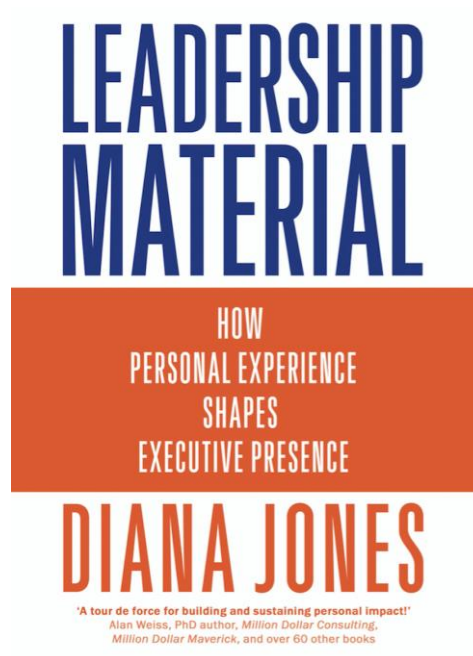


# Leadership Material

*Diana Jones talks with  
Chris Hosking and Chris Hill*



**Chris Hill:** I have been intrigued about what has been unexpected for you. What has happened in response, that you couldn't have imagined happening, or didn't imagine happening?

**Diana:** One of the things that's been unexpected, and amazing, is that the book has had a lot of interest internationally.

People have wanted to interview me about my ideas in the book: Forbes.com, CEO magazine, and the Huffington Post. Quotes of mine have been tweeted. 'Feedback is a lever for a development conversation. It's not the answer' went whizzing around the world. I never expected that. It means something to business people. What I am saying is making sense to them.

The response has given me a lot of confidence with the work I am doing and the thinking behind it. I have been invited to work with New York based executives in shifting their HQ culture. And a mum from a childcare committee wrote to say she liked what I was saying. That I have been able to hang my thinking together with my experience in a way that resonates with a lot of people truly delights me. I wish that had happened 30 years ago, but here, it has happened this year.

**Chris Hill:** As I was reading your book, I was thinking about what your parallel experiences may have been, relating to the content or the premise of the book. What has the parallel process been in the writing of it for you? Because there would be a parallel, wouldn't there?

**Diana:** There was a parallel process but not internal. The parallel process was reflected in my everyday interactions and being present in my own life. I decided that my every day interactions were going to help me as I wrote – not hinder me. And that's what happened.

I was grappling with how to describe the difficulties in letting someone know their behaviour was unacceptable. I went for a walk and bumped into one of my clients. I asked him why he found it hard. He immediately said, 'it's like crossing a line.' We talked more. The lights went on. I realized there were at least three lines we cross when we talk with someone about their default behaviour. No wonder we hesitate. Being thoughtful and purposeful is important. I went home and wrote the section 'Crossing the line.' I learned to truly value my everyday interactions and let go of thinking I had to work everything out before I wrote.

**Chris Hill:** I was imagining you writing it, and I was thinking, that's quite a lot to pull together. It is a lot to think about, and then also to be coherent, and be cohesive, and in a way that flows. I notice that it's really easy to turn the next page. The case studies are fantastic. They are potent, and they open this window into how you work, and then demonstrate, I think really clearly, what you produce. As I've been reading, I've been imagining you working, actually. Let us know about your experience of writing the book, and how fluidly it has come about.

**Diana:** There were glitches. One was the editor who 'Americanized' my book. He took out 5000 words! That was a shock as it was close to the final timeline.

A second glitch was my publisher changed my title. Their marketing team came up with 'Leadership Material.' I didn't like that at all. My first

response was I didn't think they understood what I was writing about. Then my publisher said, 'We are all standing behind you here.' That made me sit up. The new title shifted both what I was writing about and how I wrote the book. 'Leadership Material' created a far more expansive idea for me; one where I could step into and write freely. The emphasis of my writing shifted to the core of my work as sociometrist, and what I knew to be true, rather than just on the process of developing executive presence. These things touch us as glitches at the time, and then they become major positive turning points.

Other elements in the book emerged as I wrote, such as, the case studies and the practice sessions with each chapter.

Aspects of the writing were time consuming; finding relevant research and statistics, ensuring accuracy with the bibliography, gaining written permissions with the case studies. Ann Hale, Glenis Levack and Rosemary Nourse read specific chapters out loud to me and commented on how they would flow better.

**Chris Hosking:** What is it that our training does that contributes to leadership development that perhaps other methods don't?

**Diana:** Both of you know, as do I, in our hearts, that all of our development has been from our own relationships and our own experience. We're not learning skills and techniques. That our identity is shaped from own lives and relationships is not a foreign concept in Aotearoa New Zealand. Maori know who they are because of their relationships with the land, their Iwi, their ancestors and their whanau.

In leadership development, people have acted as if relating to their personal experiences is scary. Businesses have determinedly separated the personal from the professional. Yet the relationship between how we bring our personal selves alongside our professional identity is where most of the success resides.

You've got to cross that line if you want your relationships to work, and business to work, meetings and groups to be productive. There's a way of crossing that line, and to cross the line well and with good intent.

Our training has those concepts and practices embedded in it. We do identify progressive behaviour. We recognise overdeveloped coping behaviours. We do have visions of what might be different. We appreciate what standing in the shoes of another means, to look through the eyes of another. We understand what helps people to connect with one another. We understand how to participate in groups, and how to

lead groups. We understand the essential concept of leader-directed sessions and group-centred sessions, where leaders work with the group's agenda rather than their own. These qualities are core to effective leaders.

In AANZPA, we value how our personal experience shapes us. We value that there isn't one size fits all approach. We understand what it means to be isolated, and what is needed to develop mutual relationships. These are the core principles; that our lives are our development material.

**Chris Hosking:** I think that our membership will be very interested to hear how valuable you find role theory. At present a number of practitioners are reviewing the value of role theory, questioning whether it is as relevant as they once thought. I think many will share your appreciation of it as an intervention that carries people forward.

**Diana:** Role theory and role descriptions are incredibly helpful. Metaphors are universal. I found that role descriptions as opposed to giving people feedback or information about how they are, is a completely different way of thinking and has a powerful positive effect. I felt ready to write about this.

**Chris Hosking:** Your passionate encouragement and confidence that we must 'cross the line' seems to reflect your identity as a sociometrist. Sociometry guides us to recognize the life that is alive in our emotions and feelings and assists us to value this life becoming integrated into our expression moment to moment. Yet it seems anything to do with feelings or personal lives has been taboo. That if you enter that area in business, that it's all on..... people will be irrational. That's the irony.

**Diana:** There are at least two ironies. The first irony is that when leaders act from overdeveloped default behaviours, they create emotional turmoil and alienate those around them. The second irony is that Human Resource Departments want to document personal stories and information. Doing that messes up group interactions, intimacy and openness - the very things that connect people. That doesn't work. People are frightened others will use their personal information badly in gossip, or to explain behaviour. This is a sensitive area. Feelings and personal lives are essential to people's vitality yet organisationally they can be threatening.

Personal information belongs to the individual. I've liked being able to bring out these ironies in the book.

**Chris Hosking:** Your book was not written first of all for the psychodrama community but still do you have some hopes that they will still benefit from your writing? Is there something in your experience of writing that might be helpful to trainees or practitioners that could encourage them to write more about the wisdom and insights they have gleaned in their work over time?

**Diana:** Yes, I like talking about that. One big influence on me was that I'd supervised a thesis. I was reading her amazing case studies and interventions. As supervisor, my knowledge of doubling expanded. I saw that this thesis had application in therapy, in business, and with anyone working with angry or isolated people or those who have experienced painful life events. Yet the writer was shy and reluctant to complete her work so it took quite a while. It struck me how important it is to write and to write in a way people can see themselves and their lives in your writing.

Another influence on me was recognising the distinction between a text book and an anecdotal book. Mine is an anecdotal book. I am writing from my personal authority. Credibility and analytical value is illustrated by case studies and observations. Knowing this freed me up to write in the way I wanted to. I had freedom with the structure and what I wrote about. Trainees are writing anecdotally in their papers and thesis. They are writing their thinking, their interventions and the impact.

**Chris Hill:** What was the point at which you thought I'm going to write a book?

**Diana:** Two experiences come to mind. One was when I was a young professional. The Department of Internal Affairs had a community development group. Bill Buxton was the boss and he and his group were working in the community from a central government perspective. Jenny Hutt was in the group providing leadership in the community as well, and Cher Williscroft was working in the Nelson community.

I used to say to Bill, "please can you write?" I was teaching graduates at Victoria University, and I'd say to him, "can you write about what you're learning, about working in the community?" I don't think he ever did, but I just really wanted to shake something out of him in writing. He and his team knew how to make central government policy relevant in local communities through their relationships. I love reading. My thinking expands when I read.

I decided I would write a book on my work when I was in my mid 30's and then I put it on hold. My life opened up again when David and I sold

our olive farm in 2015. I asked myself, what did I want to do? I realized I wanted to write that book. I wanted to write a good book. I wanted to write a book that people loved. I wanted to write a book that stimulated people.

Chris, you asked me the benefits to the psychodrama community. I see many psychodramatists working in organizations. Not as therapists, but working in organisation and professional development. I wanted to clarify the process of learning - that learning is not *information in, knowledge out*. That learning for behaviour change is relational, and is irrational, erratic and illogical. This learning involves knowledge, making sense of our experience, together with intuition, insight, reflection, feeling and vision.

I hope my book will free people to realize they've got capacities to work relevantly in organizations. The stories reflect my methods, and what is possible.

**Chris Hosking:** Your book is an excellent example of the application of psychodrama 'in the world'. Your book impresses me in its companionable approach – the clarity of the principles and concepts which are psychodramatic clearly going hand-in-hand with the values, ambitions and structures that are imbedded in the cultures of business and executive leadership and management. I have worked in Vietnam for 20 plus years and it is only very recently the word psychodrama has been used. In previous years, it would have been a total distraction had it become the focus as we were meeting to consider leadership not psychodrama. Remaining stable on this was a challenge as I am sure has been the same for you over time.

**Diana:** Initially, I was determined not to mention the word *psychodrama*, until, I was on chapter two or chapter three, and I thought, I can't not ... that's crazy. I had a really good talk with Kevin Franklin about this. I was nervous because I thought business people might reject what I was saying.

When I accepted the new title Leadership Material, I knew I could only proceed by basing the book and my work in its real context. I wanted to have the concepts be readable to executives and I wanted psychodramatists to live with what I wrote too. That became very important to me.

If this book encourages trainees to write that would be a deeply satisfying outcome.

**Chris Hosking:** One of your hopes for our community is that your writing will enrich our understanding of the difference between therapy and organizational development. You seem very keen that our practitioners will feel encouraged to take another look at how they might better apply their training in organisations. I hear you making an invitation for us to take another look at the underlying principles as a very helpful resource to both fields - therapeutic and organisations - and that the matter of appropriate application is *always* on the table no matter what the context. Our creativity needs to be stirred which includes us generating applications as pertinent to *this* group which might be anything from using clay teapots as objects for concretisation in remote villages of Vietnam to highly detailed sociometric analyses that are presented to the senior executives of a government department.

**Diana:** I've been in lots of conversations over the years about what's therapy and what is development. My work has a therapeutic effect, but its primary purpose isn't therapeutic. The therapeutic effect comes when leaders realize either someone's standing with them as they look at something, or that others share their same fears, anxieties and experiences.

That's very powerful for anybody, but therapy, and the reason and purpose for therapy has a different orientation. My tendency is to work more in the here and now. Our focus is on how the earlier experience influences their behaviour in the here and now, and identifying the aspect, either the situation, the feelings generated, or the people involved, which triggers a 'default' (coping) response.

**Chris Hosking:** Good group work skills generate a therapeutic effect - where each person is an auxiliary for the other, or each is a therapeutic agent for the other. Teaching good group work is a pretty big part of our training.

**Diana:** Both of you would have this experience too, when you work with groups, the relationship between group members and the leader creates the leader. It's not the individual. That's what is ineffectual in leadership development. So much attention is paid to the individual yet peers, and/or boss or mentor relationships have powerful positive effects. I wanted to convey the positive impact with leaders who have a mentor, or someone more senior to them, who has got their best interest at heart and is looking out for them. That alone creates a uniting feeling for the individual. These leaders become quite bold with what they envision for themselves and how they work. Certainly, being in a group and being part of a group method, is central for good leadership development.

Development is not an isolated, personal experience. Individuals can have powerful insights yet they might not act on them.

**Chris Hill:** I've been involved with many projects within my community, speaking for our hapuu with Government agencies, working with DHB executives and board chairs, and tutoring. People appreciate my leadership and accept me in that role but they wouldn't be aware of where that comes from.

An aspect of that is through my whakapapa, through my father. He was a speaker. I was told that I would have that ability too. It would surprise them, particularly the iwi, that I've spent 17 or 18 years training in groups.

What I notice a lot is how the people in the management roles struggle to manage or lead.

**Diana:** What you're saying is just so important Chris, because I see people appointed to senior leadership roles, yet they don't know how to work with people. They get caught up with it all about them. They have their appointed position, and then there's a socio-metric choice – do people want to work with them?

I know both of you have this great ability to assess what the system is, and see what's needed. When that capacity is active in a group, people find you as leader, easy to accept. This is a complex area, and many people in organizations just don't understand that.

**Chris Hill:** They don't seem to realize they're in an organism. They're in an entity, that they're in a living, breathing, alive thing. I've watched managers down here come and go, and I've been fascinated, and really frustrated at their level of, or their lack of ability in terms of leadership.

When I was reading your book, I was keenly aware of the system down here. There's this notion that people don't need leadership training. When the last manager was employed here I was on the interview panel. Some applicants sell themselves pretty well, yet it is difficult to pick what they're going to be like in the role. I have asked what leadership development program will be in place for them. I don't think it ever happens. They lead like they live.

**Chris Hosking:** What you're just saying there, Chris, is very relevant to many of our practitioners. Diana can you comment? It's a very current and hot area of interest for many of us.



**Diana:** That is hot, hot, hot. It's absolutely a direct result of this idea that's just taken everyone just so much down the wrong path - that being a leader has got to do with being rational. That somehow leaders think their job is to do with knowledge or something, and emotions and relationships don't have a part of it. This idea that successful leaders are rational got going in the 1920's.

That idea has been so dangerous, and so debilitating for our world. Right now, there are several current international leaders, who lead from their emotions. Suddenly everyone can see and experience their lack of integration between their thinking, feeling and action. And people experience the emotional turmoil that is created. The idea that successful leaders are rational is one of the biggest lies that's ever been.

What I've attempted to do - it's something you taught me years ago, Chris Hosking - is convey Moreno's idea, that the personality is outside of the body. That the personality is not some internal private way of doing stuff, but actually, and Max used to talk about this a lot, is how people *experience* being with you.

**Chris Hill:** Middle managers might be great clinicians, they have a great skill set, and great leadership clinically, and are highly respected in terms of clinical leadership, and then they get chosen for middle manager roles. As I was reading through, I just thought this book is just so helpful for people, if they're willing.

**Diana:** This aspect of my writing has resonated with many leaders and managers - that it's the experience of being with you. Leadership is not your skills and your knowledge and all of that. Leadership is being approachable, thoughtful, astute, succinct, kind. Three or four of those qualities makes such a difference to the experience of working with people.

**Chris Hosking:** I think your 30-year journey is exceptional when I think of how much you have invested in your own development and others. Many of our trainers and practitioners, have also basically remained working in the same field of their practice for 20 - 30 years and some 40 so there is a great wealth of wisdom and skill in our membership. We are very curious about some of the points of development that you have noticed over your 30-plus years. You will have noticed significant qualities or emphasis come into and also disappear from the culture of leadership. I was struck when you said that there has been a period when leaders must be very rational and what

you have observed as a consequence of this both in individuals and organisations.

**Diana:** Having thirty years of training and applying the method means I have had the chance to both learn and influence. In New Zealand in the last eight or 10 years, the focus has moved to the personal aspect of professional development. Leader's ability to lead people, have conversations, delegate inspire others, that that's seen as a core thing, so that's a big shift in New Zealand. That those are really sought after capacities. These are not skills - they are relationship behaviours. Research done last year showed that 44% of New Zealand public sector leaders aren't able to do this. They don't know how to motivate people, inspire them, or delegate. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the realization is that we are leading people, not things, like projects, or strategic plans. The emphasis is changing.

Another factor is increased interest in outcomes and results. I notice leaders leap ahead when they cease talking about their actions and talk about the results they are getting, the real tangible results. Or they tell their story. Simon Sinek asks 'why' are you doing this? He encourages leaders to know their core personal story.

Really basic stuff. The new thing in New Zealand is that personal development is seen as natural and normal, so people are seeing what is missing is leaders' abilities to speak succinctly and purposefully with one another, their ability to run a good meeting. This has been noticed, so I think that's fabulous.

**Chris Hosking:** Perhaps another example of this is the flurry of different courses developed in recent years designed to assist us with difficult conversations and interpersonal conflict and creativity has been a valued aspect of these programs – creativity of the leader and the participants.

**Diana:** I see sociodrama or group explorations is going to be more sought after as a way of sorting through difficult and important inter-group relationships.

**Chris Hosking:** Could you expand on why you think so?

**Diana:** Leaders are desperate to grapple with problems that have been around for a long time. I was working with a group the other day in the education sector. We worked sociometrically, and I asked some simple questions, like circle sociometry, and asked was anyone an only child here? Eldest, youngest, how many in the family. Then I said, 'who here

had people living in your family that weren't part of your original family?' and of 11 people, seven stepped forward, and it ranged from having grandparents to stay, to having other kids come in and out of the family, or an uncle. It was phenomenal to realize in that group, that's what was there.

Some fantastic connections were created in the group. We then worked sociodramatically. They discovered what was important for stakeholders. They explored what their staff wanted from them as leaders. Many revelations emerged and exciting practical actions.

What people do to create connections at the beginnings of meetings is going to be recognized as core to leading effective meetings. For example, the Maori practice of whakawhanaungatanga, a living sociometry.

**Chris Hill:** There are some wonderful things in there and the impact of what you've been doing with people is fantastic. Simple things can be so profound.

As you were speaking before in response to Chris's question about the 30 years and these points of something new, or happening in the world of management or leadership development, I'm thinking about that whole team building phase. I don't know whether that still happens or not. Do you remember that?

**Diana:** I do remember that. There have been many phases. The early 80's brought management by objectives. Leaders could define what they wanted to happen and actually land up somewhere, rather than head to some obscure future. The next innovation was 360-degree feedback based on the idea that leaders would ask how their staff and peers perceived them. This was the beginning of multiple two-way relationships, rather than top down. HR departments wrecked that by recording data which interfered with the staff-leader relationship.

Team building and games came in. People would go in the outdoors. They'd break-in horses to get to know one another, rather than just talking with one another on what influenced them as leaders. 'I was born in Temuka, my grandmother was 15 when my mother was born.' People go, oh, really? These are the personal stories that create intimacy and connections yet so often that gets left out. These approaches are so simple. They are personal, and purposeful.

**Chris Hill:** Lovely. When I was working at Whenua-iti as an outdoor instructor, groups of people arrived from organisations who had just started a year-long course together. On the first day, we had them

jumping off towers, and tree stumps that were eight meters high, blind folded and they could climb up and jump off. That was quite a phase, wasn't it?

**Diana:** It was a phase. People getting to know one another and having shared experiences. During that phase, some teenagers died in a river crossing. I thought, no, wrong direction. Developing relationships needs to be in the here and now. That was when I decided not to use games, like finding someone else's name under your seat. I worked sociometrically - people talking with each other – that became the core of my work. This was a significant moment for me.

**Chris Hosking:** When I go to Vietnam, they love starting off an afternoon session with a game. Each session, actually, whether it's afternoon or morning, they have a game.

**Diana:** What do you do? What sort of things captures them?

**Chris Hosking:** Culturally this has a very important function in assisting them to warm up to learning as enjoyable. Many of the participants I have worked with have had very serious periods in their lives that have involved experiences of war, harsh governments and lack of freedom so the games still have some function there.

**Diana:** Very important.

**Chris Hill:** I am interested in your work with people from different cultures and in terms of working with Māori, and if there are differences that you have noticed. That interests me because I do some teaching and supervision in that area. When I think of the Māori world and that business of integrated thinking and feeling, and action, it naturally has that quite a lot. When we meet or get together with people, there's a whole lot of action going on, isn't there?

There is sitting and there's speaking, and there's a lot of humour and there's tears, and there's physical movement and action. I've been stimulated by thinking about that, and about Māori leadership. The context is quite different in some ways. People have leadership in a certain area, in another, they're doing the dishes.

Often in the Māori world it's held within a whole in some way and folk hold leadership in some areas. It is different.

**Diana:** It is different, yes. The things that I've learned from you Chris Hill really helped me with some of the work that I'm doing right now, and understanding who to involve in what.

As a Pākehā, I would normally decide certain things. When I'm working with Māori, I know that I don't. I'm becoming wise about who's going to do what, and who invites who to do what. There is an ease in the movement of the leadership of the group, from them, to me, to them and then to us as a whole group.

We might decide something formally as the group, then I know that it's not the 'leadership' that's makes the decision. It is actually another group or specific people to one side, who are going to say, yes, we'll go ahead with that, and no, we won't go ahead with that - the 'informal' Māori leaders are the decision makers.

Working with Māori leaders I have become aware of one particular dynamic which is their reluctance to emerge from the group as a leader. They have a tendency not to 'choose themselves.' With pākehā leaders, assisting them to truly connect with the group and people they lead is the main work.

**Chris Hill:** I am moved as I take in your understanding of the complexity of Māori leadership, the holding back, sitting back and the genuine knowledge of the purpose of this. The humility it involves and the business of speaking for a group or community and knowing when this expression is what is wanted. I'm heartened by your finding your way in this area. Chris and Diana, I've enjoyed this conversation and this rich time we have had together.

Ngā mihi mahana ki a koe Diana mō tō mahi hei whakaarahia.





*Chris Hill is of Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Tama and Ngāi Tahu descent and has been a Psychodrama trainee for 17 years. Chris's mahi covers a range of roles including counselling, cultural supervision, tutoring in the areas of Treaty of Waitangi and Te Ao Māori perspectives of the world, and resource management for her hapuu. She also sits on a number of advisory boards and trusts. Chris has particular interest in how Māori approaches to life hold within them resolution to many of our environmental and social*

*issues. In 2014, Chris received the Queen's Service Medal for services to health.*

*Chris Hosking is a Psychodramatist, Trainer, Educator and Practitioner (TEP). Chris has worked for many years as a psychodrama trainer, counsellor, individual supervisor and group work supervisor. She leads training workshops in Australia, New Zealand and Greece and for non-government organizations in South East Asia. Chris is active in AANZPA Inc. as a member of the Ethics Committee.*





*Diana Jones is a leadership coach, sociometrist, TEP and author. Her expertise is in assisting public and private sector leaders and teams be aware of the impact of their behaviour on others and learn how to create productive here and now relationships to produce business results. She is a past chair of the Wellington Homeless Women's Trust, and former treasurer and executive member in AANZPA Inc. Her passion is working with leaders to align their personal qualities with their professional identities ensuring vitality, originality and presence.*