

**Publication Date: 24 March 2020**  
**YSP Podcast Transcript: Episode 206. Resilience and leadership during a crisis**

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**Intro:** Welcome to Your Strata Property, the podcast for property owners looking for reliable, accurate, and bite-sized information from an experienced and authoritative source. To access previous episodes and useful strata tips, go to [www.yourstrataproperty.com.au](http://www.yourstrataproperty.com.au).

**Amanda Farmer:** Hello and welcome to this week's podcast episode. I am your host Amanda Farmer. It is my job each week to help you make sense of this often confusing world of apartment living, and boy is it confusing right now. Last weekend I released a special episode, episode number 204, about face-to-face strata meetings amidst the threat of coronavirus. Really that issue has just been the tip of a rather large iceberg. Since then I have been fielding questions about whether buildings should be closing their gym or their pool, whether residents who have tested positive for the virus should notify their strata manager, what happens when owners stop paying their levies, in part or at all, because a tenant maybe is not paying rent because they've lost their job, how do we make sure our common areas are being cleaned to the level they should be to stop the spread?

There is a lot to think about and I believe that this has just started to hit home for many committee members and strata managers, the depth and complexity of these issues. Now, I have been directing people who are asking these questions over to the Your Strata Property Facebook page for my up to date guidance on these issues, as well as important links to accurate information. The situation is fast changing and perhaps by the time this episode gets to air they will be even more changes impacting our strata buildings, so do check out the Facebook page for the most up to date information that I can offer you.

Now, last Friday I hosted a 1 hour live session over on the page which I cheekily titled Happy Hour. I invited owners and strata managers who might be working from home, might be self-isolating, had meetings canceled, had social engagements canceled, to come and join us and enjoy an online version of Friday afternoon drinks. I was joined by Heidi Dening, international keynote speaker, award-winning business owner, and bestselling author. We talked about how to build and show resilience during this extraordinary time, both on a personal level and an organisational level. We also covered how strata managers and committee members might best step up, and into, an unexpected leadership role in these times.

Today, I am very happy to be able to bring you the recording from my chat with Heidi. A number of you let me know and even posted under the event on the Facebook page that you are loving the positivity that Heidi and I were sharing, and Heidi's tips for how we might personally navigate our way through this new reality were really spot on. Now, my chat with Heidi that you are about to hear is only half of the event that took place last Friday. After saying goodbye to Heidi, I did a quick roundup of where most of our states are at when it comes to meeting procedure during this time. I also answered a few questions that were coming through from others who were there enjoying happy hour with me, strata managers and owners. You can get the complete audio and, even better, watch the video over on the Facebook page. Just search Your Strata Property in the Facebook search bar. If you are a member of our online community, there is a full copy of that video inside the members video library, so you can check it out there, members, if you're not on Facebook. Without further ado, let's head over to my chat with Heidi Dening.

Heidi is an international keynote speaker, award-winning business owner, global advisor, passionate educator, and author of the bestselling self-leadership book. Her middle name is Courage. Heidi believes that resilient, optimistic self-leaders can create impactful, profitable businesses. Over the last 22 years, Heidi has started, scaled, and sold an award-winning health and education business, founded an international not-for-profit with hundreds of volunteers across 3 countries, and delivered empowering presentations and programs to business leaders on topics such as business performance, resilience, and self-leadership.

Now, Heidi has been chosen for the New South Wales Government's Inspirational Women's showcase in the entrepreneurial and empowerment category, and has been awarded Westpac's international Women's Day Local Hero Award. She is the only Australian to be selected for a global advisory position that looks at how our workplaces impact our stress levels, resilience, productivity and mental health. This gives her access to cutting edge data on these topics. Since transforming her real life setbacks such as a paralyzing illness where she lost the use of her legs, to gunpoint kidnappings, tsunami terror, and fire bomb attacks, she now shares her impactful strategies from the stage and in workplaces so others can become the courageous self-leaders that they were destined to be. I know Heidi has conducted presentations for SCA New South Wales and has worked with strata managers in workshops across Sydney.

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**Amanda Farmer:** Heidi hates seeing people not live their life to the fullest and that's why she's made it her mission to empower as many people as she can on how to strengthen their resilience and embrace self-leadership strategies, so they can overcome adversity and rise out of tough times stronger than ever.

Today, I am absolutely thrilled to be able to welcome Heidi Dening. I am bringing Heidi on right now. Hello Heidi.

**Heidi Dening:** Hi Amanda, how are you?

**Amanda Farmer:** I'm doing well. How are you?

**Heidi Dening:** Well, I'm very well. I have a Friday afternoon gin and tonic in hand, so that is a beautiful thing.

**Amanda Farmer:** Cheers. Happy happy hour.

**Heidi Dening:** Yes, happy happy hour.

**Amanda Farmer:** Now, how has your week been, this crazy week? Everybody's having similar experiences, I think, a bit blindsided, a bit overwhelmed. How are you feeling?

**Heidi Dening:** Yes, look, it's been the same for everybody. It's overwhelming. It's very stressful. It's very uncertain. But I suppose the fact that I specialise in building resilience in organisations so that they can better deal with stressful, uncertain, and challenging times, I feel I'm in a great position to serve and support people through and navigate through these really tricky times right now.

**Amanda Farmer:** Yes, I agree. We were just talking about that off air, how important those skills are at the moment.

**Heidi Dening:** Yes.

**Amanda Farmer:** Now, I want to get into a few questions and we can chat around these if you like. Now Heidi, we have strata managers tuning in. We have committee members, we have people who are being looked to, I think, at this point in time as leaders and they may not have expected that previously. They might have thought, "No, I'm not in a leadership role. That's not what I do." But all of a sudden there are people who are anxious. There are people who are unsure, people who want answers and they're looking to their secretary, their chairperson, their strata manager for those answers. How do these people step up into a leadership role that maybe they never expected to have to fill?

**Heidi Dening:** Look, we are looking at the moment for leaders, and however that is defined, who are calm, who are kind, who are smart and who are a little bit visionary. There is so much panic going on, and whether or not you considered yourself a leader in the past, this is a great opportunity to be remembered for how you behave and how you speak and how you act and how you think right now. We need calm, smart, visionary, kind leaders to step up and be the kind of leader that the world needs in these very tricky times. I mean, I see a few ways that that can happen and whether you are a leading strata teams, whether you are the secretary, or the business manager, or you have started organisations, that you've got other teams that you're leading, whatever that version of team is for you, whatever that version of leader is for you, there are a number of things that you can do to show that you are a resilient leader. Because it is the resilient leaders who are going to embrace these qualities and navigate us through these tricky times.

I see the number one thing is of being of service. Right now people are panicking, they are overwhelmed and they're not looking to be sold anything. They're not looking to have people at them with, "What's next, what's next, what's next?" What they need right now is people around them to be of service. As a leader, when you can be of service to others, and that might be as little as helping someone that you know set up the tech because they're now working from home, but they're not very tech savvy, or having that once-a-day, "Are you okay?" conversation with somebody to find out what it is that they really need. But being of service is a really important component to being a resilient leader right now.



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**Amanda Farmer:** Yes. I'm so glad that you raised that, and I want to give an example of that actually that a strata manager has posted about on LinkedIn. I am just going to say, guys, if my internet drops out, because you've got to love NBN, and I disappear, I will be back so just hang in there. I'm just monitoring the service at the moment.

Heidi, you mentioned there being of service, not selling. Another way that I put it is not talking at people, telling them what you're doing, what your company is doing. I said in my podcast last weekend that if you're like me, you've got about 14, what's now probably 400, emails in your inbox that says, "This is what our company is doing in response to the coronavirus and how we are protecting you and looking after your wellbeing."

Nina, who is a strata manager at Netstrata in Sydney, actually posted on LinkedIn this week and said, "Please don't. Please suppliers to the strata sector, please stop sending us those emails. We've got about 50 of those in one day." You can imagine how many suppliers are servicing strata buildings and sending out these messages. I understand, from the suppliers' point of view, they want to be very clear that they are addressing the issue. I think you can assume that as a service provider you're aware of this issue and you are taking steps, whether you're a cleaner, or an engineer, or whatever service provider you are, or a lawyer. We probably don't need to be talking at our strata managers-

**Heidi Dening:** No.

**Amanda Farmer:** ... whose inboxes are overflowing.

**Heidi Dening:** Absolutely.

**Amanda Farmer:** So taking your point, Heidi, how can we be of service to those managers? How can you put up your hand and say, "Hey, if you need to send some people my way to answer some questions, if you need to switch around that contract, have a new start date for the contract because you can't have a meeting right now to approve the contract, how can you be of service?" Thank you for raising that one.

**Heidi Dening:** Yes, no, absolutely. I mean that leads the next one of leading by example. If that is not the behaviour you want from people, don't do it yourself. We want to lead by example because as we know, our actions speak much louder than words. So what can you do to be that role model that people can look up to right now? One of the ways is not to verbally catastrophise all the stuff that's going on. If you watch anything on social media or the news, it feels like the world is ending and it's very easy to go into those conversations and catastrophise about how bad it could be. Don't be that person. Lead by example. Be the visionary who can say, "Yes, these are difficult times," because no one likes a Pollyanna. These are tricky times, admit it. It's fine to say, "Wow, this is nothing like we've experienced, but that doesn't mean the world's going to end. There are ways through this and this is what I'm going to do proactively to make sure that there is an optimistic outlook going forward."

**Amanda Farmer:** Yes, I like that. Before we get into our next question there, Heidi, I'm just going to go over to the comments here. We've got a few more people coming in and saying hi and I just want to acknowledge you. Hi Brandon, how are you? I hope you're well also. Melissa, I think I've said hi to. Hello again. "Oh, Heidi, your lipstick looks great." What do you know?

**Heidi Dening:** Yes, that's actually an in joke with Melissa and I. Yes, Melissa, you're right, and he owes me big time.

**Amanda Farmer:** Okay. I want to know. I want an introduction.

**Heidi Dening:** Yes.

**Amanda Farmer:** Hi Megan from City of Sydney Council, lovely to see you here. Natalie. Natalie's loving my hair so I get hair compliments from Natalie Fitzgerald. Hello, lovely to see you. I know that you know Heidi as well. Natalie saying hi there.

**Heidi Dening:** Hi Natalie.

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**Amanda Farmer:** "Great post from Nina." Yes, Natalie, from the strata manager perspective I can imagine that you also understand that overload that's happening in your inboxes right now. Thank you Nina at Netstrata for sharing that. We have Alisa, who is here from the Smart Green Apartments program from City of Sydney Council. I'm just moving my glass of wine because it is in front of my screen and it's rather large and I can't see the comments. It's happy hour, guys. We've got a lot of agreement there with Nina's post which is great. Henry says it's important not to be seen as capitalising on the situation.

**Heidi Dening:** Yes.

**Amanda Farmer:** So true. And haven't we seen some awful emails? I think someone mentioned to me that Coles sent out an advertisement for party supplies. We can't get toilet paper from Coles at the moment, we're not in for the party supplies.

**Heidi Dening:** Yes.

**Amanda Farmer:** Yes, it's scary stuff. Just watch your automated marketing, anybody who's into that, and just make sure that everything is in tune and look outward. Look outward, how can I be of service, how can I be of help? The minute you start doing that, I think your anxiety levels decrease within ourselves. How can I help? And you don't get caught up in this craziness of, "Oh, how am I going to survive?" It's how can I help others and immediately feeling calmer.

**Amanda Farmer:** On that note, Heidi, yes, cheers. If want to let us know if you brought a drink to happy hour...

**Heidi Dening:** Natalie's also got a G&T so I just see she's having a sip. Yes.

**Amanda Farmer:** I see that now, yes. Feel free to share with us what it is that you brought to happy hour. Even if it's a coffee, that's fine.

**Heidi Dening:** That's fine.

**Amanda Farmer:** It might even be your kids. If you're working from home and you got the kids there, no problem at all. Heidi, let's talk about personal resiliency. We're all dealing with different situations in our businesses, with our family members. A lot of us are very concerned about our elderly family members. We're concerned to be helping those who may be unwell or who are isolated at the moment. What can we be doing as people and not just as strata managers and as committee members, as people, how can we be working on our own personal resilience? What are your tips when we're talking about our mental health and our wellbeing during this time?

**Heidi Dening:** Yes, thank you for that question. Because something that I've always said is that if you want to be a talented leader, you first need to be a talented self-leader. You've got to be able to successfully lead yourself even through difficult times like these ones, before you can expect anybody to walk with you. This means that you must, must, must, must take care of yourself first. You must put things in place. You have to be proactive in crazy times, where everyone is falling around around you, to prioritise yourself.

I think the first tip that I've got for that is to not continually check social media and the news, because all the clickbait that's going on does nothing for our ability to stay calm, to stay smart, to stay visionary and kind. What it does, it's we go into this fight, flight, freeze mode and there is nothing positive that that automatic response to danger, which is what we see when we go online, our brain just goes into that and puts us in a place that we don't need to be as great leaders. So that is my first tip, definitely.

Amongst all of us trying to pivot and do things a little differently and master tech perhaps that we've never had to master before, and find a way to keep cash flow going and provide solutions for people without appearing like we're trying to optimise and maximise a very horrible situation, being still for perhaps only 10 minutes a day, will really allow the brain to take a break and be able to just settle into that present calm state so that we can perform better and brighter than we were before. Now, I always say... People go, "Oh God, I don't like... I'm not a meditator." Neither am I. I have tried my hardest, it's not for me. But one thing I know is that by sitting in silence just for 10 minutes without devices, without all the noise, it really helps your brain to perform.

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**Heidi Dening:** If you think about those who go to the gym and if you think about doing bicep curls and you're curling and you're curling and you're curling, well, eventually you have to stop curling to give that muscle a break if you want it to perform later. Well, our brain is a muscle as well, and if you do not give it a break, it can not perform as well as it needs to. Right now we have to be focused and switched on, and to be able to stay focused and switched on we need to be still and give our brain a break for 10 minutes a day. It's only 0.7% of our whole day, by the way.

**Amanda Farmer:** Yes, doesn't sound like much.

**Heidi Dening:** It doesn't sound like much and you can do it... If you're going to work, if you're allowed to go to work, you can do it on public transport. But if not, if you're at home, just do it in your lunch time, sit outside...

**Amanda Farmer:** Make sure you have lunch, is one thing to tell these strata managers.

**Heidi Dening:** Yes, I do know that, that they do not like to have lunch-

**Amanda Farmer:** They don't.

**Heidi Dening:** It's so busy. But just give your brain a break, that would be a definite tip. For the people who are having to work from home and aren't able to get out for whatever reason that might be... Oh yes, I can see in the comments, coffee, definitely yes.

**Amanda Farmer:** Of course.

**Heidi Dening:** Coffee.

**Amanda Farmer:** Water.

**Heidi Dening:** Water, yes. But being able to move is still really important. It's no better time than now to make sure you're moving your body. I don't mean that you have to be doing a full out workout at the gym, it may be that you're just doing some gentle yoga stretches. But try to keep the movement going in your day so that blood circulation happens, and again, you're feeding your brain with oxygen so it can perform better.

**Amanda Farmer:** Something just on that, Heidi, that I've become aware of just through the Facebook feed and LinkedIn as well, is that there are community groups out there, small businesses who are doing online fitness sessions.

**Heidi Dening:** Yes.

**Amanda Farmer:** These are the local yoga studio, the local Pilates studio. I have to say I haven't seen the big guys, Fitness First, or the big gyms doing it yet, but I imagine it's only a matter of time once they realise that there may be closed, they want to provide for their members. But don't forget that that is there if you go looking for it, a little half-hour yoga session that you can do online in your bedroom at home, if that's where you're working from. But if you can't get to the gym or you don't want to because you want to just make sure you keep that distance, then still there are plenty of creative ways to still get that time out and that exercise is definitely something that I'm doing.

**Heidi Dening:** Yes, in fact, just as you're speaking, I have a 30-minute workout that you can do in your lounge room without any equipment. I'm happy to put the link to that in the comments after we get off.

**Amanda Farmer:** Awesome.

**Heidi Dening:** People can just follow through that just to get them moving. Yes.

**Amanda Farmer:** That's great.



**Heidi Dening:** Yes.

**Amanda Farmer:** Thank you, Heidi.

**Heidi Dening:** I suppose the last one that I really want people to include to build their personal resilience is to laugh out loud, to find the things that are going to make you giggle, that fill you up and make you feel good. Because amongst all this bad news, we need to find a way to keep some form of joy in our life. Now, that might be through friends and family or it could be online. I personally love Celeste Barber. She cracks me up every single day, so if you follow her on Facebook or Instagram, she's awesome to follow. She's very, very funny. But think about who it is in your life that can make you laugh out loud because we need to be able to do that through these times.

**Amanda Farmer:** Excellent. Really, really important tip. Let's try and do some laughing out loud at some stage in our life today. It isn't an unusual experience. You'll understand it Heidi when you are doing these events where you can see all the people online who are there with you, watching and commenting. But we can't hear anybody and I might feel a little bit lonely but I know you guys are going to hang around and ask questions and keep enjoying happy hour and maybe we'll do some laughing out loud as well.

**Heidi Dening:** Yes, sounds good.

**Amanda Farmer:** Now, Heidi, what do you think our organisations in the strata sector, whether they be businesses like strata management businesses, our industry bodies, or even the strata buildings themselves because they are a type of organisation, as an organisation, what can they be learning or taking away from this extraordinary situation? Should they be looking to the future, thinking about what is it that we can do now that is going to build a more resilient, more successful organisation down the track? Are there lessons to be learned now and things that can be put in place to build a more resilient organisation?

**Heidi Dening:** Absolutely. I suppose the first thing to ensure that their workplaces are resilient is to keep them safe and healthy right now. That's our first step. Whether that means you have to change the way people work, with the flex, getting your tech right so that people can flex and work from home, that will be, over the ongoing months, be probably the most practical thing that you can do to ensure that you ride the wave nilly to be able to continue to bring cash flow, to meet targets... Targets probably have to change, whatever goals set, we'll have to change, whatever the new norm is for you. Getting that tech right so you can have people working flexibly will be the number one thing for resilience.

What's so interesting... I obviously I'm a keynote speaker and I do face-to-face training in organisations. That obviously has been deleted from my everyday life, but that doesn't mean that I feel like my life is over because it's given me a great opportunity to do things a little differently and perhaps spend the time doing the things that I wished I'd had the time to do previously. I think if we can take that attitude and really see the opportunities in whatever that can be. Again, I'm not trying to be a Pollyanna, it's tough. It's not easy. I know personally myself, it's not easy, but just finding those opportunities. Keeping a safe and healthy work environment, whether that is at a workplace or at home, getting your tech right so that you can allow for flexible work arrangements, which... Some companies have been mastering this for a long time and others are lagging a little bit, so again, this is an opportunity to get ahead of it.

But what I really say is once we go through this bit of, probably the next 2, 3, maybe 4 weeks, of scrambling and finding out how we can do this in a different way, being able to keep your great staff, keep the culture of your organisation, whether that is one person or a hundred people, when we get through this, because this too will pass, that you are in a situation where you have the most talented people in your industry, they're ready to go. You can only do that by continuing to think about the culture within your company, by continuing training and development for those who are in your company, and whether that is technical skills or non-technical skills, but spending a smidge of a time looking beyond these next few weeks when we're scrambling, so that as an organisation you are going to be resilient to this particular time.

**Amanda Farmer:** Yes. I definitely like the advice there, Heidi, to be thinking about what are all the things that we haven't had time to do before. We've had events canceled, we've had travel canceled, we've now got this downtime, if you like, or quiet time, where we might be staying at home. We might be getting through even though most of us in the strata sector, incredibly lucky to still have that work coming through.

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**Amanda Farmer:** It's one of those few areas that just keeps ticking over regardless what seems to happen in the world. But there would definitely be openings in the calendar there to dig deeper on those things that you always wanted to dig deeper on. Start thinking about those, and that's something to build for the future if not for your organisation and definitely personally for yourself.

**Heidi Dening:** Absolutely.

**Amanda Farmer:** Just on the issue of health in particular, it's not something that I like to get into too much when I'm doing these broadcasts because as I like to say, "I'm a lawyer, I'm not a doctor." But certainly the place to go for up to date information on those issues within your businesses, what you should be doing with staff, with clients, in terms of contact is [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au), the Australian and government website. Make sure that that is your port of call for that.

Well, Heidi, it has been so lovely to have you with us this afternoon for happy hour. How is your G&T going?

**Heidi Dening:** Oh, it's going, but I'll be going for another one.

**Amanda Farmer:** Yes. Well, I'm going to let you go soon so you can go get a refill. I just want to say hi to some more people who've come through. Ash, it's lovely to see you. How are you? We've got Karen Stiles from the Owners Corporation Network. Lovely to have you with us, Karen. Natalie's just posted a comment and a tip for some money to keep them going. Yes, our small businesses. Definitely. I had seen that suggestion on social media and I did buy a gift voucher from my hairdresser today, something that I will use in 6 months time when things are better or something that I can give to someone, but she really, really needs the cash flow now. So think about businesses where you might be saving some money because you're not taking public transport to work, you're not eating out, you're not doing all that socialising, or can you go down to the local cafe and buy a voucher because they really need to keep paying the rent-

**Heidi Dening:** Absolutely

**Amanda Farmer:** ... which is a really serious situation. Melissa's just asking, "Can we watch this back? My phone didn't stop ringing and I missed bits. Yes, the ever the life of the strata manager, Melissa. I'll tell you what, yes absolutely, this video will be sitting on the Your Strata Property Facebook page for you to come back to and for those who missed out on happy hour. Brennan saying, "Thank you, Heidi. Great information."

**Heidi Dening:** My pleasure, Brennan.

**Amanda Farmer:** Karen is loving the positivity. I love it too and that is why I brought you on the show, Heidi Dening. It has been wonderful chatting to you. Now, you are, I know, developing or you have already some online programs when it comes to leadership and resilience. I'm going to give our watchers a link, which my lovely helpers will place in the comments section as well. It is [heididening.com/bucketquiz](https://heididening.com/bucketquiz). Can you tell us about the bucket quiz, Heidi?

**Heidi Dening:** Well look, resilience is my thing and building resilience is my thing. What I wanted to do is help people to be able to measure where their resiliency is right now. I often talk to people that if they think of their resilience like a bucket and all the water in the bucket is their strength and capabilities. When times are good, you're bucket feels strong and sturdy. But when times get a little wobbly, like they are right now, that bucket can become a little fragile and all your strengths and capabilities start leaking out.

So what I wanted to do is to help people identify if they've got some holes in their bucket. This is a quick 2 minute, free quiz that you can do online. There's a few different sections and you'll get a score at the end. It'll just help you become aware if these stressful, uncertain and changeable times are actually having an impact on you that perhaps you weren't sure about.

**Amanda Farmer:** I love that. I'm definitely going to head over and do that quiz. We'll also put the link to your LinkedIn profile in the comments here as well, Heidi, so anyone who wants to find out more about you can head over there. Thank you so much, Heidi. Have a restful, quiet, relaxing, perhaps productive weekend.

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**Heidi Dening:** Definitely. I will definitely do that. Lovely to be able to chat with you all and please any questions, just send them through.

**Amanda Farmer:** Excellent. See you, Heidi.

**Heidi Dening:** Bye.

**Outro:** Thank you for listening to Your Strata Property, the podcast which consistently delivers to property owners reliable and accurate information about their strata property. You can access all the information below this episode via the show notes at [www.yourstrataproperty.com.au](http://www.yourstrataproperty.com.au). You can also ask questions in the comment section, which Amanda will answer in her upcoming episodes. How can Amanda help you today?