



Taking the lead in creating new worlds

Many of us would like to change the world. When I think of leadership, I think of people who can guide us to better results: a world where there is less poverty, less inequality and more care for the planet. I was lucky that my first job in Cape Town at the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town landed me amongst a group of young and visionary women who were looking for these same results.

In four years these powerful women were able to show me how to change at least some of the world. Creating results from a shared vision was my first lesson in leadership. We started with shared values of social justice and social action, we found the evidence, and we spoke out. (Well, not me, I was writing the stuff). They were formidable in Parliament, on TV and on radio and in policy meetings. As a result, for example, we have one of the most progressive pieces of legislation for children anywhere in the world in our Children's Act.

But it took me years to recognise they didn't just change the world, they changed my life. They invited me in. They saw my strengths and challenged me to use them. They co-created with me. I became confident in their company. This was my second lesson in leadership. Leaders don't just create results, they create cultures and communities that sustain those results.

Being young women with the world to change, we soon scattered to go about this in different ways. Me to do the Diploma in Practitioner Coaching and begin my work as a coach and facilitator. Over the years, I followed their careers and with others I kept close for they had become friends. We turned 40 and then we turned 45 and we felt jaded and we questioned whether any of our work had really made a difference.

But then recently I heard a talk by Dhammamegha Leatt which inspired me. Annie had been at the Children's Institute, she had also done The Coaching Centre's Diploma in Practitioner Coaching and now she is Dhammamegha, a Buddhist leader in the Triratna. At a Buddhist conference at Adhithana, Coddington, United Kingdom, she addressed this topic of not being able to change the world directly. She said our friends are more than our friends. That with conscious community we can "radically change the conditions of each other's existence". She said that she'd realised that saving the world was impossible but that we could support new worlds through our intentional practice in community, and that we could invite others into these new worlds. As she said: "We build these networks of awakening...and this is what we can offer the world. We can make new worlds and we can invite other people to participate in those worlds and we can show people what kinds of worlds are possible".

At The Coaching Centre (TCC) we are conscious about the world we create. It's safe. It's respectful. It's critical. We offer each other feedback so that we might grow. And we offer this space gladly to others. I feel proud that in participating in this community where we alter the conditions of each other's existence, we create a new world. This gives us the confidence and courage to go out and create other new worlds. And we keep inviting people in.

And so, this is my third lesson in smart leadership. Leaders keep inviting others into new worlds, the conscious communities that we have created. As leaders, we carry a vision for how we want the world to be, but more important we set about creating that world in the here and now, in the very next conversation that we have, and we invite others in.

By Jo Monson
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