

Concurrent Session D
Monday 31 August
2.25pm – 3.15pm

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30 Aug – 2 Sep 2015
Novotel North Beach Wollongong



Session 5

From Crisis to Leadership of Self: Motivation, Positivity and Empowerment in the Workplace

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Katy has worked at The University of Melbourne for four years supporting research students and staff. She has worked at The University of Melbourne for the last four years and in her current role, coordinates research ethics and publications for the Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts and Melbourne Conservatorium of Music. She also chairs the University's Ethics Administrator's Network.

Katy has qualifications in social work, psychology, information management and librarianship. Her work history, prior to entering the tertiary education sector, includes a mix of frontline work with children and families in crisis with Melbourne CityMission and neuropsychological rehabilitation at Austin Health, as well as social policy work in local government.

Katy also lives on campus at the University at one of the residential colleges, where she tutors students in politics, research methods and management. Two of Katy's greatest loves are the arts and education.

What happens when we as university staff go through challenging times in our personal lives that affect our professional lives and role within the University context? How can we move through stressful and difficult situations and restore lost motivation and positivity? How can we achieve empowerment in our workplace, shifting from crisis to self-leadership? This paper addresses these issues and the significant impacts on our sense of ourselves when we experience stressors that affect our work. It is for anyone who has ever found themselves questioning their purpose or wondering how to rediscover motivation and positivity for their job at a university.

This paper charts the impacts of these experiences for one university employee, presented and analysed as a case study, chronicling the stages someone goes through from crisis to leadership of self along the journey to rediscovering motivation, positivity and empowerment in her role. Through exploring this case study, this paper offers a series of practical strategies that worked for the employee in addressing her situation. A range of key learnings are presented that aid in self-reflection and can be used as a toolkit to assist anyone going through a similar situation, whether it be ourselves or our colleagues. The paper draws on positive psychology to look at the whole person, situating work within the context of our lives and identifying ways in which to cope better at work and set up environments whereby we empower ourselves and each other to move through crisis and into self-leadership.