

# EMPATHETIC *leadership*

PEOPLE FOR SUCCESS FOUNDER  
**KRISTYN HAYWOOD** TALKS  
ABOUT COMPASSIONATE  
LEADERSHIP AND OFFERS FIVE TIPS  
TO LEAD MORE EMPATHETICALLY.

WORDS **JULIE COOPER**

If COVID-19 has taught the world anything, it's the greater need for collaboration, kindness and, above all, connection, which are all fiercely feminine traits. Not only are these characteristics altering our home life, but they're also completely changing our work life – forever redefining the future of leadership.

"It's a fiercely feminine time," says People for Success Founder Kristyn Haywood. "During a crisis like COVID-19, the feminine qualities of empathy, vulnerability and expression are incredibly important for the future sustainability of businesses. As such, leadership after this pandemic is going to be much more inspiring."

Ruling with an iron fist? Not inspiring. Ruling with a soft heart? Also, not inspiring. While feminine traits are indeed necessary to cultivate creativity and foster connection, that's only half the story. »



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## GIFT SPOTTING

Kristyn is affectionately known as the 'Gift Spotter' thanks to her innate ability to help identify remarkable gifts in others. It's with her 'Gift Spotter Movement' that she helps people potentiate their gifts and align their values with the work of their organisations.



The masculine and feminine are like yin and yang. They are both essential to achieving balance, and therefore, success. However, when one is slightly off kilter and the pendulum swings hard to one side or the other, that's where imbalance and faulty leadership can occur.

"When those feminine and masculine qualities are in balance in both men and women, that's what makes a great leader," Kristyn says. "And, we love to work with those leaders because we feel cared for – there's compassion and empathy. They demonstrate qualities of care and achievement balanced with focus and discipline."

And, the results of this balanced leadership extend beyond the manager-staff relationship, translating into a better experience for the customer.

"Empathy is the first step in design thinking, which is the new way of designing products and services that are of value to the customers," explains Kristyn. "If we can empathise with customers, we're going to be able to deliver much more suitable products and services in this whole disruptive world."

It's clear that this balance of care and achievement is essential for successful leadership and businesses. But, how can this sweet spot be achieved? For that, Kristyn has you covered with her recently released, free, e-learning program entitled 'Leading Remotely during COVID-19'.

"I wanted to get the message out there about compassionate leadership, and I wanted to reach as many people as possible," she shares. "We're all in this together. COVID-19 isn't just happening to me, it's happening to everyone. So, I thought, 'How can I be of most value? What can I give during this crisis?'"

As a leadership educator who started her own company more than 15 years ago, Kristyn has a wealth of knowledge to share. She hosts leadership trainings, takes executives off-site for retreats and does a lot of work with leadership teams to break down conflict and help them connect with their purpose.

"That's what I do, and I love it," she says. "When I first started out, I read hundreds of books. For every topic I taught, I had to know more and more and more. I had to know the next level and the next layer and the next, which has led me to have an extraordinary knowledge about human behaviour and leadership."

This extensive knowledge is crammed into each and every morsel of her easy-to-digest formula for leading remotely. From personal management to engagement and even reducing the number of 'Quarantini' nights, Kristyn offers the following five tips for effective leadership during a crisis.

### 1. MANAGE YOUR STATE

"As a leader, the most important thing is managing your state," Kristyn stresses. "And that's to be grounded, so you can connect with people remotely. It allows you to have a really meaningful meeting – humans connecting with humans."

Activities like walks in nature, meditation, breathwork and even eating nourishing foods will go a long way to helping you manage your state. It's like the old adage of putting your oxygen mask on first; in order to help others, you must first take care of your own needs. And, if you think about it, it's the perfect balance of the masculine's focus of self with the feminine's focus of others.

### 2. KEEP PEOPLE ENGAGED

"Connect your team to the importance of their work – 'Just reminding you that this is why we do what we do, this is the value, and you're a key part of that'," she advises. "When

you're managing remote workers, you could have a Zoom call and rattle off a checklist of things to do. But that wouldn't be very effective. It's likely your remote worker won't be able to connect with you this way. In fact, it could even disconnect them from their passion for work in some ways."

A funny thing happens when people work remotely. Without subtle body language cues or facial expressions to rely on, the meaning of a simple message can be completely misconstrued. So, it's imperative as a leader to lean into the feminine trait of connection, scheduling Zoom meetings for a catch-up that isn't all work related.

### 3. KEEP YOUR PEOPLE FOCUSED

To help your employees stay focused, it's more effective to ask open-ended questions than to bark orders, Kristyn says.

"Say, 'What's your focus for the day?'" rather than, 'Do this, this, this and this,'" she advises. "If we don't create a space in this remote world for ideas to pop and come to life, it can lead to anxiety. When we're in an anxious state and people are rushing us, cortisol and adrenaline pump through our bodies. Anxiety then blocks creativity because we need to focus on the threat. And, of course, that doesn't contribute to good decisions."

### 4. HAVE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

"This really requires leaders to connect to their hearts," Kristyn says. "It takes a bit of extra effort, but they really need to show compassion. Learning how to have those conversations and using the right language is critically important."

For example, if you have to let someone go, apologise and offer hope that if things change in the future, you'll be in touch. Don't simply hand over the paperwork and say good luck. "It's going to make a very big difference to the human being that's sitting in front of you, whether remotely or face-to-face," she says.

### 5. REDUCE ALCOHOL INTAKE

Even though alcohol sales are through the roof thanks to COVID-19, Kristyn says being an effective leader means laying off the booze more often than not.

"You cannot be a good leader if you're drinking every night," she says adamantly. "You'll be irritated because it's toxic. It's poison. I've personally seen the deteriorating health of many of my clients from drinking too often. They look fatigued, and they feel tired and cranky. The consequences that drinking alcohol have on your body are just not worth it."

Instead, Kristyn says to get outside, go and play ball with the kids or just do something different. Creating a new ritual can help make new habits stick. But, above all else, simply find ways to connect back to yourself and connect back to your heart.

"To be an inspiring leader, you need to be connected to your values," she says. "You need to be authentic. The masculine and feminine balance needs to be there. And that balance is fiercely compassionate." ■



Kristyn at The CEO Magazine's 2020 IWD event