

How do we hold onto our new-found freedom in the new normal?



LEARNING
LAB
CONVERSATIONS

Alison Strasser in conversation with Virginia Mansell

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stephensonmansell
the art of leadership



A few tips to guide our session:

- Please keep your microphone on mute until you are in the breakout rooms
- We encourage you to share questions and comments in the chat function
- Please use the 'raise hand' reaction icon if you would like to make comment or question during the group discussion

Learning to know anxiety is an adventure which every man has to affront if he would not go to perdition either by not having known anxiety or by sinking under it He therefore who has learned rightly to be in anxiety has learned the most important thing.

–Søren Kierkegaard 1844

Uncertainty

- “The mistake is thinking that there can be an antidote to the uncertainty.”
— David Levithan, *The Lover's Dictionary*
- “As far as the laws of mathematics refer to reality, they are not certain; and as far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality.”
— Albert Einstein
- Creating certainty, creates more uncertainty

Liminal Space

- the in
between –
the threshold
space

- The ‘threshold’ space where the person is disclaiming his own self where he is dispossessed by what he had
- The individual confronts 3 stages of
 - *Uncertainty or the ambiguous state*
 - *The possibility to adapt to new norms, rules and values*
 - *Pre-integration*
- Life, at its best, is a flowing, changing process in which nothing is fixed (Carl Rogers)

Possibility

- “The greatest danger is not to take the risk.”

- *And what wine is so sparkling, what so fragrant, what so intoxicating, as possibility!”*

Kierkegaard

Courage

"Courage is the self-affirmation of being in spite of the fact of nonbeing. It is the act of the individual self in taking the anxiety of nonbeing upon itself by affirming itself either as part of an embracing whole or in its individual selfhood."

(Tillich, 1952, p. 155)

Future Directed

- Only through the 'leap' is the world disclosed in new and unexpected ways
- Life must be understood backward. But then one forgets the other principle, that it must be lived forward, to be understood backwards again
- We are primarily future directed, meaning that we do most things with a purpose, knowing at some level that everything comes to an end

Freedom

- “We must act out passion before we can feel it.” “Man is not the sum of what he has already, but rather the sum of what he does not yet have, of what he could have.” (Sartre)
- “Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself.”
- “Life has no meaning a priori... It is up to you to give it a meaning, and value is nothing but the meaning that you choose.”

Discussion Questions:

- What can anxiety reveal to us if we see it as a friend and not an enemy?
- How has our experience of being with COVID changed us?
- What meanings are you taking out of this experience?
- What learnings are you taking into your work and home life?
- Are you aware of changes in your relationships and how do you hope to build on this?