



Crisp Video



Great Leaders Live Like Drug Addicts: 4 Ways to Lead through Crisis

SPEAKER: MICHAEL BRODY-WAITE

Michael Brody-Waite is a recovering addict, 3x CEO, TEDx Speaker, Inc. 500 Founder, and he's on a mission to **revolutionize the rules of leadership**. His TEDx Talk, Great Leaders Do What Drug Addicts Do, has been viewed over 1,500,000 times in over 25 countries and provides insight into his journey from near homelessness and addiction to successful entrepreneurship.

WORKSHOP NOTES

MBW's dad was an attorney and an alcoholic. He came home one night after drinking at a bar, picked up 6-month old MBW from his crib, and dropped him. At that moment he said to himself, "I can either be a drunk or a dad, not both."

MBW himself was an addict — ages 18-23 were really bad. Now he's a CEO and speaker with a focus on how to lead like a drug addict. MBW will show you how to apply systems that help addicts in recovery help business owners take back 500 hours of their time.

MBW asks his audiences to stand up, then sit down if you have (in the last 30 days):

- Said yes to something you could have/wanted to say no to
- Hid a weakness
- Avoided a difficult conversation
- Held back your unique perspective out of fear

In groups of 20, 200, and 2000 — MBW has never seen someone standing after this exercise.

MBW clarifies that a "mask" is not a physical mask, but rather a philosophical one that people use to keep themselves from looking weak. In this intervention, MBD will show you how to lead like your life depends on it.

There are 4 masks that hold people and companies (both big and small):

1. Saying yes when you could say no

- Examples: taking on a customer that you know will be a bad fit but you feel like you need a meeting, spending time in meetings that you don't want/need to be in.
- Workers spend 31 hours each month in unnecessary meetings

2. Hiding weaknesses

- Example: MBW spending 22 hours searching for and testing different microsoft excel features instead of spending 10 minutes with a team member who could have walked him through how to solve the problem he was facing
- Spending hours trying to solve a problem on your own instead of minutes/seconds asking someone for help

3. Avoiding difficult conversations

- Number one mask
- 70% of employees are avoiding difficult conversations with their vendors or employers - worried about hurting feelings
- Performance management is the number one way people avoid difficult conversations. Number 2 is customer negotiations.

4. Holding back your unique perspective out of fear

- We're taught to be followers, not leaders. Not how being your true self will make you a great leader.
- People at the top do all the talking. When your boss or your boss's boss is in the room and you don't agree with them or have something to say, you hold back.
- \$7500 is what it costs a company each time an employee holds back from voicing their unique perspective because a blind spot in a plan does not get caught and innovation does not get unlocked.

How understanding and removing these masks can impact your organization:

- We're taught to be followers, not leaders – not how being your true self will make you a great leader.
- People at the top do all the talking. When your boss or your boss's boss is in the room and you don't agree with them or have something to say, you hold back.
- \$7,500 is what it costs a company each time an employee holds back from voicing their unique perspective because a blind spot in a plan does not get caught and innovation does not get unlocked.
- 90% of leaders wear a mask at work.
- The most scarce resource is time – a largely unmanaged resource. Instead of hiring another employee, unlock an additional 25% of your existing employees' time.

Take the assessment to determine your mask at whatsmymask.com. MBW recommends taking the assessment and sharing results with your team. Be vulnerable and authentic. Take

ownership of it.

We're addicted to masks, and we wear them against our wills. Diagnosis without action for treatment is nearly useless. The first step is to acknowledge and accept your mask.

Then, take action to fix it.

3 principles to live mask free:

1. Practice rigorous authenticity (no matter the price or cost). Connect with other people.
2. Surrender the outcome. Focusing on things you can't control keeps you from being impacted on the things you can control. Reclaim energy.
3. Do uncomfortable work. More than just hard and smart work, the sensation in your body that deters you from taking action that is beneficial to you and others – grow.

MBW discusses how he used these practices to elevate his professional career from working at a CD store, to working for Dell, being promoted 8 times in 8 years as a recovering drug addict with no college degree. Then he took on a ton of risk and bootstrapped his own company.

That company was about to sign their biggest client ever (a hospital group), but was under a contractual obligation to let them know there was an error in their software – and while it didn't impact all their hospitals or patients, it just impacted one patient.

MBW's partner said, "Don't tell them. They'll get mad and won't sign the contract."

MBW said, "No, we have to."

He called up the contact, told him, and he laughed saying, "When software like this has an error, we're used to it impacting 20,000 patient records, not one. Of course we're gonna sign with you. I'm so impressed that you told me the truth. Looking forward to working with you."