



Wise and responsive leaders an insight into their real-life experience in current times

Praesta is an international partnership of business coaches. We support senior leaders, including CEOs, main board directors, leadership team members, other key senior executives and emerging leaders through Executive Coaching, Team Coaching and Board Performance Reviews. We are leaders in working with executive women and job-sharers.

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Enabling those we work with to be confident, authentic and encouraged in their leadership

Praesta Insights draw together ideas and experience on topical leadership issues in an accessible and digestible way.

Praesta coaches Louise Sheppard and Jane Upton are the joint authors of ***Wise and responsive leaders an insight into their real-life experience in current times.***

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an insight into their real-life experience in current times



Introduction

The last few years have demanded a lot from leaders, and the future seems likely to be equally unpredictable. There is, of course, no one way to lead nor a single approach that can guarantee success, however we notice that some of our clients seem to be particularly adept at guiding their teams and organisations and responding to new challenges. We are curious about what it is about them that has such a positive impact. This booklet is a result of our enquiry. We explore how these leaders make sense of the situation, how they see their role, what they do or change, and how they are *being*.

What we do know is that people are better able to navigate complex environments when they become more consciously aware of how they interpret situations and how they broaden their range of responses in critical moments. This personal evolution is never achieved in a single leap, rather it is an iterative process over time, often supported by external coaching. It is an uneven path with stones and potholes, but when people choose to follow this path, the results

can be impressive for them as people and as leaders.

We have deliberately avoided references to development and leadership theories, preferring to focus on the practical experience of the leaders with whom we spoke. However, our research supports our belief that, as people develop, they become more self-aware and acquire the ability to notice what is happening in the moment, and to see the choices that they have. This allows them to have more nuanced perspectives on situations and so respond in a more adaptable and flexible way. They also carry with them responses and behaviours from earlier stages of development that can be triggered. We offer some suggested reading at the end of the booklet that might be of interest. Our aim is to provide a practical, thought-provoking piece that will contribute to our readers' own development. We expect it to be of interest to leaders at various stages of their career as well as L&D professionals who are supporting them.

About this research

This insight guide is based on research that we conducted with a cross-section of leaders at Board, CEO, Executive Committee or one level below in global, national, local, and entrepreneurial organisations whom we have coached or come across in our network. These individuals have impressed us with their wise, mature, agile, and humble approach to leadership. They are working in Commerce and industry, Financial Services, Professional Services, Health, Government, and the voluntary sectors. The themes that emerged from the data are a mix of behaviours that they are demonstrating and traits that these leaders are displaying.

We are grateful to our clients and contacts who generously gave us their time and contributed to this work with their thoughtful reflections.

Structure of this booklet

This booklet is divided into five sections:

- 1. What are wise and responsive leaders doing?**
- 2. What qualities are leaders embodying?**
- 3. When do leaders exhibit 'old' habits or behaviours?**
- 4. How do leaders approach feedback?**
- 5. How do leaders use coaching?**



1. What are wise and responsive leaders doing?

We have observed the attitudes and behaviours of mature leaders in 3 main contexts:

- how they see and manage themselves;
- their interactions with their teams and organisation; and
- looking over the horizon to broader systems.

Click on the numbers to link to the relevant pages

Within these 3 main contexts we noticed the following themes.

Self-management

- 1 A willingness to be wrong
- 2 Personal resilience
- 3 Radical diary management

Interactions with teams and organisation

- 4 Demonstrating that people matter
- 5 Being an inclusive leader
- 6 Providing clarity
- 7 Enabling teams to manage day-to-day
- 8 Communicating thoughtfully

Looking over the horizon to broader systems

- 9 Thinking systematically
- 10 External networks

Self-management

1 A willingness to be wrong

The leaders we interviewed work on themselves to overcome their fear of being wrong. They are willing to admit to themselves and to others when they are wrong and are comfortable with others pointing it out to them. Successful leaders are comfortable with the unknown and with ambiguity, and it is their acceptance of that reality that makes them better able to acknowledge the limits of their own thinking. *“I used to feel responsible for coming up with the answer but realised that neither I nor anyone else has it.”* They can adapt and flex during uncertainty, stretch themselves and overcome the fear of failing. *“I have worked on myself to ignore the sense of failure if we don’t succeed as a business. I won’t feel diminished as a person or professional.”* Underlying this behaviour are beliefs including: ‘No one has all the answers’, ‘I know that I’m not always right’, ‘Disagreement is vital’ and ‘I need to adjust’. Leaders who are willing to be wrong further support themselves by seeking out a critical circle of colleagues, trustees, and friends whom they invite to challenge their view and provide feedback. It is important to them that this circle is courageous enough to tell them how it is. Being willing to admit when you don’t know and being willing to be wrong is important because it opens the space for exploration with others and leads to more options and greater buy-in.

“Be courageous and recognise early on when it isn’t working. Be flexible, listen and check whether others are with you on the journey.”

Questions for reflection:

A willingness to be wrong

- How willing are you to admit when you are wrong?
- When you do admit to being wrong, what impact does it have on the situation / other people?
- Who is willing to stand up to you?

2 Personal resilience

Leaders feel that balancing work and homelife is one of the hardest challenges, but one that they need to address actively in order to maintain their resilience in the long term. *“I’m leading through constant change – there is no beginning or end to work.”* They stress the importance of planning evenings and weekends so that they can have time out and segregate work and home. It is vital to disconnect and have a proper rest. This can take the form of doing things that refresh them at weekends and taking holidays when they switch off their devices. The leaders we spoke to have well-being practices built into their weekdays, such as meditation or early morning walks. One leader has

returned to piano playing to connect to her creativity, both to manage her own inner state and to generate creative thinking. Many refer to using exercise such as running, biking, and walking the dog to provide valuable thinking space. The leaders make time to reflect; they look backwards as well as forwards to recognise and celebrate milestones and gain strategic and psychological insights. Personal resilience enables leaders to enjoy their roles without being overwhelmed or suffering burn-out.

“I need to disengage at the end of the day. I need to be present with my family, not still thinking about work.”

Questions for reflection:

Personal resilience

- How can you build in some consistency and not just attend to yourself when overwhelmed?
- What are you **not** prepared to sacrifice, e.g., sports day or your partner’s birthday?
- How can you encourage your team to look after themselves better?

3 Radical diary management

Leaders find that, if they are not careful, their diaries run their lives. Most take a radical approach to being on their ‘own’ agenda so that they focus their time and energy on what will have the biggest impact on their team and organisation’s results. They ask themselves “what is it that must be done and can only be done by me?” *“Business isn’t about being on emails or Teams.”* They build chunks of thinking space into their weekly diary, for example blocking out a couple of mornings a week when they are at their most productive or using an hour every day to think about and focus on their strategic objectives. They say “No” to requests and are brutal with meetings, asking their PA to manage these by declining and shortening many of them. One leader colour-codes his emails so that he knows which ones to look out for. Others stress the importance of taking the team off-site to have space to connect and plan without day-to-day interferences. Radical diary management allows leaders to be more agile and focus on what is important rather than chasing what is urgent.

“I make a list of what I want to attend and do. I go in later to work some days and have thinking space in the mornings.”

Questions for reflection:

Radical diary management

- What would saying “No” to more requests and meetings enable you to do? And what stops you from being more brutally selective?
- How do you prioritise what you say “Yes” to?

Interactions with teams and organisation

4 Demonstrating that people matter

Treating people well has always been important, but now it is more so. *“We used to pay lip service to employee focus, but now it is real. There has been a rebalancing from the customer to employees.”* Leaders report feeling more responsible about their duty of care and find that they need to adapt their style of communication to people’s circumstances and needs. One leader told us that he checks in with more empathy, enquiry, and curiosity. Another said that she is more aware of people’s well-being and that of their family.

This change of priorities has led to more time being dedicated to conversations with team members and increased flexibility in response. Leaders feel that they need to get the balance right: *“challenging people to deliver whilst supporting their well-being”*. Many are still exploring that balance: genuinely

compassionate leadership enhances the organisation; it is not indulgent leadership. The tangible rewards for getting that balance right are higher levels of motivation, engagement and ultimately, retention of talent. Less tangible but equally important is the sense of this being the right thing to do. Leaders know that it is not enough to be sensitive and aware; they need to demonstrate it through their visible engagement and actions. Their teams want them to show empathy as well as act on it, particularly when there are difficult conversations to be had.

A genuine desire to understand other people’s opinions and their lived experience creates a greater openness to listening. The quality of the listening allows teams to contribute more fully to topics and leaders take their views into account as they develop their own thinking. This ability to hold multiple perspectives requires humility and a willingness to hold their egos in check.

“There is no rigid template for leading people. I need to be cognisant of different needs and mindsets, for example, flexible working is more important to many than salary as it impacts individual happiness.”

Questions for reflection:

Demonstrating that people matter

- How do your team and colleagues know that you care about them?
- How do you ensure that you are interacting with your team and meet all the other demands on your time?

5 Being an inclusive leader

Leaders highlight diversity and inclusion as a fundamental part of their leadership. They have become aware that we all have unconscious bias and need to understand how this impacts their thoughts, feelings, and actions. *“It feeds through recruitment to my own development and learning. I must be humble as a white male regarding matters for which I have no lived experience.”* Leaders emphasise the need to change their mindset from recruiting on expertise and qualifications to recruiting on talent, potential and diversity.

Some also recommend being gracious about letting good people move on to new opportunities, recognising that when they thrive elsewhere, they will remain in their network. Leaders view inclusiveness as key to diversity. The benefits of being inclusive are increased

innovation, customer orientation, brand strength, plus the attraction and retention of talent. Leaders define what inclusion means and why it is important: introduce policies and processes to promote and monitor inclusiveness, develop individual and team skills to reinforce it, and role-model inclusiveness at all levels.

They treat people fairly, not just because it is the right thing to do and promotes a sense of belonging, but also because it enables inclusive growth and longer-term value creation.

“The hardest aspect of leading at the moment is balancing pushing people hard to deliver with supporting their well-being and managing my own deep ignorance and prejudice.”

Questions for reflection:

Being an inclusive leader

- What are you doing to become aware of your unconscious bias?
- How do you demonstrate inclusive leadership?
- How do you adapt (as a leader or business) to meet the needs of others?

6 Providing clarity

When surrounded by complexity and confusion, teams look to the leaders to provide as much clarity as possible: *“My role is to create some certainty for others. I can live with uncertainty”*. Leaders work on providing a clear vision, a sense of direction, and priorities or outcomes for their teams and organisations. They are conscious of the need to remind people constantly of the vision, whilst working on the day-to-day. One leader explained, *“I used to create a highly effective management team. Now there is no management team but an effective leadership group with shared values, principles, and a shared vision. The leadership group decides the operating plan to be delivered.”* In creating the vision, it is important to check in with people regarding their assumptions about success and explore what really matters. Developing a long-term strategy and shared sense of direction is essential, even if everyone knows that it may need to adapt as circumstances change. It enables leaders to lead through others effectively and frees them up to represent the business.

“We now have a clear organisational strategy and parameters which provide for longer term outcomes. The Government releases funds and we have clear

funding streams and can shape the organisation at short notice. We base decisions on the outcomes we want to achieve rather than outputs and targets, and we can therefore be more flexible.”

Questions for reflection:

Providing clarity

- How are you providing clarity about the direction of travel and priorities amidst all the confusion and complexity?
- To what extent do you seek to understand others' assumptions and concerns?

7 Enabling teams to manage day-to-day

Leaders are noticing that they need to be less operational so that they can focus on business strategy and what is happening in the wider environment. They can no longer operate at an Expert level; one leader referred to managing his *“addiction to problem solving so that he can become better at dealing with complexity.”* They focus on

building and leading teams made up of people who are more able than themselves; *“it is important to have the right team, you need to be hard-nosed about it and take difficult people decisions.”* It is the leader’s role to create an environment where people can do their work, where they are empowered, trusted to lead, and allowed to make mistakes and learn. Leaders balance the time spent on developing individuals and driving performance.

Enabling teams to manage the day-to-day frees up leaders to focus on setting a clear vision, objectives, and deliverables. They believe that their role is to lead leaders, liaise with stakeholders, stand with courage before Boards and Government, and represent their organisations.

“I tend to want too much detail and so I ask myself whether I am getting too involved. I understand the importance of allowing leaders to demonstrate their expertise, creating the space for them to fly.”

Questions for reflection:

Enabling teams to manage day-to-day

- How can you delegate more effectively?
- How well do you create an environment where others can succeed?
- How are you balancing the time you spend on development and performance?

8 Communicating thoughtfully

Employees, stakeholders, and customers are more dispersed than ever, and leaders require new ways of communicating with them. It is important to provide visible and connected leadership, and technology enables more democratic access to people. However, communicating via technology is not enough. Leaders stress the need to use a variety of communications channels and to be precise in communications to reduce the noise. They talk of wearing a ‘coaching hat’ during one-on-ones and encouraging people to text or call them too, with a commitment that they will call back. Being thoughtful about communication enables leaders to connect with, inform and listen to those that they need to.

“I use groups to discuss issues, sometimes with me there and sometimes without me.”

Questions for reflection:

Communicating thoughtfully

- To what extent do you adapt your communication to suit the situation or individual?
- How effectively do you listen to communication that comes back from the organisation?
- How often do you ask questions rather than telling?

Looking over the horizon to broader systems

9 Thinking systemically

Thinking systemically is about understanding and making meaning of the ‘big picture’ and being able to identify root causes of difficult issues as well as wider consequences of decisions. It is about retaining focus on the system as a whole, keeping analysis connected to the overall purpose of the system.

Many leaders view their organisation as part of a wider system, “*We are leaders **in** not **of** a system.*” Leaders talked about needing to understand

the context or environment in which the system operates and on which it depends for its development. It is important for them to comprehend the system as a whole in relation to the changing environment - organisations are having to respond to many externally imposed changes. Leaders talked about enrolling others to the view that, when many interconnected individuals and groups take small actions, a shift happens in the larger patterns of communities, organisations, and societies. Some leaders spoke about the importance of mapping issues out to see the patterns. “*I break complex situations down into different aspects and identify patterns and themes. I start tackling it somewhere like an iceberg.*” Leaders hold the belief that few issues are resolved by one organisation working alone, so spending time with other organisations is more important than ever. Systems leadership enables leaders to connect to and invest in building relationships with others to manage uncertainty.

“It is like being on a mountain bike on bumpy ground all the time. I am very connected to the organisation and the external world; I live and breathe it. I try to smooth the path, take bits of the mountain out for others.”

Questions for reflection:

Thinking systemically

- What are you doing to take a systemic view?
- How do you support your team to gain a systemic view?

other functions and businesses, and seek internal and external data when tackling problems. Leaders are readers and listeners. *“I’m a huge reader and have numerous sources of knowledge feed per day.”* Having an external focus and choosing the most relevant sources of information enables leaders to be well informed and to make better decisions.

10 External networks

It is their awareness of the level of complexity and uncertainty in which they are working that convinces leaders of the importance of tapping into sources of knowledge outside their organisation. They develop strong networks and engage with the world; they get known outside their organisations; they choose to be learners and co-create with others. *“I avoid being a loner, creating my own echo chamber.”* Leaders are conscious of needing to absorb information from the external business environment by spending time listening to stakeholders in different organizations, industries, and geographies, who offer diverse thinking. They also join think tanks, read widely, and listen to podcasts for inspiration and innovative thinking. Leaders triangulate their external focus by checking what is happening on the ground, through making site visits to customers and consulting with colleagues and trustees. They encourage their teams to value diverse views, work with

“I talk to people who challenge my view of the world and help me to identify problems that I’m not seeing.”

Questions for reflection:

External networks

- How could you broaden your external network?
- What form of external challenge would improve your decision-making?



2. What qualities are leaders embodying?

Whilst actions and behaviours play a key part in the impact that leaders have, we also notice some personal traits that recur in our conversations. These are not necessarily innate elements of someone's personality: many people develop them over time, sometimes very consciously. The leaders we interviewed recognise that *how they are* in their work, *how they show up*, is as important as what they do.

Courage

Humility

Openness
and curiosity

Presence
and visibility

Being agile

Click on the qualities to link to the relevant pages

Courage

Leaders referred to being at the edge of their comfort and experience and calling on their courage to move forward when they are dealing with their own uncertainty as well as leading others through it. It takes courage as well as humility to admit that you are wrong and change your mind. It takes courage to *“do the right thing on a difficult day and not walk around looking anxious”*. There are times when the stakes are high and leaders feel that they are, to quote Brené Brown, “stepping into the arena”. One leader said, *“I take a deep breath and go for it!”*

We heard about the courage it takes for some leaders to do the right thing and not just conform to expectations. Decisions are not always understood by their organisations. Being bold is sometimes the most likely route to success but hard to sell to teams and Boards. *“I had to remember that this decision is right today, but it might be wrong tomorrow”*, said one of the leaders.

“I need to have the guts to stand before world experts and present to the Board. I remain open-minded and accept what will be.”

Questions for reflection:

Courage

- Do you have the courage to do the right thing on a difficult day?
- How do you support others in being courageous?

Humility

It is striking that when the leaders we interviewed allow themselves to be human, vulnerable, and real, others open up to them more readily and they receive better support. However, getting to the point of asking for help is often difficult. One leader spoke about the need to break down the barrier of the “hero-leader”; he is challenging his own definition of what success means to him. Another told of the importance of avoiding the trap of thinking that she needs to be brilliant or a genius to do well. *“It’s important to share ordinary stories of ordinary people”*.

Being a good human, being a good person to be around when things go wrong, creating an environment where people can tell you when they have concerns - all these attributes require genuine humility. Some leaders acknowledged that genuine humility requires them to manage their own egos: inappropriate modesty can be as big an issue as taking the spotlight. One said, *“I ask my team how I can help rather than telling them what to do”*. Another

experienced it differently: *“I can tone myself down, becoming over-inclusive, dumbing down what I and we have achieved as an organisation to allow others to engage.”* They understood that humility requires the right amount of ego, expressed in the right way.

“I admit when I don’t understand.”

Questions for reflection:

Humility

- How much humility do you display?
- Where might your ego be showing up?
- When might others need you to be less self-effacing?

Openness and curiosity

Leaders attribute their ability to make sense of their complex environment to their willingness to let go of their ego and accept the vulnerability of being wrong or at least not knowing the answer. This opens the door to more curiosity and so they seek diverse opinions, both internally from teams and externally from other networks. Openness means that they are willing to be challenged and to put aside their own opinions

whilst they consider other ideas and perspectives. One leader talked about the importance of having people around him who are *“fiercely bright or good at what they do”*, and he listens to them.

Curiosity shows up in the way that they seek out others’ views, in how they support people to articulate ideas and how they encourage experimentation. One leader gave an example of deliberately slowing down her interactions with people and developing her ability to be silent for long periods, which allows for a more thoughtful and reflective sharing of ideas.

“It is exciting learning about issues I was previously unaware of but still don’t understand enough. It’s a challenge and I have to reflect. I need to anticipate how colleagues feel and put myself in their shoes.”

Questions for reflection:

Openness and curiosity

- What limits your openness to others’ ideas and perspectives?
- How would you and your organisation benefit from your showing more genuine curiosity

Presence and visibility

The leaders we spoke to describe presence as more than just being in the room or on a screen; it is the ability to focus on the other person without distraction and an awareness of the impact that they are having on the conversation. They talk about dedicating quality time to be with teams and individuals, where their focus is on deep listening, wanting to understand the other person's situation and perspective. When they break down what presence means to them, these leaders identify a shift in priorities that leads to a more genuine connection with people, where well-being is understood to be a key part of performance and motivation and where they are still prepared to step into their authority to give difficult messages, some of which people don't want to hear.

The leaders we talked to are aware of the need to become even more visible to their teams and organisations. Online meetings offer the opportunity to speak to a global audience, yet the lack of face-to-face contact limits the personal connection that creates a sense of who they are. They are seeking opportunities to drop into team meetings, to have informal contact and enable conversations at all levels of the organisation.

"I need to show up now with a true, authentic presence. Before, a more superficial presence was enough."

Questions for reflection:

Presence and visibility

- What do you need to do to be fully present?
- How can you increase your visibility to support your team and organisation?

Being agile

Many of the leaders relish the challenge of crisis management, requiring, as it does, quick thinking and clear decision-making. Rarely do they have all the information that they need to be sure of their decisions. There is an important distinction between providing a rapid, reactive response to changing situations and demonstrating an agility that allows for a coherent shift. Leaders spoke about the need to integrate a variety of sources of information: analytics, others' opinions, and their own intuition. They stressed the importance of having a long-term strategy or direction which helps them to provide clarity and supports them when they are required to

make radical changes of direction. When they understand where their business is at, they can shape their leadership approach accordingly.

The leaders' willingness to shift quickly is only one half of the equation; the other is their ability to bring their teams with them. They spoke about the need to take both their immediate team and the broader organisation on the journey, allowing enough time for people first to understand the situation themselves and then to catch up with the leader's thinking. Some leaders include a broader range of people in meetings so that they became actively involved in issues at an earlier stage.

"It feels like we are in a boat that is tacking towards the destination. There is no fixed point of delivery, but we know that there is coherence in what we are doing. The direction is what matters to us".

Questions for reflection:

Being agile

- What do you need to do to become as agile as your situation requires?
- How can you become more effective at engaging others in change or new ways of thinking?



3. When do leaders revert to ‘old’ habits and behaviours?

Everyone falls back into old behaviours or attitudes on occasion. This often happens in moments of stress or tiredness, both of which are constant features of the working environment. Being aware of and addressing fallback behaviours are important aspects of effective leadership.

Leaders reflect that their default behaviours or responses are often those that have made them feel secure or successful in the past. For example, under pressure, some seek a lot of information for reassurance; others talk of rolling up their sleeves to ‘do’ and be the expert rather than delegating. Sometimes they return to these comfortable habits as a coping mechanism. One shared that his natural sense of humour can turn to sarcasm when he is tired or impatient and this can be wounding. Sometimes old insecurities surface under pressure. One leader recognises that she can freeze when

presenting to very senior people, when in that moment she really needs to step into her authority and show strength. Another becomes arrogant and controlling to mask his uncertainty. One leader celebrates her moments of fallback as a learning opportunity for her own development. *“When I notice I’m feeling intimidated, I can reflect on what it is that I’m afraid of.”* When she identifies her underlying fears, she has choices in the moment and can change her behaviour so that she is more effective.

The advantage that these leaders have is their self-awareness in the moment. When they identify their fallback behaviours, they can choose to take pre-emptive action or to address them quickly. In addition, when leaders recognise their stress and tiredness early, they can choose to resource themselves and are therefore less prone to fallback in high-stakes situations.

"I recognise the people or situations that press my buttons: I draw a fish on a page as a warning sign: don't take the bait!"

Questions for reflection:

- How willing are you to acknowledge those aspects of yourself that you don't like?
- What are the "old behaviours" that you need to watch out for?
- How can you become more aware of them in the moment?



4. How do leaders approach feedback?

Many of the leaders we spoke to truly value genuine feedback even when it is tough to hear. They understand that it is essential for their success and future development and view feedback as data that sparks curiosity and exploration. *"I enjoy feedback even if I have a different perspective. I am curious about it and need feedback to develop."*

Seniority doesn't always make it easier to hear the difficult messages. Everyone can be hurt by feedback that feels unfair or that touches a raw nerve. Tiredness and stress sometimes make it harder to view the feedback with objectivity. *"Harsh feedback feels difficult, but I just roll with it and try to understand where they are coming from."*

For team members, speaking truth to power can be difficult or even dangerous, so when leaders find someone or a team who is willing to confront them, they are genuinely grateful. They recognise that this takes both courage and maturity on both sides. *“Not everyone is honest when you are the CEO, there were a few people who were blunt, and I found their feedback invaluable. They would tell me I was being an idiot or say, ‘you think that, and you are wrong.’”*

Getting enough feedback is not always easy, particularly at the most senior levels, and leaders spoke about needing to find mechanisms to do so. For some it is finding trusted individuals and asking directly for feedback. Others prefer more formal mechanisms of 360s or climate surveys. One leader has a personal assistant who feels able to speak honestly to him about his impact. Leaders also made the point that it is important to receive positive feedback too, so that they know what to continue doing.

Questions for reflection:

- Are you getting enough genuine feedback? If not, how can you get more?
- How can you respond to challenging feedback in a less defensive manner?



5. How do leaders use coaching?

The leaders that we spoke to consider coaching to be one of their key pillars of support. Leaders are coming to coaching exhausted and asking how they can resource themselves and increase their resilience. Even the most senior leaders can be overwhelmed by the uncertainty of a rapidly changing environment. To be able to talk about their feelings in a confidential environment allows them to face their fears and to regain perspective.

Being an ‘expert’ is no longer working for them and they want to explore how to set the vision and direction, structure their teams differently and lead through them. Leaders are sharing wicked problems during coaching sessions, to which there are no simple solutions – how to manage with fewer staff, rising costs and do so in a way that is empowering and motivating for employees. They use coaching to enable them to ‘step onto the balcony’ so that they

can take a broader view and make better decisions than they would thinking things through on their own. Coaching sessions offer a dedicated space for reflection, where the leaders can try out new ideas and be encouraged to take a systemic view, be challenged to look externally, and consider the consequences of different approaches.

The leaders we spoke to acknowledged that they must keep working on themselves to keep pace with the speed of change. Coaching is a safe place to seek and receive feedback which accelerates leaders’ growth. We would be happy to discuss how coaching can support you with your leadership development and we have provided a table that you can use to identify the attributes of wise and responsive leaders that you are already demonstrating and those that you might like to develop further.

Attributes	I demonstrate this attribute	I need to develop this attribute
<p>Self-management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + A willingness to be wrong + Personal resilience + Radical diary management 		
<p>Interactions with teams and organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Demonstrating that people matter + Being an inclusive leader + Providing clarity + Enabling teams to manage day-to-day + Communicating thoughtfully 		
<p>Looking over the horizon to broader systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Thinking systemically + External networks 		
<p>Qualities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Courage + Humility + Openness and curiosity + Presence and visibility + Being agile 		

Further reading suggestions

***Unlocking Leadership Mindtraps:
How to Thrive in Complexity,***

Jennifer Garvey Berger

***In Over Our Heads: The Mental
Demands of Modern Life,***

Robert Kegan

***Leadership Agility: Five Levels
of Mastery for Anticipating and
Initiating Change,***

Bill Joiner & Stephen Josephs

Transformations of Leadership,

David Rooke & William R Torbert,
Harvard Business Review (April 2005)

The Call to Courage,

Brené Brown, Netflix 2019

***From Fallback to Spring Forward:
Bringing our better selves in times
of complexity,***

Valerie Livesay <https://medium.com/@vlivesay/from-fallback-to-spring-forward-bringing-our-better-selves-in-times-of-complexity-ccf5a3508f72?sk=d2def7bc162efaa9c190c72bc68d23c0>

Anthrovision,

Gillian Tett

Executive SOS,

Seven Easy Steps to a Proven
Strategic Operating System,
Antoinette Braks

Praesta Insights

(www.praesta.com, www.praesta.co.uk)

***Leading for the long term: creating
a sustainable future***

***Leading Virtual Teams: living with
contradiction and uncertainty***

The Resilient Leader

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Jane has been working as a leadership coach for over 25 years, building on a successful career in international HR. She coaches senior and high-potential clients and their teams across a broad range of business and not-for-profit sectors. Her work has taken her to every continent, and she brings lived experience of multicultural environments. She is based in Spain, works internationally and is part of the Praesta team in the UK. She is an Accredited Master Executive Coach.

Louise is a highly experienced coach with over 30 years of business experience and a deep understanding of executive coaching, team coaching and leadership gained from working with over 100 organisations globally. She has a doctorate in Coaching and Mentoring and enjoys carrying out research. Louise lives in London, is part of Praesta UK and works internationally. She also works as a coaching supervisor.

Notes

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