

WHAT ARE YOU FEELING? EXPRESS YOUR V.O.I.C.E.



BY MIKE LIPKIN



What are you feeling? This is such a simple question to ask but such a hard question to answer. When I first read it in a recent article by McKinsey & Company, I struggled to answer it. The truth is that I feel so many things, I don't exactly know what to feel. I'm excited. I'm anxious. I'm grateful. I'm hopeful. I'm impatient. I'm frustrated. I'm fulfilled. I'm tired. I'm energized. I'm encouraged. I'm doubtful. My world changes so fast that my answer changes literally by the hour.

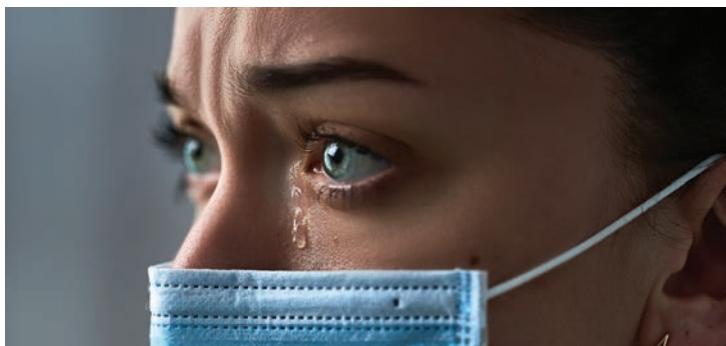
Sound familiar? What are you feeling right now? Hey, I'll bet your responses will be similar to mine. I'll also bet that they change just as fast. That's why I now keep asking the question both of myself and the people around me. If I know what I'm feeling, I know what's driving my thinking in that moment. Feeling comes first, thoughts follow. And if I know what others are feeling, I can connect with them in the most personal way.

Feeling is such an encompassing term. It's much more than an emotional response. It's a belief, especially a vague or irrational one. It's a visceral awareness of one's situation. It's an instinctive opinion about something. It's a specific state of being. It's a prevailing spirit of time and place.

If you can tap into a person's or a community's feeling, you can impact them at a meaningful level. If you don't, you'll just bounce off them. You'll reveal your ignorance or insensitivity to what matters most to them.

As we move towards the end of 2021, there are three forces shaping what we feel right now. They relate to **Grief** for the past, **Reflection** on the present and **Purpose** of the future:





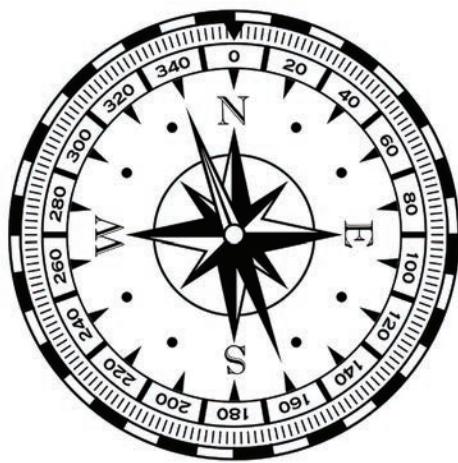
1. Grief

We are all mourning the loss of something dear to us. Covid has robbed us of our routines, rhythms and rituals. It has taken away our sense of safety, shrunk our social circles, minimized our mobility and complexified our occupations. We're exhausted from the struggle and anxious about what comes next. Harry Levinson, the renowned psychologist, famously said, "all change is loss and loss must be mourned."



2. Reflection

We are re-examining the way we live. We're questioning how we make a living. We're making new choices about our future. According to the Deloitte 2021 Global Human Capital Trends Special Report, 40% of the global workforce is considering leaving their employer this year. A record number have already quit their jobs. Flexibility is now the fastest rising job priority in the US, according to a poll of 5000 LinkedIn members. More than half of all workers want their next job to be self-employed. Adam Grant, the author and psychologist, states, "people want the freedom to decide where they work. But they also want the freedom to decide who they work with, what they work on and when they work."



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3. Purpose

We're reinventing ourselves and reimagining our vision of what we can be. We're searching for meaning. We're seeking ways to contribute. We're reconnecting with our communities. We're speaking out about societal challenges. We're supporting organizations that demonstrate their commitment to the common good - both as workers and consumers. We're expecting more from our leaders and the examples they serve. Richard Boyatzis, Professor of Psychology at Case Western Reserve University, states that a shared vision or shared sense of purpose is the strongest predictor of organizational-leadership effectiveness, engagement, organisational citizenship and even product innovation.

The next year will be the most productive one of your career if you harness these three forces to your will. You simply need to express your V.O.I.C.E.

V.O.I.C.E.

Vision

Distill your *Vision* of who you want to be by December 31 2022.

Openness

Cultivate your *Openness* to new people, ideas and possibilities.

Inclusion

Champion *Inclusion*.

Courage

Summon your *Courage* to do what you've never done before.

Energy

Nurture your *Energy* so you can activate others.

Distill your *Vision* of who you want to be by December 31 2022.

Define your identity and your role. Declare your goals. Determine the perception that you want others

to have of you. I want to be The Potentiator – someone who creates breakthroughs with others that enables them to achieve their dream. I want to sell 100 000 copies of my new book, The Potentiator and deliver 120 keynotes – in-person or virtual. I want people to see me as their talisman – someone who brings them success, happiness and fulfilment. What's your Vision?

Cultivate your *Openness* to new people, ideas and possibilities.

As Jeff Bezos says, it's always Day One. See the world through fresh eyes and you'll see things hidden from yesterday's perspective. Openness is like a magnet – it attracts knowledge, opportunities and people to you. See everything and everyone as a source of growth. When the student is ready, the teachers appear. Confront your biases and consciously blow them away. Share your evolution and epiphanies with others. That's how you open them up to their own transformation.

Champion *Inclusion*.

Don't call people out. Call people in. Empower them with your commitment to their success. Make it easy for them to say or do things that they never would have before. Establish a psychological safety zone around you. Be a mentor or a sponsor to the people for whom you can make the biggest difference. Model the mindset and behaviours that encourage equity – one day, one person, one act at a time. Form allyships – you can support marginalized groups without being a member of them. Do your homework – find out where you're needed most.

Summon your *Courage* to do what you've never done before.

Courage is simply the ability to do something that frightens you. It means taking on the blocker, bogeyman or bully that stands between you and your Vision. It could be an internal doubt that you need to conquer, or it could be an external obstacle that you need to surmount. Either way, it means coming face to face with your fear so you can act. This is the



hard, inescapable work that is required to win. On the other hand, the moment you act, you begin to liberate yourself from your fear. You build momentum and muscle. Begin now. The way to get ready is to do something before you're ready. Push your inner coward past its breaking point.

Nurture your *Energy* so you can activate others.

As people become more fatigued by the never-ending pandemic, economic uncertainty, cataclysmic change, and the sheer everyday grind, they crave infusions of hope and inspiration. They want to be renewed and reinvigorated. They need meaningful human interactions. They depend on the precious few who can motivate the many. These are the Keepers of The Flame who burn bright but don't burn out. They are zealous about their mental, physical, emotional, social and financial wellbeing. They take care of themselves so they can take care of others. Become one of them. Fuel your fire so you can fire up your stakeholders – whatever it takes.

Vision. Openness. Inclusion. Courage. Energy. Find your own way to express your V.O.I.C.E. so you can thrive on the next normal. This is Mike Lipkin and I am Your Potentiator. Now pay it forward.

The Keepers of The Flame who burn bright but don't burn out.

