

Hello...what if someone you work with and get on very well with and had just completed Climb Leadership Cohort One suggested you would be a good candidate for Cohort Two. Bear in mind you had just worked through Covid. bear in mind you were exhausted and really were thinking about leaving your profession. What would you do?

Well, she did a good sell, I'm on Cohort Two and it has probably saved me from leaving and walking away from a profession I have been in for over twenty years. So, my talk today is a little bit of what I have learnt on the Climb course and things that have made me reflect on my life and traits I have now in my personality, how I work with people, that I have probably developed from when I was a lot younger.

So we are going to go way back when. We are going to go back to when I was about 8. So, my parents encouraged me to have swimming lessons, ok, nothing fancy about that. Nobody had ever been a great swimmer in my family until then. Well, what do you know, I was good at it! Not only good at it I was really good at it! So, from learning to swim, learning the basics I won my first width swimming lesson; swimming race, sorry. I beat my sister, she didn't like it, but there we go and from there I was inducted into this team. I'd never been part of a team before, the only team I knew was my family. So, as part of this team I represented a sport, it represented a town, and it also represented an area of the U.K.

My training sessions were morning before school, could be half past six in the morning and then after school for another hour and a half. Weekends, more training, swimming competitions...but I won, I won a lot of competitions. I represented my club, I represented my county, I represented my area North Wales, and I won championships and those points counted towards the team. It was great, bloody hard work. There were times when I would be pounding up and down the swimming pool with tears in my eyes because I absolutely hated it, and I didn't want to be there, and it was too hard. I would lean on the pool lane rope, tip out the tears from my swimming goggles then carry on and pound up and down, up and down and up and down for the greater good of the team, for my own personal development and achievement and it taught me a work ethic. It taught me loyalty, it taught me success, but it taught me that success was not easy it took a lot of hard work, determination, commitment and sacrifice. All good stuff until about the age of fifteen, that was it I had had enough, I had a burn out. I just walked away, I rang up the

coach and said I can't do this anymore. Bear in mind this was all before sports science, or the internet, you know everything that we know now but we didn't know then.

So, that was what I would consider my first burn out. However, the things that I learnt back through those days; self-reliance, independence, going up against others that were much older than you, they were expected to beat you. They would look at you and laugh because you were this skinny little girl who was a lot younger than them but actually when you stood on the starting block and that whistle went and you dived into the water I pounded away and a lot of the times I would beat people who were a lot older than me, a lot more bigger physique than me and at the end of the race they would come up and shake my hand because they were just taken by surprise.

So, there were a lot of things I learnt from those times that I actually realise I have brought into the workplace. I work extremely hard in the workplace, I expect a lot of dedication from those around me, I go in early, I finish late and no matter what your job title tells you, it doesn't really mean a thing to me, what I am looking for is character, commitment, dedication.

Challenged based leading. Now on the Climb course we have been lucky enough, and I have been lucky enough to do it twice so far, is to go down to work with Dark Swan Organisation. Now if you talk about challenged based learning, we built a shower block in nine hours. I've never built a shower block before in my life and I only knew one other person in the group, there was a group of about 40-45 people, I'd never met them before but we had a brilliant talk from Dan from Dark Swan and what do you know, before you know it we are all pulling pallets apart, we are all working together as a team for a common goal. Within nine hours we had built a shower block, an outdoor shower block.

Some of us are prone to work out until we burn out. Which is more prevalent probably at the moment in our organisation because of staff retention and staff recruitment. Some of the things as a new manager coming into the team that I am really keen for is self-preservation, for myself so I don't burn out and nor do my staff. Some of the quick wins that we have developed within the team based on what I have learnt within Climb Leadership are "look for the

leaders” within your team because that is within your gift within your own team; there will be people there that are leaders and if you can pull those leaders together, they will make a difference within your team. If you read James Kerr Legacy book that will guide you through that process and inspire you.

My second quick win was to set up a team What’s App group which has come with enormous surprises and had a real positive impact on the staff within the team that are part of it. From that What’s App group we post lots of well-being activities, motivational quotes and we have started doing cold water swimming together. We are just more bonded I suppose in a different way and in a way that connects us but that we can check in with each other as well.

My third quick win is about having coffee with as many people as you can. We run a “Tea at Three” on a Thursday afternoon for our team. It started off as purely just for the nurses as a way of me getting to know the team but it has developed from there and actually we don’t have an agenda, we come and join together at three o’clock and we share a coffee and chat together. The positive from that is the creative ideas that have come from that very small time spent together on a Thursday. It’s for checking in with each other, making sure we are all alright, checking what each other needs to get through the days.

So, there is three levels of quick win supportive team building ideas there that you can use to get your team through the difficult times to a point where you feel you are running as a team. Not separate identities, with different agendas, but work together for the greater good and well-being of your staff and representative of your team and our ethos within our team is that we are there for the greater good of our community.