

Professional **Performance** ³⁶⁰ WHAT YOU NEED TO SUCCEED! Magazine

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Plan for Greatness?**

**All You Need Is
WITHIN YOU Now!**

**Les is MORE
Les Brown**

**America's Motivational
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CONTENTS

Professional
Performance 360
WHAT YOU NEED TO SUCCEED! Magazine

5 FROM THE PUBLISHER PERFORMANCE & YOU

BY DR. JEFFREY MAGEE

6 YOU'RE NOT BEHIND. YOU'RE BECOMING.

UNFOLD AT THE PACE OF YOUR PURPOSE

BY SIMON T. BAILEY

8 LES BROWN

AMERICA'S MOTIVATIONAL
SPEAKER, SHARES 80 YEARS OF WISDOM!

WITH LES BROWN & DR. JEFFREY MAGEE

13 BUILDING THE LEADER WITHIN

THAT WITHSTANDS TIME!

WITH GENERAL XAVIER BRUNSON & DR. JEFFREY
MAGEE

22 FROM ASHES TO INSPIRATION

IGNITING LEADERSHIP IN THE FACE OF
ADVERSITY

BY COACH CHRIS EWALD

25 ARE YOU GUILTY?

THE UNCONSCIOUS GOOF THAT CAN
HURT YOUR CREDIBILITY?

BY PATRICIA FRIPP, CSP, CPAE

26 LEAD LOUD, SPEAK BOLD, AND OWN THE MARKET

A NEW ERA OF LEADERSHIP HAS ARRIVED

BY JEFFREY HAYZLETT

28 THE PRODUCTIVITY PARADOX

UNCERTAINTY AND PERFORMANCE—WHAT
LEADERS CAN DO

BY DR. MARY KELLY

31 EVERYTHING BEGINS WITH AN IDEA

TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS

BY HARVEY MACKAY

34 UNLEASHING THE TALENT WITHIN

EMBRACING THE BETA FACTOR™

BY DR. JEFFREY MAGEE, CMC/CSP/CBE/PDM

37 LIFT AS YOU CLIMB

A TACTICAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGY
FOR HIGH PERFORMERS

BY ELIZABETH MCCORMICK, CSP

38 THE IMPORTANCE OF REFLECTION

ENRICH YOUR PROFESSIONAL AND
PERSONAL LIFE

BY LTC OAKLAND MCCULLOCH

40 10 TIPS TO BE A BETTER NETWORKER

IT'S ALL ABOUT BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

BY DR. IVAN MISNER

42 WHY YOUR CHANGE STRATEGIES ARE FAILING

IT'S TIME FOR A SHIFT IN HOW WE THINK
ABOUT CHANGE

BY MERIDITH ELLIOTT POWELL

44 ATTRACTING CLIENTELE

10 TESTED AND PROVEN

TECHNIQUES

BY DR. NIDO QUBEIN

47 UNLOCKING YOUR POTENTIAL:

THE POWER OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY GREG S. REID

48 HOW TO LEAD DISRUPTIVELY (AND WHY YOU SHOULD)

BE PROACTIVE IN DRIVING CHANGE

BY MARK SANBORN

50 FIVE LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM MUHAMMAD ALI

A MASTERCLASS IN COURAGE,

CONVICTION, AND CHARACTER

BY CH (COL) KHALID M. SHABAZZ (USA)

51 RECHARGING YOUR BATTERIES:

A STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP MOVE

BY MARILYN SHERMAN

52 HIGHER STANDARD

REACH YOUR MAXIMUM POTENTIAL

BY JIM STOVALL

53 ICONIC AMERICAN BRAND BUILDING BACK BETTER

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEPHANIE STUCKEY

WITH STEPHANIE STUCKEY & DR. JEFFREY MAGEE

56 STOP WAITING FOR GODOT

LET GO OF COMPETITIVE ANXIETY

BY ALAN WEISS

58 OVERCOMING FOBU

THE PROBLEM ISN'T CHANGE. THE

PROBLEM IS CONFUSION.

BY SHERRY YELLIN, PHD

61 LET YOUR PURPOSE LEAD YOUR PEOPLE

THE MOST UNDERRATED LEADERSHIP TOOL

BY MAUREEN ZAPPALA

63 ON MANNERS & YOUR PERSONAL BRANDING!

DOES IT REALLY MATTER?

WITH ZIG ZIGLAR

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From the Publisher

PERFORMANCE & YOU

BY DR. JEFFREY MAGEE

performance

per-form-ance (n) [per-fawr-muhns]

1. The act, process, or manner of performing.
2. An accomplishment: deed.
3. To begin, carry out, fulfill.
4. To function in a certain way: act.
5. Unleash Your Talent, Be the Catalyst!



The journey towards intellectual development and greatness holds a universal truth, transcending geographical boundaries. Reflecting on interactions in Hawaii with next-generation leaders and Berlin with leading YPO CEOs, where questions on career guidance and leadership development are echoed, the essence remains constant; Legacy and Formula stand as the pillars of wisdom shared.

In this edition, as the great Les Brown

has challenged the world, you must be HUNGRY if you are to be all that is within you, and across past issues of www.ProfessionalPerformanceMagazine.com, renowned achievers divulge their formulas for success, shaped by dedication and experience. Each article presents a unique opportunity to explore personal growth and professional advancement through their insights, legacy, and creating a true Master Class in Professionalism.

Engage with the content by pondering:

1. How can you implement our contributors' invaluable ideas to **enhance your journey to success?**
2. How can you leverage these insights to **uplift and guide others towards excellence?**
3. How can you integrate these learnings to **drive organizational greatness?**

For daily inspiration and insights, ensure you follow each Contributor from this and every edition of ProfessionalPerformanceMagazine.com on LinkedIn!

What you read here has never before been shared, and you are in the FRONT ROW, as my friend Marilyn Sherman would say, what will you now do with the mental gifts before you?

Embrace Performance and Unleash Your Talent!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Magee'.

Dr. Jeffrey Magee,
PhD, CMC, CBE, CSP, PDM
Professional Performance Magazine
Group Publisher & Editor-in-Chief



Find Dr. Jeffrey Magee on LinkedIn!
Changeformational™ Growth Speaker
People Optimization

You're Not Behind. You're Becoming.

UNFOLD AT THE PACE OF YOUR PURPOSE

BY SIMON T. BAILEY

There's an overwhelming feeling sweeping the globe—and maybe even in your workplace—where diligent, well-meaning people quietly scream, “I can't keep up.”

As artificial intelligence accelerates, we mere mortals are doing all we can to show up—whether remotely, in person, or hybrid—hoping to prove we're present, capable, and relevant.

And yet, perhaps you've had those moments, but it's in these moments when you feel like you're skiing downhill faster than you can steer. Moments when you wonder if you're falling behind.

But let me offer a reframe:

It's not about doing.

It's about becoming.

Recently, I had the honor of becoming a Caritas Coach, inspired by the work of Dr. Jean Watson, one of healthcare's great pioneers of caring science. Her words continue to echo in my spirit:

“If our humanness is to survive, we need to become more caring and loving to nourish our humanity and evolve as a (world) civilization and live together.” (Watson, 2005)

In my early years, one of my greatest mistakes was trying to imitate the giants Zig Ziglar, Les Brown, Jim Rohn, and the other motivational greats. I devoured books, chased seminars, and collected accountability partners like frequent flyer miles. But for all the excitement and energy, much of it left me wide in experience but shallow in transformation.

The more they talked, the more I shrank. Not because they weren't brilliant, but because I was trying to run someone else's race. I was always in the bottom half of the class, which made the top half possible. But here's the truth: I was exactly where I was supposed to be.

Psychologist Alfred Adler once said, “Discouragement often comes from comparison, while encouragement flows from contribution.”

His life's work emphasized that emotional wellness and fulfillment are found not in measuring ourselves against others, but in engaging deeply with our communities, families, and callings.

When we shift our mindset from “Am I

doing enough?” to “How can I be useful?” we begin to experience something deeper: Meaning. Resilience. Satisfaction. In other words, it is shifting from doing to becoming. That's where your actual brilliance lives.

Ivey & Gluckstern, in *Basic Attending Skills*, remind us: “Empathy slows down time—anchors people in their story, not someone else's.”

Carl Rogers captured it powerfully: “When the other person is hurting... understanding has a healing power.”

So here it is, O' Brilliant One—your gentle reminder: “You are not behind. You are unfolding at the pace of purpose.

Here's your invitation to brilliance: Encouragement is the act of pausing with someone just long enough for them to remember:

They're not late to their own life.

Let that truth anchor you today.

You are not falling behind.

You are becoming.

If this message found you at just the right moment, would you pass it on to someone else who may feel behind, unseen, or unworthy? Forward it. Could you share it? Speak it aloud.

Let's remind each other that you are not behind. You are becoming.

The world's leading expert in Brilliance, Simon T. Bailey has ascended to extraordinary heights, recognized among *Success* magazine's Top 25, being on alongside Brené Brown, Tony Robbins, and Oprah Winfrey, as well as *LeadersHum* Top 200 Power List in 2023 and *Gotham Artists* Top Keynote Speakers in 2024. With the Disney Institute as his launchpad, he's left an indelible mark on 2,400-plus organizations in 54 countries, such as American Express, Deloitte, Marriott, Visa, Stanford Health Care, and Taco Bell.

Through books, speeches, and coaching, Simon captivates the lives of countless individuals around the globe, inspiring them to lead better, stay curious, and embrace a growth mindset. Prepare to be empowered and reach new heights as he propels you toward a brilliant future. Your journey to brilliance starts now.

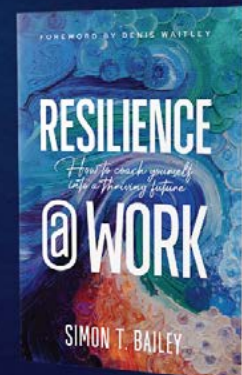


Simon T. Bailey

Did you know that 82% of working Americans think great leaders must inspire resilience in those they lead?

(Source: State of Working America Report - Thriving in Resilience and Brilliance)

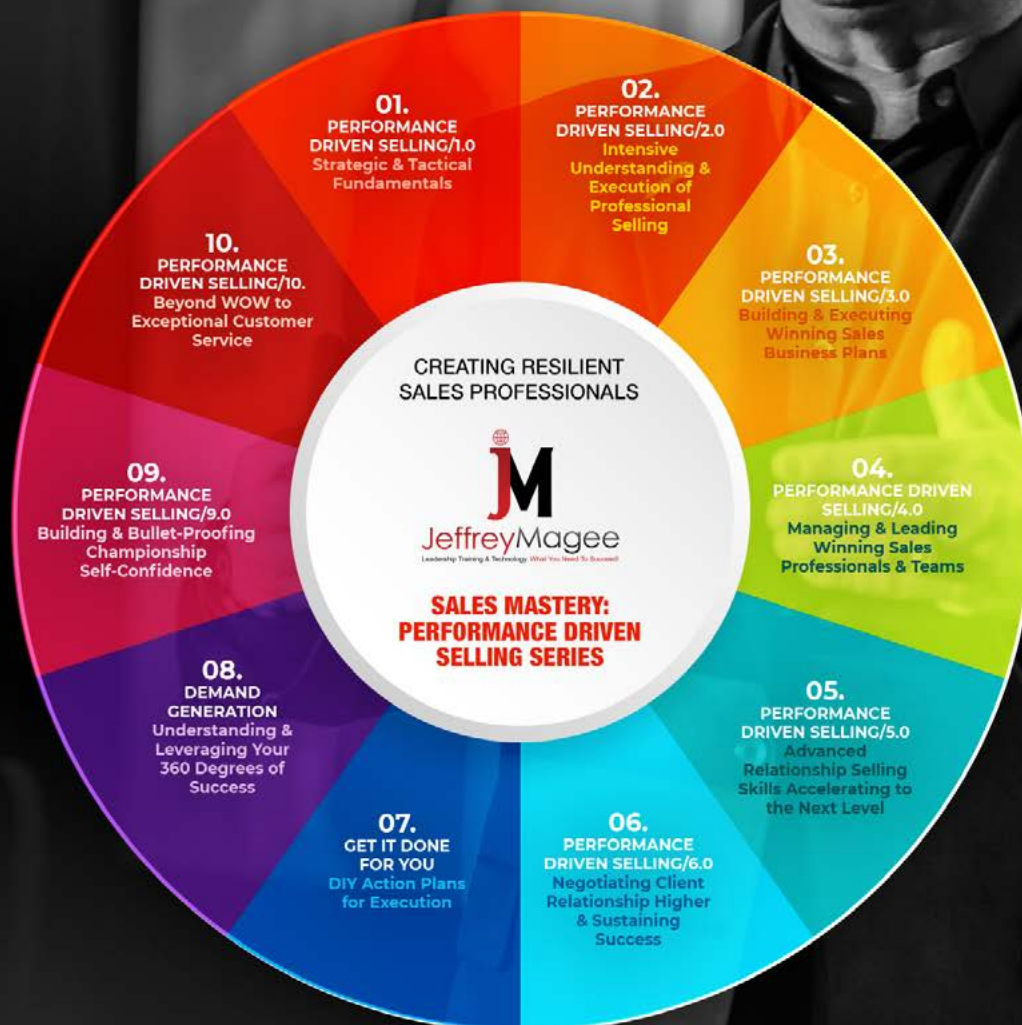
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Les Brown

AMERICA'S MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER, SHARES 80 YEARS OF WISDOM!

WITH LES BROWN & DR. JEFFREY MAGEE

Jeffrey, thank you for the opportunity to visit with you once again. I want to take my hat off to you for your willingness to continue this magazine, which I know is changing people's lives and has reached and impacted more people than you can ever imagine, including me.

Your impact and influence globally for decades and with literally millions of individuals is profound. What does that mean to you, and how does that drive you?

I am very humbled by that. One of the things that I say to people, and I say to myself often, because someone said it to me at a time when I was struggling, is that you don't know enough about yourself to be a cynic. I had no idea that I could do the things I've accomplished, reaching over 3 billion people, according to some surveys. I have learned through experience that we are here for a purpose. We were chosen. We are a masterpiece, because we are a piece of the master, and it was Mark Twain who said that the two most important days in your life are the day that you're born and the day that you discover your purpose.

I strongly believe, and I've grown into this level of consciousness, that I was born to do what I'm doing now. Our school system does not educate us. It indoctrinates us and prepares us to be employed. That day is now behind us, and they will have to upgrade the system, but I believe that we were deployed, placed here, and have a calling. A calling is something that you love so much that you do it for nothing, and you do it so well that people will pay you to do it. And when you recognize what you have done, you know that you didn't do it by yourself; many people contributed, and because of God's grace and mercy, you will still be able to live a life of contribution. My



Dr. Jeffrey Magee and Les Brown backstage in Cancun; Honoring the Les Blue Shirt Energy .

favorite book says, "The greatest among you will be your servant," and I see myself serving and doing what I can to make life easier for people who hear me speak.

What do you do to stay professionally fit? I don't mean physical fitness; I mean being capable of remaining relevant and having peak professional performance.

One of the things I do with the speakers and business leaders I train is to tell them, "Know more than your story." I'm a perpetual learner. I have disciplined myself to read 30 to 40 pages a day, even at this stage of my life, at 80, I believe that you are never too old to learn, and you're never too young to teach. I believe that is part of what drives me to think and reach

higher. Robert Browning said, “A man’s reach should exceed his grasp, or what’s a heaven for?”

When asked if he could be born again as anyone throughout history, who he would be, George Bernard Shaw said, “I’d like to become the man I never was.” Wow, that resonates with me.

You’ve engaged individuals of significance around the world. When you are in private conversations with those global leaders of industries, business, and government, what have you seen that drives them?

There are many people that I’ve seen who are driven by a sense of purpose, and they want to live a life of impact, to live a life that will outlive them. As an elected official in the Ohio Legislature and chairman of several committees, I saw individuals driven by power. That ego wanted more of it. I saw people who wanted to serve. Who had a drive to make a difference and leave a legacy. And some people want to step up and do more, but many of them, like I was, wanted to live a bigger life. And for 14 years, I didn’t. I would go see Zig Ziglar, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, Robert Schuller, and various other speakers, and my heart would say, I could do that, but my mind, we’ve been conditioned to be practical, logical, and realistic. And just considering the fact I came up during the segregated South, where we had to go through the back door, we can’t go through the front door of the home that my mother used to clean on Miami Beach for wealthy families, so I would go with her to sit in the back of the bus.

I can see in my mind now, the yellow line that we had to walk past, even though there were seats upfront, for being in a culture designed to destroy our sense of self. And it helped me to begin to see that there’s something in all of us that has a hunger and a drive to do more, have more, and experience more. And to live full and to die empty. And that your life matters, and never forget that, and allow the power of hunger to drive you to get better. Because you don’t get in life what you want, you get in life what you are!

I think many of the people I’ve seen who were in leadership positions globally have that hunger to make an impact with their lives.

“What did you start out wanting to be professionally, and how did that transcend into the world you know now?”

I wanted to be a disc jockey. Les Brown ‘The Man About Town’. Les Brown, your platter-playing popper. And I was good, became a community activist, and then was fired from the radio. I ran for the Ohio Legislature and was elected to three terms. I resigned midway through my third term to return to Miami and care for Ms. Mamie Brown. I always say that all that I am and I’ve hoped to be is owed to my mother. God took me out of my biological mother’s womb. That’s Dorothy Bell Rucker, and placed me in the heart of my adopted mother, Mammie Brown. That was a defining moment in my life, when I found out because I didn’t know most of my life, but I always say when I would speak and close out my speech, “This has been Mrs. Mamie Brown’s baby boy.” I wanted to make my mother proud. I used to work selling and doing various things, including multi-level marketing. These have all contributed to me being who I am today. Life is lived going forward, but we look back and learn a lot, reflecting on how we got here.

From your unique vantage point and unique experiences as an entrepreneur, entertainer, political leader, and business advisor, what are the most effective ways you have found to create loyalty between you and others that can be applied in today’s business?

To me, what’s most important is having a sense of integrity. Integrity judges a person not by what they do, but what they do when nobody’s looking. Integrity is having a sense of rightness and having a straightforward approach to developing your character. There’s a quote by a minister who said, “Oh’ Lord, don’t let my talents take me, where my character can’t keep me.”

So, being a person that my children, friends, and family could admire, respect, and see as a force for good, and a person who helps them to go to sleep and breathe easier, because I’ve taken them to a place they could not go by themselves. And inspire them to have the courage to see that, “Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin,” as Mother Theresa said.

Talk to me about the Professional Performance Magazine and our

relationship. What do you think about this publication and how it can serve readers?

I admire you for your persistence, determination, and creating a magazine that’s not just designed to have gorgeous pictures and promote the variety of products, but also to have people do what Abraham Maslow talked about, having that hunger for self-actualization, to live full and die empty.

To always look for ways in which they can better themselves and understand and know that in this thing called life, in order for you to do and excel at something you’ve never done, you’ve got to become someone you’ve never been. The articles, the interviews, the content of your magazine in my opinion, and help me to get a large vision of myself outside of my mental conditioning circumstances, and ignited hunger in my heart to challenge myself to die for who I’ve been to give birth to, who I get chosen to become.

I feel that having a magazine that focuses on professional and personal performances allows you to expand your vision of yourself, live an expanded life, and die to who you’ve been to give birth to who you are supposed to become. And challenge you to continue to grow and never settle for life as it is. It’s about an understanding of something you believe in before your book is written, that over time, you have to hunger for greatness to develop yourself, because you don’t get what you want to get in life; in life, you get what you are.

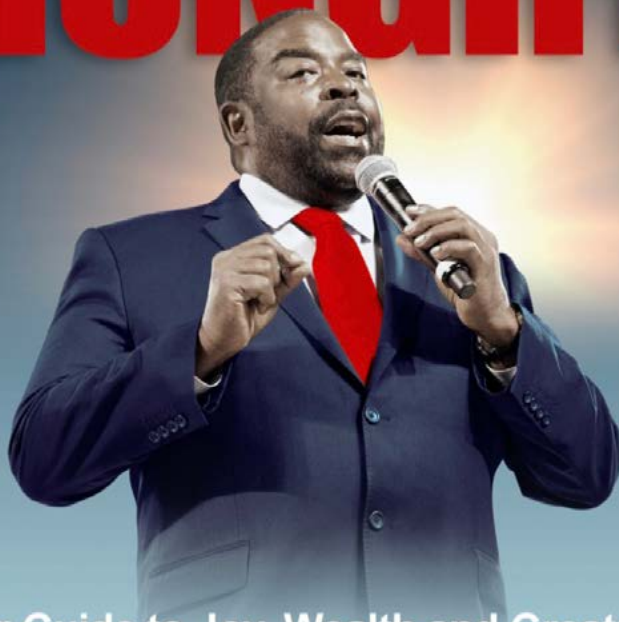
What have you learned about critical success factors for an individual organization to be relevant in today’s global market?

It’s essential to clarify who you want to be and why people would want to do business with you. What have you chosen to do that resonates with you and gives your life a sense of meaning and purpose? And, become a perpetual student of knowing who your audience or customer is. Never stop being curious about things, one of the factors that helps me stand out in the speaking industry, has been taught by the Dale Carnegie Course, which is an excellent course. Tell them what you are going to tell them, then tell them, then tell them what you told them.

I teach speakers and trainers never to let what they want to say get in the way of

Life is tough, you must be tougher. It's possible, it's necessary...

You've Got To Be **HUNGRY**



Your Guide to Joy, Wealth and Greatness

LES BROWN



what their audience wants to hear. Ensure you gain an understanding of others, and do the research. I send out a questionnaire to find out what their pain points are. What's keeping them up at night? What's challenging them? What's the unspoken conversation, and what experience do they want me to come in and create? I would become the person who would help them step out of their current state of mind and create an experience. Are you asking your client, boss, and colleagues the right questions so you can bring more value to them?

Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "A mind that is stretched by new experience can never go back to its old dimensions." To

create an experience with the audience that they become self-persuaded to be engaged, to put their telephone down, to be focused and see themselves a part of a big vision in the role that they play and always strive to better themselves, have their minds focus on the next position and who they have to become in order to achieve that.

How has telling your story impacted you? We know what it has done for others, but for you?

It has impacted me in a very profound way. One of the defining moments in my career was a presentation which can be found on YouTube, Les Brown speaking in

the Georgia Dome, entitled 'It's not over until you win.'

When I went on that stage, I was scared out of my mind. I went to the bathroom seven times, and they had to get me out of the bathroom. I thought I was speaking in a small banquet room, and the guy who was taking me to the green room asked me if I was Les Brown, and I said yes. He then asked what it was like to speak to 80,000 people. I said I don't know. He said, "Come with me."

He showed me the audience, and I ran to the bathroom. They called my mentor, who came and said we are stalling, you need to come out, there are 80,000 people out there. He asked if I was scared.

I said, "Yes, I can't hear the voice in my head."

He said, "Are you listening to me?"

I said, "Yes, what is it?"

He said, "Do it for your mother, come on man, do it for your mama."

I said, "Don't use my mama on me."

He said, "Do you know how happy she will be to be able to tell her neighbors, 'My boy Leslie spoke to 80,000 people in a stadium.'"

I said, "OK." Then I came out and I asked them to pray for me.

I will never forget when I got to the top of the steps, and he gave me the microphone. He looked me in the eyes and said, "Brownie, you got this."

His voice and the look in his eyes went straight to my heart, and I realized in that moment how important it is to have somebody who believes in you, until your own belief kicks in!

I don't remember the speech, but that look in his eyes and that belief inspired me. I'm very critical. I've never watched it, but people around the world have.

You are a proven achiever with wins and losses. You never seem to give up. Some would call you a catalyst, a thought-leader, and say you push others to think. What top points would you advise professionals in any position on leading others in our post-COVID and AI world?

I'd say that self-mastery is very important. Even in this place where we are, over 300 million jobs will be replaced by artificial intelligence. I came up during the time of Marvin Gaye and a great song, "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing, Baby." People who know themselves, who take

the time to do the deep work and read magazines like yours, study and get to understand themselves and their team, will find their internal customers and their market. They're a product of their skills and passion, not just to be good, but to pursue their greatness as much as possible.

Understand that we have so much more in us than we can ever imagine, that we must continue to know it's possible that we could reach new heights and become self-sufficient. We could create new opportunities and industries, it's possible that we can create a culture where people turn to each other and not on each other. We can develop a culture of peace, harmony, and joy despite political and religious differences. We will have challenges in life with a joy that passes all human understanding. Joy is different than happiness, which is based upon circumstances. Joy is living your life from the inside out; whatever life throws in front of you, you face it with understanding.

Goliath lost; you have to be more than a conqueror. Greatness is within you; it's in the world to do your part, live full, and die empty!

As one of the world's most renowned motivational speakers, Les Brown is a dynamic personality and highly-sought-after resource in business and professional circles for Fortune 500 CEOs, small business owners, non-profit and community leaders. His website is lesbrown.com



Meredith Elliott Powell with Les Brown



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Building the Leader Within

THAT WITHSTANDS TIME!

WITH GENERAL XAVIER BRUNSON & DR. JEFFREY MAGEE

Recently, I had the opportunity to sit down virtually for an interview for our readers of Performance Magazine with General Xavier Brunson, Commander United Nations Command/Combined Forces Command/United States Forces Korea. We had a powerful discussion across a thirty-year military career and his lens on leadership evolution.

What do you do to stay professionally fit? I don't mean physically fit; I mean capable of remaining relevant and in peak professional performing ability.

Staying professionally fit requires continuous learning and environmental scanning to remain adaptable. My approach centers on three core elements: being energetic, effective, and engaged as a leader. Energy attracts people and shows passion. Effectiveness means being the go-to person for solutions through both professional knowledge and genuine care for your people. Engagement involves knowing your team personally and being present during challenging times. Leadership isn't about popularity—it's about maintaining high standards with clear intent. Key practices include having a clear vision others can follow, taking ownership of your situation and people, and maintaining consistent, transparent communication. Finally, perspective and empathy are crucial when navigating difficult issues. Bringing personal values into professional life ensures authenticity and consistency as a leader.

What do you see as the enduring qualities of successful leaders?

Successful leaders possess several enduring qualities that enable sustained performance and inspire others toward achievement. At the core, leaders must be energetic, effective, and engaged -



General Xavier T. Brunson

energy draws people through visible passion and purpose, effectiveness builds trust by consistently solving problems through professional knowledge and genuine care, and engagement means knowing your people personally and being present during challenges. Understanding that people are the foundation of everything is crucial, as

success comes through family, mentors, and team members, requiring leaders to build genuine connections through consistent, transparent communication and face-to-face engagement rather than relying on impersonal methods. Successful leaders possess vision - the ability to "see a thing that isn't as if it were" and envision outcomes others

can't yet see while creating clear plans to get there. They consistently hold people to high standards, understanding that leadership isn't a popularity contest but earns respect when intent is clear. Taking complete ownership of your situation, people, and challenges drives care and enables you to excel in your domain. Finally, maintaining strong values and character while bringing personal authenticity into professional leadership ensures consistency and builds lasting trust.

What traits have you learned are critical to success for an individual or organization to be relevant in today's global market?

Success in today's global market requires several interconnected traits that enable individuals and organizations to remain relevant and achieve peak performance. The foundation is people-centered leadership that recognizes everything is accomplished through relationships with family, mentors, and team members. This requires genuine engagement, presence, and time investment rather than impersonal communication methods. Effective leaders must be energetic to draw people through visible passion, build trust by consistently solving problems, and engage by knowing their people personally and being present during challenges.

Vision is critical - the ability to see desired outcomes others cannot yet envision and create clear plans to achieve them. Leaders must scan their environment constantly, understand it thoroughly, and act decisively while challenging assumptions daily.

Maintaining unwavering high standards and understanding that leadership isn't about popularity but about clear intent that benefits the team. Taking complete ownership of situations, people, and challenges drives the care necessary to dominate your space.

Character and authenticity matter deeply in today's world, requiring leaders to bring personal values into professional settings for consistency. Perspective and empathy enable navigation of diverse viewpoints and complex issues. Continuous learning and adaptation are non-negotiable in a dynamic global environment, requiring constant innovation while maintaining core

standards. Finally, building strong teams and partnerships, including multilateral coalitions, provides strategic advantages that adversaries recognize and respect.

These traits work together to enable accelerated success and sustained relevance in an increasingly complex global marketplace where people, vision, standards, ownership, character, adaptability, and partnerships determine long-term success.

From your unique vantage point and unique experiences as a military officer and reaching the pinnacle rank of 4-star general, equivalent to a Fortune CEO, what are the most effective ways you have found to create loyalty between you and others that can be applied in business today?

Drawing from my experiences leading individuals and large organizations as a military officer, I believe the most effective ways to create loyalty are rooted in understanding that people are the foundation of everything. Taking care of your people is a serious responsibility that translates directly to business success.

Leaders must be energetic, effective, and engaged to cultivate genuine loyalty. Energy draws people through visible passion and purpose, effectiveness builds trust by consistently solving problems with professional knowledge and personal care, and engagement means knowing your people and being involved in their lives during challenges. This requires presence - investing time to be where your people are rather than expecting them to come to you, making genuine connections through consistent, transparent communication and face-to-face conversations rather than relying on surveys.

Loyalty isn't built on popularity but on respect earned by holding people to high standards and never deviating from them. When your intent is clear - that standards benefit the team and keep them effective - it earns long-term respect and loyalty. Leaders must demonstrate complete ownership of their situation, people, and challenges, which drives care and enables them to excel in their domain. Taking responsibility, even admitting problems, builds trust.

Authenticity and vulnerability are crucial for deeper connections. Bringing personal values into professional life

creates consistency, and being willing to share experiences, including challenges, creates a safe environment for others. I use a "Connection Equation": Connection = Time + Media + Message + Assessment - spending time with people, using effective communication channels, providing a consistent and clear vision, and directly addressing root issues through conversation.

These approaches - genuine care, high standards, consistent presence, transparent communication, and authentic leadership - build the trust and mutual respect that drive loyalty and enable accelerated success in any environment, including the private sector.

I want to go back a few days to what outwardly your ascension to success and fame was. Tell me about your military trajectory, and are there any single major experiences, moments, or decisions you made early on that influenced where you are today? How did purposeful succession play a role, or not?

My military journey began with my father, who served 28 years in the Army with combat tours in Vietnam and Desert Storm. Watching how he led and treated soldiers profoundly shaped me, instilling values of discipline, service, and love of family and country. His example taught me that servicemembers take care of you when you take care of them - a principle that guides how I see every servicemember, mentally substituting my father in their place and considering how I would want him treated.

My path wasn't always certain. I was described as a "ne'er-do-well" with shaky commissioning odds and initially planned only five years in the Army. A pivotal moment came when First Sergeant Silva, a private under my command in Fort Bragg, asked about my plans to leave the Army. Realizing that somebody needed me drove my decision to stay - good leaders provide hope to their servicemembers, and being present is essential to giving people hope.

Key mentors shaped my trajectory. General Ron Clark consistently encouraged me throughout our careers. As a battalion commander, General Lloyd Austin showed me, as a young African American captain, that reaching senior leadership was attainable because he



looked like me - he blazed a trail for me. My mother, Delphine, provided unwavering support and prayers, and my father, Albert, a retired Army Sergeant Major, is the patriarch and represents our family's legacy of service. I would also mention my wife, Kirsten, the Army's first African American female judge. Her dedication to our family first and then our service has always been a remarkable example.

Regarding succession, I believe in leaving every organization better than I found it. As the only African American division commander currently serving, I'm blazing a trail through no choice of my own, but the key is doing your absolute best to make a way for others. The best leaders establish systems, processes, and culture that enable organizations to run at high levels regardless of who's in charge. What you leave behind is far more important than what you do - I want people to look at my legacy and think I didn't waste a day and left nothing on the table.

This approach reflects the foundational principle that the Army's platform is people, and successful succession means ensuring that platform remains strong for future leaders.

What drives your thinking style?

My thinking style is driven by deeply ingrained values from my parents - my father's military service instilled discipline, service, love of family and country, while my mother provided

stability and consistency. Bringing these personal values into professional life creates consistency that influences my thinking and acting.

Central to my thinking is the belief that people are everything. My levels of certainty are things I believe, think, and know. Hope, faith, and love aren't abstract concepts but professional tools that heavily influence my thinking. Hope gets you through hard times and drives you each morning, faith gets you out of bed believing in your mission and team, and love is the adhesive that binds everything together.

My thinking has a spiritual dimension - understanding you're created on purpose for a purpose, and a leader's role is helping others recognize that. This manifests in daily self-reflection, asking whether I've been just, loved mercy, and walked humbly.

I challenge assumptions and seek different perspectives, intentionally understanding others' cultural backgrounds and experiences while recognizing I can't assume I know exactly what someone else is going through. My operational thinking centers on owning the situation - people, facilities, and challenges - which drives care and enables you to excel in your domain.

Finally, my thinking is sustained by continuous learning and reflection. I actively pursue real thought daily, reading multiple books concurrently and writing notes to process information deeply.

Having a clear vision and plans is essential to show people where the organization is headed. This blend of values, people-focused philosophy, hope-faith-love framework, multi-perspective problem-solving, ownership mentality, and continuous learning collectively drives how I perceive, process, and act on challenges and opportunities.

What qualities make star performers tick for today and tomorrow? And, what qualities detract from the general workforce performance?

Star performers are driven by energy, effectiveness, and engagement, the three pillars for peak performance. They understand their role, consistently meet high standards, and hold others accountable. They possess discipline, a strong work ethic, and a relentless pursuit of improvement. Star performers demonstrate ownership, responsibility, and take full accountability for their people, facilities, and challenges. They think critically and adapt to changing conditions while maintaining core standards. They have vision and understand how current actions connect to future outcomes. Most importantly, they operate with integrity and authenticity, doing the right things for the right reasons.

Conversely, several qualities consistently detract from workforce performance. Lack of engagement and presence undermine connection and trust. Ineffectiveness and lack of knowledge destroy credibility.

Eroding trust and telling others to do what you won't do yourself are servicemembers' main complaints. Leaders who focus only on the present without communicating a long-term vision confuse people about purpose. Complacency, lack of responsibility, poor thinking, and intolerance all hurt team performance. Star performers differ from average ones by having energy, effectiveness, engagement, accountability, continuous improvement, and authentic leadership focused on others.

You are a proven achiever, with wins and losses, you never seem to give up, some would call you a "Catalyst-Thought-Leader" as you push others to THINK, what are some of the top



points you would advise that upward manager / leader / entrepreneur / business-owner to know or do, to reap the best performance out of their team and organization in this global market reboot?

Own your situation completely, including your people, facilities, and challenges. This ownership drives the care necessary to excel. Help everyone understand and fulfill their role for the team, as great organizations happen when people know their part and contribute to collective success. Hold people to high standards consistently while meeting those standards yourself, which earns respect and drives performance.

Care genuinely for your people, even when being strict, as this builds trust and loyalty. Have vision to see possibilities and help people understand the “why” behind difficult decisions. Foster discipline and a work ethic while pursuing continuous improvement.

Lead by example because people are always watching. Build connection through time, accessibility, and presence during challenging moments. Create psychological safety and share risk, which builds trust. Address problems, not personalities, and accept responsibility when things go wrong.

Encourage critical thinking and adaptability. Push people to think through problems rather than just following orders. The ability to innovate and adapt while maintaining core standards is essential in today’s global market. Communicate consistently, clearly, and transparently

to provide vision and regularly assess whether your message is being received and understood.

These principles work in combat or corporate environments, as the fundamentals of human leadership remain constant despite context changes.

Inspiration – If you could identify one person that has inspired you and shaped who you are today, that you have not given the ‘Shout-Out’ to as much as you would have liked, who would that be and why?

When asked about inspirations, I often speak about my father, who served in Vietnam and Desert Storm, and my wife Kirsten, who retired as an Army colonel and was the military’s first Black female judge. Their influence has been significant and frequently acknowledged.

However, if I had to identify one person who has inspired me and shaped who I am today that I haven’t given the shout-out to as much as I would have liked, it would be my mother, Delphine. Throughout my career and long before, she provided stability and support to our family during every transition and challenge. Her dedication and consistency set an example that has influenced how I approach leadership and responsibility. That quiet, steadfast support is something you sometimes appreciate more fully in retrospect.

While my father was my first mentor who instilled discipline, service, love of family and country, and taught me that servicemembers take care of you

when you take care of them, and while Kirsten has been an indispensable source of support whose brilliance and sacrifices are the foundation of my career, my mother’s foundational stability complemented these strong influences in ways I haven’t acknowledged enough.

I attribute everything I’ve accomplished to the support I’ve received from family, mentors, and the incredible servicemembers I’ve served alongside. The family legacy of service with my father, brothers, and wife, all serving, is a powerful source of inspiration rooted in the good value set and work ethic my parents instilled.

In sum, while my father and wife are inspirations whose contributions I frequently acknowledge, my mother, Delphine, deserves equal recognition for the stability, consistency, and foundational support that shaped the person and leader I am today. She reminds me that consistency is one of the most overlooked characteristics of good leaders.

Hiring – If someone were to apply for a job with you (or your organization) today, and you could hire or not as you like, unobstructed by policy, procedure, mandates, and SOPs, what should they know and do to get noticed and considered?

If applying for a job with me today, here’s what matters most: people.

Be effective and proficient at your job. People are drawn to those who are good at tasks and solve problems. Demonstrate competence clearly.

Be engaged and present. Show up, be involved, and be intentional in your interactions. Care about people’s answers. Genuine connection matters more than surface-level networking.

Bring energy and drive. Show enthusiasm and passion that signals you’re “about something” meaningful. Energy is contagious and essential for high-performing teams.

Demonstrate ownership. Embrace an “own it” culture and own your responsibilities, people, space, and outcomes. Taking responsibility is fundamental.

Show strong values and integrity. Adhere to high standards with absolute integrity. Live by values like loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, and personal courage. Never tolerate



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discrimination or racism.

Be a critical thinker willing to learn.

Show you can think through problems and adapt when conditions change. Listen and adjust when someone provides a new perspective. Don't get befuddled by changing conditions; find different ways to maintain standards.

Finally, contribute to the team.

Understand your role and how you fit into the larger mission. Value teamwork and recognize that coalitions work. Even in difficult times, be someone others want on their team.

In essence, I'm looking for competent, engaged, energetic, responsible, values-driven, adaptable, and team-focused people. Show me that intentional approach combined with problem-solving and caring for others.

From your desk as the senior military leader closest to mainland China, what is the single most important mindset that people must possess over the next 3 to 5 years to be more competitive, secure, and situationally aware?

If I had to distill it down to the single most important mindset, it's this: Be a critical, adaptable thinker who constantly seeks a broader, strategic perspective while anticipating future challenges. You must challenge every long-held assumption.

Critical thinking is non-negotiable in an environment where conditions constantly change. You must be able to "think your way through a problem" by looking at the other side of an argument before passing judgment and being willing to listen and adjust when someone provides a new perspective you hadn't recognized. We need people who can be critical of themselves and their environment, allowing them to adapt and get the correct answer. You cannot afford to be befuddled by changing conditions.

Maintain a broad, strategic perspective rather than getting lost in tactical actions. Look at the bigger picture and understand the strategic movements our potential adversaries are undertaking. I like to use an East Up Map of the region to describe my outlook and perspectives. If you change your perspective on the map, you can appreciate the region's geometry and understand the larger strategic landscape. Recognize that we can do more than one thing and shouldn't limit

ourselves when facing multiple complex threats.

Anticipate future capabilities by focusing on what's coming back from relationships between actors like the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Russia. Advancements in anti-drone technology, missile systems, guidance capabilities, and submarine quieting can significantly enhance their abilities and cut development time. You must be wary of what is coming back and ensure we maintain generations of overmatch with these evolving threats.

This combination - deep critical thinking, adaptability, big-picture perspective, and anticipation of technological advancements - makes individuals more competitive in problem-solving, more secure in understanding threats, and more situationally aware in our rapidly changing and complex environment. It's about having that intentional approach to understanding the world around you.

With a recent Gallup Study indicating that upwards of 56% of workers across America surveyed indicated that they are disengaged in today's workplace, why does it appear that so many are so complacent today, and how do we engage them to levels of proactive accountability? And, do you see this in the NCO and Officer ranks within the military? If so, why, and if not, why? What lessons can we learn?

The high levels of workplace disengagement we see, whether in civilian organizations or military units, stem from fundamental leadership failures. Too many leaders aren't present or engaged with their people. As one senior leader said, leadership presence can be summarized as "just show up" - but many don't. When leaders tell people to do things they won't do themselves, fail to genuinely care about their subordinates, or prove ineffective at solving problems, disengagement naturally follows.

Yes, we see this in the military's NCO and Officer ranks. The root cause is often a lack of intentionality - leaders who don't take the time to honestly know the people working for them or understand the crises in their lives. When servicemembers feel their leaders aren't invested in them as individuals, they disengage from the mission and the organization.

The solution lies in returning to

fundamental leadership principles. Leaders must be physically and mentally present with their people, especially during difficult times. They must lead by example consistently because, as soldiers often say, their biggest complaint is leaders who "tell me to do stuff that they're not doing." Building trust requires what we call "time plus message plus assessment" - spending quality time with people, communicating clearly and transparently, and regularly checking on your formation's health.

Most importantly, we must foster an "ownership culture." When people truly own their responsibilities and feel their leaders are invested in their success, proactive accountability follows naturally. This isn't about mandates or programs - it's about leaders genuinely caring about their people and proving they're effective problem-solvers worth following. The lesson for any organization is simple: people are your platform, and if you want them engaged, you must be genuinely engaged with them.

Suppose you had 2 minutes to mentor a high-potential individual. What would you share with them from your professional vantage point of experience, training, and responsibility to be effective or successful?

If I had just two minutes to mentor a high-potential individual, I would focus on the central truth I've learned through my experience: Success is fundamentally about people—how you lead them, how you inspire them, and the impact you leave on their lives.

First, understand your core purpose. Leadership is a privilege and a responsibility, especially when entrusted with America's sons and daughters. The Army's greatest asset is its people; your journey will be defined by how you engage with them.

Second, always ask yourself: "What can I do today to give hope to others?" Hope is essential—it moves people forward and gives them purpose. When you focus on providing hope, you stay present and attentive to what truly matters.

Third, embody the three E's of effective leadership:

- **Engaged:** Be present and accessible. Know your people, show up, and be intentional about connecting with them.



- **Energetic:** Your energy is contagious. Be passionate about your mission, your team, and your role.
- **Effective:** Be a problem solver. Build your knowledge and skills so others trust you to get things done.

Trust is the currency of leadership. Build it through genuine connection—spend time with your people, communicate clearly, and continually assess how your team is doing, especially face-to-face.

Finally, lead by example and own your responsibilities. Always act with integrity, hold yourself and others to high standards, and foster a culture of ownership. Remember, how you finish is more important than how you start—be a finisher.

Seek wisdom relentlessly. Find mentors, be receptive to feedback, and surround yourself with those who push you to improve. Growth takes patience

and humility.

Ultimately, your effectiveness and success are measured not by personal accolades but by your positive impact on others and your ability to uplift those around you. Focus on people, give hope, lead with energy and integrity, and never stop growing.

Many talk about PASSION as a core element to sustained success within individuals. What is your view?

Passion is often cited as the key to sustained success, but I believe deeper forces drive individuals and organizations forward.

Hope, like “the thing that goes in your tank every day,” drives the engine and keeps us going. As leaders, we must ask ourselves what we can do to give hope to others. Hope is essential for moving forward, finding purpose, and striving, especially in challenging times.

Love, the adhesive that binds us to-

gether, is crucial. Sacrificial love keeps us committed and inspires us to do amazing things.

Faith, believing in something bigger than ourselves, whether it’s the military or some other pursuit.

Energy is also vital. Your energy draws people to you and is key to effective leadership. I’ve seen firsthand how a leader’s energy and enthusiasm can inspire an entire organization.

Commitment and ownership are vital for lasting success. An “own it culture” empowers us to dominate situations and set the conditions for success, not just for ourselves, but for everyone around us.

Ultimately, I measure success by the impact I have on others. My job as a leader is to put people in positions where they can succeed and give them the hope, love, energy, and purpose they need to thrive.

While passion is important, hope, love, faith, energy in a larger purpose, and commitment to others’ success are the real foundations of sustained achievement. These are the things that keep me and those I lead moving forward daily.

When you are interacting with other senior military leaders today, what burning issues keep you all up at night that others should be aware of?

When senior military leaders gather, the issues that keep us up at night center on the rapidly evolving and increasingly complex security environment.

First, we’re deeply concerned about deterring adversaries whose capabilities—especially those of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, China, Russia, and Iran—are growing and becoming more coordinated. North Korea’s advancing nuclear and missile programs, along with its closer ties to Russia, pose a real and existential threat to our allies and the U.S. homeland. China’s unprecedented military modernization and aggression, particularly around Taiwan, are also major concerns.

We’re seeing an authoritarian collusion, making the security landscape even more challenging. Ensuring our forces are not just present but truly ready and adaptable is a constant focus. Our alliances and partnerships are our greatest strength; maintaining these relationships is critical to deterrence and regional stability.

Logistics and sustainment—having the ability to move, supply, and repair our forces—are persistent challenges, as is countering misinformation in the information space.

Ultimately, what keeps us up at night is ensuring we can adapt quickly, keep our forces ready, sustain our presence, and maintain the trust and strength of our allies in the face of these evolving threats.

Has leadership changed over your career in terms of what is required to be an effective leader? If so, how?

Leadership has absolutely evolved over my career. While core values like discipline, service, and leading from the front remain constant, today's effective leaders must do more. Engagement and presence are now essential—you must be actively involved with your team, understand their lives, and support them through challenges. Energy and passion are also key; they motivate and inspire those around you.

Leadership isn't about popularity; it's about holding people to high standards and leading by example. You must be willing to do what you ask of others, which builds trust and credibility. Today's leaders also need to quickly adapt to changing environments, remove obstacles, and create conditions for their teams to succeed.

Building strong connections, fostering a culture of safety and shared risk, and maintaining open, honest communication are more important than ever. While the fundamentals endure, effective leadership today requires a heightened focus on personal connection, adaptability, and genuine care for your people. That's what sets successful leaders apart in the modern Army.

What are your thoughts about VALUES and how do they shape the individual and organization? Why do you believe we have such a values disconnect or collision in our society today?

Values are foundational, shaping both individuals and organizations. In the Army, we live by seven core values: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. These values guide our actions, decisions, and culture every day.

A strong value set and a solid work ethic inspire individuals and unite teams.

Returning to these core values helps us navigate the right path when faced with tough decisions. They are the bedrock of our institution, building trust and cohesion.

Our shared value system in the Army enables us to address challenges early and constructively. While we are not immune to problems, our values provide a framework for honest conversations, accountability, and problem-solving. Leaders play a key role in connecting with new soldiers from diverse backgrounds, modeling these values, and investing in their growth. Living our values means setting boundaries, thinking critically, taking responsibility, and striving for inclusivity in all we do.

Ultimately, values hold us together, guide our actions, and help us become better versions of ourselves. That's why we work hard to uphold them every day in the Army—they are truly non-negotiable and serve as a compass for every decision and action.

With what you know and have experienced in your life, what would you share with the 23-year-old you, if you could talk to YOU then?

If I could speak to my 23-year-old self, I would emphasize the importance of showing up and being truly present—not just physically, but emotionally and mentally—with the people you lead. Leadership starts with engagement, and it's essential to spend time with your team, get to know them beyond their uniforms, and be there for them during both good times and bad. I'd remind myself to continuously pursue wisdom, be patient with my own growth, and seek out mentors while remaining open to their guidance. Living by core values—loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage—would be non-negotiable, as these values provide a compass for every decision and action. I'd encourage myself to focus on giving others hope every day and always lead with a sense of purpose, recognizing that leadership is both a privilege and a responsibility. People are the Army's greatest asset, so prioritizing their well-being and building genuine connections is crucial. I would stress the need to lead with energy and effectiveness, to be disciplined yet caring, and to hold myself and others to high standards while always showing compassion. Authenticity and

vulnerability are strengths, not weaknesses, and owning your responsibilities and fostering a culture of care are essential to effective leadership. I'd also remind myself to align my personal and professional life, think critically, never tolerate discrimination, and be patient and kind to myself as I grow. Above all, I'd urge myself to always look at the big picture, challenge assumptions, and strive to leave every person and place better than I found them.

What has been your greatest learning experience in your career?

My greatest learning experience has been realizing that leadership is fundamentally about people and the connections you build with them. The Army's true strength comes from being present, engaged, and genuinely caring for those you lead. I've learned the power of giving hope and purpose, and that inspiring others is a leader's most important job. Over the years, I've also come to value continuous learning, wisdom, and adapting to new challenges. The influence of my family, especially the example set by my parents, has shaped my approach to treating every soldier with dignity and respect. Ultimately, living by our core values—loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage—has guided me through every challenge. I have learned that the best a leader can do is embodied in Micah 6:8, "Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your god." It is to understand and meet the expectations of those you lead and those you are led by.

Xavier T. Brunson is a United States Army general who has served as the commander of United Nations Command, ROK/US Combined Forces Command and United States Forces Korea since 20 December 2024. He most recently served as the commanding general of I Corps from 2021 to 2024. He previously served as deputy commanding general of I Corps from May to September 2021, and commanding general of the 7th Infantry Division from 2019 to 2021, with assignments as chief of staff of XVIII Airborne Corps from 2017 to 2019 and deputy commanding general for operations of the 10th Mountain Division from 2016 to 2017.



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From Ashes to Inspiration

IGNITING LEADERSHIP IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

BY COACH CHRIS EWALD



Chris Ewald

Life throws unexpected curveballs, transforming stable predictability into a metaphorical inferno. For leaders, these “fires”—organizational crises, market disruptions, unexpected setbacks—threaten to consume well-laid plans. But what if those ashes aren’t just remnants of loss, but fertile ground for igniting a new, more powerful kind of leadership? This article explores leadership forged in fire, rooted in the deeply human experience of overcoming unimaginable loss, drawing insights from Coach Chris Ewald’s powerful book, *From Ashes to Inspiration: Igniting Leadership in the Face of Adversity*.

The Unbreakable Bonds Forged in Fire

Chris Ewald’s journey begins on a frigid February night in 1979, when a house fire devoured his family’s home, stealing possessions, dreams, and beloved pets. The initial shock was a “stunned, hollow quiet,” mirroring the chaos of organizational crises where familiar structures vanish instantly. Yet, from those smoldering ruins, invaluable lessons emerged.

In the face of devastating loss, Chris witnessed his father’s quiet resolve, relentlessly working to secure a place for his family. His mother, an emotional anchor, provided unwavering comfort and profound empathy. These personal experiences highlight a critical leadership truth: **authentic leadership often manifests**

not in loud pronouncements but in quiet determination, unwavering support, and deep empathy for those navigating the storm.

Consider your own “before,” the stable rhythm of your team, the routines, and the individual dynamics. Chris’s story urges us to value this stability and recognize its inherent fragility. What subtle vulnerabilities might exist within your organization? Are you fostering an environment where foundational elements are cherished, and early warnings of disruption are recognized?

Rebuilding, Resilience, and the Power of Purpose

The path from ashes to inspiration isn’t linear; it’s a “strategic process of recovery,” brick by painful brick. For Chris’s family, this meant temporary housing, finding a new home, and slowly piecing their lives back together. This period, filled with acts of community kindness and unwavering family support, underscored the power of a strong network. Just as Chris’s classmates rallied, leaders must actively cultivate robust support networks, both internal and external, fostering a culture where offering and accepting help is encouraged.

Transforming tragedy into purpose means finding opportunity in adversity. Chris recounts how the years after the fire, despite the loss, became some of his most joyful childhood memories, filled with animals and a sprawling garden. This optimistic outlook, a conscious decision not to “wallow in self-pity,” allowed his family to find joy in the rubble. For leaders, this means cultivating a forward-thinking approach, reframing challenges as opportunities for growth, and celebrating small victories to maintain morale.

The Lingering Impact and the Call to Persistence

Yet, scars remain. Chris candidly shares how the whisper, “It’s all going to burn to the ground,” haunted him for decades, manifesting as a pervasive sense of impending doom, a “Fire Thief” that

sabotaged opportunities. This powerful insight reminds us that **personal and organizational past experiences can leave lasting psychological impacts on leaders and their teams.** Self-awareness is crucial here—the willingness to introspect, challenge limiting beliefs, and actively cultivate hope.

Ultimately, *From Ashes to Inspiration* is a profound call to persistence. It’s not a “fluffy, feel-good concept,” but “the gritty, unyielding refusal to surrender.” Chris emphasizes that life is “a goddamn grind,” filled with setbacks. But it’s our response to failure—our relentless drive to learn, adapt, and take “another goddamn step forward”—that defines us. As leaders, we must instill this unwavering persistence, fostering a culture where failure is a teacher, continuous improvement is the norm, and the pursuit of excellence is fueled by a clear “why.”

Chris Ewald’s story is a testament to the enduring flame of the human spirit. It’s a powerful reminder that the most impactful and inspiring leadership can emerge from the deepest despair. So, when your organization faces its next “fire,” what will you choose? Will you let the flames consume you, or will you embrace the transformative power of adversity, find your inner fire, and lead your team to rise from the ashes, stronger and more purposeful than ever before?



Coach Chris helps sales teams and leaders in the electrical industry build unmatched confidence, clarity, and execution.

Based in Michigan, he’s the author of *From Ashes to Inspiration: Igniting Leadership in the Face of Adversity*, and *The Intensity Method*—a practical guide packed with 19 lessons for busy professionals who want real, lasting change.

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Are You Guilty?

THE UNCONSCIOUS GOOF THAT CAN HURT YOUR CREDIBILITY?

BY PATRICIA FRIPP, CSP, CPAE



Patricia Fripp

You may not have noticed it yet, but you'll have fun spotting examples everywhere once you do. Some of your friends and associates are guilty. The blight has invaded television, newspapers, and magazines. It crosses all professions and levels of education. Recently, I counted dozens of examples at a 4-day meeting with some of the most brilliant and successful professional speakers and consultants in the U.S. Even you may be doing it!

What is this Crime Against Credibility?

It's a single, suddenly-popular buzzword that makes me feel like fingernails screeching on a blackboard every time I hear it. It's "stuff."

Even communication experts are guilty. I maintain that professional speakers, coaches, and consultants are paid for their lifetime knowledge, innovative ideas, leading-edge strategies, and, most importantly, their eloquence in presenting their ideas to their audiences. Yet, I overhear these communicators saying to each other, "The group loved my stuff" or "I gave them my best stuff."

Even worse is "and stuff." Some individuals don't seem to know that a period at the end of a sentence is a great way to stop. I've heard, "This will decrease absenteeism and stuff," and "We had a great conversation and stuff." In Shakespeare's time, "stuff" meant woven cloth—"such

stuff as dreams are made on." It has come to mean "miscellaneous" and even acquired the negative connotation of junk, debris, or rubbish. Surely, you don't want to clutter your speaking with rubbish?

The worst thing about "stuff" is that it is not specific! As my associate David Palmer has programmed me to think, "Specificity builds credibility." Each time one of my speaking clients says "stuff," I ask what exactly they mean to say. Some are amazed at how often they use the word, even people with PhDs. Yet, their education isn't obvious in their language because of that one useless and irritating word. If you're asking yourself what difference it could make, I'll tell you. It makes a huge difference. You get hired because what you say sounds worth paying for. Language that is fuzzy, clumsy, and unclear destroys your credibility and your claim to professionalism. You might as well be delivering your message in Valley-Girl speak, grinding your toe in the rug

and murmuring, "Whatever—."

Your audience of one or a thousand deserves clear, forceful, and specific language. Toss out all that meaningless "stuff" and show them what a professional you are.

(California) Patricia Fripp CSP, CPAE, is a Hall of Fame keynote speaker, executive speech coach, and sales presentation skills trainer and keynote speaker on sales, effective presentation skills, and executive communication skills. She works with companies large and small, as well as individuals from the C-Suite to the work floor. She builds leaders, transforms sales teams, and delights audiences. She is the author or co-author of five books, including "Speaker's Edge - Secrets and Strategies for Connecting with Any Audience," and is Past-President of the National Speakers Association. To learn more about having Patricia do her magic for you, contact her at www.Fripp.com, (415) 753-6556, or PFripp@ix.netcom.com.



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Lead Loud, Speak Bold, and Own the Market

A NEW ERA OF LEADERSHIP HAS ARRIVED

BY JEFFREY HAYZLETT

Let's get something straight - today's business game isn't won by the quiet, the cautious, or the camera-shy. It's won by the loud, the bold, and the ones who have the guts to take the market by storm.

If you're not showing up as a thought leader, you're not even on the radar. If you don't have a podcast (or are creating content that engages your audience), you're missing the biggest stage in modern media. And if you're not leading your industry from the front, you're just playing catch-up while someone else defines the rules.

We have entered a new era of leadership. Visibility equals viability. Influence drives income. You want to grow? You want to scale? You want to leave a legacy? Then get off the sidelines and step behind the mic.

Thought Leadership Isn't Just Talk - It's Currency

We're living in a credibility economy. What you say - and how often you say it - matters. The 2024 Edelman-LinkedIn B2B Thought Leadership Impact Report shows that 61 percent of decision-makers are more willing to pay a premium to work with a brand that demonstrates clear thought leadership. You heard that right - more trust, more money.

Thought leadership is no longer a luxury. It's the entry fee. It separates the players from the pretenders. And no, this doesn't mean you need to be a celebrity or have a book deal. It means you need a point of view that challenges the status quo, delivers value, and consistently positions you as the go-to expert in your field.

What problem are you solving? That's what your audience wants to know. That's what will differentiate you from the rest of the pack. Solving their pain point is what they'll look up to you for. Solve their pain point.

People follow confidence. People buy from conviction. So, if you've got something to say, say it loud and often.

Podcasting: The Smartest Way to Be Everywhere

Now, let's talk about the real power move - podcasting. It's not just a content tool. It's a credibility engine.

Podcasting gives you scale without the fluff. It builds intimacy with your audience. According to Edison Research, 100 million Americans listen to podcasts weekly, and these aren't passive scroll-through-the-feed listeners. These are engaged, loyal, and educated consumers who stick around for 30, 40, even 60 minutes at a time. That's unheard of in any other marketing channel.

And here's the real kicker: hosting a podcast positions you as the authority. You control the narrative. You choose the guests. You lead the conversation. You want to reach Fortune 500 executives? Invite them on your show. You want to create months of content? Record one episode and repurpose the hell out of it. I've always said, do business with people you want to work with. Reach out and ask. The worst thing they can say is no. And if they do, keep trying until you get a 'yes.'

The mic is the modern-day megaphone. If you're not using it, you're choosing to be ignored.

Don't Just Compete - Command Your Market

You need not just to own your market; you need to command it.

Commanding your market means setting the terms. It means shaping the conversation, defining the standards, and making your competitors react to you. The brands that win aren't just participating - they're leading revolutions in their industry. They're making noise, creating categories, and dominating headlines.

Look at the disruptors - Uber, Tesla, Salesforce - they didn't wait for market share. They took it. They told a news story and made the world listen. That's what commanding your market looks like.

So, the question is: are you reacting to the market, or are you the one moving it? My advice: ACT, don't react.



Jeffrey Hayzlett

Here's How You Do It

If you're ready to stop blending in and start leading from the front, here's the playbook:

1. **Get Loud** - Share your insights, vision, and expertise like your business depends on it - because it does.
2. **Launch a Podcast** - Not next year. Not when it's "perfect." NOW. Start the conversations your industry needs.
3. **Claim Command** - Create your own category, define your metrics, and force the market to follow you, not the other way around.

Some people are skittish about owning their category because they might only serve a small niche. So what? You can still own that category. Would you rather have a few but engaged fans that will evangelize your brand or thousands (or millions) of casual followers that don't move the needle?

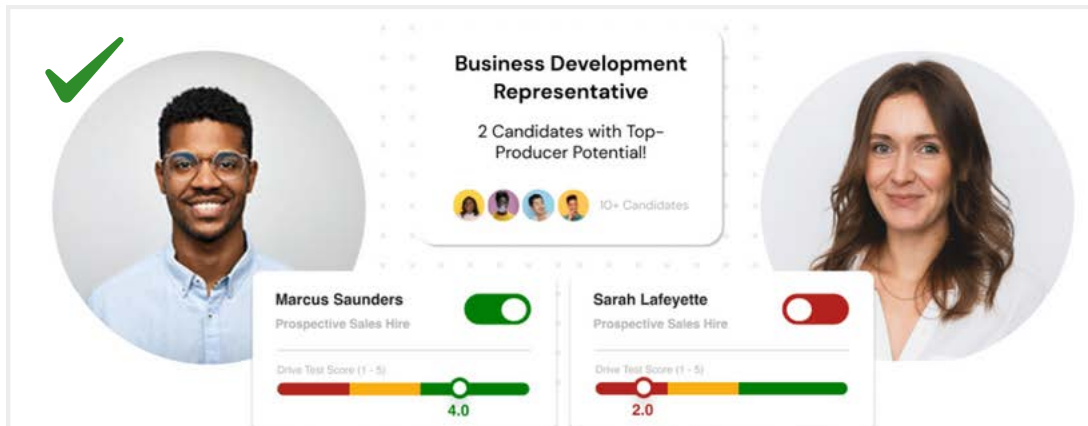
Choose the rabid fans. They're the ones who will sing your praises.

Let's be real: No one ever became a leader by staying quiet. No one ever commanded a market by playing it safe. And no one ever built a legacy by waiting for permission.

So don't just sit there watching other people lead. Get your voice out there. Get behind the mic. Get in front of your market. And take it.

You've got something worth saying. It's time the world hears it.

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The Productivity Paradox

UNCERTAINTY AND PERFORMANCE—WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

BY DR. MARY KELLY

Uncertainty is everywhere. It shows up in the economy, the office, our inboxes, and our heads. Whether triggered by layoffs, inflation, global instability, AI disruptions, or just an avalanche of decisions, uncertainty can drain our focus and dilute our productivity. As leaders, we cannot eliminate either change or chaos, but we can help our people navigate both better. Uncertainty is a leadership opportunity, but only if we understand how it affects the human brain and what practical steps mitigate its impact.

The Hidden Mental Tax of Uncertainty

At the biological level, uncertainty activates the amygdala, the part of the brain responsible for processing threats. It sets off our fight-or-flight system, making us hyper-alert but less capable of critical thinking. Over time, chronic uncertainty acts like chronic pain. It causes fatigue, emotional burnout, and executive dysfunction. We've seen this play out across workplaces in the aftermath of the pandemic, and we're still seeing it now, as people wrestle with the ripple effects of economic fluctuations and social shifts.

Uncertainty at Work

Uncertainty doesn't just affect individuals. It cascades through entire organizations, creating what I call "focus fragmentation." You can spot this when people: struggle to prioritize, avoid decision-making, react instead of plan, multitask constantly—but never get anything done well, or procrastinate excessively.

A recent survey by the American Institute of Stress revealed that 80% of workers experience productivity-related anxiety, driven by unclear expectations, fear of mistakes, and constant change. It's no wonder many teams feel like they're sprinting in circles.

Add in continuous partial attention, the habit of being constantly "on" but never entirely focused, and it's clear: even the best employees cannot perform well without structure, clarity, and psychological safety.

What Can Leaders Do to Restore Focus?

Here's where strong leadership doesn't just matter, it magnifies performance. Uncertainty is inevitable, but leaders can buffer its effects by creating clarity, direction, and trust.

Overcommunicate with Clarity and Context: People fear what they don't understand. Leaders who communicate frequently, even without all the answers, build trust and reduce speculation. People can handle bad news. Not knowing anything is actually more stressful.

Tip: Use the rule of three—say it three times, in three ways, across three channels. Clarity reduces ambiguity. Ambiguity fuels anxiety.

Prioritize Ruthlessly and Visibly: When everything feels urgent, nothing gets done. Narrow your team's scope to 3–5 publicly visible priorities. Review and reinforce them weekly. Use a Focus Board or a simple Objectives and Key Results Tracker. Make it visual. Make it obvious. Make it stick. I use a 12-Month Business Success and Accountability Planner with my teams, and we make the goals visible to everyone. That is free at www.ProductiveLeaders.com/2025-Success.

Coach Through Decision Fatigue: People stuck in uncertainty hesitate. Empower people to act without needing perfection. Use my "\$10 vs. \$10,000" decision filter: Is this mistake affordable? If yes, take the risk and move forward.

Model Calm, Decisive Behavior: Your tone sets the thermostat. When you stay composed and consistent, others gain footing—even in the unknown. In the military Special Operations world, we teach that "calm is contagious." Be calm when things change and make good decisions. Lead with presence. Your demeanor is more contagious than your words.

Protect Time for Deep Work: Distractions destroy productivity. Encourage team-wide "Focus Hours" with no meetings, pings, or interruptions, but the obvious caveat is that that time MUST be dedicated to work. An easy way to do that is to ask for results at the end. Try a 90-minute Pomodoro Focus Session as a



weekly team challenge. Then track how much gets done.

Recognize Wins: Uncertainty feels heavy. Recognizing even small wins lifts morale and builds momentum. Start a "Weekly Wins" huddle or Slack channel. Public dopamine hits boost performance.

Equip People with Self-Management Tools: Your team needs real tools to deal with stress, procrastination, and overwhelm. That's where we often fall short as leaders. We talk about time management, but don't equip ourselves for it. Provide tools like:

- *Stop Procrastinating Tomorrow* (Book by Mary Kelly)
- Free worksheets and productivity tools at www.ProductiveLeaders.com/StopProcrastinating
- My 5-Minute Mindset Plan, Change Management Plan, and other downloadable tools in the Leader's Resource Vault at www.ProductiveLeaders.com/2025-Success.

Productive People Need Predictable Leaders

Uncertainty is unproductive, but it's not unbeatable. As a leader, you can't control every disruption, but you can control the environment your people work in. And that's where the real leverage lies. Lead with clarity. Prioritize with purpose. Support with structure. When your team is overwhelmed, remind them that the right steps forward lead to progress.

Dr. Mary Kelly, a retired Navy Commander, is the CEO of Productive Leaders. Author of 20 books, she is in the National Speakers Association Hall of Fame. She is found at Mary@ProductiveLeaders.com.



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Everything Begins with an Idea

TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS

BY HARVEY MACKAY



In 1930, a Hungarian inventor named Laszlo Jozef Biro saw some children playing with balls in the water. He noticed that the balls left a trail of water as they rolled along the ground. He started thinking: Could one use a ball-shaped metal tip to write?

Biro took the idea to his brother Gyorgy, a chemist, and they worked together to create a new type of pen. They finally settled on the right design, which used a thin ink and a ball that rotated freely, which was easy to control and kept the ink from drying out.

They introduced their invention in 1931 and patented it in 1938. Then World War II erupted, and the two brothers emigrated to Argentina and founded a company in their garage.

In 1943, the pen was leased to a U.S. company for \$2 million. Then, in 1950, a man named Marcel Bich bought the rights. He took the “h” off his name to found the BIC Group, leading to the ever-popular pens most of us now call Bic.

Another fellow sat watching a great swinging lamp as a form of meditation. Then Galileo hit on the idea of a pendulum swinging as a means of accurately measuring the passage of time.

I’ve never had an idea quite like that, but some of my inspired thoughts came to me not while sitting at my desk, but in an unusual assortment of venues – watching a football game, lining up a putt, and looking out the window of an airplane. The few minutes away from your daily grind can be a tremendous source of inspiration. The trick is putting those ideas into action.

That’s why I like writing this column. If a reader can use just one idea or concept, it’s worthwhile. That’s the coach/teacher in me. I’m happy to share ideas and help people benefit from them. I think that’s a healthy attitude for everyone to have.

Everyone benefits from sharing ideas with others. We become better individuals, families, and businesses when we share ideas.

If I give you a dollar and you give me a dollar, we each have a dollar. But if I give you an idea and you give me an idea, we each have two ideas. In other words, a

candle loses nothing by lighting another candle.

But remember, ideas have very little value on their own. Ideas without action are worthless. It is when determined people implement them that they become influential, whether in daily life or business.

Acting on ideas in business is crucial for several reasons:

Innovation and competitive edge. Implementing new ideas can lead to innovative products, services, or processes that set your business apart. This can attract new customers, retain existing ones, and ultimately drive growth and profitability.

Adaptability and resilience. Businesses that act on ideas are more adaptable to market changes and can quickly respond to new trends or disruptions, facilitating long-term sustainability and success in a rapidly changing business environment.

Employee engagement and morale. Encouraging and acting on ideas from employees fosters a culture of inclusion and innovation. This boosts employee morale, engagement, and retention, as team members share in the company’s success.

Customer satisfaction. Implementing ideas that improve customer experience can lead to higher satisfaction and loyalty. Satisfied customers are more likely to become repeat buyers and recommend your business to others, driving growth through word-of-mouth.

Efficiency and cost savings. New ideas can streamline operations, reduce waste, and improve efficiency, leading to significant cost savings and better resource allocation, enhancing overall business performance.

How can you effectively act on ideas?

Create an environment where employees feel comfortable sharing their ideas without fear of criticism. This opens a diverse pool of ideas that can be refined and implemented.

Develop a process for evaluating the feasibility, potential impact, and



Harvey Mackay

alignment with business goals of each idea so that resources are allocated to the most promising ideas.

Create a clear implementation plan and establish metrics to monitor success. This helps ensure that the idea is executed effectively and its impact is measured accurately.

Gather feedback and analyze the results of implemented ideas to learn what works and what doesn’t. This continuous improvement cycle helps refine future ideas and strategies.

Ideas are the lifeblood of business innovation and growth. Acting on them with purpose and strategy can transform your business and lead you to sustained success.

Mackay’s Moral: *Don’t just entertain new ideas. Put them to work.*

Harvey Mackay is a seven-time, New York Times best-selling author of “Swim With The Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive”, and “Beware the Naked Man Who Offers You His Shirt.” Both books are among the top 15 inspirational business books of all time, according to the New York Times. In total, Harvey’s books have sold 10 million copies worldwide, been translated into 46 languages and have sold in 80 countries. Harvey is also a nationally syndicated columnist for United Feature Syndicate, whose weekly articles appear in nearly 100 newspapers across the country.



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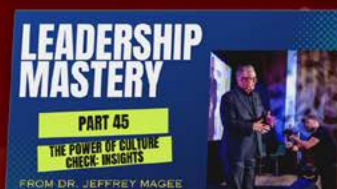
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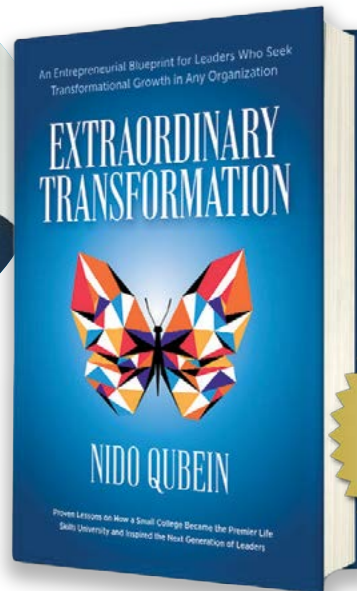
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Unleashing the Talent Within: EMBRACING THE BETA FACTOR™

BY DR. JEFFREY MAGEE, CMC/CSP/CBE/PDM

Reflecting on the timeless wisdom of blending the old with the new, a fundamental question: Is there a formula for nurturing the leaders of tomorrow, the high achievers, and those striving for relevance and resilience?

Drawing from my extensive experience as a trusted advisor and performance coach, I find myself diving into my earliest works, such as **BOUNCEBACK™**, **SELF-MARKETING** and **POWER CHARGED FOR LIFE™**. These foundational pieces written in 1991 continue to evolve and shape my approach, resonating throughout my **LEADERSHIP & SALES INSTITUTE Series/THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY OF EXCELLENCE™** (Dr. Jeffrey Magee | Leadership Mastery) and **SALES MASTERY: PERFORMANCE DRIVEN SELLING™** Bootcamps (Dr. Jeffrey Magee | Performance Driven Selling) today.

Among the key pillars highlighted is the **DOT Theory™**, expounded upon in his latest book, **CHANGEFORMATIONAL™** (Dr. Jeffrey Magee | Books). This theory serves as a mirror for confronting self-imposed limitations, unlocking hidden mental prowess, and being capable of forecasting impending Disruption Interruption Points (DIPs™) in your life.

Furthermore, the **BETA Factor™** emerges as a beacon of guidance. This simple yet potent formula emphasizes perpetual growth in four vital dimensions, ensuring enduring relevance, resilience, and a lasting impact. I'd challenge individuals to ponder: How can you embody the essence of the **BETA Factor™** in your endeavors?

In a world where the past informs the future and innovation revitalizes tradition, embracing these principles can catalyze personal and professional transformation. Discover the power within, embrace the **BETA Factor™**, and pave the way for a legacy of impact and excellence.

The BETA Factor™

B - BRAINS. How do you navigate the sea of rhetoric and fiction to uncover genuine facts and data in a world filled with information and noise? Cultivating your

brainpower involves continuous growth, fueled by curiosity, intellect, and expanding your knowledge base. The journey to intellectual evolution involves sourcing knowledge from diverse channels, critically thinking, and reasoning about your trajectory.

Continuous brain development is directly linked to your viability and life quality. Reflect on how you contribute to your knowledge base and leverage it for greatness. Identify your influencers from the past, present, and future, understanding their impact on your intellectual DNA. Critically ask and select who you mentor under and who you coach at any given time. Measure your growth and evolution by assessing the metrics of learning and progress. What intellectual property do you possess that benefits others and propels advancement?

While the brain is defined as an organ of soft nervous tissue, it symbolizes more than mere anatomy. It embodies aptitude, skill, knowledge, and the capacity to seek, apply, reason, and share information. Unleash your talent by nurturing your intellectual capabilities and embracing the journey of self-improvement.

Action Steps: Every month your mental stimulation consumption could include books from (Read/Listen/Experience)

1. A book a month on your profession
2. A biography/autobiography on super-achievers
3. An academic textbook on what you do if it were an advanced class at a college
4. Read the popular or trending book of the day
5. Re-read one of the classics from your book shelf of the past
6. Something unrelated to what consumes 90% of your life for fun and mental unexpected stimulation, and
7. Take in blogs, podcasts and magazines (hard print or electronic) like this publication that curate ever-green content on performance, achievement and success, from a broad section of achievers.

E - ENERGY. Energize Your Performance: Unleashing the Talent Within. What fuels



Dr. Jeffrey Magee

your peak performance? Every aspect plays a crucial role, from the foods you eat to the environment you thrive in. Are you more of an early bird or a night owl, and how does that impact your productivity? Understanding your body's needs and rhythms is key to maximizing your potential.

Energy isn't just about physical vitality; it's the drive, resilience, and sense of urgency that propel you forward. When you're in your element, like the Dalai Lama described as being "in the zone," your intensity shines through, setting a high standard for others.

Your dedication, work ethic, and perseverance define your journey towards excellence, akin to an Olympic athlete's unwavering commitment. Do your successes inspire and invigorate you, pushing you to new heights? Embrace the power of your wins as you tap into your limitless talent.

T - TALENT. When it comes to talent, do you truly bring your whole self to the table? Embracing and utilizing all aspects of yourself in your work is key. Recognize your innate gifts and the talents you've cultivated. Consider how you can share these talents with others, potentially turning them into a source of income.

While talent is often seen as a natural skill, the reality is that it is honed and perfected over time, blending artistry and precision. Operating from your strengths

In a world where the past informs the future and innovation revitalizes tradition, embracing the BETA Factor™ can catalyze personal and professional transformation.

Discover the power within, embrace the BETA Factor™, and pave the way for a legacy of impact and excellence.

may lead some to misinterpret your actions, possibly feeling threatened. Focus your energy on those who appreciate and support your talents rather than those who breed negativity. By doing so, you unlock the true potential within you.

Remember, true talent shines when you stay true to yourself and focus on growth and positivity.

A – ATTITUDE. A positive attitude can guide your actions and decisions, influencing how you express your passion, values, and presence. It shapes your belief systems, self-confidence, and self-worth, reflecting your inner self in every situation. Often unseen by others, your attitude drives your behaviors and impacts how you utilize your mental, physical, and creative abilities. Embracing a proactive mindset can unlock the potential within you, aligning your thoughts with the power of your **BRAIN**, **ENERGY**, and **TALENT**!

In my experience working with high achievers, I've identified common traits. Each individual embodies and embraces their BETA Factor™, which is evident in their actions. And you can BET that when aligned to your Goals and Values, your **ATTITUDE** will ensure success, you'll consistently operate from an empowered **BETA Factor™**.

The notion of "what's old is new and what's new is old" encapsulates a profound truth.

Dr. Jeffrey Magee, CSP/CBE/CMC/PDM

C-Suite and Military General clients come to Dr. Jeffrey Magee for ENTERPRISE-WIDE Talent Development & Human Capital succession architecture. Today's need to collapse down years/months/weeks into days is critical! Sustainable Solutions NOW. Jeffrey Magee, PhD/CBE/CMC/CSP/PDM, is the "Thought Leaders Leader." Jeffrey is the publisher and editor-in-chief of www.ProfessionalPerformanceMagazine.com, editor of the LEADERSHIP MASTERY and SALES MASTERY blogs, a former nationally syndicated Radio Talk Show Host, as well as a publisher author of 31 books, translated into 21-languages, to include 4-Best Sellers (YOUR TRAJECTORY CODE/WILEY)) and four graduate management text books (THE MANAGERIAL-LEADERSHIP BIBLE/PEARSON EDUCATION). He is a leadership columnist and a highly sought-after global professional speaker on performance psychology. The recipient of the United States Junior Chamber's TEN OUTSTANDING YOUNG AMERICANS (TOYA) Award, and the United States National GUARD's Total Team VICTORY Medal for civilian contribution to the Armed Services. He can be reached at Jeffrey@JeffreyMagee.com / www.JeffreyMagee.com

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Lift As You Climb:

A TACTICAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGY FOR HIGH PERFORMERS

BY ELIZABETH MCCORMICK, CSP



Elizabeth McCormick, CSP

In the military aviation world, especially in the cockpit of a Black Hawk helicopter, there's a clear principle that governs every mission: you don't fly alone.

Even if you're in the pilot's seat, the mission doesn't succeed without your co-pilot, your crew chiefs, and the extensive team on the ground who supports your flight. Everyone plays a role, and each role matters.

That's why one of the most valuable leadership lessons I ever learned in uniform; one I now teach executives, entrepreneurs, and C-suite leaders, is this: **Lift As You Climb**

It's more than a motivational phrase. It's a tactical leadership strategy for sustained success. It's the understanding that your legacy isn't measured by your altitude, it's measured by the number of people who fly with you.

Lessons from the Cockpit: Lifting Others is a Mission-Critical Strategy

When I became one of the first 100 women to fly the Black Hawk in the U.S. Army, there were no mentors waiting to show me the ropes. I navigated that world mostly alone, in a high-stakes, high-pressure, and male-dominated environment.

But once I earned my place in that cockpit, I decided: **I wasn't going to be the last.**

I chose to share what I had learned. I mentored other women who eventually

came through after me. I supported my flight crews, led from the front, and ensured others had what they needed to succeed, even if that meant pushing them ahead of me.

In aviation terms, lifting as you climb isn't optional; it's embedded in the mission.

In business leadership? It's the same. Yet too often, we ignore this fundamental principle in meetings and boardrooms.

Why Lifting Works: The Performance Payoff

When high achievers operate with this mindset of lifting others, three high-performance outcomes emerge:

1. Force Multiplication: In the military, a "force multiplier" significantly increases a unit's effectiveness without needing more people or resources. Great leaders are force multipliers. When you invest in the growth and performance of others, mentoring, coaching, or developing their potential, you exponentially expand your reach, creating a culture of excellence.

2. Resilient Succession Planning: If you're the only one who can do what you do, you're a bottleneck. If you lift others as you climb, you're building depth and bench strength. Whether you're scaling a company or stabilizing a leadership team, lifting others isn't just generous, it's strategic insurance against disruption.

3. Reputation Equity: People remember who helped them rise. In my military career, I learned that credibility is earned by your actions under pressure and your impact on people. Your ability to elevate others becomes part of your reputation equity. And in the business world, reputation equity translates into trust, loyalty, referrals, and long-term influence.

The 3 Tactical ABCs of "Lift as You Climb"

If you're looking for a high-performance approach to lifting others while accelerating your leadership success, here are three tactical ABCs you can apply immediately:

A - Amplify Potential Publicly: Don't

just coach behind closed doors. Speak someone's name in a meeting when they aren't there. Recommend a team member for a big opportunity. Share the spotlight. It's amazing how far someone can go when they know you believe in them publicly.

B - Build Decision-Capable Leaders: Teach your people to think, not just to do. In the cockpit, you train your crew to make decisions without micromanagement. It's not delegation — it's development. Leaders who lift teach others how to think critically, manage risk, and act with clarity.

C - Create a Culture of Pay-It-Forward: Set the expectation that lifting others is part of your leadership DNA. Encourage those you mentor to mentor others. When your team lifts each other, performance, morale, and retention all climb.

Final Approach: Your Leadership Altitude Matters and Your Impact Matters More

The view from the top of your industry, company, or career is always clearer when others are climbing alongside you. And when the inevitable turbulence hits, and it will, you'll be grateful for the strong team, deep loyalty, and shared purpose you've built by lifting others.

Just like aircraft can't fly without fuel, **you can't lead at your highest level without the people who fuel your mission's momentum.**

The next time you're celebrating a big win or reaching a new milestone, ask yourself:

- *Who did I lift on the way up?*
- *Who am I mentoring to climb even higher?*

Because when you **Lift As You Climb**, your leadership won't just be impressive — it'll be unforgettable.

Elizabeth McCormick, CSP, is a former U.S. Army Black Hawk Helicopter Pilot turned top-rated motivational leadership speaker. She helps leaders, teams, and organizations navigate turbulence and accelerate performance with tactical strategies from the cockpit to the workplace. Learn more at www.YourInspirationalSpeaker.com

The Importance of Reflection

ENRICH YOUR PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL LIFE

BY LTC OAKLAND MCCULLOCH



LTC Oakland McCulloch

I have been a leader for over 40 years in various professions, situations, and daily life with my family. I have led men and women in combat, peacekeeping, disaster relief operations, and in the boardroom. From those years of experience, I have learned how powerful and important reflection is in every aspect of our lives.

People often say, "I learned a lot from that experience." I always reply with the same answer. I doubt it. The problem with experiences is that they are full of emotions, and emotions always get in the way of learning. The only way to truly learn from an experience is to take a step back, remove the emotion from it, and reflect on what occurred during that experience.

There are a few ground rules when it comes to reflection, and without them, reflection is a waste of time. First, when you (personally or as a team) go through the reflection process, you must be BRUTALLY HONEST. Without honesty, you will miss the true lessons to be learned, and therefore, you are wasting your time. Second, there can be no thin skins. The two problems with people with a thin skin are that they will not be open and honest about what they did and the mistakes they made, and when someone brings a mistake they made to everyone's attention, they will become defensive, which brings emotions back into the equation. Lastly, everyone involved must remember that the purpose of reflecting

on an experience is not to assign blame; it is to figure out how to get better. Therefore, we want people to talk about their mistakes and how they decided to do what they did in that situation.

A useful framework for reflection involves asking three straightforward questions:

1. What was supposed to be done?
2. What was done?
3. How can it be improved next time?

Remember, success doesn't mean there is no room for improvement next time. There is always room for improvement. These are very simple questions, but very powerful when answered with honesty and without emotions. Then go around the room and let people answer the questions. Make sure to capture the issues, concerns, problems, mistakes, and ideas or solutions for improvement next time on a whiteboard or butcher block paper so everyone can see it.

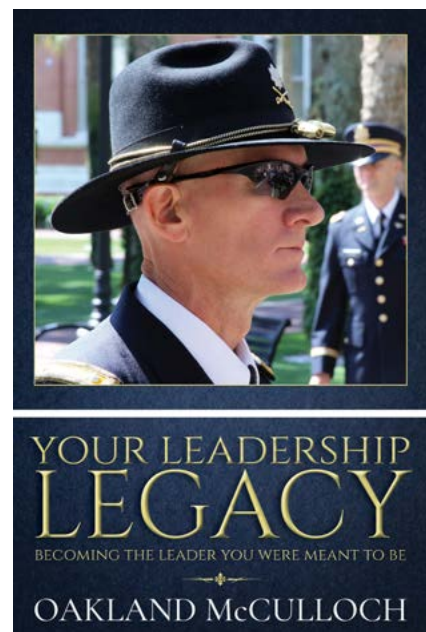
If you use this simple framework, you and/or your team will get to the root causes of mistakes, problems, or issues that caused the event to be less successful than it should have been. In my experience with reflection events, some things will be very obvious to all or many who participate in the reflection event and will be brought up immediately, but some will be a surprise to everyone involved and will only be discovered through talking through the experience.

I encourage people to implement the process of reflecting in as many ways as possible. Make sure there is ample time set aside for the reflection session. I would encourage you to have a session after every event your organization runs or participates in. At a bare minimum, you and your team should reflect on every major event or decision in your organization. If you implement these reflection sessions into your organization, I guarantee you will see an instant improvement in your organization.

I argue that, as important as doing reflection in professional life is, reflection in your personal life is just as important. This is what will allow you to grow as a leader and as a person every day. I have several daily routines I do religiously, no

matter where I am. I start my day the same way: listen to the daily mass, read a few chapters of the Bible, and say my daily prayers. I also end my day the same way every day; I read something (article, blog, or chapter in the book I am reading), I write in my daily journal, and the very last thing I do every night is do a daily reflection on what I did that day. The goal of personal reflection should be to figure out where your shortfalls were today and how you can do better tomorrow. This is how we grow as a person and are just a little better tomorrow than we were today. If you add daily personal reflection to your routine, I promise it will change your life.

Retired Lieutenant Colonel Oakland McCulloch is an internationally recognized keynote speaker and the author of the 2021 release, *Your Leadership Legacy: Becoming the Leader You Were Meant to Be*. His leadership talk and book are based on his 40-plus years of leadership experience (23 years as a combat arms officer in the United States Army) in combat, peacekeeping operations, disaster relief operations, and the boardroom. Oak highlights principles that will benefit today's leaders and inspire the leaders of tomorrow, in any profession and at any level of leadership. He will help you become the leader you were meant to be – a Servant Leader.



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10 Tips to be a Better Networker

IT'S ALL ABOUT BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

BY DR. IVAN MISNER

Let's face it, networking can be daunting. It's like speed dating for business, but instead of finding a soulmate, you're trying to find clients, partners, referrals, and mentors. It's like going to the gym - you know you should do it, but it can be hard to get started.

But fear not, fellow networkers! Here are 10 techniques to help you navigate the world of business networking:

1. Be yourself, unless you're a serial criminal. Then maybe don't be yourself. But for the rest of us, authenticity is key. People can smell a fake a mile away, so don't try to be someone you're not. Unless you're Batman. Being Batman is always cool.

2. Build genuine relationships. This is not a numbers game. It's not about how many business cards you can collect; it's about the connections you make. So take the time to get to know people and find common ground. And if you both like cats, that's even better! By taking the time to truly get to know the people you meet, you will be more likely to build a lasting connection.

3. Follow up, but don't be a stalker. You don't want to be that person who sends 20 emails and calls 10 times in one day. That's creepy. But do make an effort to keep in touch with your contacts. Following up with your contacts after meeting them is crucial, whether through a phone call, email, or LinkedIn message. This will help you to keep the conversation going and continue to build your relationship. Maybe send a funny meme every now and then. Who doesn't love a good meme?

4. Be of service, but don't be a doormat. You want to help people, but you also want to ensure you're not taken advantage of. This is essential when you're serving others. Remember, being of service doesn't mean sacrificing your well-being or allowing others to disrespect you or push you to do something you don't want to do. So, offer your expertise and resources, but set boundaries. And if someone tries to sell you a timeshare, run. Just run.

5. Attend networking events, but don't be a wallflower. It can be tempting to

hide in a corner with a plate of appetizers, but that won't get you anywhere. So put on your best smile, grab a drink, and start mingling. And if someone spills their drink on you, don't worry, it's just liquid confidence. Attending networking events is a great way to meet new people and make connections.

6. Leverage social media, but don't be a troll. Social media can be a great way to connect with people, but can also be a minefield of trolls. So, use it wisely. Post helpful content, engage with others, and don't get into Twitter fights. Trust me, it's not worth it. Platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook provide opportunities to connect with other professionals, share your expertise, and learn from others. By building your online presence, you can expand your network and increase your visibility.

7. Join networking groups, but don't join a social club unless you need more friends (in which case, you might consider buying a dog). You want to ensure you're joining groups that align with your values and goals. You also want to focus on real networking, not just hanging out in a coffee klatch. These groups provide opportunities to meet other professionals and access to valuable resources. Joining networking groups like a Chamber of Commerce or BNI can provide a structure and focus that allows entrepreneurs to be more effective in their networking efforts.

8. Offer value, but don't offer your kidney. Okay, that might be another extreme example, but you want to ensure you're offering something valuable without giving away the farm. Maybe it's a helpful tool or a connection to someone in your network. And if someone asks for your kidney, maybe it's time to leave that networking event.

9. Utilize referrals, but don't be a name-dropper. Referrals can be a great way to expand your network, but don't go around dropping names like they're hot potatoes. Respect your contacts' privacy and only make introductions when it makes sense. And if someone drops a name you don't recognize, smile and nod. It's okay, you can Google them later.



Dr. Ivan Misner

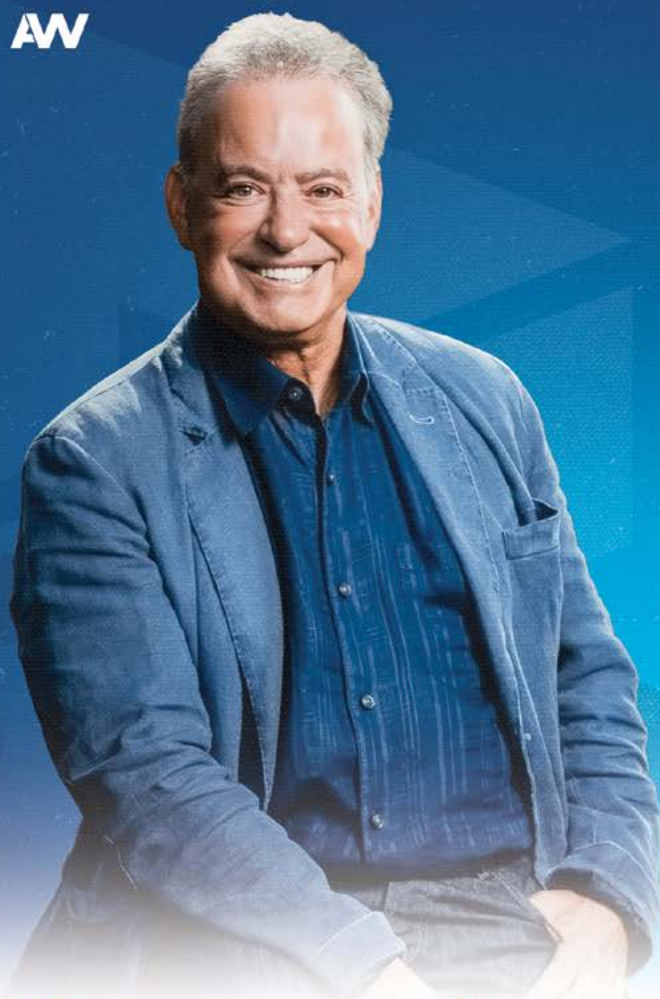
10. Attend industry events, but don't be a snob. Attending events focused on your industry or interests is great, as they allow you to network with like-minded individuals and learn from experts in your field. Niche events can also give you insights into new trends and technologies you might not have otherwise known.

It's important to network with an open mind. Don't dismiss people who may not have the same level of expertise or experience as you. Instead, approach conversations with a willingness to learn from others and share your knowledge and insights.

This process is really about building relationships and finding ways to help others, not just promoting yourself. So be genuine, listen actively, and make meaningful connections with the people you meet. You never know where these relationships might lead in the future.

Networking doesn't have to be a chore. You can network with humor and style by building genuine relationships, being authentic, following up, being of service, attending networking events, leveraging social media, and joining associations and networking groups. Remember to keep it real, be helpful, and have a good time. After all, a smile is one of the best networking tools.

Called the "father of modern networking" by CNN, Dr. Ivan Misner is a *New York Times* bestselling author. He is also the Founder of BNI (www.bni.com), the world's largest business networking organization. His latest book, *Who's in Your Room 2nd Edition*, is about the secret to creating your best life.

AW

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-Marshall Goldsmith

Noah Kagan included him in a five-person video of "retired, 80-year-old millionaires" though Alan is not 80 (close) and not retired (not nearly close).

Alan advises the best globally, because all of us can always get better.

If you're looking to accelerate your business and/or change your life, give him a call. Despite all of his publishing, no one ever learned to ski by reading a book. And you want that coach who's done it, and is skiing a few yards ahead of you demonstrating, not sitting in the chalet sipping brandy and wishing you "good luck."

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- **Christian Retel** | **EVP of Enterprise Growth - Apex Revenue.**

"I graciously received thanks from everyone in Atlanta on your presentation. It was far beyond even my high expectations. My grandmother, who never had indoor plumbing or electric, taught me the value of faith. My college debate coach taught me how to listen and persuade. Alan, over the past two decades you have taught me how to think, I will be forever grateful."

- **Barry Banther CMC, CSP, CPAE** | **Banther Consulting Corporation**

"I'm writing to say that when I heard your interview with Noah Kagan on Saturday, I was blown away and immediately stopped hiking and began taking notes. I Googled you on the way home (at red stoplights, I'm not an idiot), bought one of your books when I got home and have devoured every word. I'm a NY Times bestselling author turned publisher who's been studying business and marketing for years but have found what I've learned from you (in just a few hours)

more useful than what I've learned over the past few years. So thank you, sincerely, for that."

- **Anna David** | **annadavid.com**

If you're looking to accelerate your business and/or change your life, contact Alan at ALANWEISS.COM or alan@summitconsulting.com

Why Your Change Strategies Are Failing

IT'S TIME FOR A SHIFT IN HOW WE THINK ABOUT CHANGE

BY MERIDITH ELLIOTT POWELL

The biggest challenge I see organizations struggling with today is hands down – change. Teams are getting crushed by it, leaders can't keep up with it, and employees are completely overwhelmed by it.

For leaders today, change is their biggest priority and obstacle to success. Leaders struggle to manage, drive, and get their teams to buy into it. Change is critical to success in today's marketplace. Yet we're failing at it and failing miserably.

The research and statistics are alarming:

- 70% of change initiatives fail
- 4 out of 5 employees are burned out
- 76% of leaders don't feel equipped to manage change
- 52% of employees quit due to poorly managed change initiatives
- 75% of organizations don't provide adequate training for change initiatives

As a leader, you put a record amount of time, energy, and resources into managing change, but the results show your efforts are not working.

Now you have a choice to make – you can continue to use the same strategies you have been using and continue to get the same lackluster results. OR you can continue to read this article and learn a new, bold, innovative strategy that will shift how you and your team think, feel, and act about change and uncertainty.

A New Approach To Managing Change

The one thing you know about change, the one thing you can count on, is that more change is coming. You should also know that the change is coming faster than it used to.

So, if you know change is coming, why don't you plan for change? In other words, why don't you ASK FOR CHANGE? Use the time that you have now to predict, condition for, and take action around the changes you know are coming.

What does it mean to ASK FOR CHANGE? It means, rather than waiting for disruption to happen to you, you



Meridith Elliott Powell

actively seek it out. You start predicting and preparing for change, moving from managing change to driving it. You begin to control change rather than allowing change to control you.

Pretty empowering, right? You move from being a victim of change to the boss of change. Let's do this!

How To Get Your Team on Board with Change

In today's marketplace, your team needs a new kind of leader, one who is committed to getting them ready for the future. Your team needs a leader with the skills to help them move past the overwhelm, through the fear, and a leader who can help them Ask for Change!

3 Steps to Ask for Change

1. Set the Vision – Before you ever ask your team to think about what needs to change, ensure they have a clear vision of how great change will be. Most people resist change because they fear what the change will be – the unknown. If you paint a picture, articulate a vision, and show your team that just on the other side of change is a result they can buy into, your

team will be excited to Ask for Change.

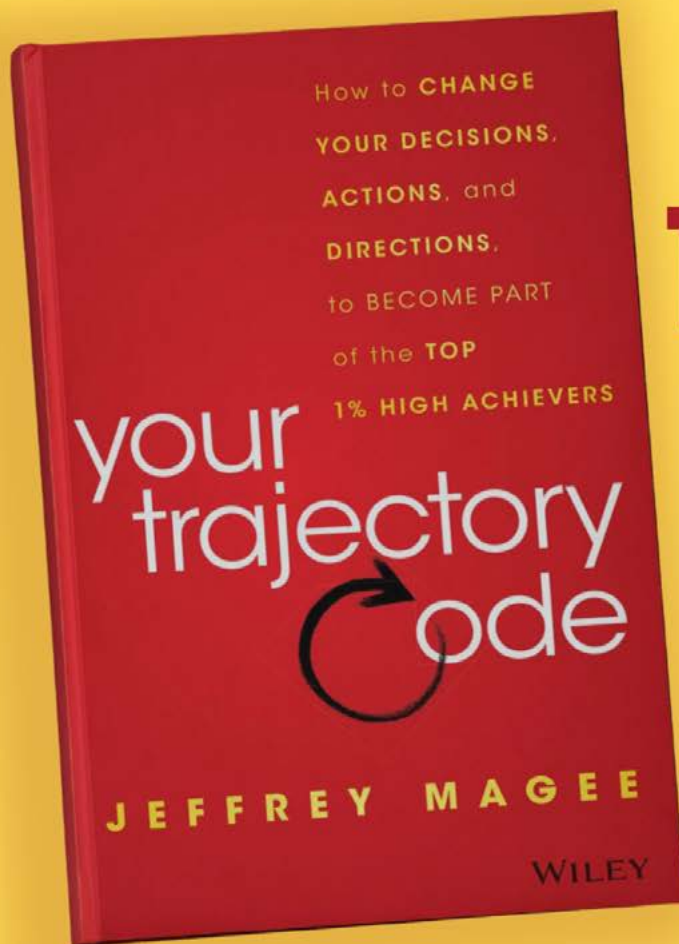
2. Brainstorm Change – Asking for change means thinking about change before you have to think about change. As we said before, change is coming, and you can wait for it or use the time you have now to prepare for it. If you want to get your team on board with change, you need to get them asking for change. Have them brainstorm the changes they see coming in your industry, with your customers, competition, and technology. Getting them talking about change and predicting change consistently makes them comfortable with the idea of change. The more comfortable they are, the more they will Ask for Change.

3. Take Action – Last but not least, you must help your team take action. Take action around the changes they see coming, and take that action now. Action will move your team into feeling they're in control, like they are deciding the impact of change rather than letting change determine their fate. And that shift will change everything in getting your change initiatives implemented effectively.

As leaders, it's time for a shift in how we think about change, lead change, and react to change. It's time to be the leader your team needs and to start asking for change.

Sales strategist, leadership expert, Certified Speaking Professional, and award-winning author, Meridith Elliott Powell wants today's businesses to stop viewing uncertainty as something that prevents them from being successful. This is why her virtual programs, leadership coaching, online courses, and keynote presentations leverage her 9 step formula for **making uncertainty your company's strategic advantage™**.





YOUR TRAJECTORY CODE

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Attracting Clientele

10 TESTED AND PROVEN TECHNIQUES

BY DR. NIDO QUBEIN

How can you create awareness in the minds of the people you want to attract as clients? It's a big challenge, but here are ten tested and proven techniques to help you do it.

1. Research the market for your expertise. Whether you are just starting out, have very few clients, or have been in your profession for many years, it pays to study your markets. Find out as much as you can about your prospective clients: Who and where they are, what they need, what they want, what they fear, how they are now meeting the needs you can fill, who they buy similar services from, etc. Find out everything you can about the people you'll be trying to reach. The key to your success is not what you know about your business, but what you know about your clients.

2. Study your competitors. Find out how the most successful professionals in your area of expertise sell their markets. You might not want to use the same approaches they use, but it helps to know what works and doesn't work for them. You also need to know what you will have to do to outsell them.

3. Analyze what marketing vehicles are most effective for reaching your prospective clients. For example, do they respond positively to direct mail? What types of direct mail appeal most to them? How obtainable are good mailing lists for them? What other vehicles are effective in reaching them? Can you reach them through ads? Through seminars? Through associations? Or will you have to work through referrals? Find out the top sources from which they buy the kinds of expert services and products you offer.

4. Create an integrated marketing strategy. An integrated marketing strategy is just what the name implies. It's a complete system of tools and tactics that work together for a synergistic effect. Instead of shooting from the hip, only when you need new business, set a consistent plan for promoting, prospecting, and selling your services in motion. The more consistent it is, the higher return you will get from your investment.

5. Develop effective positioning tools and strategies. These are the techniques

you use to establish and maintain your identity as an expert in your field.

6. Put out the word through promotion. Use direct promotion tools and tactics like direct mail, email, social media, telemarketing, sales calls, AI or even a sales force. Use indirect or subliminal advertising such as carefully designed letterheads, invoices, and other routine communications tools; institutional advertising; public speeches; and articles you write for appropriate magazines. Use visibility enhancers. People forget who you are and what you do unless you constantly remind them through visibility enhancers like media, interviews, personal appearances, and advertising.

7. Make the most of personal contacts. An integrated marketing system includes clear strategies for both direct and indirect personal contacts with clients and prospects. It may mean setting a goal of calling one or more clients every day about some item of mutual interest. For example, I often clip articles I think might interest my clients and mail them with a note saying, "I thought you might be interested in this."

8. Use vertical, as well as horizontal approaches to marketing. One of the most effective, but most overlooked, tactics for marketing your products and services is leaving behind a trail of tangibles, like information packets, brochures, etc.

9. Build effective response mechanisms into all your marketing systems. Provide mechanisms that make it simple, easy, convenient, painless, and non-threatening for any prospective client to contact you. That may include such vehicles as toll-free telephones, self-addressed postage-paid response cards, yellow page listings in all appropriate categories, convenient locations, and any vehicle that makes you accessible to direct contact by clients.

10. Maintain an effective prospecting system. The problem with most professionals is that they let many of their brightest prospects slip right through their fingers because they fail to take an organized approach to prospecting. That's the best way I know of to waste marketing dollars and other resources.



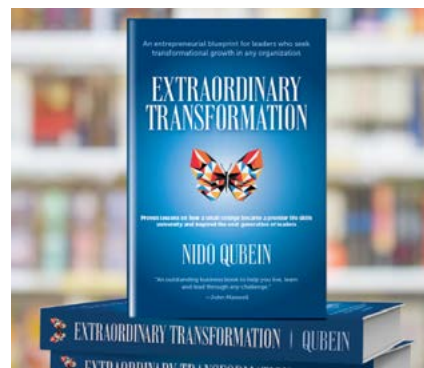
Let me urge you to set up a simple but effective system for prospecting and following up with prospective clients.

Think of marketing as persuading prospects to purchase your products or services at a profit. Remember, your marketing system must be client-centered, coordinated as an integrated strategy, and consistently executed to be effective.

Nido Qubein is an international speaker and author on sales, communication and leadership. In 2005, he accepted the presidency of High Point University. Dr. Qubein is the recipient of numerous awards and is chairman of Great Harvest Bread Company with 220 stores in 43 states. Visit NidoQubein.com

Read Extraordinary Transformation by Nido Qubein

You'll enjoy reading how Nido Qubein left a prosperous business career and returned to lead his alma mater at a much-needed time in its history. The author demonstrates his respect for the academy as he leads his team to nurture a God, family, and country university focused on providing the perfect balance between intellectual discovery and practical life skills.



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Unlocking Your Potential: THE POWER OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY GREG S. REID



Greg S. Reid

In a world overflowing with information and opportunity, personal development stands as a beacon guiding us toward our true potential. It's not merely about acquiring knowledge; it's about transforming that knowledge into action and surrounding ourselves with the right influences. Like a ship navigating turbulent waters, your self-improvement journey requires a clear destination and a supportive crew.

The Imperative of Action

Every great achievement begins with a single decision—a decision to take action. The difference between those who dream and those who achieve lies in their willingness to step outside their comfort zones and embrace the unknown. Think about it: how often have you felt a spark of inspiration only to let it fizzle out because of hesitation or doubt? The key to personal development is not just in setting goals but in the relentless pursuit of those goals through consistent action.

Action is the bridge that connects intention to achievement. It's the fuel that propels us forward, turning our visions into reality. But here's the catch: action is not merely about doing more; it's about doing the right things. This is where clarity of purpose comes into play. When you know what you want to achieve, you can direct your efforts where they matter most. Every small step taken in alignment with your goals compounds over time, leading to significant transformation.

The Importance of Alignment

However, action alone is not enough. The journey of personal development is not a solitary endeavor. The people you surround yourself with can either be your greatest allies or your biggest obstacles. Aligning with the right individuals is crucial. Seek out those who inspire you, challenge you, and hold you accountable. These are the people who will uplift your spirit and encourage you to push through obstacles.

Imagine a garden: it flourishes because of the seeds planted and the nurturing environment. Similarly, your growth is nourished by the energy of those around you. When you surround yourself with positive influences—mentors, peers, and friends who share your vision—you create a powerful network that propels you forward. Their insights can spark new ideas, their encouragement can reignite your passion, and their experiences can guide you through challenges.

Taking Inspired Action

So, how do you begin? Start by setting clear, actionable goals. Break them into manageable steps, and commit to taking at least one step daily. This could be reading a book that inspires you, attending a workshop, or simply reaching out to a mentor for advice. Even the smallest action can create momentum.

Next, evaluate your circle. Are the people you spend time with aligned with your aspirations? If not, it may be time to seek out new connections. Attend networking events, join groups that resonate with your interests, or engage in online communities. The right people will not just help you grow; they will challenge you to elevate your thinking and broaden your horizons.

Embrace the Journey

Personal development is not a destination but a lifelong journey. Embrace the ups and downs, the successes and failures, as they all contribute to your growth. Remember, every setback is

merely a setup for a comeback. When you commit to taking action and aligning with the right people, you unlock the door to infinite possibilities.

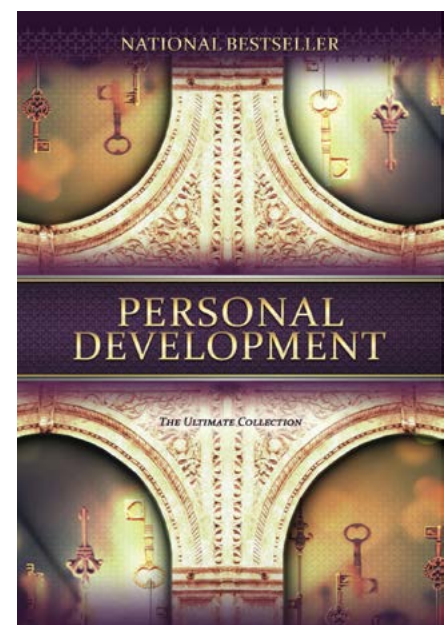
In the words of Greg S. Reid, "Success leaves clues." Pay attention to those who have walked the path before you, learn from their experiences, and apply those lessons to your journey. With clarity, commitment, and the proper support, you can turn your dreams into reality.

So, take that first step today. Your future self will thank you for it. The power of personal development is within your grasp—seize it! **"All I want in life is to give my life my all."**

Dr. Greg S. Reid is an American author, speaker, and filmmaker. For over 25 years, Greg has inspired millions of people to take personal responsibility to step into the potential of their greatness and, as such, his life of contribution has been recognized by government leaders, a foreign Princess, as well as luminaries in education, business, and industry.

Mr. Reid has been published in over 150 books, including 38 bestsellers in 45 languages. Titles such as *Stickability: The Power of Perseverance*; *The Millionaire Mentor*, and *Three Feet from Gold: Turn Your Obstacles into Opportunities* have inspired countless readers to understand that the most valuable lessons we learn are also the easiest ones to apply.

Visit his website at: www.GregReid.com



How to Lead Disruptively (and Why You Should)

BE PROACTIVE IN DRIVING CHANGE

BY MARK SANBORN

Disruption, by its nature, is at best uncomfortable and at worst devastating. It interferes with routines, challenges assumptions, and almost always requires extra effort. However, when it comes to leadership, disruption can be not only good but essential for success. Disruptive leaders challenge the status quo, foster growth, and drive innovation within their teams and organizations. They don't just accept change—they create it. Today, disruption isn't something to fear; it's something to exploit. Here's why embracing disruption in leadership can unlock extraordinary potential.

Why Disruptive Leadership Matters

Disruptive leadership goes beyond just causing change for its own sake. It's about questioning the norm, driving innovation, and encouraging continuous improvement. The best leaders don't wait for disruption from external forces; they create it within their organizations to stay ahead of the curve. By unsettling complacency and challenging mediocrity, disruptive leaders keep their teams sharp and focused on what's next, ensuring they're not left behind by competitors or industry changes.

What Should You Disrupt? As a leader, your role is to identify and disrupt what's holding your team or organization back from reaching its full potential. This doesn't mean creating chaos for the sake of it, but strategically shaking things up in areas that need attention.

Disrupting Individual Behaviors

To foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement, it's crucial to disrupt outdated mindsets or behaviors within your team. Here are some key areas to focus on:

Ill-Informed Opinions and Beliefs: Challenge assumptions and encourage critical thinking. The most innovative teams are made up of people who question what they know and seek new knowledge.

Comfort Leading to Complacency: In a rapidly changing world, comfort is the enemy of progress. Encourage your team

to step outside their comfort zones and embrace the discomfort that comes with growth.

Unwillingness to Change: Disrupt resistance to change by fostering an adaptive mindset and helping your team see the value of evolving with new trends.

Resistance to Learning: In the age of continuous learning, a refusal to grow is a liability. Instill a culture of curiosity and self-improvement.

Incorrect Focus: Help your team focus on what truly matters by identifying distractions and redirecting attention to high-priority initiatives.

Disrupting Your Organization

On a broader scale, leadership disruption must extend to the organization itself. Here are a few areas to consider:

Products, Services, and Experiences: Constantly evaluate your offerings. Under Steve Jobs, Apple didn't just improve its products; it revolutionized user experiences, setting new standards for design, usability, and functionality.

Value Proposition: Regularly reassess your company's value proposition. What differentiates you from competitors, and how can you make your offering even more compelling?

Unethical Practices: Uphold integrity at all costs. Disrupting unethical behavior is essential for maintaining long-term success and reputation.

Unacceptable Service Levels: Disrupt customer service complacency by adopting a customer-centric mindset. Companies like Zappos have made exceptional customer service a cornerstone of their brand, consistently exceeding expectations.

Ridiculous Rules and Policies: Sometimes, the best way to improve a workplace is to disrupt unnecessary rules that hinder creativity and productivity. Embrace flexibility where possible.

How to Be a Disruptive Leader

You don't need a formal title to disrupt. Here are eight ways you can lead positive disruption, whether or not you're in a formal leadership role:

Ask "What If?" Questions: In meetings, encourage your team to think outside the box. Challenge assumptions with questions that push boundaries and stimulate creative thinking.

Avoid Ideacide: Don't dismiss new ideas too quickly. Let them marinate, and give them a chance to be fully explored before making judgments.

Recognize and Encourage Disruptive Thinking: Celebrate those who bring new ideas to the table. Give them the resources and support to implement their ideas.

Be Assertive Yet Diplomatic: Disrupting the status quo requires effort. Be assertive in your approach, but always be respectful and professional.

Lead by Example: Show your team what disruption looks like in practice. Be the change you wish to see in others.

Coach Others: Help team members improve and implement their ideas. Provide guidance on how they can lead positive change.

Mentor Future Disruptors: Invest in others who want to make a difference. Help them build the confidence and skills to be agents of change.

The Future Belongs to the Disruptors

Disruptive leadership isn't about causing chaos for the sake of it; it's about being proactive in driving change that leads to growth and innovation. Whether you're disrupting outdated habits, rethinking organizational strategies, or introducing bold new ideas, your leadership can shape the future. Embrace disruption—it's not just the key to survival; it's the pathway to extraordinary success.

Mark Sanborn is an award-winning speaker and advisor to leaders. He is the Leadership Expert in Residence at [High Point University](https://www.highpoint.edu/), the Premier Life Skills University, which challenges students to "choose to be extraordinary." For more information about his work or to book him for a speech, visit www.marksanborn.com.





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Five Leadership Lessons from Muhammad Ali

A MASTERCLASS IN COURAGE, CONVICTION, AND CHARACTER

BY CH (COL) KHALLID M. SHABAZZ (USA)

At 24 years old, I met Muhammad Ali by way of a VHS video of a boxer named Muhammad Ali who had just beaten George Foreman, then the heavyweight champion of the world. I was drawn to his confidence, belief in himself, and ability to believe in himself when it seemed he had no chance to beat this seemingly unbeatable figure!

As I was flying back from DC, now 56, I found myself drawn to him again by watching his funeral. I had seen thousands of clips before, but this time it felt different. Maybe it was the quiet of flying while everyone else was asleep, but watching his life honored so publicly made me pause and reflect on how deeply he has shaped my understanding of leadership.

Muhammad Ali wasn't just a boxer. He was a revolutionary whose strength extended far beyond the ring. His life was a masterclass in courage, conviction, and character. And in watching his farewell, I realized how much I've learned from him, not just as a fan, but as someone striving to lead with passion and purpose.

1. Stand for Something Bigger Than Yourself. In 1967, Ali refused induction into the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War, citing his religious beliefs and opposition to the war. It cost him dearly at the time—his heavyweight title, his boxing license, and years of his prime athletic career. But he didn't flinch.

Ali once said, "I know where I'm going and I know the truth, and I don't have to be what you want me to be." That kind of clarity is rare. It's also the hallmark of true leadership.

Leaders today face different battles, but the core challenge remains the same: Will you trade integrity for convenience, or will you risk everything to stay true to your values?

2. Believe in Yourself—Loudly and Without Apology. Ali declared he was "The Greatest" before the world had fully caught up with his talent. For many, that bravado was shocking—even off-putting. But beneath the surface was a man who understood that confidence could be contagious. His self-belief wasn't just for show; it was a weapon in his arsenal,

something he wielded against doubt, discrimination, and defeat.

For leaders, self-confidence isn't optional—it's essential. If you don't believe in your vision, why should anyone else?

3. Use Your Platform for Purpose. Ali didn't just fight opponents—he fought systems. He used interviews, press conferences, and even poems to challenge racism, inequality, and injustice. His courage turned him into more than an athlete; he became a global symbol of resistance and dignity.

Leadership isn't about the spotlight—it's about what you do once you're in it. Are you using your platform to elevate others? Are you speaking up when it counts? Ali reminds us that influence comes with responsibility.

4. Show Courage When It Costs You Something. Leadership without risk isn't leadership at all. Ali taught us that courage isn't about avoiding fear but facing it head-on.

He knew what was at stake when he spoke out. He knew the backlash, the loss, the isolation. And yet, he didn't back down. That's the kind of bravery leaders need today—not the type that seeks applause, but the kind that does what's right when no one is cheering.

Ali once said, "He who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life." That quote belongs on every leader's desk.

5. Be Unapologetically Yourself. Throughout his life, Ali remained true to his identity—his faith, values, and voice. Whether speaking in rhyme or standing before the Supreme Court, he never diluted who he was for comfort or acceptance.

Authenticity is a leadership superpower. People don't follow perfection—they follow sincerity. Ali chose to be radically himself in a world that often rewards conformity. That boldness didn't just make him beloved—it made him unforgettable.

A Final Reflection

As the motorcade of Ali's funeral rolled through Louisville and thousands lined the streets to say goodbye, I couldn't help but think this is what legacy looks



like. Not just championships or trophies, but a life that left people better, stronger, and more courageous. Muhammad Ali taught me that leadership isn't about power or position. It's about passion and purpose. It's about living your values so boldly that they outlive you. And most of all, it's about showing up—day after day, fight after fight—with the heart to believe in something bigger than yourself.

The world called him "The Greatest." But to me, he'll always be one of the greatest teachers of what it truly means to lead.

Khallid M. Shabazz is a seasoned U.S. Army officer, currently serving as the USARPAC Command Chaplain. His distinguished career includes working at the highest levels of military leadership while providing guidance, mentorship, and support to service members and their families.

In addition to his military service, Khallid has dedicated over 20 years to educating military adult learners, including active-duty soldiers, spouses, and Department of Defense civilians. He holds a Ph.D. from Trident University and has extensive experience as an instructor, having served as an adjunct faculty member at Trident University, American Allied University, and Claremont Lincoln University for over a decade.

A competent, consistent, and compassionate self-starter, Khallid is committed to fostering success for his students and institutions. His dedication to excellence and ability to take on new challenges make him a valuable asset in any educational setting.

Recharging Your Batteries:

A STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP MOVE

BY MARILYN SHERMAN

In today's fast-paced, high-demand world, leadership is often associated with relentless drive, tireless output, and constant availability. But the truth is, the most impactful and visionary leaders know the importance of stepping back. Recharging isn't an escape; it's a strategy. In fact, the ability to pause, regroup, and renew your energy is not just a personal necessity; it's a professional advantage.

The Silent Productivity Killer: According to a recent Gallup report, 76% of employees experience burnout on the job at least sometimes, and leaders are no exception. Burnout doesn't announce itself with a dramatic breakdown. It creeps in quietly, stealing your creativity, dulling your problem-solving skills, and turning your leadership presence into a shadow of its former self. When leaders operate from a place of depletion, they make reactive decisions instead of visionary ones. They manage tasks instead of inspiring people. They survive the day instead of shaping the future. That's why recharging your internal battery isn't indulgent, it's essential.

Great Leaders Know When to Step Back: Some of the world's greatest innovators and leaders are fiercely protective of their restoration time. Bill Gates is famous for his "Think Weeks"—solo retreats where he reads, reflects, and brainstorming without distractions. These periods of intentional solitude have sparked game-changing ideas for Microsoft.

Similarly, Arianna Huffington built an entire media platform on the premise that burnout is not a badge of honor. She emphasizes that well-being and performance are not mutually exclusive; they're mutually reinforcing.

If your calendar is full but your mind is drained, you're not operating at your best. Your presence is diluted. Your vision is blurred. And your influence? Diminished.

Why You Need to Pause to Propel Forward: Leaders who deliberately recharge gain:

Mental clarity: Stepping away from the noise allows your brain to reset. This isn't about being idle, it's about making space for insight.

Creative breakthroughs: The best

ideas rarely happen when you're staring at a screen or powering through a to-do list. They often emerge when you're walking, resting, or playing.

Emotional resilience: Rested leaders respond rather than react. They make measured decisions and lead with empathy instead of irritation.

Stronger relationships: You can't pour into your team when your cup is empty. Recharge so you can re-engage fully—with presence, patience, and authenticity.

Signs You Need to Regroup: If any of these sound familiar, it may be time to hit the pause button:

- You're constantly fatigued, even after sleep.
- Your creativity feels tapped out.
- You're more irritable or impatient than usual.
- You're struggling to focus or make decisions.
- You feel like you're spinning, not leading.

This isn't weakness. It's a signal. Just like a smartphone gives you a "low battery" warning, your mind and body do too—if you're willing to listen.

The Front-Row Philosophy: Rest is Part of the Show: Living and leading from the front row doesn't mean you're "on" 24/7. Just like the best performers, you need green rooms, rehearsal time, and scheduled intermissions. No one delivers an encore if they're running on empty. You wouldn't drive a car cross-country without refueling, and you shouldn't lead a team or organization without intentionally restoring yourself. You can't give your best if you don't feel your best.

Practical Ways to Recharge—Without Checking Out:

Block "white space" on your calendar: Just like you protect meeting times, protect downtime. Even 15 minutes of stillness can refocus your mind.

Take micro-sabbaticals: A long weekend or midweek day off to reflect and reset can be more powerful than a whole vacation.

Unplug regularly: Create tech-free zones in your week where you're not reacting to emails or scrolling news feeds.

Move your body: Physical activity re-



sets your brain and boosts creativity. Take a walk. Dance in your kitchen. Stretch between meetings.

Reignite a passion: Hobbies aren't frivolous, they're fuel. Make time for joy, even if it's just 30 minutes a week.

The Ripple Effect of a Recharged Leader: When you prioritize your restoration, you give your team permission to do the same. You model sustainability over burnout, clarity over chaos, and presence over performance pressure. Your people notice when you show up energized, focused, and grounded.

So, if you've been white knuckling your leadership lately, consider this your green light to pause. Not because you're slacking. But because you're smart. Not because you're weak. But because you're wise. And not because you're stepping away from leadership, but because you're stepping into it with renewed energy, sharper vision, and a fully charged battery.

So go ahead—schedule your recharge. Your leadership (and your life) deserves it.

Marilyn Sherman is a Hall of Fame business speaker who inspires people to increase their results through personal accountability for success. She can be reached at www.MarilynSherman.com.

Higher Standard

REACH YOUR MAXIMUM POTENTIAL

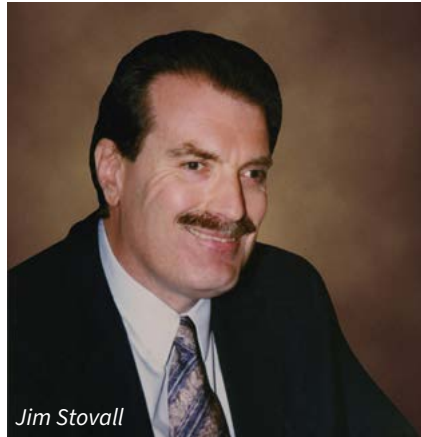
BY JIM STOVALL

If we are going to reach our maximum potential in our personal and professional lives, we must hold our thoughts and actions to a higher standard. Success comes down to one day or even one moment at a time. The way we do anything is the way we do everything, so we can begin upgrading our lives by tackling our next task with excellence in mind.

My late, great friend and mentor, Coach John Wooden, often told me that before undertaking any task or project, I should ask myself one simple question: "What would I do right now if I were amazing?" You will notice that Coach Wooden didn't say good, adequate, okay, or sufficient. If we are going to stretch ourselves, we need to be surrounded by people who will hold us to a higher standard, encourage us, and give us constructive criticism and suggestions.

My grandfather told me that nobody wants my opinion unless they ask for it, and even some people who ask for my opinion don't want it. It can be challenging to receive criticism even when it's well-intended. I have noticed within popular discourse that some people respond to criticism by pointing out those doing worse than they are. This mindset creates an unavoidable race to the bottom because you can always find someone doing worse than you are, but that does not justify your performance, nor can it be the standard you hold for yourself.

I've dedicated my life to presenting ideas and concepts through books, movies, speeches, radio shows, and these weekly columns. I have millions of books in print. Each of them—just



like this column—includes my contact information. Anyone who wants to take the time and make the effort can criticize me however they choose.

People in my office who monitor feedback from our audiences tell me that well over 99% of all our contacts and comments are positive. There are times when it is still hard not to dwell on the fraction of people who want to criticize whether they are constructive or not. When confronted with this challenge, it is best to ask yourself: Who is this person offering a critique? Is their critique valid? And should I take their suggestions to heart or dismiss them?

Make criticism positive or let it go as you go through your day today.

Today's the day!

Jim Stovall is the president of Narrative Television Network, as well as a published author of many books, including The Ultimate Gift. He is also a columnist and motivational speaker. He may be reached at 5840 South Memorial Drive, Suite 312, Tulsa, OK 74145-9082, or by e-mail at JimStovall@aol.com.

Action Implementation Steps:

1. Surround yourself with a dream team of positive professionals who give you quality input.
2. Commit to never accepting criticism unless it is constructive and meant for improvement.
3. Isolate yourself from those who want to criticize and complain for no valid reason.
4. Post your positive feedback where you will see it often and be reminded always to seek a higher standard.

IGNITE YOUR
LEADERSHIP
A PERFORMANCE
Magazine Feature



FROM ASHES TO INSPIRATION

By Coach Chris Ewald

Life throws unexpected fires. Are you ready to lead through the smoke? Discover how personal adversity forges profound resilience, empathy, and unwavering drive in leaders.

From the heart of a survivor, for the leader in you.



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Iconic American Brand Building Back Better

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEPHANIE STUCKEY

WITH STEPHANIE STUCKEY & DR. JEFFREY MAGEE

Attorney and businesswoman, Stephanie Stuckey has served as a Democratic Legislator in Georgia, the City of Atlanta's Resilience Officer, and Adjunct Law Professor at the University of Georgia. The CEO and granddaughter of the founder of Stuckey's Corporation, a roadside oasis since 1937, offers motorists a friendly stop where they can relax, refresh, and refuel. We're known for our Southern hospitality and candies, especially our world-famous pecan log roll. Our company fell out of family hands for decades, but we're back and rebuilding this classic, nostalgic brand!

Growing up traveling across America for family trips, Stuckey's roadside stores were always a favorite sight and treat. Recently, I had the opportunity to visit with Stephanie.

What traits have you learned are critical for success for an individual or organization to be relevant in today's global market?

Vulnerability is a trait often overlooked but critical to innovation. You have to be willing to experiment in order to evolve. But you have to accept failure as a necessary part of that process. If you're willing to openly share those trials and errors with your team and solicit their feedback, that's how your brand will remain relevant. So, the traits I would highlight here are vulnerability, honesty, and willingness to share.

From your unique vantage point and unique experiences, what are the most effective ways you have found to create loyalty and sustainability between you and others, that can be applied in business today?

Lasting loyalty with a team is fostered by listening and supporting. Spend time with those you work with and understand

Stuckey's®

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what they need to be successful. I'd also stress that the team should extend to everyone who works with you, from the warehouse picker to the pecan factory roaster. I'm amazed at the good ideas that I hear from all levels of our operation. If the folks at the ground level of our

organization aren't functioning at a high level, it impacts our entire capacity to perform. So, understanding that everyone has value and communicating that is what creates sustainability in an organization.



What drives how ‘You’ think/thinking style?

I’m a sponge for information and like to absorb learning from a variety of sources, mostly via podcasts since I can listen to them while travelling for work. I gravitate towards folks who think beyond just business success and delve into the higher purpose of what we’re doing. If Stuckey’s was just selling pecan log rolls, we’d have gone bankrupt decades ago. I’m driven – literally – by a higher calling that our mission is to make road trips fun. So, my thinking style evolves around getting to the why of what we’re doing. That bigger vision is what shapes everything else.

What qualities do you think make star performers really tick today and for tomorrow?” And, “What qualities detract from the general workforce performance?

Stars understand that they’re not the only performers; it takes a whole cast and crew for a show to be successful. The same translates to business. You have to operate as a team and appreciate the value of everyone’s contribution. What detracts is individuals who don’t appreciate the value of supporting one another towards a shared purpose.

You are a proven achiever, with wins and loses, you never seem to give-up, some would call you a “Thought-Leader” as you push others to THINK, what are some of the top points you would advise a manager/leader/entrepreneur/business-owner to know

or do, to reap the best performance out of their team?

Strong performances are based on team members knowing they have permission to innovate, try new ideas, and fail. Creating a space that allows for independent thinking and experimentation is one of the most important things a leader can do. It doesn’t take away from your authority if you give others the power to problem solve and ideate. That’s how we evolve together and become more resilient.

Inspiration – If you could identify one person that has inspired you and shaped who you are today, that you have not given the ‘Shout-Out’ to as much as you would have liked, who would that be? And, why?

My mother. She taught me the power of storytelling. As kids, she read us Faulkner and Flannery O’Connor while other moms read the classic Beatrix Potter books. Dinner table conversations were filled with these wonderful tales of her growing up in South Georgia with real-life characters like Uncle June Bug, Buddy Mac, and Flo, holding circuses in the back yard, entertaining the local preacher for dinner, and the time her father cussed out the school principal. As a CEO, her inspiration has fostered my love of words and using stories to promote our brand.

Hiring – If someone were to apply for a job with you (or your organization) today, what should they know and do to get noticed and considered?

Honestly, right now we’re looking

for people with a pulse. The worker shortage is real, and we’re grateful to find help. We’ll train them up and give them the skills they need. We just want folks willing to work. But at the management level, we certainly look for people with grit and a willingness to collaborate. I’m personally interested in adding more diversity to our team and elevating more women and minorities to ensure that we are listening and understanding the breadth of perspectives out there in the marketplace.

What is the most important mindset that people must possess over the next 3-to-5 years to be more competitive, relevant, and successful?

Be in it for the long haul. That’s the beauty of taking over a comeback brand that’s been around for 80+ years. When bad things happen – and they will – understanding this long game keeps you motivated. The pandemic has been hard on Stuckey’s. But we’ve survived the Great Depression, World War II rationing, the building of the interstate highway system that bypassed all our stores on state routes, being taken over by two corporations, the Arab Oil embargo, the 2008 Recession, and so on. If you’ve got a mindset that you’re going to stick with it and evolve, then you’re less focused on the competition and more focused on your own game.

With a recent Gallup Study indicating that upwards of 56% of workers surveyed indicated that they are disengaged in today’s workplace, why does it appear that so many are so complacent today, and how do we engage them to levels of proactive accountability?

We put workplace training in place so our factory and warehouse team are learning the skills for other areas of our operations. This shows everyone that they can rise in the ranks and earn more money and authority. I think it’s essential for folks to feel like there’s a pathway to moving up in any organization. It’s not easy sometimes to put those processes in place, but we’re partnering with local community colleges and technical schools to provide the training needed so folks know they can advance in their careers while remaining at Stuckey’s.

What makes for an effective and lasting Leader?

I've studied a lot of leaders, and there are all different types from outgoing and strong-willed to introverted and deliberative. However, the one consistent trait that all successful leaders share is the ability to recognize their gaps in skills and personality and build a leadership team that fills these gaps.

When you are interacting with other business leaders/owners and celebrities today, what tends to be the burning issues that keep you all up at night, that others should be aware of?

I think we overlook the importance of getting the basics right too often. During my work on climate change as head of Sustainability for the City of Atlanta, we shifted our focus partly to housing affordability because we recognized that addressing poverty was critical to dealing with the problems associated with a warming environment. The point here is that you have to roll up your sleeves and do the hard work of managing the underlying stresses that will destroy a company when a crisis hits – the structures you have in place to manage your IT, how your employees are trained and retained, and the quality of your workplace. These basics that aren't flashy and newsworthy are what make everything else possible.

With the legacy of the Stuckey's 1937 roadside convenience store brand, with more than 300 stores across the nation at its height, what do you hope history will write about your tenure as the Granddaughter of the Founder of Stuckey's and the namesake to the matriarch?

That I was able to honor the past and nostalgia of our brand while moving forward in a fresh and innovative way. I want to prove that comebacks are possible, even with a kitschy brand known for selling pecan log rolls and rubber alligators on the side of the road. There's something special about legacy brands worth preserving for future generations.

In building back an American brand, what have you found to be the top unexpected educational learning challenges or experiences?

The most unexpected challenge was letting go of my original expectations

for rebuilding the brand once I started running the company. I realized that we were profiting from selling our product, not from the stores we no longer owned or operated. I had to hunker down on what was working and buy a manufacturing facility. That's enabled us to scale and grow the brand. It's the best – but also the hardest – decision I've had to make.

If you could have one business wish for Stuckey's, what would that be?

To have a lasting impact on people's lives by recognizing the joy and fun of the everyday, taking a road trip, and exploring America. It's those experiences that give our brand sticking power.



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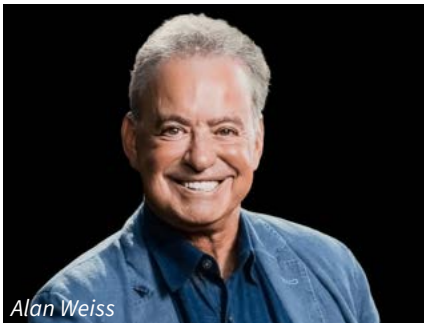


BUILDING GREAT BUSINESSES
FOR A GREATER PURPOSE.

Stop Waiting for Godot

LET GO OF COMPETITIVE ANXIETY

BY ALAN WEISS



Being patient until there is a “return to normal” or a “new normal” is like waiting for Godot. It’s a long play with no clear point. We must act based on constant change created by a seismic shift in demographics, a historical tectonic change in technology, and constant adjustments in social mores. Besides, “normal” means “average” or “typical.” Is that who you want to be?

Gaining Conceptual Agreement

We often make the mistake of charging ahead, looking for a “sale” instead of taking our time and creating agreement on value.

Don’t try to “increase fees.” If you want higher fees, increase value.

Conceptual agreement is the focus on gaining buy-in—commitment from an economic buyer (someone with control of the budget) by establishing **Objectives:** *What business outcomes are to be gained by this relationship?* This is never strictly internal, such as:

- Create alignment between departments
- Enhance communications flow
- Raise levels of empathy
- Maintain cordial relationships and avoid confrontation

These are all “HR” kinds of objectives that serve no business interest. Note that they can all be achieved without any demonstrable improvement in the business, and perhaps with actual declines in performance.

Business-oriented outcomes would include:

- Decrease involuntary attrition

- Increase referral business
- Decrease labor intensity
- Improve our cross-selling of products and services

All of those can be measured and can have monetized value attached to them. Understand that something like “improve profit” has copious potential, because if you improve profit you can:

- Increase salaries and bonuses
- Retire debt
- Provide better investor ROI (return on investment)
- Improve facilities
- Make more hires
- Increase technology and automation

You get the idea. True business outcomes leave the business in far better shape if met and exceeded. The “no normal” means that getting one’s “ticket stamped” by attending training programs without measurable effect on productivity or performance is gone with the Dodo Birds.

The next step in conceptual agreement is “metrics.” These are measures of success along the way, and/or at completion. The buyer may have existing devices (turnover reports, monthly income, sales by product, average price or fee, and so forth). The buyer may not have such resources and will ask your opinion on measuring progress. This is still more value you’re providing (as well as the metrics for your success).

Finally, we have “value.” This is the actual benefit to the buyer. There are qualitative values (I no longer will have to play the role of “referee” for warring teams), and quantitative values (reducing attrition by five percent would save us an average of \$120,000 per person; five percent of 100 is five, times \$120,000 is \$600,000).

Guidelines for conceptual agreement:

1. Must be done with the involvement of, and agreement from, the economic buyer.
2. Try to create three items of value for each objective to be met.
3. Try to monetize two-thirds of the total value statements.

Since you’ll assure the buyer of a 10:1 ROI, you want to make the monetized val-

ue as significant as possible, but still conservative. If the buyer says the savings will be \$250,000-\$350,000, or five percent to eight percent, cite the \$250,000 and five percent to demonstrate you’ve taken the more conservative estimate each time.

Finally, on qualitative objectives, ask, without a monetization attempt, about the value of getting home at dinner time, seeing the kids’ sports events, alleviating stress, or better relationships with board members.

Behind every professional objective is one or more personal objectives.

The No Normal means not discussing deliverables, programs, or methodology, but rather what you create to improve the buyer’s position.

Lean and Mean: Don’t Feed the “Chicks”

Counterintuitively, if you want to move toward (and even beyond) seven figures, you must be careful not to add unnecessary overhead. Since I began writing about high-growth consulting strategies in the early 90s, it’s become apparent that adding staff tends to decrease revenues and margins.

“Growth” is not the point; PROFITABLE growth is the point.

One of my all-star clients, who eventually sold her boutique consulting firm and is now playing golf, said in one of our small group meetings that she dreaded returning from travelling and finding all the “chicks” in the corporate nest chirping and waiting for her to regurgitate food. That was a visual never lost on anyone who heard it!

Even with the boutique firm owners I’ve coached, we focused on reducing staff, both professionally and personally. I’ve never known why someone making \$250,000 a year requires a \$30,000 virtual assistant! Have they failed to learn how to use a smartphone or a Filofax®? In most cases, I’ve reduced staff for my clients from 30 to under 10, and often to zero.

But what about most of you, who are solo practitioners? How do you keep control of overhead, which kills small practices?

Lean and mean is the way to go, right into and through seven figures in revenue. That's how you create profitable growth.

Here are some items and resources you don't need or should have on a "pay for play" (outsourced) basis:

- Bookkeeper paid by the hour
- Tax accountants paid by the hour
- Legal help paid by the hour
- Answering service rather than part-time assistants
- Use American Express as your travel agent
- Use a franchise printer who prints on demand
- Use AI or a student to create your artwork
- Use automated schedulers
- Keep your software simple—you don't need three cameras and seven lights for Zoom
- Don't chase shiny objects; you don't need every new iPhone

Don't allow your ego to determine your overhead. One mistake I made was to call my legal structure "Summit Consulting Group, Inc." with the intent of demonstrating "heft." When people asked how many were in the "group," I tap danced, inanely talking about subcontractors and part-timers, which is like telling GM you know the auto business because you drive a car.

Don't rationalize growth with the number of people. What really matters is your *brand power*, which we'll talk about later.

You won't get rich working for someone else, and you won't get rich with people working for you.

True wealth is discretionary time.

Alan Weiss, PhD is our longest-continuing contributor. He's the author of over 60 books appearing in 16 languages, is a Fellow of the Institute of Management Consultants, and an inductee into the Speakers Hall of Fame®. This article is adapted from his newest book, *Building Dynamic Communities: Developing an Evergreen Client Ecosystem* (December 2024, Taylor and Francis). He can be reached through alanweiss.com.

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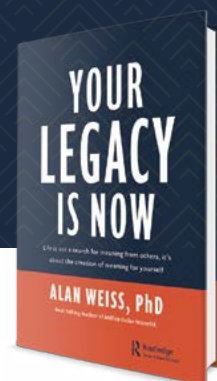


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Overcoming FOBU

THE PROBLEM ISN'T CHANGE. THE PROBLEM IS CONFUSION.

BY SHERRY YELLIN, PHD



Sherry Yellin

In 1848, a 25-year-old railroad foreman blasted rock to make way for tracks. His job was relatively simple: drill the hole, fill it with blasting powder, add a fuse, and pack it down with sand using a 3 ½ foot, 13 lb rod. On September 13, he made a critical error. He forgot to add sand to insulate the powder, generating an explosion that sent the tamping iron through his left cheekbone, prefrontal cortex, and the top of his head.

To everyone's dismay, he lived. However, he would never be the same. Once dependable and respected, he was irrev-erent, impulsive, unreliable, and lived out the remainder of his life jumping from job to job until he died of epileptic seizures at 36.

So what does a 19th-century railroad accident have to do with your leadership? Your teams? Your culture? Your bottom line? Everything.

The tragic story of Phineas Gage led to one of the most profound discoveries of our time: the brain drives behavior.

The brain drives every decision, choice, and action we make. And it doesn't take a tamping iron through the head to compromise it. It only takes a little confusion, and confusion is the silent saboteur we see in every organization we work with.

FOBU, the Fear of Being Uncertain, is a debilitating disease that flares up when we delegate without clarity and expect mind-reading. It multiplies when roles shift, decisions aren't communicated, trust isn't established, or expectations

are implied. However, it is fatal when we ask people to change and move into the unfamiliar without explaining the "why, who, and how."

The prefrontal cortex (PFC) injured by the tamping iron is the epicenter of strategic thinking, planning, empathy, innovation, impulse control, collaboration, and every other quality and behavior we expect from high-functioning leaders, teams, and cultures.

Clarity ignites the PFC; confusion implodes it. The brain is a meaning-making machine, and when we can't make meaning because of confusion, we resort to threat: we get stuck, become defensive and resistant, selfish, obstinate, and overly committed to being right. And while we may not see the damage in the moment, confusion leaves a trail:

- Suspicion, as people try to fill in the blanks.
- Resistance to change, as people cling to the familiar.
- Burnout, as energy is wasted on guessing and second-guessing.
- Procrastination, as the brain protects itself from ambiguity.
- Loss of meaning, as connection to purpose fades under fog.
- Disengagement, as people detach from what feels directionless.

The good news is... if confusion is the problem, clarity is the solution.

Clarity doesn't mean having all the answers. It means recognizing where there is uncertainty, or the possibility for uncertainty, and anchoring people with the information their brains crave:

- **What's happening**
- **Why it matters**
- **How it affects them**
- **What their role is**
- **What success looks like**

It means staying curious and asking for the additional information or help people need. It means continuously building self-awareness because what you say is not what others hear, and what you intend is not what others experience.

This isn't theory; it's neuroscience. And it's the foundation of the CRANIUM Methodology, my brain-based framework for high-performance leadership. CRANIUM

stands for the seven strategies that align how people learn best with how leaders lead best.

To enjoy faster clarity, deeper trust, and better results, start by neutralizing the enemy you can't see. Threat. It hijacks performance, shuts down innovation, and kills ownership. Learn how to outsmart the 10 biggest threats to the brain leaders face at work: yellingroup.com/threat.

You don't need more pressure if you're leading change, launching initiatives, or simply trying to build a high-performance culture. You need more precision. Clarity isn't a soft skill. It's a strategic advantage.

So the next time you see resistance, procrastination, drama, or disengagement, don't ask:

"What's wrong with them?"

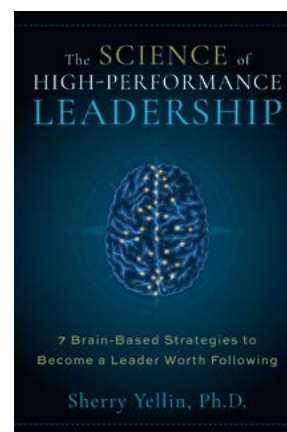
Ask:

"Where's the confusion? Where do we need clarity?"

The problem isn't the change; it's the not knowing.

Sherry Yellin, PhD, ACC, BCC, is a recognized expert in leadership, executive development, and brain-based learning solutions. With over 22 years of experience, she has designed and delivered leadership programs and coaching for Fortune 500 companies, healthcare systems, universities, and public sector clients across diverse industries—from aerospace to food service. She is the author of *Unforgettable Leadership: 7 Principles for Leading, Learning, and Living* and founder of The LEADing Lab Mastermind Group, a global network of leaders. Sherry also created The CRANIUM Campus, an online platform offering micro-trainings on leadership topics.

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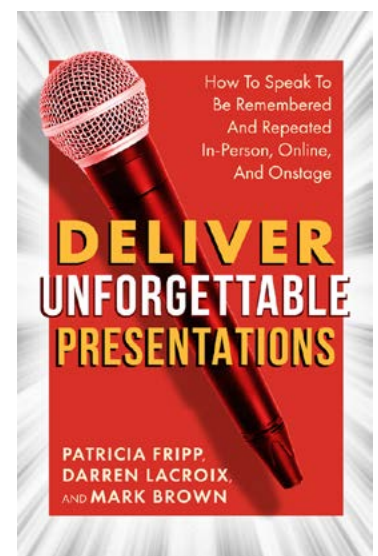
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Let Your Purpose Lead Your People

THE MOST UNDERRATED LEADERSHIP TOOL

BY MAUREEN ZAPPALA



If you're a leader, you've likely seen it: the high performer who downplays their achievements. The brilliant contributor who hesitates to speak up in meetings. The team member who overprepares, overworks, and still fears being "found out." These aren't performance issues. They're signs of impostor syndrome.

You may have already coached them on mindset, self-talk, and confidence-building. Those are helpful, but they may not be enough. Impostor syndrome isn't just cognitive. It's emotional. And for many, it's deeply spiritual. That means the most powerful antidote you can offer your team might not be a strategy. It might be purpose.

Why Impostor Syndrome Goes Deeper Than Thinking Errors

Impostor syndrome often carries the hidden burden of shame, not just self-doubt. Guilt says, "I made a mistake." Shame says, "I am a mistake." That identity-level pain is hard to coach away. People can fake confidence, collect praise, and still feel like frauds inside.

Brené Brown's work on shame resilience highlights the need for empathy, story-sharing, and human connection. But even that approach leans on others' approval. For someone who doubts their worth, that can still feel shaky.

Dr. David Burns, in *Feeling Good*, outlines paths to self-esteem: correcting distorted thoughts, achieving goals, and treating yourself with kindness. However, unless a person has a solid foundation of worth, all these strategies can crumble under pressure.

That's where you, as a leader, come in.

The Leader's Role: Offering More Than Encouragement

You don't need to be a therapist. You don't need to be a guru. But you do need to create an environment where people feel safe, valued, and anchored to something bigger than themselves.

That "something bigger" is purpose.

We're hardwired for it. Neuroscientific research from experts like Dr. Daniel

Amen and Andrew Newberg shows that people experience brain-level changes when they feel spiritually or emotionally connected to a higher calling. And 75% of people report having had some kind of transcendental experience, feeling part of something larger.

That's not just "woo-woo." That's wiring. And it's powerful.

Purpose Is the Most Underrated Leadership Tool

When team members see how their roles connect to a greater mission, it changes how they view their value. Their sense of worth becomes less about being perfect and more about being part of a meaningful cause.

Author Brian Houston tells the story of two equally talented businessmen: one is chasing personal gain, and the other is focused on supporting missions. The second one stood firm when adversity hit because his goal wasn't about himself. It was anchored in purpose.

Your team's resilience will grow the same way. When work becomes mission-driven, people stop asking, "Am I good enough?" and start asking, "How can I contribute?"

How to Lead With Purpose That Resonates

At an organizational level, your job is to clarify and communicate a compelling mission. Not just one that sounds good in the annual report, but one that stirs people's values and beliefs.

Companies that do this well attract not just good talent, but the right talent:

- Patagonia draws environmental stewards.
- TOMS Shoes attracts philanthropists.
- Herman Miller is built on faith-driven principles.
- Warby Parker blends profit with purpose.
- MyPillow inspires boldness through Christian values and cultural resilience.

People want to align with a mission



Maureen Zappala

that reflects who they are. If your organization's mission is vague or generic, you may still hire good people, but they won't feel deeply connected. That leads to burnout, disengagement, or impostor-driven perfectionism.

Instead, clarify your mission, and let it act as a filter. You don't need to convince everyone; just attract the right ones. Give those who don't align a kind send-off. That makes room for those who do, i.e., the ones who will bring both their skills and their hearts.

Final Thought: Your Team's Confidence Isn't All Up to Them

Impostor syndrome is personal, but it's not private. People don't overcome it in isolation. They overcome it in environments where they feel seen, safe, and significant.

As a leader, you have the privilege—and the responsibility—to help create that environment. Stop telling them to "Believe in Themselves!" Start showing them why their work (and worth) matters. Do it by leading with purpose. Help your people anchor their work in something larger than approval. That's how you turn impostors into impact-makers

Maureen Zappala is a former NASA propulsion engineer ("rocket scientist!"), author and award-winning keynote speaker. She works with high-performers to overcome their Impostor Syndrome so they can match their confidence to their competence and have more influence. Formerly, a 36-year resident of Ohio, she now lives in Las Vegas, Nevada. She can be reached through her website www.maureenz.com

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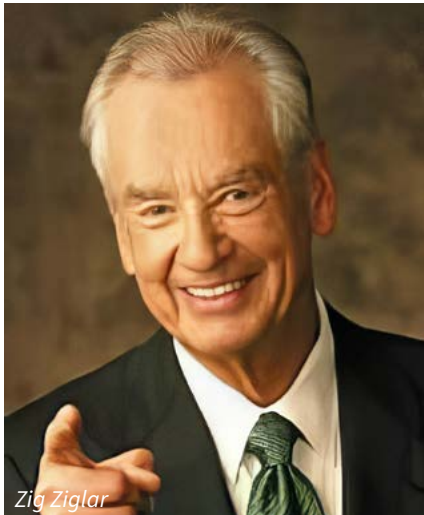
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On Manners & Your Personal Branding!

DOES IT REALLY MATTER?

WITH ZIG ZIGLAR



Zig Ziglar

As youngsters, my mother taught her children that while we might not be the smartest people around, we could be courteous, polite, and considerate of others. We were taught to say “please,” “thank you,” “yes, Sir,” “yes, Ma’am,” not to talk with food in our

mouths, and a few other little niceties of life.

Now there are some indications that manners are on the way back “in”—just in time! In 1996, a survey revealed that 78% of Americans believed incivility had gone from bad to worse in the preceding ten years, and many believed it had eroded values and contributed to violence in our society. Today, many companies are sponsoring workshops to teach professional etiquette and protocol in the marketplace. Reports abound that job candidates are turned down if they begin eating before their host does, and salt food before tasting it, because it shows a tendency toward making hasty decisions. Those who order the most expensive items on the menu and conclude with a costly dessert are generally not offered jobs for fear they will abuse an expense account.

Much of this involves common sense as much as manners, but it really boils down

to thinking in terms of what’s in the other person’s best interests. When we think that way, we act that way, and invariably, what’s in the other person’s best interests from a business perspective also turns out to be in our best interests.

Studies by Harvard, the Stanford Research Institute, and the Carnegie Foundation suggest that success in a job depends 85% on people skills and only 15% on technical knowledge and skill. In the marketplace today, people with the right attitude and who work with others effectively are in the most demand and occupy the higher positions. **Message: Use common sense and mind your manners.**

This article was adapted from Zig’s book, *Staying Up, Up, Up In A Down, Down World*, published by Thomas Nelson. Ziglar was an early supporter and mentor to Publisher Jeffrey Magee. He gifted a series of unpublished articles to PERFORMANCE Magazine. Enjoy this timeless piece! Ziglar.com

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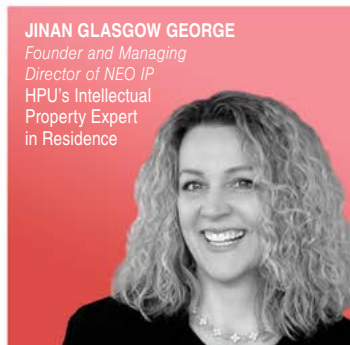
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