



# A scent of the leadership of tomorrow

By **Tonja Blatnik**

*What Professor Lucija Mulej Mlakar and Perry Timms, two exceptional minds, definitely share is combining hard-core science with subtle spiritual and subconscious concepts. Professor Lucija Mlakar is an anthropologist, sociologist, writer and lecturer, and innovator of human capital; her passion is vivid and full of insights for the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. Perry Timms, who was just recently nominated for the most influential HR thinker in 2018, founded his own enterprise, PTHR UK, in 2012, aiming to transform learning and work by bringing the soul back into our working lives.*

**Q The majority of your work is consulting, lecturing and authoring; none of which seem like an ordinary job, yet the majority of your clients still come from companies, where 9 to 5 jobs are still the rule? What does the future of work mean for jobs, skills, and wages?**

**Lucija:** Yes, that is a question opening firstly the mirror we are not all ready to look into. Namely, what does a job actually mean? Is it a jail that your boss/company puts you in? Or is it an inner and outer journey, where you share your ideas, omnipotently acknowledged as a humble desire, that we all want to feel good. The future of work is going to be very spiritual. The skill of linking intelligence, rational, emotional, spiritual and physical is knowledge needed

in the future. In Budnjani 4Q connectivity intelligences model, I suggest the business anthropology of invisible, tacit and tangible: I link intuition and deeper insights, and understand that passion is the way. But, of course, passions have many colours as well as names. Not all of us are able to channel "white" passions and translate vibrations into words, and words into action! Hidden agendas, jealousy, hate and anger abide in many organisational cultures. What actually are companies? The sum of the people, of their endeavours, energy, power and vision. And what do we sell, no matter the field? Their endeavour, energy, power and vision. Knowledge and skills are, of course, basics. If we jail people, we block their creative potential and, at the moment, we have a great crisis. Not just in meaning, politics and values, but work in general. Wages? In accordance with merit, credit and compassion! Society, having to sense those who suffer health issues or poverty, is out of equilibrium. And this is where we are!

**Perry:** The "fixed" hours of work increasingly baffles me but it is linked to three things: (a) school timings; (b) long-standing habit and (c) supposed retail hours. Only (a) really has little chance of change, but the more widespread adoption of pre- and after-school clubs; people working from home or not fixed to an office-based working process, and with retail now largely online and extended beyond 9 to 5.30, we really have little excuse.

So, it's habits that are holding us back in my view. We SHOULD work when we have the energy for it. That's not to say people can just slack off when they feel a little tired. I mean people work out when they're at their best. They then "do" their work when they're optimal and then work out how to rest, recharge and then go again.

This might sound too complex but hours wasted in stressful commuting traffic and overcrowded public transport is more ludicrous than no fixed working times to start and finish work.

**Q "If we design work better, then people would be happier about their work and be able to live more fulfilling lives," is one of your beliefs, Perry. What is "wrong" with the existing models?**

**Perry:** What's "wrong" with the existing models is mainly that they are mechanical (built for industry and we're a lot less industrial than we used to be); and it's built on the premise that people will get out of doing work if they can and shirk their responsibility so they need heavy-handed management. We know most of this is unnecessary and causes damage in how people approach work in knowledge and creative economies.

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Another element is how people are led. Oppression and distrust, with punitive measures is more 19<sup>th</sup> century than 21<sup>st</sup>; and yet many management and supervisory techniques are still of this nature.

Because people and their understanding of who they are; what they are capable of; what they want from their work and life is more sophisticated and clear. Yes, we are a little more materialistic but even this appears to have peaked and we're now more into the environment and restoring our planet.

We are now more sure than ever that the way we work isn't working (13% of people engaged in the most recent Gallup poll). And whilst there's no "Ctrl+Alt+Del" reboot, there's a gradual shift to employee experience and a more wellbeing oriented way of looking after your own people who, without them, there wouldn't be a business. There is no true war for talent, but there is a marketplace where more people are looking for good firms, who will nurture and respect their wishes and needs in return for loyal service (whilst it lasts).

**Q Lucija introduces the new concept Budnjani 4Q, the methodology of connecting intelligences (rational, emotional, spiritual and physical). "Leadership is about a delicate mixture of the soul and the intellect. Spirit and brains. IQ and EQ in psychometric/psychological shorthand," stresses Perry. What is your advice for leaders?**

**Lucija:** Leaders should be aware of biblical words: if you are chosen, be aware. Having power of any origin, for example, intellect or beauty, wealth or inner depth, one should always remember, the individual actually owns nothing. Leaders should be strong in spirit and be able to tap into life flow. And that is holocracy in practice.

**Perry:** Leaders should build on more intelligence than from pure intellect, the more compassion you will show to your people; the more understanding you will gain and show with people and situations; the more at peace you'll be and make better decisions. A balanced leader, demonstrating multiple intelligences, is far more endearing and inspiring than a brainy megalomaniac.

**Q Recently, Lucija published her new book, Conversations with Eros. The topic is a bit unusual for the managerial sphere. Why Eros? What does love have to do with busi-**

**ness, leadership and the pragmatic component of business life?**

**Lucija:** Everything: love is energy, energy is power and white passion is fuel to creative and noble ideas. And being fruitful in the long run is about being righteous as well.

**Perry:** So we DO need to talk about love very much so. Fear is too omnipresent in work, so to paraphrase the legendary Stevie Wonder "work really is in need of love today."

**Q In practice, Lucija, also works as a personality manager and therapist, helping leaders to be able to perceive themselves with a fresh and clear perspective. What will be the most sought after ideal in the future?**

**Lucija:** To open up in line with one's own inner understanding is a mutual journey. One can only flourish in dual/mutual consent and respect. Methods are vivid and sometimes unconventional. What managers lack is the ability to sit silently and listen to their inner voice and inner wisdom. Their minds are too alert, and souls do not whisper.

**Q Perry, your book Transformational HR, gives readers a deeper sense of understanding of how the world of work is changing. It was named one of the best new Human Resources e-books by the Book Authority, congratulations! What is the main message of the book?**

**Perry:** Thank you - the main message from this book is one of HR's calling: and the need to step out from the behind the scenes in corporate, to being more up front. From keyboards to vocals.

It talks about a range of factors that have helped HR be (unsung in many ways) heroes and brought a huge amount of decency and humanly ways to the workplace. It then explores where HR has become a little stuck: calcified by its own eagerness to serve. I finally explore how to liberate the best version of HR for the connected, uncertain and pacy era.

**Q Is there a special tip for Slovenian leaders, companies?**

**Perry:** I would say the tip to offer to Slovenian leaders and companies is to build a coalition with your people. You already have a working contractual arrangement with them, of course.

In addition to this, I'd invite those who want to, to help your company thrive in the future and they in turn have fulfilling roles and therefore lives. This requires some faith in them. So, as a leader, invite them to work on things they know would make things better in the workplace and for them, their colleagues and the organisation, and then let them get on with it. Don't interfere, guide them by all means, but let people find things they love and how they can adapt their workplace around them, It's the secret source to sustained performance in the research I've done.

**Q "We're not born into the world with limited potential. We're born to make a difference," says Perry. So, what legacy would you like to leave behind?**

**Perry:** The legacy I'd like is that people can design their working roles a lot more than they do now. Effectively, make the HR Job Design function redundant and have people craft their own "thing" based on understanding the work that needs to be done and working with others to make it so.

I THINK we can be an entrepreneurial economy but this needs a lot more wealth distribution and power dispersal BUT, we need more positive social activists, community convenors, local order creators, educators and more. Big government is failing and local is the new society. I'd like to be part of the shift towards this. I'm not anti-globalisation but I am pro-belonging and connectivity (and that's often associated with smaller entities and close communities).

**Lucija:** Never thought of this; but yes, I want to be remembered by warmth and my quest for truth.

**Q Your thoughts lift the spirits of many. What makes you smile, what energises you, what makes your heart race?**

**Perry:** What makes me smile is clever humour and sharp wordplay. What energises me is people who are coming alive in doing their work and who love learning. My heart races when I learn new things that are clearly breakthroughs and alternative views and models for doing things like work and leading others.

**Lucija:** I like authentic people, people of wisdom, humble people with great sparkles in their eyes. That really lifts me high. They say so many things without words, titles, and accomplishments... They just are, channelling the good of the worlds.... ◀



Perry Timms