

# LEAD ON

ANN COLLINS COACHING

## LEADING IN TURBULENT TIMES

Vision, hope and courage



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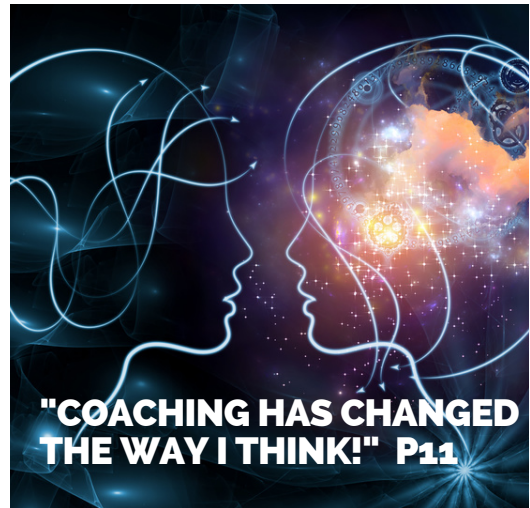
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# LEADING IN TURBULENT TIMES

Welcome to the 2022 Spring online magazine from Ann Collins Coaching. As the world comes to terms with the impact of a two year pandemic, that is not yet over, and a war in Europe, organisations are adapting and changing at a rate they had never envisaged, with a workforce that is tired and stressed, looking ahead to a future that is far from clear.

Already with Covid, leadership has changed forever: employees have experienced a different way of working, their expectations and needs have changed, creating an urgent need for leaders to simultaneously build high performing teams and ensure that wellbeing is at the heart of their leadership.

At the time of writing, we are just 1 month into the war in Ukraine. It's a situation that is changing hour by hour, with the impact on the rest of the world not yet clear, but likely to, at best, involve interrupted supply chains and at worst, a total change in the world order. Uncertainty is once again the only certainty.

Leaders are required right now to work with the certainty they can create. Digging deep to find the vision, the energy and the hope is not easy, but leaders have risen to the challenge before, not by being superhuman, but by collaborating, connecting with their employees and keeping their eye on what is truly important.

With warm wishes

Ann

[ann@anncollinscoaching.com](mailto:ann@anncollinscoaching.com)



Ann Collins,  
Executive and Leadership Coach

# 5 STRATEGIES FOR LEADING IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

ANN COLLINS

Uncertainty has been a constant theme in the last two years and now with war in Ukraine and the instability and fear this brings to the world, leaders are once again faced with uncertainty on all fronts from economic indicators to political developments.

Increased levels of stress come on the back of a mental health crisis brought on by Covid and whilst there have been positive spin-offs as leaders have uplevelled during the pandemic, the challenge of leading in a time of considerable uncertainty remains real and likely to dominate the foreseeable future.

Leaders need to start with leading themselves: increased self-awareness, reaching out for support and keeping a check on how they are managing their emotions are important. Leaders are focussed on supporting and harnessing the potential of their employees to bring teams and their organisations through and beyond the current crisis.

Through my work as an Executive Coach and Leadership Coach, I've seen leaders who are navigating leadership in this difficult time, consistently drawing on 5 strategies.

## 1. Embrace discomfort

This is the number one strategy that I see leaders using as it allows them to move beyond the inevitable stress that is inherent in the situation. Acknowledging the discomfort to oneself (and others) is a powerful step towards accepting the situation and being able to move forward without getting stuck in despair.

## 2. Zoom out to see the detail

For high achieving leaders who gravitate towards "action", they benefit from proactively taking a step back.

This can feel counter-intuitive, but taking time to analyse, consider the options and discuss scenarios can pay dividends. In times of crisis, proactively creating space, time to reflect and opportunities to zoom out reduces errors and overwhelm.

Having just come through two years of Covid crisis, it is tempting to feel that we've "done" crisis leadership!

Whilst we can draw on those newly honed skills of building resilience and adaptability, we must resist drawing conclusions too quickly.



### 3. Focus on what you *can* control

By focussing on what we can control very concretely, for us and our teams, we can create a bubble of certainty within the uncertainty. This ensures a certain success, builds confidence and momentum.

Making decisions without full information is particularly difficult of course and involves levels of risk that organisations are not used to managing.

Knowing what we can control helps leaders and their teams to have more pragmatic discussions.

### 4. Build an even stronger team for the future

Leading in tough times creates an opportunity to create exceptional teams, as we have seen these last two years. Listening to team members from their perspectives and ideas creates a fast track environment to a stronger team and future leaders with experience. Furthermore, it challenges current leaders to continue to develop their leadership skills and to be creative and experimental. This can provide an open door to a change in culture and mindset, which provides a solid base for the future

### 5. Connect

If a growth mindset is a key part of the puzzle, so is the ability for leaders to meaningfully connect with their teams and colleagues. Supporting the development of open, collaborative, supportive yet challenging relationships brings energy to a team and an ability to increase the impact of individuals. People feel included, visible and heard and we know that this reduces stress.

**"BY FOCUSING ON WHAT WE CAN CONTROL, WE CAN CREATE A BUBBLE OF CERTAINTY"**

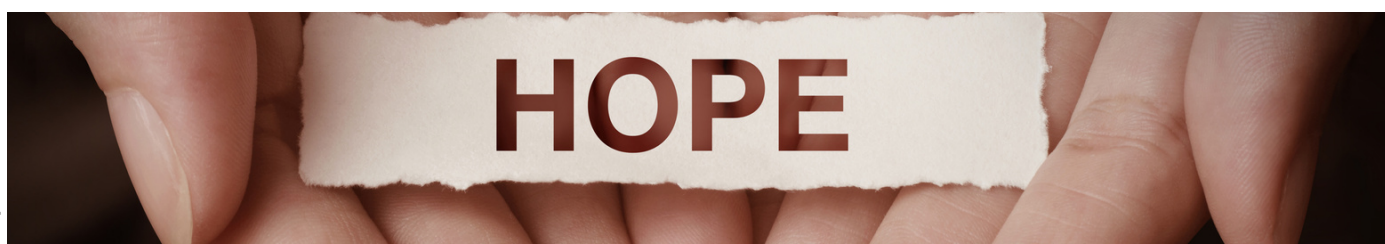
#### *What does that look like in practice?*

When people feel that they belong and feel visible, heard and that they matter, they are happy to engage in challenging discussions. They are good at solving complex problems together, they enjoy debating, they are naturally curious and importantly ready to concede their idea should a better one arise. There are no winners and losers. The contribution of the team is greater than the contribution of each person!

#### **Finally, communicate hope**

Hope and a vision for the future is the goal of these strategies, but it's also about continuing to reinforce trust when the world is being shaken. The world needs leaders with cool heads and compassionate hearts.

Leading with courage and compassion has become the gold standard of leadership in the last few years and is set to remain that way for the foreseeable future. This is good news for leaders, their teams and organisations: it's a win all round, despite the difficult times.



# HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS AND WELLBEING: DIFFERENT SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

ANN COLLINS

"High performance" and "wellbeing" as goals for leaders both for themselves and their teams can feel conflictual. When high performance means doing more, doing it better and working harder and wellbeing means "time for me", the tension becomes clear.

Redefining what we mean by high performance and wellbeing is a very important part of resolving this tension. As a first reframe, I would suggest that instead of seeing high performance and wellbeing as conflicting with each other, we see them as different sides of the same coin. High performance is not sustainable without wellbeing and for many employees, wellbeing is not possible without feeling one is making a difference and that our work is important: performing well is an essential part of wellbeing in the workplace for many. Both are required to get excellent and sustainable results.

We know that high levels of trust and communication, a culture that leans into failure for learning and where successes and failures are embraced collaboratively, where people take responsibility and deliver are key characteristics of highly effective teams.

Underneath, there is another layer: the need for self-awareness on the part of leaders and their teams because those key characteristics are not strategies, systems, tactics or the latest IT solution.

They are based simply on the capacities of people to be able to relate to each other and be ready to develop.

## **Self-awareness creates the basis for both high performance and wellbeing.**

Synonyms in the thesaurus for self-awareness include being mindful, conscious, attentive, and watchful. This expansion of its meaning is perhaps useful to help us remember that whilst self-awareness is essentially inward-looking, it can be also about looking outwards towards others – by being watchful and attentive. Essentially, it is not navel-gazing, it is about learning about how we relate to ourselves and others.

A growing body of research tells us that "knowing yourself" is key to being an effective leader in terms of performance. Leading from a place of self-awareness appears to have a dramatic impact on leaders themselves, their wellbeing and effectiveness and on those around them. Self-aware leaders are reflective, therefore able to self-correct quickly, they take responsibility readily for successes and challenges at a personal and collective level and therefore can move quickly through problems, learning for the future.

Self-awareness in leadership also has a wider ripple effect:

It promotes wellbeing at an individual and team level by encouraging people to know their values, strengths, manage stress better and help others to do the same with higher degrees of empathy and more effective communication.

### **Self-awareness and high performance**

Studies have asked leaders and their teams to rate their performance to compare their perspectives. Leaders who showed high levels of self-awareness consistently rated their performance similarly to members of their teams, whether positively or negatively. This alignment between the leaders and their teams' views of their effectiveness and performance gives the team a huge advantage: a shared vision of their strengths, weaknesses, and priorities. We could say that their collective awareness is high.

This suggests that communication is effective and open. Relationships within the team are therefore likely to be strong with a high level of trust. They can be creative, agile, and highly productive.

### **Self-awareness and wellbeing for leaders and their teams**

The impact of self-awareness on wellbeing is well known: people are more able to recognise their emotional responses and those of others, communicate more effectively, listen actively and show empathy and articulate their own feelings and needs. As a result, they can make decisions that are more aligned with their values and can nurture the mindset and habits that are supportive of their own wellbeing.



The transfer of leaders' personal wellbeing to that of their teams is difficult to measure. However, if leaders can form strong relationships with their teams, they have a good starting point from where to help employees to feel visible, heard and to articulate their needs in times of high pressure or stress.

Working on this base layer seems to make sense as a way forward towards addressing both high performance and wellbeing. Educating the workforce around the real benefits that personal development can have on leaders themselves, their teams and their results, is a first step.

There is however, a visible shift in the way that leaders are articulating their needs in terms of personal and leadership development. They see that personal development creates the necessary foundation for transformation in their leadership, career and life.



**"KNOWING OTHERS IS  
INTELLIGENCE;  
KNOWING YOURSELF  
IS TRUE WISDOM."**

**LAO TZU**



# NO TIME? A 3-STEP PROCESS TO ESCAPE THE BUSYNESS TRAP

ANN COLLINS

I used to be someone who always replied, "Really busy!" when asked how I was. And it was true - I did feel busy. Too busy, in fact. When I started coaching, I noticed I wasn't alone! When listening to my clients, I recognised their stories as my own and with them, I started to question this narrative that I had made my own and was so keen to hold onto.

I saw in my clients and myself that we were holding onto a very safe conversation stopper: "too busy" is an easy way to say no and an easy way to stop any further analysis. Some may even say that there is a certain amount of status around it: those in high level positions frequently are very busy and work long hours.

Except, I could see that for myself and my clients, this was not only about time. Being "too busy" was also sometimes a cop out of putting emotions into words: maybe I was actually tired, fed up, frustrated or even on the positive side, actually feeling very energised by the amount of work that I had!

The interesting thing about this response is that the ambiguity is acceptable and we rarely look further for the real causes of feeling either overwhelmed, tired and overstretched or needing to show our worth by being important and "busy"!

What do we lose by using "too busy" as our stock response?

We lose the chance to stand back from our own situation and to get perspective. To nurture a growth mindset, to make any kind of meaningful change in our lives, this part of the process is vital so that we can see our "reality" clearly and challenge it.

Getting off the hamster wheel isn't always easy. Firstly, it can take some time between realising the need for change and being ready to take the plunge. For many clients who are ready for coaching, they tell me that they have a fear of change and a fear of not changing.



**"WHEN YOU ARE ALIGNED WITH YOUR PURPOSE,  
THE HAMSTER WHEEL IS REDUNDANT"**

Considering what is important, what your values and your purpose are, provides the compass for change and helps to build a vivid picture of what that future could look like. Taking the decision to create that picture of the future is often the point of no-return: stepping off the hamster wheel becomes fairly easy.

Having decided to put your personal development at the top of your list, I've devised a simple 3-step process that helps you to take real steps forward towards escaping the busyness trap.

### **3 STEP PROCESS TO ESCAPE THE BUSYNESS TRAP**

#### **Clarify the WHY: what is really important to you**

Forget about "me time" with candles and spa trips: putting yourself on the top of your list is about making the decision that you have a purpose and a mission that is important. You matter. Your contribution matters.

Creating your purpose by discovering and evaluating what is really important to you is the next part of this step and is the start of forever stepping off the hamster wheel: when what you are doing is important to you, the hamster wheel is redundant.

Without much further effort, prioritising actions becomes more simple: delegating, deleting, deferring or doing becomes easier. Willpower is not required as the vision is clear.

#### **Think about ENERGY not TIME**

Finding time to put yourself on the top of your list is not as important as shifting and changing your energy. How are you showing up? What is your intention? Are you truly present in meetings?

When we channel our energy and focus our attention, we can have life changing conversations that last 10 minutes, we can improve someone's performance in a short chat, we can make thoughtful decisions.

This decision to use energy rather than time creates a huge impact on our productivity and our results, allowing us the space (and energy) to focus on our own performance.

#### **Manage your emotions effectively**

We've all experienced time "flying" or "dragging"! Our emotions play a huge role in our perception of time and when we're in the busyness trap, feeling a range of unhelpful emotions: overwhelmed or stressed or stuck, it can be hard to exit!

Interestingly, by managing our emotions we can often, even in times of extreme busyness, get out of this feeling of scarcity of time and back onto an even keel.

By acknowledging and accepting emotions as data, we can move onwards quickly from a negative emotional response, freeing up energy to take action. This takes us out of a mindset of "not enough" to a state of flow, where we do one thing after another. We don't gain time, but we get into a state of flow, positive energy and action.

This is not putting a positive spin on life, this is merely reducing the time and energy we potentially spend in an emotional tunnel that can stop us from moving forward.

Escaping the busyness trap is life changing for many high achieving leaders, leaving them with greater control over their time, energy and emotions and a better balance in their lives. For clients, it's frequently the initial part of their coaching journey, freeing up space to focus on their big goals.



## COACHING CASE STUDY: PRIVATE COACHING FOR SENIOR LEADERS

**"The change in my thought patterns has been so subtle, I have hardly noticed it happening".**

*"I highly recommend Ann as a coach. She is hugely empathetic and poses insightful questions sensitively but in a way that makes you challenge unhelpful beliefs about yourself.*

*Ann is able to ask those questions you never ask yourself. Questions which help you find the answers that you realise you've had all along but were hidden from you until Ann helped uncover them.*

*She helped me see how my thought patterns were influencing my emotions and, more importantly, how I can adjust them and break that negative emotional spiral that we can all get into at times. Just by getting me to realise how and what I was thinking impacted my mood, Ann has helped me to turn that around. Rather than "I must" or "I have to", "I can"; "I do", "I enjoy" and "I'm looking forward to", have now become my watchwords.*

*The change in my thought patterns has been so subtle, I have hardly noticed it happening. The results however are very noticeable! I am far more willing to go outside of my comfort zone and take on challenges, both in my personal and work life that previously, I would have balked at.*

*I have benefited enormously from Ann's percipience on this coaching journey."*

Jennifer O'Dwyer  
Civil Appeals Lawyer



**"willing to go outside of my comfort zone"**



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If you would like to know more about how individual coaching could help you, book a call [HERE](#) for more information.

## OUR COACHING PROGRAMMES

### EMPOWERING LEADERS TO THRIVE

#### Executive Coaching for successful senior leaders

Ann helps successful senior leaders to clarify their career journey, set expansive goals and develop a mindset that enables them to achieve goals they previously believed to be "impossible".

She provides packages of unlimited individual coaching over a 6 month period, providing personalised support throughout.

If you're ready for real change in your leadership career, ready to start living your legacy and to unlock your potential, book a call to see if we could be a fit.

#### Leadership Coaching for Organisations

Ann is passionate about helping to bring out the best in leaders, to empower them to embrace their roles with courage, authenticity and energy so they can achieve their professional goals.

She provides bespoke coaching and specialises in supporting global businesses experiencing rapid growth and transformation. She has recently worked with Zenith Watches, Sutton Valence School and provided workshops for the GE Global Talent Acquisition Team.

Themes include: Conflict Management, Building Effective Teams, Leader As Coach, Harnessing the potential of the c-suite, Developing a High Performance Mindset.





# PODCAST

LEADERS WHO LOVE WHAT THEY DO



*Simplifying the Complex*  
★★★★★  
The genius of Ann Collins is her ability to address complex issues, including leadership, mindset and self-awareness with insights that lead to consistent "aha" moments. Her voice is melodious. The combination of Ann's genius and her delivery make for a perfect podcast.

All Time Total Downloads  
**5,315**

**WITH MORE THAN 70 EPISODES PUBLISHED AND 5000 DOWNLOADS...**

**Since September 2020, Ann has been talking to inspirational leaders about their approach to leadership, the challenges and their successes.**

**From Kathmandu to Geneva, she has had the privilege of interviewing leaders from all over the globe.**

**Thank you to them!**

“

When I think about belonging, it's more about individuals feeling that they are seen, that they are heard and that they are valued

Hélène Bejjani  
Global Learning & Development Leader

**LEADERS WHO LOVE WHAT THEY DO**  
Podcast with Ann Collins  
S2 Episode 39



“

If they want to help their colleagues, their teams and their departments, then there's a gentle way, I think, of approaching what COVID trauma is going to look like and what they're seeing.

Anna Pinkerton  
Burnout & Trauma Specialist  
Author of My Kinda Life

**LEADERS WHO LOVE WHAT THEY DO**  
Podcast with Ann Collins  
S2 Episode 41



“

### BONUS EPISODE

How to make effective goals that take you to the next level

Ann Collins  
Executive & Leadership Coach

**LEADERS WHO LOVE WHAT THEY DO**



“

Don't limit ourselves because if you do that you're never going to get further.

Leave space for creativity and don't have a limited mindset.

Have a growth mindset to continue to move forward. These are two elements that I would definitely recommend to any leader

Julien Tornare  
CEO, Zenith Watches

**LEADERS WHO LOVE WHAT THEY DO**  
Podcast with Ann Collins  
S2 Episode 44



## LISTEN TO RECENT EPISODES HERE

We welcome guests to our show or talk about leadership and what matters to them!

If you're passionate about leadership and you want to join a like-minded community, then tune in to Leaders Who Love What They Do via your favourite podcast platform.

# English for NepAll Project



Every time we have a new client at Ann Collins Coaching, we make a donation to this unique project. We are so privileged to be able to provide this support and be part of Susan's mission.



## HOW OUR COLLABORATION BEGAN

In 1999, I went to Nepal initially as a VSO volunteer with the British government, working as an Education Advisor on the Basic and Primary Education Programme within the Ministry of Education in Nepal and afterwards as an Education Consultant for UNICEF Nepal. Enabling access to quality primary education to girls and others excluded for different reasons, has always been her mission and she was inspired by the determination of the professionals she worked with, both within and outside of the government, Nepali and international. It's fair to say that part of her heart is always in Nepal!



Whilst there, I met Susan Deith who was working at the British Council at the time and we became good friends, sharing a love of Nepal and also a mission for education. Susan has stayed in Nepal and as part of her work, she set up a language school in Kathmandu.



After the 2016 earthquake, myself and Belfort School of English clients supported some relief work that Susan undertook and from there, the idea to support more longterm arose and we started to support through donations at Christmas time and now it is fully integrated into the coaching business.



# ABOUT ENGLISH FOR NEPALL

**English for NepALL** is an education project based in Kathmandu in Nepal offering scholarships to children or young adults who don't have the resources to learn English.

In Kathmandu, knowledge of English is vital for two of the most important industries in Nepal: IT and tourism. IT is a huge growth area in the region and provides real opportunities for career progression. All trainers are fully qualified, native English speakers so that students are ensured the best possible standard of language learning and they achieve great results!

**Susan Deith, the English Founder**, has been working in business and in the English language field for over 20 years. She worked for the British Council in Nepal for over 10 years and 10 years ago, she founded her own language school called the English for All Language Training Centre.

It is a training centre which teaches a variety of courses, including General English and IELTS Preparation, as well as professional courses, such as Presentation Skills, Report Writing and Professional/Academic Writing. It is the only teaching centre in Kathmandu where students are taught by British Council Trained, native speaker trainers.



Listen to our podcast episode with Susan on our Leaders Who Love What They Do Podcast [here](#)

Find out more about more about English for NepALL [here](#)

## EMPOWERING LEADERS TO THRIVE

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU?

**"The tools she brings to the table are simple, but effective".**

*Ann came to my team and facilitated two virtual sessions that were highly appreciated by me and the team. Working virtually and from home for a long time, we needed someone to come in and help us find the energy, connection and tools to make our working conditions sustainable and fun. Ann has a soft, but firm approach; she professionally engages people without making them feel forced, but still a little challenged. The tools she brings to the table are simple, but effective. Her preparation, facilitation & follow-up was well planned and natural. I will continue working with Ann and would recommend her any time as a group coach and mentor.*

Eva Lundahl,  
Talent Acquisition Director chez GE Renewable Energy

**Are you interesting to discover more  
about Leadership Coaching?**

**BOOK YOUR FREE COACHING DISCOVERY  
CALL [HERE](#)**

# WHAT'S COMING UP?

**Become the leader you need "to be": ditch the "to do" list**

A FREE 1 HOUR COACHING WEBINAR for opening the door to another way of changing and to real transformation

9TH MAY 2022  
12PM UK/13H CEST



## Monday 9th May 2022 12pm UK/13H CEST

Are you looking to set yourself up for success in your leadership career? Are you ready for change in 2022? Have you been searching for inspiration and want clarity on how to move forward?

In this webinar, we will be exploring how we can accelerate our change in our leadership by focusing less on our "to do" list and more on our "to be" list.

[Book your space here:](#)

## Leaders Who Love What They Do Podcast

Lots of podcast episodes to come to inspire your leadership journey.

Leadership coaching resources with exclusive solo episodes plus inspiring conversations with leaders from all over the world.

Available on all main podcast platforms including [Apple Podcasts](#) or you can listen [here](#)

WITH ANN COLLINS

LEADERS  
WHO LOVE  
WHAT  
THEY DO

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STILL  
CURIOUS

with  
DANU  
POYNER

S2E3

ANN COLLINS



## Still Curious Podcast Guest!

Danu really got me thinking again about how our career journeys can bring diverse experiences together and enable us to take steps we didn't imagine possible.

For me, this has certainly been the case and I'm so grateful to those people who continue to support me in my rather squiggly career!

[Listen here](#)

*Ann  
Collins*  
COACHING

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**EMPOWERING  
LEADERS  
TO THRIVE**