


Rachel Setti: How business leaders need to adapt to the endless COVID-19

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Rep. Matt Gaetz wearing a gas mask on the House Floor.

‘This too shall pass’ is an oft used phrase we tell ourselves, and others, during challenging times, a way of acknowledging that the pain we are currently in will one day be a distant memory. But what happens when there is no end in sight? No anchor on which to hang our anticipation that the current situation will abate or end well for us?

This is the issue facing many in leadership roles in our COVID-19 world as they seek to make sense of the havoc it is wreaking on every imaginable level, says Rachel Setti, a registered organisational psychologist, psychotherapist, facilitator, and coach, who is a Director of Rachel Setti Consulting, in Sydney, Australia.

“Hope is an emotion which allows us to cast ourselves into the future with a positive

lens and a resolution that we will survive adversity. For many it is a powerful antidote to feelings of anxiety and depression, but how do we cultivate hope in the face of ambiguity, instability and volatility?

“You get to choose your attitude, so take responsibility. Don’t focus on the inevitable question of when this will all end, because firstly no-one knows, and secondly it is completely out of your control. Trying to control something you cannot influence is anxiety inducing and serves no purpose for your personal wellbeing. Instead, decide how you want to show up. Who do you want to be? How do you want to remember yourself during this time? How would you like others to remember you?

“Find meaning in your situation. Some feel that COVID-19 is a resetting of the world, a paring back to basics so that we can change the trajectory we were on. What personal meaning do you make of this situation? To answer this, firstly accept that these are difficult times, though the suffering and chaos may serve some purpose. Then, hone in on your inner value system, and decide how to create an alignment between who you are and who you want to be.

“Align your leadership behaviour with your personal values. The world judges us on our behaviours (because they can’t see our thoughts, feelings or intentions). It’s a perfect time to take stock and make changes to your previous behavioural shortfalls. Be purposeful in your leadership style, ask yourself how you can support others, how you can lead the business towards the best decisions in the current context. The evidence shows us that acting in the service of others, and aligning ourselves with a purpose greater than ourselves is a sure-fire way of maintaining wellbeing. What are your chosen behaviours?”

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