

A large, thick, rainbow-colored arc that starts at the top left, curves around the top and right, and ends at the bottom right, framing the title text.

Everyone Included

Improve belonging, diversity
and inclusion in your team

Helen May

Praise for *Everyone Included*

‘Driven by her clear enthusiasm, informed by her own experiences and the conviction that no-one should have to leave their identity at the door on their way into work, Helen’s book is a lively and accessible guide to both the theory and the practice of introducing belonging to the workplace as the next step on from traditional D&I initiatives. Free of headache-inducing management-consultancy buzzwords, it steers the reader through the process from initial board presentations to the granular details of drafting job descriptions to attract a genuinely diverse talent pool.’

*David Whincup, Partner, Head of Labor and Employment Practice,
Squire Patton Boggs (UK) LLP*

‘The aim of nurturing genuine diversity and inclusion in the workplace is perhaps the number one challenge for organisational leaders in the 21st century. *Everyone Included* is an invaluable guide to why this agenda matters and offers a wealth of practical advice to those trying to deliver it in the real world.’

*Paul Jenkins, Chief Executive, The Tavistock and Portman
NHS Foundation Trust*

‘Building a culture of belonging can help transform organisations. This book is a straightforward, practical guide for how you can create a culture of belonging in your organisation.’

Jig Ramji, Group Head of Talent, London Stock Exchange Group

‘Written in Helen’s inimitable no-nonsense style, this inspirational guide cuts through the jargon, and challenges traditional mindsets to think beyond inclusion for some to belonging for all, which is what the world needs right now.’

Karen Mosely, Managing Director, HLM Architects

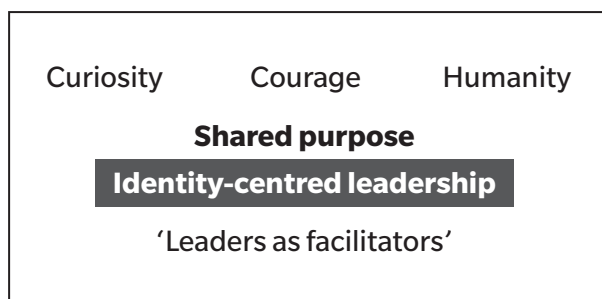
‘This book is a roller coaster ride that is definitely worth any discomfort you may feel as you allow it to disrupt traditional views of what it means to properly belong. Good leaders will like it. Great leaders will inevitably feel compelled to act on Helen’s ground-breaking straight thinking on what it means to be fully human at work.’

*Julie Stokes OBE, Executive Coach and
Consultant Clinical Psychologist, The Preston Associates*

‘Helen May has a remarkable ability to synthesize complex and uncomfortable concepts in a way that’s encouraging and inspiring. *Everyone Included* is a must-read for all genuinely engaged and inclusive leaders.’

*Shannon Cassidy, Founder and CEO, Bridge Between, Inc.; Podcast Host;
author Grounded in Gratitude and V.I.B.E.*

Figure 2.4 Identity-centred leadership: ‘Leaders as facilitators’



Curiosity

Curiosity is a core aspect of being human and is, in fact, one of the oldest cognitive pathways we have. As explained earlier, our primitive instinct to be curious is often stifled by the corporate environment and discouraged where there is strict hierarchy or siloed teams. Within the organisation-community, where effort is made for these barriers to be lifted, the identity-centred leader should develop a curious mindset to leverage team relationships, drive motivation, foster innovation and role model the behaviours to encourage team members to do the same.

Plato said, ‘Learning is, by nature, curiosity.’ The most successful leaders are those who never stop learning and, as a result, are able to make new connections between people and things. A curious mindset where a leader is constantly looking for new information and reframing what already exists means they can truly embrace the recurring disruption within which organisations today must constantly re-invent or die. Being curious has to be done authentically, free of typical ‘leadership development’ frameworks. At times, it may look chaotic, slightly maverick and eccentric. But then, isn’t that how the best leaders and pioneers tend to be?

Being curious helps a leader to demonstrate empathy and develop understanding of each of the team members. Getting to know each individual really well fosters trust and a sense of belonging. In addition, this knowledge helps the leader to leverage individual talent by tapping into specific strengths and helping each team member to develop and grow in the direction that they choose. Giving regular time to ask questions and listen to each team member also ensures that the leader is able to monitor well-being and wellness. The team members will feel valued and supported, a sense of deep belonging within the team ‘family’.

Teams led by leaders who have a curious mindset and encourage the same in others tend to be motivated, energised and feel a binding sense of purpose. Teams like this are an unstoppable force. They constantly ask, ‘Why?’ or, ‘How can we do this better?’ They never give up, but they are more than happy to

change direction. They aren't afraid to say, 'I don't know,' but they will always put energy behind finding out. They challenge outside and inside the team, engaging in healthy conflict within problem solving that serves to deepen the connections between team members. They move forward with purpose. They over-achieve. They innovate. They have fun. And they all behave like individual human beings, not employees conforming to a prescribed set of behaviours.

How are you curious?

Five types of curiosity

Todd B. Kashdan and his colleagues at George Mason University have developed a five-dimensional model of curiosity along with a questionnaire that measures each of the dimensions:

- 1 *Deprivation sensitivity*: those who recognise a gap in their knowledge and feel compelled to fill it.
- 2 *Joyous exploration*: those who have a constant fascination with the world around them and the hunger to learn about it.
- 3 *Social curiosity*: talking, listening, observing, being interested in and asking questions about others in order to understand why they think, feel or do the things they do.
- 4 *Stress tolerance*: a willingness to adapt to or embrace the anxiety that comes with trying out new things or taking risks.
- 5 *Thrill seeking*: taking risks in novel experiences in order to create thorough understanding of and reinterpretation of complex problems.

Use this scale to indicate the degree to which the following statements describe you:

- 1 Does not describe me at all.
- 2 Very slightly describes me.
- 3 Somewhat describes me.
- 4 Neutral.
- 5 Generally describes me.
- 6 Mostly describes me.
- 7 Completely describes me.

Deprivation sensitivity

Thinking about solutions to different conceptual problems can keep me awake at night	
I can spend hours on a single problem because I just can't rest without knowing the answer	
I feel frustrated if I can't figure out the solution to a problem, so I work even harder to solve it	
I work relentlessly at problems that I feel must be solved	
It frustrates me to not have all the information I need	
Total	

Joyous exploration

I view challenging situations as an opportunity to grow and learn	
I am always looking for experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world	
I seek out situations where it is likely that I will have to think in depth about something	
I enjoy learning about subjects that are unfamiliar to me	
I find it fascinating to learn new information	
Total	

Social curiosity

I like to learn about the habits of others	
I like finding out why people behave the way they do	
When other people are having a conversation, I like to find out what it's about	
When around other people, I like listening to their conversations	
When people argue, I like to know what is going on	
Total	

Stress tolerance

The smallest doubt can stop me from seeking out new experiences	
I cannot handle stress that comes from entering uncertain situations	
I find it hard to explore new places when I lack confidence in my abilities	
I cannot function well if I am unsure whether a new experience is safe	
It is difficult to concentrate when there is a possibility that I will be taken by surprise	
Total	

Thrill seeking

The anxiety of doing something new makes me feel excited and alive	
Risk taking is exciting to me	
When I have free time, I want to do things that are a little scary	
Creating an adventure as I go is much more appealing than a planned adventure	
I prefer friends who are excitingly unpredictable	
Total	

Scoring: Add up your score for each dimension, reverse scoring for stress tolerance (e.g. 'Does not describe me at all' scores 7, 'Completely describes me' scores 1)

Interpretation (calculated using a US national representative sample)

Deprivation sensitivity	Joyous exploration	Social curiosity	Stress tolerance	Thrill seeking
Low: <3.7 Med: ≥ 4.9 High: >6.0	Low: <4.1 Med: ≥ 5.2 High: >6.3	Low: <3.0 Med: ≥ 4.4 High: >5.8	Low: <3.1 Med: ≥ 4.4 High: >5.8	Low: <2.6 Med: ≥ 3.9 High: >5.2

What do your results mean?

We have explored the importance of curiosity as a core attribute of the identity-centred leader. You should consider the implications of your scores with regard to:

- What aspects of curiosity do I role model to the team?
- Which aspects am I least likely to role model?
- What are the implications?

Examples:

- If you score high on deprivation sensitivity, how does this impact the team? The upside is that the team can rely on you to solve problems on their behalf, but could you potentially prevent them from solving problems?
- If you score high on joyous exploration, do you see this energy reflected in your team? If not, how could you harness this?
- If you score low on social curiosity, how can you increase this to ensure you create the psychological safety for others to do the same as well as to demonstrate curiosity in getting to know each of your team members?
- If your stress tolerance is low, could this impact how empowered your team members feel? Could they be mirroring your risk aversion?
- If your thrill-seeking score is high, how can you use this to encourage others to take risks, but ensure that it remains within reasonable parameters?

Courage

Courage is demonstrated when a leader consciously decides on an action that has never been tried before, which may contradict popular opinion, disregard an established process or method or perhaps call out the behaviour of others that conflicts with organisational or personal leadership values, because they believe it is the 'right' thing to do. They are comfortable with being uncomfortable and they are not afraid to show vulnerability, owning their mistakes or weaknesses. When a leader consistently acts with courage, they trust in and develop the trust of those around them.

Courageous leaders tend to engender trust in those around them and inspire employees to go above and beyond in their efforts. Acting with courage allows leaders to experiment and take risks, encouraging their teams to do the same, creating agile and innovative teams. The passion of courageous leaders creates

cohesion and energy in teams – employees feel strongly motivated and determined to work together towards performance excellence. This type of leadership creates almost a familial bond between the leader and team.

Leading with courage is a game changer for organisations wanting to create a sense of community and belonging. If leaders are afraid of speaking up and calling out what they intrinsically believe to be right or wrong, the organisation-community comes tumbling down.

It is critical that this courage is echoed by the executive team – that they are willing to hold one another accountable and call out anything that contradicts the purpose and values of the organisation. They should find opportunities to demonstrate this courage publicly – to use no-nonsense language and talk about what is important to them personally. They need to show vulnerability by expressing feelings, sharing weaknesses and sometimes saying, ‘I don’t know.’

Humanity

‘If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.’

Simon Sinek, author

Now is the right time to bring the human element back into the heart of organisations. Cut out the bureaucracy, quit hiding behind corporate speak, stop relying on processes and frameworks and start leading with humanity. Leading with humanity means leading with your heart as well as your head and putting people first, in all circumstances, without exception. Enough is enough. The management theories that gathered pace from the 1960s have led organisations to become pseudo-worlds where numbers, processes, models, frameworks, ‘paradigms’, plans and data are so entrenched that their purpose is rarely questioned and employees are fitted around these elements with everyone kidding themselves that this is the best way to create high performance. If the majority of leadership models are to be believed, leaders need only adapt their approach according to a prescribed four-box grid to lead motivated, engaged and high-performing teams. (Note: I haven’t missed the irony of the fact that I am forcefully dismissing all of these things while I am writing a book about organisations and leadership, which includes my own model! I hope it is understood that the model I propose here is to help organisations understand that it really is possible to let everybody be a self-directed individual, to create a community where everyone belongs and still succeed financially.)

Organisations are merely a group of people who (mostly) find it easy enough to be decent human beings in the external world but somehow lose the