

● impact

Jan/Feb 2022 | Issue 16

A Leadership Magazine

NEW PERSPECTIVES

Habits for 2022

REALISTIC OPTIMISM

On getting the balance right

ANALYSIS PARALYSIS

The illusion of perfection

STORYTELLING

The #1 communication skill?

A STORY

About impacting the brand

IMPACT HACK #10

Be generous



hello

Welcome to another year of IMPACT!

In this January/February issue, we focus on how to get new inspiration and perspectives, why realistic optimism is key, the illusion of perfection and storytelling as a communication skill.

And there's a story about us all being brand ambassadors, whether we think about it or not.

And the IMPACT HACK this time is all focused on generosity.

And we're excited to share that our third book 'The Leader's Guide to Impact' has now also been released in Chinese!



优化你的“狼嚎”，塑造可持续的积极影响力！

Enjoy the read and thanks for reading.

Here's to an impactful 2022!

Mandy Flint & Elisabet Vinberg Hearn

impact

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NEW YEAR NEW PERSPECTIVE NEW INSPIRATION



BY MANDY FLINT & ELISABET VINBERG HEARN

Are you lacking in inspiration and motivation for the year ahead? How much time have you spent on actively choosing new perspectives to get new ideas and delivering new innovative solutions?

We are all creatures of habits, that's perfectly normal. But we can - if we want - choose to challenge ourselves to break those habits by doing something different, by seeing something different - to trigger new thoughts and ideas and force us to be more innovative and seek inspiration. To do this we have to be intentional about it and be proactive in doing so.

While reflecting on our 10 years of writing recently, we mentioned the number of locations we had been in to write our three books.

To some degree the different locations came down to necessity as we lived in different countries while writing our first two books, but that's certainly not the whole story. No, we also decided that we now and then needed to see and experience something different in order to continuously get a new perspective and new ideas for our writing.

One such example was deciding to go to Oxford while writing our first book, *The Team Formula*.

In the book, the team was having a team offsite in Oxford and to do the location justice, we decided we needed to write some of the story in situ. And it really worked.

If we may say so ourselves, it added depth to the location descriptions that would have been hard to achieve from our usual writing setting. And it affected the characters' outlooks too as we had to really put ourselves in their shoes while describing what they experienced while there.

Having enjoyed the inspiration of Oxford, and the new perspectives it provided, we have made a point of taking any and all opportunity to write while travelling together.

So we have now not just written in several locations in Sussex, London, Oxford and Stockholm – but also in San Francisco, Singapore, Charlotte and Houston – and in midair, on planes!

....continued

"IT'S NOT WHAT YOU LOOK AT THAT MATTERS; IT'S WHAT YOU SEE."

Henry David Thoreau

Here are some examples – inspiration hit while...

- punting on the river Thames in Oxford
- observing the sea lions from San Francisco's Pier 39
- consuming HUGE coffees at Starbucks in Charlotte, North Carolina
- working on a keynote talk in the bar onboard a plane to Singapore
- researching garden mazes at Hampton Court Palace outside London
- being interviewed on Share Radio in London
- working in Brighton
- taking a boat trip in Stockholm

What all these examples remind us of is that when we stimulate our senses with new scenery, new sounds and even new scents, we feel differently; energised, determined, calm – or any other relevant feeling.

And we get new perspectives, we notice new things, we break the monotony of day-to-day habits – and inspiration hits.

This can easily be recreated in day-to-day work too. Imagine that you are working from home and how simply going for a walk (not always the same route) or meeting up for lunch with colleague/friend can provide that opportunity for new brainwaves and aha moments. How valuable is that!

AND – and this is a crucial one – constant innovation is a top priority for all organisations, so all you can do to make creativity, idea creation and ongoing innovation a reality is not just a necessity but a clever success strategy!

You just never know exactly how and when inspiration will hit, but it does. And you can be the architect of that.

Yes, variety is the spice of life, and we never know which particular situation or location will provide the most inspiration or why. Sometimes we may be inspired just because we are open to it – there can be so many reasons.

But the important thing to remember is that breaking away from patterns always gives new perspective and subsequently much welcome inspiration.

What will you do to ensure you provide yourself with new inspiration, new perspectives and new ideas for the year? Who can you collaborate with on that?

“A PILE OF ROCKS CEASES TO BE A ROCK PILE WHEN SOMEBODY CONTEMPLATES IT WITH THE IDEA OF A CATHEDRAL IN MIND.”

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry



ARE YOU A REALISTIC OPTIMIST?

There is no better way to start the year

BY MANDY FLINT & ELISABET VINBERG HEARN

Do you assume things will go well? Do you dare take sensible risk, believing in yourself whilst doing so? Do you keep being optimistic even when things go wrong and you have to try a new way out? Do you see plenty of opportunities around you?

And do you at the same time stop and think about the practicalities of it all? How long it will take? If you have the resources needed? Do you think about what's going on in the market and how that might impact your plan? Do you stare reality in the face without fear or hesitation?

Then you're a realistic optimist - and there is no better way to start the year.

Clever of you. You see, realistic optimism has the perfect balance of reality and optimism.

It's the perfect marriage of a cool head and a sunny outlook.

Your realism forces you to assess all relevant facts and circumstances – and your optimism keeps you going forward towards the goal.

But at the same time, the optimism is the overarching driver. There's a relentlessness in there that often increases the chances of good outcomes.

Optimism on its own can easily become a rosy-eyed dream and nothing more.

And optimists that try to convince someone else is often disregarded as someone who is having their head in the clouds.

Whereas realistic optimists can rally support through a more complete picture, of both practicalities and hope.

And there is scientific evidence that realistic optimism is a competence that we can develop. The research also shows that optimists maintain a healthier lifestyle and live longer.

Think of the year that stretched out ahead of you. How will you use your realistic optimism as a way of achieving your goals? How can you get that balance right? How can you create a bright future?

Yes, to a realistic optimistic, the future is bright, because they are going to make sure it happens, not just dream about it.

"TOO OFTEN WE JUMP TO THE CONCLUSION THAT SOMETHING IS IMPOSSIBLE SIMPLY BECAUSE WE CANNOT SEE THE SOLUTION. NO ONE KNOWS ENOUGH TO BE A PESSIMIST."

Wayne W Dyer

PERFECTION IS OUTDATED

Don't fall into the trap of analysis paralysis

BY MANDY FLINT & ELISABET VINBERG HEARN

A reporter once asked a very successful businessman:

"What is the secret to your success?"

The man replied: "Two words"

"And they are?"

"Right decisions"

"OK, I see — and how do you make the right decisions?"

"One word"

"And that is?"

"Experience"

"I see, and how do you get experience?"

"Two words"

"And what are they?"

"Wrong decisions"

We heard this story years ago — and still think it's a great one.

So many people have "analysis paralysis", worrying about what decision to make, worrying that there is a "right" and a "wrong" decision.

The thing is, we can never really know — whatever decision we make, we can't go back and compare the outcome with what the outcome would have been if we had taken the other option. Nothing stands still, there's no way of knowing what result the other decision would have rendered. We must simply see it all as learning.

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS FAILURE, ONLY RESULTS. LEARNING HELPS US TO DEVELOP AND GROW. IF WE DON'T LEARN WE DON'T GROW.

We of course need to do some analysis and comparison of the options — and then make the decision and move on.

And recognise that even the "wrong" decisions are "right", as they always bring us experience and an outcome that can be evaluated and used as fuel for the next steps.

And in a fast changing world, there is definitely no time for endless "analysis paralysis" — we need to be able to make decisions where we balance the need for speed with depth and breadth of data — to be able to progress the situation/project etc.

It of course takes a certain amount of courage to make a decision and take responsibility for its outcome.

Courage is crucial to progress and success. We must be willing for all of our decisions to not all be perfect.

....continued

"I NEVER LOSE. EITHER I WIN OR LEARN."

Nelson Mandela

Let's be honest, when is anything ever "perfect"? Is there even such a thing? And would it really be something to strive for? We'd say no.

Maybe perfection is to learn?

Maybe perfection is to keep getting better at something?

Could it be that perfection - particularly in the analysis paralysis scenario - is outdated? Yes. definitely - perfection is outdated.

Yes, the world unquestionably moves too quickly for perfection. We are all on a non-stop learning journey. Trial and error and learning is natural and good.

So beware the illusion of "perfection".

It so easily makes us too cautious, too worried of not getting it "right".

Don't let the chase for perfection trip you up. Don't let analysis paralysis stop you.

Do the analysis you need to do and then make the decision and follow through on it - and evaluate the results you get, learn from it - value the experience it gives you.

If it's not great, then get up, brush yourself off and keep going, taking your learning and experience with you on the way.

This is a display of courage, learning and resilience and they are all crucial to success.

One final thought on perfection....

We recognise of course that the pursuit of perfection typically is done with positive intent, but it can affect not just ourselves but also others negatively. Others may try hard to get it right for the perfectionist but it is of course never good enough for the perfectionist. This in turn means that others (subconsciously) won't try as hard next time which means that you don't increase productivity or innovation (or whatever you were aiming for) and it all comes back to you - you can't deliver to perfection.

If you're a perfectionist - let it go. You'll be glad you did.

"AND NOW THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE PERFECT, YOU CAN BE GOOD."

John Steinbeck

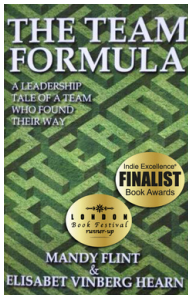


STORYTELLING ISN'T JUST FOR KIDS

One of the most powerful communication skills there is

BY MANDY FLINT & ELISABET VINBERG HEARN

The first book we wrote was a business novel called 'The Team Formula - A Leadership Tale of a Team who found their Way'.



We could have written a regular business book, to share our formula for how to work with teams. But we chose not to. Not because we couldn't but because we feel so strongly about the power of storytelling.

We encounter it all the time when we work with individuals, with teams and with organisations, that dry facts rarely engage people – but more importantly, that they rarely remember what they have read or heard, because it didn't involve them, it didn't relate directly to them.

Because, as you know – stories draw people in, stories engage, stories put people in the characters' shoes and therefore they get to experience what the character does – and lasting learning and valuable insights can happen.

Storytelling is how knowledge has been passed on from parent to child, teacher to student, mentor to mentee – since the beginning of time.

It works, it's as simple as that. And even if the world around us has changed beyond recognition since the early days of humankind, we, human beings, haven't changed significantly at all. And neither has the power of the storytelling and the impact it has on us.

When you want to engage people around you – use your stories.

If, for example, you want your team members to see the benefits of a change, share the story of how it will feel for them when the change is in place, what they'll be able to do, how a working day will look. Involve them in telling the story - ask them what they think it could look like and what it could mean for them. Storytelling as a dialogue is powerful and inclusive.

...continued

“I SIMPLY SEE LIFE AS ONE GREAT STORY AFTER ANOTHER, AND THAT'S THE WAY I'VE ALWAYS COMMUNICATED. PEOPLE REMEMBER STORIES.”

Marcus Sheridan

Or if you want your leader to understand the impact of a process change on a customer, tell them the customer's own story of how they are affected, rather than just trying to relate the facts of the case.

And if you want new employees to understand what the company is all about, share stories from the frontline, real stories of customers and why they have chosen your company – or employees stories about how the work gets done, what the culture is like.

And if you're the leader of an organisation going through change, talk about your personal connection to the change, how it affects you, your vision for the future and how it will impact others as well as yourself.

Some people don't like the word 'storytelling' and that's absolutely ok, we can simply rephrase or reframe it to the impactful practice of

- giving examples
- sharing experiences of how you have seen things work
- giving context
- telling the story of how you have got there
- sharing how you have got to the end point
- creating case studies

Because, as you no doubt know, what all stories (examples, case studies etc) have in common is that they touch something within us. It goes deeper than just the facts.

The stories create a sense of recognition, a glimmer of hope, a feeling of joy or anticipation, of insight or something else.

And this is why our following two books - "Leading Teams 10 Challenges 10 Solutions" and "The Leader's Guide to Impact" - even though they are not written as novels - are sprinkled with stories throughout. We love stories and we know that our readers do too.

The important thing is that stories make us feel – and we are feeling beings, it's when our feelings get engaged, that miracles happen.

Go on. Be a storyteller.

“TELL ME THE FACTS AND I’LL LEARN. TELL ME THE TRUTH AND I’LL BELIEVE. BUT TELL ME A STORY AND IT WILL LIVE IN MY HEART FOREVER.”

Old Native American proverb



A STORY: THE BAD BRAND AMBASSADOR

How do you represent your company?



BY MANDY FLINT & ELISABET VINBERG HEARN

Samuel was on his way home from work. He was tired and annoyed as it had been a frustrating day of office politics and he felt as if he had achieved nothing all day.

He hailed a taxi outside the office and gave the driver instructions about where to take him. He then turned his attention to his phone and called his wife.

*"Hi, Can you talk? OK, great. It's been such a s**t day and I just needed to vent a bit. Some days are just too much. You know how I had prepared that presentation for our CIO? Well, as I expected, he didn't really listen to any of what I had to say. It's so typical for this company – people say they want something but don't value it when they get it. It's all words, no-one really walks the talk around here." He paused.*

"I am not the only person who has said this, we all think the leadership are not really telling us what is happening, it does not help me to do my job, I just get so frustrated"

The taxi driver heard the monologue and grimaced to himself. He felt as if him and the other taxi drivers in town were experts at this company and all its failings. It was as if people forgot the driver was there, as if they assumed the driver was deaf, or at least didn't matter enough to consider what they were saying in front of him.

Well, I don't think I would choose to buy that company's products and services. I don't trust them – who would trust a company where employees talk so badly about it?

"YOUR IMPACT IS YOUR LEGACY"

Mandy Flint & Elisabet Vinberg Hearn

This story is a rewritten excerpt from
"The Leader's Guide to Impact" FT Publishing 2019

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ANALYSIS

The company in the story are a big employer in town, so many of the taxi drivers are repeatedly having the same experience of employees talking loudly about their experience at work in the backseat. And the taxi drivers are talking amongst themselves about what they hear which further builds a perception of the company - rightly or wrongly. The stories they hear can of course often be exaggerated and highly emotional when told (very common when someone has had a bad day), which further triggers a negative impression.

The conversations and commentary about (bad-mouthing of, in this case) the company could have an impact on the local community as well, so the company, who are of course dependent on a good standing, not least when it comes to attracting talent, might have a hard time attracting them.

This short story simply highlights how all of us, every single person, represents our organisation's brand and as such are also a carrier of the organisation's reputation. Every person can have an impact on the world of external stakeholders and opinion makers every day. *Which* impact we have is a choice we make.

"THERE IS NO ADVERTISEMENT AS POWERFUL AS A POSITIVE REPUTATION TRAVELING FAST."

Brian Koslow



IMPACT HACK #10 BE GENEROUS

**5 proven hacks
for dialling up
your impact through
generosity**

**BY MANDY FLINT &
ELISABET VINBERG HEARN**

A healthy organisation is dependent on people working effectively together. And to be generous is a big part of that. Generosity breeds generosity. And you can be the catalyst of generosity where you are.

Here are 5 proven impact hacks to consider when wanting to extend your generosity at work.

THANK/RECOGNISE SOMEONE

Stop and think: who can I thank today? Who has made a difference to your day? Who has put that extra effort in? Who has been a great team player? There is always someone who has done something great. Make time in your day for that.

Be generous with your (authentic) praise and recognition. Show people you care about them. Be a leader who likes people.

REALLY LISTEN

Keep an open mind. Be generous with your genuine consideration of the ideas and perspectives of others. Listen with curiosity.

Ask questions, build on what's being said. Consider ideas and opinions - don't be too quick to judge. Listen without judgment. Seek to understand.

OFFER YOUR KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE

Share your knowledge and insights fearlessly. But only if people are open to it and are open to listening. One way of doing that is to make sure you share it as a suggestion, not the only answer.

Sharing creates new learning, both for the receiver AND the giver.

SEEK OUT PEOPLE WHO NEED YOUR SUPPORT

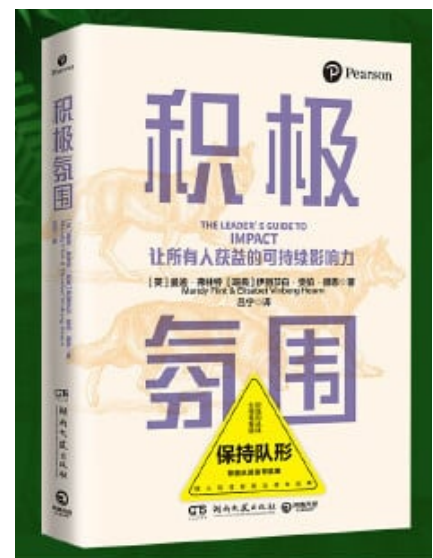
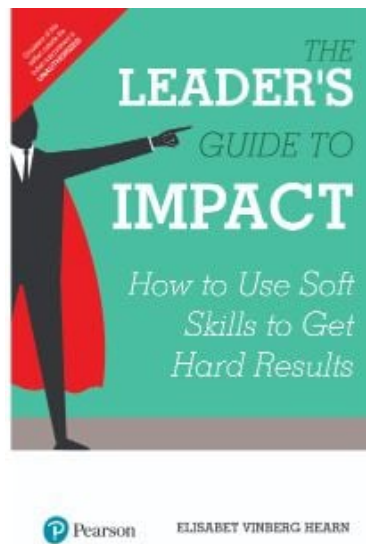
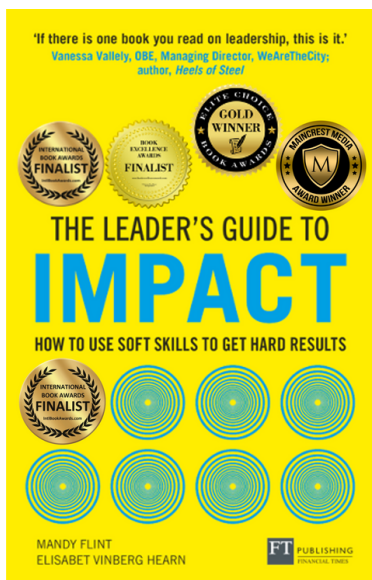
Look around you. Who may be struggling? Who needs your support? Keep in mind that it could be anyone - direct report, boss, peer or even someone external.

BE PRESENT

Wherever you are, whoever you're with - be fully present. Don't let yourself be distracted by what came before or will come after. Be generous with your time and presence.

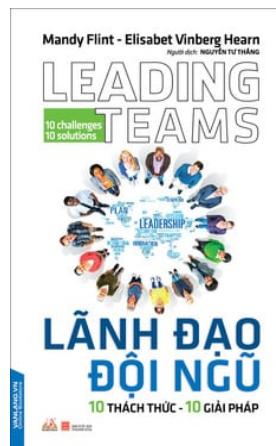
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**3 books, 11 awards, 7 covers, 4 languages:
English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese**



*The Leader's Guide to Impact
India edition*

*The Leader's Guide to Impact
China edition*



*Leading Teams
Vietnam edition*



*Leading Teams
Mexico edition*



**“LET’S BE REASONABLE AND ADD AN EIGHTH DAY TO THE WEEK THAT IS
DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO READING.”**

Lena Dunham



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