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# PERSPECTIVES

SUCCESS STRATEGIES  
FOR BUSINESS AND LIFE

By the Pittsburgh Coaches Association

## Contents

<b>How to Use this Book</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Is Coaching for You?</b>	<b>4</b>
1 <b>Whole Health Practices for a Healthy Mind and Body</b> By Deborah Barr	<b>5</b>
2 <b>Positive Thoughts Lead to Positive Outcomes</b> By Maria Berdusco	<b>7</b>
3 <b>Tightening the Generation Gaps</b> By Donna Billings, PCC	<b>9</b>
4 <b>Five Principles to become a Transformational Leader</b> By Bernice Boyden	<b>11</b>
5 <b>Build Business: Turn the Book of Your Dreams into a Manageable Project</b> By Bonnie Budzowski, MA	<b>13</b>
6 <b>The First Day of the Rest of Your Career</b> By Jeff Canter	<b>15</b>
7 <b>Bringing Back The American Dream</b> By Freddie Cecchini	<b>17</b>
8 <b>Twelve Tips to Better Relationships</b> By Lisa Corna	<b>19</b>
9 <b>Is Etiquette Relevant in Today's Society?</b> By Beth Cronin	<b>21</b>
10 <b>7 Healthy Habits: 1 Change + 1 Change = Big Improvements</b> By Laura Crooks	<b>23</b>
11 <b>Healing the Giv-a-holic with the Enneagram, Mudras, &amp; Mantras</b> By Jacqueline Dunkle	<b>25</b>
12 <b>The Neuroscience of New Habits</b> By Sharon Eakes, MA	<b>27</b>
13 <b>Creating a Culture of Accountability</b> By Suzanne Ferguson	<b>29</b>
14 <b>Simple Strategies to Start You on Your Way to Health and Happiness</b> By Diana Fletcher	<b>31</b>
15 <b>Improve Your Listening...Improve Your Bottom Line</b> By David Goldman	<b>33</b>

<b>16 Three Steps to Being Organized</b>	<b>35</b>
By Patty Creamer, CPO	
<b>17 Business Etiquette: Professionalism in the Workplace</b>	<b>37</b>
By Karen Litzinger, MA, NCC, LPC	
<b>18 Overcoming Procrastination</b>	<b>39</b>
By Leslie McKee, CPO-FM	
<b>19 Developing Goals for Success and Well-Being</b>	<b>41</b>
By Susan Moore, LSW, CPC	
<b>20 Top Team Leadership: Facilitate Your Way to Productivity</b>	<b>43</b>
By Jane Patterson	
<b>21 Executive Coaching for Performance Success</b>	<b>45</b>
By Rosemarie Perla, MS, MA	
<b>22 The A, B, C, Ds of a Healthy Financial Plan</b>	<b>47</b>
By Kathy Jo Pollack	
<b>23 Do You Drive Your Car the Way You Live Your Life?</b>	<b>49</b>
By Chris Posti	
<b>24 Coaching as a Leadership Tool</b>	<b>51</b>
By Janice Sabatine, PhD; Judith DePalma, PhD, RN; Susan English, EdD, PCC	
<b>25 Emotional Alignment: Your Key to Success in Business and in Life</b>	<b>53</b>
By Barbara Schwarck, PCC, PCC, MPIA	
<b>26 Seize The Freedom of Self-Employment</b>	<b>55</b>
By Tom Volkar	
<b>27 How to Use Silence To Grab and Hold Audience Attention</b>	<b>57</b>
By Hank Walshak	
<b>28 Website Design that Works – A Bulletin for Business Owners</b>	<b>59</b>
By William Weil	
<b>29 How to Go From Stuck to Unstoppable</b>	<b>61</b>
By Sam Wieder, MBA	

## How to Use this Book

Members of the Pittsburgh Coaches Association have joined together to write this book as our gift to you. Each participating coach has provided tips and practical insights into his or her area of expertise—tips and insights to enrich your life and help you achieve your goals.

Within these pages, you'll find information regarding health and wellness; work and careers; life balance; entrepreneurial success; leadership; personal development; finances, communication skills; relationships, goal setting, and more. The articles cover a wide range of topics because Pittsburgh Coaches Association coaches have varying areas of expertise.

We invite you to use this book in a way that works for you. Review the Table of Contents for topics and titles that capture your interest. Read as much or as little as you like at each sitting. Come back to this book often, because these pages represent years upon years of expertise, training, and experience of Pittsburgh's premier coaches.

As you read the articles here, you'll find that our coaches differ in style as well as area of expertise. When you find an article that seems as if it was written just for you, we encourage you to visit the coach's website. Chances are you'll find more helpful resources there. You'll also learn about the coach. You may choose to contact the coach to see if his or her services make sense for you.

If, on the other hand, you are wondering if coaching is the right profession for you, please visit our website and join us for an upcoming event. Pittsburgh Coaches Association is a wonderful place to meet with other coaches and build your professional toolkit. We're proud of the professional community we've built, and we welcome you!

Best Wishes for Your Success,

*Sister Susan Merrie English, EdD, PCC*

Pittsburgh Coaches Association President, 2010



## About the Editor

When you or someone in your organization needs coaching in writing, presenting, or influencing others, Bonnie Budzowski is the perfect resource. As President of inCredible Messages, Bonnie is a keynote speaker, seminar leader, and coach, with engagements across the country.

Bonnie helps entrepreneurs to write books and articles that showcase their skills and their businesses. She also helps them to develop and deliver dynamic presentations that increase their professional credibility. In addition, Bonnie works with executives and professionals in corporations, associations, and universities, helping them to express and sell their ideas—so they can increase sales, move others to action, and make a strong professional impression. Contact Bonnie at 412-828-1629 or [bonnie@inCredibleMessages.com](mailto:bonnie@inCredibleMessages.com). Visit [www.inCredibleMessages.com](http://www.inCredibleMessages.com) for free resources.



## Is Coaching for You?

If you are looking for a partnership that can help you produce extraordinary and fulfilling results, then coaching might be a good fit for you.

If you have a personal or professional goal to achieve, working with a coach can shorten the process and enhance your results.

If you find yourself stuck and seem unable to move forward in your career, your business, your parenting, or your health, coaching might be the key to help you to get “unstuck.”

Coaching uses a dialogue process to move clients forward to accomplish their desired outcomes. Through the process of coaching, clients deepen their knowledge, improve their performance, and enhance the quality of their lives.

Coaches believe that people are naturally creative and resourceful. The coach's role, therefore, is to bring out the strengths, capabilities, creativity, and resourcefulness of the client in order to facilitate the achievement of desired goals or objectives.

Professional coaches are trained to listen and observe, to customize their approach to the client's needs, and to elicit solutions and strategies from the client.

Coaches provide a process to help clients reach their own answers, ones that motivate and propel them to move forward toward their goals. Talented people often hire coaches to ensure they stay on top of their profession, their game, or their personal lives.

For example, most professional athletes have coaches because they want to continually improve. Likewise, most of the leaders of Global 2000 companies have coaches.

Some examples of situations in which coaching can support *your* goals include the following:

- Starting or expanding a business
- Making a career choice or transition
- Clarifying your life purpose
- Improving personal effectiveness
- Developing your leadership skills
- Enhancing your communication skills
- Dealing with challenging relationships
- Improving your parenting skills
- Completing complex academic or professional projects

Choosing the right coach can be a key factor in moving you toward achieving your goals. All Pittsburgh Coaches Association coaches are committed to upholding high standards of ethics and business practices, but their areas of specialty and their coaching styles vary widely to meet the needs of their clients. Visit [www.pittsburghcoaches.com](http://www.pittsburghcoaches.com) to learn more or to find the right coach for you.

## Whole Health Practices for a Healthy Mind & Body

By Deborah Barr, Holistic Health Counselor/Coach, Speaker and Author,  
[www.deborahbarr.com](http://www.deborahbarr.com)

Despite medical advances, many are burdened with health and weight problems. Obesity statistics are growing; disease is rampant; America is the most medicated nation on earth. Although prescription drug use is rising, many are still sick and depressed.

Our culture is looking in the wrong direction for solutions. Instead of looking at the level of cause, most take a superficial approach, looking for a magic pill – chemical or natural. A pill may temporarily relieve symptoms, but does not eliminate the cause. Often the same problems return or new ones develop.

The causes are rooted in diet, thought, and lifestyle choices. Health and happiness flow from everything you consume--what you eat, think, feel, and believe. Your environment, relationships, and life's work are feeding you as well. Problems are urging you to change. Do you need to create a nourishing rhythm to your fast-paced life? Or change your diet or beliefs? If healthier choices are not made, problems worsen and your health and happiness will be compromised.

A Holistic approach views body, mind, emotions, and spirit as one integrated system, and finds causes and solutions at every level.

### Food is Fundamental

Food is foundation medicine and creates the quality of all bodily systems, mind, and emotions. You can create a clear, focused mind, emotional harmony, vitality, and a disease-free body with the food you eat.

There never can be a perfect diet or universal standard for foods that will bring everyone good health. Not everyone benefits equally from the same measure of nutrients. The best foods are determined by knowledge of the person eating them--constitution, condition, age, lifestyle, and emotions, modified by the season and climate.

Everyone benefits by eating whole foods as primary foods--whole grains, vegetables, beans and legumes. Whole means they are eaten in the state they are grown. Food has a life force that is diminished when processed, refined, frozen, and micro waved.

Alcohol, refined sugar, and caffeine are stimulants and cause blood sugar to plummet, leaving brain chemistry in disarray and emotions depleted. They trigger anxiety, panic attacks, fatigue, and deficiencies.

Chemicals, additives, and preservatives cause toxicity, allergies, moodiness, emotional repression, and nervous tension. These potential carcinogens lack nutrition, are not real food, and your body doesn't want them. Work at the level of cause by eliminating chaotic chemical-, hormone-, steroid-, and antibiotic-laden foods.

Regular consumption of empty sweets, high-fat animal foods, and commercial salt stresses your organs and mind. They cause cravings and leave you dissatisfied, ungrounded, and weak, with serious health costs.

Healthy eating requires planning, organization, commitment, and often professional guidance.

### The Mind is a Powerful Tool

Are you weary of going through your day enduring stress, unable to stop worry and anxiety? Do you wake up with a knot in your stomach or a feeling of dread? Thinking or obsessing about everything that is wrong or worrying about every new disease is the same as telling your body to be sick. Chronic negative thinking drives you to make choices that cause disease.

You use your mind every day to create nearly everything you are experiencing. Thinking is rehearsing your future. What you focus on will become your reality. You do not have to get every disease your family and friends have. Taking on the beliefs of others prevents your success. Thousands have reversed health issues despite a bleak prognosis.

It's essential to uncover and transform beliefs that oppose good health. Beliefs are the basis for your health and life; your choices are an attempt to fulfill your beliefs even if you are unaware of them.

Create vibrant health by knowing how you want to look and feel. Clearly identify on paper your vision for your health and life. Daily read it, focusing on the results you desire.

Unresolved negative emotions such as guilt, anger, resentment, and fear cause disease. A willingness to resolve these issues causes a positive momentum that gets you 60% of the way to doing so.

### The Spirit Needs Nourishment Too

Spiritually, you are connected to the Divine Source of all things—the realm of all possibilities. You have an innate guidance system. Some call this soul, higher self, or authentic self. It is your link to the Divine Source, and is always guiding you toward well being. This aspect needs nourishment just as your body does.

Your spirit is fed through prayer, meditation, generosity, kindness, and gratitude. Creativity, playfulness, and laughter awaken this Higher aspect. It is enlivened when you think and speak positive, uplifting words.

You are in this life on purpose with a purpose. Learning to live from Divine guidance will lead you to everything you need to end struggle and create well being.

Are you ready to do what's best for your health and life? You have a lot of power to create health and happiness. Only the insights that are lived and practiced are of value. They must be verified by your experience in implementing them.

You can get to where you want to be from where you are by taking consistent, small steps with awareness, commitment, and an open mind.

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**About the author:** Deborah Barr is a Holistic Health Counselor/Coach, speaker and author, helping clients reverse health & weight issues and achieve emotional harmony and a life they love. She has 25 years of professional training and clinical experience in TCM, Nutritional Therapy, Herbal Medicine, Oriental Diagnosis, Attitudinal Healing, Yoga, and Spiritual Development. In 1985 she founded Whole Health Resources, the premier Holistic Health Center in Pittsburgh. Find free help through her articles and e-newsletters at [www.deborahbarr.com](http://www.deborahbarr.com) Visit to receive free ***Life and Health by Design*** e-Guide.

## Positive Thoughts Lead to Positive Outcomes

By Maria Berdusco, Author, Speaker, Strategist, Leadership Coach & Founder of Leadership International; [www.LeadershipInternational.com](http://www.LeadershipInternational.com)

Optimism is a way of thinking. Practicing optimism means that you believe and expect things will turn out well and have the expectation of positive results.

Optimism is a skill that everyone can learn and practice at a high level, and yet it is often overlooked as absolutely essential to effective leadership and successful outcomes. Research concludes that optimists are not only healthier and live longer, but are also more productive, successful, and more likely to achieve their goals. The rewards are so great. Who can possibly argue against *health, longevity, and productivity*?

### Are Your Expectations Serving You Well?

Do you expect the best, do you count on good things to happen, and take a broad view in your response to events? If so, then you are an optimist. Optimists tend to be the ones called on when opportunities arise, thereby further supporting an optimistic approach. *What do you expect will happen?* Since the probability is higher that your expectations are realized, why not expect the best? Negative thinking is self-perpetuating and creates an outlook of discouragement. Therefore, train your thoughts to be optimistic and with a positive orientation. Expect that an outcome will be favorable, and it is more likely to be favorable.

Practice optimism through hopeful and positive reactions to minimize your negative thinking. Recognize both uplifting and inspirational thought, as opposed to diminishing or de-motivating thought patterns as they occur, and you will start to choose more favorable responses to situations.

### What Are the Steps to Optimism?

To experience optimism in a given situation, first step aside and recognize your immediate thoughts or reaction toward the situation. This is whether the circumstance has been personally created by you, or whether you have found yourself in a situation over which you have no control. Your view of the situation, as a matter of choice, can metaphorically be viewed as the commonly stated 'glass half-full or glass half-empty' interpretation. As you encounter new scenarios, ask yourself: *Am I seeing the best or the worst as my starting point?*

According to Martin Seligman, who has studied optimists for several decades, an optimist's view of the world is one where defeat is just a temporary setback for the individual, and not his or her fault. A pessimist imagines the worst and is prone to depression, which is a different habit of thinking. Generally speaking, if you recognize situations as temporary, you are an optimist; and if you perceive situations as permanent, you are a pessimist.

Seligman conducted a thirty-five-year study that showed that pessimism in early adulthood results in poor health during middle and late adulthood. Similarly, Seligman's colleague, Chris Peterson, demonstrated that pessimism perpetuates helplessness, and showed that pessimistic individuals are likely to become ill more frequently, and remain unhealthy for longer periods of time. This is because their negative thinking perpetuates a helpless attitude. This also prevents individuals from taking the progressive steps necessary to fight illness.

## Positivity as a Learned Practice

Like other essential skills and habits, optimism can be practiced and even learned. This is true, even in situations in which you seem to have no control. For example, you have absolutely no control over the weather. You do, however, have a choice regarding your response to the weather. Today's beautiful sunny conditions and the torrential downpour of tomorrow are brief and temporary, fleeting in the scheme of things, and will change. Weather is never stable or enduring, and no weather condition lasts. This means that you might as well accept the weather, at the very least, or even be happy about it. Weather is exactly what it is and not more. Why would you allow yourself to become unhappy or remorseful about something that you honestly cannot change?

Recognize each situation for what it is, whether a stable reality, an opportunity, or simply an experience. Like most people, you probably have false beliefs about specific conditions that reflect previous events and are incorrect. You have responses that you have repeatedly reinforced over time. Be prepared to better and more wisely interpret situations as they arise, whether they are new or experienced previously. Regard them more positively, and they will become more positive experiences for you.

At the end of each day, do you take the time to review what worked and what went right for you? When you think of something, someone, or somewhere that you have experienced, focus on specific strengths and attributes. This will help you think differently, and have more patience when the unexpected arises. When you are in a circumstance that is undesirable, or disagreeable in some aspect, try to find an attribute that is worth appreciating, and move forward. This does not mean that you do not recognize obstacles as they arise, but it does mean you have more options available to you when they do.

One of the underlying premises of optimism is to act the way you want to feel and you will, with a hopefulness and confidence of actualization. Positive emotion, as a choice, is one of the great freedoms of mankind. This is an overall state of being, and the joy of being alive. What you have been hearing all along bears truth after all, think positively.

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**About the Author:** Leadership is a personal journey. Are you ready to take the next step? Explore possibilities and realize your leadership potential, through the clarity, focus, and support of individual coaching. Maria Berdusco is a personal, business and leadership coach, trainer, speaker and founder of Leadership International, specializing in leadership training and development. Maria is also the author of *How to Think Like a Leader: A Personal Guide to Change and Discovery*, and *The Leadership Action Guide*. If you are thinking about how to get back on track with a professional coach, call Maria at 412-221-3376, e-mail [Maria@Berdusco.com](mailto:Maria@Berdusco.com), or receive a free e-book at

[www.LeadershipInternational.com](http://www.LeadershipInternational.com).

## Tightening the Generation Gaps

**Transform generational differences into opportunities and reap the reward of working with people of all ages.**

By Donna Billings, Professional Certified Coach, Educator, Facilitator, and Founder of Reach the Top, [www.reachthetop.net](http://www.reachthetop.net).

Generational disconnect is a hot topic. Why? One reason centers on older employees who defer retirement and are working alongside Baby Boomers and younger people who are just getting started in their careers. The result is an amalgam of four distinct generations blending into the workforce.

When we understand the differing values that drive our own and other generations, we have a better chance of respecting those values and working productively together. Below is an overview of the characteristics that distinguish the generations. Please keep in mind the years I've cited may vary depending on demographics.

Following the overview are suggestions for how you can interact productively with all generations in your workplace.

### **Traditionalists/Veterans**

Members of his group, of which I am one, were born between 1925 and 1945. They have been coined the "Greatest Generation." Survivors of the Great Depression and World War II, traditionalists value logic and discipline as well as jobs that offer a stable environment. Respectful of authority, Traditionalists are characterized by conformity, place a high priority on work, and seek to build career legacies. They "don't like to rush things" and may even be unsure about and resistant to the most up-to-date technology.

### **Baby Boomers**

Born between 1946 and 1964, the 80 million Boomers are often characterized as the group whose members "live to work." They value participation and equity and look for jobs that provide personal challenges. As a group, they're non-authoritarian, optimistic, and willing to learn. Competitive, their work priorities focus on being a star performer and building a stellar career.

### **Generation X**

Gen X, also known as "latch-key kids" were born between 1965 and 1980. They watched their baby boomer parents dedicate themselves to work only to be rewarded with layoffs during the 80s recession. As a result, this group is characterized by its "work to live" ethic, which places a high priority on achieving a work/life balance. Highly motivated, Gen Xers prefer work environments where they may provide feedback and where they will not be supervised too closely. They look for a workplace that's fun and flexible, are technologically savvy, and make it their goal to have a portable career.

### **Generation Y/Millennials (a.k.a. "Nexters")**

Just entering the workforce, Nexters were reared by young Boomers and older Xers. As a group, they've been coined "upcoming optimists" (Not a bad moniker!). Nexters value diversity and morals and look for careers that provide structure. Respectful of traditionalists, Nexters share a can-do attitude and make money a career priority. From a training standpoint, they do

well in mentoring programs. Technologically superior to any other generation, Nexters build parallel careers.

These brief descriptions are not meant to confine people to a box based on their birth year. Rather, the descriptions serve as a frame of reference that will help us understand and embrace generational diversity — a move that can have a significant impact on you as a person, on your career, and on a company's financial success.

When you have a deep understanding of your own values and motivation, it's easier to begin to move toward understanding other people. If you can pinpoint their motivations and values, you'll have an easier time working with them. Instead of seeing conflict, you'll see different work styles shaped by different values. The result is a sense of personal satisfaction, a more enjoyable and productive work environment for everyone and, ultimately, better relationships with each other.

Ready to enjoy working with multiple generations? Think about how different generations are getting along where you work. Consider how well you get along with people who belong to different generations. Make it your goal to be sensitive to different experiences, perspectives, values, and goals. Identify and praise good intergenerational communication in your workplace. Identify and eliminate anything that's negative.

Here are immediate methods for good career interaction with all generations:

- Recognize that everyone is different and that your way isn't the only way.
- Identify what you value.
- Listen and discern what other people value.
- Accommodate people's values. For example, once you know someone wants to take a more visible role in weekly staff meetings, take action and make it happen.
- Connect the person to the goal. If your work is to have meaning, it's important to have a good understanding of how what you do impacts company goals.
- Lighten up. While we can't abandon work boundaries, we can introduce an element of fun when it's appropriate, such as when someone reaches a goal or a team gets results.
- Reward people! Formal and informal rewards make people feel good about what they're doing. Don't be afraid to say, "Thank you!" or "Nice job!" and make sure you mean it.
- Harness the energy that comes from working with people who have different values and motivations.

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**About the Author:** Donna Billings, founder of Reach the Top, helps clients to design and implement the next phase of their lives successfully. She helps people move into new leadership roles, transition into new careers, rediscover their core selves during women's retreats, or shift into meaningful retirement. Donna is a professional certified coach. She is also Program Director of the Professional Coaching Certification Program at Duquesne University's School of Leadership and Professional Advancement, where she teaches a course called Leadership & Coaching across Generations.

Visit Donna at [www.ReachtheTop.net](http://www.ReachtheTop.net).

## Five Principles to Become a Transformational Leader

By Bernice Boyden, Leadership Coach and Consultant. [www.successinspired.net](http://www.successinspired.net)

A leader leads the way; that's the obvious meaning. But, there is much more to leading than simply taking a step forward and expecting others to follow, especially in today's workplace. Today's leaders must be flexible to think across boundaries and outside the box while also being able to encourage others to think in the same arena. A leader needs to be able to encourage others to open their minds and be receptive to new ideas.

Are you a transactional leader or a transformational leader? A transactional leader seeks to motivate followers by appealing to the leader's own self interest. This type of leadership focuses on the accomplishment of tasks or behaviors desired by you, the leader, in exchange for rewards desired by the employee. Also a transactional leader wants to influence others. This style does not build on an employee's need or desire for meaningful work or tap into their creativity.

- To encourage the best performance, effective leaders need to practice transformational leadership. Transformational leadership represents a leader who raises their employees' awareness about issues of consequence; takes their employees to their own higher level needs; influences them to bring their own self interest in for the good of the group or the company; and inspires them to work harder than they originally had expected. This is commonly referred to as discretionary effort.

### Characteristics of Transformational Leaders

Transformational leaders are characterized by three behavioral dimensions:

- Charisma-seeing what is really important and conveying a sense of mission to others. Charismatic leaders make everyone around them enthusiastic about their assignments because they instill faith, respect, and trust, making other people proud to be associated with them.
- Individual consideration-treating each employee as an individual. Actively listening, providing feedback to the employee, and showing appreciation for a job well done.
- Intellectual stimulation-enabling others to find creative solutions. This enables employees to remain calm when confronted with many different situations, good and bad. Employees will then think about old problems in new ways.

### Five Principles to Adjust Your Leadership Style

If you're reading this and thinking maybe I am a transactional leader, here are five principles that will transform you into that transformational leader you'd like to become.

1. Model the way - leaders go first. Leaders model behavior that consistently matches their values. Leaders build commitment to long-term goals and plans by achieving small wins along the way.
2. Inspire a shared vision - Leaders see the big picture help and other people to see and believe in that same vision. It's been said that the leader breathes life into the hopes and dreams of others to enable them to see the exciting possibility the future holds.
3. Challenge the process - leaders must have courage to think outside of the box and to act on those ideas that the leader and team uncover. It's the leader's job to recognize

- good ideas, support those ideas, and have the courage to challenge the system to get positive ideas implemented.
4. Enable others to act - empower your people. This is where the importance of developing a relationship with others comes into play. Leaders are expected to be trustworthy and to empower their people. Enable others to act, delegate, lead others, and demonstrate respect for their worth.
  5. Encourage the heart - recognize and reward achievement. Effective leaders celebrate individual accomplishments and team accomplishments. When followers feel encouraged, they are willing to go the extra mile for the leader and the company.

Leadership is an art; it's a science; and it's a learned skill. Everyone can be a transformational leader. Take a look at your own leadership style and apply these five principles today!

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**About the Author:** When you need someone to help build the bridge from Manager into Leader, Bernice Boyden can work with you to make that happen. Bernice Boyden is a Leadership Coach/Consultant who works with Managers who wish to become Leaders in their own right. She does this by assessment, coaching, and consulting on a variety of levels. Bernice's goal is to catapult you into the Leader that you were meant to be. For information on working with Bernice, visit [www.successinspired.net](http://www.successinspired.net) or contact Bernice at [bernice@successinspired.net](mailto:bernice@successinspired.net).

## Turn the Book of Your Dreams into a Manageable Project

By Bonnie Budzowski, Communication Coach, Trainer, Speaker & Founder of inCredible Messages, LP, [www.inCredibleMessages.com](http://www.inCredibleMessages.com)

Authors who have turned the book of their dreams into a reality enjoy increased credibility and higher fees, not to mention the personal satisfaction of seeing their names in print. Yet a book project can seem overwhelming.

Many people think spending a week away in a remote spot will jumpstart their writing project. For some, the week just doesn't become available. For others, the week comes and goes, and they return home with a headache and a messy folder or computer file. If this has happened to you, chances are you began to write without creating a good plan.

### The First Step Is Focus

Start with a visit to a bookstore. Think about your dream, your expertise, and your audience. Then find the place in the bookstore where your book belongs. For example, does your book belong in the business section, the self-help section, or the inspirational section? Does the audience belong to a specific gender or age group? Walk to the appropriate stacks and look at the books that currently fill the shelves.

Imagine yourself as a shopper in the store. Look at what each book in your section offers that is unique. Identify the unique factor in your own book. Don't allow yourself to be overwhelmed by the fact that other books exist in your category. Simply find the unique factor in your own approach. Since there is great variety in readers, a great variety of approaches to any topic can be successful. You must, however, have something unique, even if it is your own quirky style. Give your book a working title to showcase your unique factor.

When you have identified a clear audience and focus for your book, you'll find that some material fits this focus and some does not. A key part in creating a manageable book project is deciding what to discard. You can always use the discarded material in another project.

### Next, Pull Order Out of Chaos

Now that your book has a focus, it's time to make a mess! On a whiteboard, a tablet, or with a friend taking notes, let loose and identify all the things you want in your book. Write it all down without worrying about the quality of your thoughts. Include notes about concepts, stories, examples, and facts that make your points. Spend 2 to 4 hours in this process, until you have exhausted your ideas. Then set your work aside for another day.

When you come back to your notes, come with an organized mind and your audience and your unique factor at the center of your thoughts. Using colored pens or highlighters, identify the major themes that stand out. Notice themes and subthemes. Highlight items that belong in the book and cross out items that do not. Be merciless about this.

Sometimes order will be obvious in your material. More often, you will have to struggle to identify what to keep and what to exclude. The decisions involved can be hard work, but the work is essential to making your project manageable for you and successful from the reader's point of view.

Because you are close to the subject of your book, it can be difficult to let any material go. Each tidbit might seem important, because that tidbit or experience was part of your personal journey and growth. An objective party or experienced coach can be a big help here, because distance allows objectivity and perspective. While you can accomplish this step on your own, some outside help can save you considerable time, angst, and confusion. This step need not tie you up for long periods of time. I can generally guide my clients through these decisions in one half-day session.

You'll know you are done with this step when you have decided upon and provided working names for between eight and fourteen chapters for your book.

### **Now, Create a Template for Each Chapter**

In a unified book, each chapter follows a pattern. Take a look at the non-fiction books on your shelf to discover some options.

For example, many books begin each chapter with a relevant quote. Others begin with a concrete example and follow that example with specific principles for the reader to follow. Others begin with the principles and then give an example that demonstrates the principles in action.

Some writers like to have “call out boxes” in the text to highlight the important points. Others like to summarize key points in a box at the end of each chapter. Some authors close each chapter with suggested exercises for the reader.

Choose a template that makes sense for your focus, your material, and your style. As you choose elements, remember that readers like to get material in smaller rather than larger chunks. Readers like to scan headings and bulleted lists rather than read dense text. Readers prefer to see how principles and concepts can be applied to their own situations.

Once you have a solid plan for the book of your dreams, you no longer need a week away to make progress with writing. In fact, when you have an extra hour or two between meetings, you know exactly what to write and where it fits in your book.

It's time to make the book of your dreams a reality! Are you ready to begin?

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**About the Author:** Bonnie Budzowski is a communication expert who works with people to express and sell their ideas—so they can increase sales, move others to action, and make a strong professional impression. When it's time to make your book a reality, count on Bonnie as an experienced guide to direct and support you along the way. Bonnie is one of Pittsburgh's premier writing and presentation coaches.

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## The First Day of the Rest of Your Career

By Jeff Canter, Founder and President, Step 1 Management Services, LLC,  
[www.step1management.com](http://www.step1management.com)

Thanks to a seemingly endless stream of change in both the type of work we perform and the manner in which we perform it, the average professional must continuously reinvent himself or herself. Technical innovation, social evolution, global economics, and a focus on personal fulfillment have helped to define a new personal paradigm. The career we begin our adult lives pursuing is frequently not the career that carries us to retirement. Beyond just changing jobs, a great many of us will work in multiple industries and disciplines throughout our professional lives. This incessant momentum can easily overwhelm us as we try to cope with just living day to day.

So how do we see our way through such a maelstrom and chart our professional course? There are four key behaviors and characteristics that, if mastered, can serve as our navigational aids along the way.

### Engage in Self-Honesty

Rigorous self-honesty is critical to planning where to take our professional and personal lives. This kind of self awareness is both painful and therapeutic in the sense that it is difficult for us, at times, to face those issues about ourselves that we do not like, as well as those which we know we must improve upon in order to grow as individuals. The person who knows himself or herself well and is comfortable in their own skin is more likely to successfully identify new pathways through life.

### Identify Your Passions

Obviously, I'm not referring to romantic passions here, but the passion that we feel for those activities and social issues that stir us up emotionally. We sometimes feel intense passions in defense of perceived injustices. Frequently these passions reflect our innermost strengths, values, and mores. In other words, what is it that we give a damn about? What gets us up in the morning? Effectively identifying our personal passions demands self-awareness and rigorous self-honesty because our passions may actually be quite dissimilar from what we have come to portray as the "purpose" of our lives. By ignoring learned skills and digging deep inside ourselves to understand our passions and true competencies, we give ourselves a chance to think of the world (and our role in it) in ways that are meaningful for us, not just economically expeditious.

### Unbridled Creativity

To free our thinking so that we can identify new directions and new pathways, we need to find a way to release the creativity we keep locked inside us as if it were cash in a bank vault. For those unaccustomed to working in a highly creative environment, this can seem a tall order. It does not need to be so. At minimum, if we are practicing self-honesty, we should be willing to tap into our intrinsic creativity, regardless of how we fear others may view it.

Our concept of creativity does not have to fit into any accepted mold or stereotype. It is more important that we understand how to reach our own creative capacity and leverage it to our own advantage. When we harness our innate creative juices in support of our efforts to develop a personal long-term vision, we can reach beyond the artificial boundaries we create for ourselves when we subscribe to an externally imposed notion of what “ought to be”.

### Practice Personal Acceptance

Sometimes acceptance is the thing we struggle with the most. Acceptance demands that we come to terms with how we fit into our environment, whether family or professional. For many type-A personalities, acceptance may feel like defeat. Nothing is further from the truth. Learning to accept who we are and what our limitations are may not suggest surrender; rather, it reflects a reasoned comprehension of what is possible, what is likely, and what can never be. With such clarity of thought we possess the capability to integrate our self-honesty, our passions, our inner creativity, and our ambitions into a life direction that supports our fondest hopes and dreams. Acceptance, therefore, is truly the key to moving beyond limited thinking.

Change is the only constant in the modern age. We have no choice but to cope with it (and try to thrive in it). If we can manage to put ego and unreasonable expectations aside (both our own and those of others), we have a chance to realize what our true calling may be. Don't hesitate—get to know you, you're a great person! Then make today the first day of the rest of your career.

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**About the Author:** Jeff Canter is Founder and President of Step 1 Management Services. Step 1 provides professional development, coaching, and strategic management consulting to the small-to-midsized business market. He is the creator of the **Step1 Start** Manager Training programs, which help emerging and experienced managers alike to dramatically improve their job performance. Typically, 85% of those companies who enroll their employees in a **Step1 Start** program send additional staff to a subsequent course. Go to [www.step1management.com](http://www.step1management.com) to learn more about these programs and more. Or better yet, contact Jeff Canter directly at 412.922.6870

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## Bringing Back the American Dream

By Freddie Cecchini, Business Coach and Dream Coach, Certified Meditation Instructor,  
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From time to time, all of us forget our dreams. For a lot of people the American Dream is being self employed, owning your own business. The biggest thing that most people overlook is **WHY** do I want to be in my own business? Or if they have been in business for a few years, **WHY** did I get into business?

The **WHY** is what I call your **Big Dream** or your **Olympics**. This is what inspires you to keep going when times get rough. You see, people with small dreams have big excuses; you can't get them off the couch. People with big dreams (Olympics) don't have excuses; they find solutions to any obstacles, problems, or even brick walls. They treat their business as if they were going to the Olympics... always focused.

Your business is there to support your dreams and desires in life. So being very clear and focused is the key to owning and running a successful business. Keeping your thoughts on what you want, not on what you don't want, will help to manifest your dream business.

### Your Dream Begins with a Thought

Everything starts with a thought. Thoughts create dreams, dreams create desires, desires create intentions, intentions create passion, and your passion will cause you to take action. That's the law of attraction, and the law of attraction states whatever you think about comes about. So watch what you're thinking.

James Allen wrote a book over 100 years ago called *As a Man Thinketh* and he said: "as you think so shall you be." We tend to overlook our every day thoughts and tend to focus on what we don't want, like what's happening in the news, problems, negativity, debt and a whole host of other things that we don't want. If you focus on what you don't want that's what you will attract. If you focus on problems, that's what you will attract; if you focus on debt that is where you will stay.

There are three ways to look at your dreams (what you want). Look at what you want to be, what you want to do, and what you want to have.

So let's look at James Allen's quote again, "as you think so shall you be." Your "be's" are more important than your "do's" or "have's". Let me give you an example. You can have (own) a business, or you can "be" a successful business owner. Being comes from within, from the depths of your soul, while having or owning something comes from your ego (ownership).

Your soul is a part of you that is always asking, "How may I help? How may I serve?" Your ego is a part of you that's always saying, "What's in it for me? What do I get? What's the bottom line?" Successful businesses always focus on helping and serving their customers and clients, knowing that the more people they help and serve, the more successful their business will be.

When I ask people what they want, most can tell me what they don't want but very seldom can they actually tell me what they do want. So, how do you get really clear, really focused on what you do want, what are your dreams?

### Three Things to Get You on Track

Whether you've been in business for years or you are just starting or beginning a business, the following suggestions will help you get and stay on track with your dream:

1. Start by writing down 50 things or more that you've always wanted to be, do, or have. Do not be concerned with how you're going to be, do, or have any of those things. Your job right now is just to dream big. Let yourself think of all the things that you wanted since you were a child but never believed you could have.

Napoleon Hill, author of *Think And Grow Rich*, said, "whatever the mind can conceive and believe the mind can achieve."

2. Prioritize the things on your list, from the top most important to the least important. This is the part that most people forget to do, prioritize. They tend to concentrate on the least important and never get to the things that mean the most and are their big dreams.
3. Take the top 3-5 things on your list and write an affirmation as though you have already achieved those 3-5 things. I suggest starting each affirmation with "I am so happy and grateful now that I... (add your dream)."

Keep these affirmations on a 3 x 5 card so you can look at them each day, morning, noon, and night. The key is to focus on these things throughout the day as much as possible and remember, "as you think so shall you be".

So, dream really big as if you're going to the Olympics. Have a burning desire, a clear intention, a passion for what you are doing, and make sure you keep in action so that you're heading in the direction of your dreams where you'll be the happiest.

Once you know exactly what you want, what your most important dreams are, you will need some tools to help you. Visualization techniques and meditation will help in manifesting and having a business "**of your dreams**" - "**for your dreams**".

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**About the Author:** Freddie Cecchini is a Business Coach and Dream Coach helping people build a business that supports their dreams. He's a Certified Meditation Instructor with Deepak Chopra and schooled in the art of helping people to be more focused, more calm, and less stressed. Freddie has over 30 years experience in sales, management and training. He sold everything from advertising to business opportunities and sales seminars to meditation classes. You can get a **FREE** copy of "**As A Man Thinketh**" by James Allen at Freddie's website: [www.TheCoachingShop.com](http://www.TheCoachingShop.com); [Coach@TheCoachingShop.com](mailto:Coach@TheCoachingShop.com); 724-334-5884

## Twelve Tips to Better Relationships

By Lisa Corna, Dating and Relationship Coach; Professional Matchmaker,  
[www.firstchoicematchmaking.com](http://www.firstchoicematchmaking.com).

Looking to make your relationships stronger and more satisfying? Follow these 12 tips to see a real improvement.

### 1. Look Inward

Take an honest, inward look at yourself. Do you like what you see? Make the changes that will make you feel good about yourself. If you feel good about yourself, you'll glow. What's more, you'll have positive energy to spend on your relationships.

### 2. Check Your Attitude

When you have a positive attitude, you get a positive outcome. Negativity breeds negativity and criticism breeds criticism. Pay attention to the voice inside your head. What are you saying to yourself?

### 3. Don't Try to Change the Other Person

The only person you can change is yourself. When you try to change other people, you create resistance and resentment. In healthy relationships, people celebrate their differences.

### 4. Don't Lose Yourself

While flexibility and compromise are important, be sure to maintain your sense of self and personal integrity. Love yourself exactly as you are.

### 5. Mirror what You Want

If you want respect, extend respect to others. If you crave romance, be romantic. Be the person you want to see reflected back to you.

### 6. Don't Assume—Anything

It's impossible to know what another person is thinking or feeling, so don't assume. Avoid assigning blame, communicate. If you are wondering about something, ask.

### 7. Be Curious—Listen

Encourage others to talk by asking questions and listening carefully. The more you listen, the more you will hear and understand. Often all a person wants is simply to know they've been heard and understood.

### 8. Have an Attitude of Gratitude

Gratitude affects your attitude and sense of well being. Be grateful for everything in your life. Each thing has come to you for a reason. Accept and recognize its value.

### 9. Give Compliments

Say "Thank you" often. Express appreciation for the strengths and contributions of others. Notice the things other people do for you, no matter how small. Be lavish with praise and thanks; life is made of small moments and small interactions.

### 10. Always Do the Kind Thing

In your words and actions, extend kindness and generosity. Before you say something, ask yourself, “Is it kind, is it true, is it necessary?”

### 11. Reveal Your Feelings

Don't withhold relevant facts, feelings, or fantasies from your loved ones. Be honest. With honesty comes trust. Trust is the glue that holds relationships together. Trust develops when you feel safe. You feel safe when you are able to be honest.

### 12. Open Your Heart

The more you extend love to yourself and others, the more love will come back to you. This is a universal principle. When you extend grace and acceptance rather than judgment, you become richer. An open heart gives us all freedom.

Improving your relationships takes attention and commitment. The results are well worth the effort. Are you ready for action?

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**About the Author:** Once divorced, once widowed, Lisa Corna found herself asking the \$64,000 question: “Oh my God. Now what? I haven't dated in 20 years!” Personally, and as a professional coach, Lisa navigates the dating waters with grace and expertise. Contact Lisa at [lisa@firstchoicematchmaking.com](mailto:lisa@firstchoicematchmaking.com) for dating coaching and matchmaking services that meet your personal and confidential needs.

## Is Etiquette Relevant in Today's Society?

By Beth Cronin, Professional Coach and Speaker; [www.makeasplashnow.com](http://www.makeasplashnow.com).

*Whenever two people come together and their behavior affects one another, you have etiquette. Etiquette is not some rigid code of manners; it's simply how persons' lives touch one another.*  
Emily Post

In the larger scheme of things does it really matter if you use your salad fork to eat your entrée or if you drink your white wine from a champagne flute? On one level, it really does not matter; you still eat your entrée and drink your wine. You most likely still enjoy the event that you are attending and those you are with probably still enjoy your company.

Even so, your lack of knowledge could keep you from obtaining the intended result. Have you made a favorable impression on your business or social contact? If they do not know the rules, then it may not make a difference, but if the other party knows and respects rules of etiquette, you may have made a very bad impression. You probably won't know that a mistake was noticed because it would be bad manners to point it out, but your mistake will be noted.

Some of us have problems when dealing with etiquette. We may fear the unknown, or we may not like rules. Many of us live an informal lifestyle and so do not value what we see as stuffy manners that we may think do not matter any longer.

The difficulty with this attitude is that we are viewing etiquette all wrong. Etiquette isn't about the rules for rules' sake; etiquette is about what the rules stand for—respecting the situation and the people involved. If you miss one “please” or “thank you,” you are not a bad person, but you may be missing out on some opportunities.

Etiquette is even more relevant today than ever.

### You Are Your Brand

Whether you are promoting your own business or yourself alone, you are always your best advertisement. It is important what you wear, how you behave, and how you present yourself in social as well as business situations.

In today's world you need an edge. The competition for every space, school, job, or volunteer position becomes larger and fiercer daily. Just keeping your job, let alone advancing to a higher position, is difficult today. Making a favorable impression gives you an advantage that others may not have.

### Knowing the Rules Frees You to Shine

If you know how to correctly greet a prospective employer or date, that is one less thing that you have to worry about. You can free your mind for important details. If you are not worried about which fork to use or which bread plate is yours, you focus on the people you are with and are able to give them your full attention. You will appear more confident, and you'll be memorable for the right reasons.

### Good Etiquette Gives You a Global Edge

We live in a global society and you never know when you may be put in a situation that requires knowledge of other cultures or rules. Does small talk matter or is it a nuisance? Should you address your client formally or informally? Will gender be an issue? These situations occur in business with companies having global locations and contacts. While you

may never leave your home location, you may attend a meeting with colleagues from all over the world via videoconference. In a case such as this, it is essential that you understand the cultures represented. Lack of understanding can derail a deal or an entire career.

More and more we need knowledge of global etiquette in social situations as well. When you attend a social function these days, the guest list is often very diverse. It puts you and the other guests at ease if you know what behaviors are polite and which ones are rude in another culture.

The global nature of today's world can be very enlightening and exciting. It does not have to make us uneasy or afraid. Understanding of etiquette and global protocol allows us to relax and enjoy each others' differences.

### **Technology is Changing the Rules**

Netiquette is a new term used to describe etiquette in this technological age, and it is causing enormous problems. Technology can separate the generations in a way that no other knowledge can. It is an asset that we can be connected so completely and quickly, but the technology brings its own set of difficulties.

MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, and other social networks have changed the definition of a "friend." We feel more anonymous and therefore say things in ways that we never would in person. It also makes face-to-face encounters more difficult if you are only comfortable with a keyboard in your hand.

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**About the Author:** Beth Cronin is a Professional Coach and Speaker. She specializes in helping individuals and groups take their lives from a ripple to a splash, both personally and professionally. Beth offers seminars and workshops in Business and Every Day Etiquette, One on One Coaching, as well as Corporate Coaching, including coaching for Project Managers and Teams. Visit Beth at [www.makeasplashnow.com](http://www.makeasplashnow.com).

## 7 Healthy Habits: 1 Change + 1 Change = Big Improvements

By Laura Crooks, RN, Speaker, and Certified Wellness Coach; [www.YouBloomWellness.com](http://www.YouBloomWellness.com)

Wellness is living to your best potential, enjoying your physical health, feeling satisfied, connected, and having an enthusiasm for life. While it may sound overwhelming to improve your wellness, it all starts with just one small change. Your overall sense of well-being is derived from feeling balanced physically, mentally, and spiritually. If one area is significantly over or underdeveloped, you lose that sense of equilibrium and may not feel well. Being well is a fluid, dynamic state relying on the interplay of many areas of your life.

### Everything is Interconnected

The various aspects of your life are interconnected. Just as you do not live in a vacuum, the various domains of yourself do not operate independently. As one area improves, often so does another. As you start exercising to lose weight, you realize exercise is also helping your mood and stress levels. As your stress decreases, you realize you are sleeping better. With better sleep you may notice that your creativity, productivity, and energy levels go up. With boosted energy levels, you may be inclined to cook more nutritious meals and lengthen your time spent exercising. One improvement leads to another and fuels the cycle of positive changes.

Small changes in one area of life yield positive results in several areas. What a bonus, 3 or 4 improvements for the price of 1 change! Your life is a fabric of many separate strands of fibers woven together. You can strengthen the fabric of your life and improve your wellness by making small changes in different areas.

Each of us has unique areas in which it is easier to implement changes. We do not need to make drastic changes or make changes in all areas to see and feel improvements.

### Follow Seven Healthy Tips

Below are seven seemingly unrelated health and wellness tips; yet, they are related in the sense that each one can affect the others. Positive results in one area lead to positive results in other areas as well.

#### 1. Get adequate, restful sleep.

We do not know exactly why we need sleep, but we do know that sleep improves our mood, reduces our stress, increases our energy, and helps reset our hunger hormones appropriately.

#### 2. Eat a variety of nutritious foods.

Through a variety of foods we get a broad range of nutrients, vitamins, and antioxidants our bodies use for fuel, to get stronger, and to fight illness. The better quality and variety of foods we choose the better equipped we are.

### 3. Get enough exercise.

Exercise can help you to manage stress, improve energy, lower blood pressure, lower blood sugar, lower cholesterol and triglycerides, lose weight, control your moods, and add strength.

### 4. Maintain your ideal weight.

Maintaining your ideal weight, neither too heavy nor too light, is linked to living a longer and better quality life.

### 5. Maintain a positive outlook.

Having a positive outlook is a skill you can practice and improve. It is linked to increased happiness, creativeness, productivity, and a sense of engagement and satisfaction, as well as improved physical and mental health.

### 6. Practice good hand washing.

Hand washing is the number one thing you can do to keep the germs out. Suds your hands for 20 seconds and rinse with warm water.

### 7. Floss your teeth daily.

The bacteria causing gum disease have been linked to heart attacks. By keeping your teeth and gums healthy, you can not only reduce your risk of periodontal disease, but also lower your risk of suffering a heart attack.

Now re-read the list of healthy habits, looking for an area in which you could most easily make a small improvement. Which new habit could you begin to establish? Stay open to looking at how the various aspects of your life intersect and overlap.

You may begin by simply noticing the inter-relatedness of your mood, sleep, exercise, stress, and the foods you eat. Maybe going to bed 15 minutes earlier is something you can commit to this week. Perhaps you could research various types of exercise and, using your calendar, create 10 minutes each day you can set aside for exercise. Possibly eating one more piece of fruit on the weekend is a starting point.

Improving your wellness starts with one small modification, which then ripples outward, positively impacting other areas of your health and wellness, leading to even more success. The overall effect can be large, but it starts with just one small change. Where are you willing to start?

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**About the Author:** Laura Crooks is an RN, speaker, and certified wellness coach who helps busy women create solutions so they can decrease their stress, eat to lose weight, make time to exercise, and create a happy balance between their professional-personal-family time. Through You Bloom Wellness, Laura offers group and individual coaching (including online coaching), presentations, seminars, and wellness programs. Visit [www.YouBloomWellness.com](http://www.YouBloomWellness.com) and get your complimentary report *6 Breakfast Ideas NOT Found in a Cereal Box* when you subscribe to Laura's free e-zine, *Ideas for Healthy Living*.

## Healing the Giv-a-holic with the Enneagram, Mudras, & Mantras

by Jacqueline Dunkle, IAC Certified Coach and Reiki Practitioner, specializing in Enneagram Coaching; [www.ambassadorlifecoaching.com](http://www.ambassadorlifecoaching.com)

What is a Giv-a-holic? Enneagram, which is a map that reveals our specific DNA hook, offers this definition:

*A Giv-a-holic is someone who measures their sense of worth and lovability by what they give – and most often feels unappreciated for all their efforts – making them want to give more. It's their "hook" – where they get stuck.*

The Giv-a-holic hook is rooted in the heart center of intelligence, so people with this dominant energy fall easy prey to the behavior of "giving intoxication." On the flip side, they are also a shining example of unconditional love when giving is not confused with a sense of worth or lovability.

One of the biggest excuses of a Giv-a-holic goes something like this: "It's for the kids...you know how it is." Yes, I do know how it is. I have a son. Our children need food, shelter, and clothing just like big people. After that, giving is optional.

### Do You Find Yourself in This Scenario?

You can't afford to enlist your child in the traveling circus-dance-hockey-juggling program. The precious child really wants to join, and their friend is joining. Your heart breaks. You can't bear to disappoint your child. So you say yes, then complain about the cost of the program and moan about the endless hours of commitment and interferences with other functions. You run yourself ragged and can become a walking mess.

Are you a walking mess? Sometimes all we need is the backbone to say "No." All of us want the very best for our children. It's our definition of "the very best" that is crucial. Our actions are the examples that will convey our definition and our values. When we add stress to our families by over-extending our finances and our time to accommodate a child's hobby or activity, what are we really teaching our children? The impact is far reaching, I assure you.

What childhood activities do you fondly remember? It is possible that our children would also remember them fondly. And it is even more possible that our worth and lovability as a parent is not linked to how much we are able to "give." Whatever happened to jacks and fishing and puzzles and picnics and insect collections?

### Beware of Special Occasions!

The special occasion often serves the Giv-a-holic agenda and can also become a hook – a "giving" hook. Popular perception is that giving makes us kind and good people; and, if we don't give enough, then we are unkind, bad, and even cheap. Maybe that's true, but if we can't afford to pay our own bills or feed ourselves, and we're charging gift purchases or going over budget on a gift, it's time to stop.

If your perception of love hails giving gifts at the top of the list, and you are struggling to make ends meet, think about this. You give a gift but can't afford to pay your bills and are constantly in money trouble. How can the recipients of your gifts really enjoy them, knowing they may eventually be covering the cost of your bankruptcy or if they hear you whine about being broke all the time?

### Learn to Give Wisely

Gift-giving should be a reciprocal activity that involves the overall well-being of each party, not a fix for our "unlovable" inner critic; not a tool that enables us to be irresponsible with money; not a method of finding self worth.

Give wisely. Learn to be generous by spending genuine time with those you care about instead of spending more money on them. If you can't stand spending time with them, your gift-giving is a covert operation anyway.

If want to transform an unhealthy "giving" behavior that no longer serves you, try using the following mudra/mantra technique to help raise awareness of love's source and balance the heart's sense of giving:

Designate 5 minutes of quiet time - daily. During that time, cross your right hand over your left hand and hold both in front of your heart. Reverently repeat these words with intent, "I am loved, because I am, not because I give. I am loved, because I am. I am loved..."

When used consciously with committed self exploration and coaching, this simple exercise can open the door to a new perception of love versus giving, and help reduce guilt or feelings of not being appreciated. Often times, when these old patterns are interrupted, other areas of life automatically become more fulfilling.

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## The Neuroscience of New Habits

By Sharon Eakes, MA, Trainer and Executive Coach; [www.hopellc.com](http://www.hopellc.com)

*We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.*

Aristotle

According to the dictionary, a habit is “an acquired behavior pattern regularly followed until it has become almost involuntary.” Since we repeatedly think and do many of the same things every day, each of us has developed a lot of habits, some comforting and supportive, others negative and destructive. A few examples are:

- The way we treat people
- The way we approach challenges
- The way we spend our free time
- Our usual response to stress
- How we organize thoughts, tasks, stuff

### The Good News about Habits and the Brain

The really good news about habits comes from the study of the brain. Scientists have discovered that when we repeat something over and over a pathway in the brain called a neural circuit is formed, and the pathway gets stronger every time we think or do the same thing. Like a river cutting through a valley, the longer it flows in the same path, the deeper and stronger that path becomes. That’s how habits are made.

So all we have to do to create a new habit is to do something else repeatedly. We’ve all heard that it takes three weeks to create a habit. Science now has the evidence. It takes the brain about three weeks to create strong new neural circuits, a new path for the river to take.

The best discovery of the recent research is that our brains have an ability to change dramatically throughout our lives, until the day we die. As simplistic as all this sounds, it is truly based on neuroscience, a study of how the brain works.

### How to Adopt a New Behavior

It’s unwise to spend a lot of time resisting an old pattern or trying to drop it. Brain research shows that focusing on something strengthens it – so better to put your energy into the new behavior.

Here’s a super tip: Simply thinking about the new habit — imagining it in your mind’s eye or thinking of yourself as already having the new habit — helps build it. So when you’re committed to a new habit, spend a lot of time rehearsing it in your mind.

Deal with feelings that threaten to derail you by mental note-taking. If feelings of frustration or anger, annoyance or fear knock you off balance, brain research offers this: Label what you’re feeling. Saying, either silently or out loud, “I am nervous” or “I am frustrated” calms the brain so it can get back on track.

Sometimes we can develop new habits that indirectly get us what we want. An exercise habit can improve our health; a savings habit can finance a dream vacation; and building simple practices like hugging six times a day can enhance a marriage.

Developing a systems thinking approach can help us make better decisions. According to systems educator, Linda Booth Sweeney, making systems thinking a life-long learning habit includes learning to ask different kinds of questions. For example, good questions are ones that get at a pattern of behavior over time, that focus your attention on balancing or reinforcing processes, and that surface potential unintended consequences.

### Coaching Questions to Ask Yourself

Look at your habits of thought, attitude, and behavior. Which ones do you want to reinforce and which would you rather replace?

- What's a new thought or attitude habit you want to develop?
- What will you practice to make sure it sticks?
- What's a new behavior you want to cultivate?
- How can you ensure that the new behavior reroutes a river in your brain?
- Why not make excellence a habit in your life, as Aristotle suggested?

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**About the Author:** Sharon Eakes specializes in coaching people who want to make big contributions. With a solid grounding in how the brain works, she coaches people to think effectively, understand themselves and others, cultivate successful relationships, and navigate complex environments. Sharon is a seasoned coach with a background in psychology and management, and a direct, supportive, style. Sharon is a regular columnist for the *Green Tree Times* and an occasional columnist for *The Systems Thinker*. Visit her website at [www.hopellc.com](http://www.hopellc.com) and subscribe to her free mini-ezine Fresh Views at [www.hopellc.com/ezine.html](http://www.hopellc.com/ezine.html).

## Creating a Culture of Accountability

By Suzanne Ferguson, CEC, Founder, Suzanne Ferguson & Associates;  
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Does it seem like there is no one you can really count on anymore? Are your teammates, your family, or your friends continually letting you down? If so, let me offer you a surprising solution.

You might not want to hear this, but it's true. Accountability involves two parties—which means you are part of the problem. But here's the good news: when you accept that you are part of the problem, you can take steps to fix it, and the only thing that stands in your way is knowing how. Here's more good news: you are about to learn how!

### Accountability & How to Achieve It

Poor accountability means broken agreements, unmet expectations, or even a reluctance to commit. More often than not, it arises because of an incomplete understanding of what makes for successful requests, agreements, or commitments.

Here are some tried-and-true strategies you can use to improve your culture of accountability, based around these three basic steps:

#### 1. The Request

A request is simply asking for what you want. Basically, if you don't ask, you will not get what you want!

Every request should include a by-when date if you want to have an action completed within a specific timeframe. This may be negotiated or even renegotiated, but if no date is specified, expect that the job or task will be completed according to the other's timeframe, which will almost certainly not mesh with yours.

#### 2. Agreement

An agreement is an arrangement between parties regarding a course of action—usually made in response to a request. There are 5 types of agreements:

- Accept
- Decline
- Ask for clarification
- "Promise to promise," which is the need to check on a prior commitment before agreeing. For example, "I'd like to say yes but I already have a commitment on that day. Let me see if I can re-schedule that and I'll get back to you. Can I let you know tomorrow?"
- Negotiate, which is a willingness to agree to some terms of the request but not all. For example, "I will do what you ask but I can't have it done by Monday. Is it okay if I get it back to you by Wednesday?"

#### 3. Commitment

Once an agreement is accepted and all terms are clearly understood by both parties, a commitment is made. And here's the trick: rather than making a "do or die" commitment, try managing it.

We make commitments given the information that we have in the moment and we do so with good intentions to deliver. However, sometimes "shtuff" happens to interfere with our ability to follow through as we agreed. Managing your commitments offers flexibility and choices as you work to deliver on your promise.

There are three ways you can manage your commitment:

- Keep it
- Re-negotiate it
- Revoke it

For many, renegotiating or revoking a commitment is where accountability starts to fall apart. But it doesn't have to be that way. The first rule if you need to renegotiate or revoke a commitment is to do so as soon as you know this is going to be necessary.

**Renegotiating a commitment.** An example: "I said I'd get X to you by Wednesday and in order to complete it I need Y, which I will not receive until Thursday. I will get the finished product to you by Friday."

**Revoking a commitment.** The topic of revoking a commitment often evokes a response of anxiety or indignation. If you feel this response coming on, I say: What's better? "Killing" yourself to deliver? Simply not delivering and suffering the consequences? Or explaining honestly that you can't see it through and taking the opportunity to make it right? How you "make it right" will depend on your situation and resources. Here are two examples:

- "I can't keep my commitment because of X. I asked Bob to handle it for me and he has agreed."
- "I can't keep my commitment because of X. I have not been able to find anyone who is willing to commit, what can I do to make it right?"

### Your Next Steps

If you think you are already doing all of these things and are still surrounded by people who are not accountable, I invite you to look again.

- The next time you make a request, make sure you include a by-when date.
- The next time you make an agreement, consider the five types of agreements.
- The next time you make or expect a commitment, remember that commitments can be managed.

If your culture has been "un-accountable" for a long time, you will need to train your "team" and ask that they practice these simple communication skills with you. And, of course, the best way to ensure a change is to demonstrate the skills yourself.

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**About the Author:** Since 2001, Suzanne Ferguson has coached and trained business owners, employees, and professionals to increase productivity and profitability. Her personalized coaching programs, combined with a pragmatic approach, lead clients to powerful and measureable results. Suzanne is a graduate of The Institute for Professional Empowerment Coaching. She has an Interdisciplinary Studies degree in Psychology, Sociology, and Social Work. A career in social work and experience running three home-based businesses led her to founding Suzanne Ferguson & Associates. To learn more visit [www.SuzanneFerguson.com](http://www.SuzanneFerguson.com).

## Simple Strategies to Start You on Your Way to Health & Happiness

By Diana Fletcher, Certified Life coach, Motivational Speaker, and Author;  
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You are meant to live a happy, healthy life. Take a few seconds to visualize that. You are meant to be happy. You are meant to move and breathe easily. You are meant to feel rested and nourished with healthy foods and healthy activities. And no matter where you are on the continuum, you can get started today on living a happier, healthier life.

The most important component in experiencing a truly happy life lies in taking care of your health. It doesn't matter how much money you have or how many possessions you own--without good health, you cannot enjoy yourself or take care of the people and things that are most important to you.

### Empower Yourself

Make the decision that you are going to take care of yourself and your health because you are important. Your happiness truly depends on it.

We have reached a saturation point in our busy world right now. In our multi-tasking madness, we have exhausted ourselves. The time has come to slow down. We have to stop the constant moving, doing, and striving to be everything to everyone. We need to stop giving attention to everything and everyone that demands it.

We have been in a "hurry-up" mode for so long that it is difficult for many people to figure out how to slow down to concentrate on their health and happiness. One great way to begin is to look at how you spend your days.

Honestly look at how you spend each minute of every day. Look at your activities and ask yourself, does this activity benefit me anymore? Does this benefit anyone else? If you are honest with yourself, you will discover many of the things you do are unnecessary or could be done by someone else. Eliminating just a few of these unnecessary activities can create extra space in your day. *The purpose of this is not to immediately fill those moments with more work. The purpose is to create space to take care of your health.*

### Six Tips to Get Started on Health & Happiness

Once you have eliminated some time wasters, use these ideas to get you started on your journey toward healthier, happier living:

#### 1. Get enough sleep

Adults need between 7-9 hours of sleep each night, and *it is possible* to make this a priority. Turn off the television set. Leave the work. It can wait. Not getting enough sleep can affect your decision making, your moods, your creative thinking, and even make you gain weight. Studies have shown that lack of sleep decreases regulation of hormones that control the appetite. Set a reasonable time to go to sleep and stick to it. Your reward will be clearer thinking, a stronger immune system, and more energy.

## 2. Drink plenty of water

This is so important. Keep hydrated to flush out toxins, have healthier looking skin, and boost your metabolic rate. You will have fewer headaches, and be less stressed throughout your day.

## 3. Take a multivitamin

You cannot depend on food to meet all of your nutritional needs. You will be amazed at the positive change in your energy levels vitamins can make.

## 4. Move. Get some exercise

Stand up, stretch, and move around. You were not meant to sit at a desk or anywhere else for long periods of time. Walk. Dance. Just move.

## 5. Every day show gratitude

Saying thank you is a de-stressor that makes you feel good. Negative thoughts cause stress. It is impossible to have negative thoughts and thoughts of gratitude in your mind simultaneously.

## 6. Make time for friends

Healthy relationships help you stay healthy. This does not mean you have to accept every invitation or attend every event. Give yourself time to think about your response. Is it something you truly want to do? Will you be sorry you gave up sleep or time with your family or spouse? Do you need the time for quiet and rest and taking care of your health?

Here's a powerful quote from Eknath Easwaran, "How we live the minutes of each day is how we live our lives." It's true! The way you live your life and the choices you make determine how healthy and strong you will be. Are you making choices that strengthen you or weaken you? If you are making the choices that are making you happy and healthy, that is fantastic and I say, keep up the good work! If not, you have the power to choose a different way. A happy, healthy way. How do you truly want to live your life?

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**About the Author:** Diana Fletcher is the Stress Reducing Expert. As a certified life coach, motivational speaker, and author, she teaches her clients and audiences simple strategies to help them reduce their stress. Diana is the author of four books in the Outstanding Life Series. Her most recent book is entitled, *Reducing Stress: Month by Month Stress Reducing Strategies*. To purchase books or to receive a Free copy of "25 Simple Tips to Reduce Your Stress" and additional free articles, visit Diana's website: [www.dianafletcher.com](http://www.dianafletcher.com).

## Improve Your Listening: Improve Your Bottom Line

By David Goldman, Sales Professionals, Service Professionals, and Leadership Coach;  
[www.goldmanorg.com](http://www.goldmanorg.com)

No doubt you have heard this before. Listening is the most important element in the communication process. So, why don't you listen more effectively? What gets in the way of your ability to listen to a prospect/ client/ colleague/ significant other/ friend? What can you do about it?

Many things can get in the way. The problems can be grouped into three categories and one major umbrella item. The categories are 1) the amount of distractions that abound in the world, 2) the voice in your head, and 3) agenda anxiety. The umbrella is a concept called "Filters."

### The World is Full of Distractions

With so much information coming at you at warp speed, it is almost impossible to tune out everything and actually listen to someone with empathy and full attention. Just think about what you have been bombarded with today. From the time you woke up and perhaps watched the morning news, read the paper, drove to work or somewhere (listening to the radio or an audio program), talked to the people in your life, dealt with co-workers, spoke to customers on the phone, engaged with the everyday business of your life, you have received thousands of messages that are all accumulating and blocking your ability to listen.

You have probably experienced being in a conversation with someone and being distracted by what is going on around you. It's so easy; there is plenty to see and hear.

Here's what to do. Pretend that life is like a radio dial. You have the ability to tune into one station. Even though you may want to take it all in, you know in key moments it is much better to **focus** on the person and subject in front of you. Maintain eye contact and pay attention to what is being said and how the person is saying it. In addition, ask questions from time to time to assure that you understand the message. Multitasking is not a good idea when you are in communication.

### The Voice in Your Head is Always Running.

You know the voice: you wake up into it. You cannot control it; you cannot stop it. It is always on, always judging, always assessing, and always sharing with you. In fact, the voice in your head almost always prevents you from really listening to the other person.

Here's what to do. Thank the voice for sharing with you. Since you can't get rid of it, simply allow it to be. Acknowledge it and you will find the voice recedes into the background. When you notice it again, acknowledge the voice again. As you repeat this process, you will notice that it occurs less and less. This allows you to focus more completely.

### Agenda Anxiety Threatens Your Listening

You have agenda anxiety when you think (consciously or unconsciously) that what you have to say is more important than what the other person has to say. This is what leads you to interrupt others. You think you have the more important information. Moreover, the voice in your head confirms it. If you are thinking about what you want to say, how can you possibly be listening?

Regarding agenda anxiety, exactly when did you learn that good communication meant you were able to explain your position well? It's as if the most important thing to do in communication is to make sure that the other person understands you. You just assume or take for granted that you understand them. Maybe you have practiced or been in business for

many years and have seen so many situations that you naturally think that you know what they want.

You might even be right about that. Perhaps you *do* know. However, you make a big mistake when you assume you understand without asking for clarification. Lack of listening courtesy creates a gap between you and the other party.

Sure, you may have heard what the other person has to say before . . . maybe 1000 times. However, this may be the first (and only) time the other party has gone through it. The best way to gain rapport and make others feel comfortable is to listen and ask and genuinely care about their situations.

So again, what you can do is stop yourself (bite your tongue if you have to), acknowledge your voice, and focus on the other person to listen to them.

### Filters Clog Up the Process

We all speak and hear through filters that are attitudinal. Your filter is composed of everything discussed above plus all of your life experience and whatever happened today. Your attitude (how you feel) affects how you hear people and how you say things.

There are two things to do. You control your filter and have respect for the other person's filter. You can mentally clear your filter before having a conversation. Create the arena you want. Be caring, clear, and curious. You might also want everything to be a contribution. Curiosity forces you to ask questions for clarity.

At the same time, you must respect the other person's filter. It's not simply what you say and how you say it. It's also how it lands that counts. How the other person hears your communication determines understanding.

Here's the bottom line. The best way to get someone to listen to you is to listen to him or her and really hear him or her first. You really can improve your bottom line by improving your listening.

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**About the Author:** Since 1989, David Goldman has coached more than 700 people in more than 100 companies. He works with Sales Professionals who want to make more money, Service Professionals (Attorneys, Accountants and Financial Planners) who want to grow their business, and with Leaders who want their people to be at their best. So, how about you? Are you ready to learn what you need to know and do what you need to do to produce the desired result? Contact David at: [david@goldmanorg.com](mailto:david@goldmanorg.com) or call 412-771-7447.

## Three Steps to BEING Organized

By Patty Kreamer, Certified Professional Organizer,<sup>®</sup> Speaker, and Coach;  
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*If your life is full or clutter, or you're disorganized now, and you want a fast way to "get organized," there's another way! Learn a three-step process that will leave you "being organized," and learn how my "E.A.S.Y." method provides a fast way to deal with your stuff.*

What do you do when you can no longer see over the stacks of stuff or walk in your office or home without tripping? You say to yourself – GET ORGANIZED! Translation: put stuff away, throw stuff away – just get it out of sight! The problem with this Band-Aid® approach is that it's a temporary solution. The idea is to learn how to BE organized, not just to GET organized.

Getting organized is an event – a one-time sweep that may last anywhere from an hour to a week, but not much longer. Then everything comes creeping back out, oftentimes worse than before you started.

Being organized involves having systems in place that accommodate how you think and how your habits carry you through the day. It must be intuitive to you so that it can be a process that is long-lasting.

So how does a person BE-come organized? Simple...use the READY, SET, GO system to get back to square one (a.k.a. organizational bliss). Only ten minutes a day of maintenance will keep the party going.

### Organization is a Three-Step Process

This process is instantly applicable to anyone who needs to be more organized.

#### READY...

Getting Ready is when you figure out why you do the things you do. For example, if you are a perfectionist, you might realize that you work incessantly on things that are not important. It only makes YOU feel better but adds nothing of value to the project. Once you recognize your perfectionist tendencies, you can take action to change them. Take a risk and turn in a report after the second draft (not the eighth).

#### SET...

Getting Set is when you take a look at your space, time, and goals. Taking the time to sketch out what the space will look like when it's done, creating a plan that includes a realistic time schedule, and defining what success will look like are critical, yet often overlooked. Next, you need to plan out how you will achieve success – what steps need to be taken and in what order. Schedule them in your day planner and voilà – you have a plan!

#### GO!

Since "clutter is nothing more than unmade decisions," sorting is always difficult because we want to micro-sort. To eliminate this dilemma, use the E.A.S.Y. system. If you use the E.A.S.Y. system initially to become organized, you can then use it daily for ten minutes to maintain. There are only four things you can do with a piece of paper as you sort:

**E**liminate – trash or shred

**A**ct on it – requires action

**S**end it Away – does not belong to you or in the space you are organizing

**Y**ou File it – needs to be filed away

It's very simple and doable. What are the results? You will:

- Get home from work on time
- Spend more time with your family, not your computer
- Find what you're looking for...every time
- Feel great, accomplished
- Create a work flow rather than a clog
- Feel more confident in your work
- Experience stress-free living and breathe more easily
- Find plenty of space on your desk to accomplish your tasks

It's not about organizing, filing, throwing things out, or mere tips and tricks. It's about experiencing a whole new level of existence, a way of life that breeds efficiency and power in the workplace and ultimately in all areas of your life.

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**About the Author:** Patty Kreamer, Certified Professional Organizer® and owner of Kreamer Connect, Inc., provides speaking, coaching, and consulting services to businesses and organizations who value effective practices that increase efficiency and inspire pride in accomplishments. Patty's books, *But I Might Need It Someday*, *The Power of Simplicity*, and *The Clutter Rescue Course* are available for purchase at [www.ByeByeClutter.com](http://www.ByeByeClutter.com).

If you are looking for a fun, dynamic, and effective speaker, or if your company would benefit from a productivity coach or consultant, email Patty at [patty@ByeByeClutter.com](mailto:patty@ByeByeClutter.com) or call her at 412-344-3252.

## Business Etiquette: Professionalism in the Workplace

By Karen Litzinger, Business Etiquette Trainer, Speaker, and Coach; Career Coach;  
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Have you been in a meeting where a cell phone rings? Have you seen an employee dress in a manner that was not in his or her best interest? Can you recognize the “glazed eye look” of someone faking attention while sending a text message during a meeting? When it comes to advancement, assignment to a key project, or an employee appraisal, others notice not only performance, but how people represent themselves, internally and externally.

Following are just a few etiquette guidelines to keep in mind for both you and your employees:

### Introductions

Introduce the person of more authority or importance TO the person of lesser stature. The client or customer is always the most important individual, even if you are interacting with the CEO. If you have forgotten someone’s name, still attempt an introduction rather than just standing there hoping the person will go away. You could say, “I’m so sorry, I’ve just drawn a blank on your name.” and then follow it with something you recall about the person, such as, “I remember we met at last year’s Golf and Bocci Tournament.”

### Dress

There are a few grey areas in business casual that would be helpful for your organization to define, such as capri pants, sandals, and polo shirts. Always avoid casual T-shirts or logos, workout and beachwear, and tight, short or revealing clothes. Keep a blazer in your office to add a professional layer in case you need to step up your professional presence unexpectedly. Good grooming is a given.

### Telephone

When answering your phone always state your full name and company, and possibly department. Better yet, add a “hello,” smile, and “may I help you?” When asking if someone is available, state your name and company, and ideally the purpose of your call. Remember to ask “Is this a good time to talk?” or “Do you have a few minutes to talk?”

### Cell Phones

The number one worst cell phone habit cited by a Microsoft survey was talking too loud, with 72% identifying this as a concern. The business etiquette guideline is to be at least 10 feet away from people when on the cell phone. Watch for unprofessional ring tones or outgoing message. Cell phones should never be heard ringing at a meeting or meal.

### Personal Data Assistants and Texting

Etiquette for PDAs, like Blackberries, is still in formation. A survey of senior executives by Robert Half revealed that while 86% polled said it is common for professionals to read and respond to messages during meetings, 31% disapprove of the practice. Most etiquette experts advise turning off your PDA at meetings and checking it during breaks. Redefine urgent. If something really is urgent, let the meeting leader know first, and announce at the beginning of the meeting that you may need to excuse yourself to take care of some urgent business.

Some of the best advice in the PDA area is from Will Schwalbe, author of *Send: Why People Email So Badly and How to Do It Better*, who wrote, “Think of your PDA as a crossword puzzle. Anywhere it’s acceptable to work on a crossword puzzle, it’s OK to check your PDA.”

### E-mail

Use e-mail primarily for relaying facts, and avoid it for topics that involve decision-making, discussions, or anything that can be misunderstood. Some topics are better handled over the phone or in person. Most etiquette experts agree that you should respond to e-mails within 24 hours even if you are simply stating that you will need to get back to that person with more information later. Other etiquette standards state to reply to email within 48 hours or by the end of the day. E-mail is business correspondence, so remember proper grammar, spelling, and capitalization.

### Reception Etiquette

RSVP to an invitation within a week’s time. Focus on relationships, not the food. Always keep your right hand free for greeting people with a handshake; keep both your plate and drink in your left hand. Etiquette guidelines are to spend about 8-10 minutes with any one person. Help facilitate small talk, introductions, and welcoming others into the conversation. Thank the host before you leave. Better yet, also send a handwritten thank you note.

### Dining Etiquette

Most people know to use their tableware working from the outside in, but many people are confused by which water glass or bread plate is theirs, especially at large circular tables. Remember the BMW tip: from left to right, your place setting is Bread, Meal, and Water. Be sure to introduce yourself to everyone at the table. The proper time to exchange business cards is at the end of the meal. In addition to representing yourself and your company professionally, knowing proper dining etiquette can help you relax and focus on the business at hand.

Whether you view business etiquette in terms of advancement, leadership, business communications, or teamwork, consider bringing the topics to the table. Invoking Aretha Franklin, it’s all about R-E-S-P-E-C-T...for oneself, the team, the organization, and the clients.

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**About the Author:** If you want to be sure your employees are representing your organization with the highest professionalism, then Karen Litzinger’s business etiquette training, keynotes, and coaching are for you. Karen has over 20 years of career counseling, outplacement, and professional development programming experience. She is a member of the National Speakers Association, and clients describe her style as “engaging, articulate, and energetic.” Reach Karen at [Litzingerkaren@aol.com](mailto:Litzingerkaren@aol.com) or [www.KarensCoaching.com](http://www.KarensCoaching.com).

## Procrastination

By Leslie McKee, Certified Professional Organizer® and Family Manager Coach;  
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Later is not a date on the calendar! If you are a procrastinator, it may help to compare any task/project to an airplane trip. Break it into these four parts: preparing for take off, take off, travel, circling and landing. You may be consistently getting “stuck” in one of these areas. Awareness and some simple strategies will help you finish your trip!

### Preparing for Take Off

In this stage you want to make sure you are clear on where you are going and all the steps involved. You prioritize and plot checkpoints along the way. Many procrastinators get stuck right here on the runway with ALL OR NOTHING THINKING. This comes into play when the task is perceived as large or complex.

For example, if cleaning your desk will take four hours, that doesn't mean you have to wait until a four-hour block of time opens up. Break down the task or just tackle it in smaller fifteen-minute chunks of time. You remain organized because you continue to do a little each day to stay on course. In this way you are spending your time working on IMPORTANT TASKS before they become URGENT. Using the adrenaline that urgency produces can sharpen focus and concentration, but is not healthy.

### Take Off!

Don't HIDE BEHIND FIRSTS in this stage by waiting for conditions to be perfect before you begin. This is like saying you can't exercise until you get a home gym when truthfully you can accomplish your goals where you are with what you have. Sometimes you just need to make yourself LEAP. One strategy to do this is FOCUS FIVE. Simply set a timer for five minutes and begin working. Often you will get caught up in the work and really get yourself to the next step. Another technique is to think of your three Most Important Things or MITs every day. This helps minimize the feeling of being overwhelmed and increases effectiveness.

### Travel

This can be the monotonous part of the journey. Pay attention to your POWER HOURS when energy and focus are high. Recognize and MINIMIZE DISTRACTIONS. For example, turn off alerts that compete for your attention, close the office door, and don't pick up the phone. Conversely, ADD REMINDERS that help you stick with it or get back on task. Make a habit to place a post-it at the place you were interrupted so you can resume more easily.

When you leave your work space at the end of the day make a list of the next few actions so that you can jumpstart productivity right way. Keep thinking about ways that keep you tethered to your task.

### Circling and Landing

Be aware of a tendency to start lots of things without finishing them. When you have lots of “open circles” in your life, it is hard to “be present” and focused on one thing. Notice where you're stuck in the process and address it. Many times perfectionism creeps in here and too much time is spent “perfecting” things rather than just deciding it is done! When you feel yourself doing this, just tell yourself “it's time to land” and finish it.

So look at your next project as a trip and notice what parts are easy for you and where you get derailed. Use the strategies above to keep you on track and on time. Identify whether you are preparing, taking off, traveling, or ready to land and notice where you get stuck. Reward yourself for meeting the small goals along the way and avoid the triggers that get you off course. Awareness of what triggers procrastination and implementing strategies to change will get you on task and calmly ready to meet life's deadlines.

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**About the Author:** Leslie McKee is a Certified Professional Organizer and Family Manager Coach. Leslie inspires clients to live more simply and with purpose. Her business is composed of hands-on organizing and coaching. She has always focused on the family with the intention of empowering parents and creating an environment of teamwork and respect. Leslie has been featured in the *New York Times* and on NPR, and she appears locally on *Pittsburgh Today Live* and in many publications, articles, and blogs.

To learn more about Leslie's services, and to receive a free 30-minute consultation, visit [www.mckeeos.com](http://www.mckeeos.com).

## Developing Goals for Success and Well-Being

By Susan Moore, LSW, CPC, Certified Professional Coach, Psychotherapist, and Owner of Life Dimensions Coaching and Counseling; [www.life-dimensions.com](http://www.life-dimensions.com)

Effective goal-setting is a key practice for enhancing personal and professional development. Having well-planned goals not only helps us to clarify where we want to be and identify the steps to take us there, it even has inherent value to increase our fulfillment. That is, as with many of the best things in life, we benefit from the journey as well as from the destination.

This article looks at how goal-setting can increase your well-being and ability to achieve the things that matter to you. It also provides a goal-setting process and some tips for optimal success in reaching your identified goals.

### Goals Increase our Happiness

In his book *Happier*, Tal Ben-Shahar – professor of the popular positive psychology course at Harvard—discusses how having goals increases satisfaction. We often think of only the attainment of goals as being fulfilling, but the process of striving toward them is equally important when it comes to sustained well-being. Ben-Shahar notes that, “The primary purpose of having a goal ... is to enhance enjoyment of the present.” Moving toward the achievement of our goals, especially ones that provide both pleasure and meaning, gives us a sense of direction and increases our happiness in day-to-day living.

### Set Your Own Course

*“If one’s destiny is shaped from within, then one has become more of a creator, has gained freedom.”* Allen Wheelis

With so many demands upon our attention and time, it takes energy and commitment to initiate and follow our own path. Reacting to others’ expectations, filling time with activities that relieve stress but aren’t really rewarding, working hard but at the wrong things are many ways to fall into a life we would not have intentionally chosen. Taking time to reflect on our most deeply held values and passions, and translating these into clear goals and action steps, is a way of ensuring that each of us is choosing—to the extent that is humanly possible – what kind of life we will lead.

### Having Goals Doesn’t Mean You Can’t Be Spontaneous

Working toward things that matter to you – having a plan or roadmap—doesn’t mean you have to become overly rigid. Priorities and circumstances change over time, and your goals will change accordingly. Unexpected opportunities or serendipitous occurrences may bring about complete changes of direction. Flexibility and regular review and updating of goals will keep them relevant and energizing.

### A Simple Goal-Setting Process

Goal-setting doesn’t have to be difficult. Here is one way to identify and formulate your goals:

- Think about your biggest successes and greatest disappointments. What have you learned about your strengths and likely obstacles?
- Identify a time-frame that makes sense to you – perhaps 6 months to 1 year.
- Brainstorm everything you want to accomplish within that timeframe in the important areas of your life, such as career, family, personal development, health, and fitness.
- Filter identified objectives down to the most essential. Which goals will provide the most meaning, pleasure, and value?
- Break larger or less tangible goals into concrete action steps.

### For Optimal Results

Now that you've developed well-planned and thoughtful goals – or are working toward previously identified goals – how can you improve your likelihood of success?

- Use your support system. Share your goals with your partner or spouse, best friend, or a professional coach. Enlist them to empathize with your struggles, cheer your successes, and provide new perspectives.
- Post your list of goals where you will see them regularly – for example, taped to your bathroom mirror or on your refrigerator.
- Incorporate regular action steps into a planning system – your calendar, weekly or daily to-do lists, etc.
- Focus on progress, not perfection. Give yourself ample credit for making the effort to change, develop, and achieve the things that matter to you. Some days will be more successful than others, so persistence and resilience are critical to success.
- Employ your strengths and talents. Be creative in applying them toward your goals and circumventing your challenges or weaker areas.
- Review and update your goals on a regular basis. This should be a dynamic list that reflects your values, life situation, and vision of your desired future.

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**About the Author:** Susan Moore, LSW, CPC, is a certified professional coach and psychotherapist. As owner of Life Dimensions Coaching and Counseling, Susan helps clients to fulfill their potential and experience more genuine satisfaction in both their careers and personal lives. Areas of focus include career success, relationships, life balance, and navigating transitions with clarity and purpose. To learn more, visit [www.life-dimensions.com](http://www.life-dimensions.com) or contact Susan at 412-915-6526 or [susan@life-dimensions.com](mailto:susan@life-dimensions.com).

## Top Team Leadership: Team Contacts Lead to Productivity

By Jane Patterson, Managing Partner, Cornerstone Team Development and Certified Professional Coach; [www.cornerstoneteamdevelopment.com](http://www.cornerstoneteamdevelopment.com).

Today, more than ever, leaders are on the line to do more with less while in the midst of constant change. They can't tolerate unproductive performance or find out months from now that their team is dysfunctional or ineffective. At Cornerstone Team Development, we work with all kinds of teams – top management, technical, project, departmental, virtual, and more. We are convinced that teams produce results that individuals simply can't, performing on their own.

A team's competitive advantage comes from its ability to leverage individual differences in values, ideas, backgrounds, perspectives, personalities, skills, and approaches. However, those very differences often create conflict, sap energy, and divert attention from team tasks.

### Unique Styles Bring Strength and Potential Conflict

Consider some of the unique personalities or styles that might be found on a typical high-performing team. The strengths and challenges that come with the styles need to be managed to ensure high productivity.

#### 1. The Over-committer

Many of us are guilty of taking on more than we can handle at any given time. After all, proving we are indispensable might be the security we need to protect our jobs. Yet, over-committers have so many projects going at once, they may let the team down because they are unable to fully complete their work or meet deadlines.

#### 2. The Socializer

Relationships are important, and the socializer can be a great asset to the team—the one who finds out “what's really going on.” Socializers are great at building bridges when things get strained. But be cautious: socializers may be indecisive when tough decisions need to be made, not wanting to alienate any of their key contacts.

#### 3. The Commandant

Even if all hell is breaking loose, the commandant has the deadline and budget in focus. While discipline and focus are strengths, time and money can be lost in the long run because commandants are unable to step back, take in the bigger picture, and adjust.

#### 4. The Thinker

At the opposite end of the spectrum from the commandant, the thinker loves to ponder the “big picture” and endless possibilities for making the project run smoother, better, faster, etc. This personality sees flexibility as vital to producing the best result, but, left to their own devices, thinkers will create a constant moving target and throw the team off with new thinking or the latest creative ideas. You'll recognize the thinkers as they often end sentences with, “. . . I just want to make sure we're doing the best we can.”

#### 5. The Stonewaller

Whether it's fixating on the Blackberry during a meeting, constantly being late for or cancelling meetings, or being so overbooked that they can't seem to find time to make a meeting, Stonewallers suppress team productivity. Needing more information or wanting to go over and over the details before making a decision are the weapons used to control and/or throw the team off track (in order to accomplish the Stonewaller's own agenda).

## 6. The Talker

Some people do their analysis and thinking off-line, but the talkers think out loud to go over project details, generate ideas, and consider pros and cons. While brainstorming and collaboration have their place on the best teams, talkers can burn up valuable time if they don't prepare themselves before the team meeting.

The personalities and styles of team members impact how they deal with information and how they interact. This interaction impacts the mood of the team and whether team members feel engaged and committed to producing results. All of this is dependent, in part, on the unwritten rules, expectations, and approved behaviors of the team. "The way we do things around here," both spoken and unspoken, is the culture of the team.

### A Team Contract Leads to Productivity

The team leader can make a difference in "the way" team members function on the team. For starters, the leader can hold the team responsible for how it works together by making the team's culture explicit and effective. One way to do this is to facilitate a team contract.

A team contract provides a way for the team to achieve clarity about the kind of culture it wants to create, as demonstrated through the actions and words of the team members. The team contract focuses team members on taking responsibility with one another to create a conscious and intentional culture in which the work will occur. By setting aside 30 minutes during a team meeting, the leader can facilitate discussion and seek agreement among team members about the following:

- What kind of culture does the team want to create? How do they want it to feel?
- What will make the team flourish?
- How will team members interact when things get difficult?
- What can the team members count on from each other?
- What is the best case scenario and worst case scenario for working together?
- What specific behaviors will be encouraged and rewarded by the group?
- What behaviors will not be tolerated?
- How will team members know they are succeeding in creating the desired culture?

Ideally, a team contract is created at the start-up of any team, but it is never too late to engage the team in discussing how they want to work together. The best performing teams make this a regular part of their start-up and periodically assess how they are doing at regular status or staff meetings. With so much at stake, successful leaders strike the right balance between emphasizing results and creating an environment where people work together and perform their best.

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**About the Author:** Jane Patterson is Managing Partner of Cornerstone Team Development. Jane offers expertise, insight and a very practical approach to high-performing leaders and teams who want to achieve even greater performance. Jane's clients include executive leadership teams, family business teams, IT project teams, cross-functional teams, and teams undergoing transition. Teams learn how to communicate, engage in constructive conflict, recover from breakdowns, work together, and hold each other accountable. Jane is a professional certified coach with advanced training in organizational and team coaching. Contact Jane at 412 953-9806 or

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## Executive Coaching for Performance Success

By Rosemarie Perla, MS, MA, Licensed Psychologist, Professional Certified Coach (pending), Speaker, and Founder, Perla Group—Coaching and Consulting, [www.perlagroup.com](http://www.perlagroup.com)

*Let him that would move the world, first move himself*

Socrates

Executive coaches work more or less exclusively with senior people from organizations. They work with clients to achieve quick, increased, and sustainable effectiveness in their lives and careers through focused learning. The coach works with the client through skillful questioning to assist them in defining their potential (Rogers, 2004).

The operative principles include coaching to the gap between the clients' potential and their performance. The key ingredients in coaching are *change and action*. A skilled executive coach has knowledge in the stages of change, can identify where a client is presently in the change process, and then supports them in defining a plan of action to move to the next steps in this change process (Prochaska, et.al., 1995).

In today's competitive work and economic environment where business people find themselves, coaches aid clients in keeping that edge needed for succeeding in business and in leading, motivating, and inspiring others.

Coaches carry this out by generating positivity in clients:

- Helping them to identify what makes them flourish
- Developing their capacity and resources for successful change
- Facilitating processes designed for successful change

### How Does Executive Coaching Work?

Executive coaches meet with clients and, through a series of assessments and questions designed to uncover their purpose, values, and strengths, help them to speak what they want to accomplish in their work life. Examples of this may be: managing staff's performance, meeting productivity metrics, uncovering ways to become more inspired and energized to meet performance expectations, etc.

Next coaching assists clients in creating a vision of what they want: how it looks and feels – now and in the future. This leads to setting a plan of action and frameworks for supporting this plan. Coaches then hold their clients accountable to doing what they say they want and identifying what gets in the way when expectations aren't met. Along this journey of performance enhancement, the client may ask for specific skill instructions for behavioral change. And, they more often co-create with the coach a framework for uncovering their own brilliance and capacity for growth in their chosen life's work.

### Why is Executive Coaching Important?

A recent randomized control study completed by Dr. Anthony Grant at the University of Sydney is one of the few randomized controlled studies completed on executive coaching. In fact it is the first published randomized controlled study done in which coaching was conducted with professional coaches outside of an organization. This study showed that, people receiving no coaching, clients receiving coaching demonstrated enhanced goal attainment, increased resilience and workplace well-being and reduced depression and stress. Why is this so important? Given the economic times that we are living in and the global markets businesses

are competing in, coaching can be a support mechanism during times of significant change in organizations to build strengths, resiliency, and well-being.

As you read this you might ask yourself: What are my strengths that help me to flourish as a business leader? A free tool and robust survey that many coaches use to identify strengths within their clients is the VIA strengths survey at: [www.authentichappines.com](http://www.authentichappines.com). This survey, developed by Drs. Martin Seligman and Christopher Peterson, is a well researched tool that identifies people's global strengths and their accompanying virtues. Consider how you might use these strengths each day in your work environment to move you toward the vision of success that you have set for yourself and your work.

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## The A, B, C, Ds of a Healthy Financial Plan

By Kathy Jo Pollack, Certified Life Coach, Trainer, and Speaker; [www.kathyjopollack.com](http://www.kathyjopollack.com)

Curious about what you need for a healthy financial plan? Read the Alphabet of Personal Finance. Start with:

**A** plan that includes the following four areas:

**B**udget

**C**redit

**D**ebt

**S**avings

**Budget:** Start with a simple written plan of the monthly net income you are assured of receiving and how much is going out. Do not include any extra income such as overtime or bonuses. This is the cornerstone of your financial future and allows you to maintain a reasonable lifestyle while paying down debt and saving. A simple budgeting worksheet can be found on my website: [www.kathyjopollack.com/links](http://www.kathyjopollack.com/links).

**Credit:** Be aware of what your credit report says and make every effort to make it as accurate and positive as possible. This is important because whether you are applying for a loan, credit, job, or even renting an apartment, chances are that your credit report will be viewed. You want every opportunity that comes with good credit. Here is the link for the only authorized online source for your free annual credit reports: [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com).

Do not build unnecessary debt in an attempt to build credit – they are not the same. Paying all bills on time and paying down your balances will help you to build a good credit report, which leads to the next area.

**Debt:** Now that you know how much money comes into your household and what goes out, take a closer look at your debt. Total your monthly debt payments. This can easily be found in your budget. (Exclude housing and anything you pay off in full, and include accounts which you are making monthly payments such as auto, school, personal loans, and credit cards.) Compare your total monthly debt payments to 20% of your net income or divide your total monthly credit payments by your monthly net income. Keeping your debt payments under 20% is a good general rule of thumb in case you are tempted to add debt.

### Know the Signs of Too Much Debt

- Total credit payments exceeding 20%
- Running out of money before pay day
- Making only minimum payments on credit card balances
- Putting off medical appointments
- Using a credit card for things you used to pay for with cash
- Arguing over money and bills

### Reduce Debt with these Suggestions

- Stop using credit cards.
- Pay cash.
- Pay down balances; always pay more than the minimum on credit card balances.
- Work with your creditors to negotiate rates and arrangements.
- Consider debt consolidation or a lower rate balance transfer.

If you are still having debt problems after following these suggestions, consider talking with a professional. Check with the human resources department of your employer to see if you have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for free and confidential help. Also, consider contacting the National Foundation for Credit Counseling, [www.nfcc.org](http://www.nfcc.org), to locate a credit counselor near you.

**Savings:** Build up your emergency savings to \$500 and strive for at least three months of your net income. With this \$500 cushion, you will not have to resort to credit when faced with an emergency. Once you see where your money is going and you begin to pay off debts, you will be able to save more.

Look into other forms of savings such as Certificates of Deposit (CDs), IRAs, or even a college fund for your child. Do not neglect retirement savings. Check into programs where you work such as a 401K, and make sure you contribute enough to get the maximum match.

### Helpful Tips for Saving

- Pay yourself first. Use direct deposit.
- Save additional income such as bonuses, overtime, tax refunds or extra paychecks.
- Set financial goals and keep them visible. Do you want to take a vacation, buy a house, or payoff a debt?
- Save your loose change. Little things add up!

### Suggestions to Keep You on Track

- Stick to your budget and continue to save.
- Pay bills on time.
- Pay balances in full on credit cards, and only charge what you can afford to pay off each month.
- Keep your debt-to-income ratio under 20% (excluding housing).
- Track spending when money seems tight.
- Be a smart shopper. Comparison shop for everything, not just food and clothes, but insurance, banking, phone services, etc. Terms and fees vary and change frequently.
- Check, review, and correct your credit reports every year.

### Always Remember your ABCDs

**A** healthy financial plan includes:

**B**udgeting – know what is coming in and going out

**C**redit - use wisely and check reports

**D**ebt – keep a close watch and avoid overload

**S**avings – both emergency and retirement

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**About the Author:** [Kathy Jo Pollack](#) is a certified life coach, trainer, and speaker whose focus is finance and relationships. Her first passion, personal finance, began when she worked at Consumer Credit Counseling, where Kathy Jo helped thousands of people from all walks of life. This catapulted her into her own business, which offers individual coaching, teleclasses, and workshops. By focusing on the basics, she helps clients build a strong & lasting foundation. Contact Kathy Jo at 724-224-6619 or [mycoach@kathyjopollack.com](mailto:mycoach@kathyjopollack.com). Visit her at [www.kathyjopollack.com](http://www.kathyjopollack.com) & download free tools: budgeting worksheet, Cost cutting tips, and quizzes!

## Do You Drive Your Car the Way You Live Your Life?

By Chris Posti, Executive, Corporate, and Outplacement Coach and Author, [www.postiinc.com](http://www.postiinc.com)

May I ask you a personal question? Think carefully before you answer.

### *How would you honestly describe your behavior behind the wheel?*

Are you a courteous driver? Do you obey the speed limit? Do you pass in the left lane only, use your turn signal, and refrain from unnecessarily using your horn?

To be honest with you, years ago, there were times when I was a nasty driver. Sometimes I drove too fast; other times I was discourteous to other drivers; and on occasion, I even said a few choice words about other drivers who somehow annoyed me. Even worse, there have been times when I recognized that my behavior in other areas of my life – at work and in my personal life – needed to improve, too. That's the beauty of analyzing the way you drive – it often parallels other behaviors in your life.

Over time, my behavior has definitely changed (especially behind the wheel!). Admittedly, I had to make a conscious choice to change. And if you suspect your behavior needs a tune-up, you, too, can make changes, by just following these simple steps.

### **Follow Specific Steps to Change Behavior**

First, you need an awareness that you need to change. By reading this article this far, you probably have already achieved a level of awareness.

Next, take some concrete steps to help you change your behavior. For example, to continue to improve my driving behavior, I did two things. First, I bought a very recognizable car – a red and white Mini Cooper. I knew that if I misbehaved on the road, inevitably, someone I knew would see me doing something I would rather not be seen doing!

Then, I put a bumper sticker on my brand new Mini that said, "Don't be fooled by my car, my treasure is in heaven." Once that bumper sticker was there for the world to see, I certainly did not want to demonstrate poor behavior in front of a single driver. Truly, it kept my behavior in check more than you would probably believe.

In my work as a behavior-change coach for corporate executives, and as author of a book about behavior in marriages, *Marriage On and Off the Rocks: Intimate Stories of Marriages that Made It and Others that Didn't*, I have found that the simple formula of recognizing the need for change, desiring to make a change, and then taking a few concrete steps, is profoundly effective. I have seen people change their demeanor, their attitude, their way of interacting with others, and just about any undesirable behavior you can imagine. If they can make significant changes like that, I can certainly stick to my good driving behavior. And so can you!

### **You Can Do It! Take Action Today!**

Researchers claim it takes 21 days to change a habit. I don't know exactly how many days it took for me to change my driving behavior, but it quickly and permanently changed. If you desire to change your behavior in any aspect of your life, think about methods or reminders that would support you in your effort to change. Maybe a rubber band around your wrist, maybe a public declaration to your staff of your intent to change, or maybe some gentle nudges from your best friend or your executive coach will work for you.

Take action right now! Pause to think of one thing you know you need to change. What came to mind? Write it down. Now, what is one concrete step you can take to set your change in motion? What is the soonest you can take this one concrete step? I urge you to take one step quickly (before you get interrupted by that annoyingly slow senior-citizen driver in front of you, the one you want to scream at and pass illegally on the right!) and you will achieve success in behavior change!

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**About the Author:** Like a speedy car, Chris Posti is a woman always on the go, getting results for executive coaching and outplacement clients for 18 years ([www.postiinc.com](http://www.postiinc.com)). Also a newspaper columnist and a former talk radio show host, Chris just published *Marriage On and Off the Rocks: Intimate Stories of Marriages that Made It and Others that Didn't* ([www.marriageonandofftherocks.com](http://www.marriageonandofftherocks.com)), now available on Amazon. The book, just like her coaching, helps people understand simple but profound truths about what they need to change in order to have successful marriages and relationships.

## Coaching as a Leadership Tool

By Janice M. Sabatine, PhD, Judith A. DePalma, PhD, RN, Susan M. English, EdD, PCC,  
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Congratulations! You've become an expert in your field and have been selected for a leadership position. But do you have the skills needed to be a successful leader? You may quickly realize that your education and technical expertise are not enough to deal with some of the "people" issues you now face. Leadership requires a special set of tools. These tools are found in the managing and coaching toolboxes and are critical to effective leadership. Successful leaders manage skills but coach behaviors. This article will help you recognize the distinction between managing and coaching and the situations that call for each. Two important tools from the coaching toolbox will then be described.

### Manage for Skills, Coach for Behaviors

Managing is about skills. For example, your direct report, Sharon, holds regular meetings with her team. You meet with her to explain how the team's project fits in with the department's larger goals and what specifically is expected from the group project. You help Sharon develop an agenda for the meeting. In this instance you are managing —providing information and solutions about tasks and instructing around technical skills.

In contrast, coaching is about behaviors. Sharon holds the regular team meetings and covers the agenda items as planned, but the meetings run too long and the expected outcomes for individuals are not clearly explained. People leave the meetings confused and unsure about their tasks. Sharon comes to you upset with her team members and complains about their lack of productivity. How do you handle this? Undoubtedly, Sharon's behavior is contributing to the problem, but giving advice or providing solutions will likely frustrate her even more and will not solve the problem. Because behaviors are involved, coaching is the appropriate choice. Coaching skills will help you guide Sharon to recognize her role in the problem and to find a workable solution on her own.

### Stock Your Coaching Toolbox

Two important tools from the coaching toolbox are listening and powerful questioning. These are the two key skills most often employed by certified executive coaches and are the two coaching tools that most often serve successful leaders. Good listening requires discipline and practice.

A good listener does not multitask, interrupt, or appear impatient, and consciously monitors body language and eye contact. It is important to avoid the common problem of getting distracted by what you want to say next instead of paying attention to the employee's point of view.

The focus of the listening leader is on creating a safe space and on understanding both the words and the feelings of the employee. A good listener uses intuition to identify key issues that are behind the words. When employees sense you are truly listening, they feel respected and valued and are more likely to respond positively to your questions and feedback. In the above example, because of your good listening skills, Sharon feels safe and heard and is now ready to search for a deeper understanding of the problem and to brainstorm some solutions.

Powerful questioning is the next important tool in the coaching toolbox. Powerful questions open up the thinking space in the conversation and help our employee, Sharon, find her own

creative solutions. Employees who come up with their own ideas and solutions are much more likely to follow through and enjoy success than when solutions are handed down from the boss. One of the biggest mistakes leaders make with questions is to use them for interrogation, fault finding, or in an attempt to manipulate the situation. Questions that start with *why* or that can be answered with a simple *yes or no* often bring defensive or guarded responses and restrict the creativity and openness of the employee.

Powerful questions are open-ended with no right answers. They come from a place of interest and curiosity. They show trust that the employee is creative and capable of finding a solution. A helpful hint is to ask questions that start with *how* or *what*.

In the case of Sharon, you could ask questions like the following:

- What would you like to see as the end result of your meeting?
- What does your ideal meeting look like?
- How does your behavior affect the meeting?
- What do you think your team members would say about this?

By recognizing the distinction between managing and coaching and using the key coaching skills of good listening and asking powerful questions, you can immediately improve your leadership effectiveness. In case you are wondering, Sharon was able to identify several new behaviors to try at her meetings including providing written instructions and assigning a timekeeper for the meeting. She is going to experiment with them and report back next month.

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## Emotional Alignment: Your Key to Being Successful in Business & in Life

By Barbara Schwarck, Executive Coach, Speaker, and Author, and President of Clear Intentions, [www.clearintentions.net](http://www.clearintentions.net)

*To be an effective business owner or manager, you must go beyond such tactical elements of sales, marketing, product development or strategic planning. You must also be emotionally aligned with your goal, fully believing that you can successfully manage your business. Without emotional alignment, your fears and insecurities will lead you astray and your results will be less than desirable.*

According to the SBA, 50% of new businesses fail within the first three years of being in business. What's missing? Could it be emotional alignment?

### The Body Holds the Key to Your Success

Did you know that your body holds the key to every one of your fears, insecurities, and limitations? Your body knows what you think you're worth, why you can't change, and whether or not you can successfully manage your business, career, or personal life. Of course, we all want to succeed in our business endeavors, but most of us privately doubt whether we are really good, smart, or worthy enough to make it through, especially when the waters are rough. This type of "thinking" ends up determining our success.

How can this be? Emotions are part of the natural response process people have to virtually every situation we encounter. Each emotional response is produced from a chemical reaction in our body, most often triggered by events that occurred in the past. In other words, we don't respond newly to events happening right now. Instead, our brains are programmed to attach the new experience to a prior one, some similar situation from the past. In a split second, these experiences combine, and the "new" experience triggers an unconscious reaction to the past, and we behave accordingly. In this way, "emotional baggage" from a single, seemingly insignificant past event can residually impact our behavior in the present, instantaneously building "safe" boundaries for what we say is possible, but ultimately disempowering ourselves and limiting our full potential. Managing a business can be a stressful life style likely to trigger such an incongruous response in the body.

The human brain has three major parts:

- The neo-cortex, which is the rational, conscious, and willful mind
- The reptilian brain, which, from an evolutionary standpoint, is the oldest brain. Its key concern is survival.
- The limbic system, which is the emotional and subconscious mind

As you can see, each portion of the human brain has a drive of its own. When any of these three parts are in conflict, you will sabotage your conscious will to satisfy the needs of one or more of the other drives. Emotional alignment means that all three parts of your brain are rowing together in the same direction to take you where you consciously want to be going.

### How Does Misalignment Work?

Okay, let's take a look at a possible situation. Suppose your neo-cortex, or conscious mind, wants you to have a successful business. This is rational, logical, and of course you did not go into business for yourself to fail. Coincidentally, your reptilian brain, which is unconscious and

consumed by survival, is terrified that you're going to be dominated and taken advantage of by the hours that you will have to spend in "making" it as a business owner. Perhaps your corporate job was stressful, but being in business for yourself is a whole new ballgame. Moreover, your limbic system or subconscious mind is paralyzed by how often you are being rejected when you are going to sales appointments. The experience reminds you of your father who was a struggling sales person who never seemed to get ahead.

The problem of alignment becomes obvious when described in such a hypothetical way. With these differing patterns of thought and feelings running in the background of your mind while you are running your business, it is very unlikely that you will be successful. But what is even more disturbing is the fact that in most cases, however, we are clueless about what is going on in the limbic (subconscious) or reptilian (unconscious) parts of our brain.

### What's the Solution for Misalignment?

I use NET<sup>®</sup>, or Neuro Emotional Technique, as my preferred tool to eliminate this misalignment problem. NET is a technology used to align people's bodies and minds with the emotional prospect of manifesting their goals, dreams, and visions. It creates emotional alignment between the three parts of your brain and your goals, assisting you in producing amazing results in all areas of life.

NET uses the connection between your mind and body to uncover the particular patterns that are currently blocking you from manifesting your goals. Once the present and historical basis of your pattern is revealed, the unresolved energy gets released and neutralized and permanent alignment is established. You are then free to create and enjoy an experience of freedom and success in every area of life.

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**About the Author:** Barbara Schwarck, PCC, MPIA, President of Clear Intentions and native of Germany, coaches leaders who work in international environments, leaders who work for global companies, executives who are getting ready for an assignment abroad, and ex-patriots who are struggling with the American culture. She also coaches women who want to be free to pursue what they want in life. Her coaching is holistic and it involves body, mind, and spirit.

To find out more about Barbara and Clear Intentions, visit [www.clearintentions.net](http://www.clearintentions.net) or get a copy of Barbara's latest book called *From Intuition to Entrepreneurship: A Women's Guide to Following Her Dream*, available at [www.fromintuition.com](http://www.fromintuition.com).

## Seize the Freedom of Self-Employment

By Tom Volkar, Professional Life, Career, and Small Business Coach; [www.CoreU.com](http://www.CoreU.com)

Fear around the lack of money keeps many stuck within the slavery of employment. More would seize the freedom of self-employment if they truly understood the value of the freedoms they have willingly given up.

Most seasoned self-employed individuals joyously place a higher value on their continued freedom and would not give it up even for much more money.

What do we, as free workers, know that employees do not? We intimately understand and are invigorated by the value of the freedoms that come from doing work that we love in our own way. We believe that it's our sacred [responsibility](#) to safeguard this freedom.

### Freedoms of Self-Employment

We enjoy three essential freedoms that employees do not.

1. The freedom of autonomy is our independence. It's our ability to exercise self-government. Answering to the whims and rules of another is akin to slavery.
2. The freedom of self-determination could also be called the freedom of unlimited decisiveness. By enjoying this freedom we get to decide and choose both our day-to-day work projects and overall strategies and objectives.
3. The [freedom of self-expression](#) is simply what we are able to say without hesitation or restriction. This freedom is at the core of our well-being and the freedom I want to discuss today.

The ability to speak our minds on any issue, in any setting, to anyone is invaluable because it's directly tied to the magnificence of our own authentic identity. When you knowingly restrict your identity, you have assumed an identity that is less than your core being. This pretense wounds you deeply at a soul level. Identity restriction is a slow deadening process where the individual hides his true feelings and ultimately settles for less of a life than he or she may have lived.

Many employees complain about their work but throw up fears around the lack of money or use security as an excuse. They act as though they have no choice. Yet these employees know they have settled for something less than they could be enjoying. They have not yet found the courage to make their move.

How can we, the joyfully self-employed help them to seize their freedom? We can help by talking about how wonderful our freedom feels. We can help by replacing money with freedom and fulfillment as new standards of success. We can encourage them to be bold and let their freedom ring as an example to their children.

If you are happily employed and can honestly accept the accompanying restrictions, please stay where you are. But if you are among the majority of unhappy employees, know this: the [freedoms of self-employment](#) can lead you into a life of unlimited prosperity and work fulfillment when you reconnect your natural link between authenticity and abundance.

## Your True Calling Can Save You

Your true calling (work of right livelihood) has been trying to get your attention your entire life. The expression of your authentic self is what would have developed into your true calling if you had been raised with unconditional acceptance, support, recognition, and celebration of your authentic self. What if your parents had always encouraged you to find your own [authentic sweet spot](#) in service to the world? What might you be doing differently now?

What if **your** best way to make **MORE MONEY** was ALSO **your** best way to **MAKE A DIFFERENCE**?

It's not too late. Your calling still calls and waits your invitation to come forth.

## Answering Your Call

*Vocation is where your deep gladness meets the world's deep need.*

Frederich Buechner

Here are some tips to [invite your calling forth](#):

1. Do not play small or hide from your grandest desires. Your calling cannot be a smaller compromise of a bigger dream.
2. Do not conform to cultural norms of appropriateness. Callings only honor individuality. You've got to do it your way all the way.
3. Surround yourself with true fans and believers in your capability. End relationships with doubters and those who put you down. Your uniqueness needs to be encouraged by those who sincerely care about you.
4. Callings are more effectively created than stumbled upon. Jobs and professions created by others are not as likely to be aligned with your authentic values, desires, and strengths.

Prosperity and fulfillment come through enhanced awareness so you can see and seize the right opportunities at the right time. By working on what you want to work on and dearly value, you'll end up producing work of higher value that will make you prosperous. Please trust that everyone wants to support individuals who put their heart and soul into their work.

Trust your internal yearnings to be the man or woman you came here to be. Work your true calling and seize your freedom now!

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**About the Author:** Tom Volkar believes that every man and woman is capable of enjoying the prosperity, joy, and fulfillment that comes from working a true calling. His coaching and transformative events will guide you to yours. Visit <http://www.BigLinkRally.com> for event information. Visit Tom's blog <http://www.DelightfulWork.com> for powerful career articles. Contact Tom at [Tom@CoreU.com](mailto:Tom@CoreU.com) or 724-823-0317 to find your true calling. Visit Tom's coaching website, [www.CoreU.com](http://www.CoreU.com) to claim your FREE True Calling Guidebook, *Nine Compass Points of the True Calling Process*.

## How to Use Silence to Grab and Hold Audience Attention

By Hank Walshak, Executive Presentation Coach and President of Walshak Communications, Inc., [www.gettodonenow.com](http://www.gettodonenow.com)

Let's face it. Listening to speakers deliver pure information is a drag. More than ever, audiences want to see and hear someone who offers substance and meaning they can take away and share with others, someone who connects with and reaches them on the experiential level.

Your audiences can get a lot of the information they need through search engines. They don't necessarily need you to talk to them about it. All of which makes presenting pure information to audiences passé.

What's more, modern technology has us communicating in short chunks in e-mail and on sites like Twitter and Facebook. Our attention spans are getting shorter as we talk and write in shorter chunks more often. This means that it now takes more and more to keep people interested and paying attention.

### Silence Makes You Memorable

In my more than 25 years of coaching mid-level and senior-level executives to refine their presentations, I've found that those who do best build drama and memorability into their presentations with periodic silence.

Sound counterintuitive? Yes, it does, until you consider that periodic silences work because they are pattern breaks, and pattern breaks reach the neurons in our brains that prompt us to seek and be receptive to newness. Periodic silence works, because audience members don't expect them and don't know when they will occur.

People in general and audiences in particular like novelty. That's why it pays to make periodic silence an integral part of your presentation. When preparing a presentation, most presenters tend to focus solely on how they are going to fill air time with words and content. Rare are those who plan to use periodic silence.

Periodic silence is important, because it gives your audience time to catch up with you. As a pattern break, periodic silence introduces a new element your audience isn't expecting and helps to re-ignite audience attention.

Silence is the verbal form of punctuation. You wouldn't think of writing without using periods and commas, would you? Then why speak without using verbal punctuation? Use silence as your commas and periods.

## Three Effective Ways to Use Silence

### 1. Start off with silence

After you are introduced, walk to your starting position and just stand there for about 5 or 6 seconds, instead of speaking right away. While maintaining silence, survey the audience and establish good eye contact with them. Few things rivet audience attention on you and what you have to say better than this preamble of silence. Maintaining silence like this at the start is something they don't expect. It's something new to them.

Standing still like this at the start is a wonderful pattern break. It disturbs audience attention, because it's different from what your audience expects you to do. Audience members expect you to start talking right away, not to stand silently in front of them.

### 2. Use silence before and after key points

When you introduce a major point, pause for a second or two before you make the point and pause for a second or two after you do. Then slowly repeat your point and pause again for a second or two.

For example, if you were to say something important like, "This year, we need to up our sales by 20 percent. You might handle it this way: We've got to get back into the game. During the recession, sales dropped 10 percent across the board. [pause] This year, [slight pause] we need to up our sales by 20 percent. [pause] That's right. This year [slight pause], we need to up our sales by 20 percent.

### 3. Use silence whenever you use the words Who, What, Why, When, or How

Pause for 1-2 seconds after you mention them to set them apart and emphasize them. This helps to focus audience attention on what follows right after.

For example, consider the sentence, "What should we do to improve our business?" Try it this way: What [brief pause] should we do [brief pause] to improve our business?

Once you develop a comfort level with using periodic silence in your presentations, you'll find that it nicely balances the air time you fill with content and adds punctuated drama to your presentation.

Your takeaway about silence is simple, and it's this: Silence is not only golden. It's a great way to keep your audience involved.

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**About the Author:** Hank Walshak, President of Walshak Communications, Inc., has coached executives in refining their presentations for more than 25 years. Through his Mini-Max Strategy, he identifies clients' existing presentation strengths and builds on these strengths to help them deliver great presentations. His third book, *Driven: a How-to Strategy to Unlock Your Greatest Potential*, co-authored with Razi Imam, Founder of Landslide Technologies, Inc., is slated for publication by John Wiley & Sons. Check out advance sales on Amazon.com starting January 2010. You can reach Hank through [www.gettodonow.com](http://www.gettodonow.com), at 412-831-3023, or at [hankwalshak@verizon.net](mailto:hankwalshak@verizon.net).

## Website Design that Works – A Bulletin for Business Owners

By William Weil, Principal at Socius Partners, and Technology, Web and Marketing Strategies Coach, [www.socius-partners.com](http://www.socius-partners.com)

A few years ago, just before Thanksgiving, I got a call from Martha Williamson, Executive Producer of “Touched by an Angel.” She and her good friend, Carol Burnett (legendary actress and star of the Carol Burnett show), were going on Larry King to invite donations for a theater to be named for Carrie Hamilton, Carol Burnett’s late daughter who died at age 38 in 2002. They wanted a website which people could use to donate to the theater. The site would be promoted on Larry King by Larry, Carol, and Martha.

My first reaction (unexpressed) was that there must be 10,000 web designers between Pittsburgh and Pasadena, California at least as qualified (and frankly more qualified) as I who could do this work. Martha added that the show would air in three weeks, and she needed someone she could trust to just run with this, think through all the details, take her direction, and ensure that when the show aired on December 16<sup>th</sup>, everything worked. Clearly their budget and timeframe were both too limited to attract any large design firm. When it became clear that they needed one person they could trust to handle everything from concept to design to implementation – in only three weeks – I started to feel a lot better about being the right man for the job.

### Design Your Website to Avoid Common Problems

The problem with so many web designs is that they are either done by committee with conflicting, often unprofessional, views, or there are people without the right kinds of skills making unconscious decisions about critical aspects of the site. Let’s break it down.

Most important are the target audience and the purpose and intended results of the site. If these aren’t explored at the onset, they’ll be missed at the end. Once we understand these, a lot of other things become easier. For example, if Larry, Carol, and Martha are going to be hitting it over the wall – totally teeing people up to donate, then the best solution would be a one-page website which is nothing but a donation page. Why let people get lost in learning all about the legacy of Carrie Hamilton if they are ready to contribute?

But, as Carol was going on to promote “Once Upon a Mattress,” we decided that we didn’t know how much time the women would have to talk about Carol’s extraordinary daughter, so we couldn’t assume that viewers would be coming to the site fully ready to donate. We determined the website needed to sufficiently create a motive for people to contribute.

### Insist that Your Website is Easy to Find

As important as anything else is the ability for people to *find* the website. We didn’t know for sure whether the Larry King Show would print the name of the website on the screen. Even if they did, would people remember it correctly? The main website would be [www.carriehamiltontheater.com](http://www.carriehamiltontheater.com), but since “theater” can be spelled two ways, we also registered [www.carriehamiltontheatre.com](http://www.carriehamiltontheatre.com), and for good measure, also secured “.org” and “.net” domains and redirected all to the main site.

Even still, those websites are a “mouthful.” What if they misspelled Carrie’s name – a not uncommon mistake? Our timeframe was too short to allow the site to be picked up by search engines like Google and Yahoo. To shore up our bets, we sponsored inexpensive pay-per-click ads using phrases such as “Carol Burnett”, “Carrie Hamilton,” “Cary Hamilton,” etc. This allowed thousands of people to find the site who otherwise probably would not have.

### **Make Sure Your Website Follows the Cardinal Rules**

Besides designing for a targeted audience, being clear on your purpose and intended results, and making it easy for people to find your site, here are two crucial key elements to my website designs; you should make them yours as well.

1. Make it immediately clear to people coming to your site what you are about. This means, 99% of the time, do not force people to watch time-consuming splash screens – no matter how cool they may be. Typically people will spend just a few seconds, literally, deciding if they’ll go any further on your site.
2. Make it immediately clear what you want people to do at your site. This means having a navigation system that is straightforward and clear, with emphasis on the actions you want people to take. It also includes having a clean, professional look that addresses your audience and supports your intended results.

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## How to Go From Stuck to Unstoppable

By Sam Wieder, Certified Neuro-linguistics Trainer and Coach,  
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What holds you back? How is it that sometimes you can easily achieve what you want and at other times you struggle to take the first step?

Most often the main difference between being unstoppable and feeling stuck is the way you are thinking. Certain thoughts make it easy for you to move ahead; others call up negative feelings that stop you cold.

So what might be possible if you could break free of those paralyzing thoughts whenever they pop up? How quickly might you be on your way to feeling unstoppable?

### Five Questions to Get You “UnStuck”

Whenever you are stuck or struggling, get yourself moving again by answering these 5 power questions.

#### 1. What are you trying to achieve?

When answering this question, be as clear and specific as possible. If you are vague in stating what you want, this can cause you to feel uncertain or confused—feelings that are sure to slow you down. After all, if you’re not sure where you are going, how confident and motivated do you think you’ll be to move ahead?

To clarify your outcome, ask yourself these questions. What specifically are you trying to achieve? What evidence will you have that you have achieved it? What will be different after you’ve achieved it? Are you focusing on this outcome?

#### 2. What’s stopping you?

If you have clarified what you want to achieve and you still feel stuck, identify what is getting in your way. Do this by completing this sentence: “I’m having trouble taking action or moving ahead because...” See what flows out of your mouth. Try completing this sentence two or three more times to see what comes out. What you’re likely to uncover by doing this are the thoughts or obstacles that are holding you back. This will then allow you to take action to resolve the problem and get moving again.

#### 3. What do you need?

Once you’ve identified what is stopping you, ask yourself what you need to overcome that obstacle and get moving. Do you need to get some expert advice? Do you need more knowledge or information? Do you have a clear, workable plan for achieving your goal? After you’ve identified what you need, you can then take steps to get it. You’re no longer wallowing in a state of helplessness. You’re embracing the mindset needed to be the driving force in your own life.

#### 4. What is important to you about what you trying to do?

Answering this question will help connect you with what really motivates you. If you’re trying to lose weight, think of how good you’ll look and feel when you reach your ideal weight. If you’re struggling to lay out a plan for your week, think of how “having a plan” will enable you not only to accomplish more but also to live the kind of life that you want to live. When you see what you’re doing in the moment as a step toward something bigger and more exciting, you’ll command the emotional energy that will power you forward.

### 5. What is your next smallest step?

When you think about cleaning your garage, how motivated are you to do it? If your garage is a mess, my guess is that you probably don't feel like leaping into action. In fact, your garage drifted into chaos because you've been putting off cleaning it for awhile. And why? The job simply seemed too overwhelming. You saw it as one giant hairy project that you just haven't had the time or energy to tackle.

What keeps you from cleaning your garage is often the same thing that keeps you from getting started on any major project. You are thinking about it in too big of a chunk. The result? You feel overwhelmed.

If you could instead think of a small, simple step you could take toward your goal, one that might only take 5 or 10 minutes, how much easier would that be? As soon as you take this step, you'll be fed with an immediate sense of accomplishment. That, in turn, can spark you to take the next smallest step. By taking one small step after another, you will soon build a sense of momentum that will carry you forward and enable you to feel better and better about your progress.

As your positive feelings continue to build, it will become easier and easier to stay connected to your higher purpose and be whisked down the path to creating the results that you want. And yes, you may even start to feel unstoppable.

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**About the Author:** Sam Wieder works with business people and professionals who want to command the confidence and focus to be unstoppable. A Certified Neuro-linguistics Trainer and Coach, he helps his clients free themselves from the fears and beliefs that hold them back. To receive his free online mini-course, *From Stuck to Unstoppable*, contact Sam at [sam@CommandingConfidence.com](mailto:sam@CommandingConfidence.com). Learn more about his confidence-building coaching services and workshops at [www.CommandingConfidence.com](http://www.CommandingConfidence.com).