

LEADERSHIP MATTERS

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Perspective is not a dirty word

For some reason it has never sat well with me when I am talking about what people take from my keynotes to suggest that perspective is a likely outcome.

I hear it often enough from audiences but I certainly never use the word myself. If people reflect upon their life, be it where they currently are or their journey to date and if they feel they could do more, try harder or achieve more with less - that is a personal reflection.

For a period, each time I would leave the orphanages at Baan Tharn Namchai, I would walk away feeling quite heavy in knowing there was a need to do more and that I should be working harder to improve the lives of the kids.

I indeed was taking perspective on what they were achieving or more importantly the smiles on their faces whilst they achieved the many wonderful things that they do. Without so much as feeling sorry for the kids, I was just getting some perspective.

The funny thing though with perspective is that you can keep changing your views by what you are comparing your situation too. There is a saying that kind of fits well, "I cried because I had no shoes, until I met a man who had no feet". That's perspective in a nutshell.

So I met some kids a couple of days ago who metaphorically speaking had no shoes, feet or legs for that matter. To the point where I would have met more of them, but last year seven of them died through lack of affordable medication.

Their deaths were preventable.

To call Baan Tharn Namchai in Khao Lak where we have built the homes for the kids 'orphanages' is almost to do them a disservice. They are big beautiful homes filled with well fed, happy kids who play each afternoon when they come home from school.

What I saw a couple of days ago is what I guess most people would consider an 'orphanage' might look like. The look of the orphanage and the kids is one of tiredness and having come out the other side of a pretty hard battle, that's because every day for them is a battle. Their director, founder and sole income generator has terminal cancer and each day is a battle for her.

The smiles of the kids living in this orphanage in the Yasothon Province are equally as beautiful as those of ours living in Baan Tharn Namchai. They are just innocent kids who have found themselves in a pretty horrible situation, through no fault of their own.

The kids at Yasothon, don't even have their own clothes. At the end of the school year

they take their one set of clothes and shoes, they are washed and put into a plastic bag for someone younger. On a very basic level the kids are stripped of their own clothes, they don't even own them. How often can we not find the clothes we are looking for because they are hidden amongst all the others we don't wear, or is that just me?

I am not suggesting we are not entitled to the life we lead or the comforts that come with it - to get what we have, we have too work hard and there is a level of entitlement. I certainly enjoy the finer things

that life has to offer that is for sure.

But the bed is softer, food more delicious and holidays that much more enjoyable when taken with a slice of perspective.

So I have come to accept that perspective is not a bad word, it doesn't have to sound offensive or arrogant, when used appropriately is it quite the stimulant. When was the last time you got a decent serve of perspective - watch out though it can have some unexpected side effects.

"To avoid criticism do nothing, say nothing, be nothing."

Elbert Hubbard

HANDS UPDATE

There is a great deal happening on the Hands front. In a little over six weeks time we will gather for our second night of inspiration at the Sydney Cricket Ground, Steve Waugh room on the 27th of May. On the back of the success of last year, the boys have pulled together what will surely be another brilliant night. Not one to be big on auctions at charity dinners, this time I am excited. It is going to be an auction filled with experiences that you can't buy off the shelf.

One of the things that we have recently done is create a Ning community.

For those who have no idea what that is, don't worry neither did I until a few weeks ago. But I have since embraced it. I describe it as a mix between Facebook and our Hands Website.

It allows two way communication and posting of material. If you would like to contribute to the discussion we are having, jump onto the Hands Ning and have a look, we welcome your contributions.