

She Helps Top Corporate Executives Lead With The Best Of Their Hearts And Minds

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Love is so powerful. As Mahatma Gandhi once said, “Where there is love there is life.”

For Annie Perrin who has spent her career giving senior executives myriad tools to bolster their leadership skills, the idea of sharing the importance of love and compassion seemed to be off limits in the corporate realm. “Most people would agree that we need more love. It’s how we thrive,” says Perrin. “And yet, throughout my career in leadership development it was frequently the four-letter word I was told I could not say. Not in the corporate environment.”



Annie Perrin | *Michael Weinstein*

According to a study cited in the *Administrative Science Quarterly*, people who feel a sense of love (as in connection and compassion) at work, the better they perform. As Perrin points out we operate in rigid “either or” paradigms like “we can be loving and compassionate” or “we can be hard driving and make profits.” However, she says, “never the twain shall meet.” Perrin saw this narrow worldview as outdated. “It’s certainly not one that is going to support us in solving complex problems.”

Perrin had been a partner at a leadership development firm. But much changed when she entered a two-year program in inter-spiritual studies. When the pandemic hit she agreed to take a lay off and was motivated to explore further. “I figured the entire world was stopping, changing or disrupted and it felt like a good time to reevaluate my life which is what I did,” she says.

Perrin went on to study spiritual intelligence, an offshoot of emotional intelligence and became a certified spiritual intelligence coach. She was particularly struck by her teacher, author Cindy Wigglesworth, and how Wigglesworth described “love.”

“She said, ‘think of a bird. The two wings are wisdom and compassion. Love always requires both and you cannot separate them,’ says Perrin. “Wisdom without compassion can be harsh, even cruel. Compassion

without wisdom can be without boundaries and co-dependent. This is why they go together and are interdependent.”

Ever inspired, to “Imagine, create and dream” Perrin was devoted to integrating both the head (wisdom) with the heart (compassion) in her work with executives. “In business we tend to over value the head, like data, information and knowledge over the heart, which includes empathy and compassion,” says Perrin.

Buoyed by this desire to merge these values so they harmoniously coexist Perrin was devoted to integrate them into the equation in a way that felt accessible to corporate leaders. To that end she created a [multi-media course for executives](#) at top companies.

“If ever there was a time when we were acutely aware of our interconnectedness it was during the early stages of the Pandemic,” says Perrin. “From my perspective we need leaders who are wise and compassionate, bringing the best of their minds and hearts to the table to generate solutions that take humanity and the greatest good into account.”

Incorporating video, live and virtual events, music, guided practices and printed resources, executives learn how to deal with stress and understand their limitations. They also get tools on how to acknowledge difficulty as necessary to change. “We teach leaders how to process and acknowledge loss without trying to skip over it or rush in to “fix,” says Perrin. “This enables a rare opportunity to grow and learn, even to transform ourselves through challenge and adversity.”

Also, Perrin discovered that this humanity-centered practice has transformed her own business. “The work began to flow in. There was an ease to it and a lot of joy and creativity,” she says.

Focusing on leadership with wisdom and compassion has been embraced by corporate leaders who have taken the course. Especially since there are practical techniques. They report that they are calmer and happier as a result.

Perrin remains emboldened by her work that bridges two worlds that don’t typically go together: business and spirituality. “Rather than being religious or dogmatic, it’s more about connecting people deeply to themselves,” she says. “So they can lead from the best of their hearts and minds.”

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