

Overcome the toughest challenges  
in today's busy and ever-changing environment

# MASTER YOUR MIND

Blueprint for the inspirational and successful leader



*Dare to make a difference*  
...BECAUSE YOU CAN!

# MARTIN PROBST

## **MASTER YOUR MIND**

### **Blueprint for the inspirational and successful leader**

By Martin Probst

PROfound Leadership

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## 1 Introduction to this blueprint

“Leadership is lifting a person’s vision to high sights, the raising of a person’s performance to a higher standard, the building of a personality beyond its normal limitations.”

~ Peter Drucker



Our unique methodology and approach in this blueprint for inspirational and successful leaders creates a culture of independent employees who perform interdependently within a cohesive team. We boost your and your employee's desire to excel in your roles, and help nurture values and beliefs aligned with business and team outcomes.

What does that mean? It means you are inspired to lead, and through your clear understanding of human behaviours and performance will bring the best out of your workforce. You know how to create a safe and supportive environment in which your team thrives, and you encourage each individual to seek professional development opportunities to help them excel.

MASTER YOUR MIND is the gateway to staff motivation and high performance. The various parts of this blueprint will guide you through highly effective and proven principles to reach your potential, and leave you with the knowledge that you can become a truly inspirational and successful leader.



## **1.1 What you will get out of this book**

When you decide to take control of your professional development and ultimately your career, you are well positioned to ensure that you succeed as a leader. Congratulations on doing just that by following this blueprint.

A recent TalentSmart study on measuring leadership skills revealed that two critical skills contribute to being a successful leader: self-management and relationship management abilities. You are accountable for your own success and as such it is your responsibility to discover and work on the skills and capabilities that can give you the competitive edge to become a professional who leads and succeeds with inspiration and integrity. Ineffective individuals don't recognise the importance of improving their leadership skills and stay in their low-level positions, blaming others for their lack of success. But what aspects of your work performance could be improved? What would you need to do differently to truly inspire your workforce? How can you take control of your professional life?

In order for you to become that inspirational and successful leader, you need to understand how our brains work. It is crucial that you recognise that we all think and experience the world differently, and that we need to approach people differently to treat them the same. Albert Einstein once said that the definition of insanity was to keep doing the same thing and expecting a different outcome. This gives us a tip-off that if we want things to change, we need to take action and responsibility, which in turn requires courage.

This blueprint will show you the strategies you need to implement to become an inspirational and successful leader. It will show you the tools necessary to advance yourself professionally. You will discover how to achieve higher levels in your role or career than you may have dreamt possible!

Read through this book a few times and let the information enhance your work life, build your professional empowerment, improve your networking connections to ultimately be an inspirational and successful leader!

## **1.2 Take a leap of faith**

... but commit to the change with curiosity, consistency and accountability. Moving from dependence (or a false sense of independence) to true independence is a big step and can certainly create friction within your team as some of your employees will be looking for answers while they experience changes within you and therefore their working environment.

Here are, ahead of all the other good stuff that will follow throughout the book, a few hints to guide you through those tense situations:

✓ **Accept the fact that it will take time to transition into true independence**

I guarantee you there will be some awkward and very uncomfortable moments, especially at the beginning. However, you have to push through these situations, stay in control and always lead by example. The first rule of being a leader is to be a role model for all your employees and the business itself. Start to embrace uncertainty, as this is the place of new learnings. This will also help you to make fast and smart decisions for the future, even if you feel insecure at times. Be curious, consistent, hold yourself accountable and stick to what you set out to do. Make sure that when you make mistakes, to learn from them so you can turn stumbling blocks into stepping-stones.

✓ **Create self-awareness**

Obviously you have done a fine job to be in your current position. Ask yourself and your superiors for feedback and write down the reasons why you are where you are today. This will give you the opportunity to do more of the good work in the future and work on the areas that must be improved.

✓ **Ask yourself: what kind of leader do I want to be?**

You need to be very clear on your leadership style and how you want to be perceived by your team. Only if you have clarity and are able to language who you want to be, you can move toward being that person you desire. It will then become a walk in the park.

✓ **Accountability starts with you.**

Holding others accountable for your mistakes is not a strategy for success. If I could only give you one single piece of advice, it would be to make sure you take 100% responsibility for your own actions. Along the way this will cultivate trust and build the foundation of a great team and working environment, where people are looking forward to working and performing at their best.

More often than not, managers stepping into a new role or up another level don't have the skill, knowledge, expertise and the right attitude **YET** for their new identity. Well, how could you? You haven't done it before, right? Therefore, this is a very crucial time to build your awareness on what you are doing well and what needs to be improved.

It is about investing into your personal development to fill the gaps from where you are today to where you want to be in the future. So, congratulations on getting your hands on this blueprint so you can grow as a person and leader. I appreciate this quote by Richard Branson:

“To me, business isn’t about wearing suits or pleasing stockholders. It’s about being true to yourself, your ideas and focusing on the essentials.”

It accurately captures what this book is about. It is here to help you discover who you truly are and what you want to achieve as a manager and leader. It is to improve your focus, inspire your ideas and get you to trust the one person who will never steer you wrong – yourself! Do this and you will achieve victory!

But without further a due, let’s get started!

## 2 Brand Image



### 2.1 Awareness

Large companies and celebrities are not the only ones with an image to keep. You, if you want to be a successful leader, need to be aware of your brand image. Along with the growth of social media and Google, Personal Branding is becoming increasingly important. According to Hill & Knowlton, 87% of people believe that a CEO's reputation is an important part of a company's reputation. Your personal brand is how people will perceive you and what differentiates you from others. If you want to be an outstanding leader, you need to:

- ✓ Know yourself, inside and out
- ✓ Communicate your brand values throughout the business and personal life
- ✓ Figure out how to appeal to businesses that you want to work for
- ✓ Recognise that first impressions can be lasting
- ✓ Be consistent



HOW YOU LOOK + HOW  
YOU SPEAK + HOW YOU  
ACT = YOUR PERSONAL  
BRAND.

“Your brand is what people say about you  
when you’re not in the room.”

~ *Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon*

If you build and upkeep a solid personal brand, you will be a trusted leader that people follow loyally. If you lack a personal brand of inspiration and success, you lack the influence of an outstanding leader.

This blueprint will assist you on finding out how you want to be perceived, how to tackle the task of transformation and getting you to ‘YOU INC’, in both the professional and personal environment.

## **2.2 The Process**

The first step to achieving an appealing personal brand is to realise who and where you are now, and who and where you want to be going forward. To get a clear indicator of your current brand image, ask yourself and others what you are known for. Good leaders gather plenty of market research to figure out their strengths and weaknesses, so ask people who know how you work, and what you have to offer, to help you understand your brand. This can include other co-workers, previous managers or even customers you’ve worked with and know you well enough to make an informed assessment of your knowledge, skills and ability. Then compare these findings with what you want to be known for.

Studies<sup>1</sup> show that your clothes make a difference to what people think about you. However, I believe that the main key to a successful personal brand is neither money nor any other materialistic effects. It is whom you choose to become as a person and how you decide to grow in business and beyond. Ask yourself how you want your leadership to progress. What do you see as your purpose in your professional life? How would you like to be viewed by your superiors, colleagues and team members? As a driven, genuine employee who gets the job done or as someone who only puts in half effort yet wants to be called a leader?

It is important to keep a positive brand image both on a professional and personal level. If you build trust, you can build inspiration and success. You must equally respect your brand within the workplace and within social networks, because nothing stays hidden in today's online world. An average manager might brag about his nights out clubbing and getting smashed, a successful leader is sharing his personal life in a 'sophisticated' manner.

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<sup>1</sup> Neil Howlett, Karen Pine, Ismail Orakçioğlu, Ben Fletcher, (2013) "The influence of clothing on first impressions: Rapid and positive responses to minor changes in male attire", *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 17 Iss: 1, pp.38 - 48

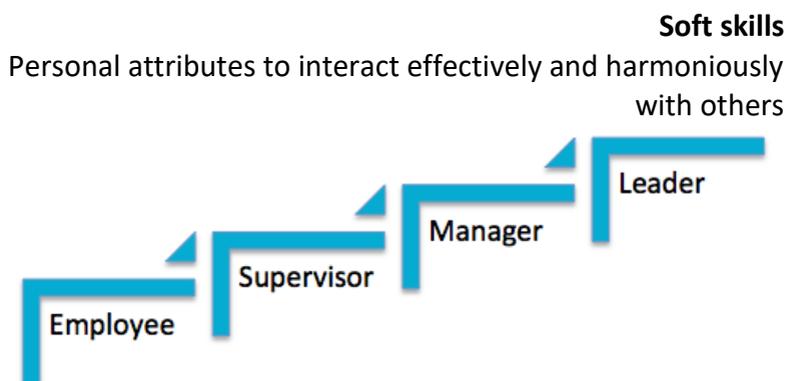
## 2.3 Grow or Go

To upkeep your brand, you will need to commit to ongoing professional development. Become a life-long learner and pay attention to how you can bring value to an organisation. These days, it is 'grow or go'. Many companies provide opportunities for you to take the next step in your career, but you have to be open and ready for it.

Too often throughout my career I've heard comments like: *"Are you tough enough for this job?"*, *"If you can't stand the heat get out of the kitchen"*, *"Treat them mean to keep them keen"* and so on. In my opinion, these people do not deserve or even qualify to be called leaders because they have neither mastered nor demonstrated any leadership skills yet. They haven't grasped the concept of 'teamness', are only interested in pleasing their own ego and getting their own benefits, rather than the holistic outcome of the team - not to mention the overall business success.

As a supervisor, manager or leader you need to understand that the hard skills (technical skills to complete a specific task) you've learned in your early years in the workforce become less important as you move up the career ladder. What you need to master now are soft skills (personal attributes to interact effectively and harmoniously with others). Although these skills are labelled as 'soft' they are often the hardest to learn but most beneficial as they are the glue that hold together the technical processes.

Soft skills are generally undervalued and ripped out of formal training packages around the world. Labelling essential skills such as leadership, time and stress management, communication strategies, interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, resolving conflicts and many more as 'soft', whether we like it or not, lessens their value.



## Hard skills

Technical skills to complete a specific task

The key for a successful manager lies in his/her ability and attitude to demonstrate **soft skills**, the personal attributes to interact effectively and harmoniously with others. I appreciate that really good Finance or Operations Managers feel frustrated when they discover that in order to become a true leader in their field, building relationships and mastering communication skills are more important than hard skills. Technical skills may get you the job, but soft skills will make or break you as a leader.

So, if you are serious about your career success, I urge you to have an open mind for these skills. They will be covered in depths throughout this book. Adapt and implement them along the way.

"If you wish to achieve worthwhile things in your personal and career life, you must become a worthwhile person in your own self-development."

*~ Brian Tracy*

### **Time for Action**

How well do you know yourself? How do others perceive you?

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Where can you get feedback regarding your strengths and weaknesses? Who can you ask?

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Do you need to update your brand image in Social Media?

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What clubs you are part of? Work? Family and friends?

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How well developed are your soft skills? What areas do you need to work on?

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Do you possess a mindset of lifelong learning? How does this present itself?

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### 3 Get a different perspective



#### 3.1 Understand Your Mindset

The first step leading to change lies in understanding your current mindset. You must realise **WHY** you are where you are right now before you can even begin to advance yourself in your career, and in the process starting to become an inspirational and successful leader.

Too often, our formal education system teaches us **what** to think rather than **how** to think, which results in most people only producing about half of what they are actually capable of and failing when it comes to getting what they really want. In regards to careers specifically, approximately 10% consciously want more satisfying jobs, but a whopping 90% are unconsciously conditioned (or programmed) not to succeed!

Understanding your thoughts and emotions empowers you in your dealings with others. You no longer have to be ruthless when trying to reach your targets, because you are clear about your goals and how you and your team can get there. Successful leaders are aware of their thought processes, whereas unsuccessful people fall consistently victim to their own negative thoughts.

Your brain is exposed to around 2 million bytes of information each and every second. However, it lets go of information it finds irrelevant through deletion, distortion and generalisation filters, and only holds onto about seven chunks of information per second – this is what we call ‘our reality’. Each person’s reality differs from the next person. They are based on experiences, learned values and behaviours, and fears.

The following NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) Communication Model explains how we interpret information from the outside world (external) by using our five senses and internal filters to create our internal representation that affects our thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

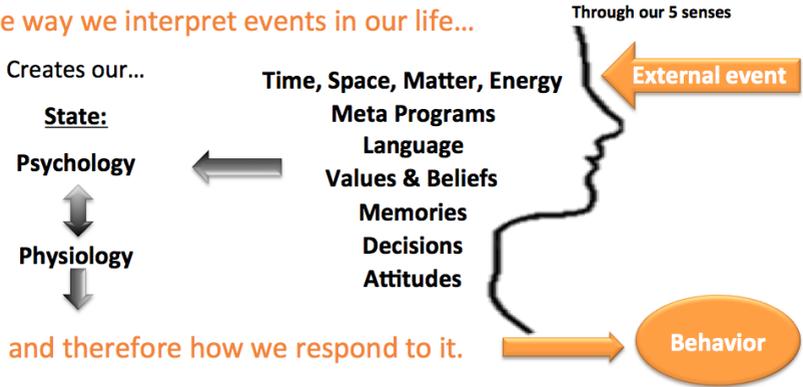
But how can this communication model be useful? The more familiar you are with this model the better you can communicate with greater flexibility, whilst understanding other people's point of view. This will help you to relate to people easier and to respond in their terms. Understanding and utilising this model will also allow you to stay in control of your mind and cause things to happen in your life, as well as being able to build rapport with anyone to achieve win/win situations in leadership, negotiation and conflict situations. Which means you will experience a more fulfilled life, mental freedom and self-empowerment.

**This is the scenario**

Tom has recently been promoted to Operations Manager, only a few months after completing the required technical training for this position. Tom is confident in his own practical abilities, however lacks trust in his team's skills and therefore doubts that he can reach the revenue targets.

**This is how it works**

The way we interpret events in our life...



**Delete, Distort & Generalize**  
 2 million bytes of information per sec.  
 Deleted down to 134 bytes per sec.  
 Chunk them into 7 plus +/- 2 chunks per sec.

Tom observes his team with his 5 senses (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, gustatory, and olfactory) – this is where it all begins. His sensory input channels (the five senses) are exposed to 2 million bytes of information per second. To ensure he is not being overwhelmed with this flood of information, the information is filtered down to 134 bytes per second through the following internal processing filters, which are determined by his perception of:

- ✓ **Time, space, matter and energy** – one of the most unconscious filters on how a person perceives and experiences quantum physics. E.g. Einstein's theory of relativity.
- ✓ **The language we use and our understanding of words and gestures** - The ability to structure external events and give it a meaning by using language.
- ✓ **Our memories** – Past experiences deeply affects and influences our perception and personality (who we are)
- ✓ **The unique way we go about making decisions** – Based on conclusions after considerations, focusing on past decisions. Past decisions is also what create our present values, beliefs and attitude.
- ✓ **Meta programs** - The patterns we look for when selecting and processing information.
- ✓ **Our values and beliefs** –Values are stable long-lasting beliefs about what is important to us. They become our compass that keeps us on our path.
- ✓ **Our attitude** - The collection of values and belief systems

The 134 bytes are then distorted to about 7 chunks of information so they make sense to the human brain.

This ongoing process creates an internal representation (psychology and physiology - in Tom's case doubting his team's capabilities) of the external event (the team not submitting required reports on time), and takes on the form of a sensory perception. This perception is a picture with sound, emotions, feelings, smell and taste – and this is what we call reality! Again, this is completely based on Tom's past experiences, values, beliefs, attitude, memories, etc. Tom might have had a similar encounter back in his University days that shaped his assumptions about doubting a team or workgroup delivering their input on time.

Tom's internal representation creates a state of fear, apprehension and judgement that excludes his ability to trust his team's ability to deliver work within an acceptable and agreed timeframe, as he believes it will result in failure again. This of course influences his physiology, for example his body language, and the way he represents himself. In other words, physiology (body language) creates psychology (state of mind); and psychology creates physiology.

Physiology and psychology then create our behaviour. This is the external response based on our internal representation. In Tom's case, his response based on fear, apprehension and judgement will most likely be defensive or aggressive behaviour. In other words, fight and flight mechanism.

**There are two sides to every coin.**

Let's go back to the brain. What if the bits (or bytes) you delete are the exact ones that you need to make a transformation within yourself and your leadership style? What if they are the pieces of information that could lead you to smarter decision-making and subsequently to leading with inspiration?

Is it possible that you have to let go of some of your engrained habits and what you believe to be the right way? Could you potentially revisit some of the principles and approaches you have so far lived by, and that would make things connect for you so that become an inspirational and successful leader would be within reach? How can you be certain that you are not deleting the precise bits (or bytes) that are essential to reaching your targets and still sleep at night?

To shift your mindset involves trusting that everything you need lies within you already.

*“What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”*

*~ Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*(Download our resource 'Neurological Rewiring' from [www.profoundleadership.com.au/shop/](http://www.profoundleadership.com.au/shop/) for more details and examples of the internal process filters, and in particular deletion, distortion and generalisations.)*

### 3.2 Things are not always as they seem

*“The way we see the problem is the problem.”*

*~ Stephen R. Covey*

You learned in the previous chapter that what we call our reality is only a fraction of what truly happens. It is therefore crucial to determine how to look at a problem. If we stare from the wrong perspective, we might create an even bigger problem rather than solving it.

#### **So, if you have thoughts like...**

- ✘ “Why can’t the team members get over themselves and work as a team?”
- ✘ “Why are they not listening and just do what I tell them to do?”
- ✘ “On top of everything else, my direct reports come running to me with every little challenge they face, and I ultimately have to sort it out. I don’t have time for this!”
- ✘ “I do everything possible to please my team but they don’t show me any loyalty.”

and

- ✘ “Why did I even accept this position in the first place? I am constantly being criticised!”

**...then look at the problem from a completely different angle!**

Every time you think the problem is out there, coming from somewhere or somebody else, you empower what's out there to control you. Your mind needs to shift from 'what's out there has to change first' to 'what changes can I make in order to change what's out there'.

“We cannot solve problems by using  
the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.”  
~ *Albert Einstein*

Have a crack at it for at least 21 days, look back and witness what has changed. What do you have to lose?

### **Time for Action**

Let me ask you a few questions, and please answer them honestly.

Is there a chance that being more efficient is not the answer?

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What would you do with your spare time if you got more done in less time? Would it really make a difference in your life, or would you simply attempt to do even more work and find yourself stuck in the same rut all over again?

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What do you need to learn about yourself when it comes to your perception or reflection of your life, work, time etc.?

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Is it possible that your employees are not the real problem?

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Is it possible that, rather than your team members being the cause, there are some engrained patterns/behaviours on how you see your team and the way you relate to time and stress that feeds the problem?

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If this is the case, how could your past experiences (or programming) affect the way you see the problem and how do you attempt to solve it?

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Is it possible, that you could empower your team with a different leadership style and get completely different outcomes?

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### 3.3 The map is not the territory

I am sure you wonder what this title means - I get it. The first time I've heard it, it sounded very strange to me too, so let me explain.

'The map is not the territory' is a pre-supposition of Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP), and means that no matter how accurate a map is, it still isn't the territory or place itself. For example, you can use the map of your favourite city, but no matter how accurate the map is, it will never be the city itself. Whatever the world is like, we use our senses to explore it and map it. The world is full of infinite possibilities, but we are only able to perceive a very small part of it based on culture, past experiences, values, beliefs, attitude, memories, assumptions etc. (remember Tom in the previous chapter 'Understand Your Mindset'?) Therefore, everyone is unique and lives in their own reality.

"You cannot see the world the way it is,  
only the way you are."  
~ Carl Jung

Let me share a personal story with you. During my first decade in the workforce I was very much career driven, to the extent that my career became my life. Because the job was the biggest focus in my life and took up much of my time, I had to delete everything else (here we go with generalization; everything). Of course not literally everything, but most other things such as planning a family and getting married. Honestly, I have no idea how my wife put up with me for such a long time, standing on the sideline waiting for me to commit to our relationship and take responsibility for my identity as a life partner. But that is a totally different story to write about... Luckily, she stood by me, supported me and gently guided me into the direction of being a family man. So, there I was, one moment ago all career horny with nothing else to enter my thoughts, and next thing I know my beautiful wife is pregnant (...and NO it wasn't an accident).

Now here is the thing; I can honestly say that until that point pregnant women didn't really exist for me. I never saw them around. But suddenly, they were everywhere; in the streets, restaurants, public transport and I mean everywhere. It felt like half the nation was pregnant at the time. So, was there really a baby boom going on? No, but our focus is based on our interest and relevance (in my case becoming a dad), and everything else is deleted, distorted and generalized to make sense of it and to avoid overwhelm and anxiety.

My focus and interest shifted from a successful career person (physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually) to my new identity of father and family man. To me, this was the time of a huge paradigm shift. It was like looking at the world through different glasses. So what can we learn from this story? I guess, no matter what situation you are in, you can choose which glasses you want to put on to experience and interpret your career, life, etc.

Another example could be Footy Grand Final Day. Around 100,000 people packed in the MCG watching the exact same game. However, if you would ask all of them to report, every single version would vary. No two people are wearing the same glasses.

This is also the reason why

- ✓ we get what we focus on to the conclusion of everything else
- ✓ we keep experiencing the same events in our lives
- ✓ we are stuck in our own ways
- ✓ we keep doing the same thing, but hoping to get a different outcome (the definition of insanity by Albert Einstein)
- ✓ we miss out on new opportunities as we can't see them

Your same world could be exciting and full of possibilities if you kept an open mind and the curiosity to explore the true potential in your career and life. The minute you really grasp this concept of ‘the map is not the territory’ you let go of the need to be right, to judge other people or seeing them as being wrong or not getting it. They are getting it all right, but based on their own map not yours.

This concept of ‘the map is not the territory’ is also the reason why people only show commitment if they are part of an idea, or in other words if they expanded their map so they are now in the territory. I mean honestly, do you like to be told? I am not; and therefore, it is important and stimulating as a good leader to ask powerful questions. If your team can contribute to the process and common goal (outcome), they own it, show commitment and accountability.

Respect their maps, be curious about their maps, explore their maps and utilise their maps by guiding them into the right direction. If you disrespect their maps and push your employees hard, you probably just get to the wrong place faster. It is also important to understand and be aware of your own map and the extent to which it influences you. This gives you the opportunity to take responsibility for your current situation and look at things from a different perspective.

Once again, this is a very effective and powerful model to implement. It will unite your team so they can work well together, reach your targets with ease, and make the team members feel valued – while all along you can still sleep at night.

### **3.4 Ready to master your problems with a different mindset?**

A Ferrari can only be built with a top-of-the range engine and superior parts. In other words; what you put in is what you get out. Let's use this metaphor to tackle our new thinking strategy; the focus needs to be first on the parts (what goes inside) before we can achieve a superior outcome (Ferrari).

We need to focus on our internal paradigms, attitude, communication, beliefs etc. rather than to focus on our external environment. Let's face it: If you want to have a more cooperative and effective team, then you have to be more cooperative, understanding and supportive to your employees first. If you want to have more time to work **ON** the business rather than **IN** the business, you have to first invest time and contribute to your team. The Ferrari example shows clearly that you need to invest in the quality of the parts and components first before you can enjoy a ride in the Ferrari.

**People don't do what you tell them to do – They do what you do!**

Let's go back to Tom. Tom feels that his team is not working well together, and does not fully trust their abilities. If Tom takes a closer look at his own map, he will realise that these feelings and beliefs are based on past negative experiences. He will recognise that if he wants to be able to trust his team and get them to work well together, he needs to first have trust in his own abilities to lead the team and reach his targets.

What if Tom starts to believe that he CAN succeed as a leader, and that his team is there to support him? What if he understands that if the team members do not submit reports on time that they are unaware of the deadlines rather than lacking capability and teamwork? Managers often forget that they regularly attend meetings and are for example aware of all deadlines, without the team getting involved in this information flow. They assume if they knew everybody else should know too. But this is clearly not the case. Things might be common sense to Tom, but maybe not to his team. Common sense is what lies in your comfort zone – 'you know what you know'. More to this topic in chapter 'Step out of your comfort zone' on page 100.

**Time for Action**

Ask yourself, how much input (passion, commitment, consistency and accountability) you contribute to a project that you are told to work on, versus a project you have chosen or at least helped to choose as part of a team effort?

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Where could you get your team more involved? Reports, processes, meetings?

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In what areas do you lack trust in others' capabilities?

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## 4 Leadership foundation



To move from **dependence** to **independence** and ultimately to **interdependence** in your career and life, you need to understand the underlying principles.

As a dependent person, you possess unconscious incompetence, and don't know how or what to do yet. In order to move to the next level (independence), you need to learn how to:

- ✓ Practice daily habits
- ✓ Adapt positive language
- ✓ Take 100% responsibility
- ✓ Become a person of influence
- ✓ And create certainty within yourself

Once you have mastered these traits, you are at the stage of conscious incompetence, in other words you know what to do, but you don't know yet how to do it. To move up another level, you need to:

- ✓ Know your WHY
- ✓ Be true to your core values
- ✓ Manage yourself
- ✓ Take massive action

Once you mastered these qualities, you are at the level of conscious competence, where you are actively, thoughtfully doing it. But in order to Master you Mind and become an inspirational and successful leader, you need to move to the level of interdependence. In order to do so, you need to:

- ✓ Confidently manage conflict
- ✓ Use advanced communication strategies
- ✓ Inspire people around you
- ✓ Nurture group dynamics

This is when you reached the level of unconscious competence, and are actively doing it without thinking. This is the space of inspirational and successful leaders.

To move from dependence to independence is the foundation of a great leader. Unless the foundation is solid and steady, the house (signifying you as the leader) will collapse with time. You need to build your leadership habits, values and beliefs on solid unshakable principles. It is easy to read this blueprint and other leadership books and articles, and to be excited about new techniques and methods. However, they will only hold value for you when they are integrated into the foundation of your leadership house.

Throughout this extensive chapter we will in great detail show you how to build your leadership foundation, and advance from dependence to independence. Let's start with one of the first qualities you will need to acquire:

## **4.1 Practice daily habits**

All human beings have to deal with universal fears, which are:

- ✓ Fear of being found out, or not good enough
- ✓ Fear of not belonging
- ✓ Fear of not being loved or appreciated

How we deal with these fears impact the way we make decisions, our character and behaviours. These fears are the reason why we love rituals or habits in our life. Rituals help us demonstrate that we are part of something (tribe, family, team, group, business etc.) and shape to a great extent who we are, in other words our identity.

Now you probably start to understand why after getting an internal promotion and stepping into a new position, we experience an identity crisis and feel unsupported by our team. Although the same people, namely our former work colleagues, possibly still surround us, we change our and their rituals by changing our habits and behaviours towards the individuals within the team.

Rest assured that this is a normal process. It is however a crucial time to create new effective rather than ineffective habits based on the new position as well as the requirements from above and from below. It is a great example that habits can be broken especially if the circumstances require it. To maintain new effective habits can be an incredibly difficult process. You might be tempted to fall back into your old ways because you may miss the good old times. You might for example begin to micro-manage as it gives you the opportunity to go back to do what you do best. You might be longing for habits where you experience the camaraderie and the sense of belonging.

So, the first thing to be aware of is to not look back, but instead to look forward and get clear on what you want to achieve. Focus on your goal and why you applied for the position or accepted the promotion in the first place. If you don't, your past will shape your future, or in other words your past will become your future.

At the beginning, it is always hard to get new habits off the ground. You can actually refer this back to gravity law. Compare it with an airplane on a long-distance flight. Take-off consumes a much higher rate of petrol than the rest of the flight. So, give yourself time to change your habits, but start now. Remember that the natural force can work for you or against you. As a true leader, you will learn to know how to use it to everybody's advantage.

“The small changes over time create  
the biggest differences to your life.”  
~ Nicola Cook

### **4.1.1 Why your habits are so important**

Our habits determine our knowledge, skills and attitude. Let's have a look at these 3 key areas:

- ✓ Knowledge (WHAT to do)  
The theoretical or practical understanding of a subject you need in order to become an inspirational and successful leader
  
- ✓ Skills (HOW to do it)  
The proficiencies developed through training or experience that can be demonstrated physically in your role

- ✓ Attitude (WHY you WANT to do it)  
The level of willingness to do something, based on your WHY – the desire, passion, inspiration and motivation

In addition to knowledge, skills and attitude, as we practise our habits we will over time gain:

- ✓ Expertise or simply a lot of experience (WHERE and WHEN to do it)  
By practising habits over and over again, you will gain a lot of experience. This is a proven fact and shows that you are doing something great.

Beware though; an accountant, for example, could have a lot of experience in making the same mistake over years, decades or even a lifetime. If there is no growth in any of the above 3 key areas, s/he becomes unemployable. Although the accountant repeatedly uses his/her basic knowledge, s/he will fall behind as the environment keeps changing.

Versus an up-to-date accountant that not only practises habits but furthermore constantly questions their effectiveness. S/he invests in improving all 3 key areas and is willing to change and adjust habits to achieve a more effective and efficient outcome.

**In order to create new or more effective habits and growth in an area of experience, you also need to improve your knowledge, skills and attitude!**

Let's have a look at effective communication for example. The definition is as follows: *Effective communication is defined as verbal speech or other methods of relaying information that get a point across.*

If I consistently tell my team what to do but never listen to their input, I create a one-way communication that is very ineffective. The team members obviously hear what I am saying, but they might not understand my reasons and I therefore will not get my point across. Unless I understand this principle, I don't know **what** the problem is or that I in fact have a communication problem. At this stage, I have neither the skills nor the knowledge for Effective Communication.

Once I know **what** to do to initiate effective communication (listening), I might still be clueless on **how** to listen effectively to my employees. At this stage, I may have the knowledge, however am still lacking skills. I am reading books, attend communication webinars and learn all I need to know about the techniques of effective listening. I now have the knowledge and the skills on **how** to listen to others.

However, this might still not be enough to be an effective communicator, unless I **want** to listen to my team. I need to have the right attitude - the desire, passion, inspiration and motivation to listen and truly understand. I need to thoroughly, honestly believe that listening to my team will contribute to my success as a leader and person.

The process of improving my knowledge, skills and attitude gave me more experience and also allowed me to make improvements to my approach. This in turn helped me to become an expert in effective communication. So, I need to stress this again: In order to create new or more effective habits we need to have all three areas of competency (knowledge, skill and attitude)!

“Learning and development is your key to success.  
IMPACT | ACTION | OUTCOME”  
~ *Martin Probst*

I trust this example of Effective Communication demonstrates that you can only lead your team to success by creating habits and rituals that incorporate all three elements: the WHAT, the HOW and the WHY. It is a vital key to breaking through to new levels of personal and interpersonal effectiveness in your career and personal life.

If you understand this concept, you are ahead of most people that I work with in education. Too often they grasp the concept of knowledge and skills, but not the attitude component. This missing element leads to frustration for both the teachers and the students. It often makes education a painful process and increases dropout and failure rates, as well as unjustified NYCs (Not Yet Competent).

If you want to be a successful and inspirational leader, start with focusing on what you, your team and your managers want to achieve, and most importantly WHY you all want to achieve it.

Ask yourself and your employees:

- ✓ What would I / you like to achieve?
- ✓ What would that give me / you, once it's accomplished?
- ✓ How will I / you know that I / you have succeeded?
- ✓ Why is this so important to me / you?
- ✓ What would be different or better?
- ✓ How would these changes benefit those around me / you?

It is the motivation and inspiration, the WHY, that will give you the right attitude to move from **dependence** to **independence** and ultimately to **interdependence** in your career and life.

To learn how you can ensure that everybody in your team pursues the same common goal, and how the different needs, wants and desires can be aligned with the business vision, mission and values, emerge yourself in the next couple of chapters in this book.

### **4.1.2 Levels of Dependence**

Levels of dependence is a great tool to simply measure how much we have evolved in our career and/or life and to provide us with a clear understanding on what habits we need to improve and practice to get to the next, higher level and become an even better version of ourselves. But let me start right at the beginning.

From the moment we are conceived, we are completely dependent on our mother. The second we are born, we are being nurtured and fed; even our bum is wiped clean because we can't yet do it ourselves (not by a long shot). This is the ...

... paradigm of dependence

- ✓ You take care of me
- ✓ You are responsible for me
- ✓ I am dependent on you to get what I want
- ✓ I am directly affected by your decisions

Dependence is the quest of reacting to the environment in a way that ensures individual survival. In a business environment, it is the focus on simply doing what needs to be done, most likely in a reactive manner, to ensure the survival of the business. In your case this might mean to turn up for work each day (literally) and work till you drop. You have no time to think (other than of work), consider other career possibilities or even enjoy life (what is that?). You are reactive in the circle of dependence, earning money to stay alive. In other words, you live to work rather than work to live.

As we grow from an infant to a teenager, we gradually become more independent until we can take care of ourselves. This is the...

...paradigm of independence

- ✓ I can do it myself
- ✓ I am responsible
- ✓ I cause things to happen
- ✓ I am independent and can get what I want myself

In a business, it is the time when management proactively seeks growth and success. In your case, this might have been when you acted, got out of the rut and downloaded this resource in a moment of clarity. It could have been when you realised that there was more to life than turning up for work each day, and that only you could change the course of your career and life.

Once you explore and practice independence, you realise that by yourself you can only get to a certain point. For the majority of people independence is the final destination. However, if you want to reach that top level of interdependence, you first need to understand that there is more power in 'WE' than in 'I'.

Quantum physics teaches us the rules of Mother Nature, and that interdependence rules our planet. Everything is perfectly balanced and every plant and animal has a purpose (even though it doesn't always appear that way). Just like a doughnut, there is no hole without the doughnut but there is also no doughnut without the hole.

Most people who strive for interdependence come to the conclusion that the highest purpose of human nature is the relationship with others. In other words, the synergies and combined efforts of individuals to achieve common goals. This is the...

...paradigm of interdependence

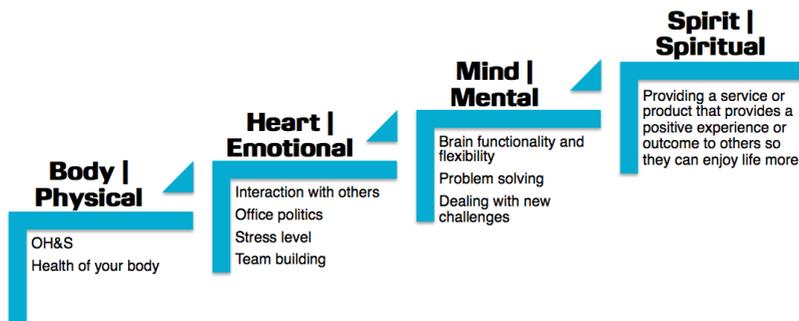
- ✓ We take care of each other
- ✓ We can do it
- ✓ We share our combined knowledge, skills and positive attitude to create something bigger (1 + 1 = >3)

If you think about your situation, this could mean to share your newly gained knowledge and inspire others to think outside the square, take a new approach and ‘expand their map’. By doing that you will not only improve your career and life, but create a ripple effect that reaches well beyond your imagination.

Just as the levels of dependence are connected and ruled by universal laws, you need to go through dependence and independence before you can become interdependent. It is impossible to skip one level.

It can however happen that we are at different levels in different areas of our life. Jenny could for example live by herself and be highly independent at home and in her social life, but at the same time slip into a dependence role at work if she is controlled and micro-managed by her Operations Manager.

All human beings work at different levels of existence, thoughts and development.



Just as with the previous example of Jenny and the different levels of dependence in various areas of her life, the same can happen with our levels of existence. Hard working (physically independent) Senior Accountant James for example, who is highly inspired by the happy clients (spiritually independent) needs a lot of guidance in the team and can appear as high maintenance (emotionally and mentally dependent).

Your aim as an effective leader is to get yourself and your individual team members from dependence to independence to ultimately interdependence, so you can create a highly functional and well-regarded team.

### **Visualization is the Key**

Visualization is about seeing yourself as the leader you want to be.

- ✓ Picturing yourself looking after yourself and others by providing a safe work environment, and promoting health and well-being within the team (Physical level).
- ✓ Creating self-awareness to manage your own emotions and to look outside of yourself, to truly understand your team and their individual needs (Emotional level).
- ✓ Encouraging critical thinking by you and within the team to make smarter decisions (Mental level).

- ✓ Promoting effective communication strategies that are solution based and achieve win-win situations (Mental level).
- ✓ Acknowledging the difference you make in your team members' professional lives, and how it positively affects the work environment and ultimately their private lives which truly reflects the spirit of leading with integrity (Spiritual level).

You need to be able to visualise what you want before you can actually do or have it. Being able to visualise how you successfully lead your team on all four planes is the beginning to move from dependence to independence, and will have an incredibly positive impact on the business, clients, team, employees, families, and yourself. Throughout the visualization, make sure you engage all your five senses (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, gustatory, and olfactory), as detailed and accurately as possible. See yourself as the independent person. Hear what you are telling yourself and your staff. Become aware of your physiology and psychology of excellence. See yourself as a role model, how you are treating your staff and how they admire and respect you for who you are and the guidance you give them with your clear communication.

This all is possible once you are clear on your purpose and goals which in turn enables you to language it (more on how you can do this in the upcoming paragraphs and chapters of this book).

“First comes thought; then organization of that thought,  
into ideas and plans;  
then transformation of those plans into reality.  
The beginning, as you will observe, is in your imagination.”  
~ *Napoleon Hill*

## **Innovation**

In your position, you often have to be innovative with the planning and controlling of your resources. True innovation comes from independent people who can design new strategies and procedures based on their own creativity. They are not subject to and influenced by others (dependence), for example by their manager who wants it in a particular way based on his/her experience and thinking.

Knowing that there is a first creation of everything in life (visualization), we need to choose if we want to be our own first creation, or somebody else's second creation. To answer this question ask yourself *“Do I choose to be an amazing original or the bad copy of somebody else?”*

The answer should be simple, especially if you review your purpose in life and the legacy you would like to leave behind for the people who matter most (more on this in the upcoming chapter 'Know your WHY'). Being aware of what matters most and focusing on it through visualizations will assist you in prioritizing your work and life even more effectively and efficiently.

### **Interdependence in business**

As mentioned earlier, independence on all levels is the goal for the majority of people. Although it is an achievement in itself, it creates enormous issues in business. This is when you see team members fighting their own battles to get what they want, rather than focusing on the big picture and common goal where ultimately everybody's needs and wants are taken care of (often beyond what the individuals could have ever hoped for. Remember:  $1 + 1 = >3$ ).

*"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."*

*~ Aristotle*

If you have many independent employees in your team, you will have difficulties in communicating effectively as well as building teamwork and utilizing resources in effective group dynamics.

I experienced exactly this situation years ago when I was commencing one of my contracts as an officer on a luxurious cruise liner. I took over from a 'manager' who created a culture of independence with comments such as *"I don't want you to help the other guy, just make sure you have done your own s@!#"*. This resulted for example in 3 different people independently creating the exact same reports for their individual tasks ( $1 + 1 = 2$ ).

To me, it made absolutely no sense to continue wasting more precious time, money and limited resources by keeping employees in independent isolation, when instead we could have gone onshore and enjoy the most beautiful places on earth. The only possible way to do so was to create and nurture an interdependent environment, where independent people would work together in a smart way by contributing and sharing their resources for a greater outcome, where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts ( $1 + 1 = >3$ ).

**Time for Action**

Take this opportunity to look at your team and assess where you can move your employees from independence to interdependence. This will reduce cost and stress, increase productivity and profit and create spare time to educate your staff.

Identify issues:

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Implement solutions:

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### 4.1.3 Dependence shift

By now you understand that as an inspirational and successful leader you need to foster an interdependent team environment that goes beyond your department. Understand that your team cannot be successful as an independent department. Only interdependence is the key to success. Just think about it for a second.

What would you do without:

- ✓ **Marketing and Advertising** that is responsible for research, and developing your product packaging, pricing and creative materials?
- ✓ **Production** that orders inventory when needed, and fulfills orders
- ✓ **Sales team** that sells your products to other businesses or consumers and build customer relationships
- ✓ **Administration** that handle general phone and email enquiries, and provide help with your paperwork
- ✓ **Human resources** that recruits and inducts your new employees
- ✓ **Payroll** that ensure your staff is paid on time

- ✓ **Maintenance** that maintains and repairs your equipment
- ✓ And many more...

So, let's move away from being independent where we often make selfish decisions, completely incongruent with the vision, mission and values of the business we work for.

The following pages provide you with solutions on how you can move through all three levels of dependence as quickly and effortlessly as possible. It supports you in your role as a leader to create an effective team environment.

## **4.2 Become aware of your language**

It has been said that language is the most powerful tool in human communication<sup>2</sup>. Sadly, only a minority of people know how to use it effectively. If more people would become aware of their language, families would see a lot less conflicts. Cultural diversity would win ground. The world would see fewer wars. Successful people become aware of their language and learn how to use it purposefully, unsuccessful people have no idea how their language is sabotaging their success and life, and how they fall victim to their own words.

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<sup>2</sup> Christine Leong's essay "Being A Chink"

What would change if we chose different words? How much could this adjustment influence our day-to-day life? Could we really consciously make such a shift? This next chapter will explain exactly how the choice of words influences you, and guide you through a set of tweaking techniques.

We language the world the way we perceive it. We talk how we feel. Therefore, language is a fantastic indicator of whether you think you have choices or not. It is an indicator of the level you see yourself at.

### **4.2.1 Necessity vs. Possibility**

As previously explained, the first step to becoming a true leader is to move from dependence to independence. Unfortunately, many managers are far from being independent, not to mention interdependent. This first step to move from dependence to independence is by no means an easy one. It is based on self-awareness and self-management.

Have a look at the following table with word choices:

Negative Necessity	Doesn't allow It's not time Shouldn't Supposed not to Not necessary
Improbability	Couldn't Don't let Might not Wouldn't Don't wish
Impossibility	Am not Don't choose to Unable to Won't Don't intend
Necessity	Allow It's time Should Supposed to Necessary
Probability	Could Had better Wish Would May / might
Possibility	Able to Choose to Try Will Intend

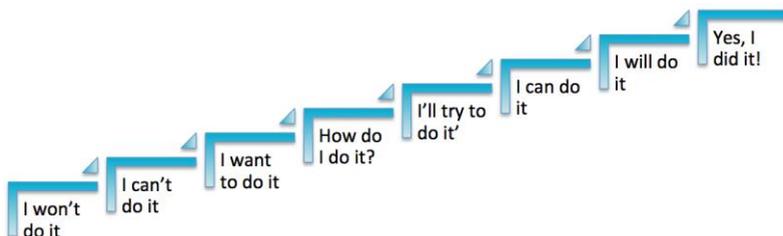
Followers use the language of and are acting upon **necessity**. They are at effect and let things happen to them.

- ✓ *Should, shouldn't, must, must not, have to, need to, it is necessary. For example: "I have to work overtime again and there is nothing I can do. It really annoys me; I am not supposed to be working this many hours."*

Inspirational and successful leaders use the language of and are acting upon **possibility**. They cause things to happen in their career and life.

- ✓ *Can, will, may, possible. For example: "I can work overtime tomorrow if I want to; I want to take on a project that interests me. No one can make me do it though, it's my choice."*

What level are you operating at most of the time?



Using ‘negative’ language is often a recipe for disaster. Negativity becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy and this is why: Our brain always finds evidence to support the beliefs or truths that we communicate (in this case negativity). Just like Google, it always gives you the results you are searching for. Try it for yourself; it doesn’t matter if you type in *poverty* or *wealth*, you will either way get thousands of hits. The question is: what do you want to focus on?

Once you change your focus and ultimately your perception, your entire professional and personal life will change. Does the world itself change when you begin using different words and phrases? No, the world is still the same, but you are not. You will have transformed the way you perceive things by choosing to focus on what is possible. This one action alone helps you uncover and master the phenomenal resources you have within you right at this moment because you already possess determination and passion, the drive to learn and grow, and the courage and desire to create and enjoy a leadership role at its deepest and most satisfying level. Otherwise you wouldn’t be striving to become an inspirational and successful leader.

Give yourself permission to let go of your ideologies that say “I can’t” or “I am not good enough”. It is lack of choice, helplessness and hopelessness that causes increased fear and lack of self-esteem in professionals. Start with this:

- ✓ Replace “I can’t” with “I won’t” (it’s not that you can’t, it is that you choose not to)
- ✓ Replace “I should” with “I could” (this moves you from necessity to possibility)
- ✓ Replace “It’s a problem” with “It’s an opportunity” (let yourself grow, learn, and create something new as an employee or business leader by focusing on the positives and not the negatives)

This notion is very powerful and almost too simple to be appreciated, but it works nonetheless.

#### **4.2.2 Focus**

Concentrate on your limitations long enough and they will become a reality. However, if you shift your focus and spend more time on the positives than the negatives, you will experience an abundance of success.

Your brain is programmed like a GPS system designed to find a specific location. So, the real question is whether you are programming your GPS with all of the destinations you don’t want to go to, or whether you have the specific address that represents the exact place you want to be, right down to the house number.

Often, we spend more time focusing on what we don't want, versus what we do want. For example, you may think about how you don't want to work overtime because you'll miss your child's after school activities or that you don't want to have a job that involves being outdoors because you don't like the cold weather in the winter months.

You may wonder why this is a big deal, but if you are determined to drive your car along a smooth leadership path, you can't do it by unconsciously telling your mind where not to go. The rule is simple: **You must be able to language where you want to wind up or you can never expect to arrive at your destination.**

If you are not yet convinced, I would like you to do the following short activity: Do NOT think of a red car. No matter where your mind takes you, let no red car enter the picture.

What just happened? In order to not think of a red car, you first had to think of a red car to process the information. This means that your focus had to be on the one thing you were told not to think about. This happened because your unconscious mind is unable to process negatives (now you also understand why a child spills the drink just after you tell the child not to spill it).

*“What you focus on is what you get  
to the exclusion of everything else.”*

*~ Unknown*

Following is some practical advice on how you can replace negative language with positive language for more beneficial results. This of course applies to all areas of your life, not just the business.

**Negatives → Positives**

What my manager said is confusing. → What my manager said needs clarification.

It is too hard to get a promotion. → It is an exciting challenge to get a promotion.

They will never understand me. → What do I need to learn about myself to become a better communicator?

You are wrong. → Let's have a look at the facts.

I will try. → I will either decide to do it, or not to do it.

I can't. I'll never. → I can't yet. I won't yet.

However / But → And

We've never done that. → Here, specifically, is what we have done in the past.

There is nothing I can do. → How can I change this situation?

Although these are minor word changes, the meanings are totally different. In fact, if you say the example words and phrases out loud, you will notice that the negative ones create feelings of limitation and lack of choice, whereas the positive ones make you feel in control and self-empowered.

Once you change your focus and ultimately your perception, both your professional and personal lives will change. You will have transformed the way you perceive things by choosing to focus on what is possible. This one action alone helps you uncover and master the phenomenal resources you have within you right at this moment because you already possess determination and passion, the drive to learn and grow, and the courage and desire to create and enjoy a career at its deepest and most satisfying level.

The key is to appreciate that it is neither money nor any other materialistic things that will make you happy. It is about whom you choose to become as a person and how you decide to grow in the business and beyond, as both are clearly your choice.

### **4.3 Take 100% responsibility for all your actions and inactions**

True independence empowers you to cause things to happen, rather than being constantly at effect and pushed around by your direct reports, superiors, directors, environment, time, money and the universe. In other words, you are being proactive and take responsibility for what's happening in your career and life. This liberates you to become independent.

Let's start right at the beginning of each day when the alarm goes off. What is it that you are telling yourself to get out of bed? Is it something like: "I have to get up" [because I must go to work and don't have a choice (at effect)] or is it "I want to get up" [and I am looking forward to get to work and take action to get things done (at cause)]?

This simple illustration of self-talk right at the core of each day determines if you are at effect (have to) or at cause (want to). In other words, it is about how much choice you believe you have in life, and therefore the power you have to cause things to happen (independent) at work or at home, rather than blaming others for where you are right now (dependent). You have reached independence when you cause things to happen for yourself, when you take 100% responsibility for your actions and inactions, and hold yourself accountable for anything that happens (or not) in your work and life.

### **4.3.1 ‘Response-Ability’: The ability to choose your response**

Let’s examine the word responsibility. ‘Response’ and ‘ability’ clearly indicate that we have the ability to respond in our own way. Independent and successful people use the power to choose their response wisely and cause things to happen in their favor. There is no blame attached to anything or anyone, even if these independent people fail to achieve a desired outcome. They will find other ways and take responsibility until they get what they need, want and desire.

This concept of taking responsibility can be difficult to swallow for many as it is so much easier to blame somebody else. However, did you notice that when you point a finger at someone, three fingers are pointing back at you? To become a successful leader, you need to demonstrate that you take 100% responsibility for your actions (and inactions), which involves not assigning blame for your current state, position or personal life. It is about choosing how you are responding to the issues you are facing, and empowering and trusting yourself to respond in a way that improves the situation, process and outcome.

For further details on the topic ‘Response-Ability’, view my YouTube video<sup>3</sup> from the International Research Conference in Europe.

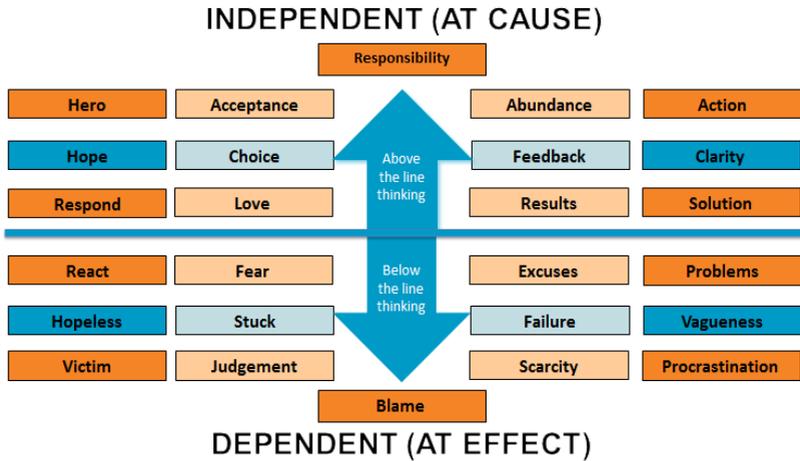
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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ma0-2ylrlqw>

### 4.3.2 Cause things to happen

#### Being 'at effect'

The following overview gives you an understanding of the level of responsibility you currently take in life and career. Find out where you are by looking at the language you use to express both yourself and the world around you.



Which area do you most identify yourself with? Do you feel like the victim, or can you see clear solutions? How often do you use words like **Stuck**, **Failure** or **Problems**? How often do you make **excuses**, **judge** or **blame** others? How often do you **procrastinate** in your office not knowing how to meet your targets or how to tackle a new report, and what to do next, feeling **hopeless**? The more you can identify yourself with the above language pattern, the more you are 'at effect'.

The 'at effect' state of mind is the reason for being dependant on others. You miss out on opportunities and success. It holds you back and shrinks your comfort zone to a point that the slightest changes at work can lead to overwhelm and anxiety. If you are in this situation, you have to take action right now. Go to the core.

Taking 100% responsibility involves not assigning blame for the current state or level of your position or personal life. It is about choosing how you are responding to the issues you face as a manager and empowering and trusting yourself to respond in a way that improves the situation, process and outcome.

For example, somebody 'at effect' would powerlessly say:

- ✓ "There is nothing I can do to reach my targets"
- ✓ "Why me? Why do I have a thankless job like this when others are happy in theirs?"
- ✓ "It is not my fault that my team isn't working together effectively. I didn't ask for it to be this way."

**Being 'at cause'**

As opposed to the seemingly choice-less phrases before mentioned, a person 'at cause' would say:

- ✓ "Although I don't like this current situation, I am determined to find a way to turn it around!"
- ✓ "The craziness of my current position is what it is, but changes are up to me and I have the means to appropriately deal with it."
- ✓ "Let's look at what other alternatives we have."

Yes, contrary to what you may currently believe, you have all the means (or resources) you need to become a successful and inspirational leader. Nobody other than you is responsible for the transformation you seek. If you believe that somebody will create your success (or be responsible for the lack of it) then you are completely dependent and it's time to make that paradigm shift to independence by changing your language and by starting to cause things to happen for you and your leadership success. It is you and only you that can make that move to independence!

**Making the shift & calling the shots**

If you already mastered all the traits of an independent person, you would have a very clear understanding of your thinking, and constantly modify your approach to improve your language, behaviours and outcomes. If this is the case, you are welcome to skip this chapter. But if the above 'at effect' examples even partially describe you, create your transformation right now. Not when you feel like it, not when it is convenient, but starting right this moment! This might sound pushy or even aggressive to you, but it's not. It is value driven and needed in order to make the paradigm shift to move to above-the-line with your thinking. In other words, get off the back seat and start driving your own bus. This will give you the opportunity to decide on your desired destination, on who needs to get off and whom you allow on the bus.

Decide to accept responsibility for your actions and inactions that brought you to the point where you are today. Admit when you've not made the best choices or when you didn't make any choices at all. The purpose of this isn't to beat yourself up or belittle yourself for decisions you've made in the past. It should simply be an eye-opener for behaviours you have (whether consciously or unconsciously) so that they can no longer hold you back.

- ✓ Understand that there is no **Failure**, only **Feedback**
- ✓ Focus on **Solutions** (ask yourself HOW & WHAT) rather than wasting time on the **Problems** (avoid WHY questions)
- ✓ Take **Action** instead of **Procrastinating**
- ✓ Focus on achieving **Results** rather than looking for **Excuses** (you can't have both)
- ✓ Become the **Hero** rather than playing the **Victim**
- ✓ Understand that you always have a **Choice**, which means you can't be **Stuck**
- ✓ Get **Clarity** on your goals to avoid **Vagueness** and confusion
- ✓ Start to understand and **Accept** people rather than **Judging** them simply on their behaviours
- ✓ Take **Responsibility** for your action (and inaction) rather than **Blaming** others for your current situation

Once you truly grasp and implement the above points, you are no longer hiding - you are taking full responsibility for your actions and outcomes. You are calling the shots.

"The most common way people give up their power is  
by thinking they don't have any."

~ *Alice Walker*

### **Time for action**

Please take a moment to reflect on this chapter before you start with the next. Be true to yourself when asking yourself the following question: "Do I have the power to choose my response?"

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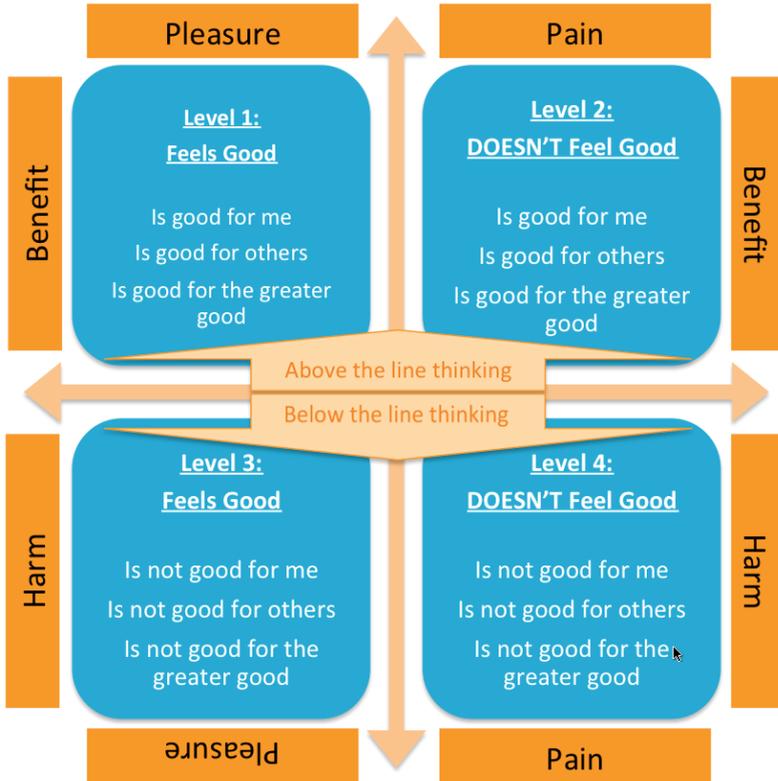
I hope you successfully started to peel back the layers of the onion, and realised that you have chosen to be [insert emotion] in the past. And you also realised that with this new self-awareness, you could go forward choosing not to be [insert emotion from above], and feel a more resourceful emotion instead. This new behaviour moves you to independence. It will give you more self-esteem and confidence, as well as the success and leadership skills you are looking for!

### **4.3.3 What's your level?**

To not only be successful as a leader, but to be an outstanding one, you have to be doing the right things (effectiveness) and doing things right (efficiency). When you are busy, for example, ask yourself if you are busy just for the sake of being busy, or if you are busy in an effective and efficient way.

I am sure you agree that every workplace nowadays is extremely fast paced and requires flexibility from each individual employee. Businesses move from one change into the next and demand from you to step out of your comfort zone and expect you to adapt and succeed in the new environment. Human beings are influenced by pain and/or pleasure, and often pick the easiest way to a feel-good experience without considering the long-term impact (consequences).

This Behaviour Diagram illustrates how it works:



**Level 1 Behaviours... (Comfort zone)**

... are activities or skills you've already mastered, which presupposes that you need to go through level 2 behaviours first to get to level one. No matter what type of personality you are, it's time for you to embrace uncertainty, as this is the only way for you to expand level 1 behaviours for long-term success, which is defined as evolution and growth. Even to maintain your comfort zone, you need to at least keep up with the changes in your environment; otherwise your comfort zone (level 1) will shrink. The more you want to move up and succeed in your career, the more you need to embrace level 2 behaviours.

**Level 2 Behaviours... (Short term pain for long term gain)**

... initially require extra effort and investment because you are facing something unfamiliar (no pain, no gain).

If you like to explore and spend most of your time learning new skills, you are in the pole position for professional success since you also like to be challenged at work. You are very determined to achieve your KPIs as well as the vision and goals of the company. You are not intimidated by unfamiliar situations because of your personal confidence to master them. You see challenges as opportunities (stepping-stones) rather than threats (stumbling blocks).

The secret of evolution and success is to spend most of your time in level 2 until the unfamiliar becomes familiar and you turn level 2 into level 1. This is called expanding the comfort zone and will give you the opportunity to then tackle the next unfamiliar task or skill (and so on).

For example: When exposed to a new and more sophisticated computer software (level 1), you will most likely face some challenges at the beginning (level 2). However, the longer you use the program, the more familiar it becomes and you notice that it saves you time. You become more effective and efficient (level 1). This then leaves you with more time to learn another new skill (level 2). Other examples might include: presenting in front of an audience, a sales call, or giving up addictions, which leads us to level 3 behaviours...

### **Level 3 Behaviours... (Short term gain for long term pain)**

... create addiction issues such as alcohol, smoking, overeating, whingeing and bitching, gossiping and also being busy for the sake of being busy. This is the level with an abundance of negative self-talk. This is where you tell yourself why you can't give up alcohol, quit smoking, lose weight etc. These thoughts make you feel good because they keep you inside your comfort zone and stop you from doing anything that may not feel good at that moment, even though it would be good for you (level 2).

Examples of short-term gain for long-term pain

- ✘ Alcohol makes you feel good and helps you forget your problems – Alcohol can lead to health issues, violence, financial hardship etc.
  
- ✘ Smoking can relax you – Smoking increases the chance of many diseases and can kill you
  
- ✘ Over eating or unhealthy eating (sugary/fatty) gives you enjoyment and comfort – Excess weight, which leads to obesity and an increase of heart disease etc.
  
- ✘ Whingeing, bitching and gossiping give you a sense of significance, because what you're really saying is: I am so much better than them – These strategies have a huge negative impact on productivity and effectiveness, affects the team environment and people will distance themselves from you. Personal connection fades, you become a liability to the company, and your redundancy might be just around the corner
  
- ✘ Negative self-talk and blame means that you don't have to take responsibility for your actions and mistakes – A life of regret, looking back on all the things you lost and didn't do because of what you told yourself.

You might live in hope that things will change, but until you consciously move to level 2 behaviours, level 3 is where you will be stuck and sooner or later will be falling down into ...

**Level 4 Behaviours...**

... are paralysing you through stress (the perception of too much variety) or procrastination (the perception of fear). This is where the 'short-term gain for long-term pain' takes their toll. The things that used to feel good but weren't good for you are suddenly also no longer feeling good. Needless to say, this is NOT the place you want to be!

**In Essence**

Be driven by long-term benefits rather than short-term pleasure to avoid harm. Most people do whatever feels good (levels 1 & 3). They might be pushed into level 2 from time to time, but the majority will soon move down to level 3 (below the line thinking) to get a fix of 'feeling good' even though it's not good for them. They think about themselves and what they get out of it short term rather than what it means in the long run.

For you to be an inspirational and successful leader, you need to spend the majority of your time in level 2 and the rest in level 1 (above the line thinking). Celebrate feeling uncomfortable while developing new successful habits during a good part of your time, as this is the only place growth can occur!

## 4.4 Fundamental needs of human beings

Following on to what we discussed in the previous chapter about the four behaviour levels is the need to fulfil the fundamental needs we all human beings have. Every human being, (regardless of gender, age, race, culture etc.) has the same 6 needs and is driven to satisfy all of them. This is valid in all different areas of our life such as business, family, relationships and in the way we spend our spare time. The priority on any of these needs will be different depending on the part of your life, but for you to be fulfilled in these individual areas, all fundamental needs have to be met.

How we satisfy these needs is crucial and will determine our experience of happiness. These needs also show us why we do what we do and why we don't do what we know we should be doing. These Six Core Needs<sup>4</sup> can be met in two ways:

- ✓ **Un-resourcefully (low quality)**, which means the way the need is met is **obtainable but not sustainable** or
- ✓ **Resourceful (high quality)**, which means the way the need is met is **obtainable and sustainable**.

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<sup>4</sup> 6 core needs are a model of NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) and based on the idea of Anthony Robbins

For example, you can take drugs or drink alcohol to meet your need of variety but is it sustainable? You could meet your need for variety through your career choice, different hobbies or adventure. Remember: Whenever you feel down and things don't seem to be going the way you want them to, use what you know about the six core needs to identify which of your needs are not met, or met in an unresourceful way. Then identify what can be done about meeting them in a resourceful way.

### Personal needs

*(must be met by everyone on some level)*

**1. Certainty (Safety, Comfort)**

**2. Uncertainty (Variety / Adventure)**

**3. Significance**

**4. Connection / Love**

### Spiritual needs

*(essential to living a fulfilled life and determine your level of happiness)*

**5. Growth**

**6. Contribution**

### 4.4.1 Certainty (Safety/Comfort)

The need for certainty is a fundamental survival instinct. We all need certainty in our life as we want to feel safe, comfortable and in control, so that we can avoid pain and experience pleasure. Those of us with a deep need for certainty do our best to avoid chaos and the unexpected. The questions we need to ask ourselves are: How do we get a resourceful certainty? Are we seeking certainty in our environment (controlling others) or through believing in ourselves? The answers to these questions will determine the quality of our lives!

#### **Un-resourceful / Obtainable but unsustainable:**

The more we think our environment has to change for us to feel certain, the less quality of life we will experience. We take fewer risks and in due course experience less growth, feel increasingly miserable and become fearful. This quite often leads to un-resourceful habits in our life like for example procrastination, spending hours on social media, eating chunk food on a regular basis, attempting to control work colleagues, everything becoming a routine etc.

**Resourceful / Obtainable and Sustainable:**

The more we take responsibility for our own sense of certainty, the greater our feelings of self-worth. Our ability to handle uncertainty around us is directly equal to how much success we experience in our career and life. The more uncertainty we can deal with and still move forward, the better leaders we become. The more certainty we experience within ourselves and the less certainty we need in our environment, the more growth we'll be willing to experience. The more we seek to learn and discover, the greater our self-esteem becomes and thus the better we feel about our lives. This allows us to become who we need to become in order to handle the issues we face along the way.

**4.4.2 Uncertainty (Variety/Adventure)**

The flip side of certainty is our need for uncertainty, or variety. Whilst we need some level of certainty to function, we also need some level of variety. As they say: 'Variety is the spice of life'. If things are too predictable for too long we get bored and could possibly end up in depression due to the self-created lack of choice, so we'll spice things up to feel variety and adventure. This need for variety is a physical and emotional need that encourages us to bring the new, the surprise, the stimulation, the unknown and sometimes disorderly into our lives. How we do this tells us a lot about the quality of our lives.

**Un-resourceful / Obtainable but unsustainable:**

People who experience too much variety retreat, close down and become ineffective. Some people respond to too much variety by becoming 'control freaks', attempting to get things back under control. Some people run away due to overwhelm, take drugs, become intoxicated, or sabotage themselves. Another un-resourceful reaction to not enough variety can be to create drama and problems, or to constantly for example mislay keys or other items, so they have 'something to do'.

**Resourceful / Obtainable and Sustainable:**

Some people relish the uncertainty and become even more resourceful. The more variety (uncertainty) we can live with, the more we'll achieve, the more we'll learn, the more successful and alive we'll be. Some people don't want a lot of uncertainty, and are content with cruising along in a mid-level role, repeating many tasks over and over, for years. These people need less variety and are perfect for that role. Resourceful strategies include playfulness, embracing adventure, changing the meaning of an event (reframe), different hobbies, new challenges and creativity.

### **4.4.3 Significance (are you a 'giver' or a 'getter' of significance?)**

Every person needs to feel important and wanted. Needing to feel special and important in some way has helped to shape who you are today. We can feel significance by building or achieving something, or we can feel significant by tearing something or someone down. It drives us to assert ourselves as individuals, look out for our own interests and put our own ego first. To satisfy this need we find ways to feel important, unique or special and prove our self-worth, and can sometimes be judgmental of others. In all cases significance comes from comparing yourself to others. At its most positive it leads you to raise your standards. At its worst you expect others to show you that you are worthy. With this need comes a caution - if we over focus on it we lose connection to others because of the differences we emphasise. The need for significance can either be met through our egos, which is tiresome and grating on others. Alternatively, the need for significance can be met through service to others and giving. It can be met through doing something that you're proud of, through blaming someone, through yelling...

There are lots of ways to meet this need, some harmful:

- ✘ If you blame others for your mess, you're meeting your need for significance.

...and some helpful:

- ✓ If you take responsibility for the mess, you're also meeting your need for significance.

Both approaches accomplish meeting the need, only one way is un-resourceful and one way is resourceful.

**Un-resourceful / Obtainable but unsustainable ('Getter' of Significance):**

You can meet it through blaming others, yelling at someone and sulking, putting others down, gossip, sad stories about yourself, martyr, victim, lying in a way that gets us caught, rebellion...

**Resourceful / Obtainable and Sustainable ('Giver' of Significance):**

You can meet your need for significance through being a leader of yourself and others, inventing stuff, solving problems, volunteer work, achieving a goal, mastery in your field of endeavour, facing challenges...

#### **4.4.4 Love/Connection (in the absence of love we will settle for connection)**

Everyone needs connection with other beings and strives for hopes of love. You need to feel loved and touched in order to survive and that need is still at your core. In this sense connection is the ultimate survival instinct. This is equally valid in family and partner relationships as it is in business and our relationships with colleagues. The need for connection is represented by the human desire to communicate with, relate to and receive love from those around us. We are motivated to share and develop relationships with people to meet this need in our lives.

##### **Un-resourceful / Obtainable but unsustainable:**

Needy, self-harm, unhealthy relationships, connection through problem e.g. drugs, 'if you don't love me I'll hurt myself', through smoking, drinking, arguing...

##### **Resourceful / Obtainable and Sustainable:**

Sharing, supporting, connecting through nature, exercising, writing, talking, relationship to god, others and yourself, self-worth, your truth, loyalty to yourself, meditation...

The first four core needs are the biological or personal needs and must be met by everyone at some level. The following two core needs are the needs at the spiritual level and are essential to living a fulfilled life and determine your level of happiness.

#### **4.4.5 Growth**

If we grow, we feel good about ourselves, our self-worth goes up, our confidence builds, we feel more certainty, we are experiencing more variety, and we are generally feeling good (significance and connection). If we're not growing, we feel as if shrinking and being 'in a rut'. We all need to grow in some way. If someone isn't feeling that great about themselves, it could be because they've been avoiding doing the things that could lead to them learning and growing.

Through personal development and learning we fulfil the need for growth in our lives. This core need is what compels us to mature and evolve as human beings. We need to constantly develop emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. There is a universal law about growth: everything is either growing or dying - there is no middle ground. Anything that you want to remain in your life be it your wealth, your health, your relationship, your happiness or your success - must be cultivated, developed, expanded, or else it will degenerate. As such, in order to keep what you have, you have to keep growing it.

### **4.4.6 Contribution**

This final need is another pathway to happiness. We get to give to others beyond ourselves, which seems to cause our own problems to fade! Contribution combined with growing personally is indisputably leading you to feel great about YOU.

Ultimately, we all share the need for contribution that is manifested in our desire to serve those around us and give rather than simply receive. Contribution is about sharing what we have with others. Everything in the universe contributes beyond itself or is eliminated. Most problems disappear when you focus on serving beyond yourself. Through contribution of our energy, time, attention, focus, money etc. to our partner, our family, the people we work with and the society as a whole we extend who we are.

#### 4.4.7 And this is where it gets really interesting

If any strategy meets three of your needs (resourcefully or un-resourcefully), you become addicted to that behaviour. You will keep doing it, even if it hurts you, because it's meeting your needs. If you complain about other people (significance), avoid taking responsibility (certainty), get overly emotional about problems (connection) – you're going to meet three needs, even though they are clearly unresourceful. You *will* become addicted to that pattern of behaviour unless you become aware of how it's meeting your needs and then find an alternative behaviour that will meet those three needs in a more resourceful and functional way.

*For example: If somebody loves gossiping...*

**We become addicted to behaviours because it meets our needs.**

- *... and finds people who buy into the story, s/he will become addicted to gossiping, because this strategy meets the person's need of unresourceful variety, connection and significance.*

**We give up behaviours if they no longer meet our needs.**

- *...but if others don't buy into the story and are not interested in listening or participating, the person will stop the behaviour, or strategy in other words, after a few failed attempts, because the strategy of connection and significance is NOT met and the variety all the sudden turned into certainty. This is where people not buying into such stories become true persons of influence, as they understand the power of responding in a way that achieves win/win. More on this topic in the chapters 'Become a person of influence' from page 107, and chapter 'Focus on Win-win' from page 216.*

**And here's where it gets even more interesting**

Our responsibility is to meet our needs in as many resourceful (obtainable and sustainable) ways as possible. For example, if someone loves complaining (certainty, variety, significance and connection) (no growth or contribution) – can they keep complaining? Yes. - Is it sustainable (as in, if they kept doing it would things improve)? NO. - Is it resourceful? NO. - So, they should stop doing it. Simple, isn't it?

I hope this information helps you to appreciate the human beings' desire to meet their needs, and how they meet those needs is creating the quality of their lives. Your focus as a leader is to support your employees, and yourself of course, to meet those needs in a resourceful way.

#### 4.4.8 Ditch the Underlying Gain

By now you should have sufficient understanding on how to create a happy and fulfilled work environment and life style for yourself and others. However, if you keep doing things that are not helpful for your career and life, then we need to talk about the payoff for this negative thought or action, whichever it may be for you. Because on some level your self-sabotage strategy has a benefit. In other words, if you didn't get anything out of it, you wouldn't do it anymore. Now, you're probably telling yourself that you are an exception to the rule, but you're not. Why? Because, on some level, staying with your old choices is working for you, you just might not be aware of how.

Let's get back to our earlier example of Tom, the Operations Manager. Tom complained about having to work insane hours during the busy End of Financial Year period for most of his career. He never got to take any holidays during that time, and therefore the chance to escape the Australian Winter together with his family. Everybody else went to have a great time, while he stayed home and worked double-shifts. Unaware of what he was doing, the unconscious, underlying gain from his discontent was in not having to spend time with his rather dysfunctional family. Tom found a scapegoat and therefore didn't have to take responsibility for his own actions, which included not even asking for some time off. Now while I understand that the End of Financial Year is a busy time for many industries, there is always room to move, and others in the team might be truly happy to do double-shifts or chip in elsewhere. Prior

to Tom's paradigm shift, he was disgruntled because he was often bypassed for time off. Fear of facing his family situation was his stumbling block.

Due to his newly found awareness, courage, and increased self-confidence, Tom created new possibilities and was now able to choose a better strategy. He let go of his love-hate relationship with End of Financial Year, focused on his family situation, and took responsibility for the changes he needed to make. Tom was able to adjust his feelings and angst towards the relationship with his parents, sorted things out and ultimately got to spend his first 'Escape the Aussie Winter' holiday with his family – on his own terms.

### **People do more to avoid pain than they do to feel pleasure**

In your professional life, this may mean avoiding the feeling of failure and self-doubt, dealing with a dysfunctional team, or lacking the confidence to do what must be done to succeed. The benefit of playing it safe is avoiding this perceived pain, and the underlying gain is to not have to face the fear of going outside your comfort zone. In other words, you fear the unknown and don't want to go there. You do more to avoid pain (by hanging in there, doing nothing and hoping that the problem would eventually just disappear) than to feel pleasure (getting out there, dealing with the actual problem and finding solutions before the situation gets worse).

We all want to have certainty about how things will play out before we act. But can you imagine a life of knowing exactly what was going to happen to you before it happened? Human beings are not designed to play it safe. What we want even more than certainty is to be challenged, to find out what we are capable of. We are designed to learn and to evolve and test ourselves.

*“You’re either green and growing or ripe and rotting.”*

*~ Ray Kroc*

When you discover what you are capable of both personally and professionally, you will finally feel a level of happiness and fulfillment that will complete you to your core. It is like doors and gates open for you and you become completely unstoppable. Opportunities and possibilities come your way without even trying for them and your savings account starts to grow without feeling like you’re working your fingers to the bone because you enjoy what you’re doing each and every day.

So, figure out what benefit you have from the things that are ultimately holding you back and find other, more productive, ways to get the same advantages. Once you do that it is like adding the last missing secret ingredient to complete your own signature dish for success.

*“When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.”*

*~ Proverb*

**Time for Action**

Ask yourself: on a scale of 0 to 10 how much of each of the 6 needs is fulfilled for you in any given context: business, family, relationship.

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Are all your needs met at a 7 or higher or do you have to go somewhere else to have your needs met?

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If your needs are fulfilled at a 7 or higher on a scale of 0 to 10, you are motivated and passionate about what you do. What are examples of this?

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If you find you are at a 6 or lower in any of your needs, identify and take steps to allow you to feel more fulfilled.

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Ask yourself: in a given context, what do you need to do in order to feel more [insert the need: certainty, variety, significance, love & connection, growth, contribution]?

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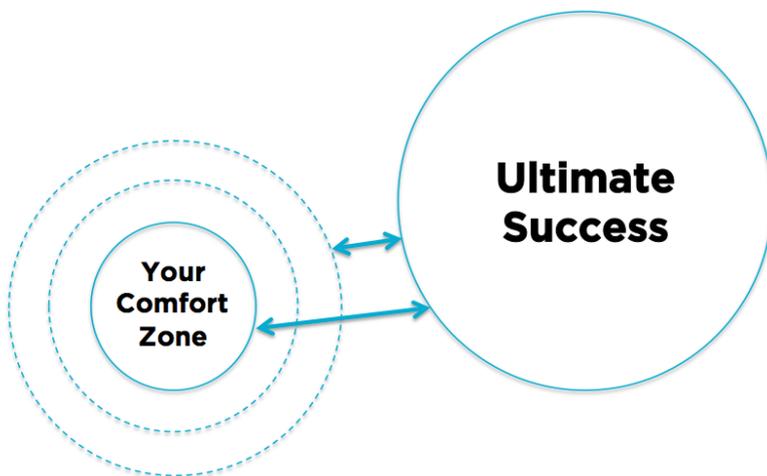
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### 4.4.9 Step Out Of Your Comfort Zone

As Neale Donald Walsh said: *“Life begins at the end of the comfort zone!”* and so does your leadership success.

Take a look at this diagram and apply it to your current professional situation:



The smaller circle represents your comfort zone right now. It is the feeling of 'I know what I know' and it is a place where you feel comfortable, safe and certain.

The edge of the circle is called 'the boundary condition of your thinking' and it represents the conscious limits of your thoughts. It separates the familiar from the unfamiliar. For you to go to the place of 'Ultimate Leadership Success', you have to be willing to press beyond your limits and find out what you don't know.

### **Why would you want to move beyond the boundary conditions of your thinking?**

It is said that every result you get in your life is based on what you already know and the action you choose as a result of that knowledge. Did you know that successful people fail more often than unsuccessful ones? They do because they have the courage to step outside of their comfort zone and learn from their mistakes. Remember, successful people perceive challenges as stepping-stones whereas unsuccessful people seem to see challenges as stumbling blocks.

To put it in simpler terms, consider this example: Paul may already know how to be an Accountant. After all, he might have done it for years. But if he knew how to be a Finance Manager, he would do it, right?

**"Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again  
and expecting different results."**

*~ Albert Einstein*

The Accountant position might have been his comfort zone. In order to learn how to be a Finance Manager, he would need to go beyond the boundary conditions of his thinking. The space between the 'comfort zone' and the two interrupted circles is the place where 'he knows what he doesn't know'. He will also realise that there are other possibilities but doesn't yet know what they are.

So, in the case of our accountant, he might well know how to create reports, confidently perform weekly or monthly processes, accruals, journals etc. But does he know how to prepare management reports, how to analyse revenue figures and present them in an appropriate format to the Executive Management? Does he know how to lead a team and effectively deal with interpersonal conflicts?

The edge of the large circle is another boundary of thinking. The inside of the large circle is the place where 'you don't know what you don't know'. There are career possibilities that you don't even know exist and this is the place where the puzzle pieces will fall into place!

For you to grow both individually and professionally, you must be willing to constantly push beyond your current boundaries (which is exactly what we discussed about Level 2 Behaviours from page 77). Each time you expand your comfort zone, what is unfamiliar becomes more familiar. This is true growth and evolution that will bring you closer to, and eventually place you in, the ‘magic circle’. The actions you take will allow you to experience the place you initially did not even know existed!

Expanding your thoughts beyond the boundary conditions of your thinking is about:

- ✓ **Being aware and willing to think differently** and embrace unfamiliar situations. It involves having the curiosity and desire to go where you’ve never gone before.
- ✓ **Asking different and better questions** to stretch your thinking. For example, rather than wondering “*Why do I always have to work overtime?*” ask yourself “*What do I need to learn about myself and how can I grow from this situation to gain more work-life balance?*” Going blank or answering your question with “*I don’t know*” indicates that you have reached your boundary condition. At this point most people give up and go back to what they know. I urge you to push on and spend some time to come up with answers either by yourself or with the help of other people.

- ✓ **Recognizing that you have power** in life. You have the choice between allowing fear and doubt to keep you in your comfort zone OR being courageous and trusting yourself to expand your comfort zone.

**Time for action**

Thinking about where I currently stand in my career, what is clearly within my comfort zone?

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What 'do I know that I don't know'?

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What other possibilities could there be for me?

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### **How can you go beyond your boundary conditions?**

There are many different ways, but one of the easiest is simply to be curious. Have 'childlike wonder' and choose to challenge things versus just accepting them as they are. You must also be willing to screw up (not just for the sake of it, but to learn from it and knowing that you did the best you could at the time), to have another go and make different mistakes next time.

You can also go beyond your career boundary conditions by:

- ✓ Changing your attitude towards challenges you face with your team
- ✓ Improving your communication skills
- ✓ Committing and keeping the promises you made to yourself and others
- ✓ Taking the action required for change
- ✓ And much more...

A coach and professional development expert can effectively assist you with going beyond your limits. They can help you realise that you have endless choices available to you.

Why do most professionals not get what they want out of their careers and what are the areas you need to address to help you not falling into that category?

- ✘ They hold values that are not supportive of what they want (for example they think they want a team that work together effectively but subconsciously feel as if a well-functioning team isn't necessary for their success)
- ✘ They link negative emotions to what they do want (for example they might have been brought up with the firm belief that high achievers are ruthless people)
- ✘ They believe their choices and possibilities are limited (for example they believe they can only hold a CEO position with high qualifications, which they don't have)
- ✘ They are avoiding pain and failure instead of seeking success and satisfaction (for example they are so scared of failing at presenting to Executive Management that they don't step up to the plate and won't take the lead)
- ✘ They don't know how to stay constantly motivated to take action (for example failing to set yearly goals, reviewing them regularly and acknowledging achievements)

If any of these apply to you, you have just increased your level of awareness, which is the first step to change.

*“The beginning is the most important part of the work.”*

*~ Plato*

## 4.5 Become a person of influence

Human beings are very complex creatures. We are highly skilled in creating problems out of an experience or event by adding a complicated story to it. Although our ego is there to protect us, it loves complexity and does not always serve us in an empowering way. The ego is purely interested in knowing, judging, justifying, being right, looking good and getting even.

Most problems are way simpler than we make them appear. And many problems are simply not our problem. As leaders, we are challenged to maintain the focus on problems we have INFLUENCE over, anything else is simply a waste of our time, resources and energy.

Influential people have followers or can convince others to follow their lead, as opposed to those unsuccessful people who do not display the traits of persuasiveness and leadership. But what does it take to become a person of influence? Is it money, or power, or being an inspirational leader? Is it connection with the right people? Or can it be acquired and learned?

I was recently working with a newly promoted General Manager. Ben came to me as he felt he had minimal control over his team and the outcomes in his work environment. He works in a medium size business with complex relationships with stakeholders inside and outside of his immediate group. Our initial meeting revealed that Ben was concerned with many issues outside of his influence, which meant he was taking responsibility for things he had no control over.

He has NO control over:

- ✘ The envious Operations Manager that had expected to get the promotion over him
- ✘ The currently low sales figures and high operational costs

What he HAS control over is:

- ✓ Whether he allows this Operations Manager to affect his confidence and self-esteem and the ability to be successful in his new role
- ✓ Whether he chooses to take initiative and liaise with stakeholders to discuss possibilities for marketing and sales improvements, in order to make the business and its products more attractive

After creating this self-awareness, we worked on his communication skills and conflict resolution techniques until Ben was able to create a massive impact within his circle of influence. He was confident that he was doing his best, which was more than the team and stakeholders originally expect from him. This new approach also enabled him to let go of the rest, which was a conscious choice.

During one of our sessions, I drew a circle for Ben and he listed the issues that were under his influence inside of it. All the issues outside of his control were stated outside the circle.



Are you prepared to let go of the responsibility for everything you have no influence over, and drop the unnecessary stress and drama?

### **In Essence**

As you learn to take 100% responsibility for your own actions and inactions, you also have to acknowledge that you can't change or control others by taking responsibility for their actions and behaviours. What you can do is change your leadership strategies (for example your communication style) and therefore your environment. By doing so, people will have to adapt to the new environment and culture. In other words, **if YOU change, people within your environment have to change**. By focusing on your zone of influence and **ONLY** your zone of influence, you are positioning yourself to be a master of what you can control.

### 4.5.1 How you can expand your circle of influence

To elaborate on the summary above, there are two different types of influence.

- ✓ **Direct control** (the way we interpret events in our life...) ... over yourself, such as your habits, decisions, behaviours, beliefs etc.
- ✓ **Indirect control** (... and therefore how we respond to it) The way we influence people around us by adjusting our strategy of influence.

For example:

- Move from judging people to teaching and educating them
- Switch from excuses to keeping promises
- Alter your mindset from 'Me against them' to 'teamness'
- Make decisions based on compassion rather than fear and doubt
- And many more...

I appreciate that you might not easily digest my description of indirect control. Influencing others is often considered as evil; it is misunderstood and being mistaken for negative manipulation.

What if I tell you that influence is a sexy word? (Definition for sexy by the way: very exciting or appealing). And it most definitely is if you influence ecologically<sup>□</sup>. In simple terms, influence is a sexy word if we use it to achieve a win/win/win situation (for yourself, others and the greater good).

You need to know that we influence with everything we do all day long. Even a simple smile to a customer is considered as influence, as we want him/her to ultimately spend money. Is this ecological? I believe it is, as long as we have an exchange of value. Money for an outstanding product, customer service and an overall experience – bang for the buck. What do you think?

So, influence can be sexy if you use it ecologically which is in your direct control. I trust by now you understand that being in control does not equal dictatorial leadership style and alienating your team. Being a person of influence involves opportunities, and most importantly, responsibilities. It is up to the successful leader to utilise it for the benefit of his team.

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<sup>□</sup> Ecology is the NLP (Neuro-linguistic programming) study of consequences, interested in the results of any change that occurs. It is useful when making behavioural changes to look at the ecology - the consequences for self, family (or business), society and planet.

**Start by delegating tasks to your team**

As a manager, even if you delegate a task to one of your team members, you are still ultimately responsible for the outcome. Why, you may ask? Because you can only delegate a task once your employee has the right knowledge, skills and attitude to successfully complete the task. Otherwise you set him/her up for failure, right? So, let's assume you don't take responsibility for the outcome. Your employee stuffs up and is blamed for the negative outcome. What's your gain? Presumably diverting the negative attention from you to him/her, but in fact you create an unresourceful identity for yourself.

You are the 'powerless victim' who has no control over what happened. Your opportunity to influence the employee (indirect control) also fades away, because you are saying (without saying it) that s/he is not good enough, that s/he does not belong and is being judged as a failure. You are violating his/her core needs of belonging and being appreciated, the universal fears of every human being on this planet (remember the chapter 'Practice daily habits' from page 42?).

This is certainly not the way to lead successfully and inspirationally. In fact, this is a great example of how you overdraw the emotional bank account of your staff members.

“You can delegate authority,  
but you cannot delegate responsibility.”

~ *Byron Dorgan*

### **Expand your circle of influence**

What can you do to ultimately master your mind, and become an inspirational and successful leader? First of all, you need to feel comfortable to delegate. You need to understand that delegating has nothing to do with weakness, giving away power or losing control.

### **Time for Action**

Here is what you can do now:

- ✓ You can start being a true leader (direct control) that teaches and educates your staff with the required tools to complete delegated tasks successfully
- ✓ You can become a more approachable person that listens when your staff have questions or feel stuck
- ✓ You can become more cooperative
- ✓ And many more...

This will lead to:

- ✓ Successful completion of tasks
- ✓ Trust, as you delegate important tasks to your team
- ✓ Increased motivation and self-esteem by all involved
- ✓ Sense of achievement and contribution by employees
- ✓ Freeing up your time to focus on higher leadership tasks
- ✓ Safe and happy workplace
- ✓ Opportunities to promote people within the department and business
- ✓ Promoting teamwork and building great moral
- ✓ Higher staff retention
- ✓ Reduced recruitment and induction cost
- ✓ And many more...

What tasks can you initially delegate?

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This is how you expand your circle of influence and become an inspirational and successful leader. Focus on your direct and indirect control by taking responsibility in a resourceful way.

## **4.6 Create certainty within yourself**

We as human beings can create self-awareness through disassociation. In other words, rather than just seeing ourselves through our own eyes (associated), we can for example imagine sitting in a movie theatre and watch ourselves on the big screen. A great way to create self-awareness is to record yourself in a meeting, during a presentation or any other tasks you are performing in your current job.

Doing so, and evaluating how we see ourselves and the world around us without emotional attachment creates a different perspective. This is called self-awareness. It gives us the ability to use critical thinking to assess our own thought processes and actions.

NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) uses the presupposition 'A person is not his or her behaviour. With self-awareness, we can assess our behaviours and change them if we don't like them, as we are in control of our mind and therefore in control of our actions.'

**Time for Action**

Take a moment to complete the above activity. Disassociate yourself and create self-awareness of yourself and the world around you. How do you see yourself?

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Too often we are solely shaped and influenced by the opinions of the people around us. This can lead to a complete misperception of who we really are. People like to judge and rubberstamp others so they fit into their world, and by doing so project their own world onto others.

With comments like...

- ✘ You don't know what you are talking about.
- ✘ Why don't you get it?
- ✘ I can believe you've done... [insert story here]
- ✘ You always sit in the office, doing nothing.
- ✘ You don't care about the team.
- ✘ And many more...

... you can easily create a false identity if you are taking all this external feedback on board.

These negative comments are often projections of other people's grumble or dissatisfaction, rather than a reflection of you.

These negative projections may lead to a hunger of proving them wrong and taking control of what they say and think. This is when we are catapulted into ego land, an illusion of control. The false certainty that we can control others, driven by our fear of not being good enough and not belonging, usually just ends up in a power-driven conflict that leads to no more than lose-lose outcomes. Remember the chapter 'Become a Person of Influence' from page 107? We can only change ourselves, not others.

*"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."*

*~ Buckminster Fuller*

Out of my own experience, I know that chasing the illusion of external certainty is very exhausting, tiring and draining. It has to be, because we put an enormous amount of energy into it, and nothing or hardly anything comes of it. There is an energy imbalance that creates an over-performing person on one side (for example a workaholic), and an under-performing person on the other (for example a life-partner that is never around). This is another instance of the universe needing to be in complete balance and harmony. Where there is good there must be bad, where there is a left there must be a right, where there is a top there must be a bottom.

#### **4.6.1 Step down so others can step up**

What do you learn from the example above? Perhaps the next time you try really hard to change somebody, you may want to take your foot off the accelerator. You will soon see that the other person will step up to the plate, release extra energy and start contributing to the solution.



## 4.6.2 Positioning

“I am not what happened to me...  
I am WHAT I CHOOSE to BECOME.”  
*Carl Jung*

Position yourself where you want to be by using the disassociation / self-awareness strategy from the beginning of this chapter. I often hear *“I am who I am today because of what’s happened to me in the past”* or *“I am the result of what I experienced in the past”*. I don’t believe this is true. I believe that it doesn’t matter at all what happened to you. What truly matters is the meaning you gave to those event(s). I understand that this statement is a hard one to swallow, especially for people who experienced some tough s@#\* in their life. Please let me explain.

Certainty within is:

1. How you interpret the events you experience in life, in other words the meaning you give (external to internal), and therefore...
2. ...how you choose to respond to these events (internal to external)

A perfect example is the story of two sons raised by an alcoholic father. Both brothers moved out and went their separate ways, but were later in life interviewed to analyse the effects of drunkenness on children in broken homes. Research by Dr. Hans Selye found that although the two men were strikingly different from each other (one completely abstaining from alcohol, the other a drunk like his father), they both gave an identical answer when asked why they developed the way they did:

**“What else would you expect with a father like mine?”**

To me, this story clearly demonstrates the point I made in the first paragraph above. Every human being has the certainty within to choose how s/he wants to interpret events in their life and therefore how s/he responds to it. With this awareness alone, I am sure you can greatly improve your career and life.

So next time, before you react to an event that you struggle with, consider who you would like to be and if the response you choose moves you away from or towards the outcome you want to achieve. For example: If in the past you have chosen to react with rage to a particular situation, ask yourself if this is the person you want to be?

If it is not, change the way you interpret the event. Rather than reacting with rage next time, you could interpret the event with “Yes, this makes me a little angry”, or “This is slightly annoying” or “You know what, this really tickles my little toe.” Reading these different options might already change your emotions and therefore will change your future response. Through this, you achieve a different outcome, which will be more positive.

Have a crack at this exercise over and over again until you react in the way that works for you - in other words; until you become that person you want to be.

### **4.6.3 Conditioning**

Don't be conditioned by the negativity and limitation of other people. You may have heard of Pavlov's experiment where he conditioned his dog. He started with the knowledge that dogs don't need to learn to salivate when they see or smell food. He called this an 'unconditioned response'. However, when Pavlov realised that any object or event that the dog learned to associate with food would trigger the same response, he realised that he had made a significant discovery of conditioning.

In his experiment, Pavlov used a tuning fork as stimulus. Whenever he gave the dog food, he would at the same time sound the tuning fork. The dog created an association between the tuning fork and the food. Once this response was learned, the dog was conditioned to the point that he would dribble purely based on the tune of the fork without having any food present.

What does this research teach you? Create awareness on how you are conditioned from your past or current environment.

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If you discover conditioning that is no longer serving you or is holding you back in your professional or personal life, make sure to recondition yourself in a way that will assist you to move forward.

“Between stimulus and response there is a space.  
In that space is our power to choose our response.  
In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

~ *Victor Frankl*

When I read the book ‘Man’s search for meaning’ by Viktor E. Frankl, who survived the death camps during the Second World War, I had many epiphanies. I highly recommend this book but also need to warn you that it is not light reading material.

Viktor Frankl had to endure revolting and obnoxious events, and without further details I get straight to the point. Despite the enormity of what he endured, Viktor Frankl was able to experience what he calls ‘the last of the human freedoms’. The Nazis were able to control the camp and the physical bodies imprisoned within, but they were not able to control Viktor’s choice of the meaning he gave to all the sickening happenings he had to witness. He himself chose how all of this would affect him... or not.

Viktor Frankl had the freedom to choose both...

- ✓ the meaning he gave to his extremely negative experience
- ✓ the way he responded

**In Essence**

We can only change ourselves, not others. If we get very clear on our vision and goals, and create certainty within ourselves that we are (or on our way to) who we want to be, we are no longer negatively influenced by the opinion of others.

*“I am who I am today because of what’s happened to me in the past” or “I am the result of what I experienced in the past” is entirely based on dependent thinking. In my view, true empowerment lies in the certainty within (internal) not by trying to control the external environment.*

*“They cannot take away our self-respect  
if we do not give it to them.”*

*~ Gandhi*

## 5 Know your WHY



For you to become a truly inspirational and successful leader, you need to be very clear on the direction you are heading towards. We often know exactly what we don't want but have no idea on what we do want instead. Friedrich Nietzsche, the famous German philosopher said it over 150 years ago, and it still applies today: 'If you know the why, you can live any how.' Struggling manager usually don't have a clear focus on the outcome, as opposed to successful leaders who have a vision and know their goals.

After my apprenticeship in the 80's I knew exactly that I did no longer want to work in a small family business, dictated by a greedy owner and managing director who gave a damn about his employees (and customers) and was purely interested in making as much money as possible, and exploiting staff and customers alike. I also knew that I no longer wanted to hang around after I finished my training.

What I didn't know though was my destination or desires; incidentally the most important factors to get me on my way! At the time, I didn't realise that our brain actually works like a GPS. If you want to get to a certain place, do you type in where you don't want to go, or a detailed address of your destination? Can you imagine how frustrating it would be to drive around aimlessly, not knowing where and how far away you are from the destination you didn't even appreciate in the first place?

This is exactly how we often communicate with ourselves. I don't want to be ruthless. I don't want to deal with difficult employees. I don't want to work in a large organisation. I don't want to [*insert here...*].

But what would happen if you were very clear on your destination, right down to the Suburb, Street name and house number? Suddenly you are cruising along easily and effortlessly, and arrive at your final destination in a calm and relaxed state. Take your time to find out where you want to head towards. This chapter will assist you with strategies and practices.

## 5.1 Focus on the Outcome

If you focus on the outcome while continuously keeping the end in mind, it accelerates the results you get. The results you get are based on your thinking and actions of today.

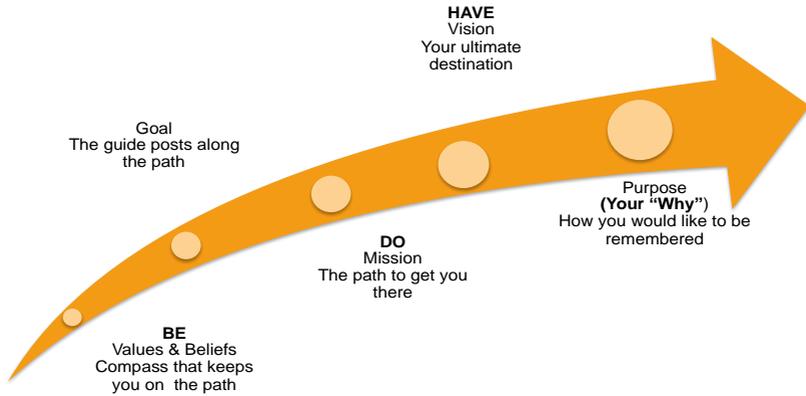
The most important thing is to get clear on your 'WHY'. Ask yourself:

- ✓ What is my purpose, why am I here?
- ✓ What is the legacy I would like to leave behind?
- ✓ How would I like to be remembered?
- ✓ What difference would I like to have made in the lives of others?
- ✓ Etc.

*“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.”*

*~ Nelson Mandela*

I understand that the majority of us don't like to think that far ahead, but in doing so we create an important mindset that gives us a clear understanding of our highest intentions, our values in life and what is most important to us. The short and long-term goals are the guideposts along the path.



**Time for Action**

Take a moment to answer the previous questions:

What is my purpose, why am I here?

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What is the legacy I would like to leave behind?

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How would I like to be remembered?

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What difference would I like to have made in the lives of others?

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Once you completed this activity, you know what it means to 'Know your WHY'.

### 5.1.1 Management vs Leadership

*“A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.”*

*~ John C. Maxwell*

Ensure that you are ‘doing things right’. The role of an efficient MANAGER is to focus on the end of the production line, and to ask *“How can I best achieve the outcome?”* The role of an effective LEADER is ‘doing the right thing’ in the first place, by focusing on the beginning of the production line and asking *“What are the things we want to achieve?”* And that of course is only possible if you know your WHY. Therefore, once again, if you would like to align values in your team, you have to be clear on your WHY, so they can follow your leadership.

Don’t get lost in the paradigm of management (remember to delegate), because the manager is still dependent on the leader. In other words, no management success can compensate for failure in leadership. Make sure you are also not caught up in social obligations like a fish in the net. You don’t want to chase other’s dreams or live their life, only to realise one day that your achievements are meaningless to you, and that you meanwhile lost what was far more valuable.

So, know your WHY. Get clear on what matters most to you, wrap it up in your own dreams and live your life accordingly. I even encourage you to create a vision board that reminds you of your dreams every single day to ensure you are positioning and conditioning yourself to achieving your desired outcomes.

If you can

**DREAM** it,

you can do it!

WALT DISNEY

## 5.2 Be – Do – Have

One of the most powerful leadership models is the Be – Do – Have, which some say was first introduced by L. Ron Hubbard in his book ‘Conditions of Existence’. The model refers to the attitude and mind shift that needs to occur in order to achieve what we want. Ultimately, the model comes down to one question: “Who do I need to BE, to do what I need to DO in order to have what I want to HAVE?”



I like the summary of the life lesson that Robert T Kiyosaki quotes<sup>5</sup> in his book ‘Rich Dad, Poor Dad’:

*The author wrote that it was when he was nine years old that he started realizing that his rich dad made much more sense than his poor dad. It was from rich dad that the author learned not to say, “I can’t afford it”, but instead to ask, “how can I afford it?” He explains this principle by relating an incident when he and his best friend Mike went to work for Mike’s father.*

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.wikisummaries.org/Rich\\_Dad,\\_Poor\\_Dad](http://www.wikisummaries.org/Rich_Dad,_Poor_Dad)

*Rich dad paid them very low wages deliberately so that it would stir anger and a sense of injustice in them and eventually for them to realize that in order to get ahead, one must work for himself and not for others. For example, in that part of the book when the author complains to rich dad that he can hardly afford to buy anything with the wages he is paid, rich dad tells him that he shouldn't dwell on the fact that his wages are low, but instead ask "how can I make more money" because this stimulates the brain to take action. His rich dad says that when someone says, "I can't afford it", his brain stops working. It therefore kills initiative and promotes passivity.*

What if you were able to live and lead in alignment with this powerful principle more often? What if you remembered that you have the capacity to experience any state of being at any time – not just when things 'work out' perfectly or you achieve exactly what you wanted. How would you feel if you were the one steering the ship, or driving your own bus as explained in first chapters of this blueprint?

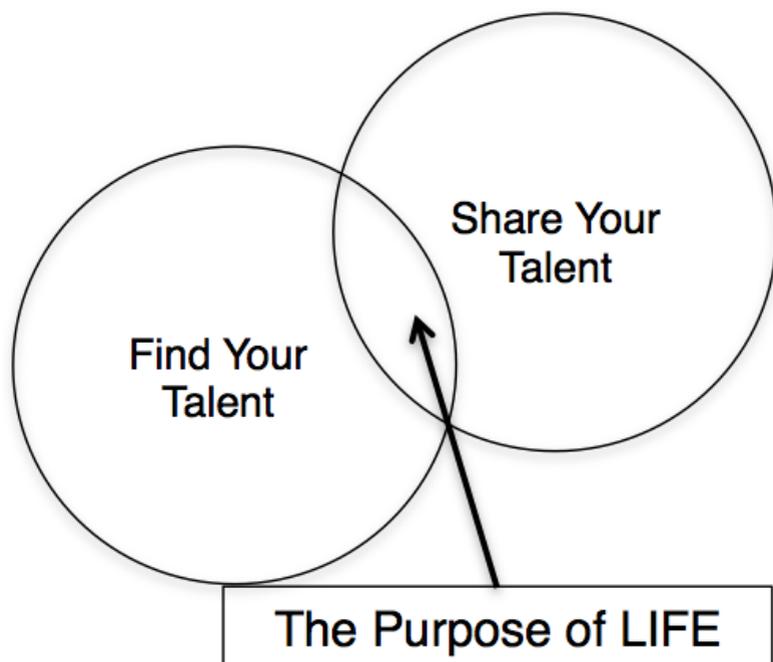
Everybody who aspires success should use this highly effective model. Richard Branson, for example, has started so many businesses, ventures, charities and expeditions that it was quite impossible for him to have been prepared, qualified and ready to start them all. He is the perfect example of why the 'chosen ones' choose themselves.

Over the course of this chapter, we will look at how you can embrace this Be – Do – Have principle, implement it in your career and life, and climb another step on your ladder to ultimate leadership. Use your answers in the previous ‘Time for Action’ exercise on page 130 to plan for your future by using the Be – Do - Have concept. Ask yourself why your career is so important to you. How will successful leadership change your life? What would that ultimately give you?

Ask yourself ‘WHY?’ when setting your goals and ultimately defining your career ambitions, and once the WHY is big enough the ‘HOW?’ will take care of itself. Your inspiration and motivation will always find a way to get you to the goal.

Your 3 WHYS explained:

1. Self
2. People you’re doing it for
3. The intersection (the connection between you and the people)



By now you understand that the best way to know what you want to achieve in leading your team or business, is to start with the end in mind. Essentially, you want to envision the ultimate goal, and then rewind.

The rule is simple: You must be able to see, hear and feel where you want to end up or you can never expect to arrive at your destination. Remember:

*“What you focus on is what you get to the exclusion of everything else.”*



An easy and effective way to set goals is to use the SMART concept by Peter Drucker. SMART goals are:

- S: **Specific** (State exactly what you desire in your leadership role or career)
- M: **Measurable** (How will you know you've achieved your goal? What will be your evidence?)
- A: **Achievable/Attainable** (By you and something you alone control and influence)
- R: **Realistic/Relevant** (Within reach yet still a stretch)
- T: **Timely** (When will you achieve your goal by and how will you celebrate it once you do?)

Other criteria for successful goal setting include:

- ✓ Your goal must be stated in positive terms
- ✓ You must take responsibility for initiating and maintaining your goal
- ✓ You must be specific by engaging all of your five senses when planning the outcome and the steps needed to get there (for example; you see your team working together smoothly; you hear the team members talking to you; you can feel the success; etc.)
- ✓ It has to be ecological (win-win-win situation)
- ✓ You need more than one way to achieve your desired outcome
- ✓ Your steps have to be specified and achievable
- ✓ Your goal has to increase your choices
- ✓ Write your goals as if you had already achieved them (which helps you access the positive state of successful completion)

*“Setting a goal is not the main thing.  
It is deciding how you will go about achieving it  
and staying with that plan.”*

*~ Tom Landry*





Your 90-day goals could for example be listed like this:

<b>SPRING</b>	<b>SUMMER</b>	<b>AUTUMN</b>	<b>WINTER</b>
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**Business & Career Goals**

1	<p><i>I identify and familiarise myself with the new position that will be available through the growth of the company. I am reading the job description, identify necessary skill sets and establish skill gaps, training needs etc.</i></p>	<p><i>I am bringing my resume and CV up to date, apply for the position and am practicing for the interview process.</i></p>	<p><i>I am following up on my application (if necessary) and attend my interview well prepared.</i></p>	<p><i>I started my new job as [insert your new job title] and feel great about my achievement. My focus is on learning and understanding as much as possible to grow and succeed in my new position.</i></p>
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**Personal Growth - Learning and Development**

2	<p><i>According to my identified skill gaps, I am completing my research to be able to make an informed decision on how to close my skill gaps.</i></p>	<p><i>I sign up with [insert your coaching / training provider] for a [one-on-one coaching package] to improve my [communication skills &amp; time management], that will provide me with the best opportunity to get the job as [insert your new job title], and be successful.</i></p>	<p><i>I am consistently attending my one-on-one coaching sessions and keep myself accountable to implement my learnings right away. This way, I already demonstrate my competency for the new position.</i></p>	<p><i>I focus on my new position, identify new skill gaps and address them with my coach / trainer / mentor to improve my performance and leadership.</i></p>
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**Health & Well-being**

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**Significant others**

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**Recreation / Hobbies**

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**Social Environment**

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**Finances**

7				
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**Spirituality**

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Also, be sure to celebrate your achieved goals and steps, as this will keep you motivated along the way. Maybe you will decide to reward yourself with a set of golf clubs you've been wanting, or perhaps you will take a well-deserved long weekend away with your family to celebrate all of your hard work. Because 1-year or even 90-day goals can be quite overwhelming, make sure you chunk them into smaller, digestible pieces. For example:

- ✓ What can I do today that will bring me closer to becoming an inspirational and successful leader? What step or steps will advance me to where I want to be?

Each day, ask yourself empowering questions designed to get you closer to your outcome:

- ✓ How can I become more effective so that I achieve my goal faster? What skills do I need to obtain to increase my success strategy?
- ✓ Who can I model to accelerate my success? (Before you model someone, please make sure s/he has already achieved what you want to achieve. Pick someone who is top in your field or an individual that you look up to because they have been able to reach similar goals. It may be someone you work with, a celebrity, or even a past or current mentor.)

Of course, you want to have a general framework and plan as to how you intend to succeed in your career, but you also need to be willing to deviate when necessary. If you don't, you'll find yourself following a path that, although it was once the route you thought you should take, ends up being the route that leads to places you never wanted to go.

### **5.2.2 DO – What am I willing to do?**

The next step is to ask yourself the following question: In order to achieve what I want to HAVE, what do I need to be able to DO?

#### **Time for Action**

Write down the habits and rituals you need to perform that will enable you to achieve your outcomes (remember the earlier chapter 'Practice daily habits'?). While doing this, you create awareness of the knowledge, skills and attitude required to do it. Saying you will do something is not good enough; you will actually need to be able to do what you say you will. This is key, albeit almost too simple to appreciate. How often do we see people converting their hobby into a business (running a small coffee shop for example), only to find out that they don't have the knowledge, skills or right attitude for it?

*Here is what I need in order to be able to do the DO:*

✓ Habits

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✓ Knowledge

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✓ Skills

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✓ Attitude

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### **5.2.3 BE – Who am I?**

And ultimately ask yourself: *“Who do I need to BE to be able to DO what is required to get what I want to HAVE?”*

There is no need to become somebody else, but perhaps you need to invest into yourself and gain awareness around who you truly are, in order to become the best version of yourself.

#### **Time for Action**

Before you start this exercise, you need to understand that you have more than just one identity. Let’s think about that for a moment. Although you are one, you have to have different identities within you for the different areas of your life. Yes, you are a manager but perhaps you are also a: son or daughter, brother or sister, husband or wife, mother or father, sports teammate, work colleague, etc. Consider all of your identities when completing this task. Wear all different hats and look at yourself from different angles.

*This is whom I need to BEcome:*

✓ My identity (Who I am)

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✓ My values and beliefs (Why)

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✓ My capability - skills & knowledge (How)

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✓ My behaviours (What)

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✓ My environment (Where & When)

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### 5.3 Your personal Mission Statement

It has been found in studies that organisations that have a meaningful vision and mission statements return more than double the numbers in shareholder benefits when compared to the organisations that do not have vision and mission statements. Indeed, the importance of vision and mission statements is underlined in the fact that it is often the first thing that is discussed in management textbooks on strategy. The same principle applies to a personal mission statement, sometimes also called Purpose Statements. It will enable you to set the base performance and actionable parameters, serve as a visual reminder of your most important goals, allow you to say no to distractions, and guide you back on track when you deviate temporarily (and believe me, we all do from time to time). A personal Mission Statement is proven to be a good tool for inspirational and successful leaders.

Here are a couple of examples of personal mission statements of famous CEOs and leaders:

"To have fun in [my] journey through life and learn from [my] mistakes."

Sir Richard Branson, Founder of the Virgin Group

"To be a teacher. And to be known for inspiring my students to be more than they thought they could be."

- Oprah Winfrey, founder of OWN, The Oprah Winfrey Network

“To develop next generation diagnostics to provide a better life.”

- Sanjeev Saxena, POC Medical

“To serve as a leader, live a balanced life, and apply ethical principles to make a significant difference.”

- Denise Morrison, CEO of Campbell Soup Company

“I want to make it so that every person in the world can afford to start their own business. Give people a cheap way to start a business and innovation will ignite in every nation.”

- John Rampton, Hostt.com

“To live life with integrity and empathy, and be a positive force in the lives of others.”

- Amy Ziari, ‘Pasta’

Completing your own personal mission statement will be the focus of this chapter. This task will take you quite a while to complete. You may need weeks or even months to gather and express your thoughts and feelings, and completely align them with the final masterpiece. Use the information from your previous exercises to make this process easier.

### Step 1

Write down 5 strengths you have that give you an advantage		For each strength write down an action you can take that exploits the strength	
One of my strengths is:		I will use this strength:	
<i>Eg: My</i>	<i>10 years of experience in accounting for logistics companies.</i>	<i>Eg: To</i>	<i>tailor my reporting and analysis relevantly to the Executive Management.</i>
1. My		1. To	
2. My		2. To	

3. My		3. To	
4. My		4. To	
5. My		5. To	

Step 2

Write down 5 personal goals that you want to achieve in the next year

PLUS one explicit financial goal

My goals are:

<i>Eg: To</i>	<i>become a General Manager who is leading with inspiration, and achieving targets with the help and support of my happy, well-oiled team.</i>
1. To	
2. To	
3. To	
4. To	
5. To	

<p><i>Eg:</i></p> <p><i>My financial objective is to achieve a salary (or profit, sales, asset value, reduced debt) of \$150,000 in the next financial year.</i></p>					
<p>My financial objective is to achieve a :</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>o</p> <p>f</p> <p>\$</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>By</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Step 3

Select your top 3 strengths (in step 1) and your top 3 goals (in step 2) and collate the information into your following Mission Statement:

### 5.3.1 Your Framed Mission Statement

**Mission Statement**  
for  
.....  
*(My name)*

**I will utilise:**

my.....  
my.....  
my.....

**Which will enable me:**

to.....  
to.....  
to.....

**and to achieve the following objectives:**

to.....  
to.....  
to.....

to achieve a ..... of \$.....by.....

**Signed by**  
.....

Name: .....  
Date: .....

## 5.4 Core values

Core values are not descriptions of the work you do or the strategies you employ to accomplish your mission. The values trigger your work, how you interact with others, and which strategies you employ to accomplish your mission. Hence, your core values must support your vision as it will shape the culture in your team and reflect on your target achievements. They are the essence of your identity.

A leader with good core values will show his or her true colours and earn his/her team and manager's long-term respect. Remember that people often don't connect with WHAT you do, but they will connect with WHY you do it. If you fail to identify and lead by your core values, you will fail as a leader. If you, however, know exactly what your core values are and use them as a guide with whatever you do, you will set the tone in establishing the quality of the work environment for your team.

Examples of values include: Abundance | Accountability | Achievement | Acknowledgement | Ambition | Appreciation | Being the best | Belonging | Capability | Care | Clarity | Cleanliness | Compassion | Confidence | Congruency | Connection | Consistency | Control | Courage | Creativity | Credibility | Desire | Determination | Dignity | Education | Effectiveness | Efficiency | Excellence | Fairness | Faith | Fame | Family | Financial independence | Flexibility | Freedom of choice | Friendship | Growth | Happiness | Harmony | Health & Well-being | Honesty | Honour | Hospitality | Independence | Integrity | Leadership |

Learning | Love | Loyalty | Making a difference | Mastery | Partnership | Passion | Peace | Power | Pride | Professionalism | Prosperity | Recognition | Reputation | Respect | Responsibility | Satisfaction | Security | Self-control | Self-respect | Significance | Strength | Structure | Success | Teamwork | Traditionalism | Trust | Victory | Wealth | AND MANY MORE...

Do you know your top 5 core values? Are your behaviours congruent with your core values? Do you keep checking in with your core values to see if you are on the right path? This chapter will guide you through a step-by-step approach to identifying and defining your core values.

*“Try not to become a man of success  
but rather try to become a man of value.”*

*~ Albert Einstein*

**Time for Action**

Give it a shot, and think about your own values. To assist you with this, go back to the activity in chapter 'Focus on the outcome' from page 129 and review what words you chose. This will give you insights into your core values.

Which values sit in a neutral position, which ones do you want to get away from (feeling negative energy and heavy emotions as well as using negative language to describe the beliefs that surround these values), and which values do you strive towards (feeling positive energy and light emotions as well as using positive language to describe the beliefs that surrounds these values).

*The first box is completed to give you an example based on different beliefs around wealth, which will also display how unresourceful and incongruent away-from (pain) motivation is to the actual value you would want to live by.*

Away from	Neutral	Towards
<p><i>I want to be wealthy because I saw the <b>struggle</b> my parents had when I was young and I <b>don't want to</b> be in the same situation once I have kids. My father always said, money is the <b>root of all evil</b> and it is so <b>damn hard to come by...</b></i></p>	<p><i>Yes, money is nice, you can do a lot of things with it.</i></p>	<p><i>I value money as it gives me <b>freedom of choice</b>, provides <b>security</b> to my loved ones and <b>fulfils our dream to create a better world</b>, spend <b>more time with my family...</b></i></p>

Now take a closer look at the values you listed in the 'Away' Column. Why are they there? What are the limiting beliefs surrounding these values that you need to get rid of and change?

What are your top core values? (in order of importance)

1.

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2.

.....  
3.

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4.

.....  
5.

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There are many fine values, such as courtesy, ingenuity, perseverance, confidence etc. The trouble is that the list of values grows easily and can cause you to lose your focus and prioritise. A 'short list' of maximum 5 values is far more useful.

Review the answers of this activity frequently to ensure you are staying on the right path by demonstrating daily habits that are aligned with your goals and desires. Out of experience, I know how easy it is to get caught up in life and what it throws at us. Yes, I am aware of the challenges we face in today's fast-moving environment, especially in business. The busyness, the hard work, stress, HR issues, unforeseen projects, communication breakdowns between teams etc. However, you now know of the importance of taking responsibility for your actions, as well as actually taking action. Only this will get you towards your desired outcome. Otherwise, every step you take just gets you to the wrong place faster.

### **In Essence**

Here is another way to sum up this chapter:

What do you want to HAVE in one 'YEAR'?

**You:** What you bring to the table (BE)

**Education:** What level of education do you need to get the results you want?

**Action:** What are you DOing to get the results you want?

**Replicate:** Whom do you model? Replicate what works.

## 6 Strategies for self-management



Self-management is being defined by Google as the taking of responsibility for one's own behaviour and well-being. A manager that can effectively manage him/herself is destined for greatness – managers that need to be managed by somebody else probably don't deserve the title. So, what are characteristics of good self-management? There are a number of essential self-management traits, but the couple we will take a closer look at in this chapter are quick decision making, and taking full responsibility for your tasks and projects.

In your position, completing tasks within deadlines is vital (or actually just completing them. Full stop.). These days, a manager's tasks are diverse and as everything in life, there are things we like to do and things we don't like to do so much. Throughout my professional career, I wrote hundreds (if not thousands) of to-do list. I finally realised that the unwanted tasks always remained at the bottom for weeks, months (or even years), whilst the tasks I loved doing never even managed to get onto the list as they were completed right away or without a reminder.

My excuse was that I just never had time to get around to those nasty tasks. Either I was too busy, or it was too late to get started or I couldn't concentrate after a long day etc. But those were exactly that – just excuses. When I got dangerously close to running out of excuses, I had to top up my to-do list with more urgent (not more important) tasks, so (un)fortunately the nastiest ended up at the bottom again.



My piece of advice: keep your to-do-list simple, because it is just a tool to get to your outcomes faster. Don't spend valuable time making them pretty or constantly re-writing them, or else you risk wasting your time rather than investing it wisely. Writing to-do-lists can be like riding a rocking horse: keeping you busy while not making any progress.

“The successful person has the habit of doing the things failures don't like to do. They don't like doing them either necessarily. But their disliking is subordinated to the strength of their purpose.”

~ E. M. Gray

## 6.1 Time to get to the point - Prioritizing

I got myself in time-management trouble too often before I realised and truly understood that prioritizing is all about getting organised and actually performing the tasks that are **important!** Let me ask you some questions: *“Are you busy right now?” “Have you already fallen behind your schedule for today?” “Are you hoping this will be a short chapter, so you can return to catching up on things?”* All right, let me get to the point...

It is a phenomenon how obsessed we all are with time, considering that time does not exist. Let me explain: If you try to get your hands on time, it's always slipping through your fingers, right? People are convinced time is there, but they can't get hold of it. My view is that they can't get hold of it because it doesn't exist. Even Quantum Theory shows us that our concept of time (a linear passage of events) is totally wide off the mark; in fact, there is no mark. Having said that, the fact that we perceive time as precious, and considering that time feels very real to us, we need to stop time from managing us. WE need to manage time or should I correctly say, manage ourselves better?

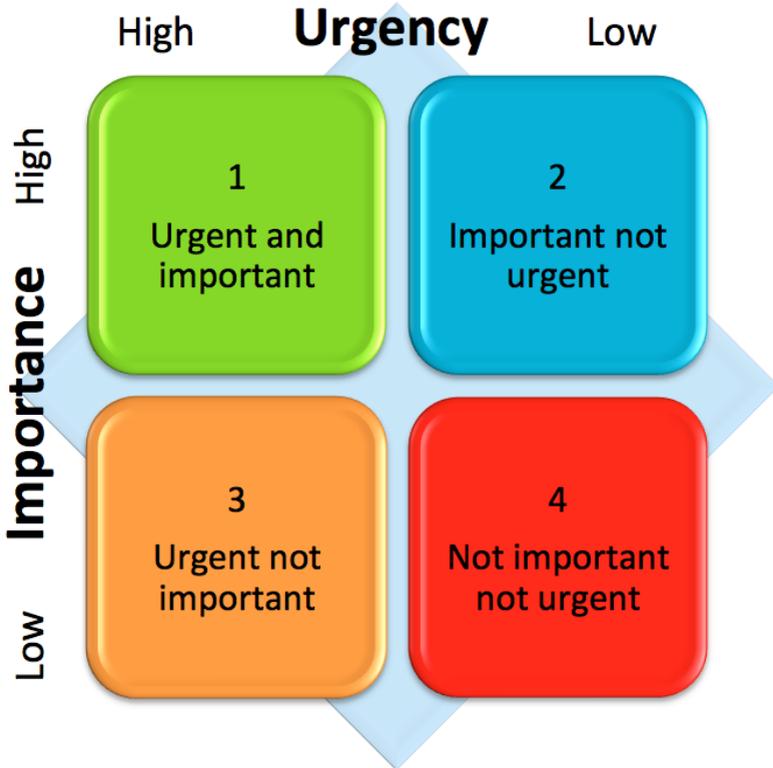
Let's face it – we all have 24 hours per day, whether we like it or not. Often, we're caught up in busyness and feel stressed. We use sentences like: *"I have no time"*, *"I ran out of time"* or *"I need more time"*. How well you use your 24 hours per day mainly depends on your skills, planning, strategies, evaluation and SELF-CONTROL.

### **Time cannot be managed – Time is an investment**

Be aware that not everything we do truly matters. Too many little tasks that are blaring at us every single day appear to be urgent but are in fact unimportant and distract us from what is more important. Therefore, we must learn to prioritise, let go of things that we can't control and invest that time in the things we can control (we covered this topic in detail in chapter 'Become a Person of Influence'). As singer John Lennon said, "Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans."

In business, I believe, you can always increase revenue and improve your profit margin, but you can never get your time back. Your time must be an investment in your goals and future, so choose wisely how you spend it. To be more productive and to achieve better outcomes, prioritise your tasks according to the following chart rather than in the order of personal preference.

**6.1.1 Task management matrix**



First of all, you need to realise that you are spending all your time (work and leisure) within this task management matrix<sup>6</sup>. The quadrant you choose will determine your

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<sup>6</sup> Adapted from Stephen Covey’s book “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People”

outcome.

For example, if you spend most of your time in quadrant 4 (doing things that are not important and not urgent), you certainly will end up in chaos and it is only a matter of time until your operational processes will collapse. This could for example mean that you 'hide' in the office writing and rewriting to-do-lists without actually ever achieving much, because you are not willing to face the dysfunctional, non-cooperating team members.

Versus spending most of your time in quadrants 1 and 2 (doing things that are urgent and important, and important not urgent), and keeping up to date with demands from employer, team members, customers, suppliers, finance and regulatory requirement, just to mention a few.

Let's define the two key terms:

- ✓ **Urgent**- requiring immediate action or attention in response to a pressing situation presented to us
  
- ✓ **Important** – of great significance or value  
For example things that significantly contribute to our goals and outcomes, such as customer satisfaction, revenue, staff retention, OH&S (Occupational Health and Safety), Margin Improvement etc.

Now here is the thing: humans are more responsive to urgency than importance. This is because urgency is presented to us and we are often acting reactively, whereas importance needs to be analysed based on our vision and outcome, and it needs discipline. Urgency doesn't necessarily mean that it is also important although we often assume it is.

For example, if an employee pops into your office and starts unimportant small talk, you are likely to engage with him/her as you feel a sense of urgency to respond and engage. You might even drop planning the implementation of a new operational procedure you've just worked on, rather than choosing to continue with what is important. This will certainly lead to 'Time management' issues over time.

**“Managing your time without setting priorities is like shooting randomly and calling whatever you hit the target.”**

*~ Peter Turla*

Let's have a closer look at the task management matrix, starting with the last area.

#### **Quadrant 4 – Not important, not urgent**

I deliberately do not want to spend too much time explaining this quadrant, as it is the home of all time wasters and activities that you like to do but have no positive impact on your goals and outcomes. For example, surfing the internet to keeping you busy, checking Facebook every 5 minutes, watching meaningless television shows etc.

Successful people stay away from this quadrant as they are focused on the outcome, and value and respect their own time and energy too much to blow it. Let's move straight to the next area.

#### **Quadrant 3 – Urgent, not important**

This quadrant is not much more effective than quadrant 4 as the tasks may appear urgent but are NOT important. Too often I see employees operating in this quadrant being caught up in urgency to complete things just for the sake of it, not realizing that what they do is not important. It is essential to consciously understand that urgent things are not necessarily important. As explained previously, they are two very different things.

Good examples for this quadrant are interruptions and to some extent meetings. How often are you being interrupted by team members simply being too lazy to think or to look for information themselves, as it is so much easier for them to stop by your office and ask a question? How many times did you rush to an urgent meeting only to find out that none of the agenda items were relevant to you or your team, but the entire management team had to attend based on urgency rather than importance?

Once again, successful people stay away from this quadrant. They understand that by staying in areas 3 and 4 they have less time for areas 1 and 2. They also understand that effectiveness and efficiency is based on importance rather than urgency. This requires discipline, which brings us to...

### **Quadrant 2 – Important, not urgent**

This is the place to be, where you should spend most of your time, the place of planning, thinking ahead, being pro-active and causing things to happen, before they become urgent and pressing. This is the hub of leadership, where people have a clear vision and know exactly which steps are important to achieve the outcomes. It is the quadrant of prioritizing and building relationships (more on this topic in the upcoming chapters of this blueprint). This is where you create procedures to prevent the fire so you don't have to fight it. The more effective and successful you are in this space, the less time you have to spend in quadrant 1.

## **Quadrant 1 – Urgent and important**

Obviously, you need to attend to these tasks first as they are both urgent and important. This is where you have to deal with the fire and try to put it out. In other words, you are one step behind the game and therefore will find yourself more and more reacting to problems versus being proactive as discussed at quadrant 2. Keep in mind that the more you have to deal with the fire, the more likely you will burn yourself.

Spending a lot of time in this area is a clear indication that you either don't have enough resources to cater for demands, and/or you poorly manage yourself and your team.

### **6.1.2 Time for change**

I've seen too many people in business (including myself) operating in this 'Urgent and Important' world, only to become progressively reactive, stressed and eventually to burn out.

So here is what you can do to overcome this situation. Although I keep my explanations pretty simple and short, I understand that this is not a quick fix and will not happen overnight. But it is essential to get started right now and act fast.

- ✓ **If you don't have the resources** make sure you get them. This task of organizing more staff, equipment, or whatever it might be, falls under the quadrant of urgent (overcome the crisis) and important (planning ahead in order to avoid staff problems, increase of conflicts, work cover issues, inventory problems, drop of revenue due to customers dissatisfaction, etc.) If you choose not to act, you are sitting right on top of a ticking time bomb. Don't tell yourself or be told that there is no money to proceed. In fact, you are at the point where you cannot afford not to afford it. Everybody needs to understand that not getting the much-needed resources will cost more money than it will save.

Getting the resources required to deal with the demand is vital and will also ensure long-term customer satisfaction, health and well-being of your team and yourself, revenue increase and ultimately reaching your targets.

- ✓ **If you poorly manage yourself** you must invest into your personal and professional development. You have to learn strategies on how to prioritise better, delegate rather than micro-manage, and of course implement new and more resourceful habits as discussed earlier in this blueprint.

Reading these straight-to-the-point principles may raise the question: *“Where do I take the time to plan ahead and be proactive, when I have to put out all these fires?”* I understand that you cannot abandon the Urgent and Important tasks (quadrant 1), but you can transfer time that you spend in quadrants 3 and 4 into the quadrant 2 ‘Important, not Urgent’. The more you expand quadrant 2, the more you will decrease your time in quadrant 1. This is the magic formula for resourceful and ongoing success.

It will require you to analyze very carefully which tasks are growing from the roots of urgency and which ones are growing from the roots of importance. You will understand by now that these two are completely different. You also have to be able to say NO to tasks that are not important, but more on this topic in chapter ‘NO is a powerful word – use it from time to time’ from page 192.

“Life is like a camera:  
Focus on what’s important,  
Capture the good times,  
Develop from the negatives,  
And if things don’t work out,  
Take another shot.”  
~ *Unknown*

**Eat that Frog!**

Mark Twain once said that if the first thing you do each morning is to eat a live frog, you can go through the day with the satisfaction of knowing that this is probably the worst thing that is going to happen to you all day long. Your 'frog' is your biggest, most important task, the one you are most likely to procrastinate on if you don't do something about it.

Procrastinating and leaving the most undesirable tasks on your to-do-lists for a length of time means that you are thinking about that frog constantly. Unless you are French and a lover of Frog Legs, this will wear you out over time. So, remember to tackle important tasks, even if they do not appear appealing to you. Once you get them out of the way, it will leave more room for other important tasks that you might enjoy more.

**Time for Action**

Take a critical look at how you are spending your time at work. In which quadrants do the various tasks belong?

Quadrant 4 – Not important, not urgent

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Quadrant 3 – Urgent, not important

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Quadrant 2 – Important, not urgent

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Quadrant 1 – Urgent and important

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## 6.2 Make quick and smart decisions

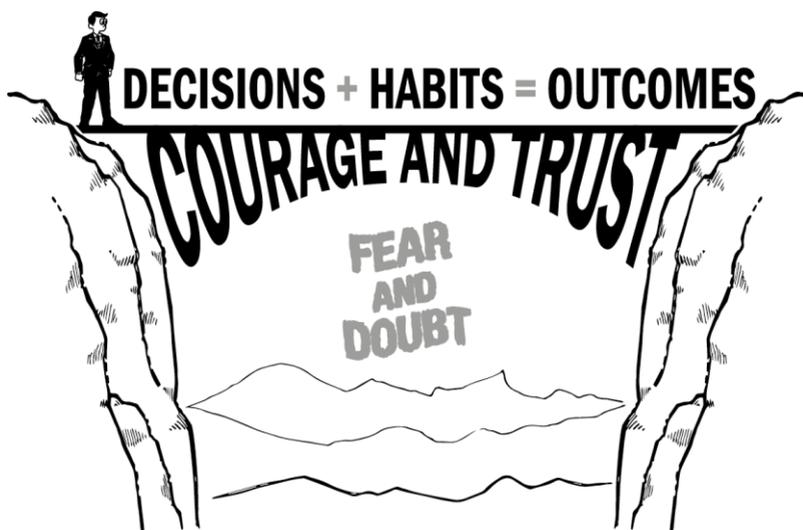
Decision-making is a vital part of the business world. Even low-level supervisors make several decisions in a workday, and some companies even encourage decision-making among front line staff. In fact, everybody makes decisions all day long, some of which we are not even aware of. It is crucial for a good leader to master the art of decision-making. Employees notice if a manager makes tentative decisions. If a boss is decisive about his/her decision, chances are s/he is decisive about the whole approach to management, and employees will respect that. A wrong decision made with conviction often gets high marks from employees.

The first step to making smart decisions is to create awareness on what 'making decisions' actually means. How do we make them, and why we make them - or not. In my opinion: Making a decision is to do something with 100% commitment to achieve a particular outcome. Regardless of the effort you put into making a decision, you need to accept that some decisions will not be the best possible choice. Even if something does go wrong, your decision was most likely reasonable in the circumstance and given the knowledge you held at the time.

*"A peacefulness follows any decision, even the wrong one."*

*~ Rita Mae Brown*

So, what if you make a wrong decision? How can you be sure you have all the facts before you make a decision? Is there an advantage in making a quick decision? The following pages will answer these questions and show you strategies to become a smart decision-maker.



### 6.2.1 Overcoming procrastination

Making quick decisions is not the same as making uninformed decisions or decisions without any substance. Making quick decisions is having the facts and being able to confidently take an action based on those facts and your analysis. There is no point lingering, questioning yourself over and over, and anguishing and tormenting over the facts. The facts are not going to change, and, likely, your first decision had merit to begin with or you never would have gone down that road.

The first step to making a decision is to overcome procrastination. A fantastic way to track your success record on overcoming procrastination is to measure how many things you already acted upon and implemented after reading and working through these first two parts of the book. How many strategies are already serving you and bringing you closer to your goals? What made sense to you but were left ignored, and you are therefore procrastinating?

It is time to stop feeding your fears and doubts with negative self-talk, and to shift your focus on the goals and the habits (knowledge, skills and attitude) you require to get the desired outcomes. Making an informed decision will create the courage and trust to build a bridge to overcome fears and doubts. More on this topic in 'Overcome Your Fears' on page 205.

## 6.2.2 Making smart decisions

To make better decisions, you need to first establish what particular outcome you want to achieve. Awareness around your vision and goals is crucial, which you have already established in the chapter 'Know Your WHY' from page 127.

We have already looked at how your beliefs support your values. You are now bringing your values to the forefront and give them an important role in your decision-making. When you align your vision, goals and values in this way, your values become your needs, and your needs your motivation. When you consider your values in decision-making, you can be sure to keep your sense of integrity and what you know is right. It builds your authenticity and reputation as an outstanding leader.

*“It is in your moment of decision that your destiny is shaped.”*

*~ Anthony Robbins*

You may wonder: “But what if I make bad decisions?” We all make bad decisions from time to time. Especially when we look back with the understanding of the consequences and the learnings, which we didn't actually have when we made the decision in the first place. So, with that in mind, was it really a bad decision at the time?

Once we realise that a decision we made moves us away from where we want to go, here a few important steps to recover from it:

- ✓ **Take full Responsibility.** Don't make excuses, rationalise or pretend that for whatever reason, somebody else is to blame. If you want to move forward, you have to take responsibility for your choices and actions.
- ✓ **Understand your choices.** Why did you make the decision? Again, this is not a time for excuses, just a time to understand why it happened so you can avoid making similar decisions going forward.
- ✓ **Apologise and explain.** If you hurt somebody, it is best to apologise and explain. Again, do not offer excuses or play down the situation. Be honest and explain your decision with help from the insights you gained from the previous steps.
- ✓ **Focus on the present.** Don't dwell on the bad decision; it is a waste of time. Move forward and focus on what is happening right now. Focus on the positive things you are currently doing instead of the negative ones you have done.
- ✓ **Be proactive in the future.** When you find that you have knowingly made a bad decision, find ways to be proactive after the fact. What can be changed or fixed now? What can you do in the future to ensure not making similar bad decisions?

### 6.2.3 Making quick decisions

I agree that for very critical, strategic decisions with high stakes or financial impact, you should indeed take more time and know your facts thoroughly. For the average day-to-day issue of a successful leader, however, you need to make relatively quick decisions once you gathered the critical information. Slow decision-making can murder your momentum, especially during developing opportunities and crisis situations.

If you look at successful people you notice that they...  
...make decisions quickly and change their mind slowly.

And by contrast, unsuccessful people...  
... make decisions slowly and change their mind quickly.

“We need to accept that we won’t always make the right decisions, that we’ll screw up royally sometimes – understanding that failure is not the opposite of success, it’s part of success.”

~ Arianna Huffington

There is a very interesting documentary called 'The Pit'. It describes and shows first-hand the financial chaos and the world of commodities trading on the floor of the New York Board of Trade. One very successful trader stated: "Guys that make it down there, believe it or not, never went to college; they have to have street smarts. They have to react. Guys following charts and everything.... they're not risk takers; I don't even see how they make money. All they do is read what it says on the sheet and go fifty bid. By the time you figure out what this is worth, I've already sold it or bought it and made my money or lost my money, and by the time you figure it out, it's not there no more."

This is a great example of quick decision-making. Those who take action have a shot at being successful, not those who hesitate to the point where the opportunity may not even exist anymore. Now this may be an extreme example, but keep in mind, these traders are not simply gambling – yes, there is risk, but they're making rapid calculated decisions. Most importantly, they're taking quick action on the decisions they make.

So how can you avoid over-examining pros and cons, and start making quicker decisions? One method could be the adaption of the SPEED formula, as described by Laura Stack in her 'The Productivity Pro' blog:

1. **Stop just long enough to gather the intelligence you need** to get a handle on an emerging issue
2. **Ponder what the issue means for you or your team.** If the issue won't affect you at all, stop here.
3. **Educate yourself on the issue as quickly as possible** if it does have an impact or consequences.
4. **Evaluate what you've learned.** Talk it over with your inner circle if necessary, but don't give it too much time.
5. **Decide your best course of action and implement it without delay.** Usually your first instincts are correct if you've been in your role long enough; don't second-guess yourself too much. You'll soon learn whether you've made the right decision; if not, you can take corrective action.

A word of caution, though: Avoid being influenced by others around you; otherwise you will never succeed in any of your undertakings or worse, end up having no desires of your own. Also, never base your decisions on advice from people who haven't already achieved what you want to achieve, and who don't have to deal with the consequences. Also, NOT making a decision means you already forfeit, or as Wayne Gretzky once said:

*“You miss 100% of the shots you don't take.”*

Having said that, you need to realise that not making a decision is already a decision in itself, because you decide not to make a decision, which is entirely your choice! People often confuse choices with excuses. If you decide to think about it and choose to do nothing, then you are saying (without saying it) that you are quite happy with the way things are. And that's fine if that is the case. Ultimately it all boils down to choices and there are only two types of it in business; 'Now or 'Too late'. So, you can either have excuses, or you can have results. You can't have both, which brings us to the next part of this chapter.

## 6.2.4 Making powerful decisions

As Anthony Robbins outlines in his book 'Awaken the Giant Within', the following are the key elements of making powerful decisions:

- ✓ Remember the true power of making decisions
- ✓ Realise that the hardest step in achieving anything is making a true commitment – a true decision
- ✓ Make decisions often
- ✓ Learn from your decisions
- ✓ Stay committed to your decisions, but stay flexible in your approach
- ✓ Enjoy making decisions

Another approach I often take is to focus on how I will feel once I've achieved the outcome, rather than how I feel while I make the decision. Like we learned earlier in this book, visualisation is the key. Focussing on the achieved, positive outcome is a very simple yet powerful strategy to overcome the fear involved at the time, and helps me make quicker, smarter and more powerful decisions, rather than being affected by and being the victim of my current situation.

### **6.3 NO is a powerful word – use it from time to time**

Most people find it difficult to say NO when asked to do something. Somewhere along the line, for any number of reasons, they have become conditioned to do what others ask. It is, however, a simple fact that you can never be productive if you take on too many commitments. You simply spread yourself too thin and won't get anything done on time – or at all. Especially in business, you constantly get requests for your time; via phone, email or in person. If you want to stay productive and minimise stress, you need to learn the art of Saying NO.

The solution to effective self-management is actually quite simple. You need to be able to prioritise and say NO to the things less important than others. We all have 24 hours a day, so if you say YES to something, what do you have to say NO to?

For a very long time I used to say YES to everything. I was literally 'Yes Man' as played by Jim Carrey. I carr(ey)ed the belief that saying NO was rude and impolite. It took me years to realise that I said yes to everything because I wanted to be liked by everyone. However, even though I constantly said yes, I still didn't manage to be liked by everybody!

As you can imagine, this led to frustration, disappointment and taking on additional work from lazy people unloading their unwanted tasks. YES, I was a very dependent person at the time. I earned other's trust in a highly unresourceful way (everybody knew I got things done on time, as I wanted to be liked) but their respect for me was going down the drain. I had no backbone, couldn't say YES to myself and subsequently couldn't say NO to others. Thank god that this personal strategy didn't pay off; otherwise I would still be running around trying to please everybody but myself...

But why is it so hard to say NO? To start with, and as mentioned above, we all carry the fear of being rejected. It can hurt, anger or disappoint the other person if you are saying NO. Second, especially in business, you usually hope to work with this person in the future, and want to maintain a good relationship. Saying NO in the wrong way could jeopardise the good working relationship.

Below are a few tips on how to say NO in a nice way:

- 1) **Value your time** – know your commitments and how valuable your precious time is.
- 2) **Know your priorities** – Even if you do have a little time at hand, is this new commitment really how you want to use that time?

- 3) **Practice makes perfect** – Saying NO often is a good way at getting better at it. If somebody is persisting, keep saying NO. They will eventually get the message.
- 4) **No apologies and being nice**– it might be polite, but gives the impression of weakness. Be firm and unapologetic about guarding your time.
- 5) **Say NO to your manager** – it is not a way of saying that you cannot handle the work. It is a way of explaining to your manager that you do not want to jeopardise your existing commitments. If the manager insists, ask him/her to re-prioritise.
- 6) **I'll let you know** – is a good way of telling the other person that you will give it some thought and to get back to them. You can then say: "After giving it some thought and checking my commitments, I won't be able to accommodate your request at this time."
- 7) **Not the right fit** – the project or task might be a good one, but just not for you right now. Be honest (and sincere) about it and let the other person know.

*"I encourage people to remember  
that NO is a complete sentence."*

*~ Gavin de Becker*

We often forget that we are allowed to say NO. You do not need to explain yourself, you can just say no. Doing so will over time expand your ability to say yes and really mean it. At the beginning, your attempts at saying no might be far from graceful, but with practice they will improve and you will possess the knowledge that they are well intended.

### **6.3.1 NO to perfectionism**

Perfectionism is often mistaken for ‘being perfect’ or ‘doing something perfectly’. Many people assume it must be a good thing, but others think of being a perfectionist as something negative. Perfectionism involves putting pressure on ourselves to meet high standards, which in turn influences the way we think about ourselves. Researchers have shown that parts of perfectionism are helpful, while others are not.

There is a big difference between the healthy and helpful pursuit of excellence, and the unhealthy and unhelpful striving for perfection. The definition of perfectionism can be divided into three key parts:

- 1) Relentless striving of extremely high standards
- 2) Judging your self-worth based on your ability to achieve these unrelenting standards
- 3) Experiencing negative consequences of setting such standards, but continuing to go for them

Out of all people, surely I need to be a perfectionist – I am Swiss after all! It has been in our genes for generations, I told myself for a long time. Unfortunately, this belief didn't do me any good; it actually pushed me to complete exhaustion time and time again. It was a useless, deeply engrained belief that in order to be worth my money, I needed to collapse on the couch every night. And that was still not good enough to be perfect. How could it? We could always do so much better, couldn't we?

Luckily, an epiphany struck me one day, and I realised that nothing could ever be perfect. There is and will always be a better, quicker way to do things. Just think of all the gadgets that have developed in businesses over time. And even if YOU think something is perfect, that's just your opinion. I am certain that somebody else would argue differently. I began to learn that not being perfect is a good thing, because there still is room for growth.

*“You’re either green and growing or ripe and rotting.”*

*~ Ray Kroc*

In reality, perfectionism does not exist. Somebody who wants to be perfect has no standards. How could they? Perfectionism is impossible to achieve and can therefore not be measured. It is however amazing how many people spend an incredible amount of time and effort to be perfect. What I realised through my own experience is that my urge to be perfect was not triggered through genes but rather my lack of self-confidence and the fear of not being enough (remember the chapter on universal fears earlier in this blueprint?). Putting my head down and making things ‘perfect’ became a space for hiding from the things that truly matter in life.

*“There is no need to be perfect to inspire others.  
Let others get inspired by how you deal with your  
imperfections.”*

*~ Robert Tew*

If you are caught up in the cycle of perfectionism, here are a few steps to overcome it:

- 1) **Learn to recognise perfectionism** – This is an important first step. Remember, there is nothing wrong with having high standards, but when the standards are too high, they can get in the way of your work and life, and create a lot of stress, frustration, anxiety and self-criticism
- 2) **Change perfectionistic thinking** – Replace the self-critical thoughts with more realistic and helpful statements like ‘Nobody is perfect’, ‘All I can do is my best’, ‘Everybody makes mistakes – we are all human’, ‘It’s ok not to be pleasant all the time.’
- 3) **Get a different perspective** – See your situation from another person’s point of view. You can challenge your negative thoughts by asking yourself: “How might my best friend view this situation?”, “Are there other ways to look at this?”, “What would I tell a close friend who has similar thoughts?”
- 4) **Look at the big picture** – Ask yourself: “Does it really matter?”, “What is the worst that could happen?”, “If the worst does happen, can I survive it?”, “Will it still matter tomorrow – next week – next year?”

- 5) **Compromise** – and be more flexible with your high standards. Ask yourself: “What level of imperfection am I willing to tolerate?”, “Who can I ask for help?”
  
- 6) **Practice** – Expose yourself to situations with lower than usual standards. You could for example: Stop at checking a document for mistakes after the first time; Spend 30 minutes instead of 2 hours to prepare for a 15-minute presentation etc.
  
- 7) **Reward** – It can be hard to face your fears and change old ways. Therefore, reward yourself from time to time (this could include taking a walk, take some time to relax, go out for a nice healthy meal etc.)

**Time for Action**

What tasks are you trying to fulfill 'perfectly', to the expense of other things or areas in the business?

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Let's not focus on perfectionism any longer, let's focus on results. This brings me to the next topic, the 80/20 rule.

### 6.3.2 The 80/20 rule

As we previously learned, it is essential to make smart decisions in today's fast moving environment. It all boils down to how we spend our time, resources and energy. The 80/20 rule (or also called the Pareto Principle) implies that 20 percent of all your activities are likely to produce 80 percent of the meaningful results in your business (and life in general for that matter).

Ask yourself what your 20 percent in the business are. Is it the meetings you attend on a regular basis? Is it the reports and analysis you produce for Executive Management? Or is it the time you spend checking first hand that Operations are running smoothly? Whatever it is, make sure you understand what your 20 percent are so you can nurture them.

Now ask yourself what the remaining 80 percent are that only produce 20 percent of the results? Is it an unproductive team member that makes the same mistakes over and over again, even though they have been shown the tasks several times? Is it attending meetings where your attendance is not required and you have no productive outcome? Whatever it is, make sure you understand what your 80 percent are so you can change them.

Here some food for thought: If you really know your Operations well, and understand the 80/20 rule, how about you do less of the 80 percent and more of the 20 percent? What if you could manage 160 percent with 40 percent activities? I am just saying...

While I do understand that you cannot just drop the entire 80 percent that produce 20 percent as some of those tasks are still necessary to accommodate customer service, achieve regulatory requirements, quality standards etc., I believe that you can implement changes that create a shift in the weighting.

I trust you get the concept. Relating this back to our previous heading, a perfectionist spends way too much in the 80 percent activities that only produce 20 percent of the outcome.

*“The few things that work fantastically well should be identified, cultivated, nurtured, and multiplied.”*  
*~ Richard Koch*

## 7 Take massive action – The power of momentum



Throughout this blueprint, you decided on your desired goals and outcomes and what you are willing to do. You also learned better strategies on how to manage yourself. What you do next is absolutely critical.

**You must take massive action.**

Nobody ever said success was easy. The question you need to ask yourself is: *“Is it worth it?”* Given a choice between risking failure in business and playing it safe, most professionals will choose the safe option unless they can find a compelling enough reason to change.

*“Vision without action is merely a dream,  
Action without vision just passes the time,  
But vision with action can change the world.”*

*~ Joel Arthur Baker*

Therefore, once you have decided on what you want to achieve (for example deepening your trust in your team's abilities), your next step is to take massive action. You must be prepared to take massive action if you want to transform yourself (and your team) into whatever you want it to be. There is no substitute for taking action, as action is the only antidote to procrastination and you've got to be willing to do whatever it takes to create the change you desire.

It is crucial that your goals provide you with inspiration. As we have looked at in detail in the chapter 'Focus on the Outcome' from page 129, as long as your WHY is strong enough, you will find a way (also known as your HOW) to get there. On the flipside, it is only when your HOW becomes bigger than your WHY that it gets too difficult to fix whatever career or life issues you have. This is where your negative self-talk kicks in, and where you are asking yourself *"Why even bother with this s@#\*?"*

Therefore, I encourage you to take action and to implement the strategies in this book - NOW. Momentum is that invisible, universal force that goes with your flow and follows your lead. It can surge you forward or it can pull you under. Only through taking action right now, when you are inspired and ready to implement the newly learned strategies, will you create change in your career. If this is merely an entertainment activity, meant to keep you busy (or busier) because you have nothing else to do, then nothing will change and you just simply become a gatherer of information. You will only imagine the results you could get, never being able to enjoy them firsthand.

Don't let your fear stop you from doing what you need to do. Remember that fear is just a feeling; one which you can conquer if you keep challenging it, essentially reducing the power it has over you.

## **7.1 Overcome Your Fear**

We all have one thing in common: Fear resides within us all. You know you have it when you are involved in something that makes your heart race, whether it is the moment that you are making your first big presentation, the first time you need to have a serious talk with an employee, or anything else business related that makes your body tense.

The famous fight manager Cus D'Amato once said, "The hero and the coward both feel exactly the same fear, only the hero confronts his fear and converts it into fire." Without fear, you will not succeed – however, in order to achieve success it is vital to embrace fear and overcome it.

You may even be impacted by fear but do not realise it until later. For instance, I once turned down the opportunity to work overseas, basing my decision on personal commitments. Only later did I realise that I was afraid that my language skills were not up to scratch and I could be exposed. Fear had taken away this amazing opportunity. Once I recognised the real reason for my decision, I bought myself some language tapes (yes, I am that old!), studied and in due course gained more self-confidence. I was sure not to turn down the next opportunity to work abroad and travel! Over the years I took on many jobs around the globe, which opened up unimaginable opportunities in my career. As you can see, I even published several books in a foreign language although my high school teacher told me that I was too stupid to learn another language and wasn't permitted to attend English classes.

So what exactly is fear? If everybody experiences fear, why do some people deal with it better than others? How can we overcome our fears? How we ended up being so fearful, and how to overcome it is exactly what we are looking at in the next part of this chapter.

Think about what it takes for a toddler to walk. They keep trying to take a step and every time they fall, they get up and try again. I've never seen a child give up, thinking that it was too bloody hard and believing that they were going to keep falling for the rest of their life. Every toddler strives to stand up and walk. In other words, they decide to succeed and not to fear failure.

Although parents generally want only the best for their children, Mum and Dad often make statements that later become an integrated part of what the children think. It is said that by the age of 17, we've heard "*You are wrong*" and "*You shouldn't do that*" or "*What's wrong with you*" around 75,000 times! Crikey! You have subconsciously been conditioned to "*I am not good enough*" or "*I shouldn't do that*".

Let's reflect on this for a moment: If you knew that you could handle *whatever* life and in particular your area of business has to offer, what would you attempt to do? The possibilities are endless! We now know that we are the creators of our own destiny. We can condition ourselves to what we want to be.

*"If someone offers you an amazing opportunity and you're not sure you can do it, say yes – then learn how to do it later."*

*~ Richard Branson*

Give yourself permission to let go of your ideologies that say *'I can't'* or *'I am not good enough'* and choose to face your fears. It is lack of choice, helplessness and hopelessness that can cause increased fear and lack of self-esteem in managers and leaders. So, start using 'choice language' and you will see the positive changes. This notion is very powerful and almost too simple to be appreciated, but it works nonetheless.

### **7.1.1 Get Over Yourself**

Asking yourself why your career or life is the way it is, means that you are either looking for excuses, justification or blame (focussing on problems), rather than figuring out the WHAT and HOW which in turn will give you the answers to move forward (focussing on solutions).

The truth is: THE MOMENT YOU GET OVER YOURSELF, YOU CRACKED THE CODE!

Stop worrying about what could go wrong. In fact, don't waste another minute of time or unit of energy to analyse why you are afraid, or why your team is not working together harmoniously, or why you cannot achieve your targets without being 'the bad guy'. It won't actually achieve anything. In fact, it will just lower your self-esteem. Instead, ask yourself where to direct your focus to get the best results, and suddenly you have a lot of free space in your head. Everything will look more positive because you are no longer beating yourself up over 'what's wrong with me'.

Don't wait for your fear to go away before you follow this advice because fear itself creates a vicious cycle and increasingly undermines your self-esteem, as well as your ability to excel in your position and industry. Ask yourself if your fear is justified. There are times that it is; however, in this chapter we are talking about imagined fear, or fear that isn't real. You may decide to put off delving head first into confronting the rotten apples in your team because you're afraid of the impact that this will have on the already fragile relationship. It's time to face that fear and create the environment that you're more than happy to be in! You may be tempted to make excuses for your paralysing situation, but the only way to overcome this type of fear is to actually do the things you want but have so far been afraid to do. In other words, you have to expand your comfort zone. We covered this topic in great depth in the first chapters of this blueprint.

So, here is the deal (it may seem all too simple, but it's actually pretty huge):

**Taking action toward the thing you fear most is what causes the fear to go away.**

If you run from your fear, it will never leave you. You need to ignite your desire and grow as a person so that you learn to become the successful leader you want to be. People often wait for courage to change their status, but this is generally in vain because courage is not needed to burying yourself in preparing low-level analysis documents, attending extended meetings, or otherwise wasting time that could be spent bettering your situation. Don't wait for the 'perfect time' before giving this a shot – it is just an excuse for not having to do the things you are supposed to do, are afraid of doing and get paid to do. Courage will not turn up until you actually start to take action!

### **You are top-notch**

After deciding to no longer avoid the very things that you know would make you a successful leader, your next step is to face the fact that you are indeed worthy and good enough to lead your team. This can be challenging and very scary if you were often told the opposite by past managers or anyone for that matter, but don't let them stop you. Don't let them dictate where you are today and how far you go tomorrow.

As I've said, courage does not come in the mail whilst you do nothing, so the more you put things off while waiting for courage, the worse you will feel about yourself. Many managers feel this same way, and that's an important fact to realise. You are not alone in wanting to achieve your targets and still sleeping peacefully at night, but not taking the action to get it. It is a pattern for a large number of people and it is completely normal to feel that way. The good news is that once you start building your reputation, you will begin to realise that you actually have what it takes to make your role successful and extremely fulfilling!

*“Success is not final, failure is not fatal;  
It is the courage to continue that counts.”*

*~ Winston Churchill*

Now that you feel more empowered to becoming an outstanding leader, here is something I'd like you to consider:



### *Two Wolves - A Cherokee Tale*

*One evening, a very wise, old Indian Chief was speaking with his grandson about life, telling him about the internal battle that goes on inside all people.*

*He said, "My son, inside all of us there exists a constant battle between two wolves. One wolf is very evil. He wants to force you to experience anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and a self-centred, destructive ego. The other wolf is good. He helps you to experience joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, faith, self-respect, and to develop a giving, constructive ego".*

*The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf wins?"*

*The wise, old Indian chief replied, "My son, the one you feed."*

**Time for Action**

“The question isn’t who is going to let me;  
It’s who is going to stop me.”  
~ *Ayn Rand*

Take a moment now to reflect on:

- ✓ What you want to achieve within the next 3 months
- ✓ Why this is so important to you and how it will change your career and/or life
- ✓ How committed you are and what you are willing to do for it

Write it all down here, sign it at the bottom of the page and share your goals with your loved ones, mentor etc. This will help you to stay accountable for your goals and actions along the way.

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## 8 Confident Conflict Management



Conflict is defined as a difference of values, wants, needs, or expectations. The workplace is a diverse environment involving people with all of the above differences, and as a result, conflicts may naturally occur. The issue is not whether conflicts exist but rather how we deal with them or what happens when they are not appropriately addressed.

The impact of conflict in the workplace can be devastating to the individuals involved, to colleagues and teams, to clients and to the business and organisation as a whole. Some of the results of unresolved conflict in the workplace include stress, frustration and anxiety; loss of sleep; strained relationships; absenteeism; presenteeism; employee turnover; loss of productivity; increased client complaints; sabotage; injury and accidents; disability claims; and sick leave. These symptoms are also a significant cost factor to departments, and this chapter focuses on how to overcome the stumbling blocks they pose.

## 8.1 Focus on 'Win-win'

Effective interpersonal leadership means that you need to think Win-win. It is not a technique, but much rather a philosophy of human relations. The now common terminology 'win-win' was first used by the famous Stephen Covey, and is in detail described in the book 'The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People'.

*“Think Win-Win isn't about being nice, nor is it a quick-fix technique. It is a character-based code for human interaction and collaboration.”*

*~ Stephen Covey*

For those not expecting to deal with people and needing their goodwill ever again, it might be appropriate to enter negotiations aggressively and win at all cost. However, successful and inspirational leaders find an acceptable solution for all involved parties, and ensure that those involved feel that they've won in some way. This will ensure an ongoing healthy relationship between all involved, encourage creativity in people and increase productivity.

A typical story of a badly managed conflict situation is the one of two people sharing one orange. Both of them want the orange and one suggests cutting it in half. One person squeezes their half and throws out the rind, but gets barely enough for a drink. The other, with great difficulty, grates their half to flavour a cake and throws out the juicy pulp.

They both made do with half an orange, when in fact they both could have had the whole (juice and grind).

How can you as the leader make sure your employees get the whole orange? What are the key factors of Win-win outcomes? How can you assist your employees in these situations? Let us explore the different scenarios of negotiations.

### 8.1.1 What are the options?

There are several scenarios when it comes to human interaction.

- ➔ Win-win
- ➔ Win-lose
- ➔ Lose-win
- ➔ Lose-lose
- ➔ Win-Win or Agree-to-Disagree

**Win-win** is a frame of mind that is constantly seeking out scenarios where agreements and solutions are mutually beneficial and satisfying for all parties. Win-win is thinking along the lines of abundance for everybody, and that one person's success is not achieved by the other person's loss. Win-win is based on the outcome of 'a better, higher way' rather than 'my way or your way'.

**Win-lose** is based on the authority principle that if one wins, the other must lose. It is the unfortunately common thinking of scarcity, as in strong-weak, hard-soft, full-empty, winning a game-losing a game, right-wrong, etc. Win-lose is based on the outcome of 'my way or the highway'. However, in most circumstances, if all parties are not winning, all are losing.

**Lose-win** is based on capitulation (giving in or giving up). It is worse than win-lose because it has no expectations, demands or standards. People who think lose-win seek strength from acceptance and popularity, are quick to please others, have little courage to express their own needs and are easily intimidated by those around them. Lose-win is based on the outcome of 'being a nice person, even if you finish last'.

**Lose-lose** is based on the philosophy of war. When two win-lose (egoistic and stubborn) personalities come together, the only possible outcome is lose-lose. They become oblivious to everything else but for the other person to lose, even if this results in losing themselves. Lose-lose is based on the outcome of 'if nobody can win, then maybe being one of those losers is not necessarily bad'.

**Win-win or Agree-to-disagree** is based on the amicable agreement that both parties want to walk away with a win, but if that is not achievable, they happily walk away until they might find a win-win at a later stage and under different circumstances. This scenario might only be realistic in the early stages of a business relationship; however it might provide tremendous emotional freedom in a family environment. Win-win or Agree-to-disagree is based on the outcome of 'either we both win, or we happily walk away'.

“Faced with the choice of changing one’s mind  
and proving that there is no need to do so,  
almost everyone gets busy on the proof.”

~ J K Galbraith

As to which option is the best one, the answer is not straight forward. It really depends on the circumstances. Thinking back to the Footy Grand Final game mentioned on page 35, of course the aim for each of those teams is win-lose. If you have a quarrel with a friend, and you value your friendship more than the issue at hand, you might want to go for a lose-win this time around. If your child wants something yet you are concerned for their wellbeing or safety, you might need to insist on a win-lose. If you as a family cannot agree on what movie to watch on a Saturday night, you might go for the win-win or agree-to-disagree and hold a board game night instead. However, in most situations the only viable option for a satisfactory outcome for all involved parties is a win-win.

### **8.1.2 Overcome your Ego**

First things first; you need to overcome your Ego. Here is a short overview on how our ego works and what you can do to overcome it.

The Ego is there to protect us. However; it does not always serve us in an empowering way. The 6 needs of the Ego are the need to Know, Judge, Justify, Be right, Look good & Get even.

#### **The Ego and inferiority**

Have you ever felt like you're just not good enough? Have you ever looked at someone else and thought: *"I wish I were as good as they are?"* If you have (and let's face it, most people have) then this is an example of being caught in the commands of your Ego.

It is important for us to notice when our Ego is popping up and, by listening to that 'mini voice' in our head, determine if it is in fact leading us to our goals or not. If it doesn't, we can choose to respond differently to ensure we don't:

- ✘ Feel tense, uncomfortable and overwhelmed with stress
- ✘ Take life too serious so nothing feels like fun anymore
- ✘ Have the urge to be right all the time and struggle to accept other people's opinions
- ✘ Constantly compare ourselves to other people
- ✘ Have to blame others if things are not going our way
- ✘ Struggle to take responsibility
- ✘ Feel that we're on our own in our life

*“The nice thing about egotists is that they don't talk about other people.”*

*~ Lucille S. Harper*

Remember the tale of the Two Wolves on page 212? As the Cherokee Tale explains, our Ego feeds on fear, doubt and pain. The more we attach ourselves to our Ego, the more we move away from our True Self.

**Be very clear - your Ego does not define who you really are!**

Although the Ego is part of us, it is the total opposite of our True Self. Our 'dark side' is Ego. Our 'light side' is True Self. We can only manifest love, happiness and success when we are operating from our True Self.

How can we overcome the Ego, you ask? We can make a conscious choice which wolf we want to feed. We can choose to embrace our True Self or be at effect by our fixated Ego.

We can also overcome the Ego by:

- ✓ Loving **unconditionally** (the minute you ask somebody "**How much do you love me?**" your Ego kicks in)
- ✓ Being compassionate and caring
- ✓ Focusing on courage and trust rather than fear and doubt
- ✓ Being present and curious when you're with people
- ✓ Being generous
- ✓ Connecting with our higher purpose and how we would like to be perceived and remembered

### **What happens when we stop ‘feeding our Ego’?**

Once we stop feeding our Ego and accept our True Self, we will be empowered with feelings of joy, peace, love, self-respect and many more positive emotions that allow us to evolve and heal. We can start enjoying every single day that is our **gift** (which is why it’s called the **present!**).

#### **8.1.3 Get clear on the desired result**

When you want to achieve win-win, your focus first needs to be on the results, not on the approach or the methods. If you start negotiations with a certain position (for example a certain salary you have in mind for a new position you applied for) and focus on defending that position, it become very difficult to back down from it without ‘losing face’ – in other words, your Ego gets in the way of a win-win outcome. What is described as ‘positional bargaining’ in the insightful book ‘Getting to Yes’ can also endanger ongoing relationships and create resentment, anger and bitter feelings.

So what needs to happen is to focus on the parties' interests, not on the positions. The challenge in negotiations is to close the gap between peoples' interests, not their positions. In the salary example above, it is neither the applicant's desire to stick to his original salary request, nor the recruiter's desire to stick to the advertised salary range. It is about closing the gap between what the applicant thinks he is worth and what financial budget the recruiter can work with.

In order to successfully negotiate win-win results, there are a further couple of helpful elements that need to be considered.

### **Separate the people from the problem**

We are all human beings and therefore sensitive to what others might think of us, have fears of jeopardizing relationships, carry deeply held values, come from different social environments or backgrounds, and with that are somewhat unpredictable. When we enter negotiations with a win-win outcome in mind, we should separate the people from the object. We can do that by putting ourselves in their shoes, not blaming them for our problem, not automatically assuming that their intentions are the complete opposite of ours, and even discussing each other's perceptions.

### Options, options, options

Unfortunately, too often in negotiations, parties settle for less than what they could. Parties should come up with various options before deciding on a method. It helps to identify and communicate shared interests, as well as different interests, beliefs or values. Each side has multiple interests, of which the most powerful ones are basic human needs. Any proposals or considerable options need to be consistent with the parties' values.

Remember the example of the orange at the beginning of this chapter? It is a typical example of how we tend to look for options in a straight line from our own position to the other person's position. We tend to judge hastily, are only looking for one possible solution, and tend to focus on satisfying our needs rather than consider everybody's needs. In the case of the orange, if they had looked at their options and communicated their different interests, they would have easily achieved a win-win outcome.

“Jack Sprat would eat no fat,  
His wife would eat no lean,  
Now was not this a pretty trick  
To make the platter clean?”  
~ *Traditional English Nursery Rhyme*

**Negotiate based on principles**

The reality of negotiations is that (unlike the example of the orange) many cases face an interest gap that no amount of inventive options can bridge. Compromise by one of the parties is not a win-win outcome.

Being guided by independent, objective standards is the solution for this challenge. The people involved can start looking for guidelines to which they can adhere to when deciding on the outcome. What is the wise thing to do? What is the fair thing to do? What is the most efficient thing to do? This approach will produce agreements professionally and harmoniously.

If objective criteria are being brought into negotiations, it is important to state them neutrally and see them as a basis for jointly finding a win-win outcome. Both sides need to be open to discuss the most appropriate standards and how they could be applied in these negotiations.

### 8.1.4 Methods

So, we learned that to achieve win-win, the involved parties need to decide on the desired results, and then discuss the approach or methods, all of which will enable them to self-evaluate their progress or success. All expectations are therefore clear for everybody from the very beginning.

In order for win-win to work, all underlying systems have to support and work towards win-win also. These might include reward systems, training systems, communication systems, recruitment systems, etc. Often, the problem of not achieving win-win outcomes lies in the system, not in the people. If we want to achieve win-win but reward win-lose (when we compare individual's results for example), nobody will win. Competition certainly has its place, but it is much more effective if it is against previous results, or the market competitor, rather than within the organisation or even the immediate team.

Methods or agreements that support a win-win outcome typically involve interdependent interactions, trust, delegation, self-supervision and initiative. Let's get back to our earlier example of Tom, the Operations Manager. If Tom wants his team to work together and submit those reports on time, he not only needs to involve them in the win-win negotiations, but needs to ensure they can participate in the process early.

The following five elements are identified and determined by the win-win outcomes:

1. What & when things need to be done
2. Guidelines, principles, policies etc. to which to adhere to
3. Financial, human or technical resources that are required
4. Accountability to set standards of performance and self-evaluation
5. Consequences for performance and non-performance

If Tom gets his team together, successfully negotiates win-win outcomes (which might include an aligned reward system like a team outing if everybody submits their reports timely), he can simply get out of their way, let his highly capable people work together, be a source of support if they need it, and receive their accountability reports. The responsibility lies with the individual team member for accomplishing the mutually agreed results within clearly defined guidelines and available resources.

**Time for Action**

Take a critical look at how you currently approach negotiations, and identify more effective ways for future ones.

Consider your own scripting. Is it win-win, win-lose, or lose-win? How does this affect your interaction with others?

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What obstacles keep you from using the win-win model more often?

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Identify an upcoming human interaction wherein you would like to reach a win-win outcome.

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Identify 3 key relationships (business or personal) in your life. How are they scripted; are they balanced? What steps can you take to improve the balance?

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Remember; you now learned the basics about win-win negotiations, but this book can only teach you the theory. It is now up to you to put it into practice and acquire the skills by doing it over and over and over again. As the saying goes: Practice makes perfect.



## 8.2 Conflict Resolution

Conflict is inevitable in business and can destroy relationships and good teamwork. When conflict is not being managed promptly, it can very quickly deteriorate and negatively affect communication and productivity. Research<sup>7</sup> shows that 60-80% of all difficulties in organisations come from strained relationships between employees, not from deficits in individual employee's skill or motivation. A research commissioned by Australia's Medibank found that stress related absenteeism posed a \$3.48b per year direct cost to employers, with stress related presenteeism even higher at \$6.63b per year. It is therefore essential that you gain the expertise and confidence to identify, deal and resolve conflicts.

To resolve a conflict, a difficult but necessary conversation is essential.

*“The problem is not to HAVE the conversation,  
the problem is NOT to have the conversation.”*

*~ Martin Probst*

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<sup>7</sup> Daniel Dana, *Managing Differences: How to Build Better Relationships at Work and Home* (2005, 4th ed.); Barbara J. Kreisman, *Insights into Employee Motivation, Commitment and Retention* (2002)

Many managers resist conducting these conversations because they feel that they don't have the necessary strategies and fear that they may make the situation worse. This results in behavioural issues and poor staff performance remaining unresolved. But how can you avoid the conflict to build up? What can you contribute towards solving the conflict? And when should you get involved?

Let's have a look at some common issues and strategies to resolve them.

### **8.2.1 What's bugging the team?**

The most common reasons for workplace conflict are of interpersonal nature, structural conflicts, goal misalignment, mutual department dependence, role dissatisfaction, dependence on scarce resources, and communication problems.

You have already learned some strategies to achieve win-win outcomes, to which the following can be added.

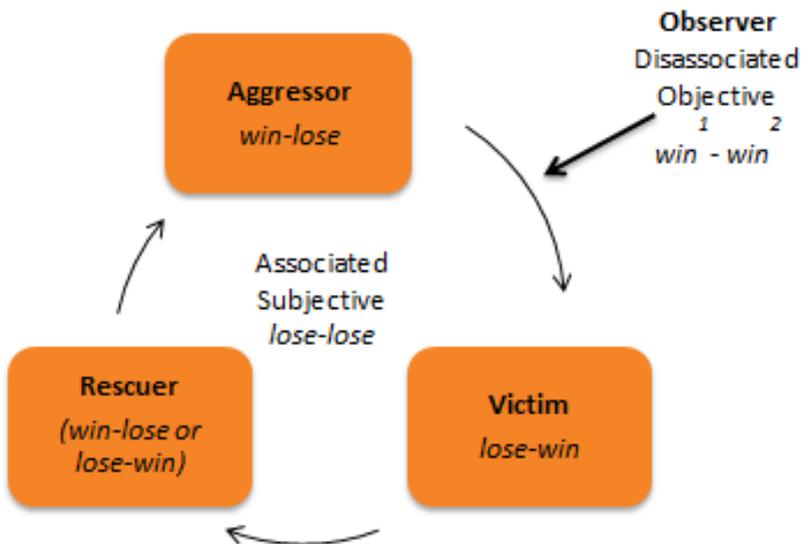
**Set an example**

For you to be an inspirational and successful leader, you must play an exemplary role within the organisation. You are an influential person and play an important part in the professional lives of your team members. Setting a positive example includes professionally and maturely abiding to company ground rules, and therefore condemn and sanction anybody breaking those rules, regardless of the nature of the dispute. Ground rules might include professional demeanour, use of appropriate language, good communication style, honesty, etc.

It is also vital that in order to resolve a conflict positively, the team environment is one of mutual respect (which again stems from your leading example). Your employees must all understand the value of respect and teamwork, which assists in resolving a conflict. If everybody adheres to taking turns of talking, of letting each other explain their point of view, of not undermining each other, and understands that collaboration or sometimes compromise is much better than avoidance or competition, then conflict resolution will be so much easier. Should any team member disobey the ground rules, you as the leader need to take action, issue a warning and communicate the expectations for future behaviour.

### Be the observer and stay neutral

The key in conflict resolution is for an inspirational and successful leader to be the observer. The observer sees things in an objective way, a perspective based on observation and measurable facts. The less you are emotionally involved in the disagreement the less defensive and the more productive and smooth the process will be from your end.



<sup>1</sup>**Courage & Control** to stand up for self

<sup>2</sup>**Compassion & Connection** for/with others

In order to be an effective mediator, you need to get out of the 'Drama Cycle' (lose-lose) as everybody involved in it is subjective and cannot make good decisions. Their perspective is based on personal opinion, assumptions, feelings, emotions, beliefs, etc.

“If you are not part of the solution,  
you are part of the problem.”  
~ *Eldridge Cleaver*

An effective strategy to stay emotionally detached and in a neutral position, is to disassociate yourself from the problem. Do this as soon as you realise that negative feelings and emotions are creeping in.

Associated means you are seeing an event through your own eyes, which means you are actually there or relive the event as you would be there, which creates or brings back certain emotions, feelings etc. and creates a subjective view.

Disassociated means you are seeing an event and yourself from a far-removed distance. This can be easily achieved by visualising yourself sitting in a movie theatre and watching the event (for example the conflict resolution meeting which you are part of) on the big screen. This will allow you to see things in an objective light.

If you are experiencing or remembering a positive experience, it is by far more fun and intense to be associated. If you are experiencing or remembering negative or unpleasant experiences, it is more helpful and useful to be disassociated. Too often we are doing the exact opposite by reliving negative experiences (associated) and disconnecting from the beautiful, positive moments in life (disassociated). This is a sure way of making our life miserable.

If you want to experience a more fulfilled and happy business and personal life, simply do the opposite; associate yourself with the positive experiences in your life. If you hold a difficult but necessary conversation, disassociate yourself in order to:

- ✓ Gain confidence to get that conversation started
- ✓ Identify major factors that contribute to conflict
- ✓ Assist others to become observers and be in control of their emotions
- ✓ Focus on solutions rather than buying into the stories of others, being caught up in the problems
- ✓ Structure your conversation and turn dysfunctional situations into productive outcomes

## Active Listening

You cannot argue with a point you have not heard. Unfortunately, parties involved in conflict situations spend much of their time talking instead of listening. People are quick to interrupt when they are in disagreement. While one party is stating their position, the other is already defending and formulating their contradiction. Do not jump to conclusions and listen instead.

“We have two ears and one mouth  
so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.”  
~ *Epictetus*

Active Listening is the ability to focus completely on what the other is saying and is not saying, to understand the meaning of what is said in the context of the other person's desires, and to support the other person's self-expression. Encourage team members to:

- ✓ Listen with empathy
- ✓ Stay focused and not to get distracted with anything that is going on around them
- ✓ Put themselves in the other person's shoes
- ✓ Explain issues clearly
- ✓ Use “I” rather than “you” statements in order to avoid for people to feel attacked
- ✓ Be clear about their feelings and remain flexible and adaptable during the conversations

Encourage the team members to be willing and open to understand why and how the other party came to their conclusion. This will give them the opportunity to pick up on valuable insights they didn't know before, which in turn will help to improve ideas and find even better solutions to move forward. Questions such as: *“Walk me through your process and help me to understand why you are doing it that way”* or *“Have you considered doing it XYZ way?”* or *“How do you think this will impact our business’ revenue, cost and ultimately bottom line?”* can prove very helpful in this process. To reflect back and ensure that what we heard is what was said, we can paraphrase or recap their comments, or clarify points that were unclear to us.

One way of showing that we are actively listening is to nod occasionally, to smile and use pleasant facial expressions, to maintain an open and inviting posture and to encourage the other party to continue with small comments like *“yes”* or *“uh-huh”*.

Once everybody has truly listened to each other's needs and concerns, you might find that there is no disagreement at all. For example: John from Perth says, *“I will call you tomorrow at 11am.”* Peter from Melbourne replies, *“You are not listening. I told you I am not available before 1pm.”* If Peter had listened carefully and considered that John lives in Perth and has a 2-hour time difference, he would have realised that both are talking about the same time slot!

**Additional help**

Should all your strategies, conversations and methods be fruitless, it might be time to bring in outside resources, for example somebody from Human Resources or an external mediator if the situation requires some distance and additional confidentiality. Additional help might also be needed if the dispute is requiring too much of your time. Requesting external help should not be regarded as a failure on your behalf; on the contrary, if the conflict is resolved satisfactorily, it will reflect positively on the process of conflict management.

**Reach a conclusion**

You as the leader take a great leap to manage a conflict, no matter the source. You can apply the strategies we discussed throughout this chapter, and even teach them to your employees so conflicts can be tackled at their source. Do not be afraid to step up and get involved when it is required. However, do not forget that the main aim is to resolve the conflict. And this needs to be made clear to all involved parties.

When the disagreement is resolved, it is time to move on. Dwelling on past differences does not lead to productive results; in fact it will only hold everybody back and most likely create new differences and disagreements. Follow the saying 'water under the bridge'; so once a disagreement is resolved, everybody needs to let go and move on!

**Time for Action**

What conflict situations have you been ignoring for a while, but actually know better than discounting them?

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How can you challenge them?

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What would be different once the conflict is resolved?

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Once the conflict is resolved, what does it free you up to do going forward?

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*For more insights and to answer the 4 crucial questions to **calmly and confidently deal with conflict**, opt in to our **FREE Video series**, valued at \$144. Go to: [www.profoundleadership.com.au/yoursuccess](http://www.profoundleadership.com.au/yoursuccess)*

## 9 Advanced communication strategies



We have briefly touched on the definition and basics of communication from page 46, and other various communication elements throughout this book. In order to be a truly successful leader though, you need to take it a lot further. Being able to communicate effectively is one of the most important skills, not only on a professional level, but also on a personal one. Statistics point to the fact that 85% of our success in life is directly linked to our communication skills.

*“The quality of your life  
is the quality of your communication.”*

*~ Tony Robbins*

So no matter how ambitious, committed or educated you are, you need to develop highly effective communication strategies to be truly successful. Do you want to understand how you can easily resolve conflicts with people in different areas of your life? Are you generally being well understood?

Communication is more than just exchanging information. It is about interpreting and understanding the feelings and intentions behind the information. It is also about being understood and your ability to convey your message effectively.

Communication is not about what you say; it's about the response you get!



Effective communication can take on different forms. The three primary ones are verbal, written and expressed (body language and facial expressions). Communication is a very complex subject with many different areas, skills and strategies to consider. The basics for good communication include:

- ✓ Be an engaged and focused listener
- ✓ Make an appropriate amount of eye contact and smile
- ✓ Pay attention and adopt to the other person's body language
- ✓ Use their name during the conversation
- ✓ Stay calm while communicating

In this chapter, we will focus on advanced communication strategies. You are being introduced to those methods that I believe are the most beneficial to you, and will create the biggest impact for you on your path to become a successful and inspirational leader.

## **9.1 Favored Representational Systems**

The Primary Representational System is essentially your personal learning style and situational response approach, meaning how you best absorb information and/or respond to an event. For you as an inspirational and successful leader, it is beneficial to recognise the other person's representational system, and start 'speaking their language'. This strategy is also a brilliant way of building rapport between a sales person and a prospective client.

### **9.1.1 V: Visual or Seeing**

People who are visual often stand or sit with their heads and/or bodies erect, with their eyes up. They will be breathing from the top of their lungs. They often sit forward in their chair and tend to be organised, neat, well-groomed and orderly. They are often thin and wiry. They memorise by seeing pictures, and are less distracted by noise. They often have trouble remembering verbal instructions because their minds tend to wander. A visual person will be interested in how your product LOOKS. Appearances are important to them.

### **9.1.2 A: Auditory or Hearing**

People who are auditory will quite often move their eyes sideways. They breathe from the middle of their chest. They typically talk to themselves (some even move their lips when doing it), and can be easily distracted by noise. They can repeat things back to you easily, they learn by listening, and usually like music and talking on the phone. They memorise by steps, procedures, and sequences (sequentially). The auditory person likes to be TOLD how they're doing, and responds to a certain tone of voice or set of words. They will be interested in what you have to say about your product.

### **9.1.3 K: Kinesthetic, Tactile or Feeling**

People who are kinesthetic will typically be breathing from the bottom of their lungs, so you'll see their stomach go in and out when they breathe. They often move and talk veerrry sloowly. They respond to physical rewards, and touching. They also stand closer to people than a visual person. They memorise by doing or walking through something. They will be interested in your product if it feels right, or if you can present them with something they can grasp.

### **9.1.4 AD: Auditory Digital, Self-talk or Making Sense**

This person will spend a fair amount of time talking to themselves. They memorise by steps, procedures and sequences. They will want to know if your product makes sense! The auditory digital person can exhibit characteristics of the other major representational systems.

The following two systems (olfactory and gustatory) are rarely primary systems...

### **9.1.5 O: Olfactory or Smelling and G: Gustatory or Tasting**

Olfactory and Gustatory are strongly connected although they do have separate channels. For example:

- The taste of food is impacted by the sense of smell
- If you have a highly developed sense of smell and taste, you can distinguish between many aspects of sweet, sour, bitter, salty and even umami

These two systems can also protect us from danger such as smoke or rotten food.

People who are olfactory have a strong reaction to offensive odour and may flare their nostrils and raise their chin. People who are gustatory often lick their lips or look like they are chewing. The breathing patterns and speech of both systems are similar to the kinesthetic system.

### **9.1.6 Speak the other person's language**

Here is a list of phrases that people of the respective representational systems use frequently. If you want to create a bigger impact on the other person, you can start using these terms or expressions so they feel better understood and get the impression that you are speaking their language

Visual (V)	Auditory (A)	Kinesthetic (K)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An eyeful</li> <li>○ Appears to me</li> <li>○ Beyond a shadow of a doubt</li> <li>○ Birds eye view</li> <li>○ Catch a glimpse</li> <li>○ Get a perspective on</li> <li>○ Looks like</li> <li>○ Paint a picture</li> <li>○ Take a peak</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Listen to this</li> <li>○ Sounds great</li> <li>○ Clear as a bell</li> <li>○ Grant an audience</li> <li>○ Loud and clear</li> <li>○ Power of speech</li> <li>○ Purrs like a kitten</li> <li>○ Earful</li> <li>○ Tuned in/ Tuned out</li> <li>○ Same wavelength</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Feels right</li> <li>○ Boils down to</li> <li>○ All washed up</li> <li>○ Gave me shivers</li> <li>○ Come to grips with</li> <li>○ Cool</li> <li>○ Calm</li> <li>○ Collected</li> <li>○ Get in touch with</li> <li>○ Get a handle on</li> <li>○ Lay cards on the table</li> </ul>
Audio Digital (Ad)	Olfactory (O)	Gustatory (G)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ That does(n't) make sense</li> <li>○ Speak out of experience</li> <li>○ I consider</li> <li>○ I (don't) understand</li> <li>○ Explain to me from A – Z</li> <li>○ What is the next step</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ As sweet as a rose</li> <li>○ This smells fishy</li> <li>○ I smell a rat</li> <li>○ A fresh sea breeze</li> <li>○ Smoking hot</li> <li>○ Tuned in/Tuned out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Like a piece of cake</li> <li>○ Revenge is sweet</li> <li>○ S/he is bitter</li> <li>○ I can get a flavour of it</li> <li>○ That's how the cookie crumbles</li> <li>○ Chew it over again</li> <li>○ Leaves a nasty taste</li> </ul>

The following is an example of how to tailor the same message to the four main representational systems.

Visual: If I could **SHOW** you a **CLEAR** and **ATTRACTIVE** way in which you could benefit, you would at least want to **LOOK** at it, wouldn't you? - If this **LOOKS GOOD** to you we will go ahead and **FOCUS** on getting the paperwork in.

Auditory: If I could **TELL** you a way in which you could benefit, you would at least want to **HEAR** about it, wouldn't you? - If this **SOUNDS GOOD** to you we will go ahead and **DISCUSS** how to set up an account.

Kinesthetic: If I could help you **GET A HOLD OF** a **CONCRETE** way in which you could benefit, you would at least want to **GET A FEEL FOR IT**, wouldn't you? - If this **FEELS GOOD** to you, we will go ahead and set up an account by **HANDLING** the paperwork.

Audio Digital: If I could **EXPLAIN** to you **OUT OF EXPERIENCE** a **PROVEN SYSTEM** in which you could benefit, you would at least want to **CONSIDER IT**, wouldn't you? - If this **MAKES SENSE** to you, we will **TAKE THE NEXT STEP** by setting up an account **FROM A - Z**.

This communication model applies to all areas of your life. Whether it is at work, in your sports club, at the networking event, or in your family – it is highly beneficial to recognise other people's representational systems and communicate in their words.

## 9.2 Building rapport

Like I mentioned in the previous Representational System part, people are usually more receptive to people like themselves. This is something you can tap into and use to your advantage. There is nothing wrong about this technique, as long as it is used with ethical intentions. Rapport is similar to trust, and is a state of harmonious understanding with somebody else or even a group of people. It means getting on well by having things in common, and therefore improving communication between various parties. Sometimes, this happens naturally, however non-verbal rapport can also be built by applying the following few steps (some of which we have already touched on in the section 'Active Listening' on page 237):

- ✓ **Appearance**; the way you dress should help you connect to people, not create a barrier. If you are over- or under-dressed, it can make the other person uncomfortable or even resentful. A good guideline is to dress just slightly better than the people you are about to meet.
- ✓ **Posture**; holding your head up and maintaining a good position. Be careful though, especially if you are tall; high chin angles make others feel like you're looking down at them. Adding a slight head tilt makes the other person more at ease and shows trust.

- ✓ **Common ground;** do your best to find something you have in common. Use open-ended questions (more on these later in this chapter) to find out more personal information about the other person.
- ✓ **Open body language;** lean forward, towards the person, with hands, arms and legs uncrossed. Ensure you respect their personal space though; standing toe to toe with someone can be intimidating.
- ✓ **Appropriate eye contact;** look at the other person about 60% of the time. You do not want to make them uncomfortable by staring at them.
- ✓ **Mirroring;** with an approximately 10 second delay, adjust your own verbal and non-verbal (body) language to reflect that of the person you are talking to. Include gestures and postures like folding hands, sitting back, raising eyebrows, etc. Discreetly mirror their language without sounding like a parrot. You can also copy their speech patterns, like the tempo and volume.
- ✓ **Be open;** Let go of stereotypes and be non-judgmental towards the other person. When you disagree, give the reason first before you say that you disagree.

- ✓ **Make it personal;** use the other person's name. This is seen as polite and creates a friendly environment. Greetings and closings including the other person's name are more personal and acknowledge the other person in a positive way. Don't overdo it though, and use the other's name in every sentence! This technique might seem strange at first, but it will feel natural after some practice.
- ✓ **Empathy;** demonstrate that you understand the other person's feelings and emotions, and that you can see their point of view.
- ✓ **Encouragement;** Reassure the other party with a smile and small comments like "yes" or "uh-huh". Make genuine compliments, acknowledge and congratulate them on recent accomplishments, and avoid criticism.
- ✓ **Find links;** talk about things that refer back to what the other person has said, and build on the other person's ideas. This creates relations to common experiences and interests.
- ✓ **Honesty;** admit if you were wrong, have made a mistake or don't know the answer. Acknowledging mistakes helps to build trust.

"Rapport is the ability to enter someone else's world,  
to make him feel that you understand him,  
that you have a strong common bond."

~ Tony Robbins

Your ability to build rapport with another person or group of people is a critical component for successfully building relationships. A study has shown that when an interviewer had mirrored the candidates prior to dropping a pen on the floor, the candidates were two to three times more likely to pick up the pen. In everyday life, rapport building can help in negotiations, sales and teamwork, and can bear countless opportunities. Make mirroring a part of your unconscious behaviour.

**Time for Action**

Like many other new habits, mirroring takes getting used to and might feel unnatural at first. However, it is a simple yet very effective technique to quickly building rapport.

Over the course of the next week, start mirroring the people you talk to; be subtle and delay your reaction a little. What do you notice?

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How has the behaviour of the other person changed?

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Which of the previously slightly strained relationships have improved?

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### **9.3 Chunk & GROW**

Have you ever been curious why you can just talk easily to some people, while with others you seem to struggle to connect? This chapter will explain the reasons behind that, and how you can use the chunk size filter and GROW concepts to your advantage. It describes how to master the art of communication by controlling the flow of conversation or ideas from abstract to specific, and vice versa.

### 9.3.1 Chunk size filter

Hierarchy of ideas (Chunking) is a fantastic tool for a successful leader because many communication breakdowns are caused by mismatched chunk sizes. Paul, the accountant, might for example use smaller chunks than Tom, and view Tom as unclear and sleep-inducing when he talks. Tom may see Paul as terribly boring and caught up in detail. In meetings, Tom will talk about the vision of the company, while Paul is only interested in specific information on how to get there.

It is highly beneficial to be able to ‘chunk’ when you need to improve communication. When talking to someone using bigger chunks, you can ask the question *“What, specifically...?”* to get more details. When talking to someone using smaller chunks, you can ask *“What is the intention of this?”* to encourage larger chunks. If an employee considers his/her job as unpleasant, you can chunk him/her up to demonstrate the importance of this particular job in relation to the success of the entire company. This may appear more tolerable and motivating to the employee.

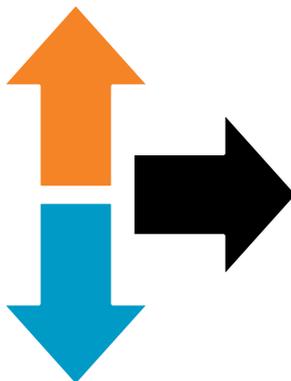
Following is an outline of what Chunking means.

**GLOBAL / ABSTRACT**

“This is the WHY –  
vision, mission, goal,  
purpose of the  
company.”

**DETAILS / SPECIFICITY**

“This is the WHAT,  
HOW, WHERE, WHEN,  
and WHO needs to do  
it.”



**LATERAL**

“This is the WHAT  
ELSE –  
access other  
examples and  
opportunities .”

Increasing your business success and efficiency comes down to your ability to think up, down and across the communication ladder easily and effortlessly. The faster you can do this the better you become at ‘thinking outside the box’.

Generally, executives’ or board members’ discussions on business planning, marketing strategies and trends etc. are very highly chunked up. Trying to get specifics at this point in time is not going to help the vision to move forward. On the other hand, dreaming big all the time without being able to chunk down into specifics and move towards the desired outcome won’t be useful either. True entrepreneurs have the flexibility of chunking up, down and across on demand at appropriate times.

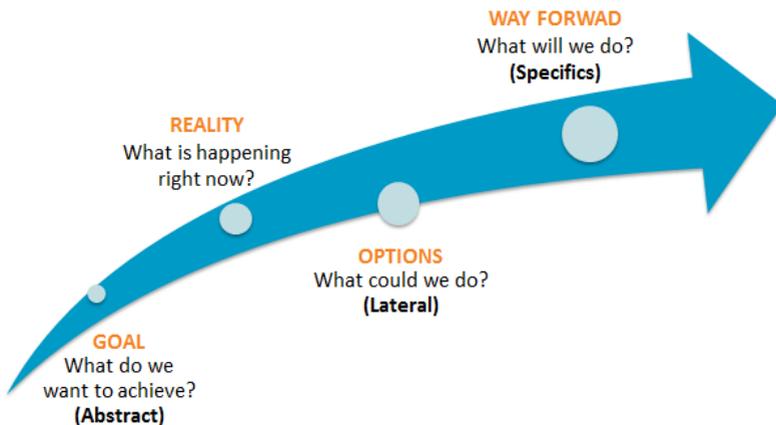
Resolving conflicts also becomes easier when you understand the power of this communication strategy. Being able to chunk up two people with different ideas makes it easier to find an agreement as they most likely will learn that they ultimately want the same thing (freedom of choice, acknowledgement, respect etc.). Once an agreement is reached, chunk down to get clear on the details. Once you notice negative emotions (frustration, anger, despair etc.) creeping in from one or the other side, chunk across to explore what else could be done to resolve the conflict. In other words, consider different options that are available to maintain the agreement. Once you reach common ground again, it's time to chunk down even more until a solution is found and both parties are clear on how to achieve the desired outcome.

This technique is very simple but also very effective. Go, try it yourself and be surprised by the results.

### 9.3.2 GROW Model

To bring some valuable structure to the ‘chunk size filter’ in a meeting or mediation process, you can apply the GROW Model<sup>8</sup> which is another method for problem solving. This strategy is a four-step process that can be compared to planning a journey; establishing a goal (where you want to go) and determining your reality (where you currently are). Then it is about exploring the options (various routes), and the last step is about the way forward, in other words establishing the commitment to making the journey.

Let’s now look at this communication model. For each step, I have given you examples of questions you can utilise.



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<sup>8</sup> Originally developed in the 1980s by Graham Alexander and Sir John Whitmore

**G for GOAL**

1. How would you like this situation/issue to be?
2. How is this situation important to you? To your purpose?  
To your ideal life?
3. How will you know that you have achieved the goal?
  - a) What do you see that proves that you have solved the problem or achieved the goal?
  - b) What are you doing that proves that you have achieved your goal?
4. Etc.

**R for REALITY**

1. What is happening right now that tells you this is important to you?
  - a) What is missing?
  - b) What are you tolerating?
2. What have you attempted to do so far to transform this situation?
  - a) What results did you get?
  - b) What did you learn?
3. What are your beliefs about achieving this outcome?
4. Etc.

**O for OPTIONS**

We've now explored where the person wants to be and where the person is right at the moment. It's now time to really open this thing up!

1. What could you do if you had total certainty about the outcome?
2. What could you do if you were without fear?
3. What could you do if you knew you could not fail?
4. Etc.

**W for WAY FORWARD**

Now we know a whole lot about what the person could do. It's time to...

*(Remember: No decision has power unless we commit to action.)*

1. Look at your options. Which action(s) stand out as being the action(s) that would bring you just one step closer to your outcome?
2. When will you have completed these first action steps?
3. What evidence will you have that you have completed what you wanted to?
4. Etc.

The beauty of using this communication strategy is that the involved person or team are personally active in identifying the problems and producing ideas for solutions. It offers a framework with general 4-step questions, without the need for you to offer answers or force any particular direction.

## 9.4 Communication Strategies for the meeting room

In addition to the Chunking and GROW models we discussed throughout the previous pages, I would like to give you a few pointers that are helpful specifically for meetings. They can be implemented easily and will lead to even better outcomes once combined.

- ✓ **Start with the end in mind** - Straight at the beginning of the meeting, establish a clear objective (in positive language) that everybody agrees on (common goal). This will help to lead the discussion into the right direction, like a compass. You might also want to take a moment to explain how the meeting will run, especially when there are a few new people attending.

- ✓ **Use the meeting time wisely** – Nobody wants to waste their time; therefore we need to streamline the meetings as much as we can. Start meetings on time, and do not spend time recapping for latecomers. Prepare an agenda that covers factors like priorities, results, participants, sequence and timing. Take offline those items or discussions that can be completed outside the meeting.
  
- ✓ **Attend meetings with an open mind** - Attending meetings with a mindset of curiosity and a willingness to receive feedback (the breakfast for champions) will create a relaxed learning environment. Encourage quiet people to give their opinions and ideas.
  
- ✓ **Listening is key** - Too often people are caught up in their own world and focus purely on how they can defend their actions. So, do not over prepare yourself for upcoming meetings. This will allow you to listen to what is truly said (not what you want to hear) and will give you the opportunity to engage with the attendees and promote open communication rather than creating misunderstandings.
  
- ✓ **Focus on solutions** - Sometimes, it is necessary to state a problem. However, once the problem is acknowledged, the focus must immediately shift to solution based discussions, as this is the only way to victory.

- ✓ **Ask high quality questions** - Who likes to be told? So, ask a lot of great and high-quality questions (*What* and *How*). This will allow attendees to come up with their own solutions, which creates commitment and accountability in the room.
- ✓ **Show some vulnerability** - Meetings often turn into fear or ego driven power games. Showing some appropriate emotions and vulnerability can easily prevent this from happening. Asking questions like: *"I am curious to find out what I need to learn about myself to improve this situation?"* (rather than defending yourself) will make people feel more comfortable and willing to make some improvements themselves.
- ✓ **Rephrase** - If we say things that came out the wrong way, then we need to have the courage to rephrase what was said to get things straight right away. This can simply be done by saying: *"This came out the wrong way, I do apologise. Let me rephrase what I just said..."*
- ✓ **Always aim for win-win** – There are generally 4 strategies in a meeting: Get out; Give In; Take Over; Go for the win-win. Going for the **win-win is the most effective**, especially in the business world.

- ✓ **Recap decisions** – for productive meetings, the end is just as important as the beginning. Spend a moment recapping decisions and actions, as well as what will leave the room and what will be kept confidential. Attendees should not get away with silent disagreement. It is important that everybody is on the same page about decisions and action points.

Effective meetings require structure and order. Applying the few points above will ensure that your team will learn to embrace meetings. Running successful meetings will support your career as a successful leader.

## 9.5 Inferential vs Literal Communication

Two important phases of communication are encoding and decoding. The definition of inferential in the context of communication is that the message is not directly expressed, but rather based on interpretation. The inferential model of communication<sup>9</sup> proposes that despite us humans wanting to communicate, we do not have a code to faithfully capture our message which can then be cracked clean by others. Therefore, we resort to non-verbal symbols, like pointing, mimicry and other types of display.

The challenges of inferential vs literal communication occur in both listening and speaking of course. In order to achieve successful conversations, we need to understand if we are talking to a literal or an inferential person. Let's have a look at the difference between the two.

Literal people are very clear and direct about what they need, and get annoyed with others that are not. They need to know exactly what needs to happen, and will communicate it accordingly. Inferential people will imply what they need, giving you clues but not clearly stating what they want or need. You need to draw your own conclusions and read between the lines.

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<sup>9</sup> by Prof. Mathukutty Monippally, 2001

## What's the difference?

Let's have a look at a few examples for the different communication styles. To demonstrate how inferential and literal communicators tick, let's use the example of somebody saying: *"I'm thirsty."*

### Literal

A literal person will take the communication word for word and will not feel compelled to do what has not been said. They might respond to the above statement with something like *"that's no good"*, or might not respond at all.

When communicating to them, make sure to be very clear with your instructions and expectations. Say exactly what you expect to get done, word for word and do not expect them to do what has not been communicated to them. Use sentences like: *"Please do this by..."*, or *"I need this actioned by..., please."*

### Inferential

An inferential person will interpret what is communicated to them and will act according to the meaning they give the communication. They might react to the above statement with something like *"Would you like a glass of water?"*, or *"Can I get you something to drink?"*

When communicating with them, expect the inferential **listener** to fill in any blanks and arrive at their own conclusions. Inferential **speakers** will expect the receiver of their communication to make sense of what they say, fill in the blanks, give meaning to it and act accordingly. So, make sure that you include hints and clues rather than clear instructions and facts.

Understanding this principle is vital for successful leaders. You need to understand that communication is almost never comprehended as it should be. Knowing if you talk to a literal or inferential communicator is also a key element when you give feedback.

### **Time for Action**

What kind of communicator are you? If you talk to someone, do you tell the person exactly what you think, or do you infer that there might be a problem that they should be fixing?

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When did you experience a literal vs inferential conversation go wrong?

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What would have been different if you applied this method and switched to the other person's communication style?

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## 9.6 Asking the right questions

Asking the right questions is right at the heart of effective communication. The quality of your questions determines the quality of the answers. Asking the right questions will help you manage people more effectively and build stronger relationships. So, let's have a look at some helpful, proven questioning techniques.

### Open and closed questions

When you ask a closed question, the answer will be "yes" or "no" or a short phrase, and won't get you any further than that. When you ask an open question, you ask the other person for their knowledge, their opinion or their feelings. These questions usually begin with what, how, why, tell me or describe.

Asking closed questions are good for testing and understanding (*"Will I get a pay increase if I complete my CPA exam?"*), making a decision or concluding a conversation (*"Now that the team merger is complete, we will improve our process efficiencies?"*), or frame setting (*"Are you happy with the service from our IT helpdesk?"*).

Other examples of closed questions are:

- How old are you?
- Do they give you what you need?
- It's great weather, isn't it?

Asking open questions are good for finding out details (*“What else do we need to make this process more efficient?”*), developing an open conversation (*“What were you up to on the weekend?”*), or finding out problems or opinions (*“How do you feel about the team merger?”*).

Other examples of open questions are:

- Why is it important to you?
- How do you feel about the service you receive from the IT helpdesk?
- How are you going with your CPA studies?

Both open and closed questions have their place. Closed questions can start a conversation and summarise the progress, whilst open questions help the other person to think and to continually give us useful information.

### Leading questions

This type of questioning leads the other person to our way of thinking, or in other words we lead them to the answer we would like to hear. This can be accomplished in several ways:

- Adding an appeal to agree, like *“Paul is very efficient with his processes, isn’t he?”*
- Framing so the easiest answer is “yes”, like *“Shall we all start to use the new process from Monday?”*
- Asking based on an assumption, like *“How easy do you think the new process will be to follow?”* (assuming that the process should be fairly easy)
- Illusion of choice, like *“Would you like to start the new process from Monday or from Wednesday?”* (assuming that you, the leader, would be happy with both)
- Cause-and-effect questions, like *“If you go on a 6-week overseas trip, how do you reckon your CPA exams will go?”*

Leading questions are sometimes desirable. It is however important to recognise them at all times and only use them ethically and with caution.

### Rhetorical questions

Rhetorical questions do not expect an answer at all, and might be used to make a point, to persuade or to draw the listener into agreeing.

- *“Aren’t Paul’s presentations so clear?”*
- *“Isn’t it great that the team merger went so well?”*
- *“Don’t these new systems work together just beautifully?”*

These questions are useful to engage the listener, and convey the feeling of agreeing rather than being told. They are even more powerful if you use them in succession, but be careful not to sound too presumptuous.

### The 5 Whys

This questioning technique, developed by Sakichi Toyoda in the 1930s, is very effective for troubleshooting, improving quality and solving simple to moderately difficult problems. When a challenge arises, keep asking the question *“why”* until you reach the source of the problem and a solution becomes obvious.

For example, we could go ahead and evaluate Tom's team problem with the reports being produced late:

1. **Why?** The numbers came in late so the team could not produce the reports on time.
2. **Why?** Running of the daily numbers took longer than anticipated.
3. **Why?** The person running the daily numbers was slow.
4. **Why?** The person running the daily numbers is inexperienced.
5. **Why?** The person usually running the daily numbers was sick on that day.

**Solution:** There need to be more people trained up to run the daily numbers.

This simple technique can quickly get you to the root of a problem, and is most effective if it is performed by the people close to the problem, so people that have the insights to the processes.

**Time for Action**

What are your criteria for good questions? Are they brief, easy to understand, relevant, open, close, suggesting?

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Write down a few bad questions, and then tweak them to become good ones.

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**In essence**

Learning good questioning techniques does not only help you as a leader, but will assist your employees to get the information or support they need without wasting time with asking multiple or wrong questions.

It is a must that you teach your team the above methods and provide them with a dynamic vehicle for their development. Your employees will be able to improve their interaction with internal and external customers, and troubleshoot some of their challenges autonomously going forward.

## 10 Inspire people around you



Your success as a leader is not just what you achieve, it is also what you inspire others to achieve. Orrin Woodward brought it to the point: “Average leaders raise the bar on themselves; good leaders raise the bar for others; great leaders inspire others to raise their own bar.” Positive inspiration makes a huge difference in people’s lives. Better health, happiness, efficiency and fulfilment are only a few of the side effects. It is said that people usually leave a boss before they leave an organisation.

*“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”*

*~ John Quincy Adams*

Inspiration is very powerful, but it is not easy. In fact, many people believe that someone needs to be a natural enthusiast, or has to be born with that certain 'charisma', in order to successfully inspire people around them. You might be relieved to learn that this is not the case. Forbes Magazine put 300 leaders to the test over the span of 18 to 24 months, to improve their abilities to inspire others. As a group, they were able to move from the 42<sup>nd</sup> to the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile – a very significant leap. This clearly proves that with awareness and a development plan, leaders can make a major improvement on their ability to inspire others.



### *Bouncing back*

*A father took his young son into a toy shop to give him a chance to look at some special gifts he would like to receive from Santa Claus. The father told the boy to have a wander around on his own for a few minutes to see what he would like. At the back of the shop, his young son found a statue of a man made from lots of colourful balloons.*

*He looked at the balloon man for a minute, and then he drew back his fist and hit him just as hard as he could. The balloon man fell back and hit the floor, then rocked backwards and forwards and after a few seconds he stood upright again.*

*The confused boy backed off and looked at the balloon man and then hit him again, as hard as he could. The balloon man fell back once more and hit the floor, but was soon standing upright again.*

*The father saw his young son hit that balloon man and asked, 'Why do you think he comes bouncing back up when you hit him and knock him down?'*

*The boy thought for a minute and said, 'I don't know Dad, I guess it's because he's standing up on the inside.'*

Do you currently motivate others easily? Are you optimistic? Do you believe in what your organisation does and stands for? There are a number of methods that will inspire the people around you. You might already apply some of these; others can be acquired and implemented in order to make a difference to your circle of influence. Every action you take counts.

## 10.1 Lead by Example

“Example is not the main thing in influencing others.  
It is the only thing.”  
~ *Albert Schweitzer*

As an inspirational and successful leader, part of your job is to encourage the people around you to push themselves and subsequently the company to greatness. In order to do this, you must show them the way by doing it yourself. You must be their role model and lead them by example, and create a picture of what is possible. You need to follow the example of ‘Show, don’t tell.’ Following are a few role model behaviours:

- ✓ **Be your team’s advocate.** You need to do your homework, and follow through on what you say you’re going to do. Remove obstacles, be persistent and show that obstacles don’t define you, them or the company. Advocates might sometimes be unpopular for taking a stance, only to be thanked later. If you take the risk and say the things others are holding back, you become the glue that holds people together.
- ✓ **Create solutions.** Be the first to offer solutions, and then ask your team for more. In a solution-driven culture, employees exchange ideas, create responsive relationships, and really work as a team. Only if the team is working together, you will achieve the best results.

- ✓ **Show your capabilities.** People don't care what you know until you demonstrate what you know. Your competencies are an opportunity to express who you are, what you do and why you do it. Do more than expected, excel at what you do, and give your employees your best.
- ✓ **Take responsibility.** To achieve great team results, you need to exhibit accountability. See it, own it, solve it and do it. Leaders with solid work ethic and character take responsibility for the work they do, which in turn will help build a culture of accountability in your team.
- ✓ **Make time.** Ensure that you schedule time for your employees. Busy day-to-day management can easily let you forget the biggest asset you have as a leader; your team. Engage your employees, and get a better understanding for who they are, what they do, what they want, and what they bring to the table. When leaders share their precious time with employees, everyone benefits.
- ✓ **Provide stability.** Stay calm and cool in tense situations, to ensure your credibility as a leader. Focus on self-care practices (like finding an outlet for your frustrations, dialling back on the coffee, writing down negative thoughts on paper, becoming aware of and manage your emotions, etc.) and make them a way of life.

- ✓ **Be consistent.** If you want to grow as a leader, you need a track record of success. You can't establish a track record if you are constantly shifting gears or trying new strategies. You (and your team) need to stay on the course to achieve and surpass goals.
- ✓ **Express your enthusiasm.** You need to have passion for what you do in order to be successful. When you are the initiator and make things happen, you transform your dedication to enthusiasm seamlessly. Communicating your enthusiasm to your team has a contagious effect.
- ✓ **Communicate clearly and positively.** Successful people can't thrive on a negative dialogue. Make sure you respond to team members and maintain clear lines of communication. Seek face-to-face discussions to make them more fruitful and swift. It helps to build confidence and makes people feel like they have a voice.
- ✓ **Listen, learn, lead.** If you don't ask and listen, you will never know. The better you get to know your employees and their work processes, the more you will gain insights and discover personal growth and workflow efficiency opportunities. Leaders aren't good because they are right; they are good because they are willing to learn and to trust.

- ✓ **Value wellbeing.** Management of your energy for high performance has to be non-negotiable for you and your team. This may include: eating healthily, limiting coffee and alcohol consumption, meditating daily, consistently sleeping 8 hours, moving your body, practicing mindfulness, etc. A balanced team, mentally and physically, is a successful team.

## 10.2 Have Integrity

*“Integrity is doing the right thing.  
Even when no one is watching.”*

*~ C.S. Lewis*

Integrity is one of the top qualities of a great leader. It implies a commitment to do the right thing for the right reason, regardless of the circumstances. Leaders with integrity conduct themselves with the same high ethical standards no matter where they are, or who they are with, and are incapable of breaking other people’s trust. Listed below are some characteristics of integrity:

- ✓ **Be truthful.** Leaders with integrity don’t try to see what they can get away with. Your employees need to be able to count on you conducting yourself consistently with high ethical standards and with honesty. Inspirational and successful leaders believe in and live by the long-term value of telling the truth.

- ✓ **Be trustworthy.** Being tight-lipped is a perfect way to demonstrate that you can be trusted; so, do not disclose or share any confidential information. If you repeat confidential statements made by employees or peers, even if the original source doesn't hear about your gossip, the people you tell will lose respect for you and no longer trust you
  
- ✓ **Deliver on promises.** A great leader doesn't just say the right things, but actually gets on and does it. Every promise counts, so ensure that you communicate clearly what it is you are promising. Sometimes, delivering on promises is not easy, so keep pushing yourself until you get them done. Pace yourself with your promises and don't overdo it – balance is the key.
  
- ✓ **Be respectful.** Respecting others means understanding different values and beliefs, recognizing, accepting and developing the skills of others and including all employees as part of the team. It is vital that the leader condones unacceptable behaviours and sets a norm for future actions.
  
- ✓ **Treat everyone equally.** When leaders regard themselves as better than their employees it creates a feeling of worthlessness which inevitably demotivates and reduces productivity. Respect individuals by putting them on the same playing field.

- ✓ **Establish sound policies.** Establish a set of sound ethics guidelines, and integrate them into all business processes. Communicate them broadly to all employees, and make clear that you will not tolerate any deviation from any of them. Then live by them.
  
- ✓ **Be inclusive.** Have a look at your team with regards to diversity (race, gender, age, ability, faith, etc.). When organising team events, ensure that the time, venue or activity is not (even unintentionally) discriminating for anybody; you do not want any resentment from those team members. Consider the inclusion of culturally significant events or practices to widen everybody's knowledge about other cultures.

**Time for Action**

What ethics guidelines do you currently have in place?

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Think of a time when you have or haven't demonstrated that you can be trusted with confidential interpersonal information. How will you handle these going forward?

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### 10.3 Communicate your vision

“Our vision is only actionable if we share it.  
Without sharing, it’s just a figment of our imagination.”  
~ *Simon Sinek*

Every successful and inspirational leader has a vision. For John F. Kennedy it was to put a man on the moon. For Nelson Mandela it was a South America without Apartheid. For Eleanor Roosevelt it was a world of equal opportunity for women and minorities. Nothing happens until it happens in somebody’s mind first. And you as the leader need to mobilise your vision through communication, so people want to join you and make it a reality. Here is how you can achieve that:

- ✓ **Know your purpose.** What legacy do you want to leave? You should be clear on this based on what we have covered in chapter 5 ‘Know your WHY’. A hallmark of great leaders is that their vision includes big ideas. Big ideas get people excited. The vision needs to be clear, concise and easy to remember for it to stick well.
- ✓ **Be authentic.** Stay true to who you are, be self-aware and genuine. Show your true self to your employees, family and followers. If your vision and goals are based on your true values and beliefs, then communicating them transparently and convincingly will feel natural to you.

- ✓ **Bring your vision to life.** It does no good to create a vision without a plan to speak about it in many venues over a period of time. It is more than just placing a vision statement on the wall in your area. It takes several repetitions for most people to truly hear and remember the message. Repetition breeds awareness, acceptance, and understanding of your vision.
  
- ✓ **Make it look easy.** Great business leaders know how to paint a vivid picture of the future. In order for the vision to stick, you must insist that all managers model behaviours that are consistent with the vision. It is through such action that all employees will believe in and live a meaningful manifestation of the vision.
  
- ✓ **Involve your team.** Sharing your vision and goals ensures that employees are fully aware of them and work towards them. When people know the reason for doing something they're more likely to do it. Ensure that each employee can see how their role directly affects the achievement of a goal. They will be more willing to take ownership of their work.

- ✓ **Take a stand.** Walk with confidence, and stand your ground when it comes to your vision. Communicate it and state it as if it was already an accomplished fact. Attitude is infectious; those around you will be inspired to take a stand for the embraced team vision as well. Even if they do not agree with all the details of your vision, they can still follow your lead; they might have different ideas about how to put a vision to use, which is fine and healthy.

### **Time for Action**

Determine how you will communicate your vision. What words and phrases will you use?

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In what environment will you communicate your vision?

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How will you communicate the benefits to your employees?

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## 10.4 Be open

“Minds are like parachutes.  
They only function when they are open.”  
~ *Thomas Dewar*

Inspirational and successful leaders keep open to new ideas. For some, being open-minded is as easy as breathing. For most others, it's a challenge. But making the effort to think openly and embrace new ideas will produce untold benefits for your status as an inspirational and successful leader. Don't make the mistake of complacency; you don't know everything, no matter how old and experienced you are. Now, more than ever, we live in a world that is constantly changing. Truly open-minded people are never weary of the effort, and always alert to new ideas and opportunities to try.

- ✓ **Aim high.** Reach for the stars, be ambitious; your employees will not be inspired by a leader who resigned to reality. Never surrender if you want to encourage your team to dream big too. If they are pulling ambitious goals from the depths of their minds, hearts and souls, they can accomplish anything they set their mind to.

- ✓ **Think Creatively.** Successful endeavours are usually initiated by thinking out-of-the-box, stretching beyond what is the norm and testing the limits. To make this easier, try to create 'psychological' distance and disassociate yourself from your current position or location. This can make the challenge more accessible and encourage a higher level of thinking.
  
- ✓ **Be courageous.** Inspire others by having the courage to change course. State what is wrong and needs to be changed; once you say it, people will see that it is true. Of course, people may attack you for what you are trying to achieve, they might even get personal. After all, fundamental changes can be frightening. If this happens, direct the discussion back to the real issues.
  
- ✓ **Challenge your beliefs.** Your readiness to do this on a regular basis, for example through discussions with others or reading something provocative, demonstrates to others that you are willing to challenge your convictions. It also conveys trust that you are open to explore alternative thoughts, ideas and beliefs.

- ✓ **Improve your abilities.** People with a growth mindset<sup>10</sup> reach higher levels of achievement and have a greater sense of free will. They embrace challenges, persist during setbacks, see efforts as the path to mastery, learn from criticism, and find lessons and inspiration in the success of others. More important than believing in your abilities is the belief that you can improve your abilities.
  
- ✓ **Learn something new.** Join clubs or classes based on things you have no knowledge of. Learn a new language. Read up on unexpected or unusual topics. Build silly things like a robot, a sensational Lego construction, your own worm farm, a cubby house for the kids in your life. Try things you have never tried before. Don't mistake exercising a 'stimulating' mind for an 'open' mind – to have an open mind, you must accept that your presumptions of something might be wrong.
  
- ✓ **Share the knowledge.** There is no better way to inform and expand your mind than to get into the habit of reading good and diverse literature. Try to read at least one book per month, and share what you read and what inspires you with others. Leaders are Readers.

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<sup>10</sup> Adapted from "Mindset: The New Psychology of Success" by Carol Dweck

- ✓ **Be inspired yourself.** Look for people, knowledge, ideas and environments that you find inspiring and motivating. Draw from inspirational words of wisdom or quotes. Surround yourself with likeminded people, so that you can inspire and motivate one another. Research people you admire to learn from their actions and behaviours. Find a mentor among people you know who are 10 steps ahead of you in your field, role, or industry, already doing what you want to do.

**Time for Action**

Become like an inquisitive child.

- Try a new food or dish
- Learn about different people and lifestyles, for example through Wikipedia
- Learn a new skill just for fun, like a programming language, a cipher scheme or algorithm
- Talk to somebody you would not normally talk to
- Attend a religious service that you have not visited before
- Play a strategy game, do a jigsaw puzzle or complete some brainteaser puzzles
- Block out one of your senses, like for example getting dressed blindfolded, or eat while blocking your nose
- Explore places in your suburb, city or state that you have never been to before
- Think about some mysteries, like the question of the chicken or the egg, or what is the most mysterious picture in the world
- Spend an entire day without ever checking the time
- Read a random topic on the internet, or watch a random tutorial video on YouTube

## 10.5 Be human

“The essence of being human is  
that one does not seek perfection.”  
~ *George Orwell*

Being human is not a sign of weakness, but much rather a mark of strong leadership. Emotional display of leaders has a larger impact on employees than the content of the message. When a leader shows that he or she is human, it takes the focus away from them and puts it on the problem at hand. Being human brings people together and creates a strong, winning team.

- ✓ **Admit your flaws.** Show me a person who says they are without fault, and I show you a liar. Although it is important not to flinch every time you are out of your depth, it is similarly important to acknowledge the fact that all human beings are naturally flawed. Everyone has at least one obvious weakness (or two); accept your short-comings so people can relate to you.
- ✓ **Be vulnerable.** It can be both terrifying and exhilarating to admit that you don't 'know it all', and for many of us it implies that we are weak or defenceless. Nothing could be further from the truth. Accepting vulnerability as strength makes you a better leader, because you stop wasting energy protecting yourself from what you think other people shouldn't see.

- ✓ **Show emotions.** It is incredibly powerful for your team to know that you can occasionally get frustrated, happy or concerned. It reduces their self-doubt and increases their ability to reach out, collaborate and become better professionals and human beings. If it is happening on a regular basis, though, you might risk depriving them of stability. The strength lies in a good balance.
- ✓ **Build relationships.** Being friendly with your staff doesn't mean they will not respect you or that they won't take you seriously. It allows them to see that you're human and that you're just trying to do a job too. When employees are distant from their managers there is less of a commitment to the organisation and the role. Furthermore, if they have friends at work, they are more excited to come in.
- ✓ **Share your successes and failures.** Stories don't tell people what to do; they ignite imaginations and emotions. If you tell stories from your own experiences, it will show your team what they can become or do. Be willing to share your failures as well as your successes. If you share mistakes you made and lessons you learned, others will relate to you. They'll understand that they're not the only ones with challenges.

- ✓ **Share your influences.** What sources of inspiration have guided you through the most important decisions in your life? What has made a huge impact on who you are as a person? Share your experiences and wisdom from your unique point of view. Share the influences that shaped who you are so others can also benefit; you may be the only one who can touch someone with your inspiring message.

**Time for Action**

What is a good success story you could share with your team?

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What failure story could you share?

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Which of your bad habits are obvious to others, but you have been reluctant to own up to?

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## 10.6 Care about others

“Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world. For, indeed, that's all who ever have.”

~ *Margaret Mead*

As the saying goes: “People don’t care about how much you know, until they know how much you care.” If you can’t show a person that you genuinely care about them, you will have trouble inspiring them. Caring for your team is not the same as complying to their desires; just because someone disagrees with you doesn't mean you have to give them what they want. Take a genuine interest in the people around you; leadership is when you become aware of how people around you are going ongoingly.

- ✓ **Show compassion.** Place yourself in the other person's shoes and show empathy. Sometimes, all that people need is a warm smile, or even a pat on the hand or shoulder. Communicate with them in a warm, patient manner. They need to see that you are on their side (even if that side turns out to be doing the opposite of what they want). Lighten their load with small acts of kindness.
  
- ✓ **Be considerate.** Listen without judging or shaming, and give those around you your full attention. Do not get distracted, listen with your eyes; ask questions, seek to understand and make comments like *"I understand"* to give them reassurance. Being there for your team and to be their sounding board is sometimes all that is needed.
  
- ✓ **Make them feel good about themselves.** People rarely remember what you did, but they will remember how you made them feel. Notice what you like about others and tell them. Personally acknowledge and commend people on their efforts and achievements. Paying those compliments and noticing little things will give your employees hope, and encourage them to excel again and again.

- ✓ **Build positive emotions.** Experiencing positive emotions broadens our thinking, fuels our resilience, builds resourcefulness, triggers an upward spiral toward optimal functioning, improves our health, and is contagious (especially those of the leader). Teaching your employees how to overwrite negative emotions with positive ones gives them all of the above and much more, not only at work but also in their personal lives. It shows your employees that you truly care for them.
  
- ✓ **Provide opportunities.** Job variation, achieved for example by new projects or performing each other's tasks once in a while, keeps the role interesting and prevents boredom for your employees. Opportunity for promotion, training and transferal shows the employee that they can have successful futures within the organisation rather than just staying in the same role for years.

- ✓ **Don't take advantage.** It is easier to ask your team to work overtime if it is only occurring every now and again and for a specific time period. You should also roll up your sleeves and share the load; inspirational and successful leaders do not ask their team to do what they themselves are not willing to do. Ensure that your employees are paid adequately, and the salary correlates to the amount of work expected of them. The workload should be reasonable; expecting too much and setting unrealistic targets causes stress and anxiety which prohibits productivity and causes employees to resent their leader.
  
- ✓ **Show the rewards.** Outline to your employees that their positive contribution will result in good resume content, business incentives, job opportunities, etc. For some people, additional perks (even small things like free tea and coffee for breaks or discounts on products and services) are extremely motivating. Depending on the business budget this can include even bigger things such as company phones.

**Time for Action**

Ten positive emotions are: joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, love.

Which emotions do you experience regularly?

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Can you remember one example for each of the positive emotions listed above? Where were you and who were you with when they happened?

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The ability to cultivate positive emotions is an important skill for undoing negative emotions quickly. Recall a recent situation when you experienced negative emotions; how could you have overwritten them with positive ones?

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## **10.7 Develop and support**

*“Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.”*

*~ Jack Welch*

For your organisation to grow, everybody has to become better. You are only an inspirational leader if your team feels inspired; therefore, you need to show commitment to your team’s progress. Creating a culture and environment that permits everybody to encourage one another will produce the best work and ideas.

- ✓ **Activate people's desire.** Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the French aviator and author, put it beautifully: "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea." Inspire your team by activating their desires; you may be surprised by what they do.
  
- ✓ **Lead to people's strengths.** The best leaders are not well-rounded; the best teams are. Delegate liberally and encourage an atmosphere where people can focus on their core strengths. Investigate time to find out what role they fit best in; if employees feel their voice can be heard they will be more willing to give feedback about what does and does not work and how things can be improved. Help your team understand each other's strengths and how these talents can create a united picture and improve teamwork skills.
  
- ✓ **Promote professional development.** Learning and successfully applying soft skills is an extraordinary mechanism for facilitating growth. Share with your employees what you have learned throughout your career and by studying this blueprint. Challenge yourself and your team to overcome shortcomings at regular intervals throughout the year; if you are strained for time or not confident enough yet, you can employ a Professional Development Expert to help you out.

- ✓ **Give praise.** Catch people doing something right, and elevate and encourage them by commending them immediately. Praise isn't just reserved for primary school. People love to receive recognition for their work. It makes them feel proud and appreciated and encourages them to continue in that manner; commending on effort rather than result reinforces that even further. Inspire others by sharing the credit, and publicly (if possible) acknowledging contributions of others.
  
- ✓ **Challenging your team.** You need to challenge and support your team equally. Inspire them by expecting the most of them and get them to try things they have the potential for. Assign them with tasks that make them stretch their abilities. Give them ownership of the problem and let them take responsibility.
  
- ✓ **Set them free.** No one likes a micro-manager; don't give your employees detailed instructions, but rather give them the freedom to figure it out by themselves. If they ask for help, give them a rough outline to move in the right direction, but intentionally leave something left to their imagination so they will have the freedom to fill in the blanks. Once they are capable of figuring things out by themselves, they discover they are more powerful than they ever thought possible.

- ✓ **Let people fail.** As Thomas Edison so famously said: “I failed my way to success.” Leaders let their employees fail, and yet not let them be a failure. Provide your team with the support to take risks when completing their tasks, and let mistakes be open and become shared learning opportunities. Make sure they know that you view failure as a necessary part of growth and innovation, and that you see great things for the person ahead. Let them go to grow.
  
- ✓ **Grow other leaders.** Positive qualities of successful leaders can be multiplied when they cultivate an attitude of contribution. Companies like Southwest Airlines for example have found that an effective way to give employees first-hand experience in a leadership role is for them to shadow current leaders. This goes beyond formal training and employees at every level are exposed to leaders so they get to see how the leaders think. It’s important to give employees the right tools and resources to succeed. But you don’t always have to hold their hand; you may have to give up a little control by giving them the power to make certain decisions. That is how they can grow into successful leaders themselves.

**Time for Action**

Can you think of a time when support from a superior has changed the course of your career?

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Identify how you can give your employees additional support to grow into outstanding leaders themselves.

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How can you challenge your team or employees? Can they rotate positions, even if it is temporarily swapping tasks or responsibilities?

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What professional development will you provide your team with in the next 12 months?

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## 11 Nurture group dynamics



We are part of teams at nearly every point in our life; at work, at home, in social organisations, in sports clubs, in church communities – the list is endless. These team members interact with each other, are aware of one another, have a common objective and goal, and perceive themselves to be a group.

*“Nothing truly valuable can be achieved except by the unselfish cooperation of many individuals.”*

*~ Albert Einstein*

Being part of a group can be nurturing, supportive, and positive for the individual members. It is after all our tendency and quite possibly the single most important characteristic of humans to join with others in groups. However, if the dynamic within the group is negative, team members can be left feeling depleted, discouraged and judged.

Group dynamics play a significant role within any organisation, family, culture, or community. It is vital to remember that all of them are made up of people - people with different ideas, motivations, upbringing, and sometimes intentions. Most groups look for a leader in an effort to maintain connection within. Sometimes, that bond between group members must be developed, and once developed, it must be nurtured.

Positive dynamic within a group is easy to spot; the members trust each other, work towards a united decision, and hold each other accountable for making things happen. Researchers<sup>11</sup> have found that when a team has a positive dynamic, its members are nearly twice as creative as an average group.

So, how can you influence the dynamics of groups you are a member of? This chapter will go in depth into the formal structure of groups, the phases they go through, the culprits when it comes to group dynamics, and of course strategies on how to improve the dynamics.

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<sup>11</sup> Research in book “How to Have a Good Day: Harness the Power of Behavioral Science to Transform Your Working Life”, by Caroline Webb

Let's use the story of Paul, the Accountant we have met earlier in the book. Paul has taken self-initiative and significantly improved one of his reports. He made the input data update easier, and introduced further automation to make it fool-proof to a certain extent. He gave the report a facelift and introduced a dashboard for easier reading by the stakeholders.

At the weekly team catch-up, he shared these enhancements with his co-workers, suggesting for them to have a look at his report and apply some of the improvements to their own reports so they too could save time and improve stakeholder satisfaction. Jenny, one of his team members, showed a lot of enthusiasm and was keen to implement the process improvements. A couple of the other team members dismissed his efforts and even questioned why Paul had wasted his time to change a report that was perfectly fine. Paul felt judged, even regretted sharing his achievements, and sat silent for the rest of the catch up.

This story illustrates several important group dynamics which impact each group member and the group as a whole. Understanding how groups interact and what might cause problems in a group can help us to improve group performance, communication and cohesiveness.

### **11.1.1 Why positive group dynamic is important**

I would like to share with you a story written by Dan Pearce which I think fits perfectly into this chapter and why group dynamics are so important for the individual team members.

*“People usually live up to their expectations. The kid picked first for dodgeball feels a duty to be the best, and to perform the best, and to be better than anyone else. They feel a need to execute. And, the only way they are going to achieve that is to make their body run faster, jump higher, and move quicker. If more fat kids were chosen first for activities and sports and group/team dynamics, they would automatically start to change their lives to fit into the expectations that surround those moments. Any time a child is picked last, they know it’s because people expect the least of them, and so they never actually have a need to rise above that.”*

Following are a few reasons why positive group dynamics are essential for any group or team:

- ✓ A group can influence the thinking of its members, and positive interactions will positively influence the individuals
- ✓ Groups with good leaders perform better than groups with weak leaders
- ✓ It will give job satisfaction to its members
- ✓ The cooperation of a connected group will result in maximisation of productivity
- ✓ Negative thinkers will be converted to positive thinkers
- ✓ The effect of synergy of positive thinkers is more than double every time (remember:  $1 + 1 = >3$ )
- ✓ Emotional attachment within the group members reduces staff turnover

How teams operate and how they view themselves and their organisation are too important to leave to chance. Success or failure of groups or teams depends on a number of factors like: member resources (knowledge, abilities, skills, personality characteristics), group structures (group size, roles, norms, bonding) and group processes (communication, decision making, conflict management, leadership).

### **11.1.2 How groups are formed**

The most common framework for how groups are formed was developed by Bruce Tuckman in the 1960s. In short, his framework implies that groups do not perform at maximum effectiveness when they are first established. There are five stages of development to become productive and effective. Many teams experience the same development stages with strikingly similar conflicts and resolutions. The 5 phases which groups pass through are:

- ✓ **Forming**
  - Characterised by some confusion and uncertainty
  - Major goals have not yet been established
  - Leadership has not been determined
  - Members get to know each other and share expectations
  - Trust and openness must be developed; therefore this stage should not be rushed

**✓ Storming**

- Characterised by highest level of disagreement and conflict of all the phases
- Members challenge group goals, struggle for power and strive for the leadership position
- Members voice concern and criticism
- Can be a positive experience if cohesiveness is achieved through resolution
- If members are unable to resolve the conflict, the group is likely to separate, or will remain but be ineffective and remain in this phase

**✓ Norming**

- Characterised by recognition of individual differences and shared expectations
- Members begin to develop a feeling of team unity and identity
- Cooperative effort begins to yield results
- Responsibilities are divided among members
- Group decides how it will evaluate progress

**✓ Performing**

- Characterised by the maturity of the group and feeling of cohesiveness amongst members
- Members accept each other, conflict is resolved through team discussions
- Each member makes contributions, and the authority figure is also seen as part of the group
- Decisions are made through a rational process, focusing on relevant goals rather than emotional issues

**✓ Adjourning**

- Characterised by the disbandment of the group, and therefore not experienced by all groups
- Reasons for this phase can include accomplishment of the task, decision for group members to go their own way, relocations, and many other
- Group members often experience feelings of closure and sadness as they prepare to leave

These stages of group development are indicative; often groups do not clearly proceed from one stage to the next. In reality, several stages may go on simultaneously; the leader must stay in control to steer the team in the right direction, and pre-empt problems early.

**Time for Action**

What stage or phase is your team or workforce at?

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What other groups are you part of, and what stage or phase are they at?

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## 11.2 Dynamics Killers

Several factors are holding a team back. Group leaders and team members can equally contribute to negative group dynamics. Let's have a look at some of the most common negative contributions by the group members:

- ✘ **Lack of a strong leader.** When the leader is weak, a more dominant member of the group can often take charge. This can lead to misdirection, power struggle, disputes, or a focus on the wrong priorities.
- ✘ **Excessive admiration.** If people want to be seen to agree with a leader and therefore hold back from expressing their own opinions, the team is suffering from disproportionate deference to authority.
- ✘ **Taking a free ride:** Some team members may work hard on their own but limit their contributions in group situations. This is called free riding or social loafing, and creates resentment within the team.
- ✘ **Subdue to Groupthink<sup>12</sup>:** When people place a desire for consensus above their desire to reach the right decision or stand up for their opinion, it prevents the group from fully exploring alternative solutions. The desire for group cohesion effectively drives out good decision-making and problem solving.

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<sup>12</sup> Research and publication "Groupthink" by Irving L Janis

- ✘ **Adopting blocking roles.** Team members can disrupt the flow of information in the group by adopting blocking roles such as the aggressor (often disagreeing with others or being inappropriately outspoken), the negator (often critical of others' ideas), the withdrawer (not participating in discussions), the recognition seeker (being boastful or dominating sessions), or the joker (introducing humor at inappropriate times).
  
- ✘ **Fear of feedback.** This happens when people feel that they are being judged too harshly by other group members and hold back their opinions as a result, in turn contributing to a negative group dynamic.

In addition to the above dynamics killers, there are times when a group member may no longer be content with the culture and begin to act out behaviourally. These times then become challenging for the leader, attempting to remain objective when the hard-earned group cohesiveness starts to fall apart.

If you face a challenge like this, it is imperative that you continue to view the employee creating the disruption as an integral part of the group. It might be beneficial to perceive the employee exhibiting problem behaviours as a special employee, as one who needs the benefit of your experience and skills, as one who is still part of the group.

You might also focus on your values and beliefs in the area of power, communication and the established corporate and team culture, before attempting to understand the special employee's point of view, so you can recognise staff dysfunction as a symptom of system dysfunction (if this is actually the cause).

It takes a secure and confident leader to admit that the team culture might be flawed. The important thing to know is that it can be changed, the special employee can find new ways to behave, the group can find new ways of interacting, and the corporate culture can brag about a successful and inspirational leader.

In a group with poor dynamics, people's behaviours are disruptive which results in not coming to any decision or making wrong choices; all because group members could not explore options effectively. The dynamics of many people interacting may present difficulties at times. However, witnessing the development and strengthening of the bond within that group is well worth the effort. Ask any successful leader.

**Time for Action**

Are there any dysfunctional roles being played within your team or workforce?

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Have you noticed any Groupthink symptoms? How can you nurture and develop these particular group members?

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### **11.3 Dynamics Rescuers**

All teams are groups, but not all groups are teams. In the workplace, the dynamics of teams determine if goals will be met in an efficient manner. Identifying team dynamics and understanding positive and negative outcomes is a stepping stone to knowing how to predict and build team performance. We have already talked about the dynamics killers, so now I would like to touch base on how you can improve team or workforce dynamics.

In the earlier chapters of this blueprint, we have already touched on various elements of successfully managing and inspiring a team. This chapter takes it to a new level of complexity, and comprises of six major elements:

- ✓ Know the team
- ✓ Focus on communication
- ✓ Define goals and responsibilities
- ✓ Solve problems fast
- ✓ Strengthen the team

Let's go into more detail for each one of them.

### **11.3.1 Know the team**

You as the leader are required to guide your team through the various development phases. If you want to pre-empt any potential problems, you need to know what phase your workforce is currently in. You also need to know if any impending dynamics killers are on the horizon.

A good way to identify positive and negative factors affecting the group is to check which 'group roles' are being filled, which additional ones might be required, and which ones might need to be eliminated. Below is a list of such group roles (based on Kenneth Benne and Paul Sheats' 1940s work):

#### **Task roles**

*Getting the work done*

Initiator/Contributor; Information Seeker; Information Giver; Opinion Seeker; Opinion Giver; Elaborator; Co-ordinator; Orienter; Evaluator/Critic; Energiser; Procedural Technician; Recorder

#### **Personal and/or social roles**

*Positive functioning of the group*

Encourager; Harmoniser; Compromiser; Gatekeeper/Expediter; Observer/Commentator; Follower

**Dysfunctional and/or individualistic roles***Disrupting group progress and weakening its cohesion*

Aggressor; Blocker; Recognition Seeker; Self-Confessor;  
Disrupter; Dominator; Help Seeker; Special Interest Pleader

The roles required within a group can vary depending on the phase the team is currently in, and what tasks are at hand. You as the leader need to determine which roles are most suitable and helpful for the current phase and/or task, and then subsequently recruit or develop the missing roles.

To create positive dynamics within the team, you need to identify any dysfunctional or disruptive roles within the group, and eliminate the behaviour through increased awareness, coaching or feedback.

Group awareness of the various roles the individuals play within the team can contribute to its social harmony. Damaging behaviours will decrease because individuals can monitor and pick up on them when they happen.

### 11.3.2 Focus on open communication

Are we discussing communication again, you might be asking? I cannot stress enough how important communication skills are for an inspirational and successful leader. The nuts and bolts, really. The alpha and omega.

To achieve positive team dynamics, open communication plays a central role. You as the leader need to ensure that all team members are communicating clearly in all forms of communication, including emails, phone conversations, documents, meetings etc. This eliminates misunderstandings, and promotes a peaceful work environment. Following are a few hands-on suggestions on how you can achieve this:

- ✓ **Create a friendly atmosphere.** Avoid communicating in an overly intense manner, because in a tense environment your message might not be well understood or retained.
  
- ✓ **Keep the team informed.** If the status of a project changes, or if you have an announcement to make, let people know as soon as possible. That way, you can ensure that everyone has the same information.

- ✓ **Face-to-face meetings.** Holding regular open meetings is one of the best approaches to communicate effectively within a group. Facilitate these meetings in a proficient manner, so that quiet team members are not overwhelmed by opinionated co-workers.
- ✓ **Stick to the basics.** Time is precious, so ensure your communication is focused and only includes as much detail as is needed to understand and engage.
- ✓ **Use simple words.** Everybody is not on the same page when it comes to vocabulary, especially when your workforce is diverse. When ambiguous words are used, you can be misunderstood and/or waste precious time having to explain yourself.
- ✓ **Avoid unneeded repetition.** Do not sound like a broken record. Only repeat if the other party is unclear about what has been said or discussed.
- ✓ **Active listening.** Demonstrate undivided listening, and check that the other person is actually listening and engaged too. If not, the conversation might better be held at a later time.
- ✓ **Use visuals.** Your team should not just hear the message, they should also see it. Placing visuals around the team work area is a good strategy and provides better comprehension.

- ✓ **Check in with the team.** On a regular basis, discuss as a group how well communication is going, and encourage feedback. Are there areas of too much information or areas where there is a void?

### 11.3.3 Define goals and responsibilities

It is important that all members of the team know what is expected of them. In order to do this, team goals and responsibilities need to be clearly identified prior to starting work. Teams that lack clear goals, focus or direction can quickly develop poor dynamics, as people struggle to understand their role in the group.

- ✓ **Mission statement.** Create a mission statement based on the same principle as the one we discussed in chapter 'Your personal Mission Statement' on page 154. Ideally, the mission statement is created in the early stages of the team formation.
- ✓ **Compelling direction.** In a next step, define clear objectives of the team; what the expected outcomes are; composition and roles; what everybody's responsibilities are; monthly, weekly, daily goals etc. Make sure that everyone has a copy of the document, and remind people of it regularly. It will serve as a roadmap and give direction to the team members when times get tough.

- ✓ **Role clarification.** At times, work and duties of team members can change due to workload pressures, new team members or other related events. It is vital to clarify the required changes in duties and responsibilities so everybody is on the same page.
  
- ✓ **Team potential.** Working together well means that we respect and truly value each other's differences. It makes no sense for a cricket team to pick 11 fast bowlers! Diagnosing your team's challenges, strengths, and performance opportunities can both provide a starting point and a benchmark for achievement. Engage the team to collectively select the action steps they will take to unlock the team's potential.
  
- ✓ **Priority catch-up.** A brief weekly catch-up can be helpful to reduce mental overload. Every team member can name their two priorities for the week, which encourages the individuals to be realistic and focused in their work. This practice not only forces people to decide what really matters during that upcoming week, but is also an opportunity to redistribute work.

### 11.3.4 Solve problems fast

If you tackle a problem when it arises, it is less likely to develop into an unmanageable problem in the future. As soon as you notice a team member has adopted a behaviour that is affecting the group dynamic negatively, act quickly to challenge it.

- ✓ **Identify the problem.** Before being able to confront a problem, its existence needs to be acknowledged. This might seem an obvious statement; unfortunately, often problems have an impact for some time before they are recognised or brought to the attention of someone who can do anything about them.
- ✓ **Gather good knowledge.** Once you identified the problem, and before you attempt to solve it, you need to gain a deeper understanding of the issue and check facts. Avoid guessing. Why is it happening? Who is involved? When is it happening? These and other questions might be helpful in this process, as long as the answers simply state facts and do not contain blame.
- ✓ **Chunk it down.** Breaking down the problem into smaller pieces can decrease anxiety and make it look less overwhelming. Try to identify and separate the various things and people the problem consists of.

- ✓ **Brainstorm solutions.** Write down every solution you can think of – as it goes with brainstorming, do not over-think it. At this point, there is no right or wrong – think outside the box. Take enough time to step back and assess the situation and opportunities that the problem represents. Ask others that were faced with similar challenges what they did. The more possibilities you come up with, the bigger the choice in the next step.
  
- ✓ **Decide on a solution.** From your brainstorming document (or whiteboard of course), eliminate the options that will not work. Then rank the remaining possible solutions in order from best to worst. While you are doing this, consider the negatives and positives for each solution. Keep a few solutions as viable options in mind, in case your first choice does not work out.
  
- ✓ **Take action.** Don't wait and let the problem get out of hand. This might in turn lead to new problems. Come up with a quick action plan, and immediately take the first step. By working quickly towards a fast and harmonious solution, you can show your team members that you are able to handle issues fairly and effectively as they arise.

- ✓ **Find the lesson.** More often than not, there is a good side to each problem. Finding those positive parts reduces negative emotional impact, and you might be able to see the problem as an opportunity. It is also a good idea to provide feedback to avoid or reduce future challenges; to either the entire team or the affected individuals.

### **11.3.5 Strengthen the team**

Break down barriers and assist the team to get to know each other better, especially when the team is newly formed or a new member has joined. Team building exercises ease new colleagues into the group gently, and help to generally bring the members together, make them understand each other's point of view, and increase inter-group effectiveness. You can lead by example and share what you hope the group will achieve, along with some personal information about yourself such as valuable lessons that you've learned.

Team building comprises of various types of activities to enhance interpersonal and social relations. It is different from team training which is designed to improve efficiency. Fun is an important component of team building even though the intent of the activity is to become more focused, aligned and ultimately productive.

Simple team building exercises in the workplace could consist of:

- ✓ **Celebrate each other.** This could be an informal lunch for somebody's birthday, passed exams or qualifications, a job well done or a project completed well ahead of the deadline.
  
- ✓ **Team slogan or motto.** Discuss and nominate an inspirational team slogan (such as "*A single arrow is easily broken, but not ten in a bundle*"). Or have a different quote or slogan on display each month.
  
- ✓ **Mini office makeover.** Sometimes, a few changes to the environment can work miracles, and you don't require a big budget to achieve it. The team can work together and come up with a list of things that could do with an overhaul, such as additional pot plants, laminated inspirational pictures, swapping desks, etc.

- ✓ **Play team games.** It could be as simple as finishing off a regular team meeting with 15 minutes of a card or board game a team member brought along. Or ask your team to build a poker tower (distribute a pack of poker cards and a pair of scissors to each group of 2-5 members. Instruct them to build the tallest poker tower using only the cards and scissors given to them). Or play the human knot (stand in a close circle, all put their right hand in the air and grab the hand of somebody across, then do the same with the left, then have fun untangling). There are so many of these games out there – check out the web!
  
- ✓ **Outdoor activity.** Sport activities are not everybody's cup of tea. However, going outdoors is an effective way to engage the team and they do not need to be expensive. Things like a Golf Driving Range, flying kites, play lawn bowls or croquet, do an egg race, or even play with the good old Frisbee are fun for people of all capabilities. Or you could simply hold your next team meeting in a park!
  
- ✓ **Indoor activity.** There are a ton of indoor activities on offer. You can take your team for a cooking class, a crafts workshop, hold a talent show, bust out of an escape room, play a round of pool, attend a music or dance class, volunteer at a charity or café for homeless people, hula hoop, or visit a museum or art gallery. There is such a variety of indoor activities that I have not even scratched the surface!

- ✓ **Recognition gifts.** These small presents are an easy way to spread fun and team spirit amongst the group. Have a box ready with items such as cheap sunglasses as a gift for somebody that had a bright idea, or a Gumby figure for somebody that has shown flexibility, or a rubber ball for a person that has bounced back from a challenge. They demonstrate a sense of positivity and create a desirable work culture. Come up with items that have their own meanings behind them.

### **Time for Action**

One way of improving group dynamics is to simply ask the team. The individual team members can request feedback about themselves, for example:

What strengths do I bring to the team? (Name three)

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When am I most useful to the team? (Identify a situation or interaction)

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How could I better contribute to the team? (Describe an observable behaviour.)

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What are your hopes for me in relation to the team? (Meaningful contribution)

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Our team's job is to:

.....

.....

.....

We are successful when (describe results or interactions):

.....

.....

.....

Our team would be better if (describe in behavioural terms):

.....

.....

.....

I'm uncomfortable discussing (point out the elephant in the room):

.....

.....

.....

I am proud when:

.....

.....

.....

.....

**In Essence**

The term group dynamics describes how people in a group or team interact with each other. If the environment (or dynamic) is positive, the team can work efficiently and harmoniously. If it is negative, the performance is poor. There are many factors that can influence the dynamic negatively, and it is crucial that the leader identifies and acts on them quickly. As I have already mentioned but would like to point out again: a team with a positive dynamic is nearly twice as creative as an average group.

*“Coming together is the beginning.  
Keeping together is progress.  
Working together is success.”  
~ Henry Ford*

## 12 What's next?

You have now gained a wealth of knowledge and learned cutting edge strategies to become an inspirational and successful leader. I trust that you embraced and implemented concepts like goal setting, positive language, taking responsibility for your actions, making quick and smart decisions, and inspiring those around you. If you have also improved your focus, and created more self-awareness and certainty of who you are or want to be, you are well on your way to be an outstanding leader.

Should you lose momentum on your quest to ultimate interdependence in your professional and personal life, go back to this book and reflect on some of the tasks you completed. It will be highly insightful and can easily get you back to action. But don't stop here - you can reach so much higher. Develop your leadership skills whenever and wherever it suits you. Online courses are convenient and perfect for managers who prefer to study independently, but with expert support. Or if you need tailored solutions relevant to you and your current challenges, coaching and mentoring might be the next step for you. Check out our website to see what's on offer!

The only question you need to ask yourself now is "What's next?"

*"Knowing is not enough. We must APPLY.  
Willing is not enough. We must DO."*

*~ Bruce Lee*

## 13 About the Author

Through his company PROfound Leadership, Martin has helped hundreds of self-driven and competent managers to stay in control 100% of the time, so they can positively impact the people around them through their actions and authentic leadership style.



Martin's endeavour to make a lasting impact on managers and work teams has seen him spending well over 20 years travelling the world, studying the field of self-development and human potential. He understands what it means to work in pressured environments and the importance to become the best at what you do. His background and experience working with a wide variety of cultures and individuals enables rapid rapport and trust to develop.

He is Master Certified in numerous personal transformation modalities, has been responsible for the personal and professional success of countless members of middle and upper management, and is an all-round nice guy with an infectious laugh.

His mission to maximise human potential to achieve peak performance in a supportive work environment has led him to:

- Teach over 9 years in a classroom setting
- Conduct over 1,000 hours of one-on-one coaching
- Present at and run over 100 in-house workshops and speaking engagements
- Author 6 Australian and international books and audio books
- Write over 80 published blogs and articles
- Create a high-level leadership journal
- Serve as an adviser and member on various committees and boards

Today, Martin is directly impacting the lives of many managers in Australia and around the globe through his leadership development books, online training, public speaking events, in-house workshops, and one-on-one coaching. He created the PROfound methodology to assist his clients achieve ultimate success through a platform of self-awareness, building effective human dynamics, as well as strong and healthy work relationships that go beyond the nine-to-five demands of the job. His clients can't believe how simple and easy these strategies are to learn and apply, and what immediate and profound impact they have on their professional and personal lives.

*To keep up to date with Martin, you can connect with him on LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/martinprobst>), send him an email to [martin@profoundleadership.com.au](mailto:martin@profoundleadership.com.au), or join to get his regular blog updates via the website [www.profoundleadership.com.au/blog](http://www.profoundleadership.com.au/blog)*

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**PROfound Leadership**

t | +61 1300 936 313

m | +61 (0)439 936 313

e | [info@profoundleadership.com.au](mailto:info@profoundleadership.com.au)

w | [www.profoundleadership.com.au](http://www.profoundleadership.com.au)

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