
The Lessons I Learnt From My MBA Course

Who are you? What do you want to do? Why are you here? What will people think about me? Am I an impostor to be here? Am I good enough to be here? These were the questions going through my mind on day 1 of the MBA. It was my dream to do MBA and now that I was here I was doubting my decision. I have lived in a hypocritical society where people are often judged for their opinions, beliefs, career choices, clothes, gender and so on. When you grow up in a society like that it affects you and takes a toll on your confidence. On my first day here at Lancaster MBA, I wrote a list of things that I needed to change and the list included items such as be more confident, be more open and stop worrying about other people's study. Well, it is easy to write it on a paper, but doing it takes constant willpower, emotional intelligence and self-awareness. I identify myself as an Introvert and for me going out of the comfort zone is a constant struggle. I can count it on my hands how many times I wanted to raise my hand in class but I just couldn't. Overbearing fear of the judgement of the people stopped me from raising my hand.

The fear of coming across as stupid made me more self-conscious. When I looked around and saw my classmates in their elements, it made me think maybe I don't deserve to be here. But that's the thing all these were just the assumptions I was making. So, I started talking to people and I felt more at ease. After a while, we were assigned our first group activity with a random group of people followed by first feedback. All my team members said I look calm and shy, which is not a new thing to me. I knew these things, but when I asked them, "do I look less confident". All of them said "NO". Here, I was getting worried about their judgements and they were few of the most encouraging people I have ever met. After having discussions with classmates, I realized everyone was feeling one or the other thing, but we all are in agreement to create a safe place for everyone so that we can grow. This realization was like an eye-opener for me. I used to think I was emotionally aware as I can control my anger and conduct in the situations. But within a few days of Mindful manager and collaborative activity, I realized I lacked emotional intelligence and self-aware.

During our Mindful Manager lectures, Peter said, "people often have prejudices about others and other people's opinion". Is it possible that I have created a prejudice about me? Have I let society and my bad experiences create another self-image for me? On that day, I went back to flat and started freehand writing and what I realized is that I am so far away from my own reality that I don't know who I am? Am I the shy girl who lost her confidence after a tough experience or am I the fearless teen who didn't let anything come across her way? I realized I may have moved across the country, travelled the world, but I am still the same person. "You can't get away from yourself by moving from one place to another." – Ernest Hemingway. This quote from Ernest Hemingway describes perfectly how I was feeling. I felt as if in the opinions and voices of others I have lost my own voice. When David and John taught us about the Johari Window, I realized my blind area has grown outgrown my arena. I have forgotten what I am good at and what I am bad at. So, on that day, I made a conscious decision to not let myself from doing something just because I am scared what others will think about me. I will take Sue's advice about acting in the first 5 seconds, so that my brain can't stop me from doing it. It is similar to "5-second Rule" by Mel Robbins: "If you have an impulse to act on a goal, you must physically move within 5 seconds or your brain will kill the idea." I got a perfect place to

practice the next day: The Leeming House in The Lake District. I started conversations and participated in every game without the fear of being judged by others. I trusted my safety in the hands of the team. Before coming to Lancaster, I had a hard time trusting people. I was the kind of person who could not do a trust falls even on the bed. But somehow, I was okay with being in the air and getting transported to another end spider-web. If I hadn't made an effort that day, I would not have done all the things that I did. The only feedback that I received from everyone in my group is to believe myself more and not let my mind goblin take over.

After coming back to campus, I had a lot of going on in my mind about my conduct. The conversation that I had with John hit close to home and I realized what he said about my presence was true. I went through all photos and videos of the Lake District and I realized I was still coming across as the timid shy person. I realized how my conduct, posture and my voice has been giving out another image of me. Why was I falling into the same pit? I know I had been there and I want to improve. I always think that I am still the same person that I was 5 years back. Although I have grown in numbers I haven't improved as a person. What I was scared of 5 years back, I am still scared of the same thing. My ever-increasing list of what I want to be is still increasing.

So, I am making a commitment to me here and now that I will definitely not be the same person as I was before. I am going to take everyone's feedback and improve on it. I plan to listen attentively, respond instead of reacting and make an effort to understand another person's opinion and be vulnerable. I also started working on John's advice to make myself bigger by working on posture and stance. I am also taking advice from Brian from career keystones and just getting out of my head and making my voice more assertive by using voice modulation. I know it is human nature to judge, but I am trusting my friends to give me a safe space to fail. I aim at failing often and better. With this experience and learning in my hand, I believe I can improve and develop more self-awareness.