

AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP TALK

Human-centred leadership training
Award-winning | Effective | Empowering



Have we made paperwork more important than our purpose?

Celebrating 14 years: and this is the one question I can't stop asking myself...

This month marks a very special milestone for us: **PROfound Leadership turns 14 years old.** Looking back, I'm incredibly grateful.

Over the past 14 years, I've had the privilege of working alongside thousands of leaders from all walks of life. Together we've explored difficult conversations, built confidence, strengthened emotional intelligence, developed resilience, navigated change, celebrated successes and learnt from setbacks.

There have been over 500 workshops, webinars and keynote presentations, over 1,000 hours of coaching conversations, countless strategy sessions, coffees, airport lounges, late nights developing resources, and wonderful moments connecting with people who genuinely want to make a positive difference.

Thank you for being part of that journey.

While many things have changed during those 14 years, one thing hasn't: Our belief that leadership has always been, and always will be, about people.

Which perhaps explains why I've found myself reflecting on one question lately: **When did the paper become more important than the purpose?**

"People don't experience our intentions. They experience our impact."

That simple question became the inspiration for this month's leadership article.

As always, in this month's Leadership Talk you'll also find practical leadership reflections, a glimpse behind the scenes, and ways to continue the conversation.

Keep scrolling!
Martin



Are your systems supporting great work or slowing it down? Discover why trust, purpose and people should always come before paperwork, and how leaders can reduce unnecessary bureaucracy while maintaining accountability. 

When did paper become more important than purpose?

Somewhere along the way, many organisations became experts at proving work was happening instead of helping people create meaningful impact. We measure what is easy to measure instead of what matters most.

Forms instead of trust.

Processes instead of purpose.

Compliance instead of conversations.

Of course, documentation, governance and accountability all have an important place. The danger begins when the paperwork quietly becomes more important than the people it was designed to support.

In this month's article, I explore why bureaucracy isn't necessarily the problem - but why a lack of trust often is. You'll discover why great leaders focus on removing unnecessary friction, empowering responsible people, and creating systems that support meaningful work instead of replacing it.

 If you would like to join the conversation, check out the article here:

[\[https://profoundleadership.com.au/when-did-paperwork-become-more-important-than-purpose/\]](https://profoundleadership.com.au/when-did-paperwork-become-more-important-than-purpose/)



Reflection

"Are our systems helping our people make a greater difference - or simply helping them prove they're trying?"



Support that meets you where you are

Purpose should always guide process - not the other way around. By regularly questioning how we work (not just what we do), we can create workplaces where accountability and trust work hand in hand. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Quick win [leadership tip]

The purpose pause

Before introducing another form, meeting, approval or process, ask one simple question: "How does this help someone create better outcomes?"

If you can't answer that question clearly, the process may have outlived its purpose.

Every system should do one of three things:

1. Protect people.
2. Improve quality.
3. Make work easier.

If it doesn't, consider whether it needs to be simplified, redesigned or removed.

Leadership challenge: This week, identify one unnecessary step in your own work and ask, "*What would happen if we stopped doing this?*" You might discover that removing friction creates more value than adding another process.



Self-reflection [leadership tip]

3 questions worth asking

Whether you lead an organisation, a team or simply yourself, take a few minutes to reflect on these questions.

1. Which processes genuinely create value?

Which systems help people perform at their best?

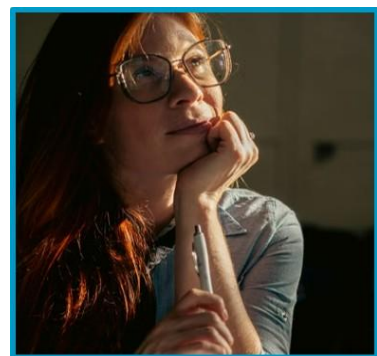
2. Which processes exist simply because "we've always done it that way"?

Could something be simplified, removed or improved?

3. Where could you replace unnecessary control with greater trust?

Sometimes the greatest productivity improvement isn't adding another process. It's removing one.

Small changes often create the biggest impact!



Resources and support [training/coaching]

Creating workplaces where people thrive

One lesson has become clearer every year over the past 14 years: Great leadership isn't about creating more rules. It's about creating environments where accountability and trust work together.

Through our human-centred leadership workshops, keynote presentations and coaching programs, we help organisations reduce unnecessary friction, strengthen ownership, improve communication and build cultures where people can focus on what matters most - making a meaningful difference.

If you're looking to develop confident leaders and high-performing teams (or boost your own leadership skills), we'd love to explore how we can support you.



- 👉 [Explore our training options](#)
- 👉 [Check out the coaching programs](#)
- 👉 [Book an obligation-free strategy session](#)

14 years in 14 lessons [Behind the scenes]

Anniversaries naturally invite reflection. As I look back, I'm not thinking about the number of workshops facilitated, kilometres travelled or hours spent designing programs.

I'm thinking about the people.

The conversations that changed perspectives. The leaders who found confidence they didn't know they had. The organisations brave enough to put people first. The wonderful clients, community members, friends and family who have supported us along the way.

Every opportunity to facilitate, coach or speak has been a privilege. So whether you've attended a workshop, joined one of our Meetups, read an article, listened to a podcast, purchased a resource, or simply shared an encouraging conversation...

Thank you.

Your support has made these 14 years incredibly meaningful, and we're excited about what the future holds. Here's to continuing to build workplaces where people thrive.



Looking back over the past 14 years, these are some of the **lessons that have shaped both my leadership and my life:**

1. Lead yourself before attempting to lead others.
2. Confidence grows through action, not certainty.
3. People don't experience intention; they experience impact.
4. Respond... don't react.
5. Curiosity builds bridges; judgement builds walls.
6. The quality of your questions determines the quality of your leadership.
7. Trust your people - and give them reasons to trust you.
8. The things we value most are often the hardest to measure.
9. Choose purpose before process and people before paperwork.
10. Conflict handled well strengthens relationships.
11. Every challenge carries the seed of learning.
12. Go big on the small things - they become the big things.
13. Independent people achieve more when they choose to collaborate.
14. Success is meaningful only when it creates a positive impact on others.

I'd love to hear your thoughts. **At what point do systems stop helping people... and start getting in the way?** Simply reply to this email or join the conversation on or socials.

As always, if you have questions or simply want to talk through options, reach out. We are on your support team.

Dare to make a difference!
Martin



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