

"Idle Thoughts"

from a

CREATIVE SOUL

BY ROB LAMBERT
CULTIVATEDMANAGEMENT.COM

WELCOME

How this book came about

Thank you for downloading this ebook.

I got infected by the virus that shall not be mentioned and was bored.

So, I thought I'd collect together a few ideas, images and thoughts into a free ebook. This is what you're reading now.

It's a reminder to myself to be a better person each day, to create for the sake of it.

I created this to remind myself of what's important in life. I hope it may be entertaining and insightful for you also.

What? You paid for this book?

This book should be free. Ask for a refund if you paid for it.

This book took exactly 2 hours to create, so don't pay for it.

But, if you'd like to support my work, then please head to my site where you will find ways to support my work (and 5% of all profit from my "work" goes to charity) :

cultivatedmanagement.com

Alongside my work at Cultivated Management, I explore small creative projects — my Creative Soul Projects. They sharpen my publishing skills, stretch my creativity, and spark insights I bring back into my work.

I share them so you can see how creative exploration supports growth in communication, creativity, and leadership — and maybe enjoy a few minutes exploring them yourself.

I was in isolation after getting the virus that was spreading the world. Instead of simply doing what I usually do when I get some leisure time;

- look on AutoTrader for cars I cannot afford

- depress myself by reading about people shipping books and videos, rather than me actually doing that

- or simply wasting time scrolling through my list of "things I'd like to create one day"

I figured I should just create something. Anything. Ship it. Let the world decide.

Constraints

I set myself some constraints for this book.

Chiefly these being:

1. I had to create the book in under 4 hours (it took 2)
2. It had to look and feel interesting - as in, not just a boring word document turned into a PDF.
3. It had to have some meaning. To me, for my kids, something.
4. It had to be created in CANVA. Why? Because I spent two hours reading about the "best way to create a design / photo / eBook" and got overwhelmed. So, I just picked Canva.
5. It had to be fun to do. Which it was!
6. It had to use some of my own photos because I felt like it should. (BTW - the photos don't always match the words, but I'm cool with that)

All photos in this book are mine.
Everything in here is copyrighted.



About Rob

Obligatory boring part.

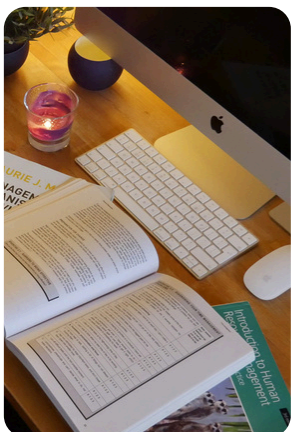
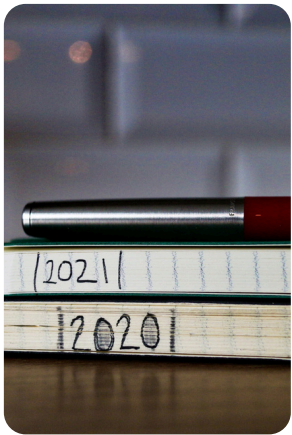
1. I am married with three boys and live in Winchester, Hampshire.
2. By day I am a management and HR consultant, and I run cultivatedmanagement.com
3. I have a YouTube channel.
4. I have a Podcast.
5. I co-host a wildly successful podcast called Stationery Freaks
6. I have written several books and do International Keynote talks.
7. I run an award winning communication workshop. You can find the online version on my website - link below.
8. I like cars. Mostly old ones.
9. I like taking photos - you can find me on insta : @simplylambert
10. I love writing. A day without writing seems a loss to me.
11. I can run faster than you might think.

<https://www.cultivatedmanagement.com/start-here/>



**let's
get
started**

ACCENTUATE YOUR STRENGTHS



Accentuate your strengths.

One thing I've learned is that we all have weaknesses.

Equally, we all have strengths too.

I have spent too much of my life trying to deal with weaknesses that simply weren't holding me back.

I was under the impression this is what I needed to do for success in work and life. It's not true.

Fix the weaknesses that are holding you back from what you desire to do, ignore the ones that aren't.

And focus on your strengths.

Focus on what makes you tick and what you're excellent at.

It may take some time to discover what makes you tick, but there will be many things.

Spend time listening to your heart and studying what makes you fly. And looking at what you're good at.

What gives you energy?

What takes it away?

What do you yearn to do? What gives you peace? Who do you wish to help?

Start there.

Under-utilised

I know from experience, that when you're under-utilised and you're not using your strengths (like creativity), a deep malaise will set in.

You will go to work everyday with no joy, energy or enthusiasm.

Finding work that brings you joy is a hard task - and some people have more opportunities than others.

But try, to find something, anything, that feeds your soul.

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>If you say you'll do something, do it. People will trust you.</p> | | <p>Listening is one of the greatest compliments you could ever give someone.</p> |
| <p>Let's not argue about what a good person should be – be one.</p> | | <p>Your life will never be more, nor less, than you as a person.</p> |
| | | |
| <p>Family First. Enough Said.</p> | | <p>Our results are an outward display of our behaviours, our behaviours come from our thinking.</p> |
| <p>A demonstration, even if average, is always better than a brilliant description. In other words, actions speak louder than words.</p> | | <p>Try to share what you know. Don't inflict help, but share what you feel others will grow from.</p> |
| <p>Not all change is good. Nor is it bad. But it is constant and it pays to learn how to embrace and swim with change.</p> | | <p>Only take advice from someone who was, or is, an example of that advice.</p> |
| | | |
| <p>Winning at all costs can be costly. Remember, the costs are usually other people.</p> | | <p>Mistakes are a wonderful way to make yourself better and learn.</p> |

Readers are leaders, or something like that. Learners are earners – again, something like that.

Yes, read. Read widely and deeply and carefully and critically. But also learn from experiencing life. Get up and do something. Go out. Create. Explore. Meet people. Travel. And learn from doing.

Don't expect anything in return for your actions.

Holding the high bar and doing what is right is enough.



RESPECT BY DEFAULT

You don't need to earn anyone's respect. Nobody should need to earn yours either.

We should give and have respect by default, for simply being here on this planet.

Trust....well, that's another thing. We earn that by doing what we say we will and being consistent in our behaviours.

And we can lose it. Easily.

Trust takes time to build. But respect should be by default.



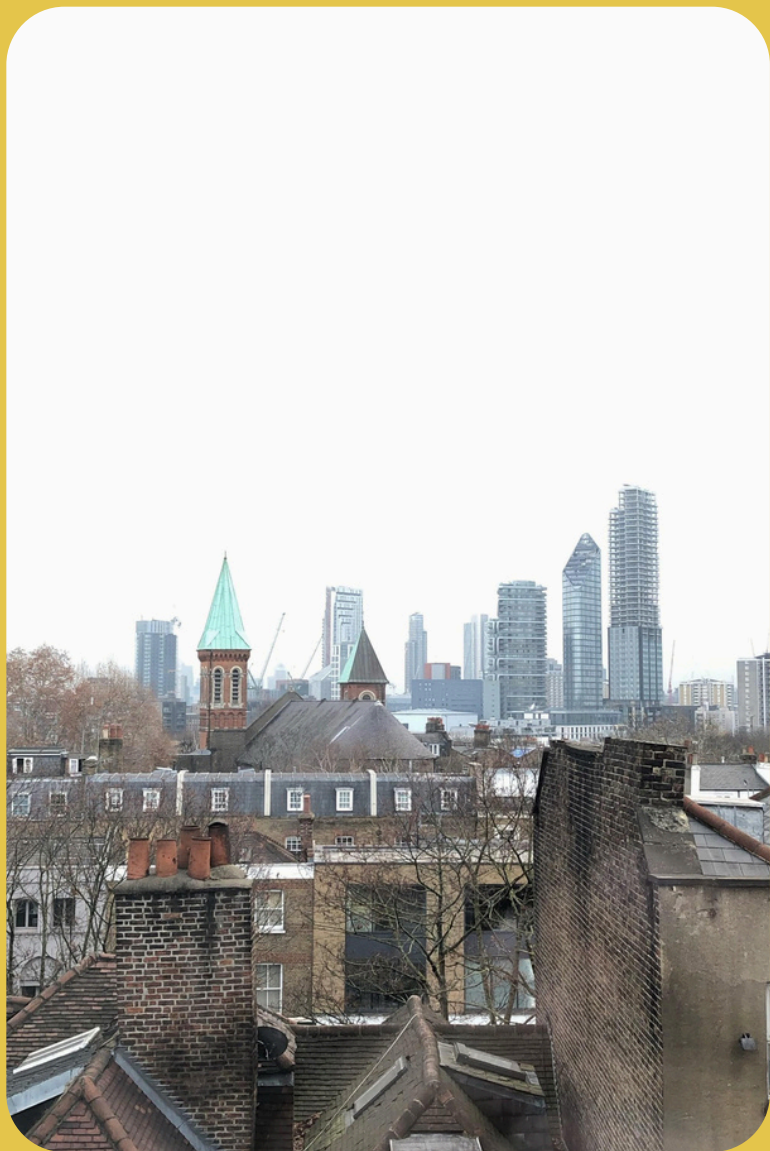


THE JOB MUST DEVELOP YOU

When you find yourself in some sort of work,
remember this:

A sense of pride, responsibility and seeing your
work adding value, is what will bring you joy.

You must also feel like the job is developing you. If
it's not, what can you do?



Try to avoid modelling your life
on other people's.

And if you do find yourself
comparing and despairing
because other people "seem" to
have achieved more, or seem
happier yada yada yada –
keep asking yourself this
question.

**"What did they give up to
get that?"**

And then ask whether you're
prepared to give up some things
to achieve others?

If you don't have time to
do it correctly now,
when will you have time
to do it again?





LIVE IN
THE NOW

Ambition is good – but don't let it detract you from living in the now.

Being present in the moment is a brilliant skill to develop in life.

SHOW DON'T TELL

Show, don't tell.

I spent a large part of my life telling myself and others that I would do x, or y, or z, or this book, or that video, or that play.

Often letting the potential of x, y or z prevent me from even doing x, y or z. Or being afraid to express myself. Or being worried about success! Madness.

Often times, I would be waiting for the "right" time, that would never arrive.

Better to simply show people than tell them.

Deliver and ship.

Create more than you consume.

The Times we had.



COMMUNICATION IS SOMETHING THE OTHER PERSON DOES

When you know that communication is something other people do, as in, it happens in their heads, you know how to communicate effectively.

When your message doesn't get through - that's your fault. It's a hard lesson to learn. If the other person does not receive, understand, comprehend or listen to the message - that's on you.

What can you do differently?



All communication has a purpose, audience and it happens in a context.

And the best way to communicate, is to understand the other person and move towards their style.

Communication happens in their head.

Note: Develop your superpower of effective communication with my [online course](#).



Set some goals in life. Have a direction or target in mind. A destination, I suppose.

Work out what routines and habits you'll need to reach these goals. Then work hard to build them.

Stick to the process, habits and routines and you'll move smoothly and quickly towards your goals. It's all about habits and routines - try to develop positive ones from an early age.

Remember, speed and learning come from the discipline of sticking to your routines and habits.

Try to now let go of targets – the world is far too unpredictable to expect the exact results you desire.

Keep them in mind but don't be upset if the world has other plans.

HAVE DIRECTION



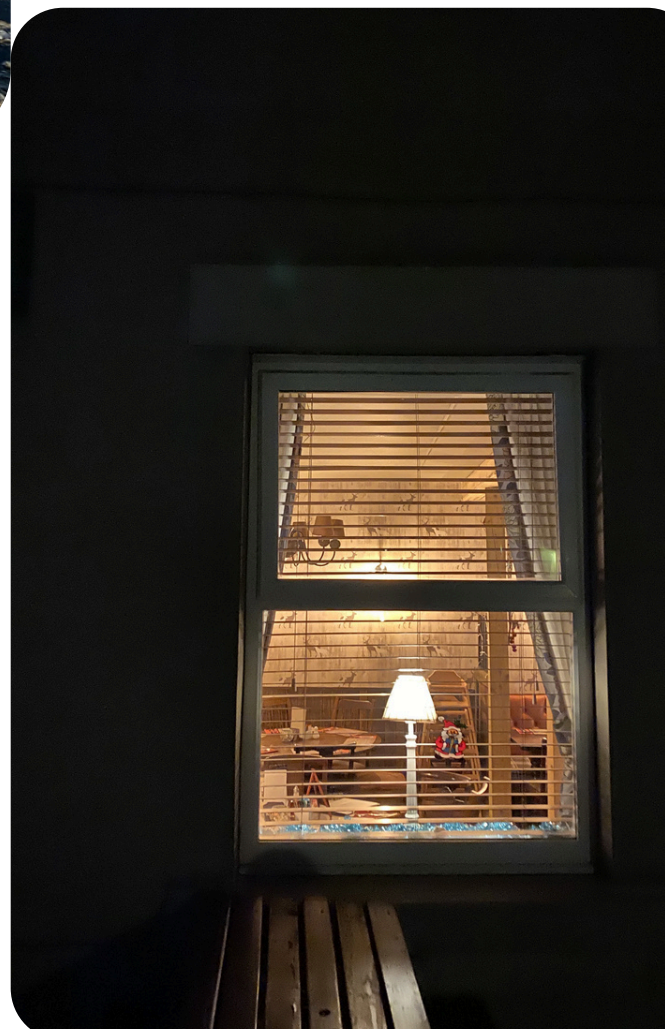
When you decide to take ownership of the problems in your life, you will gain peace of mind.

Don't blame others. Look at what is wrong, own it and address it.

And then you can take back control. You then get to choose. It's no longer someone else's fault.

This is liberating.

Don't create fires for others to put out. Think things through and act carefully.





Don't shy away from hard work.

In fact, open the door to it and welcome it.

It will build character. You will learn from it. And through the hard work you gain a deeper understanding of yourself.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Fall in love with the process of work and routines, not the end goal. | | Before you expect people to follow you as a leader – lead yourself. |
| There are always several sides to a story. Discover them before you make judgement. | | Constraints help us to be creative and grow. Don't expect things to be easy. |
| Did I help someone today? A powerful question to ask yourself each evening. | | Be enthusiastic about the things that mean something to you. It is contagious. |
| What problem am I trying to solve? | | Prepare yourself for dealing with other people. |
| It's a powerful question to work out whether you're solving something worthwhile. | | They won't always have your best interests at heart. |
| | | Forgive easily. But detach from those who bring you down. |
| Solving the easy problems of today will create bigger problems for tomorrow. | | Never know all of the answers – listen and learn. |
| We are all unique and we all have unique strengths. | | Don't be intimidated by those who seem like they have it all together. They probably don't. |
| Be careful of following the masses. They may be wrong. Think for yourself. | | You grow with each step you take. Be sure those steps are towards the right things. |

PRACTICE IS PREPARATION



Practice is preparation
for the main event.

The event may not go
to plan, but at least
you've prepared.

You know it. You
understand it. You can
deal with what comes
next.

You can get back on
track. You got this.

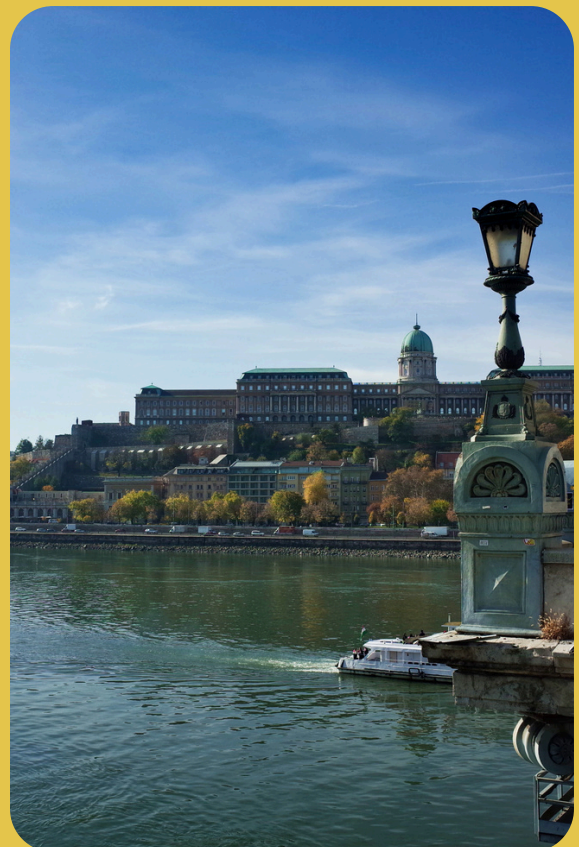
Practice is preparation.

Find work that fires your
soul.

It's tiring not to put your
heart and soul into work.

I'd rather work 50 hours
on something that feeds
my soul, than 2 hours on
something that is
meaningless.

We don't always get to
choose. But we can be
aware. Then we can
decide. Then we may be
able to make a change.



DICHOTOMY

There are always more problems, options and opportunities in life than you can realistically deal with.

Focus on only those that truly matter. It helps to have a bright painted picture of what you'd like to do with your life.

And then focus on addressing only the obstacles, blockers, work, options and opportunities on this path.

Life is a dichotomy though.

Because as much as a focus in one direction can help, it can blinker you to the very opportunities and serendipitous moments that comes from the "now".

Some of my most amazing experiences have come from simply saying "yes" to something that is presented. Equally, some of my most soul destroying years have come from not having a guiding path to make decisions.

Create a picture, define some principles and live each day as it comes. Trust yourself.



GREEN GRASS



The grass isn't always greener on the other side, especially if we're the problem.

Before we assume the other side has greener grass, we should draw a metaphorical circle around ourselves first, and look for improvement and problems there.

Be kind to yourself. Give yourself a break, but trust me, when I've assumed other people have it better, or another job is better, or another life is better, I've quickly realised I have all I need – and the problem is me.

The grass is not greener if we're the problem.

A black and white photograph of a city skyline across a river, with a bridge and steps in the foreground. The skyline includes several modern skyscrapers, some under construction with cranes. In the foreground, there's a stone bridge with a metal railing and a set of wide stone steps leading down to the water. A row of ornate street lamps is visible along the walkway on the right.

COMPANY VALUES

When you enter the world of work remember the real values of an organisation are rarely the ones printed in booklets, splashed all over the website or printed on posters on the wall.

They are how people get promoted and how people interact with each other.

Don't fall for the marketing.

When you join an organisation you hand over many freedoms at the door. Choose wisely if you can - we're not all fortunate to be able to choose.

Take care of what you value. And try as hard as you can to find a company (or start a company) that has values that are aligned to yours.

We don't always have the choice, privilege or opportunity to make this happen. But when you feel deep discomfort with your work, the chances are your values are out of alignment. Is there anything you can do?

If you end up the corporate world of work, you'll realise that a lot of your time is spent on wasteful activities, unless you guard against this.

Meetings. PowerPoints. Discussions about meetings. PowerPoints about meetings. Meetings to plan the next meeting. PowerPoints about PowerPoints. Meetings about PowerPoints. Meetings about why Excel is better than PowerPoint. PowerPoints about why PowerPoints are wasteful.

More meetings.

You may spend a lot of time wishing you weren't in meetings. Guard against falling into this "busyness with no results" work style. Many people don't realise they are adding little value to a company. It's seen as normal. It's part of modern work culture. But for anyone who thinks a little critically about it, this wasteful busyness is soul destroying.

It requires a little critical thinking to escape it.

Work on delivering tangible things. Whatever role you have, find the purpose of the role (as in, what problem are you there to solve), find the value of what you do (as in, what results should you be delivering) and keep shipping that value.

There will be a necessary level of admin and some meetings, but the real joy will come from shipping things or doing the work that you're there for. Not from going to meetings.

Remember, life is too fleeting to spend it in a meeting.



**FLEETING
MEETINGS**



We are all in different seasons of life.

Appreciate this and understand that other people may have different drivers and motivators.

What we find interesting others may not. What we believe is important may not be important for others.

What we drive towards may not appeal to others. Respect by default - and appreciate we're all in different seasons of our own lives.

SEASONS



OLD IS COOL

Maybe I'm just a little biased but old stuff is still cool.

Older people have wisdom and stories I wish I had tapped into before now. Old cars have character. Old houses have charm. Old books contain time tested advice.

New is cool too.

The trick in life is adopting new things that amplify your life whilst not forgetting what can be learned from the past.

Build the kind of friendships
that gives you meaning.

Build the kind of teams you'd
like to work in.

And if you get to build your
own company – build one
you'd LOVE to work in.

Become the kind of person
you're proud to be. That's
harder than I ever thought it
would be, but a worthy life-
long journey.



ENRICH OTHER PEOPLE



Imagine that everything you do has the potential to enrich the lives of everyone it touches.

Keep this in mind when things are tough. Keep this in mind when you feel like things are too hard.

Keep this in mind when you're considering taking a shortcut.

Keep this in mind in your daily behaviours, actions and thoughts.

Be a wonderful asset to others. Enrich their lives as best you can.



You get 100ms to make a good first impression (Willis and Todorov, 2006).

You've not said anything by this point, when you first meet someone, and they're making an impression of you.

The sad thing is, the other person finds evidence of their first impression of you - whether they were right or wrong - whether it was good or bad.

Make a bad first impression and they'll seek evidence to confirm their impression. The same for good.

So, it makes sense to make a good first impression.

Here are some ideas:

1. Smile
2. Stand as tall as you can - it matters not how tall you are - just don't slouch
3. Make eye contact
4. Find your inner confidence - it shines through
5. Dress appropriately for the situation
6. Feel positive - and this will shine through too

You have pillars of life that underpin you who you are.

For example: creativity, productivity, family, societal impact etc.

Remember to keep the tension between these pillars under your control, if you can.

In other words, don't give your whole life over to one or two pillars at the expense of the others.

Balancing of this tension is key.

There will never be harmony, but as long as you are in control, you can give and take, repay, borrow and be aware of what's going on across these pillars.

Otherwise you may find you're successful and lonely, or rich and unhealthy. And of course, family and health should probably be your top focus. Easier said than done. I know that.

**PILLARS
OF LIFE**



THE CIRCLE OF SUCCESS

Success may eventually lead to failure.

Try not to get carried away with the successes
and hung up on the failures.

I've noticed life tends to oscillate between the
two. Or maybe it would be better to describe
it like a ferris wheel. Each seat is either success
and/or failure. It's random but you know it's
going to flip between success or failure at
some point.

The best thing to do is to keep practicing and
keep learning. And fall in love with the work.
And let go of the outcomes.





The world may tell you to not give a f*ck what others think. To be so full of confidence that nothing can shake you.

To achieve and achieve and achieve and grind and hustle and achieve and never take a day off and grind some more and achieve even more.

Think critically about this though. Ignore this siren call.

There are consequences for not taking a day off.
There are consequences for not caring about our fellow human beings.

And frankly, who realistically wants to work with someone who is exploding with self-confidence and a sense of over-achievement?

--> We commonly refer to these people in the corporate world as "assholes".

It's tiring to work with someone like this. Work hard and strive but be humble and a pleasure to work with.

ADD TO THE CULTURE

When we join a school, college, sports team, community group, workplace....we are either adding to, or removing from, the culture and society of that group.

Positive behaviours add to it.

Negative ones detract.

My advice is to add to every community you join. Be a positive asset to others. Be kind. Contribute. Listen. Work hard.

And people will remember you for that. And you'll have a good time too.



CARE

Care about what you do and it will show.

My dad always said "if a jobs worth doing, do it well".

Of course, some jobs aren't worth doing but we simply have to do them. Do them well too.

In fact, in all that you do - concentrate and focus on doing it well. Not only is this a good work ethic, but it means you won't have to do it again.

And you'll also have the satisfaction of knowing you did your best no matter the outcome or result. And that's all we can do - is our best.



INSULATE FROM THE MADNESS

Insulate yourself from the madness that happens around you.

Save a little money if you can, reserve a little energy, keep your eye on the wider world, raise your awareness, study what happens around you and insulate yourself from the unpredictable world.

Always have a back-up plan.



Make a stand against toxic, illegal, immoral, discriminatory and dangerous behaviours in the workplace. If you don't, you're complicit in them.

STAND UP



FORGET TIME MANAGEMENT

ENERGY AND ATTENTION IS WHERE IT'S AT

People bang on about time management. But trust me, time doesn't respond well to being managed.

It does what it wants to do. It goes on and on regardless of whether I try to manage it.

Instead, focus on energy and attention. Cultivate energy. Give your attention away carefully.

Time will do what it likes. But we have control over where we direct our energy and attention.

Read the book - [Take a day off](#)





LEADERSHIP

Leaders require followers. Leadership cannot be bought, nor given to you with a job title. The title of Vice President does not automatically create followers.

People choose to follow a leader.

If you want to lead then ask "Why would people choose to follow me?"

It helps to believe in something worth following. It helps to develop outstanding communication skills. It helps to care about something, and other people.

It also helps that you're creating more than you consume. You're also taking ownership, setting the high bar and role modelling great behaviours. You have ambition but you're humble. You're learning. You're having fun.

People always choose to follow a leader.

CREATIVE SOUL PROJECTS

ACTION

SETTLES DOUBT





Thank you

A huge thank you if you read this far.

If you'd like to support me, and learn more about developing creativity, communication and learning - and developing those all important leadership skills, then check out the cultivatedmanagement.com