



**GURU
GUIDE**
with
Vidusha and Anton

in conversation with
Gordon Tredgold

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**LEADING PROJECTS
& INITIATIVES
REMOTELY**

A QUICK INTRODUCTION TO THE GURU GUIDE

The 'guru guide' is an attempt to cull out decades of hard-earned expertise to be distilled into succinct, simple and practical advice.

It is NOT meant to be an exhaustive exploration of a topic: rather, pointed areas of focus which can only be discerned by a practitioner. It is not meant to be a generic set of advice: it is advice from battle-hardened professionals who have had a lifetime of experience and proven track records.

The Guru Guide has a pre determined format:

- ✓ It aims to understand a topic/ area of focus
- ✓ It aims to give tools to help you navigate the area
- ✓ It also gives contexts and examples: so that you can customize it to suit YOU

Exploratory, intimate and insightful, the Guru Guide aims to bring to you a wealth of expertise which can only be possible through veterans whose varied and in-depth experiences offer unparalleled insights.

The brevity and simplicity is by choice, and design. Focused on Executives and Managers who want to get quick tips and techniques, who are eager to improve their craft

and trade : the Guru Guide aims to offer 'little nuggets' of advice and importantly, simple tools, which will enable practitioners to up their game and benefit from expertise which may be hard to find in a hurry.

INTRODUCING



**VIDUSHA
NATHAVITHARANA**

Vidusha is currently the Destiny Architect at High5 Consultancy and Luminary Learning and the organization's founder. His areas of expertise are with strategy facilitation, HR strategy development and Leadership Training. He has conducted assignments in 15 countries regionally and consulted for the World Bank, the UN as well as some of the top corporates in Sri Lanka and the Region. He is also a member of the board of directors for Chrysalis, a social enterprise working to empower women and youth by fostering inclusive growth in Sri Lanka and elsewhere.



**ANTON
THAYALAN**

Anton is a multi-faceted professional who has had over two decades of hands-on experience in process improvement, change management and strategic management, and currently works as the Chief Evangelist of Luminary Learning and the Transformation Therapist of High5 Consultancy. As the former AVP at HSBC DPL Anton won accolades for his superlative work there: and won the prestigious HSBC Group Service – Global Talent Management Member two years in a row. Anton currently works as a consultant focusing on efficiency and productivity improvement and process optimization for local and regional clients.

INTRODUCING GORDON TREGOLD



We were introduced to Gordon by his mentor and friend Nigel Risner. Gordon came on our very first webinar series and what we noticed from the get-go was the quiet confidence and self assuredness that generally comes from years of trial and error, and learning from it. Unhurried, focused, laser-sharp and witty : it is not difficult to understand why Gordon is one of the most sought-after speakers and coaches in US and Europe (and increasingly, around the World).

Unlike many, Gordon is what we call a 'working professional who also trains' rather than a full-time trainer : and this enables him to be abreast of his trade at all times - his work with Fujitsu even during lockdowns for

for Covid is a classic example of his ability to 'walk the talk.' Gordon led an entire team virtually across various geographies at the height of the European lockdown for Covid - and not only achieved the objectives set - but did it within budget - and faster than the deadline set : how often do you hear of that in the IT Industry ??

Above all else, there is a genuineness about Gordon that is hard to miss. Willing to go the extra mile, willing to help and always willing to share, Gordon is one of those who we will forever be proud to call our 'friend'...

WHY LEAD REMOTELY IN THE FIRST PLACE ?



Well, if Covid has taught us anything - it is to ensure you make use of all technology and tools available to you before something FORCES YOU TO. Imagine how much more we could have done if only we had adopted platforms like Zoom and MS teams BEFORE Covid hit us - imagine how much more easily 'working from home' would have worked out for most of us...

Don't forget that we truly DO work in a global economy and working remotely is a fact of life. From the Boardroom to the Battlefield - we often HAVE to rely on cameras and mikes to motivate, engage and perform almost all of leadership activities - without even once ever having met the person face to face.

That IS our reality : and I guess the faster we face it the better it is...

HONESTLY THOUGH - THERE IS NO REAL SUBSTITUTE FOR BEING THERE IN PERSON IS THERE ?



Tough one to really say - because I have always felt that relationships can be fostered without actually ever meeting - I mean - look at the three of us; I have never met the two of you, but we have collaborated for a few projects - and I would like to think we have a brilliant friendship and awesome partnership going.

I am not negating the dimension physical meet-ups bring. Being a trainer as well - I draw on the energy of the crowd - and I think most trainers - and also, anyone in performance arts will tell you the same. However, we are talking of managing projects in work environments - and though here, too, being there in person CAN and generally DO bring a dimension of personal connect that is difficult to bridge 'virtually' : there IS a lot that we CAN DO virtually which we negate - and often overlook....

Rather than looking at this in definitive it is best to look at the two approaches as 'different' rather than one being better or worse than the other. If technology has enabled a complicated surgery to be conducted in collaboration in two completely different countries with two set of doctors who speak completely different languages - then I honestly think leading other projects effectively should not be too difficult !

IF IT IS DONE REMOTELY - IS IT JUST 'MANAGING' A PROJECT RATHER THAN 'REALLY LEADING' A TEAM ?

Well... You can, and should learn to both manage AND lead remotely. Project Management DOES require leadership: mere management isn't enough.... I am not going to get into the semantics about what management is and what leadership is out here because that is not really the scope of what we are going to discuss : so, let this simple diagram explain the difference at its core.

In reality, projects that are purely remotely led actually require a hell of a lot more leadership than management. Given that no one is 'physically' there to engage with, the range of engagement and activity you need to bring to the leadership aspect is quite staggering actually. So, make no mistake : it is not just project management but serious leadership that goes into a project's success...

Leadership Produces change and movement	Management Produces order and consistency
<p>1. Establishes direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Creates a vision » Clarifies the big picture » Sets Strategies <p>2. Aligns people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Communicates goals » Seeks commitment » Builds teams, coalitions and alliances <p>3. Motivates and inspires</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Energizes » Empowers subordinates & colleagues » Satisfies unmet needs 	<p>1. Planning and budgeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Establishes agendas » Sets timetable » Allocates resources <p>2. Organizing and staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provide structure » Make job placements » Establish rules and procedures <p>3. Controlling and problem solving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Develop incentives » Generate creative solutions » Take corrective action

REALITY 1 : DISTANCE IS NOT THE PROBLEM: THE ATTITUDE IS



<https://unsplash.com/photos/TzVNoxOhW6Q>

See : the BIGGEST problem is just attitude...

We assume that we cannot lead remotely - and that we have to do certain rituals 'in person' and that without that little chat at the pub or that quiet meeting over a bite at the deli, leadership will be sterile and ineffective...

So, even when technology IS available, we are always trying to jump that next train or next plane to 'get there' in person - which often is just a feel-good factor or worse still - a 'getaway' from the 'old routine.'

So, let's get this straight. Absolutely ANY project can be managed without the leader actually being present in person - as effectively as being there in person. So, don't take distance the issue - correct your attitude...



TOOL 1 : REMOTE HUDDLES/SCRUMS



Scrumms are quite common in Agile environments - and they are NOT about socialising but about a razor sharp 10 minutes to plan the line of attack for the day. They are short, deadly serious (though there is tons of laughter too !) and extremely action oriented. Unlike meetings which stretch on forever, huddles/scrums are short and definitively timed affairs.

If you are leading an initiative a remote huddle/scrum is essential to ensure the project is on track and take any quick decisions required - DAILY. You cannot do weekly meetings which become longwinded and tiresome - specially in virtual environments - so, have a daily scrum instead. 10 minutes - 15 minutes flat - ensure everything that needs to be set for that day is done and everyone knows what needs to be delivered within the day. If wider discussions are required for some line items, take them separately and address them with the person concerned.

REALITY 2 : DISTANCE ISN'T THE ISSUE - TRUST IS



See - whether you are there in person or not, the issue is about trust... Have you done enough to establish credibility as a leader. Have you done enough to win over trust : professionally and personally ? Have you understood the need to have your team and your peers 'know' you.

Don't take distance as being the issue. You can do a heck of a lot without ever meeting a person to build trust, confidence and also a professional relationship. You can also build lasting friendships purely remotely as well...

Have you seen gamers ? They play in small teams, and prepare for years sometimes for a championship. They have NEVER met - but when they play, they really do play with the same level of confidence in each other and trust in each other as any team playing any team sport on a physical pitch/ground. How is it possible : without ever having met each other ? The love for the game, complimentary skills as well as the desire to achieve the same objective is a start : and of course the level of interaction they have daily, weekly and monthly. Some of these teams share bonds that go way beyond the game - which augments the relationships even further - and comes into play to often enhance their performance as a team.

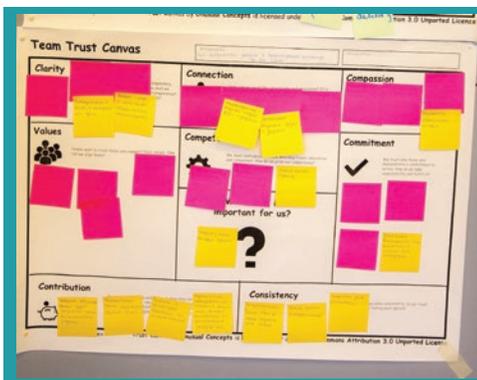
TOOL 2 : TEAM TRUST CANVAS

The Team Trust Canvas was designed by Alexey Pikulev and is a wonderful basic tool to look at how trust can be built within a team.

The idea is to have a conversation around each of these elements : and then start working on them...

- » **Clarity.** A Team experiences trust when they see transparency and mistrust when things are ambiguous. How shall we build and support the clarity, openness and transparency? How can we avoid the uncertainty and vagueness?
- » **Connection.** It is natural for people to follow others and build relationships. How can we connect and engage with each other? How can we improve our relationships and reduce conflicts?
- » **Compassion.** Team members need to care about each other. Are we ready to show concern? Are we ready to be compassionate?
- » **Value.** People want to trust those who support their values. How can we align them? Competency. We have confidence in those who stay fresh, innovative and competent. How do we grow our competency?
- » **Commitment.** We trust only those who demonstrate a commitment to action. How do we take responsibility and fulfill it?
- » **Contribution.** People are motivated and engaged when they deliver results. People trust results. Is anything getting done? How do our rules and policies promote getting things done? How does our organization's culture reward results?
- » **Consistency.** We like to see the things done consistently. Is our trust and confidence rising or falling each Sprint?

The Final most important part : What else is important to us?



[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE TEAM TRUST CANVASS](#)

REALITY 3 : DISTANCE IS NOT THE ISSUE - SUCCESS FRAMEWORKS ARE

When performance starts to falter we often blame the geographic distance and related 'issues' as the excuse : rather than attacking what often is the root cause : the lack of a success framework. Good leadership requires good frameworks - and managing performance within a team is also largely about the frameworks you set. The idea that the 'leader' using his 'charisma' (alone) singlehandedly 'saving the day' is stuff for movies and fairytales. Projects success, and leaderships success thereof hinges on leaders at all levels, and the right success frameworks being in place: We strongly recommend FAST Success Framework.

Focus

Set SMART Goals, with a clear definition of Success and proposed deadline

Accountability

Ensure that they have tools and resources needed so they feel empowered and can commit to the goal

Simplicity

Ensure that they have clarity and understanding of how the goal will be achieved in the required timeframe

Transparency

Create a plan of progress and agree regular review checkpoints

unless you have robust system and processes and success framework in place, leadership will fail : as well the project.

TOOLS 3 : FAST FRAMEWORK

Here are the 6 steps of the FAST Framework



1 Set the SMART Goal



2 Check they have the required resources



3 Check they understand what's required and how success will be achieved



4 Check for commitment to deliver



5 Agree progress plan and review points



6 Follow up, provide support & Recognition

3 SIMPLE TIPS THAT WILL HELP YOU BE MORE EFFECTIVE WHEN LEADING REMOTELY

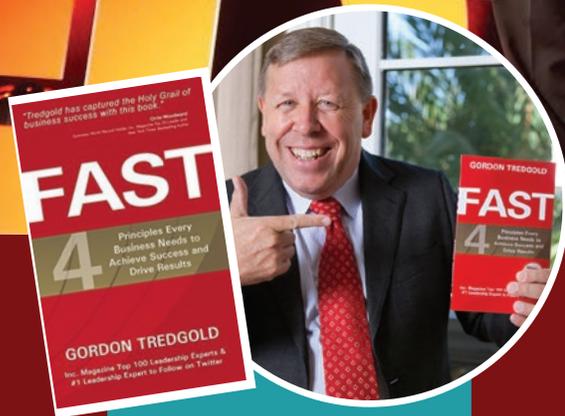


- » Use SMART Goals - clearly defined deliverables with agreed due date (what does success look like)
- » Empower by ensuring they have what they need, and understand what needs to be done (do they have what they need and know how they will be successful)
- » Create a GPS for progress tracking, clear progress milestones and timing, and agreed review schedule (Do they know where they are on the journey)

And as always recognise good progress and provide support if needed.

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**GORDON
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