



THE VIRTUE OF VULNERABILITY

REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP PRESENTED BY
THE MARKETING ACADEMY AUSTRALIA 2019 SCHOLARS



THE VIRTUE OF VULNERABILITY

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.



SHERILYN SHACKELL

FOUNDER AND CEO
THE MARKETING
ACADEMY

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 150 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.



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MISSION

Turning the marketing talent of today into the leaders of tomorrow

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 4P's 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, 15 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 lectures 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 have a team of over 40 leading 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.

**HAPPY 5TH BIRTHDAY
TO THE MARKETING
ACADEMY AUSTRALIA**

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.





INTRODUCING THE MARKETING ACADEMY AUSTRALIA 2019 SCHOLARS



Introducing The Marketing Academy 2019 Scholars

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.



ADAM BEAUPEURT

Managing Partner,
B.B.E

"I'm an arsehole."

Sitting on the couch at home, trying to defrazzle from a sleep deprived, hyper-caffeinated day, I'm half listening to my partner talking. She's trying to help me. She's trying to tell me that I'd ruined the day of one of our employees. That I'd hurt them. At best, I'd brush it off. At worst, I'd snap back at my partner. Something didn't go the way I wanted it to. In fact, nothing did.

They couldn't do it as well as me.
They never understood what I meant.
They didn't care like I did.
They didn't have to react that way.

"I'm such an arsehole."

I said this to myself, years later huddled with my new friends: Scholars and Mentors at The Marketing Academy. I'm drifting in and out of a deep conversation on personal responsibility. I'm struggling to focus. Shaking my head, almost physically, I was dumbfounded as I reflected on just how much of an unconscious, ignorant and shit manager I was. Blind to the effect and influence I had on this group of people. I went about my days with little regard for what and who I was shaping. Both them and me.

Thankfully, as I sat there, these uncomfortable reflections were seen through new eyes, new understanding - and newfound responsibility. And at the very least I have a simple and easy reminder of what not to be.

"Don't be an arsehole."



ADAM FURNESS

Managing Director,
Impact

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'll 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 offsite 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 acute 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.

Each coaching session has provided a gem of wisdom. Each presenter, insightful and rare. And my fellow Scholars delivered endless moments of brilliance. Vulnerabilities were uncovered and deeper connections made as the masks we were wearing began to fade. The Marketing Academy wasn't at all about marketing, it was about becoming better leaders and ultimately better humans.

It was during sharing my experience of the first Bootcamp with my wife, Sophia, that the biggest realisation hit - I realised it doesn't matter how old you are, what your experience is, how many degrees you have or your job title - learning never stops. Life is all about being a mentee, being in a constant state of curiosity. A life scholar if you like, where the more you learn, the more you realise how little you know. It's been through the amazing speakers, mentors, Scholars and coaching at TMA that I have learned that I know very little; and that's an amazingly valuable lesson. Thank you.



ADAM HAMILTON

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 WA (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 me at all. 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 us?" 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.



ALEX LOWES

Global Manager, Media & Partnerships,
Tourism Australia

Uh-oh. Red strikes aren't good. And there were a lot more than I would have liked. Then came the sinking feeling you get when you realise what you thought is very different to what someone else has seen. I wasn't proud of the result or how I had performed with the team.

It was day two of The Marketing Academy bootcamp and our group had been given a topic to debate. The task was clear - negotiate and agree an outcome. It was fun, we were noisy, opinionated and getting to know one another. It was only afterwards when we were given feedback on our communication style that my eyes were opened.

Listening to those around me and communicating well are traits I always thought I've been good at. Open communication is even something my husband and I talked about in our marriage vows. Communication is so important and transcends all relationships, at work or home; what we unearthed about ourselves that day was eye opening for all but especially me.

Great communication is not about who says the most, stamps their authority or wins the point. Great communicators 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.

I was so taken aback by this revelation I went on to speak with a wonderful mentor about it at a later date - he said to me that even when he knows the answer in the room, he'll spend an extra amount of time asking questions and coaching until others find the answer how great is that?! Of course there are times when conversations need to move quickly, when you need to pivot 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 so that they feel 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 conveys my leadership values; to do it with inclusivity and demonstrate I value other people by first valuing what they have to say.



AMANDA BYRNE

Chief Experience Officer,
Scenic World Blue Mountains

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 utilising 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 whilst also balancing 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 passions, career goals and 5 year plans. I found I didn’t always have clear answers to those 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 plan and lead others at work and in life seemed to falter when it came to leading myself. This intense feeling that I should know something more began to manifest. I felt that everyone around me had an infallible career compass, that all successful people have masterful 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?

When I first started The Marketing Academy I had those feelings of insecurity amongst this incredibly talented group who seemed to know with confidence exactly where they were going and how to get there. Over the course of this journey we have transformed from a group of interesting strangers, to comrades who have shared some of our deepest secrets. Every single person has had a story of not feeling good enough, not being worthy, feeling like an imposter, of struggling to find their place. All these incredible leaders have their own fears and vulnerabilities and are working very hard to be their very best. I shared some of my fears with a fellow Scholar who said “Wow, I love that you follow your curiosity!”, and I thought, you know, I’m really good with that. Leaders need to be curious; to explore, 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. Consolidating everything I have learnt at The Marketing Academy, I am invigorated and committed to staying curious.



AN LE

National Marketing Manager,
McDonald’s

I was the typical overachiever. Throughout High School, University and the start of my career – when I put in the work, I got results. So I studied hard and got great marks. I did the long hours and got really good at my job. I took on bigger projects and I 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 do. 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 race.

On day one of our first bootcamp, Chris Savage wisely set the scene (with much gusto) as he pointed out “what got you here, won’t get you there”. 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 Heferon TED Talk ‘The Pecking Order’ was quoted – “you can’t be a super chicken and be an exceptional leader”. It became so clear to me – I was a super chicken. I genuinely love seeing the growth and development of my team, but my starting point was wrong. I wasn’t really thinking about what was best for them – ultimately I was motivated by what it meant for me.

Beyond bootcamp my coaching sessions with the incredibly inspiring Claire Salvetti have been the biggest gift in helping me become the person I want to be. For so long, I felt like I needed to be at a particular place by a particular age. I thought careers were about constantly moving up, I was worried about failure and what other people thought of me. I’ve come to realise that I’m already on the path to success, and it doesn’t matter how I get there. And most importantly of all, it’s more important to take on opportunities that make me happy, that make me grow, and that I’m doing it surrounded by great people.



ANNA BAY

Executive Manager, Group Strategy
& Marketing, CBA

It starts with an idea. A thought that might just go somewhere, that might be worth saying, that could turn into something.

But there’s another voice in your head, the voice of doubt. A voice that looks around the boardroom in which you sit, the table of the suited and booted and asks, “Who am I to say that?”.

Go for it, you urge, mustering your nerve, the blood rushing to your cheeks as you stammer out your words.

Blank faces stare back. “Sorry, can you say that again?”.

You clear your throat, a little too loudly, laugh a little too awkwardly, apologise a little too quickly. I’m sorry – you say, the line that undermines, you disclaim your opinion and minimise your voice before you begin.

You get the words out, somehow.

They are watching you, they are judging you. And you do not measure up.

Yes, well, er— anyway, some humanitarian keeps the conversation going because quite frankly you made no sense and it is better for everyone if the whole thing is just forgotten. You slump back into your chair, spent, your face burning and wonder why am I here?

It’s sometime before you try again. But you’ve been told — you need to speak up.

You give it another go, this time constructing your argument in your head. You’ve watched what other people say, you’ve considered their language, their opening, their style. You’ve tried the words out in less terrifying moments. And this thing, you know, is something you must say.

You open your mouth, but someone else jumps in and they are off and away, eloquently articulating precisely what it was you wanted to say. You shut your mouth. You take note. You resolve to try again.

This next time, your idea goes against those around you. The conversation runs on, everyone else pleased with the accord they have found, the common ground. You are reluctant to disrupt, to be seen as abrupt, out of step with what they all believe, but for this you must.

You reflect, and they keep going. You pause, then pounce. You open your mouth and the words start to spill out, softly at first, then gaining strength as you say what you think. As you speak your mind, you realise with a start that you were wrong all along. People weren’t judging you. They were listening to you. Listening for what it is that you have to say.

Because you have a voice. And you now know how to use it.



BRYAN WILMOT

Global Head of Marketing,
Stake

It’s intimidating meeting with Damian Eales. As you arrive to the top floor of the Surry Hills News Corp building, you’re ushered into an expansive office with plush chairs, multiple TV screens and Damian sat at a table reading your profile. He sips an 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 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. He just knew what was up!

Amongst the countless nuggets, one in particular stuck with me. “Have equal parts self-criticism and resilience”. As someone who struggles with self-doubt, constantly questioning my deservedness of being in a room or on a program like The Marketing Academy, I had always thought that the answer to this foible was to crush this sense of doubt. Overcome it. Get past it. However, in an instant this was completely reframed.

Everyone doubts themselves about something and that is just part of being human. However, the response should not be to ignore or avoid this but rather to embrace it and use it, and definitely not to beat yourself up about it. Doubt might expose a knowledge gap but instead of feeling stupid or unworthy, use it to fuel a learning opportunity.

Thinking about this more deeply however, I think there’s a broader learning to be taken here. It helped me understand that negative experiences, failures and moments of vulnerability aren’t things from which we should shy away. It helped me understand that negativity and positivity can co-exist in the very same moment and that in fact, they have a symbiotic relationship.

This has shaped my idea of the leader that I want to be. One that can be absorbent but resilient to challenging times and most importantly to find the nuggets of positivity within them. Identify the learnings. One who for myself and for anyone I’m leading, doesn’t waste energy bucketing things into such binary terms as achievement and failure, but finds a way to put them all in the wisdom bucket.

I’m genuinely appreciative for the experience of The Marketing Academy and the eye-widening experience it has been and encourage everyone reading this to support this program and the value it adds to our industry.



CATHERINE BOWE

Industry Marketing Manager ANZ,
Facebook

I was no stranger to the virtues of vulnerability when I started The Marketing Academy... in fact I was in the midst of a severe vulnerability hangover when I set off for bootcamp. The week prior I had spoken frankly at the Mentally Healthy Workplace event run by UnLtd and decided to share my personal connection with the importance of mental health across LinkedIn, Facebook and AdNews. 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 and 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, and I wanted to hide from a room of 30 of my industry peers.

But I didn't.

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 that I needed.

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. Pivoting my energy to my strengths of complex problem solving, visualising outcomes and influencing people to bring them along on the journey with me. And I now 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.



CELIA WRIGHT

Client Services Director,
Ikon Communications

"Are you ok?... no really. You're telling me you're ok, but everything about you is saying otherwise."

It was early 2018 and the lady in front of me was calling bullshit. I realise now it wasn't for her benefit that I was dishonest, it was for mine. I had tried to protect myself from dealing with a significant life blow months earlier, and unlucky for me, the cracks had started to show.

I was sitting in a café near work and broke down. I was scared. I was facing my inability to cope. That my orchestrated construct of myself wasn't reality.

I couldn't seem to catch my thoughts.

"Do you have someone to talk to... do you have a good GP?"

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 felt like 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 prior, became stressful and emotional. I would judge myself for this, which didn't help. In hindsight, I spent too much energy creating an appearance that I was ok. There were only a few people who knew the extent of my ill mental health.

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.

"When we deny the story, it defines us. When we own the story, we can write a brave new ending."

Brene Brown explains it well. As joy came back into my life, I felt emboldened to continue writing the story – one step at a time. I joined a running club and finished a 10k race (first time in 7 years). I applied for The Marketing Academy and was accepted (after putting it off for many years). I made the jump to officially change jobs (after a decade with the same employer).

I have been inspired by many people who have shared their personal struggles and it has taken a while for me to feel comfortable to share mine. And whilst this part of the story doesn't define me, it nonetheless is and always will be part of my story.

By finally sharing it, my hope is that you will be honest with yourself and recognise that struggling mentally isn't something to hide and push to the bottom of the to-do list until you're sitting in a café with someone you barely know asking you if you're ok.



CLAIRE WEST

Marketing Director, Westpac Brand,
Westpac Banking Group

'I know you can hear me, but you're not listening to me' ... a piece of advice that I have dished out numerous times to my children and my husband.

And a piece of advice, that has this year been revealed as a significant blind spot for me.

A curious one to have, as I clearly felt the impact and was painfully aware of what it's like not to be heard.

Listening – and deep listening has become a topic of focus and discussion in our industry and more widely. And being on the pulse of what's being discussed, I had ticked this off as something I was a natural at ... clearly evidenced by the concentration etched into my brow, the occasional 'yup' in agreement, and the odd well placed nod in all meetings and conversations.

Not only was I a great listener, but a great communicator too, as while listening I could simultaneously work through and articulate a well planned response to make sure my point landed just right.

A simple exercise on listening at our first bootcamp, and my horrendous score told a different story though.

It highlighted my focus on myself and delivering my well timed and planned perspective, leaving only enough mental space and presence to hear and not listen.

I was not in fact listening for a better idea or solution than the one I was forming in my head. I was not displaying empathy. I was not truly open to anyone and I was not leading in a way that lined up with my value set at all.

This year is one where I am re-teaching myself to listen with a child's curiosity and a mother's care.

To still my mind and be present has been one of the hardest things I am still learning. I wander from a vacant stare to so much noise in my head urging me to try and stay listening, that I can't hear a word being said to me.

I find it a daily struggle, but like anything that's hard to master, it will be the thing that propels me to the next level in my leadership journey. I hope those around me feel more heard, that I am open to a whole new world of ideas and perspectives, and that I am not only a better leader, but a better mum, sister, daughter, friend and wife because of it.

Because suddenly the world seems a much bigger and more interesting place and opportunity and brilliance is everywhere just waiting to be heard.



DANNI DIMITRI

Strategy Director,
Havas Media

When Dr. Simon Longstaff of the Ethics Centre spoke at bootcamp, I was positively stirred. For me, he drove home the importance of critical thinking.

Coupled with the self-awareness journey we've been on, which has been humbling and eye-opening for me, this has encouraged me to look inward and apply critical thought to why I feel, think and behave in the ways I do. In doing so, I've learned, I think we've all learned, more deeply about what we believe in, making it easier to truly back our behaviours. Being vulnerable to become stronger.

Sometimes, the point of view I have can be so obvious to me and when expressed, difficult to contend with. Since making this active choice to critically think more deeply about all of my behaviours, the moment I realise this is happening, or before it starts happening, I make small shifts in my own behaviour to gather multiple perspectives first and build mine in, or just really listen to everyone else, rather than asserting mine too quickly. This journey has taught us to take complete responsibility for your own actions – which I have enjoyed embracing wholeheartedly. I have also placed a focus on inspiring others to see things this way – your own perspective, although perhaps heavily researched and thoroughly thought through, isn't the only one and isn't always the right one. Truly understanding that has been humbling for me.

The leader I want to be embodies an approach where critical thinking is applied to all behaviours across all parts of life, whether that be difficult decisions, human interactions or business output.



DAVID CURRIE

Head of Partnership Sales,
Melbourne City F.C.

"Am I Two Different People?" This was the question running through my mind, as I sat in the dusty (but very charming) 'school room' at the Q Station, whilst soaking in the Living Leader programme. I'm surrounded by some of the best marketing talent in the country, sharing our stories, our motivations, our vulnerabilities. Listening 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 values and behaviours that an effective leader needs to demonstrate. Suddenly, the thought of being part of something big isn't so distant, heck I could effect change in a positive way, I'm 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? Why do we see the need to have two parallel universes in our everyday lives? With that thought lingering in my mind, within the excitement of my new-found confidence to conquer the business world, lead high-performing teams, achieve great things, and inspire colleagues, my thoughts suddenly started to drift away from the office and to reflect on the 'life' side of the equation.

All of a sudden, a sense of guilt consumed my moment.

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; Am I being there for my team, what can I give to enable a better performance? Was I constructive with feedback? What can I give to raise levels of performance? Am I communicating effectively? Is everyone happy? But the thought suddenly dawned on me: Am I being the best leader I can be at home too? Do I use the same criteria to assess the 'life' version of myself for family and friends? Do I employ the same levels of patience, empathy and standards to communicate with those I love most? Do I show my appreciation there enough? I realised, there and then, the leader I want to be is one that embraces the notion that there is no 'work/life balance', the energy we use to strive for greatness, is the same regardless of venue. One side is no less deserving than the other. "From what we get, we can make a living; what we give, however, makes a life."



JO HIGGINS

Integrated Marketing Lead,
IAG

Leadership.

Not the world's longest word but plenty in it to dwell over.

And dwell on it we do. There's a million concepts, tools and models; versions, role-models, podcasts and books.

What is it? Is it a title? A hierarchy? Does it require a team? Deep technical expertise? Being at the top of my game? Am I one? Why is it something that seems so much easier to see in others than myself?

And that's before I even get started on what makes leadership great...

Now the stakes are even higher. The goal, greater. And the fear of failing and getting it wrong, more intense.

But then the circuit breaker. Approximately 11am. 13 March 2019.

What if leadership isn't actually about me? What if it is about them? The others. The people you do, could, should, might one day lead. The brutal honesty of asking myself 'how many leaders have I developed?' Argh!

A realisation that I have to shift my focus from self and what I 'get', to selflessness and what I 'give'. Double ARGH!!

But this moment was the magical moment of the Marketing Academy for me. A redefining of what leadership truly means.

The chance to learn through being vulnerable. To share failures proudly with others and hear from them as they explore the same question. Being asked to remove my mask and hold a mirror up to my true self. And see who I am. And see how far I've come. And how far I've still got to go.

I don't find removing my mask easy. There are days when it seems welded on. A permanent fixture of what it means to be me, professionally and sometimes, personally. The prospect of it not being there is pretty terrifying. As is the knowledge that I'm 100% responsible for my actions and whether or not I remove it.

I don't doubt that there will be days I get it wrong. There will be people who meet me who may only ever meet the mask. But I now understand that there is an alternative. And I've been given the tools, the impetus and the network to help me leave the mask behind.

Through the Marketing Academy I've had the privilege of being surrounded by 29 amazing leaders, who've shown me that the world doesn't end if you are vulnerable. Instead, it becomes better.



JUSTIN CAREW

Creative Director,
McCann Sydney

For as long as I can remember I thought to be a great leader I needed to know more than everyone else, always be 100% right and deliver everything perfectly.

As hard as I tried to read, practise, prepare and increase my confidence – I was secretly masking a deep fear that would leave me paralysed with anxiety that I didn't know everything and I didn't have all the answers.

So when I stepped into a room full of the best in the business, I felt so small. So I just did exactly what I've always done. Hide behind the mask of a big smile, brave face and high confidence to hide my fears. But suddenly something shifted as everyone who is the best in the business removed their mask and showed they too had all the same fears. A weight was completely lifted off my shoulders. I realised that no one has it all together.

As the week unfolded the course showed me I could end all my fears and anxiety, simply by being transparent and honest about my vulnerabilities. As hard as it was, by putting up my hand and accepting both my strengths and my weaknesses, I've been able to empower others to take control, unite team members to use their untapped strengths and finally enjoy being the leader I always wanted to be.

Now I won't say there isn't work to be done, but I feel like I have a thirst for knowledge and the tools to get me to where I want to be. Thanks to this experience, I have finally overcome that fear, which has empowered me. Sure I still feel those fears, but I know how to deal with them – see the forest through the trees and tackle anything that comes my way.



KATHRYN FURNARI

Group Business Director,
PHD

Friday 1st March 2019. 3.55pm. Cypress Lakes Golf Course on the 14th green.

The moment I got the call from Terry saying I was in. Me? I was going to be part of the Marketing Academy in 2019? Surely not. He had the wrong number. He'd meant to call someone else.

But no. It was me.

As the news sank in and I shared it with Chris, my partner and Mark, my boss (who happened to be on the course with me at the time) I was still questioning myself. My ability. My worth. How on earth had I been lucky enough to get in?

But reflecting on that moment, I am disappointed I questioned myself. I am disappointed I thought it was luck. I am disappointed I didn't believe in myself the way Chris and Mark believed in me.

Walking into the first bootcamp I felt so out of place. I was surrounded by such amazing, smart, ambitious individuals. I didn't belong there. I was an imposter.

During those first few days when I was feeling most vulnerable, uncertain and overwhelmed, I made a decision. For the first time in my career, I actively decided what sort of leader I wanted to become. Not just a good leader, but a great leader. It was a complete shift from just going with the flow to making shit happen. Not being afraid to stand up for what I believe in. Identifying and being true to my values. Not questioning my ability and believing I could do anything. Not using the word "lucky" whenever someone asks me how I got to be where I am and telling them I worked hard, I was determined, I persevered, and I surrounded myself with amazing people.

I think back to that moment I got the call. I told myself not to get my hopes up. It was a long shot. I was so excited about being accepted into The Marketing Academy. But I didn't truly understand what I would have missed out on – until now. What an amazing opportunity it has been to be inspired, to be vulnerable, to start to define my purpose (which I'm still figuring out!), to share stories and to learn alongside incredible humans and to come out the other side knowing I am worthy, I am able, I am unstoppable. I am so grateful for this opportunity to rediscover what it truly means to 'believe in me'. And to all those amazing people I have surrounded myself with people who believe in me (I hope you know who you are). Thank You!



LINDA MONIQUE

Founder,
Almo

If you asked me to run a marathon, I would smirk and respond with a polite, 'you've got to be joking'. Ironically, I find myself running my own company, a 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 goddamn marathon?

The Marketing Academy has taught me an incredible amount of valuable lessons. What stuck the most is this; redesign. We have full conscious control to change the way we see, respond and act in every moment of our lives. We have the power to make change through choice. Whether it's stopping to decide how we react to a difficult conversation, how we choose to look at failure and how we take back control of our day-to-day lives. Be it work or personal. "Construct a life you find meaningful." Simple words, yet powerful.

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. 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 am no longer running a marathon with no end in sight. I choose to ski 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. Taking back control has meant changing the way I envision everything from success to challenges thrown at me. Snowballs and all.



LOAN MORRIS

Commercial Director,
iNC Digital Media

Most of the people I have met who have taken part in The Marketing Academy call it 'life changing' but even hearing that I was not prepared for how it would make me feel. There honestly is no way to describe the level of support, care, inspiration, compassion, understanding and love I felt from my fellow Scholars from day one.

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 was I selected to be part of this exclusive program? Feeling like the biggest imposter in the world, surely somebody was going to realise that I had no right to be there and would drag me out pronto!

But I had no time to dwell on these thoughts. Your guard is down in a matter of hours. We had a lifelong 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 and thinking like a leader but my biggest problem was that I wasn't owning my own success... I felt like I needed to apologise for being here, for having achieved what I had achieved and even felt like I needed permission to call myself a leader. I was lacking self-confidence and belief in my ability to truly lead a business, a project or people which meant I spent every day hiding behind a protective shield. What my mentors and my coach made me realise is that I'm worthy of being part of the Academy. I don't need to apologise for wanting a seat at the table and wanting to take on more challenges and that I am in fact an unstoppable natural born leader ready to move mountains!

I now know why I have been selected. I have a clear idea of what type 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.



MARK ECHO

National Planning Director,
Bohemia

2019 has been an incredible year for me both personally and professionally. My wife and I have been able to go overseas on two different occasions. I have been promoted to National Planning Director and of course been selected to be part of The Marketing Academy. This experience in particular has 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 me 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 she was able to identify eleven whilst I could only think of three.

This 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. They were things I saw as my duty given my position at work and even more importantly as a husband. I was blind to what I was bringing to the table and that meant I was always striving to be doing more. I realised I was never really appreciating the choices I was making that were influencing what was happening around me in my life. Including the impact my behaviour was having on others around me.

As you could imagine, I called my wife straight after this exercise just to tell her that 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 believe 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 is only the beginning of my journey as a better leader and as a better human.



MARK WIEDERMANN

Director Planning & Inventions ANZ,
Frucor Suntory

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)

At first this was a bit confronting - the cultural dynamics I was not happy with were most likely the output of my own leadership behaviours! So, rather than focusing on what I wanted to change in others I needed to turn my energy to what needed to change with me. I learnt that I had underestimated my breadth of impact across the teams that so much of my role now is to build belief and confidence in our people.

Through self-reflection and experimenting with changes in how I turn up to work every day, I was starting to see that I could have an even more positive impact on the cultural change I was seeking, and all by pivoting on a few of my own behaviours. Simple things like not walking through the office head down looking at my phone but rather looking around and connecting with someone different. Or when someone in the team approaches me with a problem to solve, rather than solving it (just to let my ego know 'I've still got it') I now create quick team huddles to collaborate and solve together.

Sometimes we focus too much energy on developing ourselves technically and trying to increase how much we know, but what I have experienced over the last 6 months is that the biggest growth opportunity is in changing how I behave. The impact this has on the organisational culture and the people is far more significant. Small pivots in your own behaviour can result in big positive changes for many others. If everyone thought about one or two behaviours they could change, the impact on the workplace would be huge.



MICHELLE GRIGG

Marketing Manager,
Powershop

I was incredibly daunted when I was asked to write this piece. I haven't had the 'a-ha' moment. I've always wanted to be a better leader, a better person. And know most of the time I fall short. And I felt like once again, I fell behind because I didn't have that moment to write about.

I thought maybe 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 uncomfortable and anxious all the time. But I couldn't write about that, as it's something bigger than that.

Just this week, the head of people in culture stopped me in the hallway. She wanted to tell me that she'd noticed a complete 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 was flourishing too.

And that speaks volumes.

It's ok that I haven't had the 'a-ha' moment. For me, the whole year is not one moment but a slow gradual change that's been so subtle, I haven't noticed it. But others have. And all it took was one person providing authentic feedback.

The Marketing Academy has meant that I've learnt to settle with uncomfortableness.

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 oyster with the sand. The sand uncomfortableness is still there, it's just busy washing round becoming a pearl.

I went into the year with the biggest feeling of being an imposter. 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 uncomfortableness. Because it means that I've had the opportunity to be surrounded by some of the smartest, brightest, best people in the business. I don't need to compare my journey to theirs but flourish in that we're all growing and becoming great leaders together.



NIGEL SEETO

Country Manager Australia
& New Zealand, Ancestry

It is quite a confronting experience to really look at yourself for the first time and understand how your beliefs and behaviours 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 pattern. 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 read this far, you probably know how this ends... (not well).

I've been told self-awareness is 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. Ultimately, 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 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 have been fortunate enough to embrace and absorb from the incredible speakers, mentors, my coach and our fellow Scholars. Now my mission is to not 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.



PAUL EVERSON

Managing Director

Going into 2019, I thought I had it all. I was at the peak of my career as the Managing Director of a large multinational communications 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 wife. 3 loving boys. Life was good. I was at the top of my 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 is visionary, approachable, firm but fair, trusting, supportive and a good listener. All the things you read in a 'how to be a good leader' handbook.

March 12 2019, the first Marketing Academy boot camp, brought that all into question. What I would discover, was that I couldn't be a 'great' leader without bringing my full self to a leadership role and I couldn't do that until I knew myself. And I mean really know 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 as a leader 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 captain would start making plans to hand over his ship. Feeling embarrassed, rejected, vulnerable, lost, doubting myself; the realization of not being defined by a title or belonging to something; really started to set in a negative away. I was at my lowest point. I had some dark, very dark days.

The saying goes, smooth seas don't make great sailors and it was during these troubled times where I would discover the true meaning of myself and in turn what it takes to be a great leader. I wanted nothing more than to hide. Run away. Abandon my ship and my crew. It could have been easy to do, however 29 Marketing Academy Scholars and a surrounding community of mentors, coaches, family and dear friends would teach me the true lesson of leadership. A captain never leaves his ship even when the seas are rough. While I didn't want to, I showed up. Battered and a little bruised (especially the ego), I continued to show up every day. I captained my ship right to the end and finished the voyage as I started. With passion, drive, hunger and a will for my crew to succeed without me, and they will; giving it my all until it was time to hand over the helm.

The last few months have tested my character and resilience in more ways than I care to admit, however, I have come to the realization that it is the exciting waves that make for great adventures.

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. I leave knowing I am stronger than I ever thought possible. I leave with 29 new friends and a wider network who put wind in my sails. I leave knowing that true leadership is about resilience, about pushing forward through troubled times and about showing up. Always. And I leave knowing myself like I have never known before, that deeper understanding. I know, will make me a better leader. A great leader. And for that, a better person.



RICHELLE BARKER

Marketing Director ANZ,
Electrolux

As a leader and fairly new to my role as Marketing Director in late 2018 I was craving 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 new role. I had typical imposter syndrome which I've found (throughout this process) is even more common than I thought.

Next minute it's March 2019 and I'm thrilled (and nervous) to be heading to the first Marketing Academy Bootcamp. One of the sessions was led by an individual who begins by telling a very personal, emotional story that had impacted his life. I see his honesty, the realness of his truth and how brave he is for sharing. I instantly love this guy! I love his openness. I immediately trust him. I listen to every word he says for the next two days during our workshop.

During the session we speak about what it means to be an outstanding leader and about taking responsibility. There was so much for me to learn from this experience both personally and professionally. I started to think about the leader I wanted to be and what changes I needed to make as a person. I want to be a great leader, I want to develop even better leaders and I want to influence other people and their lives for the better. To do this, I just need to be me, be real, be human, take risks, ask for help, encourage feedback and learn. I need to lead by example and be vulnerable - it's ok!

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

It's all about human connection and building real, deeper relationships. Vulnerability plays a huge part here. We are all real people with real stories and the more we share the more we connect as leaders. We can and must all make a difference within our own teams and our industry. "91% of people struggle to give feedback to leaders and 87% struggle to give feedback to peers" (Kamal Sarma). This is a real shame! My learning has impacted my work life and personal life significantly. It will continue to shift the way I think about leadership as well as who I am as a person.

I have shared my learnings with my team, my family and my partner. Allowing myself to be vulnerable will hopefully encourage others to do the same. It has opened up new business opportunities for me knowing it's ok 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. This is big.

It's ok to sweat it out. To fail. To be vulnerable. You'll learn something. If you encourage openness and truth you'll build stronger connections and have people back you the whole way. More importantly, you can be there to support others. I haven't got it quite right yet that's for sure, but I know where I'm headed.



SERGE COSTI

Marketing Manager,
Lion Co

I had a massive a-ha moment when I heard several people from The Marketing Academy talking about this thing called "authentic self". I'd never heard it discussed so openly and 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 'mask' and how people become used to, even addicted to, the personas they put on at work. Then I started to hear others – including my coach Oscar and some of the mentors I've been fortunate enough to chat with – talking about the same concept and then it really clicked. It was at that point that I really thought about my own actions and discovered a massive blind spot around this concept. And once I noticed it – the fog lifted.

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, ra, ra, ra. But these are just personality traits. I learnt 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 for better and some for worse. I put it down to being at work versus being at home. And it 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'm sitting around the dinner table with my family telling jokes. Then there's version that would get all uptight, like in a boardroom meeting or when shit goes all pear shaped on a project I've been working hard on, and I 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 its an unfamiliar 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.

If the best version of myself is when I'm hanging out with my mates at the pub, or playing with my kids, what's to stop me from being that person all the time? Why do I act differently because I'm giving a presentation or pitching a new idea?

And it's not about being all rosy all the time, there's going to be tough times and I've had plenty of them this year. But at least by recognising these emotions, and not trying to cover them up I can be more honest with myself and those around me.

I learnt that when I'm being my authentic self, I can navigate all these situations, or my whole life, with a sense of ease knowing that I'm bringing the truest version of myself to the table without any pretence. It's about dropping the persona and relying on my real character, wherever I am. And I've found it to be a massive enabler.

In a lot of leadership theory they say 'it starts with you', and for me latching onto this little nugget means I can be a more open leader by being my authentic self always, and hopefully create the conditions so that my team can be theirs too.



SKYE RUGLESS

Head of Subscriptions,
News Corp Australia

"While clearly capable, Skye often undersells her ability and doesn't possess high levels of self-confidence or a strong presence in a room of senior leaders."

My boss wrote that on my nomination form for The Marketing Academy. She also wrote half a page of glowing remarks but all I could think about was that one sentence. Ouch! I won't get an interview with that in there. I thought to myself.

And, I couldn't ask her to remove it because I knew what she wrote was true.

A week earlier I presented my marketing academy pitch to News Corp's board. 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 challenged on a few things (eg: where some of my numbers came from). I had all of the answers in front of me but became so overwhelmed, I was paralysed. My chest tightened and I struggled to breath. Fortunately someone jumped in and the meeting ended early so the board only saw me flounder, not completely breakdown.

Despite all of this, I somehow got an interview and was selected to be part of The Marketing Academy's 2019 cohort. On the first day of bootcamp Sherilyn asked us, "What is the biggest challenge or opportunity you are facing 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 my confidence about five years earlier when I let one A-hole get in my head. It spiralled from there. I started to question everything and read 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 it wasn't logical 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. And the circle of people surrounding me whom I trust is (slowly) growing, along with my self-confidence.

If you had of told me nine 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, they 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 other leaders through my actions and by sharing stories like the ones in this book.



STEPH DORE-SMITH

Senior Marketing Manager,
Crown Resorts

I knew when I entered The Marketing Academy that I would have to hold a mirror up to myself and ask a lot of hard questions and I wasn't sure what I would find or how brave I was going to let myself be.

Of the many powerful moments across the first bootcamp, the most was when I finally took off my mask.

It stripped me raw in front of new friends. I saw others reach into the depths of their experiences and emotions and felt honoured to hear their stories.

Yet I didn't share my whole story. Even in that safe, supportive environment. I judged myself harshly for that. Probably still do. The first opportunity to share it all and yet I held key elements of who I was and my story in reserve.

At that point I actively decided that if I wanted to be the best leader, partner, mum and friend I could be, I had to lose the word 'brave' and replace it with 'vulnerability'. Something I didn't do much and had a very outdated definition of in my head.

Nine months on I have twenty-nine brilliant and inspiring new friends. A true and deeper understanding of myself and the impact I can have on others as a leader and friend. I appreciate what I already have so much more and know where I need to push and prod and reshape.

My journey into vulnerability has helped me listen more at home and at work. I speak less but speak up more when it counts. I avoid less.

Thanks to a fabulous coach who asked many soul searching questions, I know what my best and worst self looks like and how to pivot when that worst self is emerging.

And I spend more time paying my learnings about vulnerability forward.

I am so grateful that I was able to dive into the challenging and supportive community of The Marketing Academy and to learn with and from the amazing scholars of 2019.



**VICTORIA
BRENNAN**
National Head of Technology Platforms,
Wavemaker ANZ

I've always been comfortable with the idea of myself as a solid team leader. I'm a people person. I work hard and I get things done. But when presented with the definition of a true leader, I questioned whether I'd ever truly led.

I'm not saying I was doing a bad job before and perhaps I did have some leadership qualities – but the thing is, they were entirely unconscious. I've been catapulting through life firing from one milestone to the next without taking the time to consider how I'm doing it. So when this process provided the chance to stop and think, I was confronted again and again with the stories I've been telling myself and reality. It's not an easy thing to do.

Yes, I'd been in positions of authority and yes, I'm sure that I'd set a good example for those around me, but had I made a considered effort to develop people to become good leaders themselves? Do I sit back and really listen to what people are and even aren't saying, or do I jump in too quickly to try and problem solve? Am I a leader amongst my peers? Do I take responsibility for the behaviour of those around me or do I write it off as 'not my problem' and move on to something I can fix? When I really thought on those questions I realised that my career had been focused far more on tasks than the impact I was having on people – and as a self proclaimed 'people person' that didn't sit right with me.

We're all busy. We've all got an everlasting to-do list. But really it's just work. The only thing that's real about what we do is the people we do it with. So the most important thing is that we leave our mark on those people in a positive way. But that doesn't mean being the one that gets things done, or that everyone likes to hang out with. It means taking the time to let people feel heard and to truly understand your colleagues as people. Often it means going to uncomfortable places. It's saying that tough thing that needs to be said, but only giving yourself permission after you've truly seen things from the other person's perspective. Leadership is learning it's not about you.

The biggest lesson for me has been that I need to push myself into moments of conflict. Whether it's conflict with a peer to encourage debate and drive change, conflict with myself as I bite my tongue and try not to be such a know it all, or conflict with a belief I've been holding on to forever. Conflict is never going to be comfortable but at least I know I'm learning if I'm feeling it.



**ZOE
COCKER**
Head of Brand & RYOT Studio,
Verizon

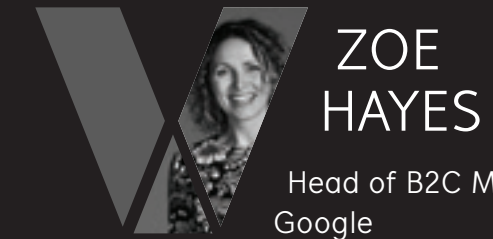
It's so hard to pick one pivotal moment over the last nine months when there have been so many. Since joining The Marketing Academy I can't remember a time when I wasn't contemplating, reflecting or acting on a moment to be a better leader. I have had times of utter denial that I was a leader at all. 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 unwaveringly in one camp. The camp built on duty, justice and fairness. To find out I could be so uncompromising was quite confronting. Here I was claiming and believing that I was; a great listener, an 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 and products that stand up on their own merit. Thanks to the many 'a-ha 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.



**ZOE
HAYES**
Head of B2C Marketing, Apps & Platforms ANZ
Google

The Oscar triple punch.

Standing in my hotel in Singapore I trepidatiously reach for the phone. I have a call with Oscar, head coach of The Marketing Academy to ask to swap my assigned exec coach.

Punch 1: After a quick intro on why I feel it's not working out Oscar asks "If you were an animal in your meeting with him what animal would you be?". Hmm. This chat is not going how I thought. I buckle in for the ride. After some deliberation and feeling a bit silly I reply "a meerkat". I feel a meerkat is inquisitive and friendly – a fine spirit animal for a coaching chat. Yes? Apparently not. "And what animal do you think you needed to be to have 100% responsibility in the outcome of your sessions?" This is getting harder... After a tough and awkward ponder I have an enlightening realisation of my role in this – I respond with "A lion".

Punch 2: He then queries "if I were to take the martial arts philosophy that states if you're behaving in this way in this part of your life, you're then likely behaving like that elsewhere. What would that make you think?" It's at this moment with a fair amount of shock I realised how much I'd been holding myself back in many aspects of my life. Nuts.

Punch 3: I share with Oscar a throw away comment on my father. Of course he won't let that one fly without interrogation and quickly drills to get me to reveal more. Here goes. I reveal as a child I'd been scorecarded at the dinner table on my stories. Being the youngest of four – the family regularly would hold up their imaginary scorecards and announce 2, or 3 (out of 10 mind you). It was mostly done with humour – but talk about a tough crowd. I then rush through sharing how my father regularly denigrated the intelligence of myself and my siblings. Oscar simply reaches into that pain – and tells me I have the opportunity to not relive that story and fear of judgement from childhood. Instead I can be choiceful and rewrite my story now as an adult. Simple words but that simple view of CHOICE of that story I had held onto was a whole new perspective and option for me.

So – after 30mins being 'Oscar-ed' I'm exhausted but rallied. I almost bust down my hotel door on my way out to take on the working day with a whole new view and attitude.

My take-aways that I now regularly draw upon:

1. 100% responsibility
2. Lion not Meerkat
3. Edit a new story





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TREASURED, APPRECIATED
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"WE F@%D UP,
WE NEEDED TO
OWN IT."

DAVID SCRIBNER

STORIES FROM INDUSTRY LEADERS,
MARKETING ACADEMY MENTORS
AND COACHES



DAMIAN EALES

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, NEWS CORP AUSTRALIA

"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 changed my lens on life by seeing problems as opportunities. I've leveraged my love of learning with realtime 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 Devine. 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. Don't be one of those people with no regrets. I have plenty and although I'm not proud of them, I value how they've made me better.

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.



DAVID SCRIBNER
CHIEF CUSTOMER OFFICER, OOH!MEDIA

A Saturday morning following the Friday night wedding of our Head of HR.

Our network, and with it, our customer 'service' ethos and our brand promise came crashing down. Our hungover leadership team also had no mobiles to use so had to assemble at head office (by taxi) and then get on landlines and solve the issue for over 1 million Australians.

There was no playbook – no mobile telco had had an outage on this scale before. And we were 8 hours into the outage which started at 12 midnight.

- Our social pages were swamped
- 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 so 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, hearing about important news from friends and families. We f@%d up, we needed to own it.

And by owning it, we recovered. Our NPS doubled from before the outage to after. We continued to be the market leader in customer service. But I'll never forget that Saturday morning, I was never more alive.



EUAN SMITH
COO, FOXTEL

The sacking 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 underwhelming 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 cutover 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 stock was everywhere except where it was supposed to be: my team and our customers close to mutiny.

The deck said we had to move vendor. Again. And that we needed another \$500k to do so. By the time I was on page 3 the COO had reached page 12. He stopped me mid-sentence :-

'Did you learn anything?'

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.

I end every offsite with my leaders with this quote. It's paraphrased from Terry Leahy, the ex-CEO of Tesco :-

If you ask 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.



JENNI DILL
VP, CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER,
MCDONALD'S AUSTRALIA

Risking 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, flavours 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 an overseas co-packer (with a few upgrades) to allow us to supply a 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 have 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 snack 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 myself, my team and my business, encouraging everyone to be their best.



JOHN STEEDMAN
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN MEDIA
INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT, WPP AUNZ

Showing vulnerability is to me the greatest sign of a true leader. 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 out counsel.

The decision to seek advice 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.

It is a lesson I have taken with me across other areas of my life, and one from which I now offer to all: If you are faced with a difficult decision or find yourself unable to solve a problem – be it personal or professional – at any time in your life, do not let it fester. Seek help through professional counsel or by way of a mentor. And importantly, listen and act on the advice.

Seeking help and being vulnerable is not something that should make you feel embarrassed or useless; instead it should be seen and felt as a sign of strength. It is one of life's greatest lessons, and one that all true leaders have learned.



JUDI HAUSMANN
CEO, THE HAUS

I don't think there is a pivotal 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 won't lie – though much of it was really flattering, some of it really hurt.

I was accused of being too dominant and threatening, too loud and excitable, too competitive, too short term in my thinking and many other things.

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.

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

To embrace their flaws as well as their strengths and to work on the things that don't serve them well.

I think the ultimate aim of leadership is very similar to the aim of parenthood – you want to help people become the best versions of themselves.

Nothing makes me prouder than to see the people I have mentored succeed.

And in the meantime you will still find me looking for ways to change and improve myself every single day!



KAMAL SARMA
CO-FOUNDER, REZILIUM

The moment I fell in love with a person I did not know

I was at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. My wife had given birth to our 2nd child and I started crying. It was the same hospital where my first daughter, Karishma, had passed away just over a year ago and it had been the darkest time of our lives.

I was handed our baby, Kavisha, 4 weeks premature and she took my breath away. I had this huge smile across my face. This was a new feeling. Since our first daughter passed I thought that I had forgotten how to smile. Now I could not stop smiling.

She was a bundle weighing 2.2kgs and I would do anything for her. I have to admit that growing up in the fund management world I had become very transactional. Your days are pegged on seemingly important information which comprised of Rates of Return, Assets under Management and whether the NASDAQ was going up or down. Little did I know how this little being was going to change my life.

I now thought about what world she was going to live in rather than how quickly I could pay off the mortgage.

I was more worried about what water she would be drinking and air she would be breathing in the future. My timelines shifted! It had been the

next year's ROI that mattered to me. I was now concerned about the next 50~100 years.

I did not worry about shareholder returns, now I was concerned about if I had the leadership skills to step up and be a leader in her life. I was concerned if I could stay connected to her as she grew up to become a woman.

So I gave up my career in funds management and started my journey to become a student of resilience, leadership and human connection. Resilience so I could help her as she goes through the ups and downs of life. Leadership so I could make a tangible impact on the world she would grow up in. Human connection so I could stay connected to her.

I hope through the work that I do I leave the world in a place where she experiences peace not threatened by conflict, an environment where she can thrive and a future that is better than mine.



KATIE RIGG-SMITH
CEO, MINDSHARE AUNZ

A turning point in my leadership journey happened shortly after I had been promoted to Chief Strategy Officer. I worked with an amazing group of strategists, in a flat team structure, whom were all around my age and people I considered friends. Suddenly I was in a position of leadership over the team and that took some adjustment, although more for me as I came to realise than for them.

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 watering 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, Lucielle, 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 Duckworth 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 is 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 have 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 innate 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.

KIM PORTRATE CEO, THINKTV

A mere two weeks into my brand-new-shiny new job I realised I'd landed in a horrible place to work.

There's no sugar coating it I thought, as I forced myself into the car to head to work.

The company culture was built on fear, reinforced by herd mentality and if I am truly being honest, it included healthy lashings 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 leave. 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 plus 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. Once you've identified your professional Everest spend time developing a solid plan and then drive forward with everything you've got to achieve it. Don't slow down, get distracted or get disappointed as roadblocks crop up along the way. If you stay focused on the outcome and be relentless in its pursuit you will (eventually) see the summit.
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 GOHIL 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, suits and our amazing support team.

As the CEO of the agency, I took great pride in the team we called Drogans. Each day we came 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 until the end. For the good of the business and for those 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 know, 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 clock-work and I managed my little brand portfolio with relative ease....but I also now know 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 2005. 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!



SUZANA RISTEVSKI

EXECUTIVE GENERAL MANAGER
MARKETING & CX, NAB

About 8 years ago, we discovered my son, Oliver was on the spectrum.

I don't think I told anyone for about 2 years. I didn't want to admit it out loud, as I hoped that the diagnosis was wrong or he would somehow 'recover'. It took that long to come to terms with it personally.

Of course, as he grew older, I realised that the diagnosis didn't matter. In fact, it was incredibly helpful – we knew what we needed to do to help him navigate the world. Oliver is a beautiful boy. There is no grey with him. No lies, no ego, no hate, he is void of many of the human imperfections that us mere mortals face into on a daily basis. He finds joy in the most simple things and is a true delight to be around. There isn't a person that hasn't fallen in love with him, once they get to know him.

He has taught us many things.

He has taught us to look beneath the veneer. He has taught us, that it is worth spending the time to hear people's stories. There are usually reasons why people behave the way they do, it's worth investing time to understand why.

He has taught us to truly accept and appreciate diversity in thought. His lense on life is different from mine, but it is no less valuable than mine.

He has taught us to not sweat the small stuff, to be curious and to enjoy 'moments' in time. Not everything needs to be grand. Not everything needs to be a big deal, and certainly not everything needs to be taken personally.

I thought I would have to teach him about the world, but I have since learnt that we have to teach the world about him. True diversity makes the world a much better place.





 The Marketing Academy Australia

The Marketing Academy Australia

THE MARKETING ACADEMY AUSTRALIA
2019 SCHOLARS

THE VIRTUE OF VULNERABILITY

'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'

AUSTRALIAN SCHOLAR

The Australia Scholarship programme is midway through its fifth year 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 STATES

'The Marketing Academy Scholarship is literally life changing'

SCHOLAR ALUMNI

The US Scholarship Program was launched in 2018 and is sponsored by Salesforce, Facebook, Mars Confectionery, Accenture, KFC and The Wall Street Journal.

This year, the US programme will launch the Fellowship programme, a 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.

Find out more: themarketingacademy.org/us/

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 9 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 industries through year-long apprenticeships.

Find out more: themarketingacademy.org/uk/

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 CEO's, CMO's, 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.



"Inspire 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.

2015

2016

2017

2018

2015

SCHOLAR	ROLE
Adam Ross	Content Lead - Coca-Cola
Alex Light	Commercial Director - VICE
Amy Lee-Hopkins	Head of Marketing Communications - Anglicare
Claire Wish-Wilson	Manager Marketing - Suncorp
Damon Robbins	CEO, News Perform - News Corp
David Halter	Chief Strategy Officer - CHE Proximity
Duncan Parfitt	COO - Spark Foundry
Ernesto Soriano	Freelance
Hamish Strahorn	Head of Strategy & Experience - Nine Entertainment
Heilan Bolton	Senior Marketing Manager - Qantas Loyalty
Ian Edwards	Managing Director - Wavemaker
Jane Merrick	General Manager Marketing and Distribution - World Nomads
Jo McAlister	Director, Content Marketing - Foxtel
Justin Robinson	Director - Industry Reels
Justin Taylor	Head of Marketing Communication and Brand - Simplot
Kim Hamilton	Managing Director, Sydney - OMD
Lucy Plunkett	Head of Marketing - Visit Ballarat
Michael McKeown	Marketing Manager - CUB
Mim Orlando	Marketing Director - Lavazza
Nick Turner	General Manager - The Star Entertainment Group
Nicola Bardsley	Head of Brand & Strategy - Westpac
Paul Connell	GM & Marketing Director - Unilever
Pia Coyle	National Head of Investment - Ikon Communications
Rachel Taylor	Senior marketing Manager - PepsiCo
Sean Hall	Founder & Chief Energist - Energx
Sharon Lewis	Strategy & Marketing Director - Rebel & Soul
Tim Kirby	Senior Business Leader
Vanessa Sanford	General Manager, Media, Marketing Operations & Risk - Commonwealth Bank
Victoria McCrea	GM Marketing and Innovation - George Weston Foods
William Papesch	Head of Marketing - Mondelez

2016

SCHOLAR	ROLE
Andrew Howie	Head of Brand & Advertising – Amazon
Brooke Chilcott	Partner – Delorean
Burcak Sezer	Head of Marketing and Innovation – Kimberley Clark
Claire Salvetti	Chief Executive Officer – One Green Bean
Claire Tenzer	Group Business Director – TBWA/Melbourne
Gabriella Conlon	Head of Global Product Partnerships – Google
Gemma Hunter	Global Executive Creative Director – MediaCom
Holly Jonas	Head of Program Management – Uber
Jay Sellick	Chief Customer Officer – Sportsbet
Jeci David	Portfolio Marketing Manager – Kellogg's
Jeff Miller	Head of Marketing, Consumer Wealth – Commonwealth Bank
Kate O'Ryan-Roeder	Managing Director – Mindshare
Katie Finney	Strategy and Solutions Director – Seven Network
Lauren Cain	Founder – JAYCAINO
Liz Kaelin	Head of Client Experience – Terem Technologies
Louise Davis	Director
Michael Kay	Managing Director – Rufus
Nora-Kate O'Connell	Group Marketing Manager – KFC
Peter Cerny	Executive Creative Director, Partner – Channel T
Polly Blenkinship	Marketing Director, Insights & Media – Foxtel
Rachel Pullicino	CMO – Campos Coffee
Renee Garner	Chief Operating Officer – RevTech
Sergio Brodsky	Head of Strategy and Innovation – Nunn Media
Simon Davenport	General Manager, Marketing – National Basketball League
Stewart Gurney	Chief Strategy Officer – PHD
Terri Martin	General Manager – Dymocks Children's Charities
Tina Walsberger	Marketing and Communications Director – Edinburgh International Festival
Todd Pironis	National Sales & Marketing Manager – Johnson & Johnson
Tracy Hall	Marketing Director – GoDaddy
Zoey Saunders	Marketing Director – Lion

2017

SCHOLAR	ROLE
Amanda Fuller	Managing Partner – DDB Remedy Australia
Andrew DaSilva	Senior Manager – EY
Brent Whelen	Marketing Director – Fonterra
Cally Scivetti	Brand Solution Strategist – Google
Chris Gross	Marketing Director – Audible
Colin Glynn	Director of Consumer & Business Insights – McDonald's
David Griffiths	Group Marketing Manager – Samsung
Ebonie Newman	Chief Commercial Officer – Storyful
Gary Elphick	Founder & CEO – Disrupt Sports
Jacquelyn Cowardin	Head of Audience Acquisition – George P. Johnson
James Stewart	Director Emerging Products – IAG
Jane King	Group Director of Marketing – Val Morgan
Jayne Andrews	Marketing Director – Carnival Cruise Line
Julia Donnan	Head of Hardware Marketing – Google
Kara May	Partner, Head of Marketing – Knight Frank Australia
Kate Gamble	General Manager – Resolution Media
Kathy Damatopoulos	Digital Performance Media Manager – Suncorp
Lucie Wolstenholme	General Manager – Integria Healthcare
Margy Vary	Marketing Director – Guardian Australia
Matt Parkes	Head of Retail Banking Services Marketing – Commonwealth Bank
Mimi Fleming	General Manager – Vice Media
Nathan Wilson	Category Management – Microsoft
Niki Allen	Senior Manager, Communications & Media – StatePlus
Paul Den	Partner & Co-Founder – Banter
Pia Chaudhuri	Creative Director
Ruth Taylor	Marketing Manager – KFC
Sarah Jauncey	Communications Manager – Disability Services Australia
Sarah Peacock	Head of Customer Engagement – NSW Business Chamber
Simon Davies	Marketing Director – NewsMediaWorks
Tim Kenward	National Marketing Manager – McDonald's

2018

SCHOLAR	ROLE
Adam Slattery	Head of Brand & Communications - Vodafone
Alexandra Conomos	Senior Marketing Manager - Audible
Alison Tiling	Chief Strategy Officer - VMLY&R
Andrew Kolb	Strategy Director - VMLY&R
Anna College	Agency Director - Ikon Communications
Anshika Grover	Associate Director, Product Development & Transformation - Optus
Brooke Tierney	Founder & Managing Director - The Sister
Chiquita King	Founder & Managing Director - Coffee Cocoa Gunpowder
Ciaran Norris	Industry Manager - Facebook
Danni Wright	National Head of Strategy - Carat
Declan O'Dwyer	Group Director - UM Worldwide
Dorothee Gomez	Business Director - OMD
Evonne Williams	Marketing Communications Manager - Simplot
Hannah Sturrock	Managing Partner - The Hallway
James Boardman	National Strategy Director - Bohemia Group
Jules Lund	Founder - TRIBE
Kammeron Cran	General Manager, Consumer Sales & Marketing Victoria - News Corp
Katrina White	Small Medium Business Strategy - Microsoft
Kelly Tagalan	Corporate Partnerships - The Royal Institution
Laura Johnson	Chief Marketing Officer - PASS Technology Group
Lucio Ribeiro	Lecturer - RMIT
Martin Curtis	Head of Performance Agencies - Google
Mitchell Parkins	Head of Sponsorship - Sportsbet
Mollie Hill	Executive Director Strategy, Brand and Marketing - Tourism Western Australia
Myriam Conrie	Director of Sales & Marketing - Sofitel Sydney Darling Harbour
Nicky Bryson	Founder - The Trenches
Richard Woods	Group Account Director - BMF
Sarah Knox	Director - Res Publica
Sarah Murdoch	Global Marketing Director - Jurlique
Tamie Carson	Executive Manager, Customer Experience - Commonwealth Bank

THE MARKETING ACADEMY AUSTRALIA SCHOLARSHIP NOMINATION



NOMINATE NOW

The Marketing Academy Australia Scholarship Programme is free for emerging leaders in the Marketing, Advertising, Communication and Media industries in Australia. It's a highly selective programme – and you need to be nominated before you can apply.

Nominate someone who you believe to be the best and the brightest marketing talent in Australia. Every 'nominee' will then receive an 'Invitation to Apply' for by email.

Submit your nominations at www.themarketingacademy.org/au

Here's the ideal selection criteria;

- Ideally between 10 and 20 years in a marketing or agency role
- Already in a leadership role or position of significant influence
- Working for current employer for 12 months or more
- Highly ambitious to further career in marketing leadership, aspiring to board roles
- Demonstrates commitment to career with evidence of results and achievements
- Interests in charitable, social, cultural, creative or sporting endeavours
- Commitment to broadening horizons, such as world travel and further education
- High emotional intelligence
- Naturally driven to succeed
- Employed full-time (not freelance) with no known risk of resignation, redundancy or termination during the year

THE MARKETING ACADEMY EXISTS THROUGH THE SUPPORT AND GENEROSITY OF THOSE THAT DONATE TO THE PROGRAM.

SOME BIG THANKS FROM THE MARKETING ACADEMY 2019 COHORT TO THE LEGENDS WHO HELPED MAKE THIS YEAR TRANSFORMATIVE FOR US:

TO THE COACHES AND SPECIAL MENTION TO OSCAR TRIMBOLI –

THANK YOU FOR CHALLENGING US, CALLING US OUT ON OUR BULLSHIT, HOLDING US ACCOUNTABLE, AND PUSHING US TO REALISE A VERSION OF OURSELVES THAT HAS MORE CLARITY, STRENGTH AND CONFIDENCE IN OUR LEADERSHIP.

TO THE MENTORS –

WE'RE FULLY AWARE OF THE SACRIFICE THOSE ONE AND A HALF HOUR SLOTS YOU GIVE US FROM YOUR CALENDARS REPRESENT. THANK YOU FOR THE CANDOUR, AUTHENTICITY, WISDOM, REASSURANCE, PRACTICAL TIPS, AND TIME. IT HAS BEEN INVALUABLE TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US.

AND WE'D LOVE TO RECOGNISE THE SPONSORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO HELP US CREATE A WONDERFUL GRADUATION BASH – THANK YOU AND CHEERS!

THE MARKETING ACADEMY COHORT 2019.



THANK YOU

THE 2019 SCHOLARS WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS SINCERE GRATITUDE TO ALL OF OUR SPONSORS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT.

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THE STAR

SHOWCASE SPONSORS





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