

MyPeople[®]

MEETS

Drew Povey

Influential Leadership Authority

LEADERSHIP: THE NEXT BIG THING

Every successful CEO, world-beating sports captain and inspirational teacher exhibits the same characteristics: the 7Cs

THE GAME CHANGERS

Curiosity, Changeability, Charisma, Connection, Confidence, Collaboration and Courage

EDUCATING ORGANISATIONS

Managers and Leaders are different;
Managers focus on: Structure - Processes - Tell
Leaders focus on: People - Vision - Sell

PEOPLE. PERFORMANCE. POTENTIAL.

DEVELOPING PEOPLE AND INSPIRING EXCELLENCE



Drew Povey is an influential leadership authority with a unique multi sector viewpoint on creating innovative and sustainable change.

Tell us a bit about who you are and what you do...

Hello! My name is Drew Povey and I'm a leadership specialist. I've been fascinated by the areas of leadership, change, culture, achievement and mindset for over twenty years, having read widely on the subject and observed best practice in a range of different sectors. My own personal leadership career started at 15 when I studied for a rugby coaching course, having played the game for a number of years. Once I'd completed the course, I took on a team to coach and from this very first experience of leadership, I was hooked. I certainly wouldn't have articulated it like this at the time, but to see the impact of mindset shifts and cultural change on behaviours, actions and performance was truly inspiring.

I subsequently worked in elite-level sport, which was where my own learning increased significantly again. Following a

period of study for my degree, I decided that the link between coaching sport and teaching was too great not to explore. Twelve months later I started my first teaching job whilst continuing to work in sport. The parallels were undeniable and this is where the obsession with leadership kicked in.

I rose through the education ranks, becoming Headteacher in 2009 at the ripe old age of 32. However, within the first few weeks of my tenure, we were told that we had the UK's largest school deficit (which wasn't of the schools making) and that we had to pay it back. This was a huge challenge, compounded by the fact that we were in a PFI building, had a falling school role and all financial projections were indicating a doubling of the debt over a five-year period. Nationally renowned experts were called in and the general view was that this was an impossible task. At this

point I started to generate some new leadership models to deal with the situation. We dealt with the financial deficit and these models had a big role to play in the transformation. Word quickly spread and we took the models I had developed to other sectors to help them develop, which included working with the Police, the NHS and big businesses in the corporate sector. This saw the creation of DPC LTD and the rest, as they say, is history!

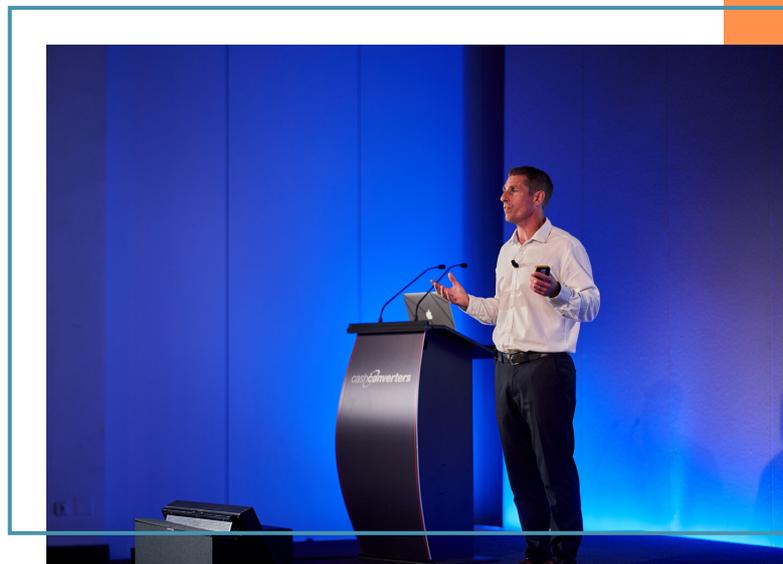
I believe reading and continued learning to be absolutely key to the development of people in all fields, in all roles and in all sectors.

What's been the driving force of your career journey and how this has led you to where you are today?

My purpose has always been 'helping people to develop'. At the age of 15 I felt this as a coach, then again as a teacher, as a headteacher and now still within the leadership world. I have never gone into a business and been told 'Drew... we've just got too many leaders!' I also wholeheartedly believe that by developing people, we will develop our business, so this must be the starting point for any change. As is my mantra - business is about people, people are about relationships and relationships are all about emotions. This simple sentence is inextricably linked to all the models I continue to produce and the work that I currently do and passionately believe in.

What is the biggest lesson you've learnt?

Like most people, my life to date has been littered with challenges, both personal and professional. This for me is why we require



personal and professional leadership. A significant remit of leadership is to deal with challenge. Seth Godin talks about this well, when he stresses that we are all leading something and that the world needs more leaders - he's right. This leadership may be in the home, in a community group, in a team or in a big organisation. Complexity is apparent, change is needed and so this is where the leadership dynamic comes in. This is also why management is so different to leadership, because one is more static and the other is more dynamic. However, I must say that whilst leadership is simple to understand...it can be really hard to do!

The other key lesson is answering the question: 'What is resilience?' We all have to deal with difficulty (the title of my latest model) but how do we do this effectively? How do we lead during times of challenge? To look at resilience and come to the conclusion that it's all about 'just getting up and going again' or using the famous Ian Dowie quote of 'bounce-back-ability' I feel we are missing the nuances and key elements. Just getting up and going again isn't resilience for me... it's stupidity! When we are in a difficult place, I believe that curiosity is (again) key and that true resilience is about bouncing back, smarter. The three-step process that can help us realise this, is to learn-unlearn-relearn. The learning is about what happened, the unlearning is about getting rid of some aspects that cause pot holes and pitfalls

and the relearning is all about development. Dr John Maxwell has a simple but effective way of framing these steps as 'stabilise, organise and then mobilise.' I love these steps and they should be a major part of every leader's toolkit.

What one piece of advice would you give, to succeed in this ever-changing business world? I would have to start with talking about both the development of people and the mindset work of Dr Carol Dweck. Effort is a KPI that we don't talk about enough and when I work with individuals, teams or whole organisations I observe daily that people are putting 'glass ceilings on their own potential' and rarely reaching their potential. In short, the hare and tortoise story is truer today than ever, and that this is playing out at all levels in our businesses.

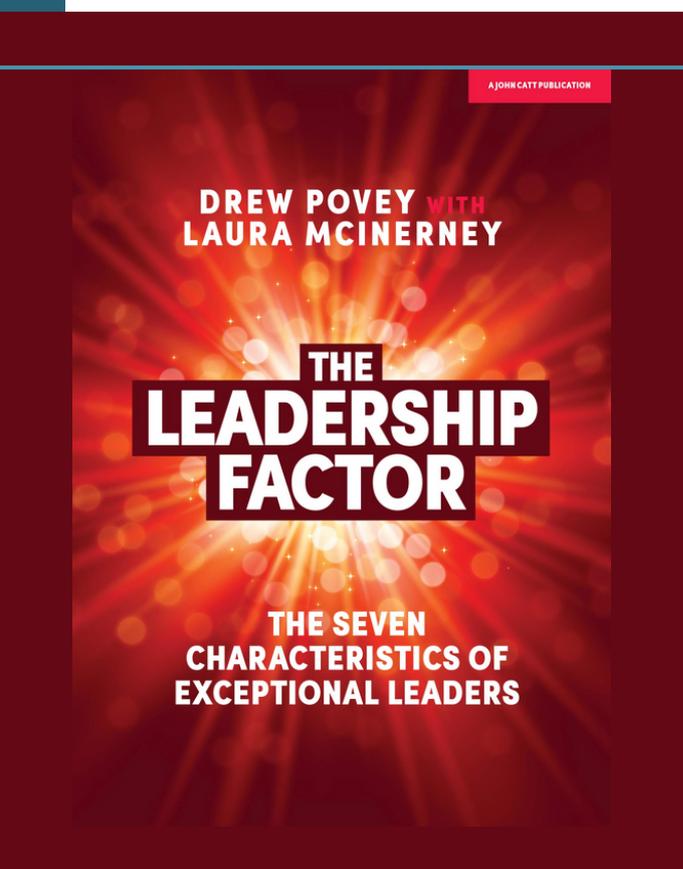
Secondly we must encourage more curious thinking. In my latest [book](#) 'The Leadership Factor', written with the brilliant Guardian

journalist Laura McInerney, we explore the traits of the best leaders. The starting point for the book is curiosity. I won't go into detail here, but asking 'why?' and really understanding what's happened, both in good and bad times is key to a successful individual mindset, team, or business. I believe that curiosity is the hidden gem in the theme of resilience and the foundation for creativity - Something that is often our competitive advantage.

How do you make decisions when there's a disagreement and stakes are high?

Good decision making is crucial for everyone. This may sound obvious, but there are a number of barriers that make this more challenging. We are continually bombarded with information and stimuli. From our inboxes, to our notifications, from our team needs, to our client needs, we are constantly being flooded with information and data that can interfere with our focus. Secondly, is the requirement for our people to be part of the solution and wanting to be involved in the organisation's thinking. This often leads leaders to a point where they are frozen, trying to spin plates and suffering from analysis paralysis. Or put another way, they are caught at the 'whack-a-mole' game at the fairground...and losing!.

The key to navigating these issues successfully is thinking. We must take time to think and even think about our thinking without being too philosophical. Victor Frankl, concentration camp survivor and renowned psychologist, talks eloquently about the importance of the gap/space between stimulus and response. This is where a reactive call may be a bad one, and gives us bigger problems down the track. For a leader this is key, but the development of all people in a team, this is even bigger. The best decision making happens when people have thought about the thinking and created a space. I believe that there should be three parts to this. Firstly, involve as many people as possible as the collective thoughts





of people that care leads to better decision making. As Daniel Coyle states in his book 'The Culture Code', two plus two really can equal ten in a collective effort. Secondly, people must 'confront the brutal facts' as this pulls them towards the collective effort. The third stage is to explore the situation and come up with ideas. The point is simply that if we feel we are part of something then we are also more likely to own it and therefore drive towards its outcome.

Do you think Values are important in an organisation? Values are essential for any great team. However, too often they are created by the leader or leadership team, pinned to a wall and left at that. As stated earlier, my preferred way to create values is to produce them with as many stakeholders as possible using the vast array of media we have available to us.

Many businesses I work with already have values but want to bring them to life again. A simple way to do this is to discuss, with as many people as possible, what the values look and feel like when applied. This helps people to visualise what they really mean. Once the values have been created and understood, then they can drive behaviours, decision making and recruitment of new hires. A good mantra to hold on to for values is the old adage 'stand for something...or fall for anything.'

What are your thoughts on psychometric assessments? I really believe in psychometric assessments and they can help leaders in a number of ways. All feedback is important and the measures can give us invaluable insights. They are certainly not 'a panacea' or the answer to everything, but they definitely play an important part in the whole feedback process. Psychometrics play a big role in enabling leaders to become more self-aware and, if you subscribe to the belief that 'the hardest person you lead is yourself', then the more we can learn about ourselves, the better.

When and how do you like to give and receive feedback? I like regular and robust feedback, particularly one on one. These conversations are crucial and help to shape what we do, how we do it and why. The context in which we give feedback also matters hugely. The time, place, frequency and type of delivery all needs consideration to ensure that the messaging hits and sticks. The relationship dynamic is also very important, as this can see change fly or fall flat on its face.

What does High-Performance Culture mean for you? It is about having the right mindset and behaviours that resonate. Ken Blanchard describes such places of work as 'high performing organisations'. This is where people have a joined up focus, want

to be there and have an emotional connection to the work. I believe this can be achieved by talking about all these issues and encouraging all to be involved in the direction and shaping of the future.

Conversations should centre on what we stand for, where we are going and what we believe in. This must be continually reinforced by the leaders in both their actions and their rhetoric – both are essential. One final key element that I've seen in the best cultures, like Wales RFU under Warren Gatland, is that egos are parked at the door and everyone takes responsibility for performance. There is limited blame and excuse-making and lots of honesty, humility and hope.

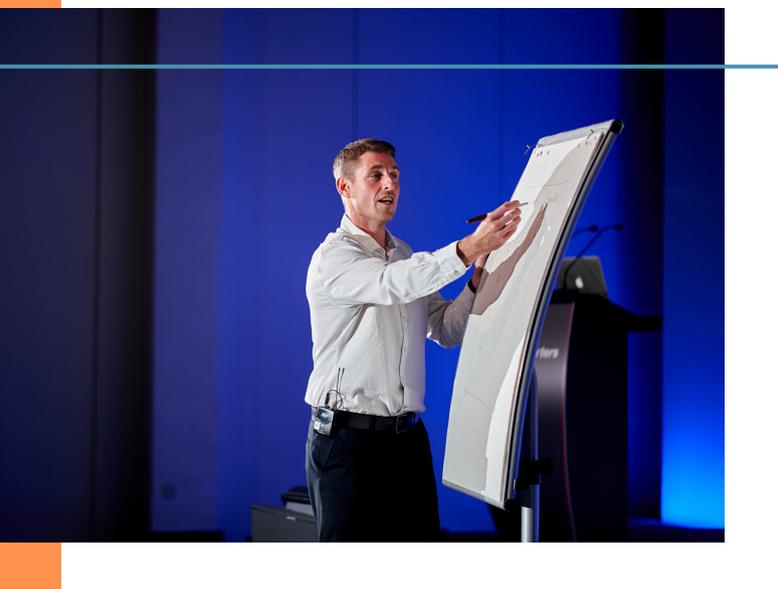
Who has been your most memorable manager and what did they do that influenced you so much? I've had so many, some good and some not so good, but the important thing is to learn from them all in terms of what to do and what not to do. I've also had great coaches and mentors and, for me, this is the most important relationship to have. Probably the best message I was given by my mentor was that 'people make the difference' and this is now the basis of the work I do today. I was also introduced to the famous Michelle Obama quote: "When

they go low, we go high" by a great friend and the power of this life lesson is huge!

Where's your sanctuary when you need time to think or reflect? I use many places. We have a lodge in our garden, which is great to work in. I visit Parks when I'm in London, but my ultimate place to relax and think, is our family caravan in Wales. I start to relax on my drive there and think with great focus and clarity when we arrive. So my message is that all leaders need a caravan or other related bolt-hole.

What are the top three books you've read and why? I've read over 500 books on leadership, change, success, culture and mindset, so narrowing it down is a tough one. So many texts have developed and shaped my thinking, in so many different ways. 'The score takes care of itself' by Bill Walsh was a book I read very early in my career and it resonated with my ideal I learned from my mentor, that 'people make the difference'. Also, John Maxwell is a big leadership influence on me and his writings simplify this complex topic. I have also learned a great deal from Jim Collins, particularly 'Great by choice' and the brilliant thinker that is Tom Peters.

What's your favourite sport? I love nearly all sports! I was brought up on football, which is where my love of Everton came from. But I'd probably have to say that rugby, both union and league, are my favourites. Having worked in elite rugby league for around 24 years, I have seen a lot and learned a lot too. The team dynamics needed for a successful group is very obvious and the challenge of the physicality can teach us a lot about how all organisations can perform better together, particularly when times get tough.



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