



Conder & Company

*"A healthy attitude is contagious but don't wait to catch it from others. Be a carrier."*

**Tom Stoppard**



## Masterclasses

# Mental fitness in the workplace – a new era

**Covid-19 has given us an opportunity to refocus on what really matters. This includes repositioning corporate wellbeing programmes to include masterclasses for their people to increase happiness and success at work and in life, to build mental fitness and psychological assets for everyone.**

### **Don't you think it's time for a change?**

It's become fashionable to talk about wellbeing from the boardroom to management teams, yet with the focus on cost cutting, companies must take care that wellbeing does not become a tick box exercise.

#### **Responding to a new era**

As we move to the new world of work, with a combination of virtual and the office, there has never been a better time to provide education in mental fitness to help people be more successful and increase their happiness and overall wellbeing. My prediction is that the best companies to emerge during this time will be those that build capability in their leaders and people to genuinely care about their people.

## Building Psychological Assets for organisations and their people

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The pandemic has caused some people to think deeply about their lives and what is important to them. For many, keeping up the same level of focus and intensity feels very challenging and for others the inability to predict and envision their future has triggered their brain into threat mode.

**It is imperative that wellbeing is repositioned as mental fitness.**

Many employers promoting mental health and wellbeing in the workplace have successfully put in place mechanisms to support their people and embed a culture that spots the symptoms and offers support for people who are willing to come forward. The stigma has been reduced and more people share their stories about their mental health with no detrimental effect on their career progression. However, we now need to take a massive step forward in repositioning wellbeing. In such difficult times all of us can improve aspects of how we work, how we manage our emotions and how we change our perspective to gain wellbeing and happiness. It is now imperative that we eliminate the perception that this support is 'for other people and doesn't really apply to me.'

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***Many leaders are not equipped with the skills to guide and motivate teams for wellbeing in a challenging and uncertain environment.***

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We all know the phrase, "look after your people, they will be happier and perform better for themselves and you."

### Masterclasses on mental fitness in the workplace

This series of masterclasses educates leaders and their teams to help them understand and dig deeper into the human dimension of happiness, success and performance. The sessions provide an understanding of, and strategies and tools for, managing human emotions, mindsets, motivation and behaviours to achieve optimal wellbeing. They build mental fitness with practical tool and techniques, supported with stories and examples to demonstrate how to develop mental fitness.

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***We now need to take a massive step forward in repositioning wellbeing. as mental fitness. Just like physical fitness we can develop with exercises and practice.***

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***In such difficult times all of us can improve aspects of how we work, how we manage our emotions and how we change our perspective to gain wellbeing and happiness.***

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***"Now is the time to not only embrace your human capital but build and fortify your psychological assets."***  
Sue Conder

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# Building Psychological Assets for organisations and their people

Here are some highlights of what the sessions cover:

**1. KNOWING YOUR PURPOSE AND CREATING MEANING IN UNCERTAIN TIMES**

How to connect to what is important to you to enhance your motivation, fulfilment and success

**2. YOUR PERSPECTIVE HAS THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON THE QUALITY OF YOUR LIFE**

Techniques for managing your mindset and having a positive experience

**3. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IS MORE IMPORTANT NOW THAN EVER**

Harnessing your skills to manage your own emotions and forge stronger relationships

**4. ADAPTABILITY AND AGILITY WITH COGNITIVE AND EMOTIONAL FLEXIBILITY**

Strategies to respond flexibly and optimistically with your thinking and emotions

**5. EMBRACING STRONG CONNECTION AND RELATIONSHIPS FOR COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE IN HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS**

Having quality conversations for a more energised, collaborative and effective team

**6. BUILDING HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS IN A VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT WITH HIGH LEVELS OF TRUST**

*We have designed a series of six Masterclasses that address practical, positive ways to support people with their emotions, how they are thinking and behaving; that will not only help with their personal wellbeing and mental fitness but support them to enable their organisation's transition to become more agile and adaptable in response to the changing demands of their customers, suppliers and partners.*



## Why the masterclasses are so powerful.

**1. Evidence based content and highly qualified psychologists and coaches:** Our material is based on research into what makes people happy and successful in life and work. Because of our understanding of psychology, we also aim to understand people; their motivations, and how they think and behave.

**2. Seasoned business leaders and facilitators from across a broad range of business sectors:** We are good at understanding the business context and the challenges of business transformation. The masterclass facilitators have decades of practical business experience. We therefore bring stories from working with hundreds of leaders and their teams. You can have confidence that the tools and approaches when applied will make a difference.

**3. Tailored programmes to your business:** We prefer to have an exploratory conversation with one or two of your key people to ensure we appreciate the organisational context. This helps us to tailor the

*The sessions provide an understanding of, and strategies and tools for, managing human emotions, mindsets, motivation, and behaviours to achieve optimal wellbeing, performance, and success for everyone*

## Building Psychological Assets for organisations and their people

material to make it relevant to your people by providing the best stories and anecdotes to make the sessions more impactful.

**4. Tailored to different audience groups: senior teams, middle management or for all people:** To help your people engage with the content and apply it practically in their work and life we tailor our material to the needs of the audience and their priorities.

**5. Size of group can be tailored to provide different benefits:** We can deliver the session to smaller groups of up to 20 people that is highly interactive. This can typically be with teams so that participants can discuss topics and learn together to make a difference to themselves and their part of the business.

The second option is for a more 'broadcast style' model with a larger audience. Here we can give more benefit to more people and provide some interaction through, unmute, surveys and the chat function.

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**If used with 'intact' teams our sessions can be particularly helpful with enabling people to work together on common issues and challenges, establishing common language and helping them to support each other better.**

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**Attending as an intact team can be especially helpful in a distributed environment. A by-product of these sessions is nearly always stronger trust between team members. An added benefit is increased empathy, a gaining of a shared understanding of how each team member is thinking and feeling.**

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**6. Flexible duration and follow up:** The sessions are typically delivered in a one hour or 90-minute session. There is a workbook to support each session so that people can record how they will apply the tools and continue to think about using what they have learnt. This will help people to embed the tool and techniques more easily into their daily lives.

**7. Optionally, one to one or team coaching can be provided:** To continue to support the participants in between or post the sessions

Follow up team coaching can also help participant to embed the learning and share experiences and success of those undergoing a similar journey building a strong cohort of people centred leaders. It enables participants

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*The sessions are typically delivered in a one hour or 90-minute session and we are happy to discuss more tailored follow up sessions with topics identified by the participants that would help them further.*

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to test out their new repertoire of behaviours, reflect on results and learning with colleague and a facilitator and set goals for further actions. Typically, these sessions include five, two-hour sessions with 4 to 6 participants, spaced out over a 4 to 6 month period so that learning is embedded and sustain over time as new habits are built. The cohort of leaders, a community of human centred leaders going through a similar journey, using a common language and shared experiences is much more likely to create change that is lasting as leaders.

Optionally, one coaching can be provided to continue to support the participants in between or post the sessions. We also recommend peer to peer reciprocal coaching to continue to reflect and act in order to build and sustain new habits and ways of thinking. The masterclasses give participants a chance to reflect on the material and insights from 'real work' experiences related to their own experience so that they can shape different ways of thinking and behaving that will be advantageous for them.

Experimentation is encouraged in between seasons, as is focusing on a clear sense of where the leaders are heading, challenging personal narratives and stories so that they can leverage their unique combination of strengths in order to have more fun and be happier and more successful.

**8.Choice of delivery platform:** The content can be delivered face to face or in the current environment on the technology platform that makes sense for the organisation; Microsoft Teams, Zoom or other platforms that you prefer.

### We offer a range of different topics. A brief synopsis of five are presented below.

A brief synopsis of the initial 5 core programmes

#### Session 1: Finding purpose and meaning in the midst of uncertainty.

##### Why is purpose and meaning so important now?

A lot of the things that would normally give our life meaning are currently off the table, so keeping the same level of focus at work can feel intense and difficult. Many of us have lost some of our ability to control the important things around us and we can't envision the future or plan many of the things we would normally plan and this is further exacerbated with potential for job loss or delayed expected promotion.

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*This session focuses on helping you to think about how you get meaning, what drives you and why you do what you do.*

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*Research shows people function best when they have a clear sense of purpose.*

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*Many organisations have a clearly articulated purpose, but their people struggle to understand how what they do fits into this.*

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## Building Psychological Assets for organisations and their people

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In addition, working remotely can result in employees feeling demotivated from a lack of a feeling of belonging, and we know that some managers are struggling to lead distributed teams. For many people this can trigger feelings such as anxiety or demotivation, or just feeling not switched on enough to deliver the performance expected. Many are concerned that the current pressure will make it difficult to sustain their levels of motivation and performance. Even before the current crisis, the 2019 Deloitte Human Capital Trends report found that only 53 % of survey respondents felt their organisations were effective or very effective at creating meaningful work. This is a big concern because research shows people function best when they have a clear sense of purpose.

### What does this session cover?

This session focuses on helping you to think about how you get meaning, what drives you and why you do what you do. Many organisations have a clearly articulated purpose, but their people struggle to understand how what they do fits into this. As we know, what is important for one person may be completely different for another. It's not all about the big picture, significantly, it's also about understanding which of the day-to-day aspects of our lives at work and outside of work give us meaning so that we can find and cultivate these meaningful parts of our everyday life more.

The session also explores some of these aspects such as: status, power, accomplishment, relevance in what we do, contribution, the value we gain from engaging with others and learning. This mind-opening session will help leaders and their people understand what gives them meaning, what motivates them and what aspects of their feelings of being valued and motivated are disabling or exhilarating. Do they have insufficient internal motivation drivers such as intrinsically enjoying an activity versus external factors such as praise and social recognition? With a stronger sense of purpose, participants should be able to become more resilient and be more able to shape the direction of their future and positively adapt their thinking and actions in the midst of the challenges we are all facing.

## Session 2: Your perspective has a big impact on the quality of your life and performance at work

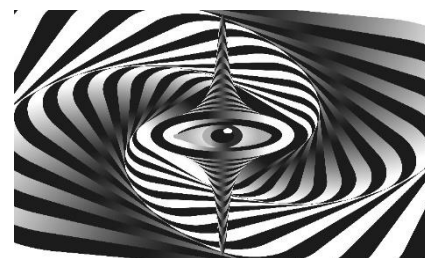
### Why the ability to choose our perspective is important.

The pandemic has exposed many workers to increased stress, balancing professional and personal demands. Many people are experiencing exhaustion and burnout from working longer hours and dealing with work challenges. Wellbeing is now a high priority for many organisations and a fundamental aspect of this is helping people with their mindset and perspective. Business psychologists, Elizabeth Tenney and Ed Diener, show that there is evidence, spanning many decades of research, that

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*We have known for many years that when employees are happy, organisations thrive. In my decades of working with businesses and as a business psychologist, I have always wondered why businesses do not provide more education on the impact of one's perspective on performance. There has never been a better time to do this.*

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*The bottom line is that what we think creates the experiences we have, so our success is much less based on external factors, it is in fact internal thoughts and beliefs that shape our reality.*

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the subjective wellbeing of workers, including life satisfaction and job satisfaction, positively correlates with the performance of workers. We have known for many years that when employees are happy, organisations thrive. In my decades of working with businesses and as a business psychologist, I have always wondered why businesses do not provide more education on the impact of one's perspective on performance. There has never been a better time to do this.

### What does this session cover?

It's actually about building our capacity for changing the way we see and look at things, and our emotional reactivity. It's not something that we do once or twice but we need to continually build our 'perspective taking' muscle and have the ability to change our perspective when it is not serving us well. The session explores how we often forget that our perspective is a choice. We cover models such as the one from Ed Diener, in which he outlines three important cognitive patterns; what we give attention to, how we interpret things, and how we remember past experiences. An important message from the session is that what we think creates the experiences we have, so our success is much less based on external factors, it is in fact internal thoughts and beliefs that shape our reality.

The session also covers topics such as: halting overthinking, not believing everything we think is true and techniques for reframing our thoughts. We also learn how to let go of judgements that jeopardise our response and develop an ability to stand outside of what is really going on and see things from a more holistic perspective. In addition, the session introduces the power of hope, gratitude and optimism.

### Session 3: Emotional intelligence matters now more than ever.

#### Why understanding and regulating our own emotions and showing empathy to others is crucial.

For decades we have known that when the brain operates in threat state, our cognitive capacity decreases. Our emotional reactions are wired for fight or flight which are often destructive rather than constructive. Although emotions are just feelings, they do drive what we do and how we act. Knowing our emotional triggers and being able to prevent adverse strong reactions is a powerful skill that can be developed. We can learn to defuse negative and unhelpful thoughts and act despite them. Sonia Lyubomirsky's research shows that we influence roughly 40% of our happiness. In the Harvard Business Review article 'What Makes a Leader?' there is research that shows when professionals who have similar technical skills and intelligence are compared, EQ accounts for 90% of what gets people promoted within an organisation. The great news is that our emotional intelligence level is not set in stone!

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*We have all heard the phrase, socially distance but don't be socially distant! It's increasingly important in a dispersed workforce to have quality conversations, conversations that make a difference to people. Trust is crucial, and there's no better way to earn and create that trust than by being a human being and showing some vulnerability.*

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## Building Psychological Assets for organisations and their people

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Leaders are also now having to work harder than ever before to guide people, motivate them, inspire them, and look out for them. We all know our emotions can hijack our ability to manage ourselves and our ability to effectively relate to others. Now more than ever, it's definitely not a soft skill, a nice to have, it's a critical skill to deliver the results we expect. It's during these times of crisis and stress that we need leaders to demonstrate their humanity. We have all heard the phrase, socially distance but don't be socially distant! It's increasingly important in a dispersed workforce to have quality conversations, conversations that make a difference to people.

### What does this session cover?

This session covers emotional management techniques such as labelling our emotions rather than pushing them away, becoming aware of our 'red button' triggers so that we can pause before having strong adverse reactions. We look at skills for self-management, how to build behaviours such as staying calm to help solve problems and managing emotions to work more effectively with others in demanding situations. Our ability to manage our emotional reactivity is an important capacity that will increasingly serve us well.

We explore how people with emotional intelligent behaviours can express themselves clearly and thus earn respect from others and create effective communication and stronger relationships. We cover empathy and how to build trust. A lot of those behaviours that foster bonding between people—mutual gaze, interpreting body language, mirroring emotions—become lost during virtual conversations. So, it's even more important to have honest conversations that are not just transactional to get the work done but build the relationship among the people involved.

**Session 4: Agility and adaptability are no longer a choice for organisations or individuals intending to survive the current crisis and flourish in the new normal.**

### Why adaptability and agility are critical with changing markets, business models, supply chains and new ways of working.

In today's environment, the ability to survive significant unforeseen and foreseen changes will be crucial for business success and even survival. This will require in people an ability and willingness to learn from experience, and then apply that learning to perform successfully under new situations. Agility is also talked about as a new, related vital mentality but is more concerned with responding quickly to changes within existing boundaries. Many organisations are planning adaptability at an organisational level but not supporting their people to be adept at changing their mindset and behaviours. Organisations cannot become adaptive without adaptive people and this capability is easily developed.

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*This session will help to build the mindsets that enhance adaptability in the way we think and help us build cognitive flexibility. It is not all about thinking though, we will cover the importance and skills needed for emotional adaptability.*

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*My hypothesis is that many organisations are planning adaptability at an organisational level but not supporting their people to be adept at changing their mindset and behaviours.*

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## What does this session cover?

This session will help to build the mindsets that help us to be more flexible in the way we think. It is not all about thinking though, we will cover the importance and skills needed for emotional adaptability. We will also address how to develop our 'tolerance of uncertainty' muscle which will be key in today's environment, as we move forward in the next few years. Adaptability is not always the right answer. Equally we can learn to be more tolerant of uncertainty and ambiguity which is a core requirement in uncertain times. It is also essential for lifetime mental wellbeing: to focus on things we can control and tolerate those we can't in order to stay at our best despite ambiguity.

We cover techniques to become more cognitively agile such as seeing the big picture and recognising multiple perspectives. We will also look at social adaptability to help teams work more collaboratively to solve more complex problems. The session will cover a number of transformative tools such as Carol Dweck's growth mindset and techniques to improve emotional flexibility and change agility including knowing when to persevere with Angela Duckworth's grit and determination model.

## Session 5: Connective intelligence for building trust and cohesion in a virtual world

### Why improving how people work together is so important in times of uncertainty and disruptive change.

The request for some people to return to offices while others are remaining remote creates an imperative for leaders to effectively lead hybrid teams. Some leaders have the limiting and incorrect belief that a team with many individuals of high performance is a high-performing team. All the research shows that this is not true and with good leadership the potential performance of a team is much greater than for a collection of individuals. Some leaders and team members believe teams are too much trouble or they fear the time, personal discomfort and personal risk that can happen in a team environment, preferring instead to lead their teams through silos. With the changed working dynamics there is a new imperative for leaders and managers to develop new skills.

High-performing teams will give organisations a lasting competitive edge. Companies who understand the principles of strong team relationships and collaboration will thrive. Leaders often say they lack the understanding of how to enable their teams to work collaboratively, many are still learning the skills to manage high-performing teams and overcome the challenges of distributed teams.

## What does this session cover?

High-performing teams don't happen by accident. We have developed an evidence-based model, **TEAMWORK®**, to provide a simple framework for

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*High-performing teams don't happen by accident. This session builds an understanding of the criteria and skills for teams and their leaders to step up to the next level.*

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*Many team leaders are still learning the skills to manage high-performing teams and overcome the challenges of scattered teams.*

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*A study from MIT Sloan has shown that "Dispersed teams can actually outperform groups that are co-located, if the right sort of collaboration is in place."*

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## Building Psychological Assets for organisations and their people

leaders and their teams. This session builds an understanding of the criteria and skills for teams and their leaders to step up to the next level. This includes additional skills for operating in a distributed environment where leadership behaviours typically need to be more deliberate so that team performance is not jeopardised. Teamwork begins by building **trust**. A vital component of developing trust is having **empathy** with other team members. A team needs to focus on a clear set of **accountabilities** which all members are committed to achieving and a clear and compelling **mission**, a reason to work together and be part of something bigger. Similarly, teams without clear, explicit **ways of working** can be influenced by unaligned assumptions that hinder effectiveness. Most management research is showing the importance of adaptability and agility to **optimise** success and given the current crisis we are in, the **relationships** aspect of team cohesion is vital. Finally, **Key Performance indicators** are the primary objective of the team, not teamwork for teamwork's sake.



### Session 6: Building high performing teams in a virtual environment with high levels of trust

Forward-thinking organisations will educate teams to mitigate possible disadvantages of hybrid and remote working. This session will cover a number of mindsets and behaviours to proactively create high performance and wellbeing in the hybrid world. Themes include, the ability to retain and rebuild strong connections while overcoming the reduction in informal networking that would normally happen by the desk or watercooler or at the beginning or end of meetings. Building trust in customers, teams and colleagues, and leveraging skills in energising and engaging others and leading change for dispersed teams are also covered. The session will look at strategies for overcoming the limitations of learning, collaboration and creativity. In addition, the need to increase visibility and one's ability to show high job performance in order to receive recognition and promotion, mitigating against, 'out of sight out of mind.' An important skills covered is to increase capability to influence and avoid being overlooked in voice and video meetings while creating increased comfort in speaking up in a virtual environment.

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*There has never been a better time to build the psychological assets in your people. My prediction is that the best companies to emerge during this time will be those that provide support to genuinely care about individuals and their individual success. Now is the time to not only embrace your human capital but build and fortify your psychological assets.*

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*A constant review of activities, questioning whether your time and energy is focused on the right things will be paramount to be successful whilst working in the hybrid environment.*

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*A recent study by Catalyst for example found evidence that suggests it's more important for women to be physically present to be heard.*

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# Building Psychological Assets for organisations and their people

## Questions to help you assess the risk to your business

1. *Are your leaders equipped with the skills and capability to care for the wellbeing of their people?*

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2. *Do your people have the skills to develop their mental fitness to thrive now and in the future?*

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3. *Are your people grappling with their wellbeing which is impacting their performance?*

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4. *Are people struggling with their sense of purpose and meaning in a fast-changing work environment?*

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5. *Are your people in need of support to change their perspective and manage their emotions in challenging times?*

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6. *Do people need to be more adaptable in response to changing demands of customers, suppliers and partners?*

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7. *Are your distributed teams having honest quality conversations that builds trust and strong relationships?*

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8. *Are your leaders having quality conversations to build motivation and success in their people?*

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9. *Are you investing in team development to drive performance to the next level?*



## About the author

Sue Conder is a former Deloitte Partner and business leader, with 25 years + in organisational change consulting and leadership development and as a business psychologist, supporting executives and their teams to embrace the people dimension of success in life and in business. She delivers webinars, masterclasses, workshops and coaching for executives and for leaders and their teams.

She is the founder of Conder & Company who believe in the power of 'company' and bring together a large network of accomplished professionals. What unites Sue and those with whom she works in partnership, is a shared philosophy on the importance of wellbeing and how individual success contributes to organisational success.

They come with years of practical business experience and with evidence-based frameworks and tools, which take into account both the complexities of business and importantly an understanding of working with people's mindsets, emotions, behaviours and motivations. This enables individuals to gain personal success and wellbeing so that they can also perform at the highest levels.

To find out more about their ethos and approach, get in touch with Sue Conder on [letstalk@conder.co](mailto:letstalk@conder.co) or visit [www.conder.co](http://www.conder.co)