

Rebel Talent

Why it pays to break the rules at work and in life

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**Rebel talent displays five characteristics
: novelty, curiosity, perspective,
diversity and authenticity.**

Napoleon was a rebel. He revolutionized warfare by introducing the corps system. He fought in the trenches with his men when most generals of the era sat in tents.

At the time of the French revolution, laws were not applied equally to all. Napoleon introduced the Napoleonic code where everyone was equal before the law.

We generally have a clear sense of matching behavior with context – for example we expect a noisy crowd at a rock concert while we expect audience to be quiet in a symphony. We expect formal clothes in meetings and so on.

As people gain power, they feel greater power to defy convention.

**Most of what we know is actually trust
in someone else's knowledge.**

Novelty increases our job satisfaction, our creativity, and our overall performance. It also increases how much we grow in our confidence and ability.

When we engage in novel activities, we get into 'self expansion' – our sense of who we are expands.

We always expect that we need to know all the answers as leaders. Good leaders show vulnerability by asking for suggestions and showing a willingness to learn.

In 2000 BBC appointed Greg Dyke to revamp BBC. His predecessors sat in the office and issued policy guidelines. In his first year, Dyke travelled across the world and met as many employees and customers as possible.

Dyke's only question was – what would you do if you ran BBC? What should I focus on? He got a lot of support and suggestions from his people. This is not something leaders do, very few leaders listen to the junior employees.

Dyke was unconventional in his approach, breaking hierarchy, engaging with everyone etc. This paid off and results improved over the years.

Curiosity is related to greater positive emotions as well as greater closeness especially when we interact with strangers for the first time.

Curiosity makes us look at a problem as an interesting challenge to take on. A stressful meeting with a boss becomes an opportunity to learn.

Curiosity becomes an engagement vehicle leads to exploratory behavior and gets us inspired learning.

Teachers who teach the syllabus do not inspire while teachers who let the students explore the syllabus build higher learning.

In the 1950s Adriano Olivetti transformed his typewriter company by having playgrounds for workers children, by having libraries, by having movie screenings etc. Each of these is seen as a novelty today at Facebook or google, but Adriano understood that his employees needed to be treated better.

Power aggravates the problem to learn, when we are confronted with fresh information , we are worried we could be wrong.

When executives teach students, they pontificate rather than reflect and open up the discussion.

When we feel powerful, we are more inclined to express our attitudes and opinions in groups, as a result we feel entitled to dominate the discussions.

Harvard professor Karim Lakhani did an experiment where people who are six degrees removed from the problem were three times more likely to solve the problem than people whose domain was the problem.

Non experts are better problem solvers than experts.

If we are not careful, stereotypes at work can blind us, they act like firewalls where no fresh information comes through, and we don't change until something dramatic happens.

Diversity at the workplace is related to better outcomes , but it does not lead one to conclude that greater diversity is the cause for those better outcomes.

We find it hard to relate to people who are highly competent, but we tend to warm up to people who are flawed- because we know that we are too.

We hesitate to make ourselves vulnerable, because we are scared of being judged by others. Opening up wins us trust

It's a curious reality that most organizations manage their employees based on weakness.

As organizations grow, they lose sight of what made them successful.

According to a Gallup study people who use their strengths daily are six times more likely to get satisfaction from their jobs than others.

Flight attendant announcements are an area where rebels are having a field day. Southwest airlines attendants make the announcements as funny as possible so that they get the attention of the passengers, when the announcement is boring, no one is hearing the announcement.

When we feel that the work we do matters, then our dedication deepens.

The qualities of rebels – novelty, curiosity, perspective, diversity and authenticity are all paths to engagement. Engagement is short at the workplace tight now.

A hallmark of a healthy culture is when people are free to share their ideas, opinions and criticisms.

Across the globe, all institutions and groups and organizations instill some sort of social hierarchy to instill order and efficiency.

Hierarchies have benefits , however they have costs and can be hugely ineffective.

Steep hierarchies lead to lower job satisfaction, lower morale, reduced loyalty and more stress, anxiety.

8 principles of rebel leadership

1. They seek out a view
2. They encourage constructive dissent
3. They open conversations, don't close them
4. They reveal themselves and reflect
5. They learn and forget quickly
6. They find freedom in constraints
7. They lead from the trenches, always available at the front line
8. They foster happy accidents

**The recipe for success is to rebel against
time itself !!**