



THE INNOVATIVE LEADER

Jael Eu

When leaders mature, the comfort zone beckons - past battles are recounted, bygone victories are lived in, and laurels are rested on.

Renewals are resisted. Rebuilding is effortful. Revivals offend the dignity and sensibilities of a staid leadership.

How do leaders remain innovative in the face of ever-changing change?

◀ **Professor Freddy Boey** is the Deputy President of National University Singapore's Innovation and Enterprise.

Overseeing the university's initiatives in areas of innovation and entrepreneurship, he believes that Singapore has the ability to systemically groom and produce more inventors.

Prof Boey pioneered the use of functional biomaterials for medical

devices in Singapore and has developed more than **120 patents under his belt**. His customizable hernia mesh has received US and China FDA approvals with US-China funding.

- ▼ **Speaking at the Eagles Leadership Convention 2021 (ELC2021)**, Prof Boey shares his journey on innovation and what it means to be an innovative leader that would help lead societies in an uncertain future.



1. Finding and asking the right questions

Innovation. Everybody wants it, but how does one get started on it and how do we really achieve it?

"I ask questions like: 'how come?', 'why?', and my two favorite words – 'why not?' The key is in finding the right question", Prof Boey shared.

"The first thing that I did when I got a secondhand car was to take everything apart... that was my journey, I've always been very curious ever since I was a kid. You need to try and eventually you'll find out what works and what doesn't.

"When you start probing, you start learning, when you start learning how and why things don't work, you inevitably end up asking the right question... If you don't try, you won't know."



◀ Prof Freddy Boey receiving the fellowship from Prof Dermot Kelleher, Principal of the Faculty of Medicine Imperial College London.

Image: Imperial College London

2. Taking calculated risks, not reckless risks

As the former Deputy President and Provost of Nanyang Technological University (2011 - 2017), Prof Boey led the university to greater heights.

“When I first started my journey of being a provost, I remembered saying that I don’t want to play the game of rankings. I’m not going to do exactly what other universities do or do it better than them. I’m going to do something different and do it better.

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“In some ways, it is a high risk. But we have to learn to take calculated risks, not reckless ones. There will always be risks. But as leaders, we have to learn how to take rational risks, not one based merely on emotions.”

Regarding taking risks based on emotion, Prof Boey shared a surprising piece of advice: do not believe in yourself.

“My first rule is: I don’t believe in myself. From an emotional

standpoint, the natural human tendency is to believe that our innovations and ideas are good. That's very dangerous.

"As a rule of thumb, I'll never put my own money into my own ideas. I'll contribute to the idea and rely on the financial support of others. Only then would I know that my innovation and idea is truly good."

3. Persevere with humility

"There is no possibility that every start-up will succeed," Prof Boey shares, "but if the entrepreneur himself goes through many failures, he will succeed one way or the other. The key is to persevere but perhaps with an idea slightly different from the first one."

Many see the end products of innovations in its full glory, but not many see the blood, sweat and tears that go into it while it is a work in progress.

"The nature of the beast of start-ups is that many will fail. Most people will tell you when they succeed, but conveniently not tell you the number of times they've failed before they succeed."

"Don't cling on to all of your ideas... if someone tells you that your idea doesn't work, it is best to be humbled and move on to another idea. Persistency comes in finding the right question. But once it is answered or if the answer is that it doesn't work, you have to move along."

Yet, there is a silver lining for innovators faced with rejection of their ideas - there are still many ideas yet to be discovered.

*Don't cling on to all of your ideas . . .
there are still many ideas yet to be discovered.*

"I personally believe that people who know how to innovate, usually have more than one good idea. Some have many ideas. While having

many ideas is good, it can also potentially be a problem. As such, we must learn to brutally reject what doesn't work and instead ask ourselves: which idea is most likely to succeed?"

4. Being a leader that creates impact with innovation

Innovation is a journey, it does not simply stop at one's creation.

The next step is creating.

"The three words that leaders find difficult to say are 'I don't know', but it is so important to acknowledge that we don't know when we don't know. It is dangerous to assume that we know everything.

"A leader also needs to have love, because without an army, you would be useless as a general. If you have an army, you have to take care of them. When you're able to bring out the strengths of each individual in working towards the goal – that is innovative leadership."



MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS



On August 27, more than 10 young leaders in the **Younger Leader Development Program (YLDP)** gathered together for their second retreat since the program's closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Supported by a whole host of mentors from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand, the team sat down for a full day hybrid online-offline session.

The day revolved around honest and authentic conversations about sexuality and identity - touching on pertinent issues in society today while being equipped with a Biblical worldview.

We would like to thank all of the donors who have contributed to YLDP. We are grateful for your generosity and kindness in helping us raise the next generation of leaders!



- ◀ Visit www.eagles.org.sg/race2022.html to learn more about the fund raising effort.

In the months of August and September, **Peter's Ponderings** continued in full swing with **"Evaluating Leaders"** and **"Leading From Being"**.

Speaking to groups of 51 and 46 on Aug 21 and Sep 25 respectively, Eagles Founder Mr Peter Chao shared his thoughts on leadership.

PETER'S PONDERINGS

— REFRAMING PERSPECTIVES —

EVALUATING LEADERS



◀ Scan or [Click Here](#) to watch

In August's "Evaluating Leaders", Peter Chao concluded the session by touching on the 'essential selves' of leaders in a time of crisis.

"It is hard to disintegrate a person because a person is made up of both head and heart. In times of crisis, a leader's heart and thinking patterns are revealed because we collapse into our essential selves.

"Our essential selves shed light on how we think and how we react... When it comes to evaluating leaders and deciding who to trust, it is only possible if a leader has a good track record."

PETER'S PONDERINGS
— REFRAMING PERSPECTIVES —

LEADING FROM BEING



◀ Scan or [Click Here](#) to watch



In September's "Leading From Being", Peter Chao expounded vulnerably on the fragility of trust.

"Trust is very fragile. Once lost, it is difficult to retrieve... yet our lives are peppered with these incidents that make us lose trust resulting in us being people who find it difficult to rest. That insecurity will describe the way we lead.

"The long and short of it is that we have to take care of ourselves - who we have become because of our past, and who we are becoming because of our existential experiences right now."

Take care of ourselves . . . who we have become, and who we are becoming.

In August, Pan Pacific Hotel Group CEO Mr Choe Peng Sum and Browzwear CEO and Co-founder Ms Sharon Lim spoke at our **NEXTimeOut Webinars** organized on August 17 and 25 respectively.



Mr Choe expounded on three important factors to inspire and rally employees towards a common cause through a crisis:

1. A resilient team is the most valuable asset in an organization. You build a resilient team by fostering trust and camaraderie. Ensuring that your employees are cared for physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially is of paramount importance.
2. Prioritize the right things instead of dogmatically doing things right. A crisis requires creative solutions, and learning to empower individuals to rise up will require the flexibility to go against the regular playbook.
3. Job fit – part of what keeps an organization vibrant and on the move is setting people up for success. Ensuring that your employees are placed in the best position to flourish will always pay dividends.

Purposeful BUSINESS

LIVE Thursday, 25 Aug, 8.30 - 9.45 pm (SGT)



In a world where scalability and profit are the sole yardsticks of business success, how does one build a business driven by purpose?

Over the course of an hour, Ms Lim shared the power of having a purpose in business, outlined the challenges that derail a purposeful business, and gave several keys to sustaining a business of such a nature.

One participant remarked, "I am grateful to Ms Lim for sharing some hard-won advice from her time in running a purposeful business. I am walking away with a greater understanding of what it means to constantly ask myself the "why" in whatever I do."

Relationships MATTER

LIVE Wednesday, 19 Oct, 8.30 - 9.45 pm (SGT)



Upcoming Webinar: **Relationships Matter** by Dr John Ng.
Register at www.nexleaders.com.



On October 24, Dr Ho Boon Tiong kicked off the very first, fully in-person **Eagles Rendezvous** session of the year.

The session, the first of four Bible study sessions on the book of Titus titled **"The Ekklesia"**, saw 16 people returning to the Eagles Center since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Dr Ho summed up the first session with a keen observation of the glorious grace of God.

"It is not about our doing or generating. It is God in Christ. Christ in us. The grace of God alone helps us to live upright and holy lives."

To register for a physical seat at our live sessions on October 8, October 15 and October 22, head to www.eagles.org.sg.





www.eagles.org.sg