THE VIRTUE OF VULNERABILITY

REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP PRESENTED BY
THE MARKETING ACADEMY AUSTRALIA 2019 SCHOLARS
What is the virtue of vulnerability?

In today’s fast-paced, screen-obsessed, dog-eat-dog world, we’ve created an expectation where vulnerability is to be disguised, hidden away and forcefully forgotten. “Fake it till you make it”, “don’t get emotional” is language that is commonplace at work, and leadership has become about perception, control and power.

But this view of vulnerability is flawed. When we share our vulnerabilities with others, it creates a new common language: one of empathy, expression, connection, and growth. Personal virtues promote collective and individual greatness, and there is not a virtue more lacking than vulnerability. The gift of vulnerability is rare. It is to be savoured, treasured, appreciated and most importantly, reciprocated.

‘The Virtue of Vulnerability’ is a collection of stories from some of the top marketing leaders of today.

A letter from Sherilyn

A little over 5 years ago I arrived in Sydney to explore the opportunity of launching The Marketing Academy in Australia. It was a huge and frankly risky move. Would the marketing, media and advertising community want it? Would they sponsor it? Would we get the CEO industry executives we needed as Mentors and Coaches to support it? Would the bosses nominate their talent for it? Would they laugh me out of town? What would it mean for the Academy if I failed? Was I even doing the right thing investing our already scant resources in setting up 10,000 miles away? I can’t lie, I also thought about what failure would mean for me! I was gambling a lot professionally and personally. Vulnerable doesn’t touch how I was feeling. Terrified is closer. Honestly, there was a voice in my head telling me that if I crashed and burned at the first meeting I’d get straight on a plane home and not tell anyone I’d left the UK! But I also decided I would be completely open with everyone I met; “Please help me – I can’t do this alone, we need the industry to ‘lean in’, no we don’t know the market at all and we have no experience here... but we can learn if you help us.”

I got lucky. The very first Australian I met, straight off the plane, was John ‘Steady’ Steedman. He listened, for an hour, to this Brit, who’d never stepped foot in the country before, talking through a somewhat rambling and clunky pitch about an organisation he’d never heard of. He was kind, gracious and generous. I felt welcomed, accepted and supported within 60 minutes. I didn’t fly home for another 3 weeks and in October 2014, thanks to so many awesome people like Steady, we announced The Marketing Academy Australia was open.

So I’m thrilled and very proud that our Scholars are marking our 5th birthday in Australia with a publication exploring ‘The Virtue of Vulnerability’. We all know that word is used often but not everyone knows that the origin of the word lies in a Latin noun which means ‘wound’ and the Latin verb ‘to wound’. Maybe that’s why we seek to conceal our own vulnerabilities or wounds... for fear that they will be used against us, to further ‘wound’ us? Well, here’s the thing – human beings crave connection, to belong, to trust and be trusted, to feel safe in every context to be who we are. The beautiful thing is that in sharing our vulnerabilities, by revealing our wounds and wearing them proudly connects us all, provoking immense trust, profound understanding and empathy.

Vulnerability IS a virtue and stories which prove it are shared by our Scholars and mentors on the pages of this book. I hope they inspire you to reveal a little more, share a little more, because everyone has wounds – and I’ll show you mine, if you show me yours.

SHERILYN SHACKELL
FOUNDER AND CEO
THE MARKETING ACADEMY
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The 2019 Scholars would like to thank the team at The Marketing Academy Australia, the mentors, coaches and alumni for inspiring us, growing us and pushing us to be the best leaders we can be.

As part of our graduation, we’ve themed this year’s showcase ‘The virtue of vulnerability’ – an exploration of vulnerability as a human trait, its role in leadership, how it is suppressed, ignored, concealed and stifled, but also how it can enable leaders to thrive.

We’ve written and collected honest and inspiring stories from the industry’s top leaders, revealing the pivotal moments when they decided what kind of leader they wanted to be. Our aim is for this publication is to inspire the next generation of marketing talent and it is our gift to the industry.

HAPPY 5TH BIRTHDAY TO THE MARKETING ACADEMY AUSTRALIA

The Marketing Academy is a non-profit and voluntary organisation who develop leadership capability in talented marketers from the Marketing, Advertising and Communications industries through mentoring, coaching and experiential learning. All of The Marketing Academy programmes are provided free of charge.

There are many development programmes which will teach you to be a better marketer and many more that can tell you how to become a better leader. The Marketing Academy deliver the only programme that will also show you why.

The Marketing Academy scholarship programme focuses on the 4Ps development modules:

- **Personal Development**: Become an extraordinary human being
- **People Development**: Become an inspirational leader
- **Professional Development**: Become an exceptional marketer
- **Purpose**: Become a change maker

A free, highly selective, 35 day learning programme is delivered over 9 months for 30 carefully selected delegates. Packed full of money can’t buy experiences and best in class content this unique development programme has been designed to include a powerful combination of mentoring, coaching and sessions delivered by some of the top CEOs, CMOs and business leaders from Australia and the rest of the world. During the program the delegates will experience:

**One to One Mentoring**

Each scholar meets with up to eight of Australia’s most experienced and inspirational marketing leaders. With help from a team of over 40 hosting CEOs, CMOs and Directors from Marketing, Media and Advertising who each have committed their time to The Marketing Academy as a Mentor.

**Executive Coaching**

Nine months input from one of a team of 30 professional Executive Coaches. The coaching element of the programme provides the delegates with a critical sounding board, plus challenges and facilitates their thinking and development.

**Residential Boot Camps**

Three fully immersive ‘Boot Camps’ where delegates share learning, insight and experiences. The first is a five day Boot Camp followed by two days in July and a two days in October where in addition to a full induction, inspiration speakers, workshops and learning sessions, the delegates undergo an intense leadership development programme.
The 2019 Scholars are a diverse group of leaders from Marketing, Media and Advertising in Australia, working across a broad range of categories including technology, financial services, FMCG, quick service restaurants, consumer electronics, energy and publishing.

All starting with our first boot camp at the Q Station at Manly in March, the past 9 months has seen each of us experience different journeys of personal and professional growth, and now we’re ready to graduate and pass on our learning to the industry.
REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP

STORIES FROM THE MARKETING ACADEMY AUSTRALIA 2019 SCHOLARS

"I lost my confidence."

"I'm such an arsehole."

"Conflict is never going to be comfortable."

"I get to the end of The Marketing Academy Scholarship without a title. Without a role. Without belonging anywhere. But I leave with much, much more."

In the following pages, the 2019 Scholars embrace their vulnerability.

Each scholar will share a moment that made them reflect on the leader they were, and made them pivot to the leader they want to be.
I’m an arsehole.

Sitting on the couch at home, trying to defractelize from a deep deeyer, hyper–coffeenated day, I’m half-listening to my partner talking. She’s trying to help me. She’s trying to tell me that I’d trashed the day of one of our employees. That I’d hurt them. At least, I’d brush it off. At worst, I’d drop back on my partner. Something didn’t go the way I wanted it to. In fact, nothing did.

They didn’t do it as well as me.

They never understood what I meant.

They didn’t try as hard.

They didn’t have to react that way.

I’m such an arsehole.

Scholars and coaching at TMA that I have learned that I know very little; and that’s an amazingly valuable lesson.

The Marketing Academy wasn’t at all about marketing, it was about Scholastic learning, mentoring, coaching and friendships. Scholars delivered endless moments of brilliance. Vulnerabilities were uncovered and deeper connections made. Each coaching session has provided a gem of wisdom. Each presenter, insightful and rare. And my fellow Scholars turned into mentors and not a mentee.

But, I was so very wrong.

I went into The Marketing Academy not really knowing what to expect. I imagined I’d meet a few new people, maybe make a couple of connections and learn a little bit more about best practice in marketing. I even thought there was a possibility I’d generate some business out of it. You see, I’m turning 42 this year and have had about 20 years in the industry.

I’ve participated in numerous courses, completed a degree, facilitated team workshops and run off-site days. I’ve built businesses and teams, sat on boards, had an executive coach for years, discovered my purpose and feel I’ve developed an acutely self-awareness. I know I’m still a work in progress (I like to say, “recovering dickhead”), but if I’m really honest, there was a part of me that thought, maybe I should be going into The Marketing Academy as a mentor and not a mentee.

But, I was so very wrong.

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Co-Founder, Radiocarbon

For me there hasn’t been a singular lightbulb moment but rather, a string of events that started my evolution into the kind of leader I want to be. (Disclaimer: I’m still a major work-in-progress!)

Looking back, there has been a lot packed into the past 12 months. In late 2018 I travelled solo to Ecuador and stayed at a remote shamanic Ayahuasca retreat in the Andes for a few weeks. In February of this year, my mother unexpectedly passed away from an, until-then, undiscovered form of terminal cancer as I was halfway through the application process for the Marketing Academy. I had planned to withdraw from the process as I was overwhelmed by the loss and the constant travel back and forth from CA (where I’m from) and where Mum lived; but simply had forgotten to. I definitely wasn’t at my best, so you can imagine my surprise in March when I was formally offered a spot as a 2019 Scholar! Oh yeah, and just because we hadn’t had enough going on, my partner (Alana) and I decided to move house in July.

So, as you can see, it’s been a big year of change and this has led to a lot of introspection and reflection. One of the things that crystallised most on a professional level throughout the duration of The Marketing Academy program is that my career and my role as a leader isn’t about what’s in it for myself, it’s about others. It’s about the people that I work with and for, inside and outside the organisation, as well as the special people that are there for us when we’re not at work. After all, what matters most is the quality of our relationships and our overall well-being. How we show-up as leaders has a direct impact on how others feel about themselves, how connected they are and whether they believe that their work is meaningful.

From here on, my leadership mission is about the betterment of business and all of the people it touches. I have a responsibility to influence a change in mindset from “what’s in it for me” to “how can we help”, being the voice for consumers, customers, suppliers and society. Senior marketers and innovators, like those lucky enough to be part of The Marketing Academy, have so many opportunities to change things for the better and use our positions as forces for good, and I truly believe that we should.

Tourism Australia

Looking to those around me and communicating well is tough. I always thought I’ve been good at. Open communication is something my husband and I talked about in our marriage vows. Communication is so important and transcends all relationships, all work or home, what we’ve unconsciously observed that day. But it was my partner who opened it all and especially me.

Great communication is not about who says the most, stamps their authority or wins the point. Great communications hear everyone in the room. We learned truly great leaders help those around them search for answers by giving them a step up and a voice in a forum.

It was so taken aback by the reaction I went on to speak with a wonderful mentor about it at a dinner date – I said to me that even when he knew the answer in the room, he’d spend an extra amount of time asking questions and coaching until others found the answer … how great is that?! Of course there are times when conversations need to move quickly but you need to be a conversation because you have more information – but what about asking that person in the group that you know has great knowledge to contribute if they are confident enough to say they haven’t heard and included?

The Marketing Academy has opened my eyes to not only how to communicate so much more effectively, but to do it in a way that convey my leadership vision, to do it with inclusivity and demonstrate ‘value other people by first valuing what they have to say.”
I never started out with a plan. My career, and life for that matter, had been a series of events beginning with the phrase - ‘well that sounds interesting, why not’, and then utilizing all my resources to make it work. Gut feeling rather than strategy lead me from one adventure to the next which always felt perfectly fine, until it didn’t. I had reached a certain age and milestone in my career which also signalled being a working mother and leader of the home.

With this accumulation of responsibility came more intense interest - interest from others, scrutiny from myself. What were my aspirations, my passion, career goals and 5 year plans. I found I didn’t always have clear answers to these questions. I didn’t plan to get here – it just felt right. I didn’t know where I was going – I hadn’t seen it yet. My seemingly natural ability to lead and lead others, all of which seemed to follow when I came to leading myself. This intense feeling I should know something more began to manifest. I felt that everyone around me had an infallible career compass, that all successful people have master plans precisely achieved. This fear began to chip away at my confidence - perhaps hard work is not enough, maybe I don’t know what I’m doing, and eventually questioning if I deserve to be here at all?

On day one of our first bootcamp, Chris Savage wisely set the scene for anyone I’m leading, doesn’t waste energy bucketing things for anyone I’m leading, doesn’t waste energy bucketing things. He said, “You are more important than you think and your profile. He sips an espresso.

BRYAN WILMOT

Global Head of Marketing, Stake

It’s intimidating meeting with Damian Stals. As you arrive to the top floor of the Sunny Hils News Corp building, you’re ushered into an executive office with plush chairs, multiple TV screens and Damian out at table reading your profile. He sips on espresso.

As I started speaking with Damian, a hyper-big dog in Australian media, and someone that simply refers to the big boss as Rupert, I felt, I was immediately blown away by his precision and clarity of thought. He’d seen it all, he knew it all, he’d done it all. Had I just walked in up?

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I was the typical overachiever. Throughout High School, University and the start of my career-- when I put in the work, I got results. I studied hard and got good marks. I did the heavy lifting and got really good at my job. I took on bigger projects and got promoted. But as I progressed in my career, this formula stopped working. When I became a manager, I thought I had to do it all, I thought I was the only one who could do what I did. I put pressure on myself to have all the answers. When I failed, I was hard on myself—constantly focusing on what I could have done better. I thought leadership was about being on top of it all and the concept was so daunting to me. Being part of The Marketing Academy has shown me I’ve been looking at it all wrong. It’s not about me. It’s not about having all the answers. And there is no magic

Of the first few weeks of bootcamp, the first big public speech was nerve-racking. With much bashful he pointed out, “you get what you work for, you get what you work for.” I realised the process that had helped me achieve so much wasn’t going to be enough anymore.

My next realisation was when the Margaret Hellens TED Talk, The Pedaling Leader was quoted - “you can’t be a super chicken and be an exceptional leader.” It became clear to me -- I am a super chicken. I generally lose when there’s a gold and development of my team, but my past passion for an area in which I wasn’t really thinking about what was best for them -- ultimately -- I was motivated by what I thought I could do for me.

Beyond this, my confidence was eroded by the literally any opportunity to fail. Leaders need to be curious, to explore, to find the new, to listen, to make mistakes, to learn, and more importantly, be prepared to change.

I’ve only just begun to curve my self-imposed barriers to being a great leader. Considering everything, I have learnt at The Marketing Academy. I am invigorated and committed to staying curious.
I was no stranger to the virtue of vulnerability when I started The Marketing Academy… in fact, I was feeling exposed and in desperate need for a bit of time to readjust and put my shield back on so I could carry on. But that was the opposite of what I got as a result. I felt like such a fraud.

Here I was a poster child for opening up and sharing your story in a bid to build connection and remove the stigma of mental health. I wanted to hide from a room of 30 of my industry peers. I was feeling exposed and in desperate need for a bit of time to readjust and put my shield back on so I could carry on. That was the opposite of what I got as a result. I felt like such a fraud.

I removed the mask and faced up to the persona. Little did I know my life was about to expand in a way I wasn’t aware I needed it to.

I had somewhat of an epiphany on the third day of bootcamp. Dropping the mask and seeing what’s underneath and having the courage to take ownership in your character and stop hiding has forever changed my perception of myself and of others.

I knew that I was capable of being a leader that deeply cares and has courage. Practising my energy to my strengths of complex problem solving, enabling outcomes and influencing people to bring them along with you and meet me. And now I know that I am highly motivated by creating ways to connect with people in unique, fun, interesting and meaningful ways.

The Marketing Academy has been much more than inspirational talks and executive coaching. It has taught me that vulnerability is a strength, and not a tool. Life expands or contracts in direct proportion to your courage.

I had reached rock bottom and the next few months were a blur. I became highly anxious. Everything was tiring. Moments that would’ve been easy in friends. I started exercising. I meditated daily. It took six months to feel like myself again. Thankfully I did have great support through this – my husband and family; my manager at work. And little by little I came out of the fog. I confided in friends. I started exercising. I meditated daily. It took six months to feel like myself again.

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I tried to deflect the suggestion – I have good support at home and didn’t think I needed professional help. I said I would consider it.

The next morning, I couldn’t face the day. Literally. I mustered enough energy to visit my GP and was quickly referred to a psychologist. I told him that I had reached rock bottom and the next few months were a blur. I became highly anxious. Everything was tiring. Moments that would’ve been easy in friends. I started exercising. I meditated daily. It took six months to feel like myself again.

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‘When we deny the story, it defines us. When we own the story, we can write a brave new ending.’
Am I Two Different People? This was the question running through my mind. As I sat in the daily (but very charming) school room at the Q Station, whilst soaking in the Living Leader programme. I am surrounded by some of the best marketing talent in the country, sharing our stories, our motivations, our heartaches, all learning to their passion for success, and taking on board the course content, I’ve never been so inspired to begin building the career I want to achieve, to lay down the rules and behaviours that an effective leader needs to demonstrate. Suddenly, the thought of being part of something big isn’t so distant, and I could feel change in a positive way, I am capable of anything I want to achieve in my career.

But why stop at my career?

Earlier in the week, Nigel Marsh talked about the (un)importance of work/life balance as a leader. Nigel introduced the concept of getting rid of the analogy altogether, shouldn’t we just have ‘life’, he pondered? But why stop at work/life balance as a leader. Nigel introduced the concept of getting rid of the analogy altogether, shouldn’t we just have ‘life’, he pondered? Earlier in the week, Nigel Marsh talked about the (un)importance of work/life balance as a leader. Nigel introduced the concept of getting rid of the analogy altogether, shouldn’t we just have ‘life’, he pondered? Earlier in the week, Nigel Marsh talked about the (un)importance of work/life balance as a leader. Nigel introduced the concept of getting rid of the analogy altogether, shouldn’t we just have ‘life’, he pondered?

At work, I’m a harsh critic when it comes to being the best leader I possibly can be. I carefully reflect on daily encounters on the way home. But why stop at my career?

As the week unfolded the course showed me I could end all my fears and take control, unite team members to use their untapped strengths and finally enjoy being the leader I always wanted to be. But this moment was the magical moment of the Marketing Academy for me. A realisation that I have to shift my focus from self and what I ‘get’, to selflessness and what I ‘give’. Double ARGH!!

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The virtue of vulnerability

If you asked me to run a marathon, I would shrug and respond with a polys, ‘you’ve got to be joking.’ Ironically, I find myself running my own company’s business marathon that right now, has no end in sight.

To finish a marathon requires an incredible amount of resilience. As does running your own business. But how do we really cope with major challenges and bumps in the road that continue to appear? Do we even want to be running a good marathon?

The Marketing Academy has taught me an incredible amount of valuable lessons. What stuck the most of all, is redesign. We have full control to choose what we want, expect and act in every moment of our lives. We have the power to make change through choice. Whether it’s deciding how we react to a difficult conversation, how we choose to look at failures and how we take back control of our day-to-day lives.

I am no longer running a marathon with no end in sight. I choose to step down my own entrepreneurial mountain. It may not be a balanced life, but it is one that I have chosen and altered for the better.

In bootcamp I have been about taking back that control and nurturing not only myself but my own staff. I am not alone in this journey. This year has been about taking back that control and nurturing not only myself but my own staff. I am not alone in this journey.

I often felt powerless in my own role and the situations I found myself in. I didn’t think I could handle another set-back. I often felt powerless in my own role and the situations I found myself in. I didn’t think I could handle another set-back.

I recall arriving at the first bootcamp, looking around the room, meeting the Scholars for the first time, feeling the palpable nervous energy and wondering how did I make it here? Why me? Why? I was selected to be part of this exclusive program feeling like the biggest impostor on the world, surely somebody was going to realise that I had no right to be there and would drag me out pronto.

I had no time to dwell on these thoughts. Your guard is down in a matter of hours. We had a fledgling bond instantly. A bond that goes beyond being just acquaintances and superficially mingling at functions, lectures or events. That’s what can happen when you’re no longer afraid to be your true self.

One of the most valuable parts of the scholarship for me has been the opportunity to meet with mentors who have challenged the way I viewed leadership. They made me realise that I was already acting like a leader but my biggest problem was that I wasn’t thinking like a leader. They made me realise that I was already acting like a leader but my biggest problem was that I wasn’t thinking like a leader.

I have learnt so much from the cohort, alumni, mentors and my coach and I am forever grateful for all the time people have invested in me. It has been an amazing experience but it is only the beginning of my journey as a better leader and as a better human.

As leaders, when we grow up through an organisation quickly we can at times forget to remember that our circle of influence and impact expands just as quick. I was recently reminded of a great quote when I was facing some leadership challenges in relation to culture change within my company: “To be effective at leading any level of change within an organisation, leaders must be able to look into themselves and know the extent to which their own leadership behaviours are responsible for the problems within the organisation.” (Chris Argyris)

That year has been about taking back that control and nurturing not only myself but my own staff. I am not alone in this journey.

I was a huge revelation for me. I realised there was so much I was doing in my life which I was taking for granted and merely saw them as ‘expected’ of me. Were things I was doing in my role, work and even more importantly as a husband. I was boiled to what I was bringing to the table and that meant I was always striving to do more. I realised I was never really appreciating the choices I was making that were influencing what was happening around me in my life.

What my mentors and my coach made me realise is that I’m worthy of leader I want to be and I make no apology for it. I have learnt so much about myself over the past 9 months and I still have so far to go, but one thing for sure is that I will be forever grateful for the opportunity that has been given to me.

The Marketing Academy has taught me to be believe in my abilities. Most of the people I have met who have taken part in this experience in particular have resulted in so much learning; trying to understand things within me and trying to understand how I’m seen by others.

Throughout all of this, the thing that has stuck with the most has been truly understanding my own strengths and giving myself credit for the things that I do. There was one particular exercise in the first bootcamp where we needed to share a story of a time we felt truly successful to a partner - we then had to identify how many strengths we displayed through the narrative and our partner had to do the same. Needless to say I was able to identify eleven which I thought would be impossible.

As I could imagine, I called my wife after this exercise just to tell her I appreciated everything she did for herself, for us and for me. She showed true strength and determination which I didn’t appreciate as much as I should.

The Marketing Academy has taught me to be vulnerable. The Marketing Academy has taught me to be appreciative. The Marketing Academy has taught me to be believable in my abilities. The Marketing Academy has taught me to be...me!

I have learnt so much from the cohort, alumni, mentors and my coach and I am forever grateful for all the time people have invested in me. It has been an amazing experience but it is only the beginning of my journey as a better leader and as a better human.
I was incredibly bowed when I was asked to write this piece. I haven’t had the heart to write about control. I’ve always wanted to be a better leader, a better person. And knew most of the time I fell short. And I felt like once again, I fell behind because I didn’t have that moment to write about.

I thought maybe I could write about control. I’ve always had control issues – it’s why I hate flying, hate driving. If I couldn’t control the situation, I wouldn’t do it. Or I would do it, and every different outcome would have a pre-planned response. I would be unemotional and anaesthetised at all the time. But I couldn’t write about that, so it’s something bigger than that.

Just this week, the head of people in culture stopped me in the hallway. She wanted to talk to me as she noticed a change in me, that I was a calmer, whole presence, more rounded leader. And that she wanted to say something, because it meant my team were flourishing too.

And that speaks volumes. It’s ok that I haven’t had the ‘aha’-moment. For me, the whole year is not one moment but a slow gradient change that’s been so subtle. I haven’t noticed it. But others have. And it all took one person providing authentic feedback.

The Marketing Academy has meant that I learnt to settle with uncomfortable feelings.

The feeling that I’m never quite good enough.

The feeling that if I’m not in control then things aren’t going to be done, or be ok.

I’ve learnt that I can choose my response and let things wash over me rather than be all consuming. And I’m going to use a terrible metaphor – but it’s like the ocean with the sand. The sand uncomfortable is still there, it’s just washing round becoming part of the place.

I went into the year with the biggest feeling of being an impostor – I was the youngest, the most junior, the last one to be picked. But I’ve decided that’s ok. I deserved to be in the room and in the cohort. I’ve settled with the youngest, the most junior, the last one to be picked. But I’ve decided to use a terrible metaphor – like the sand uncomfortable.

It’s quite a confronting experience to really look at yourself for the first time and understand how your behaviours and beliefs may be holding you back from being the person and leader you know you can be.

For me, it wasn’t a single moment, but a gradual realisation that the habits and behaviours that had worked for me to this point, things I considered strengths, were no longer helping me succeed in becoming an effective leader. Leading by example, working hard, grinding away until I found a solution – this was my belief.

I felt I could solve any problem with enough time and effort. I thought doubling down on this would translate into strong leadership and help inspire our team to greater heights. If you’ve need the time, you probably knew how this ended. (Don’t ask.)

I’ve been self-aware of the first step to enlightenment, and while I’m a long way off that, luckily I was in the right place to learn about leadership; understanding that leadership isn’t about you – it’s about everyone else, and the powerful positive impact we can have on the people around us. It’s about setting a vision and giving the team confidence to achieve things that they didn’t think were possible. It’s about generosity of time and spirit. It’s about being authentic and bringing your best self every day – being the same person in the boardroom as you are on the surfboard (thanks to one of my mentors for this tip – you know who you are!).

These are just some of the lessons I believe have been fortunate enough to embrace and absorb from the incredible speakers, mentors, my coach and our fellow Scholars. Now my mission is not to waste this opportunity – to pay it forward and display the same generosity that’s been shown to me. We’re all leaders, and the Marketing Academy has not only given me the confidence and tools to become the leader I always wanted to be, but more importantly, an understanding that our greatest achievement is the positive impact we can have on the people around us.

Going into 2019, I thought I had it all. I was at the peak of my career as the Managing Director of a large telecommunications company. Named Scholar of The 2019 Marketing Academy where I would learn new leadership skills that I could test and deploy to my crew. A beautiful 3 week long stay. I was keen to see the top of the game. I had it covered.

Or so I thought. It turns out I really didn’t know much at all. Especially about myself and the meaning of what it takes to be a true leader.

I’d always prided myself on being what I thought was a great leader. Someone who was visionary, approachable, firm but fair, trusting, supportive and a good listener. All the things you want in a ‘how to be a good leader’ handbook.

March 12th, the first Marketing Academy boot camp, brought that all into question. What would I discover, that I couldn’t be a great leader without bringing my self for a leadership role and couldn’t do that until I knew myself.

And I really knew myself.

Little did I know as I was discovering these profound and life changing lessons, a wild storm was brewing that would give me no choice but to step up in leadership and force me to truly start to discover who I, Paul Everson, really was.

Unfortunately, through a global merger my role would become questionable and a few months later I would find myself transitioning out of a business and job I had loved for 6 years. This was passion porting plans to hand over the helm. Fearing embarrassment, I retreated. Vulnerable, fast, doubting myself the realisation of not being defined by a title or belonging to something; I couldn’t do that until I knew myself.

I was incredibly daunted when I was asked to write this piece. I haven’t got to the March and I’m thrilled (and nervous) to be heading to the first Marketing Academy Bootcamp. One of the reasons was an opportunity to help people who had impacted his life. I saw his honesty, the reality of his truth and how much impact he had on me. So it was an easy decision – this is the year I’m going to do it.

My coach and our fellow Scholars. Now my mission is to not abandon my ship and my crew. It could have been easy to do, however for me, it’s the excitement of the unknown, the realisation of not being defined by a title or belonging to something; that deeper understanding, I know, will make me a better leader. A great leader.

I leave knowing myself like I have never known before, that deeper understanding, I know, will make me a better leader. A great leader.

It is quite a confronting experience to really look at yourself for the first time and understand how your behaviours and beliefs may be holding you back from being the person and leader you know you can be.

As a leader and fairly new to my role as Marketing Director in late 2018 I was creating guidance on how to be a better leader. I had a vision of how leaders should be perceived and wanted to prove I was deserving of my role at Electrolux. This goal had been reached. Looking back (throughout this process) is even more common than I thought.

Next month it’s March 2022 and I’m thrilled (and nervous) to be heading to the first Marketing Academy Bootcamp. One of the reasons was an opportunity to help people who had impacted his life. I saw his honesty, the reality of his truth and how much impact he had on me. So it was an easy decision – this is the year I’m going to do it. I just need to be the fear, the hurdles, the mistakes, the help, encourage feedback and learn. I need to lead by example and be vulnerable – it’s ok.

Throughout this year we learnt about issues within our industry such as mental health issues, pressures of our roles and lack of engagement. We have now come to realise, even more, the value of vulnerability and encouraging openness and sharing.

We all talk about human connection and building real, deeper relationships. How important it is to have a heart and soul. We all need people with real stories and the more we share the more we connect, as leaders. We can lead well by talking about our own process of growth. It’s ok to not to know everything. I’m actually trying to have fun along the way, stop sometimes and ask for help! I’ve also improved my personal relationships by taking responsibility and letting my guard down.

It’s ok to see what’s out. To fail. To be vulnerable. You’ll learn something. If you can’t be vulnerable then truly you’ll Build stronger connections and how people back you the whole way. More importantly, you can be there to support others. I haven’t got quite right yet that’s for sure, but I know where I’m heading.
I had a massive ‘a-ha’ moment when I heard several people from The Marketing Academy talking about the thing called ‘authentic self’. I’d never heard it discussed so openly or so frequently. The first time I heard it was at bootcamp at Manly Q Station, when Kamal Sarma was talking about this concept of the ‘real’ and how people become used to, even addicted to, the personas they act out in their work. Then I started to hear others— including my coach Oscar and some of the mentors— I’ve been fortunate enough to interact with— talking about the same concept and then it really clicked. It was at that point that I really thought about my own experiences and discovered a massive blind spot around this concept. And once I opened the lid, I thought:

You see, I had been using the term ‘authentic’ all wrong. I used to think being authentic was about being down-to-earth, a good guy, being humble, etc, etc. But there were just purely patronising. I learned that being authentic is about being the same version of myself no matter where I am.

I noticed that I was behaving differently in certain situations, some far better and some worse. I just put it down to being at work versus at home and I shouldn’t have to be like that. And I learnt there’s a better way. A much better way.

There was a version of myself that was open and relaxed, like when I was sitting around the dinner table with my family telling jokes. There was a version of myself that was open and relaxed, like when I was sitting around the dinner table with my family telling jokes. Then there’s the version that would get uptight. We were in a boardroom meeting or when the dog would pop up and I was on a project I’ve been working hard on, and might be tempted to let nerves and self-doubt get the better of me.

There are moments where we are tempted to act differently because it is an unfair environment, or when stress catches us at a weak moment and we behave other than we would when we’re at our best. This has happened to me many times, and I know I haven’t been myself.

I spent ten minutes in the boardroom and the next hour and a half crying in my car. It was a disaster.

About six months before that moment, I was in front of the board asking for CAPEX. I was on a challenging few things (eg: where some of my numbers came from). I lost all of the answers in front of me but become so overwhelmed, I was paralysed. My chest tightened and I struggled to breathe. Fortunately someone jumped in and the meeting ended early so the board only saw my fluster, not completely breakdown.

Despite all of this, I somehow got on an interview and was selected to be part of The Marketing Academy’s 2020 cohort. On the first day of bootcamp Sherlyn asked us: “What is the biggest challenge or opportunity you face right now— personally or professionally?” For me, the answer was the same in both areas of my life: I was plagued with self-doubt. I wanted to be a leader who was more confident in my approach and interactions.

I lost some of my confidence about five years earlier when I let a one-hole get in my head. It spiralled from there. I started to question everything and mead into things that weren’t there. For example, if I was given a challenging work assignment because my boss thought I was capable of doing it, I would question her motives and conclude something ridiculous like she was trying to make me look incompetent. I also went through a period where I didn’t date anyone for four years because I thought I was so damaged that no one would want me. This belief that I wasn’t good enough held me back from so many things. I knew I wasn’t logest and I knew I was stuck. I just didn’t know how to move past it.

The pivotal moment for me happened at our first bootcamp, where I embraced the ‘virtue of vulnerability’ for the first time by sharing my story with our group.

My whole story, not just the parts I wanted them to know. I told them how I had been hurt physically and emotionally by some of the most important people in my life. Something very few people knew about me because that was how I coped. I projected positivity and kept my pain to myself. “Screw the world,” I secretly thought. “I don’t need anyone.”

But the truth was I did. I felt alone, and compartmentalising my life meant the only person who was being screwed was me.

Since that day in bootcamp, I have (slowly) been opening up to more people. They have all responded with genuine kindness, and now I am learning to show myself kindness too. I still have a long way to go but I am no longer plagued with self-doubt.

The circle of people surrounding me when I first joined is (slowly) growing, along with my self-confidence.

If you told me had had a few months ago that openness and kindness were the ingredients I needed to become a leader who was more confident in my approach and interactions, I wouldn’t have believed you. But my life has truly changed by embracing these qualities.

In my view, these are two of the most important qualities a leader can possess. Going forward, I’ll continue to work on and practice these qualities in all aspects of my life. And hopefully, pass these forward to others through my actions and by sharing stories like the ones in this book.

And, from the amazing scholars of 2019.

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It’s so hard to pick one pivotal moment over the last nine months when there have been so many. Since joining The Marketing Academy I can’t remember a time when I wasn’t contemplating reflecting or acting on a moment to be a better leader. I have had times of utter despair that I was a leader at all. On the flip side of that, I have had moments of overwhelming gratitude and pride of the huge distance I have come in such a short time.

A particularly poignant moment would be towards the end of the first bootcamp. We were presented with a medical scenario with a moral dilemma, a polarising topic. The aim of the exercise was to shed a light on our individual ethical decision-making foundations. When faced with the three possible ethical frameworks I found myself unequivocally in one camp. The camp built on duty, justice and fairness. To find out I could be so unconscious was quite confronting. Here I was claiming and believing that I was; a great listener, empathetic and real people leader. However, learning that my belief system is so profound challenged this thinking and caused me to reflect on how I truly lead those around me versus how I think I lead.

Ultimately this offered an incredible opportunity to really honour that desire to be an empathetic leader and truly understand what drives and motivates others. This moment helped challenge not just the leader I wanted to be at work but in fact throughout my life, including my family and my friends as well as my colleagues. The importance of understanding what drives others, empowered me to build a team and a company culture that is inclusive, diverse and best of all collaborative.

Through this experience I have learnt more about my team and my colleagues than ever before. Helping foster people around me outside of traditional training or mentoring environments. This invaluable skill has enabled me to step back, see an opportunity for growth and encourage those around me to step into that space.

In February, a new leadership challenge lays ahead of me, when I embark on a new journey of motherhood. As I plan my maternity leave I feel confident in the knowledge that I haven’t spent the last nine months building my own legacy, but instead building a team of highly proficient individuals that stand up on their own merit. Thanks to the many ‘in-person’ moments the Marketing Academy has offered I feel confident my team will flourish, not because of the person who built it but because of how they were built.
SO... THIS SPACE WAS DONATED TO BUILD SUPPORT FOR OUR CHARITY... BUT WE HAD NO IDEA HOW TO USE IT.

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NOMINATIONS FOR 2020 CLOSING SOON.
"WE F@%D UP, WE NEEDED TO OWN IT."

DAVID SCRIBNER

STORIES FROM INDUSTRY LEADERS, MARKETING ACADEMY MENTORS AND COACHES

STORIES FROM INDUSTRY LEADERS, MARKETING ACADEMY MENTORS AND COACHES

"Best you take a walk through the hall of mirrors and take a good, long, hard look at yourself", Forty something years ago, that started this journey of reflection. But more on my parents' advice later.

Good leaders are good at giving feedback to others but I have a theory that great leaders are even better at giving feedback to themselves. And let's not beat around the bush...when I say feedback, I mean criticism.

That we clad criticism in cotton wool and call it feedback is part of the problem. These cotton wool critiques are bubble wrapped with apologetic prefaces, diffusionary diversions and counterfeit counterpoints. We apologise upfront to cushion the blow. We diffuse our criticism in the warm embrace that "many others were also accountable...so don't be too hard on yourself". And we balance the books with counterpoints: "you can do better on this but don't be too hard on yourself because you're great elsewhere".

I was once told that if you want to improve, seek criticism not concessions. Ask your leader what you're not doing well; ask your peers; ask your people. You won't agree with it all, you won't like it all, but you'll know what you're up against.

Upon reflection, I have usually been my best critic. And by best I mean most honest and considered critic. Self criticism has been a constant chorus in my life. I've learnt though, that to tolerate that torrent, I've had to re-double my resilience. I've consciously counselled myself and shared insecurities with trusted family and friends. I've challenged my lens on life by seeing problems as opportunities. I've leveraged my love of learning with real-time retooling. I've trained myself to turn pressure into challenge. I've developed belief that no matter how trying the challenge, that there is a way.

It can lead to an unquiet mind at times: half your brain scolding you for missing a trick or being downright dreadful; the other half reminding you that to err is human and to forgive (yourself in this case) is Divine. But most of all, recognition that each let-down can be a leg-up if properly perceived.

There was no pivotal moment in this story. The seeds were sown through a childhood where I was lucky to be raised by wonderful teachers. My parents let me take risks, let me fall, encouraged me to stand again, and most of all, made me reflect on what I'd learnt from the experience.

So in summary, I put to the scholars of this program that success is a function of self-criticism matched in equal parts with self-esteem, and you should develop both in equal measure. Too much criticism with not enough esteem is a recipe for mental illness. Strong minds are mandatory. And curtailed critique with ego overload will surely lead to hubris and pride, both precursors to a fall.

And finally, as we return to my Hall of Mirrors quote, as it turns out it was prophetic. Indeed I was in the Palace of Versailles four decades later, where I stumbled into the actual Hall of Mirrors. It was there that I reflected on my parents and my life, while I took a good, long, hard look at myself.
EUAN SMITH
COO, FOXTEL

The sinking was imminent, of that I was sure. The COO opposite sat stone-cold as I walked him through the deck that painted the nightmare.

I’d pitched to move our entire supply chain to a new vendor. I’d been given the funds, selected a new partner, delighted in telling the breathtaking incumbents of their fate, ended their contracts with a flourish.

Roll forward six months. The management team of my new supplier had been removed by the Dutch parent. We had pressed on with the supplier anyway. Huge mistake. We were a distraction; an irrelevance to a new team that had zero investment in our success. Their shiny new warehouse system had failed, their remaining staff were in disarray. This management team could not run their own ship properly, let alone add new business lines.

Our network, and with it, our customer ‘service’ ethos and our brand promise came crashing down. Our hungover leadership team could not run their own ship properly, let alone add new business lines.

Our stores were swamped, which started at 12 midnight.

There was no playbook – no mobile telco had had an outage for over 1 million Australians.

Our people were exposed.

• Our people were exposed.

• Our stores were swamped.

• Our people were exposed.

It took the leadership of a group to solve. A group that was born on trust. We doubted ourselves, we made some big and fast calls and we wrote the playbook:

1. Accept responsibility and apologise (do not blame others).

2. Compensate easily and meaningfully.

3. Communicate, communicate and communicate again, using every channel, consistently.

This was my pivotal moment as a marketer/customer champion. This was pivotal to much more than the thrill of a winning campaign or the taking of market share through a shrewd product launch. This was putting the customer first, the heavily impacted customer first, and using everything at our disposal to make their lives better and remember it was your mistake, even if it was someone else’s.

Customers missed job interviews, shifts, picking up kids, were exposed.

• A boss who is some help & not their biggest problem

• A chance to get on

• To feel valued & respected

• A job that is interesting to do

If you ask people anywhere in the world what they want from their work you will consistently get four answers –

If you can give this to people, every day, then they will follow you everywhere.

My biggest moment of growth was literally to put my money where my mouth was and risk it all. I’ve continued to use this approach as a test for every big decision:

My CEO asked for 24 hours to think about it.

My research showed that we could win.

I nodded, waiting for the axe to fall.

‘Good, because once is just bad luck. Twice would be careless.’

He smiled, nodded and handed his copy of the deck back to me.

‘I’ll cover it.’

He stood. The meeting finished 45 minutes early. We went on to build a fantastic solution with a partner that continues to flourish 15 years later.

Leadership is never about how you treat people when times are good, it’s 100% how you show up for them when it’s tough.

Terry Leahy, the ex-CEO of Tesco –

If you people anywhere in the world what they want from their work you will consistently get four answers –

• a job that is interesting to do

• to feel valued & respected

• a chance to get on

• a boss who is some help & not their biggest problem

If you can give this to people, every day, then they will follow you everywhere.

I always repeat bullet 4. Was that you today? Was that me? It’s always good to check.

JENNIFER DILL
VP CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER, MCDONALD’S AUSTRALIA

Risky It All

I was a successful Marketing Manager working on big brands that were enjoyed by millions of Australians each year. Our business was being challenged by a small, premium competitor that was rapidly growing distribution and share.

Working with a very small hand-selected team, our goal was to figure out how to compete. Early on, consumers confirmed that we were onto something with positioning, packaging, flowvans and brand. After running product development trials overseas, we developed patents and equipment to make the new product.

Our research showed that we could win.

The multi-million dollar price tag on the new equipment was a big stumbling block. After three different failed CAPEX submissions, we had one last shot: de-risking the proposition to leverage on overseas co-packers (with a few upgrades) to allow us to supply in one state launch.

In the Executive meeting, the final decision was made. The CAPEX was not approved. We were not launching.

I left the meeting reeling. I simply couldn’t understand it. We’d jumped over every single obstacle. We had a water tight business case which paid back inside 5 years. I was completely distraught and disappointed in myself as I had failed my team, my agencies and our business. I had wasted 18 months and over $750,000 in development costs. I was completely gutted and went home exhausted and utterly demotivated to think about what next.

The next morning, I went straight to my CEO and offered to buy the brand name, packaging, formulations and equipment specifications. I was so convinced that the idea would work that I would go and do it myself. I had to admit that my plan was not very well thought through, but involved me building the business and then offering him first rights down the track. I had less than $5,000 in the bank and a mortgage to pay but I would somehow figure it out.

My CEO asked for 24 hours to think about it.

The following day the CAPEX and launch plan was on my desk, fully approved. When I asked what had changed, my CEO’s answer was simple. He had never seen someone demonstrate such conviction and belief in what they were doing.

The new brand formed the foundation of a hugely successful phase of growth for our business, recognised locally and globally as best practice. Red Rock Deli is now Australia’s largest brand and continues to go from strength to strength. And it almost didn’t happen.

My biggest moment of growth was literally to put my money where my mouth was and risk it all. I’ve continued to use this approach as a test for every big decision: would I be willing to risk everything to make this happen? If not, that tells me everything I need to know. This approach helps provide clarity for my team, my team and my business, encouraging everyone to be their best.

JENNIFER DILL
VP CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER, MCDONALD’S AUSTRALIA

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Our research showed that we could win.

The multi-million dollar price tag on the new equipment was a big stumbling block. After three different failed CAPEX submissions, we had one last shot: de-risking the proposition to leverage on overseas co-packers (with a few upgrades) to allow us to supply in one state launch.

In the Executive meeting, the final decision was made. The CAPEX was not approved. We were not launching.

I left the meeting reeling. I simply couldn’t understand it. We’d jumped over every single obstacle. We had a water tight business case which paid back inside 5 years. I was completely distraught and disappointed in myself as I had failed my team, my agencies and our business. I had wasted 18 months and over $750,000 in development costs. I was completely gutted and went home exhausted and utterly demotivated to think about what next.

The next morning, I went straight to my CEO and offered to buy the brand name, packaging, formulations and equipment specifications. I was so convinced that the idea would work that I would go and do it myself. I had to admit that my plan was not very well thought through, but involved me building the business and then offering him first rights down the track. I had less than $5,000 in the bank and a mortgage to pay but I would somehow figure it out.

My CEO asked for 24 hours to think about it.

The following day the CAPEX and launch plan was on my desk, fully approved. When I asked what had changed, my CEO’s answer was simple. He had never seen someone demonstrate such conviction and belief in what they were doing.

The new brand formed the foundation of a hugely successful phase of growth for our business, recognised locally and globally as best practice. Red Rock Deli is now Australia’s largest brand and continues to go from strength to strength. And it almost didn’t happen.

My biggest moment of growth was literally to put my money where my mouth was and risk it all. I’ve continued to use this approach as a test for every big decision: would I be willing to risk everything to make this happen? If not, that tells me everything I need to know. This approach helps provide clarity for my team, my team and my business, encouraging everyone to be their best.
It is one of life’s greatest lessons, and one that all true leaders have learned. This can take many forms; from being honest and open in both professional and personal circumstances, through to being brave and seeking advice in times of need. This was never more obvious to me than eight years back when I decided to ‘come out’ to my family, friends and colleagues. It is the toughest decision I have ever made in my life. And it wasn’t one I could manage on my own. So to help me work through how best to handle it, I sought counsel. The decision to ‘come out’ was one of the bravest decisions I have made. But without question, it was the right one. The support I received from every corner of my life was simply unprecedented, none more so than from my two adult children. This culminated in my son taking the role of best man, and my daughter being part of the wedding party when I recently married my partner of seven years.

I don’t think there is a prouder moment in my leadership journey – it’s been a constant evolution since I started my agency 30 years ago at the age of 28. When I look back now to what I was like then, I see so many differences!

I am now so much older and wiser - more patient, a much better listener, and not in such a hurry as I understand that the journey itself is just as exciting as getting to any particular destination.

But one thing remains the same and I credit that with any success I have enjoyed throughout my long career.

My willingness to be honest with myself and to change. To change my behaviour to change my business model, to change absolutely anything that wasn’t working.

From the earliest days I listened to feedback from my staff and my clients and I acted on it. I wasn’t alone – though much of it was really flattering, some of it really hurt.

I reflected on the feedback constantly. I went to therapy and to leadership courses. I learned to meditate to teach my brain to slow down. I read a lot of books.

I did the work. And I came to realise that a leader’s self improvement quest is never done.

I believe that’s the best thing I can teach my people.

I am now so much older and wiser - more patient, a much better listener, and not in such a hurry as I understand that the journey itself is just as exciting as getting to any particular destination.

I was at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. My wife had given birth to our 2nd child and I started crying. I was accused of being too dominant and threatening, too loud and excitable. I won’t lie – though much of it was really flattering, some of it really hurt. What on earth was that? You were right to tell us all off! This was never more obvious to me than eight years back when I decided to ‘come out’ to my family, friends and colleagues. It is the toughest decision I have ever made in my life. And it wasn’t one I could manage on my own. So to help me work through how best to handle it, I sought counsel.

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The team were amazing but not always on time, with some people regularly turning up late. I didn’t want to single anyone out so I sent the team an email simply reminding them that we need to be in on time as it doesn’t send a good message to the rest of the agency or our clients that strategy get to make their own rules.

Ten minutes later after feeling really bad that I had reprimanded everyone I sent another email saying I did understand if you had to be late sometimes as things come up - pretty much watertight down the entire original email. Now keeping in mind they were my friends meant they weren’t afraid to call me out. One of them, Lucille, took me aside and said in her lovely way: ‘what on earth was that? You were right to tell us all off! Here we were thinking ‘good one Katie!’ and then you go and undo it all with another email. You are our boss now and you need to get used to that’.

In hindsight it is funny how such a small thing became such a profound part of shaping my approach to leadership. I spent time with my Executive Coach, Gary Dückworth unpacking exactly why I had second guessed myself that day.

As he said to me: and it is something that has stuck with me ever since that, ‘you need to focus on being respected not liked’. As a leader you no longer have the luxury of worrying about whether everyone is your friend or whether people hate how things to say about you behind your back. Your job is to make tough calls that many times may be unpopular but are the right ones to make.

But it doesn’t mean you have to become a jerk in the process. As Gary was quick to point out, being respected is more often a higher order than simply being liked. You achieve respect even in the most difficult of circumstances by being consistent and congruent in what you say and do, by being authentic to your style of leadership and most of all by communicating at every point.

For an inspire people pleaser like myself that naturally wants to be liked, this focus on respect first and foremost, being consistent, congruent and communicating the difficult, has liberated me to do the job I need to do as CEO.
I learned five things from the experience that have made me a better leader of people today.

1. Be ambitious. Set big, hairy, scary challenges and then absolutely go for it. Once you’ve identified your
   mentality and if I am truly being honest, it included healthy
   exemptions of bullying.
I could have resigned and moved on quickly.
This seemed like the easiest way out and it was justified given
everything discussed during the arduous interview process had
been a work of fiction. Everything from the scope of the role to
budgets to the commitment of the existing team.
But I didn’t know. I stayed. Why?
Because the sheer size of the challenge was enticing. I wanted to see if I could achieve the professional
equivalent of conquering Everest.
Was it worth it? Well yes and no.
On the side, the business did thrive. Strong growth, a realisation that sales will flow, immediate and in
the future, when marketing ‘was right’ and a glimmer of recognition that marketing is a profit generating
powerhouse and not a cost centre.
On the negative side. I was bullied, slandered and, at times, horrified by the words and actions of my
executive colleagues. To this day, and I am sad to say it, I occasionally adopted these very same techniques
in order to survive the weekly management meeting. But now, given the experience is far behind me the
reflections on what was learned are far more profound.
I learned five things from the experience that have made me a better leader of people today.

1. Be ambitious. Set big, hairy, scary challenges and then absolutely go for it. Don’t slow down, get distracted or get disappointed as roadblocks crop up along the way.
Help them grow professionally and personally. Listen when they talk, nurture their dreams and ambitions
and respect their contribution - without them nothing will be achieved.

2. Never compromise your integrity. You will pay for it – now or later – there is always a price for this.

3. Civility counts. Never speak to a person like you wouldn’t speak to your wife, mother, kids. Words are weapons
in the wrong hands, and you can’t take them back. In difficult moments give yourself time to frame them
properly and constructively. It will hold you in good stead in the long run.

4. Honesty, even if it comes at a price and puts you in the firing line, makes you look less competent or
brings swift and brutal retribution, it is always the best course. Always.

5. Build a team of skilled, and likeable people from diverse backgrounds unified by passion and commitment.
Help them grow professionally and personally. Listen when they talk, nurture their dreams and ambitions
and respect their contribution - without them nothing will be achieved.
I know, it sounds like sheer hubris to claim I nail all five every day, but the truth is I do. I fail in a lot of other
ways, every day, but I make sure I never fail on these.
I suspect it’s the daily practice adhering to these principles that, in hindsight, makes the job I least liked the
most valuable role I have ever had.

Sudeep Goihl
Partner, KPMG

Thinking about the moment that made me reconsider my role as a leader was when I was faced with the decision
to close down the operations of Droga5 in Sydney.
Droga5 Sydney was an amazing beast, home to some of the best people I have ever worked with – creatives,
planners, sailors and our amazing support team.
As the CEO of the agency, I took great pride in the team we called Droga5. Each day we come into work was
challenging and absorbing: exhilaration and elation mixed with the pain of heartbreak and disappointment.
It all changed on a fateful day in New York, when some news was handed down from the management team. I had
always valued honesty, getting stuck in and hard work, but no amount of hard work could change the conversation
that I had just had. Our new owners were downsizing the Sydney business.

Of course, that didn’t stop us from trying to keep the doors open - the news tumbled over and over in our heads on
the long trip back to Sydney. I kept thinking about the countless sacrifices the entire team had made for love of the
agency and now we would be turning our back on a good percentage of them.
Had I given them the wrong advice in countless reviews? Was our pitch work not strong enough? Were our relationships
not as solid as we thought? Or was it a combination of all of these? I questioned every decision I had made over the past
18 months. I questioned all the advice I had given and all the advice I had taken on board.
In actual fact, it didn’t matter to our NY/ LA owners. Some of the team I had grown the agency with were not going to
be part of the business anymore and I felt I couldn’t bring myself to be part of the business either.
This moment in my career made me consider what was right and wrong in a different way. I’d always preferred to lead
from the front and enjoyed being part of the team. This experience taught me that a leader sometimes has to make
decisions that serve the business first and the team you value second. That can be a really hard choice to make.
I also learned that as a leader, even though downsizing was personally hard, I had a responsibility to see it through
till the end. For the good of the business and for these employees we still had with us, who had stuck with us through
thick and thin.
Like all good stories, eventually, there was a happy ending. I feel the experience has made it easier to separate the
hard business decisions from what my heart tells might be an easier way to move forward, by considering the bigger
picture and the long view.
SUSAN MASSASSO
GLOBAL CMO – THE A2 MILK COMPANY

This may sound rather unusual but my pivotal moment that caused me to pause and allowed me to become a better leader today is when I became a mother.

I knew, I know that’s not a life-changing work moment... but it is... stick with me...

I was – what I thought – a ‘got-it-together’ manager of a few direct reports and thought I was the bees-knees! My work life was super planned and organised, everything ran like clockwork and I managed my little brand portfolio with relative ease... but I also now knew my management style had more holes in it than a block of Swiss cheese.

I left the workforce for my maternity leave of my first child (I now have 3 rambunctious sons) in blissful ignorance in 2006. I had my birth plan, I chose the music I wanted my baby to be born to and my husband and I had picked names, it was going to be just like a J&J baby shampoo TVC... what could possibly go wrong?

Well as with bringing in new people into the world and subsequently trying to breastfeed, start solids, responsibly try and assist them to get a grasp of the spoken word and get a handle on toilet training (never again) – everything, apparently can go pear-shaped.

And here lied the best management training programme I ever (didn’t) sign up for...

I learned to:

• deal with ambiguity (not knowing what the next 24 hours, week, month and year will bring for the next 18 years of your life)
• improve my influencing and negotiating skills (try getting a toddler to eat gross mushy food, or wee straight)
• be creative (refer to previous example)
• agile thinking and able to pivot plans to adapt to a changing market place (dealing with projectile bodily fluids from both ends – at times simultaneously – whilst preserving your dignity... and sanity)
• complex strategic thinking (remembering the 101 items of ‘baby stuff’ needed to go on an overseas trip with a child under 12 months)
• calm and composed under pressure (functioning on less than 3 hours sleep many nights in a row will either break you or make you stronger)
• empathy (how can you not feel sorry for a kid trying to do tummy time and just constantly face planting instead)
• celebrating small wins (yay we wee’d in the toilet for the first time!) the list could go on, but I have a word limit to work with. So truly I credit the creation and raising of my first little person as an incredible pivotal point in my career where I learned to step up and become a more senior leader across the organisation from that point onwards.

By-the-way as with parenthood... you’re never done learning. So whilst my management style improved; the juggle is real and the constant need to refine, improve and course correct is still alive and kicking!
More than just marketing or leadership skills, The Marketing Academy seeks to build inspired leaders from the inside out.

It’s hard to sum up into words just how incredibly life-changing the Scholarship is.

Australian Alumni

THE MARKETING ACADEMY

The Marketing Academy is a not-for-profit organisation founded by Sherilyn Shackell in the UK in 2010, Australia in 2015 and the US in 2018. They identify and develop exceptional talent in Marketing, Communications, Media and Advertising by providing a forum for C-Suite executives, marketing experts, business leaders and coaches to inspire, develop and mentor an entire generation of future leaders.

The Marketing Academy run programmes for different levels:

- **The Fellowship** – for CMOs
- **The Scholarship** – for emerging leaders
- **The Apprenticeship** – for young people

The Marketing Academy programmes are highly selective and yet delivered free of charge. They can do this because they unite a powerful, committed and engaged community of client side CEOs and CMOs, media and creative agency CEOs, and subject matter experts from every marketing discipline in the industry who share their knowledge on a pro bono basis.

This community shares their desire to invest in talent and the belief that marketing, media and advertising, collectively and at its best, has a direct impact on the planet; the power to influence the way people think, the choices they take and the decisions they make.

Furthermore, in a turbulent and changing world, developing our talent is the only certain way to ensure growth. The Marketing Academy are dedicated to delivering programmes that will ensure that the impact of marketing, media and advertising is felt in at the centre of every board room.

Our future is in the hands of the younger generations of marketers, influencers, innovators and communicators and for their collective power to be wielded in the most effective way they deserve our time, wisdom and experience.

Through their programmes The Marketing Academy:

- Identify the industry’s brightest and best minds and equip them with the values, beliefs, behaviours and skills to be outstanding
- Enable emerging leaders to gain wisdom and experience from C-Suite leaders within diverse sectors and disciplines
- Provide a platform for high potential talent to learn best practice from around the globe, and be inspired to create world changing results
GLOBAL TMA PROGRAMS

AUSTRALIA

‘I can’t recommend this programme highly enough – it has changed the way I think about myself, the world I live in, and the impact I can make’
AUSTRIAN SCHOLAR

The US Scholarship Programme was launched in 2018 and is sponsored by Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Google Australia, News Corp, Samsung, KFC Global and Facebook.

The Australian Scholarship programme includes a five-day boot camp at the Q Station in Manly, followed by a two-day boot camp hosted at Facebook’s offices in Barangaroo, and then a final two-day boot camp at Coogee. During the first boot camp, scholars participate in the Living Leader leadership program.

UNITED KINGDOM

‘The Marketing Academy has been a real accelerator to my development. The insight I’ve gained into myself, the marketing profession and leadership has been a unique and priceless experience’
UK ALUMNI

As the original Marketing Academy, the UK Scholarship Programme is entering its tenth year and is sponsored by Facebook, Virgin Atlantic, BT, PHD, Accenture and ITV. The UK programme is comprised of the following elements:

The Fellowship: This free and highly selective programme equips CMOs and Marketing leaders with the tools, knowledge and insight to move onto Boards and into MD / CEO roles.

The Scholarship: A nine-month, free part-time programme for 30 of the UK’s fastest rising stars in Marketing, Advertising, Media and Communications.

The Foundation: A stand-alone charity The Marketing Academy Foundation provides young people from challenging backgrounds work experience in the marketing industry through year-long apprenticeships.

Find out more: themarketingacademy.org/uk/

UNITED STATES

‘The Marketing Academy Scholarship is literally life changing’
SCHOLAR ALUMNI

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THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

To deliver the Scholarship Programme, we unite an entire ecosystem: brands, media owners, creative agencies, media agencies, industry associations, academic institutes, and leadership organisations. We bring together CEOs, CMOs, authors, experts, inspirational speakers, founders of charities and sporting legends who contribute to the curriculum on a pro-bono basis, ensuring the Scholarship is a totally unique and immensely powerful learning experience.

These companies have provided the financial support which enables The Marketing Academy to deliver the Australia Programme. In doing so they have demonstrated their dedication to promoting marketing excellence, passion for the development of exceptional marketing talent and philanthropic commitment to giving something back to the industry as a whole.

Google was founded in 1998 and have grown to serve millions of people around the world. Google’s mission is to organise the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful.

Commonwealth Bank is Australia’s leading provider of integrated financial services. Their purpose is to enhance the financial wellbeing of customers and the community.

News Corp Australia is Australia’s No.1 media company and destination for news, lifestyle, sport and business. News Corp Australia plays a key role in the lives of consumers and provides a valuable channel for advertising partners to engage these consumers. They offer advertisers greater reach of audiences than any other Australian media company across all platforms – print, web, broadcast, mobile and tablet.

Founded in 2004, Facebook’s mission is to give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together. Facebook can help your large, medium or small business grow. Get the latest news for advertisers and more on our Facebook Business Page.

KFC Corporation, based in Louisville, Kentucky, is one of the few brands in America that can boast a rich, decades-long history of success and innovation. It all started with one cook who created a soon-to-be world-famous recipe more than 70 years ago, a list of secret herbs and spices scratched out on the back of the door to his kitchen. That cook was Colonel Harland Sanders, of course, and now KFC is the world’s most popular chicken restaurant chain, specializing in that same Original Recipe® along with Extra Crispy™ chicken, home-style sides and buttermilk biscuits.

“Improve the World. Create the Future.” Samsung’s 2020 vision is at the core of our commitment to create a better world full of richer digital experiences, through innovative technology and products. The goal of the vision is to become a beloved brand, an innovative company, and an admired company. For this, we dedicate our efforts to creativity and innovation, shared value with our partners, and our great people. We have delivered world best products and services through passion for innovation and optimal operation.
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<tr>
<th>SCHOLAR</th>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Howie</td>
<td>Head of Brand &amp; Advertising - Amazon</td>
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<td>Brooks Chilcott</td>
<td>Partner - Deloitte</td>
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<td>Burcak Sezer</td>
<td>Head of Marketing and Innovation - Kimberley Clark</td>
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<td>Claire Salvetti</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer - One Green Boat</td>
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<td>Claire Tenzer</td>
<td>Group Business Director - TBWA/Melbourne</td>
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<td>Gabriella Conlon</td>
<td>Head of Global Product Partnerships - Google</td>
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<td>Gemma Hunter</td>
<td>Global Executive Creative Director - MediaCom</td>
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<td>Holly Jones</td>
<td>Head of Program Management - Uber</td>
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<td>Jay Sellick</td>
<td>Chief Customer Officer - Sportsbet</td>
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<td>Jeci David</td>
<td>Portfolio Marketing Manager - Kellogg's</td>
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<td>Jeff Miller</td>
<td>Head of Marketing, Consumer Wealth - Commonwealth Bank</td>
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<td>Kate O’Ryan-Roeder</td>
<td>Managing Director - Mindshare</td>
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<td>Katie Finney</td>
<td>Strategy and Solutions Director - Seven Network</td>
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<td>Lauren Cain</td>
<td>Founder - JAYCANO</td>
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<td>Liz Kaolin</td>
<td>Head of Client Experience - Terem Technologies</td>
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<td>Louise Davis</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<td>Michael Kay</td>
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<td>Nora-Kate O’Connell</td>
<td>Group Marketing Manager - KFC</td>
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<td>Peter Cerny</td>
<td>Executive Creative Director, Partner - Channel T</td>
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<td>Pally Blienkinship</td>
<td>Marketing Director, Insights &amp; Media - Fastel</td>
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<td>Rachel Pullicino</td>
<td>CMO - Campos Coffee</td>
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<td>Renee Garner</td>
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<td>Sergio Brodsky</td>
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<td>Simon Davenport</td>
<td>General Manager, Marketing - National Basketball League</td>
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<td>Stewart Gurney</td>
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<td>Terri Martin</td>
<td>General Manager - Dymocks Children's Charities</td>
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<td>Tina Wolsberger</td>
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<td>Todd Pironis</td>
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<td>Amanda Fuller</td>
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<td>David Griffths</td>
<td>Group Marketing Manager - Samsung</td>
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<td>Kate Gamble</td>
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<td>Mimi Fleming</td>
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<td>Nathan Wilson</td>
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<td>Niki Allen</td>
<td>Senior Manager, Communications &amp; Media - StatePlus</td>
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<td>Paul Den</td>
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<td>Anna College</td>
<td>Agency Director - Ikon Communications</td>
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<td>Business Director - OMD</td>
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<td>Marketing Communications Manager - Simplot</td>
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<td>Kammeron Cran</td>
<td>General Manager, Consumer Sales &amp; Marketing - News Corp</td>
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<td>Katrina White</td>
<td>Small Medium Business Strategy - Microsoft</td>
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<td>Kelly Tagalan</td>
<td>Corporate Partnerships, The Royal Institution</td>
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<td>Chief Marketing Officer - PASS Technology Group</td>
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<td>Lucio Ribeiro</td>
<td>Lecturer - RMAT</td>
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<td>Martin Curtis</td>
<td>Head of Performance Agencies - Google</td>
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<td>Mitchell Parkins</td>
<td>Head of Sponsorship - Sportsbet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mollie Hill</td>
<td>Executive Director, Strategy, Brand and Marketing - Tourism Western Australia</td>
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<td>Nicky Bryson</td>
<td>Founder - The Trenches</td>
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<td>Group Account Director - BMF</td>
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<td>Sarah Murdoch</td>
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