk about but need it broken down into just those little aha moments, of going, "Ah, if I put that in, so okay, maybe if I tell a story and get people inspired around me in understanding what's going on and then how am I going to engage them? What do I do?"

Sebastian: Yeah. Look, it sounds, you really hit the nail in the head, Jillian, because it's so simple that sometimes, very clever people don't get it. I once worked with a managing director that he was struggling with his people and part of it is they were saying that he was very controlling. And in one of the coaching sessions, I asked him to talk to me about that. He said, "The reason I'm like this because in the past, we went through a big disaster and I don't want them to feel like that." He told me some personal things that went with that. I said to him, "Have you ever shared that with them?" And he said, "No." And I said, "Why not?" It was this big silence.

I think then he's starting to realise that being a true leader is being authentic and at times becoming vulnerable, and sharing a story like this because in the same way that I ... Wow, it was a blind spot. The people, I'm sure they would go, "Wow." And he did and he had an amazing effect. He didn't realise. He started to learn that leadership is about getting my mask of manager leader you like and going there and tell them things that maybe I've never shared before that in the back of my mind that I have thought that may not be important, but for people were important. It gets you closer to people, establishes trust.

Trust, a lot of people don't realise that, but trust is about making yourself vulnerable to others. That's why it's so scary, because they might hurt us. They might laugh at us but unless you take that risk to establish trust, to become vulnerable, you're not going to engage people. They're not going to be able to move mountains for you.

Jillian: Well, it's so true because we think vulnerability is weakness and that especially at-

Sebastian: They see it as weakness, right? Which it's not. It's quite the opposite.

Jillian: I think it's quite empowering but it takes courage to take that first step into that-

Sebastian: Of course. But if you think about it, it's what bonds like intimacy. Intimacy is about vulnerability. A lot of people, because they're so much into that left brain domain particularly, I guess, organisations like the CPA, accountants, engineers, but leadership is quite the opposite. It's a bit of a flip. I understand it's challenging for many people.

That's why coaching, it becomes critical but that's what it's all about. People that follow someone and by following, I mean really following. People that would step out because when people are bonded to you at that level, and you ask them to do something or you ask them to do something that doesn't make sense, they'll do it. They don't ask why.

I'm working at the moment with a guy in Sydney, a CEO. He's an entrepreneur. He's got this chain of outlets and he's got this bunch of people. He's done so much for them and they're prepared to, with closed eyes, step off the cliff with him. That's how much they trust him. But yet to achieve that, you need to do a lot of work, a work that is sometimes very frightening, very scary.

Jillian: Well, it does take courage because our model has always said that vulnerability is weakness, which is we've discussed it's not. It's actually authenticity.

Sebastian: Exactly. Another one is asking for help. I talked about language in my book and at the end of the book, I asked people what requests and offers are you making to people? Go to your people, ask them what they need from you. Ask them something. Leaders today more than ever before are not expected to know everything. In fact, many people in YouTube know much, much more in particular fields than probably you, the team leader.

So make them feel important. Because if you don't know something and I come to you and I rely on you, I made you feel important but also established trust because I rely on you to give me information which is valuable.

Jillian: Well, it's a very caring model. It's a model that does feel very genuine and as you said, authentic. Obviously, the flip side of that side is the fear model, which still exists out there. Do you think that's something that people can actually have that aha moment and say, hold on, are people scared of me?

Sebastian: People will have that aha moment firstly, if they have a big crisis and that happens sometimes or somebody else taps them in the shoulder and says, "Hey, you need to look at this," which also happens and that's why they do the 360 feedbacks and all that. But I think people need to be ... And that's the initiation by the way. That's what I meant by initiation. They have that great crisis or somebody taps them in the shoulder. Some, they lose the job but whatever, something really goes wrong or just people have to be ready. You can't force someone to change unless deep down, they realise that they need to change. Sometimes, the situation is in a comfort zone and that's sometimes the worst because it stays there forever or for a long time.

Jillian: Just as a final point to the people listening, how can they actually start to take a step tomorrow, today to review their leadership-

Sebastian: Look, the first step, I think would be to read my book.

Jillian: Yeah.

Sebastian: I'm sorry but I have to say that.

Jillian: You know what? With absolutely no agenda of my own, I would say that.

Sebastian: But the reason I say that is because we've touched on so many topics and there's a lot more detail in there. But look, I kind of mentioned it earlier. I think the first step is to establish a good sense of identity, to know their strengths, develop their character, build their confidence and self-esteem. You need to feel extremely confident and you'll feel that if you work on yourself progressively and I'm just not talking about technical competencies. I'm talking about, as I said earlier, character, strength, do that. And keeping the way that what stimulates you out there, who is the people that made you tick? What are the issues in your organisation, in your community and society that made you tick and respond to that either by reading, by contacting people, asking for a mentor in your organisation, outside, reach out. So those are the things. Start experimenting. That's in itself already putting leadership into practise.

Jillian: Sebastian, thank you for joining us today. Of course, Sebastian's book *The Leadership Results* is available now at all good booksellers. We will add a link to that in our show notes and also a link through to Sebastian's website and to his LinkedIn profile if you'd like to connect with him. Sebastian, thank you again for your time today.

Sebastian: It's been an absolute pleasure, Jillian. Thank you so much.

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