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Forget the competition, the lack of resources, and the economy. Don’t spend another day listening to others who have become hypnotized by their circumstances. It’s your time to shine! You can BE THE ONE to rise to the occasion and get others to follow your lead. BE THE ONE to gain visibility and the influence to change your organization’s culture.

You will BE THE ONE who is the first to get promoted and wins the best awards. Regardless of your title or level of experience, learn how to be a Change-Maker™ who your organization will fight to keep.

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• How to increase your influence regardless of your formal title.

• How to avoid burnout or performance gaps by creating a strategic plan that defines the big-picture and helps your team members understand their role in achieving it.

• How to use the psychology of motivation to get your team to work harder because they want to, not because you told them to.

JONATHAN SPRINKLES. “Your Connection Coach,” is a multiple-award-winning expert, TV commentator, and speaker. He has spent over a decade teaching emerging and senior leaders how to achieve big results in record time. Jonathan is irrationally passionate about helping people get their breakthrough.

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A portion of the proceeds of this book will be donated to supporting the families of wounded & fallen troops.

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“Jonathan Sprinkles will make your organization more positive, focused, and productive than ever before!”
—BRIAN TRACY
Bestselling author and international expert

BE THE ONE
STEP UP, TAKE RESPONSIBILITY, REJECT EXCUSES, AND ACHIEVE BIGGER RESULTS THAN EVER BEFORE!
BE THE ONE
A tell-it-like-it-is guide to leading the way and getting your organization to
STEP UP, TAKE RESPONSIBILITY, REJECT EXCUSES, AND ACHIEVE BIGGER RESULTS THAN EVER BEFORE!

Jonathan Sprinkles

To:_________________________________________________________

From: ______________________________________________________

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

-Martin Luther King, Jr.
To those who stuck around to ask additional questions, those who have invited me back year after year, those who make an extra effort to make me feel welcome (you know who you are), those who showed me their notes from years ago and how you have put them to good use. You are a constant reminder of what a privilege it is to serve you.

You give my life meaning.
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Let me be clear up front; this book is about doing big things. In this instance, “big” doesn’t equate to size. Not necessarily. It means choosing to be a bigger version of yourself, being open to taking a big risk, and showing up to make a big. I wrote this book so you would have a tool to stop waiting for someone else to step up and decide to Be The ONE to get it started.

Be forewarned, this is not a series of short and sweet vignettes that stroke your leadership ego. This book should challenge you to examine yourself, and possibly become very uncomfortable. You may even feel like you have been complacent up until now. If you don’t at some point feel the need to up your game, either I haven’t done my job, or you have missed the point entirely. We already have enough people who are content with filling seats and living inside their little boxes. This book is about breaking outside of the box, standing on top of it, and using it as your platform to evangelize your message to the crowd.
Be the ONE reflects my deep passion to build up leaders who build other leaders. We have arrived at a time in history when bold leadership is a must. You have to be about something. You have to be for something. There has to be a Big Idea attached to your agenda. Anything less, and you become instantly irrelevant. Gone are the days of people accepting empty rhetoric and emptier promises. We need real solutions, real advocacy, real courage, and real love. **I believe a leader who is afraid to take a stand is like a pencil with no lead—pointless.** If you don’t intend to use your power to create specific outcomes, what is the point of having power?

Very shortly into our conversation, you will see how being “The ONE” has little to do with “them” and has everything to do with you. You have to change yourself before you can change the world. Regardless of who else shares your viewpoints initially, you have to be obedient to your vision, your calling, your burden, and your purpose. Fortunately, you have just taken the first step. As you turn every page, keep asking yourself how you can apply this information right now. Hone in on ideas that will stretch you beyond what you’re accustomed to, and will cause you to become the leader people love to follow.

The heart of Be the ONE is self-agency. It involves you getting off your ‘but’ (your excuses) and doing something. It doesn’t have to be big, but it does have to be done. You are to Be the ONE who establishes the new norm, who increases the energy level in the room, who steps up and offers another perspective, and who makes it cool to give a darn about someone other than yourself. Never, ever, ever underestimate the power of that idea that rests atop your shoulders and quietly speaks into your ear. That still-small voice is leading you to your greatest hour. It begins with the smallest, yet intentional act of service. It is the courage to be who were created to be in the moment that was created for you.
That time has come for you to be a Change Maker. Each chapter is dedicated to teaching you one of the Laws of Change. It is an all-out assault on small thinking. This isn’t what just looks good on paper; this is what really works and what really makes a difference in the real world.

That said; don’t be mistaken. Although my style is very down-to-earth, my ideas and content have been rigorously tested and revised through my experience as a trainer and mentor to leaders for over a decade. Additionally, I have run several successful businesses, led national initiatives, and championed awareness for causes I deeply care about. All of these efforts required earning people’s buy-in to go from one level to the next. Consequently, I passionately study the psychology of human behavior and how to get people to know, like, and trust you, so they will ultimately support your movement. This book is a reflection of that passion. I am handing over to you some of my best tools.

I am proud of you and excited about your future. Your courage to step up will change more lives than you know. Be the example you never had.

Be it.
Own it.
Pass it on.

Jonathan Sprinkles
LAW #1: YOU’RE BEING WATCHED.

I’ll never forget the shame that was on my friend’s face as he recalled the scene from the prior evening. We had just completed an all-day program mentoring a group of high school kids and showing them a preview of what life was going to look like when they got older. Of course, we put our best feet forward, talking about the virtues of staying focused, getting good grades, staying away from the wrong crowd, etcetera, etcetera.

After a long day of playing big brother, uncle, mentor, and role model, my buddy decided that he needed to let off some steam downtown where the nightclubs were. I guess he let the pendulum swing a little too far to the opposite side, because Mr. Perfect turned into Mr. Sloppy Drunk! As he stumbled out of the club, guess who he nearly knocked over—the high school kid he mentored earlier that day! I don’t know what ever became of this kid, but I sure know that experience changed my friend…and me! His story was a sobering example (pun intended) that the old proverb is true, “what is done in the dark, comes out in the light.” Being “on the clock” is a myth for Change Makers.
Now that you are in the spotlight, you are not on the clock, you are “on” around the clock. There’s no need to argue about the fairness of this because it isn’t. Deal with it. You will be judged, talked about, misunderstood, scrutinized, you name it. Your life will be like one big reality show and everybody will have an opinion about everything you do, ranging from what time you showed up, what you wore, and who you sat next to at dinner. Welcome to the fabulous life of being a celebrity!

That said, you cannot lead others until you first learn to lead yourself. My sophomore year in college, I was sitting in a workshop at a conference, barely able to keep my eyes open because I stayed up partying so late the night before. I still remember the name of the conference presenter, Steve Birdine. Almost prophetically, he said to us, “Leaders need to know when to go to bed.” You can say Ouch or Amen depending on how closely that hits home. At the time, I hadn’t yet learned that what you do at night is a prelude for what your next day will be like. Mr. Birdine taught us that we can only keep up a front for so long. Eventually, the “real you” is going to emerge and the truth will be evident.

He reminded us that there is always a point before something goes down that we have the opportunity to back away, walk out the door, and go home unscathed. That point is called Reputation Management. It is the first lesson every person of influence must learn. Reason being, your public leadership will be married to your self-leadership. Self-leadership involves the discipline to make tough decisions and self-sacrifices for the good of the organization.

As author Sun Tzu said, “Discipline is organization.” It is the internal drive to keep everything in its proper context. You don’t let your emotions and urges cause you to put yourself in a position in which compromises the integrity of the moment. If there were a “be perfect” pill, there would be a line around the corner at every drugstore of people lining up to fill their prescription. But there isn’t, so that means
that you need to learn to manage your “stuff,” whatever your “stuff” may be. Truth be told, we all have “stuff,” so let’s not pretend we don’t. Some struggle with legal stuff, illegal stuff, occasional stuff, habitual stuff, tangible stuff, virtual stuff. The list goes on. We all have bad habits and do things we aren’t proud of. I don’t judge you. Not at all. But I must add, you need to be disciplined enough to keep your “stuff” from putting you in a situation that affects the integrity of your position or worse yet, the reputation of your organization. **Although we all have flaws, most people aren’t mature enough to handle seeing your imperfections on display.**

Clearly, I’m not offering a free pass to act foolishly. I’m simply making the case for you to let yourself off the hook for having faults even though you are a leader. I get it, but most people don’t. I can see past it. Most people won’t. Most prefer to put you on a pedestal and assume that you don’t have the same issues they do. They can’t seem to wrap their brains around a person who is well-disciplined in most areas, yet equally undisciplined in others. It won’t be until you get so-called “exposed” that they realize your title doesn’t exempt you from unwanted behaviors.

Thus, I suggest you identify a safe zone for you to work out your stuff. If you know you have a temper, learn to wait until you get into complete solitude, away from earshot (and cell phones) before you go off. Don’t wait until the moment of decision to determine whether you are going to “keep it real.” In the heat of the moment, you will “keep it wrong”! If you have issue with flirtatiousness (as many in power do), pre-establish the groups of people who are automatically off limits. Repeat to yourself internally who you’re dealing with as you talk to them. Find someone you can trust and make sure they’re always in your vicinity when you’re in potentially tempting situations. **We all have issues, but you must set boundaries around them.** Failing to do so could ruin the credibility of your organization and bring down your entire legacy altogether. By the way, I’m speaking from experience.
At one point early in my career, I was motivating people by day and sitting on a therapist’s couch once a week, working through the latent effects of my father’s death over 15 years before. The suppressed emotions had left me with an immense fear of loss and a strong case of approval-addiction. It affected my leadership, my business, my relationships and my outlook on the future. Although I felt like a hypocrite as an inspirational figure who, himself, needed therapy, I was being naïve and prideful. My ego at the time wouldn’t allow me to realize that the smartest move I could make was to work through my challenges rather than allow a false image of how I was “supposed to be” based on a title keep me from getting help.

During my sessions, I was comforted to learn that seeking counsel was not only smart, it was very common. You may be surprised to know how many people of influence struggle with depression, anxiety, and the same fears held by the general population. This is why it is even more important for them to seek reprieve from their high-stress lives via the listening ear of a life coach, therapist, or spiritual leader. Collegiate and professional athletic teams hire a psychologist to be on hand for their players as they face difficulties throughout the season. Corporations do the same for their executives. With so much pressure on a daily basis, people decay internally when they don’t let it out somewhere. The tension eats them up from the inside out and they end up making stress-induced decisions they later live to regret.

Now you understand how our “stuff” enters into the equation. Our “stuff” is our method of coping with the tension in our lives. It is a place of comfort that becomes increasingly attractive with the mounting challenges of our position. It becomes that ever-present Pandora’s Box, always offering a tempting option to dip into our favorite stash of bad habits in the heat of the moment. Don’t overburden yourself with the pressures that your position brings without establishing an outlet that brings you back to your center and helps you align your public self with your private self.
LAW #2: NEVER GET OUT-HUSTLED.

Oh contraire! If you think you’re going to be able to sit on the sidelines and let everyone else sweat it out while you fan yourself and work on your tan, you’ve got another thing coming. As a Change Maker, your function is to inspire and influence people to do what they would not or could not do on their own. You can’t influence someone to do something you won’t do yourself! Think about it: if I were your best friend, and I was a lazy so-and-so, eating entire bags of potato chips, watching hours of television, and wiping the grease on my shirt, would you listen to my advice on working out? Of course not! You’d probably be trying to figure out how to move out in the middle of the night without my finding out.

If you know people take their cues from you as a Change Maker, how then, does the notion of someone doing your dirty work for you make sense? If anything, it’s just the opposite. If you have a meeting and the chairs are scattered across the room, you need to be the first one to start rearranging the room and the last one to stop working.
If there is a piece of trash on the floor, you need to pick it up. Don’t wait for someone who isn’t in management or a member of the Executive Board to see it and dispose of it. Remember that you are responsible for establishing the culture of your organization. The late George Steinbrenner would attest to this. Steinbrenner was the famed owner of the New York Yankees, a franchise worth an estimated $1.7 billion (86 percent higher than the next team, the Boston Red Sox). Although he could clearly have sat back and collected checks, his hands-on mantra kept him involved in the details that made the Yankees a world-famous franchise. He once said, “Before every home World Series game, I walk the restrooms of Yankee Stadium to make sure they’re clean.” You would think this would be unheard of for a man of his stature. However, Steinbrenner wanted to model what meticulous dedication to excellence and a sense of ownership should look like. Thus, the Yankees kept winning and their fans kept selling out the stadium.

Whatever they see you doing, they will follow. If they see you step over the trash, don’t expect them to do anything different. They are your colleagues, not your custodians!

Experienced leaders inspire behavior by recognizing desired actions. As you build your reputation as a Change Maker, you will need to earn respect by modeling desired actions. You can’t make people believe in you; but as they see your character consistently on display, they won’t have a choice not to. Put in the work my friend!
D o you know someone who has a bad relationship with a traditional authority figure such as a parent, district manager, landlord, pastor, or... probation officer? We all know at least one person to whom this applies. If your title were enough to get you all the respect you need, it would be nearly impossible to find someone who had a negative interaction with their Change Maker. But we all know that’s far from the case. If you think your life is going to instantly change simply because you are wearing a title, due for a big wakeup call, my friend. You will learn very quickly that (as my Grandma would say), “Ain’t nobody gotta to listen to nothin’ you have to say!”

Don’t kid yourself or overestimate your importance in their lives. Just because you want respect doesn’t mean you’ll get it. You can inspire people; you can influence people; but you can’t make anyone do anything. In *The Leadership Challenge*, author James Kouzes asserts, “Leader-
ship is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow.” The key word—choose! Your position provides a platform for your leadership; but your influence is what touches the hearts of your people. The title alone is neutral; how you use your title determines whether there is any power behind it.

If you’re a leader people hate to be around, they will smile in your face and tear you down behind your back. Even if you get people to do what you tell them to, they will, over time, stage a subtle, quiet rebellion until your power has completely disintegrated. People will only take so much of being bullied by people they don’t like, regardless of their level of authority.

One image that will be forever etched in my mind is the Chinese student who, in 1989, stood in front of four Chinese military tanks in Tiananmen Square, protesting the government’s Communist policies. Of course, the student stood no chance of derailing the tanks or the government’s iron fist, but at that point it didn’t matter. He got to the point where he said, “I can’t take it anymore” and was willing to do anything to create immediate change. I have seen this very thing happen within organizations. When people are fed up, they can care less about any so-called authority you’re supposed to have over them.

Rather than berating and intimidating people into following you, why not take a more lasting approach? It’s far less stressful and infinitely more permanent.

Here’s what I mean.

Gary Chapman wrote a classic book called The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts. In it, he explains the five different methods by which we all give and receive love. The essence of the book is that when you learn to speak another person’s Love Language, you connect with them faster and your bond is much deeper. The Love Languages are as follows:
1. Acts of Service – Shows love to others by helping them in times of need.

2. Words of Affirmation – Shows love to others by expressing their feelings through compliments, encouragement, and praise.

3. Physical Touch – Shows love to others by non-sexual physical gestures such as giving hugs, holding hands with someone who is sad or touching a shoulder to show support.

4. Quality Time – Shows love to others by dedicating a portion of their day strictly for spending time to bond with someone.

5. Gifts – Shows love to others by giving thoughtful mementos as visual symbols of their feelings.

Chapman explains that everyone, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, background, or income level, has a Love Language. Everyone has a soft spot. Everyone has something that makes them feel connected to other people. Consequently, our job is to learn to address them in this language, not selfishly do unto them only what moves us. When you change your paradigm to this mode of thinking, your impact on them grows exponentially.

Since we have already proven that titular leadership (leading by your title) doesn’t work, try lingual leadership (leading by their Love Language). Did I just say titular leadership? Anyhow, here are some practical examples of what you can do to speak a person’s Love Language and get through to them:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Love Language</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acts of Service</td>
<td>• Find ways to help them without their having to ask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Be one of the few people who consistently checks in on them when they are extremely busy, stressed out, or physically ill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assist them with mundane tasks that take up big blocks of their time such as cleaning, reorganizing their workspace, making phone calls, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words of Affirmation</td>
<td>• Shower them with praise, telling them how much you appreciate something they said or did</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Compliment them for something they do well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Write them notes of thanks, congratulations, or “I’m proud of you”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Touch</td>
<td>• Give them a small hug when you first see them and/or when they leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Slightly nudge them when you make a point or a joke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Make contact with them (usually their arm or shoulder) during an emotional conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Time</td>
<td>• Focus on them the entire time you are together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Look them in the eyes and nod your head to symbolize your engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tell them beforehand that you have set aside time to be with them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts</td>
<td>• Search for symbolic representations of memorable moments in your relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Listen for clues during a conversation about things they want or need and surprise them with it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Give them plaques, trophies and trinkets they will keep around their desk to remind them of a job well done</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As you can imagine, the concept of learning a person’s Love Language is an invaluable tool for creating deep, meaningful bonds with them. Can you see the value in learning the top two Love Languages of each person on your staff or in your membership? Is it possible that you would be far more persuasive if you were equipped with knowing the Love Language of a potential client or prospect? How about your supervisor or mentor? You can build relationships that make you stand head and shoulders above everyone else around you. Your power and possibilities will grow exponentially.
Perhaps one of the most common misconceptions about leadership is that being a “do-it-yourselfer” is a great trait to possess. Who wouldn’t want someone around who was willing to pick up the slack when others don’t come through? I know I sure value these people in my life. I rely on them! However, as awesome as these ultra-dependable people are, they are not leaders. As a matter of fact, those in leadership positions who have this mindset are a cancer to the organization and a threat to its viability in the future.

Here’s why.

I remember waaaay back in the third grade when I first received the entrepreneurial bug. I decided I was going to have a garage sale and make some money by selling my old toys. I suppose my $5 a week allowance wasn’t getting me to my video game fund goals fast enough.

I grabbed my best friend Carl and told him I’d split the profits with him if he helped me assign prices to the items for sale. We went into the garage, opened up my toy chest, and began rummaging through a pile. It was like Toys R
Us and Goodwill had a baby. There was junk everywhere. I decided that we would equally divide the pile of toys, write a fair price on masking tape, and affix it to the toy (I know, very professional!). After approximately 15 minutes, I had only priced three toys, but Carl was almost finished with his half. I couldn’t understand how he was so quick. I mean, I looked up to him because he was in the fourth grade and knew how to do fractions, but this had nothing to do with garage sales! Why was he finished so much faster than I was?

When I looked at Carl’s half, I was shocked and horrified. He took every toy and priced it 50 cents. WHAT! I blew up at him, informing him that the Hot Wheels car he was holding was a limited edition collector’s car that any kid would die to have. Never mind the fact that two of the wheels were missing and all the paint was scratched off. That’s beside the point. Clearly, he was unable to appreciate the finer things in life. I proceeded to tear each of his price tags off and told him to start over. I’d tell him what to write going forward. Carl was not amused by my suggestion. In fact, he was highly offended. He kicked his pile of toys over and went home. We never spoke again after that.

Just kidding! We’re still friends even today. Gotcha!

Let’s examine this scenario. Though it was comical, it was also very common. In that instance, I wasn’t being a very effective leader, was I? I wanted everything done my way… no exceptions. I’m sure you can share a similar story of your own in which someone of the “never mind, I’ll take care of it” persuasion usurped your power in the name of efficiency. Their doing so created a lack of trust, lowered your esteem, and made them appear to be plain ‘ol selfish. They robbed you of your ability to grow, learn from experience, and have a sense of contribution to the group. Even if the project did end up being a success, it would be impossible for you to have a sense of pride because you would have no sense of ownership.

In addition, bad leadership practices such as these have two negative impacts on the organization: 1) they turn the
leader into an Enabler, making it easy for the group to pick up lazy habits. Or 2) the leader becomes a Crippler, stifling their members’ passion for participating in the organization’s goals because their ideas get shot down and input rejected every time they want to get involved.

As business operations specialist Davy Tyburski teaches, "People support what they help create." Where there is no ownership, there is no buy-in. “I’ll just do it myself” is translated in other people’s minds as “I don’t trust you.” That’s a strong statement. It’s a vote of no confidence. It says that you don’t believe that they can neither figure it out themselves nor can they sufficiently follow the instructions you provide them. The “I’ll just do it myself” mentality is among the worst statements a leader can make because of its implications. Unknowingly, you are really saying, “I’ll have to keep doing it myself indefinitely.” It means, “I’ll do it myself because I’ve failed to sufficiently train someone to remove this burden from my life.” To make matters worse, it also means “because I am hindering their growth process, my organization will never develop beyond this point.” Are you ready for the many repercussions of that statement?

If you believe there is only one way to get things done, you’re screwed. If you believe nobody else around you is capable of being trained to do an adequate job, you’re screwed. To make matters worse, that says more about your inadequacies as a leader than it does about them. If you’re not mining your group’s talent pool and developing the skills of the people around you, what’s the point of your leadership? If you are the only person with hands-on experience, you are building an organization that is destined to fail.

You must have the discipline to shake off the “I’ll take care of it myself” mindset, even when frustrated with the results you’re getting. **If that’s the way you feel, you’re not thinking big enough!** If you have a vision that is large enough to be worth a darn, you physically couldn’t do everything because there are too many pieces to the puzzle. Hoarding all the tasks or going behind every-
one to redo their work so it’s done “your way” is a limiting belief that will keep you from ever growing beyond where you are. By yourself, you can only do so much. **In order to grow, you have to change your thinking to be more inclusive in the execution of your strategy.** Have enough vision to think about the long-term effects that not sharing responsibilities will cause. Your difficulties may be due to your lack of patience, a breakdown in communication, or a breakdown in key relationships. Don’t label all the toys yourself; figure out where the problems are and fix them. Lead!
LAW #5: BE THE THERMOSTAT.

It has been said, “No man can make his own footprint if he wears another man’s shoes.” No matter how good your successor was, your goal is always to become better than him or her. Actually, every Change Maker’s goal should be to open the path for their successor to go even higher than them. As a Change Maker, the foundation for your achievements rests on the shoulders of your predecessor. Therefore, by default you ought to be better off than they. If you’re not pushing the bar higher, that isn’t leadership; that’s called maintenance. Leaders get the corner office with nice furniture. Maintenance men get supply closets (and tight pants that moon people when they bend over).

If you’re reading this book indoors, you are probably in an air-conditioned room. If you look around, you will find a small box with a series of numbers on it. This box is responsible for regulating the temperature in the room. For all my slow people, I’m talking about the thermostat! The function of this device is uniquely apropos to your position as a leader. If you notice, the thermostat has a regulatory tool in it called a thermometer that tells you what the tem-
perature is. As soon as the temperature gets past a certain point, the thermostat kicks in to heat up or cool down the room to the desired temperature. This isn’t rocket science. But here’s what’s important for you to remember: **the thermometer will tell you what the atmosphere in the room is; the thermostat will change it.**

As a Change Maker, you have the choice of being a thermometer or a thermostat. Thermometers’ only value is that they will give you an accurate reflection of their environment. If it’s hot, the thermometer will reflect that it’s hot. If it’s cold, the thermometer will reflect that it’s cold. Thermometer leaders are the ones whose energy and zeal are determined by the current events. When the organization is hot, their energy level is high. When the organization is cold, they cave in. Thermometers say things like:

“People just won’t get motivated.”
“This is the way it’s always been.”
“We don’t have enough money to do anything differently.”
“We’ve tried that before. It’ll never work.”
“What did we do last year?”
“I don’t think we have enough people to do this.”

Thermometers are deeply affected by a down economy. They seek to blame external factors for their lack of success. It’s always “their fault.” When they do achieve good results, it is attributed to good karma, luck, or just having a positive attitude.

Thermostats are different. They set the temperature and cause the environment to adjust to them. While thermometers can tell you how things are, thermostats will tell you how things are going to be. Even if it’s hot in the room currently, if the thermostat is set to 60 degrees, it’s just a matter of time before there is a climate change. Thermostat leaders are unaffected by what they see. They don’t operate by sight; they operate by vision. They can look at what, to most, would be no opportunity and clearly see the fruition of their plans. They are unfazed by setbacks. They view them as teaching tools that help them become better.
They are both patient and impatient at the same time. They understand that change is never easy and never instant, so they work hard daily to put themselves one step closer to the goal.

The thermostat’s language is future-oriented. Their comments about the circumstances sounds more like:

“We are small in number, but strong in spirit.”
“I don’t know the answer—but I will figure it out.”
“If all of us do our parts, we will succeed.”
“Their problems do not have to be our problems.”
“Economic issues will spark our creativity. Necessity is the mother of invention. How much can we do with what we have?”

Being a thermostat isn’t just about being positive or enthusiastic; it is about making a choice to win. When you truly decide to succeed, you cut off the option to fail. Thermostats believe that their only weapon against failure is having a dogmatic determination that supersedes their circumstances. The way things are has absolutely no bearing on how things can be.

A thermostat’s favorite word is “yet.” The word “yet” implies that there is more coming if you just stay tuned. It means that there is something just around the corner. It means that if you leave early, you’re going to miss the big finale. “Yet” acknowledges the current condition, but prevents the present from stifling the future. It says that there is still hope and reason to keep trying.

“We haven’t hit our number...yet.”
“I haven’t gotten my raise...yet.”
“We haven’t figured out how to increase our retention numbers...not yet.”

Thermometers and thermostats have two entirely different language patterns, reflecting two different belief systems, and ultimately two different end results.
can you monitor your own mindset and avoid slipping into thermometer thinking, you can also do the same within your organization. Be a group of can-do people.

- Celebrate people who submit new ideas.
- Give commendations to those whose small extra effort yielded big dividends.
- Cut out pictures depicting what things will be like when the goal is reached.
- Work hard today, but live for the future.
Your qualification to lead your organization isn’t rooted in being extroverted or introverted. It is in your ability to adapt and become what is necessary for achieving your goal. Smart leaders know how to “turn it on” or “tone it down” depending on what will be most effective for that moment. There is an ancient saying that, “There is a time for everything,” meaning that what may be right in one situation may stifle you in another. There will be times when you need to turn up the volume on your personality to motivate your troops, and there will be times when you need to fall back and let other people shine. There isn’t one mode of behavior that is best for all occasions. You have to remain flexible. To have only one leadership style is equal to having none at all.

Don’t fall into the common trap of believing that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. There are benefits as well as drawbacks to every personality type. Your greatest strength can also be your greatest
**weakness.** I’ll help you by reframing some common characteristics to show you the Achilles Heel of each:

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<th>You See Yourself As</th>
<th>But Others May See You As</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compassionate</td>
<td>Overly-emotional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
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<td>Upholding Standards</td>
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<td>Intelligent</td>
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<td>Rational</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>Unappreciative</td>
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<td>Laid back</td>
<td>Unable to be “in the moment”</td>
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From the outside looking in, you may only see the benefits of certain behavioral styles, but now you can clearly see there are also drawbacks. Your personality type should be the least of your worries. While it can sometimes help if you are a charismatic person who lights up a room, if that’s not your natural temperament, it doesn’t mean you’re not a leader.

One of the first things you have to understand about leadership is a truth that all leaders agree on—**leaders are not born; they are built.** Nobody comes into the world knowing how to lead. Leadership is a skill that is developed through a long series of events in which it is observed, attempted, and screwed up a few times before it is eventually perfected (I use this term loosely because there is no such thing as a perfect leader). Never once will you hear in a maternity ward, two parents saying, “We were planning for a little boy, but we got a leader instead.” It doesn’t work that way. It doesn’t matter if you are the life of the party or a quiet giant; you can lead.

Tony Dungy, former head coach of the Super Bowl Champion Indianapolis Colts, is living proof of this. In the
National Football League, it is not only common to have a cussing, fussing, get-up-in-your-face-and-talk-about-your-mama kind of coach, it’s an expectation. I know players who say they get thoroughly cussed out several times a week.

That’s just how it is—except on Tony Dungy’s team. Coach Dungy made a decision early in his career to defy common practices among many coaches and use his Christian values as the platform for his leadership style. Unlike other coaches, he never screamed at his players, nor did he curse at or embarrass them when they made bad plays. Instead, he used his quiet voice to speak words of support and encouragement on the sidelines.

When you contrast Coach Dungy’s style with that of other well-known coaches, you would think he wouldn’t last one season in such a hard-nosed environment. But his results speak for themselves. He has one of the highest winning percentages of all coaches in NFL history and is a lock to go to the NFL Hall of Fame. The secret behind his success, which he discusses in his book *Uncommon: Finding Your Path to Significance*, is that he treated his players like sons, not players. He sought to be a coach, but not just that. He was also an advisor, a confidant, and more often than not, a father figure. His players swore by him. They didn’t love him because they won; they won because they loved him.

You’re completely wasting your time if you’re worrying about your personality type. Instead, shift your focus toward learning how to become more effective at influencing the people you’re leading. Depending on your confidence about your temperament, it is either going to serve as an excuse for an inability to achieve results, or a false sense of security that you should not have because you think you’re “better” than you really are.

The greater issue is how you can use whatever natural gifts you have to emotionally connect yourself to the people around you. That’s all that matters. Regardless of your being an introvert or an extrovert, if people like you, they’ll follow you. If they don’t, they won’t. This
is why I can’t begin a discussion on leadership without first referencing John Maxwell’s second law in his book *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, The Law of Influence. It states that influence is the measure of leadership, nothing more, and nothing less. Notice, he didn’t mention anything about wealth, humor, or good looks (which is good news for some). It’s about influence. Period.

While some coaches seek to control their players, Tony Dungy uses Maxwell’s model of influencing his players. While some coaches seek to get into the heads of their players, Coach Dungy became one of the greatest coaches of all time because of his ability to get into the hearts of his players. He understood that leadership is not about making people afraid to disrespect you. It is about compelling people to never want to disappoint you.

You can do the same. In order to earn the right to influence your new constituents, you want to convey to them that they are important—to you! If they remember nothing else about you, they need to hear you say verbally as well as through your actions that “you matter to me.”

One of our most basic human needs is to feel important. Significance is so essential to the human experience that even the wealthiest of men, who have all the earthly possessions money can buy, find themselves on lifelong quests for the one thing their bank accounts can’t get them—to matter. Men have leapt over canyons, broken world records, surrounded themselves with all of the (you fill in the blank) that would make them appear to be a somebody in the eyes of the masses. But, if inwardly they still question their value to the world around them, they have to top themselves yet again at a bigger, more flamboyant, and even more dangerous feat. They are willing to risk splattering themselves across a valley or getting steamrolled in order to make their name in society.

Celebrity magician and escape artist David Blaine described it this way, “I just believe that the feeling of wonder
is amazing. I am pushing myself as far as I can humanly push myself... I can only hope for the best and expect the worst.” His counterpart, Criss Angel, echoed his sentiments when he disclosed his belief that “pain is a beautiful thing.” Admittedly, these are extreme scenarios, but the principle is prevalent even in your environment. People want to feel important. As a Change Maker, part of your responsibility is to use your power to make this happen. Every seed of recognition, appreciation, and validation yields a harvest of influence.

Research shows that people who feel valued are people who go the extra mile to support their leaders and make them look good. They are significantly less likely to leave the organization in search of another organization that better meets their needs. What does this tell you? People need to feel important! Regardless of the nature of your organization or movement, your aim is the same—engagement.

Noted developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst Erik Erikson, known for his theory on social development of human beings, would add to this discussion that keeping your people tuned in comes down to answering three simple questions. You must be able to tell them 1) Who are we? 2) Where are we going, and 3) How are we getting there? They need to know that there is a vision and that they are significant to its success.

The viability of each of your initiatives mandates that every member is able to attest to the following statements:

1. **“I am valued by my leaders.”**
   Just as every child wants to know that their parents see them as unique and special, every member of an organization also seeks the validation of his or her leaders. Few things make a greater impression than having their superior take notice of their work and celebrate them publicly.

2. **“My efforts are contributing toward achieving the organization’s goals.”**
   Essential to realizing our value is having a perceived
sense of usefulness. People don’t perform well when they see themselves as small fish in a big ocean. How significant a person feels their role is determines whether they feel connected to or irrelevant to the group’s vision.

3. “I am a part of a winning team.”

Everyone loves to be a part of a winning team. Everyone needs to feel like their efforts and sacrifices are going to pay off in the end.

Throughout the year, distribute anonymous surveys that ask each respondent to score from one to five how much they agree with each of the above statements. This will create a great gauge for you to know exactly how well you’re connected with your people. Depending on how you score, you can give yourself a pat on the back or a kick in the butt. Either way, you will very quickly become crystal clear about what your next moves ought to be. Stick to what really makes a difference and don’t sweat the small stuff.
Your title gives you a position, but your influence gives you power. The title gives you a spot on the agenda, but until you earn their respect, they may care less about what you’re saying. Unless you were fortunate enough to have someone teach you differently, you probably grew up, like most of us, thinking that the most outgoing person in the crowd was the leader. As a shy kid, believing that I could never be a leader because I was naturally demure in nature didn’t sit well me. It wasn’t until many years later when I learned that there are three primary leadership functions. Let’s look at three leaders that exist within every organization.

1. **Visionary** – Visionaries are the most charismatic of the three leaders. They are known as the “idea people,” always coming up with creative ways to spice up the program. A Visionary can walk into an empty room and see it completely painted, furnished, and decorated. They have a knack for seeing the invisible. They live in the future and can easily
spot upcoming trends, or start new ones altogether.

Visionaries have a keen ability to “sell the sizzle” before the steak is ready. Meaning, they can get people to rally around a cause even when it is only in the idea stage. People are captivated by Visionaries’ smooth flow, well-placed words, and bubbling enthusiasm. When you get a Visionary talking about a new idea, no matter how crazy it seems, you want to believe them because they are so passionate about it!

In one of my favorite movies, *Bugsy*, Warren Beatty plays the role of Benjamin “Bugsy” Siegel, the ultimate Visionary. A member of the mob who, ironically, would do anything to become famous; Bugsy was responsible for creating the entertainment mecca we now know as Las Vegas, Nevada.

Set in the 1940’s, Las Vegas at the time was nothing more than a random plot of desert land. Of course, because there was absolutely nothing out there, the land was dirt cheap (get it—dirt cheap). He had a vision to build something in the middle of the desert that would bring people from all over the world. While it seemed crazy to most, Bugsy went after it full-force after he discovered that the Hoover Dam was being erected not far from the city, which would easily provide the needed power to his new brainchild.

I won’t tell you about the shocking turn of events in the movie, but you already know that his idea ultimately worked. Bugsy Siegel’s vision turned that little pile of dust into a multi-billion dollar industry as well as one of America’s fastest growing communities.

2. **Manager**—Managers are the people who bring all the pieces together. When they hear an idea, their first thoughts are about the people, resources, timelines and budgets necessary to pull it off. As great as they are in the area of coordination, Managers are often gifted in the area of networking because they have to
know a lot of people in order to accomplish their tasks. If you need anything from a good deejay to changing your identity, they can handle it. It’s part of what makes them indispensable within an organization.

I would be absolutely useless without the Managers in my life. When I do private seminars for speakers and entrepreneurs, I work with a small team of two Managers who keep things running smoothly while I am on stage. They understand that their job is to free me up to focus on what I do well—teaching from the platform. They make checklists to ensure that all the details are covered, all the way down to making sure there is water and candy at everyone’s table. Not to mention, they also take an occasional glance to check whether my head isn’t shining too much on camera. It would be impossible for me to measure the value of all the time, energy and headaches they’ve saved me.

Here’s the kicker—they don’t do all the work themselves. Sure, they’re ultimately responsible for getting it done, but they’re not the ones in the room at 11 pm putting tablecloths on the tables. They submit lists of everything that needs to be done prior to the event. They use this list to delegate tasks to the appropriate people until everything is done. As Managers, they use the power of clear instructions that produce repeatable results. They simply provide the direction, support, and oversight; their delegates do the rest.

3. Specialist-The Specialists are the most technical and often the most anti-social of the three leaders. Specialists often take the position, “I don’t care about the big picture, just tell me what needs to get done and I’ll do it.” Their very name implies that they have specialized knowledge, which makes them the go-to people when you need something specific accomplished.
4. For example, if you owned a restaurant, you would be the Visionary, creating the theme and atmosphere. The headwaiter and general manager would be the, well, Managers. Duh! The chefs would be your Specialists. If you notice, they are the furthest from the customers, but arguably the most important people in the building. The chefs are unfazed by the band playing on stage or the color of the table decorations. All they want to know is what they need to cook. The best thing about this is that they are extremely easy to work with when given all the tools they need to be successful. They are low-maintenance and low-drama. Isn’t that every leader’s dream?

When I get called to help an organization, I am often asked to fix a disconnection between Management and the Specialists. As awesome as Specialists are when everyone is on the same page, they can sometimes be so narrowly focused, they fail to see everyone else’s perspective. Because of this, some often question why I count Specialists in my leadership trifecta (I’ve always wanted to use the word “trifecta” in a book—I’ve finally done it!). While I understand arguments to the contrary, I can’t overlook Specialists because they have to work with the other two types of leaders to accomplish the vision. They influence the Visionaries by reminding them to get their heads out of the clouds and to think practically. They influence the Managers by helping them establish realistic expectations and budgets. If the Specialists aren’t happy, nothing will get accomplished!

That said, once you discern which leadership function aligns with your natural gifts and passions, you will achieve a valuable goal: inPowerment.

inPowerment is the term I use to replace that of the most commonly-used word, “delegation.” The “d word” shrieks fear in most people’s heart, conjuring up thoughts of times when they told someone to do something, they completely dropped the ball, and everyone suffered because of it.
Everyone has a story like this. Part of the reason why we have one is because of the very nature of the word “delegation.” What does it mean? Yeah, yeah, yeah. You can make up a definition on the spot, but if we were to keep it real (which we are), everyone’s definition is different. This is why the results can be so unpredictable. **What you name it influences how you treat it.** If you call something a word that you don’t understand, how could you get results that you can predict?

Hence, inPowerment is the word that explains the best-case scenario results you want when working with others. **inPowerment is when you assign people roles that represent each person’s passion. You put people “in power” and let them own the outcome.**

A key difference between delegation and inPowerment is ownership. Delegation is task-driven and often results in people doing what they’re told, and nothing more. inPowerment is outcome-driven. It capitalizes on their strengths, challenges them with the responsibility of working out the details, and ultimately celebrates their contribution as the person who stepped up and got it done. **Delegation promotes obedience; inPowerment promotes ownership.**

This is what it sounds like in a conversation:

**Delegation:** “Aimee, I need you to call everyone on the list and get people to come to our meeting.”

**inPowerment:** “Aimee, you mentioned you enjoy working with people and are very persuasive. The meeting is Thursday. We need at least 75 percent of the people from the list to show up. I need you to own it. Can you do it?”

The philosophy behind inPowerment is that there is a perfect fit for every task within an organization based on their temperament and talents. That which that stresses
one person out is a dream job for someone else. In order to create fully-functional teams, the leader’s responsibility is to place people in positions where they can shine. Thus, workers receive the benefit of making contributions that represent their natural strengths, creativity, and tenacity. You receive the benefit of superior-quality work with fewer errors, and completed in less time.

This can only happen when people are working from their strengths, not their weaknesses. Creative people do best in creative roles. Analytical people do best in analytical roles. Have them switch places and innovation ceases. Case in point:

Have you ever done something you loved to do? When you did that something you love, did the time pass by quickly? When you did the something you love to do and time blew by quickly, were you excited about the next time you got to do it?

Have you ever done something you couldn’t stand? Did time creep by slowly? When you did the thing you couldn’t stand and time crept by slowly, did you dread the next time you had to do it?

Exactly.

Though this terminology may be new, the concept isn’t. My first “real” boss, Roy Spence taught me during my college internship at GSD&M Idea City, one of the most successful advertising agencies in the Southwest. During our first few days there, he pulled several of us into his office and explained why most companies are set up to fail. Roy pulled a notepad out of his desk and drew a ladder. He started at the top, labeled it “CEO,” and each rung below it a subordinate title. He did this until he got to the bottom of the ladder. He then drew us—underneath it.

“I’m the big cheese,” he said, pointing to the top. Then he pointed below the bottom of the ladder. “You guys are
Cheetos.” Roy always had a way of pimp slapping you while making you laugh at the same time.

He went on to explain how, in most companies, high performers are rewarded by being promoted to a position on a higher rung, but outside of their strength.

He continued, “If you’re a great designer, it doesn’t make any sense for me to make you a manager over a team of other designers. Being great at illustration doesn’t equate to being great at managing people.”

He then drew a circle next to the ladder, and several around it. “Here’s how we do it around here. If you’re good at what you do, we don’t give you a new job; we let you do more of what you’re good at.”

He used the circles to display how his employees would expand in responsibility (horizontally) versus following the traditional model of vertical promotion. It made perfect sense.

Unfortunately, I had forgotten Mr. Spence’s words for over a decade until they virtually came out on their own during a workshop of mine. As I explained the essential truth—as people to work inside their area of gifting in order to achieve fulfillment—more pearls of leadership wisdom followed.

I told my audience, “Folks, remember this, people don’t have to work for your organization—especially not the good people. They have options. If your people are stressed out daily because they don’t enjoy their work, it’s only a matter of time before they find a place that better fits their needs, work style, and personality.”

That being said, here’s the key to getting twice as much done in half the time and effort. This one line is going to boost everyone’s productivity, including yours. Are you ready?

“inPowerment. Work on your strengths and give people the power to own the rest.”

You could hear a pin drop. Eyes started squinting, indicating that they were pondering the accuracy of my statement. I said, “Look, there are certain things you just
won’t be good at. There are other things that, even if they are challenging, you enjoy doing. For instance, I love speaking to organizations and teaching them leadership strategies. Some might even say I’m good at it…and those people would be correct. However, as good as I am at one role, I am severely challenged in others. Like spreadsheets. I don’t like details. They make my skin crawl. You don’t want me balancing your books for you. If you hired me to be your accountant, we would both go to jail!”

When we do things we enjoy, it energizes us. When we are tasked to do things we don’t feel good about, it is a de-motivator. The less confidence we have in our ability to perform, the greater the likelihood that low output and possibly sabotage will occur. The statistics highlight the issue even further. A recent report from the BlessingWhite firm reported that only one out of every three employees is actively engaged, and 17 percent said they are actively disengaged. Scores of similar surveys have also reported that workers feel undervalued and have one eye on the door.

The trick is to know what you’re best at, then build a team that has equal strengths in the other areas. There are things you aren’t going to be able to pass on to others. This is what Roy did. He’s an incredible visionary. He has the kind of personality that lights up every room he enters. When he spoke at our office gatherings, the atmosphere was like a religious tent revival. One of his nicknames was “Reverend Roy.” He was brilliant at rallying the troops and getting us to believe that GSD&M was on the verge of taking over the world.

As talented as Roy Spence (the S in GSD&M) was at arousing the congregation, he still had weaknesses. This is where G, D, and M, the other founders of the company, came in. Everyone had their own unique skill set that they brought to the table. Individually, they were each strong. Together, they comprised a history-making, industry-changing team.

As I have said many times, leadership is supposed to create a transfer of enthusiasm. Your job is to get what is
“in you” into them. The way you do this is by inPowering them. inPowered people feel connected to the group and their work has purpose. This creates positive feelings about their performance because they’re working on things they’re good at. This creates positive feelings about their role in the group. Hence, they gain a positive outlook about their future with the organization.
If you’re like me, you love a good “whodunit” flick. On every television series that deals with solving a mystery, the investigators begin the investigation by asking the same question—*what’s the motive?* Motive is defined as a compelling reason to act. A person’s motive can determine whether they will end up as a witness or a suspect. The detectives simply want to discover whether the person in question would have sufficient reason to commit the crime. Once the motive is discovered, we’re all in for 30 to 60 minutes of good drama.

In the same spirit that the detectives du jour have had to dig deep to find the assailant’s criminal motives, you have to find a motive of your own as a Change Maker. Be honest with yourself, why are you in power? Really.

- **Is it because you want to help others?**
  You could have done that before you were promoted.
- **Is it because you wanted more prestige and recognition?**
  What if they don’t buy into your vision?

- **Is it because you wanted more money?**
  What will happen when you’re working so hard at putting out multiple fires that you feel like no amount of money could adequately pay you for this?

I ask you again, what is your *real* incentive for taking center stage? What is engrained so deeply in your heart that it wakes you up early and compels you to go to bed late? What will refuel your tank when you’re running on empty? What will give you hope when all around you swear you’ve gone crazy? Are your ideas impossible? What’s going to keep you from quitting?

If you have learned anything by now, you know for sure that real leadership extends far beyond any superficial reasons for holding a title within the group. You have to “find the WHY” within you that is strong enough to get you through the many tough times and into the Promised Land. It can’t be because someone coerced you or because of what others would think if you didn’t step up. This is the one time that it’s okay to be selfish. Even if your answers may be unpopular, they are still *your* answers. As my sister once said to me, “When you do things for your own reason, nobody can take that away from you.” So Mr. or Ms. Change Maker, the first step on your journey of transforming minds is to become crystal clear about why you’re embarking on this journey in the first place. You absolutely must know the purpose of your position.

When you have a firm grip on your “why,” it will unleash your passion for what you’re doing. Passion is an essential tool in every good leader’s repertoire. This is especially true when you’re new to your role, have no clue what you’re doing yet, and have a mile-long list of goals to achieve. Be prepared; you probably won’t see many results
initially as you are settling into your new role. You will be thrown into new situations that require you to have answers that you don’t have. **But the one thing that will always neutralize the pain of what you’re going through is your passion for what you’re getting to.** When you are fired up and fully convinced that things are going to work out, what should be a stumbling block turns into a stepping-stone. Problems don’t bother you; they make you better. You accept that you’re going to take some knocks during the initial rounds, but by the time it’s all said and done, you refuse to give up until you have gotten yours.

Your passion will also be contagious among those around you. A Change Maker with uncontrollable enthusiasm is like a match looking for a dry place to start a fire. Even if you can’t see all the details of how it’s all going to come together, look excited anyhow! The more excited you are, the more excited they’ll be. No matter how you feel inside, never let any doubt or lack of self-confidence show. Put a smile on your face, talk a little louder than normal and speak the conviction of someone who is holding the winning hand. People around you will figure you must know what you’re doing or else you wouldn’t be so sure of yourself. It’s called bluffing! **Passion persuades!**

Remember, my friend, you set the tempo for your group. Whatever you do, they will play “follow the leader.” If you are optimistic, they’ll be optimistic. If you are focused, they’ll be focused. If you operate without passion, so will they. As my mother used to say to me, “Attitudes are contagious; is yours worth catching?”
A lack of vision is synonymous with a lack of focus. Put your finger in front of this page and slowly bring it to your eyes. I’m serious; do it! As your finger moves closer to your face, two things happen: you start to look very funny to others and your finger looks like its splitting into two. What you’ve just done is trick your brain into deciding which eye it’s going to use to see. Because it gets confused, it tries to see through both eyes and that’s why you get double vision. While it would be more effective to close one eye to focus, your brain’s natural tendency to utilize both eyes makes it impossible, even if you’re seeing the right thing the wrong way.

I’ll go a step further. This exercise serves as an excellent metaphor for the many decisions you make in leadership. Often times, there is no clear-cut right choice. Both options are staring at you in the face, forcing you to commit to one or the other. Add in pressure, limited time, limited resources, complaining constituents, and the like, and the intensity magnifies. This is called the Bright Shiny Object Syndrome. It is a scenario in which we are lured away from our main interest by a
competing one that promises to be the latest and greatest solution to our problems. The challenge that this creates is that your momentum is diverted, and you go in different directions rather than staying the course. While there is always room for finding better ways to solve old problems, you and I both know the result is that you take two steps forward and two steps back, ultimately resulting in little or no progress. As a Change Maker, this is treacherous to your leadership because you appear to be uncertain, whimsical, and operating without vision. Nobody wants to follow a person who is hypnotized by Bright Shiny Object Syndrome. The cure for BSOS is easy: Focus.

**Focus = Clarity + Commitment**

**Clarity**

Clarity is clear thought. When you have clarity, you operate with one stream of consciousness. You know what you want, and you go after it. Popular success teacher Mike Murdock, explains, “Brainstorming is the accumulation of ideas. Focusing is the elimination of them.” **Clarity allows you to eliminate any thoughts that are inconsistent with your goal.** In other words, you don’t milk the cow when what you want is eggs.

People with clear goals are as rare as broke people with good advice. Most of us walk around life wondering what’s going to happen next. People with clarity create what’s going to happen next. They get what they want because they know what they want to get. This is the reason I asked you earlier WHY you choose to lead. When you can answer with certainty, it will guide every decision you make and will reveal the path for getting there with the least amount of steps.

Conversely, those who don’t have clarity live and lead in the realm of ambiguity. Their instructions and expectations change frequently. Following directions from these discombobulated people is just as nerve-racking as walk-
ing around blindfolded in a room filled with mousetraps. **Nobody will advance at full speed until they have clarity about what’s ahead.**

**Commitment**

By definition, commitment is a pledge to do something in the future. In practice, **commitment is doing what you say you will do, long after the mood in which you said it has left you.** It is the glue that binds you to your word.

Even if you are clear about your intentions, commitment gives you a bias toward taking action. Many of us know that we want to lose weight, and we know exactly how we’ll look once we achieve our ideal physique, but until we are committed to the process, nothing changes. Commitment is the antithesis of convenience. You know that you are committed when you flip that determination switch and your mindset becomes, “this will happen by any means necessary,” not based on how easily it can be achieved. You already know that every great feat is going to require great sacrifice. This is life’s way of testing you to see how badly you really want this thing. It wants to know if you’re interested or truly committed.

By the end of the process, you will learn how much your goal was worth to you. In the past, you may have made noble efforts, but at some point you will be challenged to give your all, to put all your chips in the middle of the table and either win or go home. Are you ready to go all in? You can always tell how badly you want something by how much you’re willing to give for it. **When you commit to an outcome, you’re committing to the sacrifices that accompany it.**

Don’t get nervous on me. You’ll be okay. Here’s a tip that will help you focus—as you have just proven by putting your finger in front of your face, the brain can only focus on one thing at a time. If you focus on your finger, this book becomes fuzzy and vice versa. This is also true about your thoughts. Your brain can only think one thought at a time.
Use this to your advantage. Instead of asking the same goofy question that we all normally ask ourselves, *what’s the worst thing that can happen*, which encourages us to focus on the negative outcomes, we should ask ourselves *what’s the BEST thing that can happen*. What if your big risk does pay off? What if you *do* raise the funds? What if you *can* achieve your big, crazy, wild “I can’t believe we just did that” goal? What would that be like? Invest time thoroughly examining your answers, preferably writing them down to achieve greater clarity. Visualize what your best-case scenario will look like the day it becomes a reality.

See the possibilities. What would the outcome look like if everything went your way? Get this image in your mind and take action boldly, as if your next step will trigger a chain of events that will produce this result. You will be pleasantly surprised when your confidence instantly elevates and your commitment level goes through the roof. Best of all, your newfound focus will have a ripple effect within your organization. Because of your influence, your group will see what you see and believe what you believe. Instead of playing it safe, choose to go after the best-case scenario and your WHY will manifest.
Have you ever wondered why you certain themes repeat in your life? Or perhaps you have noticed that you tend to favor one type of person over another in a group. The reason for this, as well as for many other choices you consciously and unconsciously make, is revealed by examining your history and discovering the origin of the belief systems that create the results you are getting. Answer the questions below with honesty and transparency. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper if you prefer to have more space.

What would your last 3 relationship partners say about you?

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What are your 3 best qualities in relationships?
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What are your 3 biggest areas of improvement in relationships?
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Are your parents married, divorced, married but “not really”?
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Who was your favorite boss? Why?
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What five people do you admire most? Why?

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When you sense conflict, do you deal with it immediately or let it blow over with time?

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How frequently do you read books on leadership and study leadership and communication models? How does this contribute to your development and decision making?

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What was your birth order?

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For what did your mother (or dominant parental influence) reprimand you most as a child?

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What recurring themes make you frustrated about your decisions, causing you to tell yourself, “I’ve got to get it together”? 

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Now that you probably feel as though you’ve just had a therapy session, let’s dissect each question and how your answers are manifesting in your leadership philosophy and practices. They should shed light on how you developed your thoughts concerning trust, sharing credit, independence, teamwork, emotional reconciliation, accountability, and success.

Question 1- What would your last 3 relationship partners say about you?

Nobody knows you better than people with whom you’ve been in a relationship. Even if you had a bad breakup, your ex should be able to give a fairly accurate account of your character. Before you broke up (and things were civil), they saw the best you had to offer, which is probably what you used to hook them in the first place. They can speak to your honesty, your promptness, your emotional consistency, and your attentiveness. The way you performed in your relationship(s) is likely to be consistent with your performance in leadership. Both involve how you
engage other people over a long-term period. Chances are, your exes and your current members or subordinates could swap stories and find lots of commonalities.

**Question 2 - What are your 3 best qualities in relationships?**

Once again, there is a similarity between how you treated your love bunny and how you act toward your constituents. Your best relationship qualities reflect your strengths in group dynamics. This is what you bring to the table when you join an organization.

**Question 3 - What are your 3 biggest areas of improvement in relationships?**

The things that drove love bunny nuts about you are likely to be the qualities that are stifling your leadership career. These are the areas that you need to decide whether you are going to accept them as character flaws (which may prevent you from advancing your organization), or if you are going to take them head on, seek counsel, and put people around you who will compensate for your weaknesses.

**Question 4 - Are your parents married, divorced, married but “not really”?**

Volumes of studies have been documented by psychologists about how significantly we are impacted by the first relationship we are exposed to in life. Your parents’ relationship affects how you perform in all relationships as an adult. If you had stability in the house, you are more likely to be open, welcoming, and generally trusting of people. If you were exposed to arguments, cheating, bitterness, and talk of how “all men are dogs” or “all women are evil” in your home, your outlook on relationships may be jaded, emotionally selective, and slightly distrusting of people’s intentions until they have proven themselves. You have learned that people come and go, so you place less emphasis on saving failing relationships. If your parents are married
but “not really,” you have experienced a relationship that is a façade. You have observed how two people can hold a title, but not have any direction. You have missed out on seeing two people come together to restore emotional intimacy after a setback. You will have to be conscious of these effects in order to avoid repeating the pattern in your leadership positions.

**Question 5 - Who was your favorite boss? Why?**

Supervisors are the most impactful professional relationships you have in your life. They are your dominant leader/subordinate relationship outside of the home and school. Positive relationships with bosses teach you how to lead more than any other relationship in life. You see firsthand certain qualities that you will emulate because they teach you by example how to conduct yourself on a day-to-day basis.

**Question 6 - What five people do you admire most? Why?**

Admiration is somewhat narcissistic in nature. It has been said that what we love about someone is what we love about ourselves. We admire qualities in others that we either possess or would like to possess. The list of people you admire speaks about what you value most in people. It is also a preview of the qualities that you will cultivate in yourself and close relationships.

**Question 7 - When you sense conflict, do you deal with it immediately or let it blow over with time?**

Red flag! Your answer to this question deserves extreme scrutiny. Conflict resolution is the number one relationship skill of all. Even people who are completely satisfied with each other occasionally have to resolve differences. Your very attitude about conflict speaks volumes about how you handle yourself during disagreements. Where there is no right or wrong answer to this question, its implications are huge. If you are the type to handle conflict on the spot, you may be viewed as aggressive, caustic, or even a bully
depending on your skillset and temperament. If you prefer to let it blow over, not only does that reveal that you have a lot of unresolved issues, the greater inference is that you live with a lot of unspoken expectations. This can result in relationships going from zero to blowout over what seems to be nothing, all because you have been quietly “boiling” about offenses that you never verbalized.

**Question 8 - How frequently do you read books on leadership and study leadership and communication models? How does this contribute to your development and decision making?**

If you’re not actively pursuing improvement, it means you’re living off of what you learned in the past to solve today’s problems. You aren’t growing. Albert Einstein said, “A problem cannot be solved with the same mentality that created it.” History’s most brilliant thinkers have enshrined their best ideas in the pages of books. All of the answers you need have been written down for your benefit by someone who has already tested them. Better leaders make better organizations. Better organizations make better campuses, companies, and communities. *It starts with you.* The best investment you will ever make, the one that will always yield the greatest return, is in yourself.

**Question 9 - What was your birth order?**

This has nothing to do with astrology or anything like that, so don’t go there. Your birth order is where you fit among your siblings. According to Dr. Kevin Leman, one of the foremost authorities on birth order, it can heavily influence everything in your life, including the career you select, who you date, the car you drive, and you’re your credit score. Dr. Leman teaches the following guidelines about birth order traits: **Firstborns** are aggressive, reliable, and conscientious. They have a strong need for approval from anyone in authority. **Only children** are firstborns on steroids. They are even bigger perfectionists, and they get along with people older than them. **Middle children**
often grow up feeling ignored, or that they were treated differently. They can read people well and are peacemakers who see all sides of a situation. They are independent and intuitive. They strive to be different than (even the exact opposite of) their other siblings. **Last born** children are the showmen. They are used to being the center of attention. They are used to being taken care of. They expect to get their way. They are the most financially irresponsible. They just like to have a good time.

Surely, you see how the goings-on in the house in which you were raised influence the decisions you make in organizations. Learning the traits of your birth order will reveal the source of your deepest aspirations and frustrations. Unbeknownst to you, you have likely been recreating your family dynamics in every interpersonal relationship and group environment. This should also help you better understand the needs and unspoken expectations of the people you lead.

**Question 10 - For what did your mother (or dominant parental influence) reprimand you most as a child?**

This isn’t what you think it is. The things you got in trouble for most as a child are the things you should be doing more of as an adult. If you talked too much, it means you probably have a gift of gab. If you lied a lot, you are naturally creative. If you broke things around the house due to rough playing, you definitely have a penchant for physical activities. Listen to your inner voice. Find assignments and positions that will allow you to do what you do best. It will feel like a natural fit. Best of all, you’ll be great at it, everyone will admire you, and it won’t feel like work. What got you your biggest spankings then will give you your biggest paychecks today.

**Question 11 - What recurring themes make you frustrated about your decisions, causing you to tell yourself, “I’ve got to get it together”?**
If you were honest with yourself in your answer, you just identified your top barriers to your greatness. It isn’t “them,” it’s you. You know what causes you to consistently stumble. You know how your life would improve if you could just get over the hump and rid yourself of these habits from your life. You know. Now that you know better, you can do the work to become better. Your best life and your organization’s best future depend on it.
Launching a spaceship is a big deal. There is no room for error. Being off by even a few degrees on take-off or reentry could cause the shuttle to burn up in the Earth’s atmosphere. The lives of the astronauts are in the hands of a team of incredibly intelligent, well-trained, meticulous people. Because of the need for extreme accuracy, they have stages of checklists that have to be completed and signed before a shuttle is cleared to launch. At one point, there were five people in the United States whose metallurgical signatures were required for a shuttle to deploy. Elite aerospace consultant, Tony Magee was one of them. In his book *You Can’t Shove a Great Life Into a Small Dream*, he shared one of his top secrets for success in business and life: “your expectation is your destination.”

What “The Destiny Doctor” is conveying is the importance of paying attention to that which is in your mind because it is sure to manifest in your life. What you deeply, firmly believe, you should take action toward creating. Every result is first born as a thought. Well, usually. This axiom is almost always true in your personal success. In
team dynamics, the rules change slightly. While expectations remain the substratum of our actions as individuals, it is only the voiced expectations that influence relationships. Tony Magee was indeed correct; your expectations do determine your destination, but when two or more people come together, expectations become the cause of the majority of frustrations.

Have you ever been let down before? Have you ever not been on the same page with someone? Have you ever been disappointed? All of the above are byproducts of unmet and usually unspoken expectations. I am always amazed at how rarely teams come together to have the “Goals and Roles” conversation. We have been led to believe that as long as everyone heard the same instructions at the same time, things are going to work out perfectly, and the group will operate in harmony. And it fails to pan out every time. Someone ends up hating the group, hating the project, and ultimately resenting being a part of it, causing the overall quality of the output to diminish.

I’ll be transparent and throw myself under the bus. I admit that I too have fallen into this trap far too many times. I didn’t know to value clearly explicit expectations because it was the right thing to do. I was beaten into submission. I grew weary of giving directions to my teammates in my company and getting back work that was well-intended but totally wrong. It was frustrating to have days or weeks waiting on them to return the work as promised, only to have to start all over again because what I thought I said was not what they heard. All of that ceased the day one of them saw my frustration, looked at me blankly and asked “What were you expecting?”

#$@* IT! This was the conversation that we should have been had before parting ways to get the work done! That simple question could have abated countless numbers of disappointments. It could have prevented my aggravation with their work while also preventing their bitterness toward me for wasting their time.
But it’s not your fault. We weren’t taught differently. We weren’t taught the right way to get the right results. All of that is about to change.

Regardless of your group’s tenure or the nature of your relationships, make it a point today to have the Goals and Roles conversation in order to put everyone on the same page. It is a game changer. Take turns and fill in the blank of these two profound statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPECTATIONS SHEET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You can count on me for _________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_______________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_______________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’d like your help with_________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_______________________</td>
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<td>_______________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That’s it! It’s so easy. This process work for any relationship, be it professional or romantic. It can even work with your children. The essence of this conversation is for both parties to get your thoughts, wishes, and desires out of your minds and on paper. **Assumptions are killers.** Don’t leave it to chance that another person will think like you, share your motivations or work ethic. The only way to ensure that your entire group remains on the same page is to have a routinely scheduled, brutally honest, results-oriented dialogue about what everyone intends to contribute and what they need to receive in return.
Hopefully, you see the many practical applications within your organization. Your inPowerment is rooted in having clearly-defined expectations. When tasks go undone or under-done, it is usually due to a partial or mutual failure to go beyond the due date and establish preliminary check-in dates to ensure that work is flowing in the right direction. This sounds so simplistic. You’re probably thinking, “Come on Jonathan, everyone does this.” No they don’t. Just think, when was the last time you sat down and wrote down the following information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMITMENT AND DELIVERABLES SHEET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment Due Date ____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check-In Date #1 ____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Deliverable ____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check-In Date #2 ____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Deliverable ____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check-In Date #3 ____</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expected Deliverable ____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Take the time to write this information before the work begins. Make it a part of every interaction you have with people you work with and interact with frequently. Doing this will eradicate 90 percent of your misunderstandings, moments of conflict, and all-out arguments about who should have done what. This way, everyone’s expectations are 100 percent clear from the beginning. Five to ten minutes up front can save you hours of bickering and redoing work that could have been done correctly the first time had someone just…said something.
One of my favorite speaking engagements of all time was when I was invited by the US Army to train their soldiers on leadership in Seoul, South Korea. The experience changed my life forever. My view of the armed forces changed significantly when I met the many brave men and women who are keeping our country safe. Going into the trip, I thought everyone in the military was older like GI Joe or secret agent like James Bond. I had no clue that so many of the soldiers on the front line were actually young people—18, 19, 20 years old. That was a big eye-opener for me. I had no clue that I owed so much to these great Americans who were serving our country at such a young age. I instantly buried all my assumptions and stereotypes. I decided to get to know the “real Army,” not this Hollywood version I made up in my head.

I learned their acronyms (they have about 8,000 of them), their ranks, and the different job functions that were available. What impressed me most, however, was how some people were saluted when they walked down the sidewalk
while others weren’t. I learned that there were certain classes of officers who earned the right to be saluted by all of their subordinates as a sign of respect. Based on the pins they wore, other soldiers could see from far away to whom they needed to pay extra homage. This is where we got the expression “earning your stripes,” meaning working to achieve the respect of others.

I thought about how all Change Makers, even civilians, have to earn their stripes. Only those who have been through adversity, and have actually led through adversity, get the respect of their peers and followers. Those who are anointed as leaders don’t have nearly the same pull as those who have worked their way to the top.

There are seven stripes that a Change Maker has to earn in order to ascend to the privilege of a reputable legacy. Your real leadership experience doesn’t begin until you’ve hit some hardship. You haven’t officially led until you have had to overcome obstacles in order to preserve your reputation or the future of your organization. The Seven Stripes of Leadership are as follows:

1. **Crisis** – Former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani, often criticized by some for his policies prior to September 11th, 2001, became known as one of the top experts on leadership based on the way he guided his city and country through the chaos ensuing the deadliest terrorist attacks in American history. It was his defining moment as a leader. Millions trusted him to lead the nation through a time in which the entire country felt vulnerable and in need of direction. His unflappable character etched his place in history as one of our great leaders. It proved that he was unflappable with character that we could depend on.

2. **Scandal** – Former Los Angeles Lakers coach Phil Jackson, the winningest pro basketball coach of all time, almost didn’t make it to the record books. In
2004, his two superstars, Shaquille O’Neal and Kobe Bryant, both having egos bigger than the Staples Center, couldn’t exist on the same team and Shaquille O’Neal was traded. For years, the bad blood between the two became bigger than the game itself. Jackson, known as “The Zen Master,” managed to temper the scandal, keep his team focused, and three years later win his final two championships. Many point to the superior talent the Lakers possessed as the reason for their winning ways. However, all of the players and insiders agree that it was the leadership of their coach that kept their attention on basketball, not headlines. It was a tough task, but it clearly paid off.

3. Your Mistake – Former president Bill Clinton is a master of reinvention. Refusing to be held down by the Monica Lewinsky scandal in 1997 that rocked the political world and dealt a severe blow to his credibility, he has reinvented himself and is now known as a top humanitarian and advocate for international causes.

4. Birth – The measurement of your leadership isn’t what you’re doing right now; it is what is still in place once you’re gone. Anyone can get the party going while they’re there, but what happens when the second generation of leadership takes over? How many programs, policies, and traditions have you built and systematized into the culture that will still be in place when you aren’t there to oversee them? Earning this stripe is two-fold: you get half credit for that which you give birth to and the other half when it continues without you.

5. Rebirth – Steve Jobs was fired from Apple in 1985. This happens every day—but not to the founder of his own company! But Jobs wouldn’t quit. He
founded NeXT, a computer platform development company, which was eventually acquired by, you guessed it, Apple. Jobs eventually earned his CEO position back and lead the company to record growth in revenue and market share. Under Jobs’ second regime, Apple produced the iPod, iPhone, and iPad, its largest selling products.

6. **Repeat Victory** – In most sports, it is rare for a tournament champion to repeat the following year. In many companies, the winner of Rep of the Year rarely repeats. The temptation to slack off, rest on your laurels, and become complacent is magnified when your team has nothing to play for but simply trying to beat itself. Few are that driven to continue to raise the bar on their own performance. It takes a leader who can fight the natural tendency to lose focus. Leaders must keep the group hungrier for more than their last accomplishment. This only happens on rare occasions.

7. **Coaching Someone Through Stripes 1-6**– You don’t become a Master until you have guided someone through their defining moment. Only when you transition from leader to coach will your legacy be solidified.
LAW #13:
MORE IS CAUGHT THAN TAUGHT.

Whoever came up with *do as I say, not as I do* was a borderline moron. From birth, we learn by imitating the actions of people around us. We learned to speak by repeating the ABC’s time and time again. Even the habits that we now consider mundane such as brushing our teeth or tying our shoes all came from countless episodes of watching and mimicking people around us. Evidently, “do as I say” was developed by someone who didn’t understand the power of influence. People will learn more about who you are by observing you than they will by listening to you all day long.

Studies show that ninety-three percent of every message is non-verbal. Thus, the most salient and memorable message (i.e. the one that “sticks”) is not the words that come out of your mouth, but the behavior you model. As it pertains to setting a standard, talk is cheap. In my years of teaching and mentoring leaders, this has been the most difficult lesson for people to internalize. Perhaps this is because it is the most difficult to consistently uphold. We all want to have it
our way without giving up much in return. Unfortunately, it doesn’t work that way. All of your inconsistencies will be on display. All of your inadequacies will be on display. All of your “I said this, but did that” moments will be on display. And all of them are being observed (and eventually mimicked) by the people in your organization.

As a person of influence, you must always be aware that you are just that—innfluential. Although it is intangible, an organization’s culture is living, growing, and is always shaping your future. **Culture is everything in your organization. It is the atmosphere that determines how every decision is made and every plan is executed.** Human beings can only survive if the atmosphere contains certain elements. Fish need a certain atmosphere. Plants need a certain atmosphere. Excellence does too! The same way we need air, plants need soil, and fish need water, excellence requires focus and consistency.

For this reason, keep a close watch on the difference between your words and your actions. We all have an Actual Self and a Desired Self. The two are often similar, but rarely the same. Don’t beat yourself up. Give yourself room to grow, but be aware of the confusing message you’re sending when your actions don’t line up with your words. What you consistently do (or don’t do) will soon be reflected in the culture of the people in which you interact with most, and in the people they interact with. Then it will be pervasive throughout your organization.

MIT professor Dr. Ed Schein describes the three layers of organizational culture as:

**ARTIFACTS** – Tangible and verbal elements of an organization. This includes items such as:

- Logos
- Colors
- Hand signs
- Tattoos or markings
• Articles of clothing
• Chants
• Songs

Anything that you can see or hear two or more people doing is considered an Artifact that shapes the group’s culture.

**ESPOUSED VALUES** – The words used to describe your organization. This includes items such as:

• Mission statement
• Vision statement
• Constitution and bylaws
• Standard Operating Procedures
• New member’s orientation
• Policies
• Slogans
• Mantras
• Inside jokes
• Parables, fables, and passed down stories

**ASSUMPTIONS** – The actual values of the culture, which don’t necessarily follow the espoused values. This includes items such as:

• Rules that aren’t followed
• A counterculture within the dominant culture
• Infighting or rumor spreading
• Side conversations that contradict what is being purported in group settings
• Unmet goals
• Talking but not taking action
• People responding only when something is mentioned in public, not when it is on paper
Dr. Schein explains that the Assumptions are more influential in the establishment of your organization’s culture than the Artifacts and Values. The first two levels are who you say you are, while the third level is who you really are. For example, an organization that espouses to be about excellence but consistently starts their meetings late or has type-o’s in the agenda clearly is not excellent. Espousing to be about diversity while your leadership is homogeneous clearly is not about inclusion. Espousing to value creativity, but not structuring any time for pitching and implementing people’s new ideas clearly reveals that there is not an emphasis on encouraging innovation.

It only takes one person or one significant event to completely shift the direction of people’s attitudes and practices. This can be really good news or a big warning sign depending on which traits are passed on. On a very personal level, I learned this lesson by the way in which my family interacts with each other.

My great grandmother was a very stoic woman. Pictures weren’t common in that day, but in the few that exist of her, she isn’t smiling in any of them. Consequently, my grandmother was the same way. She was a very smart woman, having graduated high school early at age 16, and quite the entrepreneur in her lifetime. Interpersonally, however, she was all business. For all the business skills Grammy had, she
was equally deficient in soft skills. My mother frequently recounts stories of her childhood, playing dress up in the mirror. My grandmother would raise her voice saying, “Girl, get out of that mirror! Being pretty ain’t gonna get you nowhere.”

Thus, my mother grew up in an achievement-oriented and relatively touchless environment. Unconsciously, my mother passed elements of this down to her children. She is the type who will show up for all of your games, she is always the first person to call you on your birthday, or tell you how proud of you she is, but I don’t recall very many “intimate” family moments. There was no lying on the couch together watching television. We would sit next to each other, but not rest on each other. Everybody had their own space and we were comfortable with that. My siblings and I are still like that to this day.

Knowing that it only takes one person to shift a culture, I decided to Be The ONE to do it. Life is too short to live half way, especially with those you love. I noticed that one of the Assumptions in my family was that we all loved each other, but nobody ever said it. We were quick to show it, but the words “I love you” were rarely spoken. They were reserved for extreme situations such as funerals, illnesses, or extremely trying times. Although I participated in this, I grew increasingly uncomfortable with it.

I decided that at the conclusion of every phone call, I would tell them I loved them. Looking back, it was hilarious to think how a guy who gets paid to speak to tens of thousands of people annually and has no problem teaching for hours on end could struggle so mightily with three little words. These words might as well have weighed a ton each, because that’s how difficult they were to get out of me. If we spoke for 30 minutes, I’d wait until 29 minutes and 58 seconds to say it. I’d blurt out, “I love you…bye!” and hang up the phone, panting like I had just completed a marathon. I was scared. I’m not sure what I was scared of, but it terrified me to be so vulnerable. But I did it. And I kept doing it.
Eventually, that part of the conversation became less difficult for me and felt more natural. I learned that anything worth being good at is worth being bad at until you become good at it. As a Change Maker, don’t waste your time worrying about the difficulty of bringing the change about; ask yourself if it is worth learning how to bring it about.

- Is it worth stumbling through it until you figure it out a better way to do it?
- Is it worth looking like a fool until you look like a natural?
- Is it worth people talking about you until people are impressed by you?
- Is it worth it being stressful until you are successful?

In this instance, the answer was a resounding yes for me. I kept at it, nearly needing a dose of aspirin after I hung up the phone. It wasn’t long before it caught on. The change process proved to be much worse in my mind than it was in reality. I believe my family wanted to be more emotionally vocal as well, but they needed a nudge to make it safe to do so. We still have a way to go, but we are far from what we used to be. I am glad to say that. We are becoming a family that lives our values.

Now it’s time for you to take an honest look at your “family values” within your organization. There is a relationship between recognition and repetition. How consistent are you at upholding the key elements that push your group forward? What are you rewarding? What are you celebrating? On this topic, former University of Florida football coach Urban Meyer once said, “You get what you emphasize.” The trick is to measure the right things. Think about the five to ten “drivers” that make your group successful.
• What daily, weekly, or monthly rituals do you have in place to immediately recognize and reinforce desired behavior?

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

• Do you keep a scorecard so they can see for themselves how many times they have gotten it right?

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

• How are you recognizing people who go the extra mile?

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

• Do you give more attention to problem solvers or problem creators?

________________________________________

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In the blank spaces on the scorecard, place an X in the category that you feel most likely describes the real culture of your organization. As a tool to keep yourself honest (versus saying what sounds good), briefly describe why you feel the way you do in the category entitled “Proof.”
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<th>Consistently Good At It</th>
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*Note: Fill in the last three blanks with areas that you feel are important to your group’s success.*

In the spaces below, write your Espoused Values (what you say you do) and your Assumptions (what really happens). If you don’t know the Espoused Value, don’t make one up! Write a “?” in that space. If you are certain there is no Espoused Value, write an “X” in that space. What conclusions can you draw about the organization’s culture based on this?
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<th>Espoused Value</th>
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Note: Fill in the last three blanks with areas that you feel are important to your group’s success.

What does this say about the present status and the future of your organization?

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When you discern a sluggish culture within your organization, this is the first place to start.

Focus on closing the gap between what you say you stand for and what *really* happens. You lead the way. You start the change. You *Be the ONE*. 
LAW #14:
LISTEN TO YOUR CRITICS...KINDA.

One of my abiding core principles comes from the words of Booker T. Washington who said, “Power concedes nothing without demand.” I take that statement to mean that anything you do that is contradistinctive to the current status quo is going to be met with opposition. It will be fought. You will be fought. Put in your mouthpiece because it’s coming.

Over the last few years, I have been amazed at the unmitigated venom that people feel comfortable spewing at another person, albeit usually over the internet. Nevertheless, the gloves have come off. I guarantee you if any of the religious figureheads had been alive today to spread their messages, they would have been blasted by scores of “dislikes” on their social media pages. Nobody is safe. Everyone is going to take heat, especially if you are a Change Maker.

I re-learned this lesson recently while reading feedback from an event at which I presented. The evaluations looked like people hadn’t attended the same function. Half the people loved me and wanted me back. Half the people thought I was the worst thing since the invention of the
Jheri Curl. Keeping it real, I was very shocked to see such harsh criticism. I knew as I left that I should have done some things differently, but most of the people were very complimentary of me in person. They shook my hand, smiled, and told me they had a great time. The evaluations proved otherwise.

My ego took a blow because I wasn’t used to getting subpar reviews (my mistake #1). It hurt my feelings (my mistake #2), and I started to think about how I asked them specifically what they wanted to discuss, wrote it down, then checked it off as we went along, so I couldn’t have been that bad (my mistake #3). I felt terrible because I like knowing I did a great job, but more importantly, I want to know that I served the people to the best of my ability. Obviously, I failed. It was an odd place for me to be, and I loathed the feeling.

But then I came to my senses. I thought about it a little more, regained my composure, and revisited my rules for receiving feedback.

Before I share with you what they are, I need to qualify them by sharing that I am a believer in the wisdom of listening. It is a discipline and a skill held by the best and brightest among us. It shows more intelligence to become a great listener than it does to become a great speaker. People who listen well are far more successful and enjoy better relationships.

That said, because of the abovementioned phenomenon about people now going beyond simply being honest to being over-dramatic and hurtful because they are under the cloak of anonymity, the rules have changed just slightly. You now have to learn how to listen so you still get value from the experience.

Now that we’ve gotten that out of the way, here are The New Rules for Listening to Feedback.

1. **All feedback is good.**
   I know it sounds like I have just contradicted myself after just ranting about how awful people
can be, but it’s true. All feedback is good. It does not always make you feel good, but it is good for you. It is good to learn that people will say one thing and write another. It is good to know what people really think when they don’t have to be nice. It is good when people have such a strong emotion about you that they feel compelled to write about it. These are all very good things. You want this information. The polite smiles and compliments people give you to your face do absolutely nothing to make you better. They give you a false sense of security and make you feel like you are something that you aren’t.

_The Harvard Business Review_ once stated that every percentage point below 100 that your clients or employees are satisfied with their experience is the same percentage in which they are likely to leave you for something they like more. So, while you are basking in the false glory of a relationship that isn’t what you think it is, you are setting yourself up for a surprise crash landing. It is always best to get the unvarnished truth, especially the parts you didn’t expect to hear.

2. **They are speaking their truth.**
If you were awful, or if they believed you were awful, you were awful—to them. The same is true when they say you were great. Everyone has their own expectations, their own preferences, and their own motivations. Their evaluation of you is formed by compressing all of these factors into one sentence called their opinion. **Once they submit their opinion to you, you are responsible for the meaning you assign to it.** The most anyone can do is tell you what they think. You decide the value their thoughts should have. You choose to receive it. You choose to internalize it. You choose
to carry it with you thereafter. Words only have as much power as you give them.

It is unfruitful for you to get all worked up, trying to argue and self-justify. In doing so, you lose perspective. **You can receive or you can defend, but you can’t do both.** You know the difference between when you are listening versus being silent while thinking about a comeback to what is being said. The two are very different. When we are offended and our emotions get rattled, it is from our innate drive for self-preservation that we feel the need to become defensive. Don’t fall into that trap. If you are in your head, you are missing the magic that is in the moment. Just because they have an opinion, that doesn’t make it the Gospel. Rather than debating every point in an effort to change people’s minds, receive their truth as their belief based on their expectations, and leave it at that.

3. **Consider the source.**

- **Breakthrough #1** – As I sat there reading one scathing comment after the next, I had to stop and ask myself, “How many of these people could do what I just did?” Answer—none. Therefore, everyone who dogged me about how terrible their experience would be incapable of doing any better themselves.

- **Breakthrough #2** – You could tell that some were trying to be constructive while others were just being some (BLEEPS). Those who were objective applauded parts and called out other parts as unsatisfactory. I dig that. And they were right. There were segments that sucked. I am a very harsh self-critic so I own that. But
those who lambasted me were completely over the top. One of my early mentors, Dr. Lee Jones, said, “What you think of me is none of my business. That is between you and your self-esteem.” The thoughts people express about you reveal more about them than it does about you.

4. Fix it.
Despite all of the above being true, it is still your responsibility to come back better next time. I am not negating or discounting people’s opinions; I am merely compartmentalizing them. Whether they love you or hate you, they are still your constituents and you have a responsibility to serve them with all you’ve got. This doesn’t mean you’ll please everyone. That will never happen so don’t try. In fact, I believe if someone doesn’t walk away a little ticked off, you haven’t done your job because it means that nothing is changing. However, on the occasions in which you discover that your approval ratings are below your pre-defined benchmark (if you don’t have one, set one…today!), you need to go back to the drawing board and figure out what you’re doing wrong.

If you’re going to be a Change Maker, you can’t have thin skin. If you are heavily influenced by people’s thoughts and opinions, you’re setting yourself up to be perpetually mentally unstable, always changing directions, and miserably ineffective. Part of being popular is being a target. Those who have the most fans also have the most critics. Scrutiny is part of success. Get used to it. Ashton Kutcher once remarked during an interview that during his journey from being a kid from Iowa trying to make it in showbiz, to becoming one of Hollywood’s most recognizable faces, the people who cheered
him to the top were the same folks who were rooting for him to fall. This is one of the Hard-core Realities of life that doesn’t get discussed much, but is true among those who have elevated themselves to the top position. You can either learn this lesson now or learn it when all of your YouTube videos have 100,000+ views and your fan page has legions of people wanting to be your BFF. You have to be tough. Don’t expect:

1. **To be recognized for your work.**
   Ninety percent of your efforts will go unappreciated or unnoticed. People will see the output, but they will be oblivious to the hours of preparation that went into it. Only the final 10 percent that people can see will get a thank you or a compliment.

2. **To be thanked—even by people who benefit from your work.**
   People are funny. There are many who will pick from the fruits of your labor, but never acknowledge the source. Opening minds and changing mores is a thankless job. Don’t be mad; you’ve done it too. How many of your schoolteachers have you written thank you notes to, bought gifts for, or taken out to lunch? Uh huh. Exactly.

3. **Liked.**
   Innovators get fired. Creators get criticized. Pioneers take the bullets for those coming behind them. People uncomfortable with change will do everything they can to keep things the way they like them. This includes throwing you under the bus if need be.
4. **To receive more than lip service.**
People will be with you when the idea is being pitched, but when it’s time to do the work, don’t expect that packed house to still be packed. Only a nucleus of people who signed up will actually show up. The best rule of thumb is to anticipate 10 percent of your initial numbers to follow through and be consistent until the end.

5. **Certain you’re doing the right thing.**
In the movie *300*, King Leonidas, as confident and brave a warrior as he was (with a killer six-pack), he still made the trek to visit spiritual mediums prior to going to battle. He had his plan, but needed reassurance that he wasn’t going to get his men killed. This is common among people who live on the edge. Marcel Brunel said, “There’s a fine line between hardcore and stupid.” At times, you will feel a little of both. Okay, a lot of both, actually, especially when the cynics start cackling. You have to develop the mental discipline to trust your gut, listen only to those you trust, and become immune to criticism.

6. **To be supported.**
Much of your work will be done alone or with a small nucleus of members. Many of the dollars that fund your movement will come from your own pocket. Most of the major leaders of change died with little to no personal savings. Their estate became wealthy once they died, and they were recognized posthumously by the masses. Look up the statistics for yourself. I’m not saying that leading a movement is a vow of
poverty, but clearly, if this is your baby and you feel called to ensure that the mission is achieved, be ready to bootstrap it if need be.

7. **To be stress-free.**
Your mind will always be wandering, searching for a better way to achieve your goals. You will go to bed thinking and wake up thinking. You will talk about your vision 24/7. This too is part of the call. Pressure is prevalent, but let it inspire you to press on and finish strong.

Getting raked over the coals is a great opportunity for reinvention. Begin by asking them what they want, what they expect, and what would make their experience better. Sometimes, your least satisfied customers can become your best customers when you engage them to help you improve your offering. Remember, **people only complain about what they care about.** If you are willing to listen to their concerns and actually do something about it, you will often earn yourself a second chance at redemption.

When you learn to do it correctly, failure can be the best thing that ever happened to you.
LAW #15: 
RESPECT PEOPLE’S TIME.

They say that C. Northcote Parkinson was being humorous when, in 1955, he wrote his historical essay in *The Economist*. Now known as Parkinson’s Law, he said, “Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion.” I don’t know what was so funny about this statement. It was true.

Have you ever been in a meeting that lasted so long, you forgot what you were originally meeting about? It drags on…and on…and on. Sometimes, it’s a good thing because new ideas are flowing or you just have a lot of information to cover. That’s fine. But far too often, it is because of inefficiency and lack of organization that most meetings last far longer than they should. All you can do is sit there in agony, going, “Oh My God! I’ve been here so long, even my 5 Hour Energy shot has run out.”

What’s even worse is when you have an evening meeting that runs long. You zone out. In the back of your mind, you’re thinking, “Had I only known this was going to be a sleepover, I would’ve brought my toothbrush.” Overly-long, inefficient, unproductive meetings will kill your
movement. The moment you are branded as a time waster, you’re done. People’s interest will dissipate like air seeping out of a soon-to-be flat tire.

Because meetings are your primary means of building momentum, establishing your values, and providing social proof of your members’ commitment to the organization, it can be argued that your meeting’s success determines your group’s overall success. Well, I’ve got some good news for you. I’m going to show you my secret recipe for running efficient meetings that end on time. Sound good?

**Step 1 – Announce it**

Make it plain to everyone that these all-day revivals are not the best use of everyone’s productive energy. Tell them, “Look folks, we are going to get back to running these meetings efficiently. We’re only going to take 60 minutes, 90 minutes (whatever the appropriate length should be), and get you out of here.”

This will spark a new wave of energy for those who are also burned out. You may even hear a few hallelujahs!

**Step 2 – Ask for input**

This is the most important part of making this system work. Tell each attendee that if they have something to report during the meeting, they need to send their topic(s) and time required to you 48 HOURS prior. Why 48 hours?

1. It forces them to proactively think through what they’re going to discuss during the meeting, thus separating that which is important from miscellaneous chitchat that usually leads to digressions. This way, they will approach the meeting with a sense of momentum, already knowing what they want to say and how they can say it most effectively.

2. There are always, in every organization, those last-minute people who couldn’t hit a deadline with a 2x4. If you have a 48 hour policy, at least
you have created a cushion for yourself that you can use to negotiate a new deadline, or assign someone else to report for someone who is inadequately prepared.

**Step 3- Appropriate**

Now that you know what is going to be discussed and how long everything should take, the rest is easy. On your agenda, write the topic on the left and the amount of time allotted to the topic on the right. You will not believe how much of a difference this makes! It is a not-so-subtle reminder to your attendees that you mean business so they need to get to the point and then wrap it up.

It’s often a good idea to select one of your more strong-willed members to be the timekeeper, who gives polite warnings as time draws to a close.

Trust me, this works, but you have to work it. The moment you break your written rules, the entire system falls apart. Honor your commitments. Your meetings will be more productive and efficient than ever before.
LAW #16: EARN THEIR RESPECT AND KEEP IT.

When I was in college, I was a Resident Assistant. This means, I was responsible for about 20 to 30 young men in my wing of the residence halls. When I first got the position, I was a 20-year-old junior. Most of the guys were my age or younger. But then there was Bryant.

Bryant was a transfer student. He was actually married with kids, but he was staying on campus. At the time, I couldn’t understand why. Now that I have friends who are married with kids, it makes perfect sense. I never knew how old Bryant was, but this guy had a thick mustache and thick, muscular frame like he worked out frequently. He also had a lot of hair on his chest, which instantly said to me, “This is a MAN.”

I was intimidated by Bryant. He was a cool guy, but, inwardly, I felt like I was the kid and he was the adult. I had a position of authority, but it felt weird to look at Bryant as one of my subordinates. He sensed this, and took full advantage. Bryant stayed in his room during my hall meetings, never attended any of my programs, and he even
took a little extra time checking out, knowing I wouldn’t fine him as the policy stated I should. I never called him out. I only made weak, spineless requests.

“Hey…uh…man…uh…can you try to uh…be on time next time? If it’s convenient for you.”

When I initially began doing leadership trainings for the military, I learned that some branches of the armed forces forbid officers to associate with non-officers. I’m sure they have their own reasons for this policy, but based on my experience with Bryant, I can understand why. I was clueless about how to harness the authority of my position. Thus, I wasn’t the leader of my hall, he was.

I know I just told on myself about what a wimp I was back in the day, but as I help people through their leadership challenges, I have discovered that leading your peers is one of the hardest and most complex challenges that any Change Maker will have to face. When your talents and ambitions put you in the precarious position of being vaulted into a place of power, it can be a difficult adjustment for everyone. Because you are smart, hardworking, and have a passion for the job, you deserve to be there. You should be there. But the new social paradox of hanging out one day and giving orders the next, unsure if anyone will actually listen to you and respect you is terrifying. Many feel as though they have to choose between being too friendly, which results in being an ineffective leader or being “the boss,” which could mean losing the bond with their former peer group.

On one side, you want to embrace your new role and please the superiors who gave you the job. On the other side, you want to maintain the friendships and support systems that you knew before you were in power. Nobody wants to hear, “You’ve changed. You think you’re better than us now.”

It’s tough. In some cases, your passion for the position and your need to maintain relationships will literally compete with each other. You will love one and resent the other. It’s a shame because I know that we lose a lot of good talent this way.
I have good news. I have for you some strategies that will help you navigate through this tenuous time in your life. If you follow these four steps closely, you can be able to be great at your new position and enjoy great relationships with your colleagues as well.

1. **Conversation** – In times of uncertainty, communication is the key. If you are the first among your peer group to get promoted, there will be a lot of eyes watching you and even more assumptions made about how you will respond to your newfound power. Let’s be honest, most of the assumptions will be negative. The quickest way to overcome this is to have a group conversation with your “posse,” sharing with them your new responsibilities as well as your fears. Be brutally honest with them about behavioral modifications you’re going to make. For example, it won’t be appropriate to forward funny emails anymore. Or, you may not have time to hang out in the break room like you used to. It doesn’t mean you feel differently about them, you simply have to evolve and adjust for your new responsibilities. Let them know that you’re also willing to take turns and support them in their initiatives so no one person is subordinate at all times. Shared power creates less room for bruised egos. When you are open about your feelings, your friends will be less likely to take your role changes personally.

2. **Character** – It will be time to re-establish the roles in the relationship. Being in leadership doesn’t necessarily mean being “over” someone. It does, however, mean being responsible for them. This includes their productivity, timeliness, and their conduct. Anyone (this includes friends) who disregards your rules is a threat to your influence over the entire organization. I reiterate, *people are watching.* They want to see how
you respond so they’ll know how much they can get away with. If you’re smart, you will ask your friends for their highest level of support by being examples of 5 Star performances. Get them to demonstrate the behavior you want the rest of your organization to embody.

3. **Consistency** - They will try you. Others will be watching for your favoritism in order to discredit your leadership. If they see that you have two sets of rules, you’re toast. Make the opposite happen. Become so great at what you do, people assume you’re only performing so well because you have your buddies on your team. This can be a rare opportunity to do great things with people you actually enjoy working with.

4. **Covenant** – Create a binding agreement, even a verbal pact that establishes the terms of your relationship. This sounds a little extreme, but it is the foundation of all successful relationships. This way, everyone knows that they have a mission to accomplish and a job to uphold. Detrimental behavior is not an option. If someone breaks the deal, you have something to reference and a reason to exit the relationship if necessary. They may say, “If you were my friend, why did you get me in trouble?” You look back at them and ask, “If you were my friend, why did you put me in that put position?”

These four steps may save your career or your personal relationships. It sounds hardcore, but you have to selfishly protect your reputation. During your performance review, nobody wants to hear, “I had good intentions but Ellen wouldn’t let me do my job.”

When they hear this, it implies a few things you really don’t want said of you. It suggests that:
• You don’t choose your associates well.
• You have problems deciding between popularity and professionalism.
• You are weak-willed.
• They need to give Ellen the position because obviously Ellen is the one with all the influence!

As a Change Maker, you have to be inwardly-driven enough to know what your priorities are and when to make the tough decisions. Don’t allow familiarity to breed complacency. Use the bond to create a high-performing family.

It’s never easy to lead your peers, especially in the beginning. But if you remember these four C’s and use them on a daily basis, you will be amazed at how easy it is to turn your friends into fans…and not foes.
LAW #17: BUILD PARTNERSHIPS AND DOMINATE THE GAME

You will only see Continental tires gleaming on a Mercedes-Benz showroom. Pizza Hut only sells Pepsi products. Maybe it makes their pepperoni taste better. McDonald’s, however, says only Coca Cola is the “real thing” for them. The National Basketball Association evidently believes T-Mobile phones are good enough for their fans. The National Football League disagrees. They believe it’s all about Verizon. In the 1990’s, banks began a trend that changed the course of our economic future by merging to form enormous conglomerates. Then oil and gas companies followed suit, then phone companies, and then airlines. The list goes on. What we witnessed was the beginning of the new reality for the new economy—joining forces isn’t just a smart move; it is now the only way to create a competitive edge in the marketplace.

If you’re thinking, “What the heck do pizza and cell phones and gasoline have to do with my organization?” you’ve probably already missed the point. While all of these multi-million dollar giants were independently successful, they wisely saw the economic benefit to creating strategic
partnerships with other companies to compliment their position in the marketplace.

Enough with Business 101; let me break it down in plain English. If you want to expand your organization’s influence and become infinitely more powerful, it’s a wise move to find other organizations to team up with. How great would it be to instantly multiply your effectiveness by combining the best of both worlds between you and another organization with a shared vision? Strategic partnerships are being built all around you every day. Now, it’s time for you to stop observing and get in the game. It’s time for a power move. This is much easier said than done. Most people express the desire to collaborate on initiatives, but 90 percent of people have no clue how to do it correctly. I have seen this process turn into an absolute circus. This is probably why most Change Makers end up taking on the “I’ll just do it myself” mindset. It’s the wrong way to lead, it limits the organization’s long-term growth, it is myopic, and a copout. But I understand.

There is a reason to smile. The same fundamental principles that have brought commercial powerhouses together are at your disposal for you and your organization. Actually, the process is ironically simple. If you make it complicated, you are probably over-thinking. You have a good fit when:

- They are just as excited about working with you as you are about working with them.
- There is harmony not just in what gets done, but in how it gets done (i.e. work style and ethics), and in why the work is significant to teach other’s goals. This implies synergy between the two organizations’ cultures and creates a case to form an on-going strategic partnership.
- Both parties believe the new arrangement will bring benefits they could not have achieved on their own.

Although it sounds counterintuitive, partnerships are selfish in nature. This is business, not community service.
Hypothetically, if you come to me asking to work with me, you’d better believe the question I’m asking the entire time is **what’s in it for me?** My acceptance of your proposal has nothing to do with making a new friend or helping someone “come up” in life. The only way that we can work together is if you can prove to me that you can accelerate the speed at which I can achieve something that is important to me. Your job is to make me think, “I need you in my life.” Otherwise, I don’t.

I’m not trying to scare or dissuade you; I’m just giving you a dose of Hardcore Reality 101. The people who have the most power to change your situation are usually the busiest, have the least tolerance for wasting their time, and consequently, the most cynical. But all hope isn’t lost. This doesn’t mean you should give up; it means you need to be more strategic. Although they keep their proverbial door shut to keep the time wasters out, you can still get through their initial line of defense...if you know the password. Yes, the password. All busy, well-connected, people of influence have a topic that will stop them in their tracks: **Plans, Problems, and Passions.**

Although we all have them, in a powerful person’s life, they seem magnified. Highly-successful people are known for having a penchant for speed. They want things done, done well, and done fast so they can move on to the next piece of the puzzle. When they get mired in bottlenecks, they feel it more than the average person does because their sights are set on achieving the big picture goal. Anything that slows down the plans from coming together is a major problem, and problems are not tolerated for long. Why do you think high-level executives and celebrities pay tens of thousands of dollars for private jets? Why do people hire personal shoppers to buy their groceries for them? Why did Batman search on Craigslist and discover Robin? It wasn’t because he looked good in tights and a cape. They all need to free up some time from their problems so they could have more time to focus on building their Plans, eliminating their Problems, or enjoying their Passions. Is
this making any sense? Once you can demonstrate that you can accelerate one or more of their plans and/or alleviate one or more of their problems, you can earn a listening ear from nearly anyone.

Before you make your approach, check yourself. How much of this is about you, how much is this about them? The more you use the word “you” the longer you keep their attention. If you don’t know—ASK! Ask lots of questions, read everything you can about them. Talk to people who have also worked with them. Put in the work prior to making your initial meeting with your point of contact. When you approach them to make the pitch, you need to have a rock-solid case that clearly shows how working with you would enhance their bottom line, you need to know that you have a rock-solid case that makes the proposal absolutely clear why it would enhance their bottom line. In doing so, you will experience the following benefits:

1. **You will impress them** – There is a big difference between the experiences you have when you “wing it” and the times when you are prepared. Most people are in the former category; that is why they hear “no thank you” quite often. Personally, I see an instant red flag when someone approaches me, but hasn’t read any of my books, watched any of my videos, and knows nothing about me except a few blurbs from my website. Anyone can do that. That shows that they Googled me just before they got on the phone, but didn’t do much else. They know the facts about me, but they don’t know what’s important to me. Big difference. The person who walks in with printed materials, pre-organized (for bonus points, put their logo on the cover page), color coded, etcetera, is the one who is clearly about business. It shows you to be a cut above the rest; someone worthy of paying attention to. Put your best, most prepared foot forward.
2. **You will impress yourself** – You may think I’m being funny, but I’m not. Self-confidence is 80 percent of persuading people. Maybe more. **Your passion intensifies with your preparation.** In the times you aren’t prepared, you are less aggressive. In the back of your mind, you quietly hope they don’t ask any tough questions and you end up being exposed. The harder you work the more committed you become, the more determined you are to get a “yes” when “no” or “I’ll think about it” just won’t do. I’ve always taught that you only get out of life what you demand. Inasmuch, it is hard to find the courage to demand that which you have not earned. Conversely, it is difficult not to demand that which you have earned.

3. **You will make a lasting impression** – Although there are too many factors for me to guarantee that your proposals will always be accepted, I can guarantee that you will always be remembered. And that’s a good thing. There will be plenty of instances when the timing may be off, or there are external factors that you can’t do anything about that prevents them from accepting your offer. However, because you were so good, they will find a place for you to fit into future plans. I can recall firsthand several times when, at first glance, things didn’t work out, but that person committed to keeping in touch and later plugged me into better an even better situation than I was originally seeking.

So now that you get it, I can teach you how to go get it. It all comes down to three questions.

1. **What do they need?**
   One of my core values involves serving others. I believe, as Stephen Covey said, that we should “seek first to understand, then to be understood.” Start
with them. Start with their needs. Do your research. Learn about their mission, their current goals, and key initiatives. This will provide the foundation for your initial conversation with them. One commonality among all organizations is that each one is striving to achieve something…and everyone would love to get there faster if possible. What role can you play in making this happen? Don’t fool yourself into believing that any group is above needing help. From the outside, they may look like a well-oiled machine, but insiders can always tell you about the flaws within their system. The best way to find out is (I know this sounds too simple but)...ASK! Every organization has something they can improve. Use this to your advantage.

Ask their decision makers,

“If you could wave a magic wand and acquire more of something or have less of something, what would that something be?”

You will be amazed at how much they’ll tell you. If you don’t hear a response that sounds like something you can help with, rephrase the question.

“If you could get some additional support with ________, would that be of value to you?”

If all else fails, I even suggest totally putting yourself out there. Tell them

“I really want to work with you on any level because ________ (supply a valid reason).
We can start small just to try things out initially. Once I have proven myself to be a good fit, we can do bigger things as we have built up trust. Sound fair?"

Keep digging until you find that “something” that your organization can provide.

2. **What do I need?**

   Now that you have identified your counterpart’s needs, you can focus on what’s in it for you. What do you stand to gain in the joint venture? The big three categories are:
   
   1. Exposure
   2. Manpower and
   3. Money

   How can working with them produce an advantage for you in these areas? Depending on the condition of your organization, you may be able to create a long list of departments in which you would like to improve. For example, you may initially desire to collaborate with a group because they are well-established in the community. However, you may discover in the process that they have an incredibly efficient culture in which little time is wasted among them. If your organization is inefficient, having the opportunity to observe them in action is a benefit all in itself. Personally, I believe these types of cultural comparisons are more valuable than the actual joint venture because they expose you to new ideas that you can go back and implement yourself. The partnership will one day end, but the new practices you learned during the partnership can improve your organization forever. The point is you need to be aware of where your group stands. Write down two exhaustive lists: one with your strengths, and
another with your weaknesses. Not only will this help you gain clarity about the direction you are heading, but this exercise will also shed light on why specific goals are and are not achieved.

3. **How can I best serve them with what I have to give?**
   This is where the magic happens. This reminds me of the times growing up when my mother would teach me lessons about how to serve people. She would say, “Jon, I don’t care how successful or popular people are, someone always has trash that can be taken out.” The message behind this statement was that, no matter how seemingly insignificant the task, it is possible to create value in people’s lives if you take the time to look. When you make your proposal, be very up front with them. It is not only okay to be honest; it is mandatory. Begin by saying, “Based on what I have taken the time to learn about you, you could really use a little more XYZ, correct?” If they agree, continue on. “Great. I’m in need of some ABC, and you seem to be really good at it. I have some ideas for how we can match up our strengths and create something really big. Are you interested in hearing them?”

   This is an important line that should be practiced until it flows naturally. When you get this down you will appear confident, well-prepared and worthy of partnership. It shows that you have done your homework and are serious about your business, versus being a leech or a time-waster. This is huge because if an organization is attractive to you, they probably appeal to others, too. There is a high likelihood that they are getting hit up by people all the time, most of whom will screw up because they haven’t read these three questions.

   Fortunately, you have. Go dominate the market, one strategic partnership after another.
LAW #18: IT’S ALL ABOUT MARKETING.

In my not-so-humble opinion, marketing is among the top three money-making skills in which any person in any industry should develop proficiency. One well-run campaign can take a fledgling business and turn it into an enterprise. It changes lives, creates jobs, and makes dreams happen.

Unfortunately, most of the free world seems to disagree. They prefer to stick to old school tactics, trite, overused propaganda, and wonder why things don’t work. That’s when it’s the government’s fault, the economy’s fault, The Man’s fault.

Nobody ever says, “You know what, I really at suck standing out in a crowd and offering so much added value that they feel compelled to select me over my competitors.”

That’s far too empowering of a statement. It makes people acknowledge that they are, what my friend James Malinchak calls, “wasting their time and money doing what’s cute instead of what sells.” However, being able to acknowledge such limitations also indicates that a small change in behavior could turn things around and alter the direction of your organization. It’s time you learn how to
market yourself, your organization, and your movement. The right way.

The most fundamental elements of marketing are features and benefits. **Features describe what something is; benefits describe how it improves your life.** Even out of the gate, this trips up many people. In workshops, I ask people, “What is a benefit of your product or service?” I hear answers such as,

- We are the largest organization,
- We cost less than our competitors, or
- We give you better XYZ than everyone else.

These are great answers, but none of these are benefits. Once again, **benefits describe how your product or service improves someone’s life.** Talking about the product or service in relation to other products or services is only a feature.

**A benefit statement would sound like this:**

- As the largest organization of its kind, we offer an extensive network that you can plug into, make valuable connections, and get in with Centers Of Influence who have the authority to say yes when others have said no.
- Because we are the most affordable option, you are going to have a great experience and keep more money in your pocket. The money you save can be invested in other resources that are going to help you grow.
- We are a proven industry leader in quality; you have peace of mind knowing that you have made a safe investment. We are as close to a sure thing as you can get.

Can you see the clear difference between the two? The first set of statements is about them; the second set of state-
ments is about you. This is essential for you to understand because people make decisions for two reasons: to gain more pleasure and to avoid pain. With that in mind, you have to angle all of your initiatives toward achieving one of these two objectives for your target market. Anything other than that will leave you dead in the water.

Look at the benefit statements again. Each one has within it a core value that is provocative and compelling. It is the “benefit within the benefit” that makes people’s eyes light up. In benefit statement #1, the key benefit was connections. In benefit statement #2, they key benefit was financial freedom. In benefit statement #3, the key benefit was peace of mind. If you picked up on this, that’s huge. It’s important that you do because it is the difference between success and failure at branding and marketing your movement.

Always ask yourself, “What is this really about.” Drill down deeper beyond your first two or three answers. Go into a prospect’s mind and think about in what ways their life will change as a result of aligning themselves with you. When you do this, it will become increasingly easier to produce benefit statements that stop people in their tracks and make them beg you for more information. I’m only partially kidding, by the way.

Write three features and three benefits that people will receive when partnering you’re your organization. Add an extra bonus to take them over the top!
WAIT!

Don’t go any further. You need one more piece of information that will make this exercise more effective. **No benefit is universal!** What is of value to one person may be of no consequence to another. For example, saving money may not be as critical to someone who has a lot of disposable income as it is to someone who is barely making ends meet. Peace of mind is far more important to a parent than it is to a teenager. That being said, you have to go beyond boilerplate answers, assuming that everyone thinks the same way and wants the same things. If that were the case, we would all drive the same cars, wear the same clothes and eat the exact same foods. Fortunately, we don’t (I’d hate to look like some of the people I see in airports).

Here is how you differentiate and dial into people’s specific goals and problems: feed them what they eat.

There are the 4 Layers of Leadership™ that I call **The Arc of Influence™**. They are:
**Survival** is just that, getting by. Think about your first day of high school. You were scared to death (I sure was). You had no idea where anything was and your major goal was not being stepped on by upperclassmen. This universal feeling is present in all of our “firsts.” The stress of the figuring out how to get through the situation without embarrassing yourself or losing your position to a competitor is a hallmark of being in Survival mode. Your primary interest is yourself, and possibly those in your inner circle. You don’t have the emotional bandwidth or resources to do much else. You are focused on taking care of your immediate needs, trying to stay afloat. Thus, your influence is at a minimum.

**Stability** comes when you have developed a basic understanding of what it takes to get by. You know you can hang in there and figure out the next steps. Your performance is good, but inconsistent. You can be anywhere from the bottom third, middle of the pack, or top quarter of the group. Because you have grown in confidence in your abilities and have a few victories under your belt, you feel comfortable with reaching out to assist others.
Success is when things finally become fun. You have mastered the process, you and are more willing to take risks, knowing that you are going to come out on top. You are no longer worried about if you will win, but by how much you will win. You want to break your own records. You are among the elite 10 percent at what you do. You have earned a reputation as one of the greats. People frequently come to you for advice and to model your habits. If you are so inclined, you devote a great deal of your time mentoring and grooming your proteges who will one day take your place.

Significance is the level most difficult to achieve because it is no longer about you. Significance is achieved when the work gets done without you personally doing it. You transition from significant achiever to advisor, coach, and mentor. You hand the reins over to your successors and let them execute the strategies you taught them. Your success is judged based on how well the people you have trained perform. Your concern isn’t about your own leadership; you’ve proven yourself in that area. It’s now about your legacy.

As you examine the interests of each level, I’m sure you can see that there are some big differences between people at each phase. It goes from Survival, where it’s all about me, to Significance where it is all about the mission. This is why there are billions of dollars spent annually on targeted advertising campaigns to reach out to a specific niche of people. What makes one person jump up in the air is completely irrelevant to someone on the other side of the spectrum.

For instance, even food can be looked at differently. Someone in Survival mode just wants to get full. Someone in Significance mode is looking for the proper fuel for their day. One person just wants to stop their hunger. The other is calculating how the amount of carbs, calories, protein, and vitamins they are putting into their body will enhance their performance. Thus, your marketing strategies and
benefit statements should reflect the primary interests of those who you want to attract.

List one of your features from above. Examine how the benefit would change depending on who receives it:

**Feature:**

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Benefit for a person in Survival mode:

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Benefit for a person in Stability mode:

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Benefit for a person in Success mode:

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Benefit for a person in Significance mode:

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Use this example to shape every marketing project, every speech, and every program you produce going forward. No benefit is universal! Think about what your prospect
wants, what you’re selling, what you’re really selling, and how you can turn it into that irresistible offer that they can’t live without.
LAW #19:
CLICK.

great man once said, “In order to be successful, you don’t have to be the smartest or most talented person in the room. You just have to be the first one to show up.” I live by this. Although I never considered myself to be smart when I was younger, I found ways to get the upper hand by beating people to the punch. It started with me walking a little faster than other people, so I could get in a better position in the cash register line. I noticed that most people would casually approach their decision about which checkout lane they would choose. I didn’t. I would quickly scan my options and take immediate and decisive action toward the one that would get me out the door fastest. I wasn’t always right about the checkers (I sometimes unknowingly chose First Day Frank or Chatty Cathy), but I still ended up three or four spaces ahead of the people who were parallel with me only minutes before. Just a little extra effort at the right time completely changed the outcome of each situation.
From this experience, I developed the philosophy that I will always “beat the competition before they know they’re competition.” It continued to work for me in college when I was struggling to resurrect my GPA and self-esteem from an abysmal 1.75. I started talking more in class, asking more questions and adding valuable commentary to the lecture. As far as I was concerned, it was my class. Everyone else had to listen to what the professor and I were discussing that day.

I met each professor at their office during office hours. We discussed real-world applications of the information in the reading materials. They all knew that this Sprinkles kid was serious about learning the topics they were so passionate about. They thought I was a top student. They had no clue that I was one semester away from failing out. Once again, I had beaten the competition before they knew they were competition.

The most poignant memory I have of my strategy paying off was during the first finals of my comeback trail. My Business Law professor and I had become cool. I had really turned up the juice in his class. It was huge class full of smart people. However, few took the extra steps that I had. Finals season is the time when everybody tries to suck up to their professors and receive clemency for missed classes and poor prior performances. People who never uttered a word all semester would camp out near the professor’s office trying to get some last-minute face recognition.

I remember walking up to see him during our normal pow wow time. I had to step over people seated all over the floor. It looked like the aftermath of a warzone. Students were trying to get his attention like they were New York Stock Exchange salesmen. When he looked up and saw me, he said, “Hey, you guys step aside. He’s been here all semester. What is your question Jonathan?”

SCORE!

To make a long story short, I earned a very high B in his class, but he gave me an A because of my extra effort
all semester. It was the beginning of an epic comeback that changed the direction of my life forever.

I am now fully persuaded by the power of Click. Here’s what I mean—when you are the first one in the weight room in the morning and all the lights are off, Click, you turn them on for the day. When nobody else has made it to the library to study, you walk to the lights and Click. When everyone else is at home getting an extra wink of sleep, you arrive at the office and Click.

When I was a young computer salesman, I had no clue about anything technical. I hadn’t ever sold anything before in my life. But I stayed after work, even after the second shift, learning about my company, my competitors and my industry. I worked “bell to bell.” For months, I cancelled social engagements until people stopped inviting me out. I was in it to win it. When everyone else was at happy hour, I was building my future. When I left, Click, I turned the lights out.

You don’t have to be the smartest or most talented person in the group, but you will always have the respect of your organization when you out-Click them. Kirk Nugent once pointed out that, in the Olympics, one second can mean the difference between a gold medal and no medal. One second can radically change your life. If you are .001 seconds faster than me, it doesn’t mean that our skills, talents, or abilities are that different. You were just one step faster than me, which may have come from you having one better practice than me, and very likely one more Click than me.

How many more Clicks do you have than your group? Than your competition? How many other people who want your position are you out-Clicking?

When you want to make a lasting impression on the people of your organization, always focus on being the first. Be the first to first to speak up, be the first to lead the standing ovation, be the first to say thank you, be the first to apologize, be the first to offer to pay, be the first clean up, and be first to raise your hand when it is time to ask questions. To that end, don’t just raise your hand; touch the sky.
The next time there is a question posed to a group, pay attention to what happens. Ninety-nine percent of those who raise their hand will do so just above eye level. It is very casual and safe. Forget that. Be intentional and edgy. Change the energy in the room, even before you speak. Create a habit of throwing your hand in the air like you were trying to high-five the ceiling. Make your armpit touch your ear. It makes you look infinitely more confident, self-assured, and apparently in possession of a good answer. It is yet another way to beat the competition. When everyone else looks like they could care less, you look passionate and are very likely to steal the attention from them and divert it to yourself. You win without having to do any additional work. Once again, I never discussed what you should say; just be the first.

The same is true when an open-ended suggestion is made in a group setting.

“Would you all like an appetizer?”
“Where would you like to go for our retreat?”
“Does anyone have some thoughts about yesterday’s performance?”

Over 10 years of presentations have taught me that, almost always, there is a short period of silence between the time a question is asked and the time the first person offers a suggestion. There is a prolonged pregnant pause. This is your opportunity. I call it “Shooting The GAP.”

Shooting The GAP is a phrase I borrowed from football. It is what happens when a defensive linemen exploits the space between offensive linemen and gets into the backfield untouched to disrupt the play or get a sack. In group settings, Shooting the GAP occurs when you challenge yourself to be the first to raise your hand or throw out a suggestion during a short pause while others mull over their answers. This is an effective way to sneak into the lead position every time. It takes guts to put yourself out there, but all the benefits come your way when you speak up while others are afraid to. It doesn’t have to be perfectly-worded prose—just say something. Present your opinion, and do it
first. This way, when the late-arriving suggestions come, they have to be better than the idea you initially provided. Thus, you have just shifted the burden to them if they want to get their idea approved. Marketing studies have revealed that this is the most valuable of all positions because people tend to stick with what they hear first. Fill that G.A.P. and you will receive their

**Gratitude** for breaking the ice.
**Admiration** for being self-confident.
**Praise** in the form of complying with your suggestion.

Think fast, act fast, and be the first.  
*Click.*
Most people are boring. Their size of their thoughts and aspirations reflect the size of their environment. Don’t be one of them.

Regardless of your personal temperament, a natural introvert or a natural extrovert, you’ve got to think big, even in little places. Your success as a Change Maker depends on it. You can’t be “another” so-called leader of “another” so-called organization. If the direction you’re heading doesn’t inspire people to want to jump on board, you’re thinking too small, and you’re wasting everyone’s time.

A Change Maker isn’t necessary when status quo is acceptable. The very name “Change Maker” implies that you should be about elevating the consciousness, the standards, and the expectations of the people around you. This only happens when you’re stretching, never when you’re settling.

Your vision should be just barely realistic enough for you to believe that it’s possible. However, its impact must be meaningful enough that you will work relentlessly to pull it off. This is the fine line between genius and insanity that Change Makers are known for walking. A compelling
vision is attractive to believers and abrasive to those who are afraid of risk. That’s a good thing.

When you talk about big ideas, you attract big idea people. When you talk small, you attract people who think small. In order to become attractive to the kind of people you want around you, you have to speak the language of “impossible possibilities.” You have to live your Big Idea. For example, at one point in time, Donald Trump was out to change the New York City skyline. That’s a Big Idea! Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen, co-authors of the Chicken Soup for the Soul book series, are now known as the world’s best-selling authors because their book has sold more copies than any other book in history. While they never in their wildest dreams would have thought they could achieve such a feat, they didn’t let that stop them from living their Big Idea. From the beginning, they decided that Chicken Soup for the Soul was going to “change the world one story at a time.” That’s a Big Idea!

Dr. Steve Perry is one of the most influential visionaries in the United States today. Growing up a poor, troubled teen being raised by a single mother in the projects, his life was one small decision away from becoming yet another statistic that you hear coming from low-income areas. He sampled various wayward activities before turning his life around and eventually earning a master’s degree in Social Work and a PhD in Education.

Filled with an unquenchable passion to widen the bridge that brought him over, Dr. Perry had a wild idea. He founded a charter school in the ‘hood that strived to ensure that all of its students are college bound. I was fortunate to hear him recant the story of how the idea came to fruition. As a small group of us were sitting in a conference room at his school one rainy afternoon, Dr. Perry has us enchanted, like a griot passing down the wisdom of the ages. “They said it was impossible,” he said. “They said that we were crazy. They said that it would never happen. And when I say ‘they’ I mean us (people of color).” He went on to share frustrating accounts of how the people whose children
would be attending the school were not even behind him. Finding financial supporters was even more difficult. He and his leadership team went to person after person, sharing their vision of creating a rose in the middle of thorns, a beacon of hope for the community. “Everyone told me no,” he asserted. Everyone—except for the last one. That’s all I needed.”

Today, Capital Preparatory Magnet School, whose mascot is aptly, The Trailblazers, touts a 100 percent college placement record. This is not because the neighborhood is conducive to becoming an elite educational environment. Not at all. There are often crack vials left in the grass in the park adjacent to the school, remnants of the previous night’s activities. There is a liquor store directly across the street. I was stunned to discover that even with Capital Prep’s astounding success rates, the parental involvement is almost nonexistent.

During the school’s initial years, they shared a building with a community college, teaching science classes without any science labs. Dr. Perry’s visionary leadership drew the attention of CNN’s Soledad O’Brien who highlighted his success in the hit documentary Black in America 2. She asked him point blank, “How do you do it?” Candidly, he replied, “I don’t know! But we do have teachers who are willing to get in there and figure it out.”

Capital Preparatory Magnet school has earned the distinction of being ranked by US News & World Report as one of America’s Best High Schools. Students travel up to two hours per day to and from school. They receive over 2,000 applications for 40 spaces annually. During my visit to Capital Prep, Dr. Perry made a small quip under his breath that most of us didn’t catch. He expressed his discontent with being known as one of the top high schools in America. He wants to be THE top school in America.

As inspirational as the story surrounding Capital Prep is, what should be glaring at you is that you too can start with nothing. You too can grow an idea to whatever level your creativity and work ethic will take it. Your role as
Change Maker mandates that you continually water the seeds of your ideas in your head until they eventually manifest and bear fruits of change. More specifically, a Change Maker’s job is to instill the Vision, Values, and Victories in the organization.

**VISION**

In the days of robes and sandals, a wise man said, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” Another way to say it is that when no vision is present, the people cast off restraint. In other words, when people gather, yet are unclear about what’s next, they tend to become disinterested, disenfranchised, and eventually disengaged from the group.

An organization’s vision is a tie that binds everyone together. It provides a common reference point and a banner under which the entire group can unite. The vision is the top recruiting tool. It is what attracts people who share a common passion for the cause. When you are clear about who you are, you will attract people who want the same things you do. It is what causes people to say, “I see where you’re headed and I want to get on board.”

Your vision must be challenging. It must be provocative. It must be sexy. It must represent a dream fulfilled. It must be big enough to make a difference, yet personal enough to make people refuse to quit. The vision is your personal crusade. You have to be about something. Do you want to cause people to start doing something or to stop doing something? What do you want more of? What do you want less of or none of at all? Standing against something is a firm position, but an even stronger position is articulating something else that you are for.

I see this mistake often within organizational initiatives. You have to answer the question, once you have erased the problem, what do you intend to replace it with? Thus, a “no racism” campaign is not as effective or actionable as a “love your neighbor” initiative. “Don’t fall” is not a vision, but “300 accident-free days” is.
Your vision requires a vision statement. Articulate your outcome in a way which people can receive, remember, and repeat it with clarity and conviction. Answer the following questions in order to help you gain clarity about the vision and the circumstances that created a need for it.

**Mission statement** – Why do we exist?

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

**Vision statement** – Where are we going?

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

**Problem statement** – Why is it important that we go there?

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

**Passion statement** – What’s in it for you personally?

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________
Personal story – How does your background tie into the vision? What were the circumstances behind your conviction?


Now, take these elements and write a revised vision statement that is more clear and compelling. Let it reflect your Big Idea.


VALUES
Your values describe what is important to the group. Practically, they are reflected in how you treat each other as you go about achieving the vision. Tangible values are the lifeblood of a positive culture. Strong organizations spend a lot of time defining and refining how their values are to be expressed on a daily basis. It should be so prevalent that new people can walk in and from Day 1 recognize that they need to adjust themselves in order to fit into the culture. It should be very clear which attitudes and behaviors are acceptable and which ones are to be excluded.

In my company, I make painstaking efforts to ensure that our core values are not only known, but also lived out as we interact with each other. I didn’t want to sound like another big, cold, corporate entity with no soul. I sat down and asked myself, “What are the best practices that I cur-
rently have and what additional qualities would I need to have if I were the best-run organization in my industry?”

That was a tall order, but this is what I came up with.

Core Values of Sprinklisms, Inc.

1. **REDUNDANCY** – Everything digital, everything backed up.

2. **EFFICIENCY** – Efficiency = Speed + Accuracy. Get it done quickly and correctly the first time. No repeated mistakes. Fast conversion of “idea to implementation,” measured only by results.

3. **GOD-DIRECTED VISION** – Being vessels used to achieve God’s will is the objective, never individual agendas. God gives opportunities; our stewardship of them is our gift back to Him.

4. **TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION** – Tell the whole truth. Discuss all issues to complete resolution until understanding has been reached and all hearts are clear.

5. **EXCELLENCE** – Represent consistently high quality and meticulous attention to details.

6. **CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE** – Create long-term partnerships in which we are viewed as an indispensable resource. Be fun to work with and very thoughtful. Specialize in remembering the little things that make people look forward to working with us.

7. **PREEMINENCE** – Bring new skills to the organization that makes you and the team better. Insist on being the best in every category to our clients. Be the best in the industry at your position.
8. **LOVE** – Love yourself, love your teammates, and love the people we serve. Go to the nth degree to show it in words and in deeds.

This is what makes us tick. For every value, there are at least two practices that we can point to as proof that we are walking our talk. Our values govern how we interact with our clients and with each other. They are the daily habits that make us draw closer to the Big Idea every day.

In the space below, write your organization’s values along with definitions and where in your organization you see them displayed. Then write some values that you would like to have.

**Current values:**

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**Desired values:**

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
VICTORIES

I am a sports nut. I love competition. I love the roar of the crowd. I love the background stories and key matchups. Blah, blah, blah. As diverse as the athletes are in body types, work ethics, and athleticism, the common bond that unites all of them is they all like to win. At whatever point marks the end of their event, be it a buzzer, a referee’s whistle, or a final stroke, the athletes and fans can all look up at a scoreboard and know whether they can celebrate or get angry and blame the referees. In all sports, the scoreboard is the objective third party that determines whether the ride home will be celebratory or dead silent.

Unfortunately, organizations don’t have scoreboards in their parking lots. Marketing guru Jason Silverman pointed out, “If I stood outside of 500 random office buildings, campuses, or association meetings and polled people leaving for the day and asked them ‘How do you know if you had a good day today?’ I would get as many different answers as the number of people I spoke with—even among coworkers who sat next to each other.” It is astonishing how many people who are smart, goal-oriented, and seemingly successful have no clue whether they ended up one point ahead or behind for that day.

My personal success, as well my organization’s, hinges upon how well we measure the right things and recognize progress in areas that matter most. I have a very simple scorecard that I use for myself. I call it my Zebra. Don’t laugh! It’s called a Zebra because my system is very black and white. Either I won or I lost. There is no in between. There are no points for effort. Only results matter.

The contents of my Zebra may change depending on the project I’m working on, but the abiding question never does—“Did you accomplish the one thing that is most significant toward your goal?” I call that moving my Zebra. It either moves forward or backward because it can’t stay the same. The opportunity cost of inactivity is very high. If my Zebra moves forward continually, I know I’m winning. If not, I’m hosed.
Unclear objectives is a byproduct of lazy leadership. It is not enough to say, “This is where we’re headed...go get ‘em!” and back away. The visionary must also add the component of “this is how we know we’re on the right track.”

• What are the key victories that imply success?
• What are the most important numbers to watch?
• In what measurable ways does every individual’s performance move the needle of success?

Your victories give your group motivation to band together and fight until they win. Likewise, victories also provide a reality check when you lose. **Benchmarks are a Change Maker’s best friend.** They tell you, whether change is really happening or not. Benchmarks can prove that you are moving forward, not just sitting in meetings and shuffling papers.

At the conclusion of a work day, your people need to walk out of the building, campus, or meeting feeling like they’re one step closer to the championship—and why.
very day, there is someone who sees something (i.e. an inefficient process or an outdated belief system) that is in need of change, but says, “That’s not my problem.” There is also someone who sees the same issue and says, “That’s my chance to become significant.” It is no surprise that the former people outnumber the latter by many. Fortunately, change doesn’t require popularity status or acceptance by the masses. It only requires one person to get it started—you.

If I have done my job, you now see that you alone possess the power to manifest whatever reality you choose. You should be clear that your God-given gifts and talents weren’t given to you so you could use them for your own benefit; they were given to you so that you could serve people at a high level. You should now understand that you don’t have the right to remain silent.

Step into being your highest self. Accept your calling to be an innovator, a game-changer, a champion for your cause, a genius in your own right. Be the ONE to redefine the word “possible.”

Challenge our beliefs and self-imposed restrictions. Be our emotional leader. Never let us give up on our goals. Help us to
see the end in our minds long before we can see it with our eyes. Remind us of why we set out on this journey in the first place. Teach us to be all that we were created to be. Love us through our mistakes and insecurities. Live with the courage that inspires us to become better human beings.

You represent the “Never Not” for your family, company, and community. Because of your example, we will Never Not know that it be done. We will Never Not believe in the transformational power of education and personal development. We will Never Not second-guess ourselves or shoot ourselves down before we at least try.

While some are content to know they can make a difference, you must believe, “I AM the difference.” You shift the energy with your consistency, your comments in meetings that get us refocused, your ideas that sound crazy at first but actually work, your notes of encouragement signed with a happy face that you stick on our computer while we’re not looking, your hugs when we need them, your corny jokes, and your smiles in the hallway. You are our unfair advantage.

All of this only happens when you step up and lead the way. Be the first, knowing that you won’t be the last. Be the best, raising the bar for others and making mediocrity completely unacceptable. Be the difference that makes the difference. Be so clear about your principles that you can walk into any room and not feel pressure to change who you are. Be the original who refuses to live like a copy.

It only takes one person.

Be the ONE.

JONATHAN SPRINKLES