

MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT, ACEL

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Got plans for October?

I have recently changed jobs, which has been an exciting but hectic time. I am sure that most people reading this column will have experienced the seismic shift that impacts on every aspect of your life as you finish up in one role and excitedly move to another. On previous occasions when this has happened to me, I have been so keen to take up the new position that I have simply finished work on the Friday afternoon and then polished my shoes and tidied myself up over the weekend in readiness to start again on the Monday morning. Despite my natural urge on this occasion to again get straight into the new role, I listened to advice from those around me and took a break between positions for the first time in my career. Based on this cathartic experience, I have taken the opportunity in this short article to make the following two important points.

Firstly, the break proved to be a wonderful opportunity to rest, renew and to reflect. To do this I went away to an exotic location with my wife and ensured that I had enough time to unwind and simply relax. Despite not feeling tired, it was a refreshing experience to take some time-out to slow down for a while. The most important aspect of this period however, was the chance to reflect on what it was that I wanted to do differently in this new role.

A change of workplaces provides an opportunity to further develop or refine aspects of your leadership and performance that were perhaps not impacting so well in the last job. In order to undertake this type of critical reflection, I have found that it is useful to collect some data or relevant feedback from those colleagues with whom you have worked closely in the previous role. It is amazing how respectfully candid people become when they are asked to help you prepare for the new position. I have discovered that people are uninhibited when asked to provide a view on what could be done differently in the next job. When asked what I should do more of and what I should do less of, I have found the provision of advice to be free flowing and often surprising. Issues that subordinates would probably never identify if they thought you would be back the next day, are often incredibly insightful and become the basis for fine-tuning. I would urge all of you, if and when you get the chance as you depart a work environment or even if a close colleague departs, to seek some authentic feedback by asking what it is that others think you could do better. Throughout my career, these opportunities have been liberating and helpful moments.

The second point that I wanted to make about my recent break was that I was presented with uninterrupted time to read some of those books that had long been causing me guilt in that growing pile that I had always been meaning to read. The absolute best book I have devoured in ages was *Drive* by Daniel Pink who just happens to be a headline keynote speaker for the annual ACEL conference, which will be held in October of this year. This New York Times bestseller is a

fascinating and very convincing read. Pink persuasively and cleverly provides a compelling evidence-base for what most of us intuitively knew about leading others but which had become somewhat unfashionable in recent times. This book builds on neuroscience, psychology and biology to demonstrate that the power of intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic inducements is the basis to high performing work environments. In this book Pink reminds us that people are driven by a deeply human need to make a difference and to do that we all need to feel in control to be able to direct our own lives so that we can better ourselves and those with whom we interact.

Unfortunately space does not permit me to highlight all of the incredibly important elements of motivation and work impact that this book so brilliantly explains. I do implore you however, to see if you can get your way to Brisbane for this rare opportunity to hear one of the world's most acknowledged and accomplished thinkers. Pink leads an all-star cast of high profile, cutting edge speakers who will undoubtedly make this the equal of any ACEL conference that we've ever produced. This three-day event is a must-attend for everyone involved in leadership in the educational sector. From top-tier leaders to teachers and administrators, this conference speaks to all who will play a role in shaping the future of their organisations, schools and the wider community.

Featuring high quality speakers and dynamic, engaging forums designed to deliver practical theory from real life case studies, 'An Inquiry Mindset' is the inclusive event for leaders at all levels and regions across the Asia-Pacific. Along with Daniel Pink the conference will also feature Reverend Tim Costello who is one of Australia's most sought after public speakers. Reverend Costello has written several books including *Streets of Hope: Finding God in St Kilda*; *Tips from a Travelling Soul Searcher*; *Wanna Bet? Winners and Losers in Gambling's Luck Myth* (which was co-written with Royce Millar). The conference will also showcase the work of Lee Crockett who is an international authority on teaching students the skills they need to acquire to succeed in the 21st century. Lee is the author of *Understanding the Digital Generation*; *The Digital Diet*; *Living on the Future Edge*; *Teaching for Tomorrow*; *Literacy is Not Enough*; and *Teaching the Digital Generation*.

I look forward to seeing you there.



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