

# **The Positive Encourager's Book**

*The art of encouraging people  
during our time on the planet*

**Mike Pegg**

## *Publisher's Note*

*This book is published by The Strengths Organisation and The Talent Network*

The book contains many practical tools and exercises that people can use in their own ways.

We are happy to encourage people to do this and to pass on the ideas.

Some of the materials can obviously be adapted for ongoing commercial use.

If you would like to use these in this way, please contact Mike Pegg or David Pilbeam at either of the following addresses.

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## Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	7
<i>Continuing To A Positive Encourager</i>	17
<i>Continuing To Do Positive Work</i>	205
<i>The Strengths Approach</i>	295
<i>The Vocation Approach</i>	308
<i>The Positive Realist's Approach</i>	335
<i>The Building On What People Can Do Approach</i>	352
<i>The Enjoyable Work Approach</i>	375
<i>The Craft Approach</i>	397
<i>The Picture Of Success Approach</i>	413
<i>The Pioneering Approach</i>	445
<i>The Class Act Approach</i>	485
<i>The Flow Approach</i>	506

<i>The Positive Teams Approach</i>	525
<i>The Values Driven Organisation Approach</i>	589
<i>The Mission Approach</i>	613
<i>The Brilliant Teams Approach</i>	630
<i>The Right Strategy Approach</i>	645
<i>The Coordination Approach</i>	699
<i>The Positive Leadership Approach</i>	740
<i>The Taking Over A Team Approach</i>	799
<i>The Communication Approach</i>	836
<i>The Decision Making Authority Approach</i>	860
<i>The Clear Contracting Approach</i>	868
<i>The Three Waves Approach To Shifting A Culture</i>	891
<i>The Entrepreneurship, Engine And Excellence Approach</i>	907
<i>The Innovation, Implementation And Integration Approach</i>	915

<i>The What Works Approach</i>	929
<i>The Win-Win Approach</i>	939
<i>The Facilitation Approach</i>	959
<i>The Achievement Approach</i>	986
<i>The Following Your Rhythm Approach</i>	1007
<i>The Design Approach</i>	1021
<i>The Inspiration, Implementation And Integration Approach</i>	1038
<i>The Caring Approach</i>	1052
<i>The Specialist Approach</i>	1071
<i>The Driven Approach</i>	1100
<i>The Genuine Approach</i>	1122
<i>The Establishing Credibility Approach</i>	1140
<i>The Managing Pressure Approach</i>	1145
<i>The Performing To Your Potential Approach</i>	1164
<i>The Decisive Moments Approach</i>	1191
<i>The Organic Development Approach</i>	1208

<i>The Frameworks For Fulfilment Approach</i>	1225
<i>The People Worker Approach</i>	1238
<i>The Professional Freelancer Approach</i>	1278
<i>The Overview Approach</i>	1302
<i>The Offering Options Approach</i>	1319
<i>The Wholistic Approach</i>	1336
<i>The Skills For Success Approach</i>	1360
<i>The Appreciative Inquiry Approach</i>	1376
<i>The Personal Best Approach</i>	1392
<i>The Top Performances Approach</i>	1447
<i>The Warrior Wizard Approach</i>	1472
<i>The Stimulating Project Approach</i>	1481
<i>The Rewarding Role Approach</i>	1499
<i>The Relaxed Relentlessness Approach</i>	1507
<i>The Money, Meaning And Magic Approach</i>	1522
<i>The Managing Emotions Approach</i>	1534
<i>The Radar, Repertoire And Results Approach</i>	1590

<i>The Pleasurable Work Approach</i>	1598
<i>The Positive Experiences Approach</i>	1610
<i>The Stretching Work Approach</i>	1626
<i>The Obsession Approach</i>	1632
<i>The Intense Person Approach</i>	1656
<i>The Great Days, Good Days And Grunt Days Approach</i>	1699
<i>The Setbacks As A Springboard To Success Approach</i>	1711
<i>The Pacing Approach</i>	1722
<i>The Generous Guide Approach</i>	1736
<i>The Enlightenment To Excellence Approach</i>	1768
<i>The Caring To Callous Cultural Approaches</i>	1797
<i>The Managing Challenges Approach</i>	1814
<i>The Mentoring Approach</i>	2336
<i>Continuing To Build A Positive Planet</i>	2374
<i>Conclusion</i>	2614

## *Introduction*

There are many ways to live life. This book explores the positive encourager's way. It looks how we can encourage people during our time on the planet.

Different people encourage others in different ways. Some do it by being kind. Some do it by acting as positive models. Some do it by helping others as parents, friends, educators, mentors, leaders or in other professional roles.

Some do it by providing practical tools that people can use to shape their futures. Some do it by helping people to increase the quality of their lives. Some do it by helping people to build on their strengths and achieve their picture of success.

Some do it planting seeds of hope that encourage both present and future generations. Some do it by creating encouraging teams, organisations and societies. Some do it by passing on knowledge that people can use to build a positive planet.

People make choices every minute. They can choose to be positive or negative, to be creators or complainers, to take responsibility or avoid responsibility. Each choice has consequences for both themselves and other people.

Most people want similar things in life. They want to be loved, happy and successful. The differences are how they try to achieve these aims. Many people also want to do their personal best in life and enjoy a sense of peace.

There are many ways to help people. This book describes the positive encourager's approach to working with individuals, teams and organisations. Here are some of the themes that we will try to bring to life in the book.

## *The Positive Encourager's Approach*

*The approach starts by clarifying what people want to achieve. It then helps them to build on their strengths, follow successful strategies and achieve success.*

*The approach builds on what works. It provides practical tools that people can use to focus on their purpose, follow their principles and achieve their picture of success.*



The encouragement approach has had a strong influence on my own work. During the 1960s I was given the opportunity to work in therapeutic communities. At the time I had little training, so it was important to study what worked.

Bearing this in mind, I approached many people to learn about pioneering programmes in therapy, education and other fields. As well as doing a five-year programme in psychotherapy, I went to courses led by leaders in humanistic and existential psychology.

Many people were generous with their time and shared lessons they had learned in their lives. The main question I asked people was:

*"What has helped you to grow most in your life?"*

Different people answered this question in different ways. Here is a summary of some things they said.

*"I had somebody who encouraged me. They made me feel the centre of their world. They encouraged me to build on my strengths*

*and manage the consequences of my weaknesses. They taught me to do my personal best rather than compare myself to others."*

*"I learned from a key person who was supportive but tough. They encouraged me to take responsibility and said we are here to serve. I could use my experiences and feelings to help other people or hurt other people. It was my choice, but there were consequences."*

*"I met people who were different. They had experienced setbacks, were dyslexic, sensitive or different in other ways. They said it was possible to be myself and thrive. They also underlined that: If you are going to be a deviant, you always have to over-deliver."*

*"I studied people, team and societies that performed brilliantly. When studying leaders of superb teams, for example, I found that many were positive and predictable. They had then used their strengths to enable motivated people to achieve peak performance."*

*"My teachers were systems thinkers. They showed how to see the big picture and how things were connected. Putting positive things into a system was more likely to get positive results. They showed how to build sustainable systems that delivered ongoing success."*

Looking back on your own life, can you think of a person who has encouraged you? This may have been a parent, teacher, coach, manager or another person. What did they do to encourage you?

They may have made you feel welcome, listened and provided words of support. They may have offered practical suggestions or opened doors to new possibilities.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *My Positive Encourager*

*The name of the person  
who encouraged me was:*

\*

*The specific things they  
did to encourage me were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that happened as  
a result of them encouraging me were:*

\*

\*

\*

At this point it can be reasonable to ask about the difference between positive and negative encouragement. Here is one view of the differences.

### *Positive Encouragement*

This is when a person behaves in a positive way when aiming to encourage others. This often results in people feeling positive afterwards.

### *Negative Encouragement*

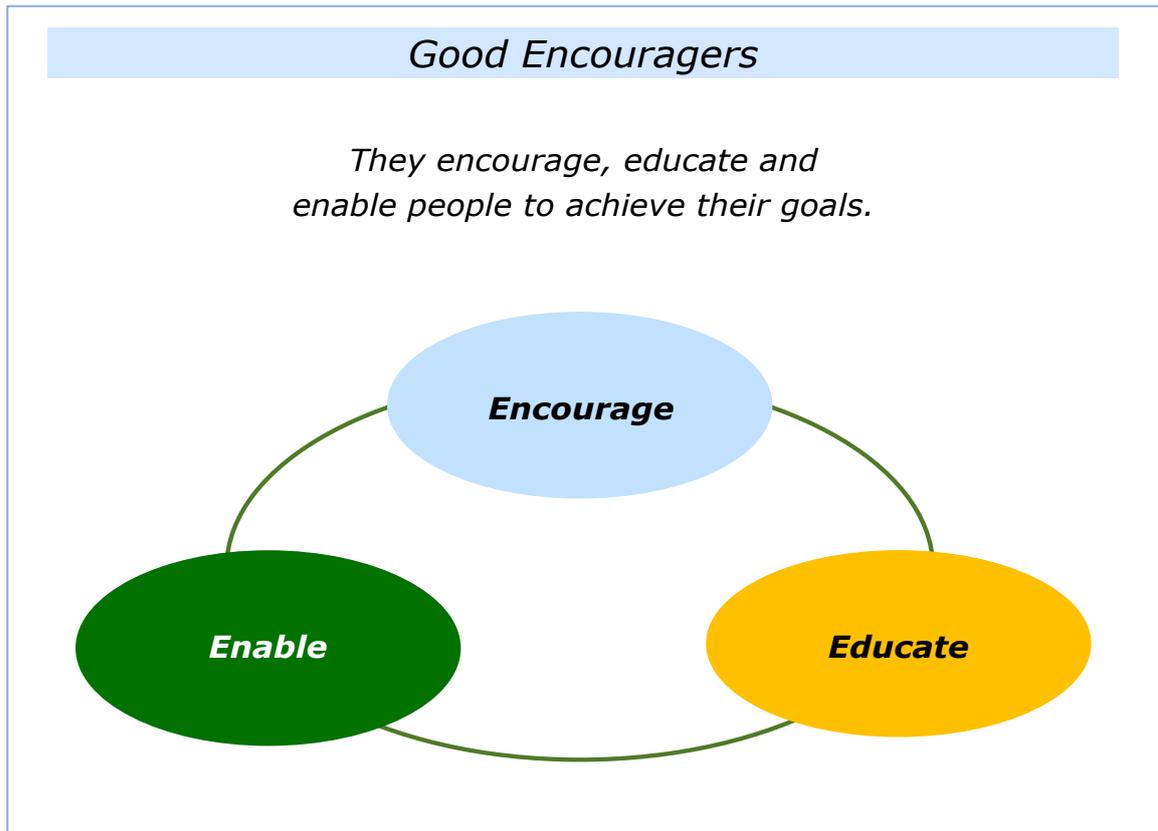
This is when a person behaves in a negative way when aiming to encourage others. This often results in people feeling negative afterwards.

Positive and negative coaches in sports, for example, may embody the two different approaches. They translate their beliefs into action and these can have consequences.

Coach A may believe in encouraging people by creating a positive environment in which motivated people want to deliver high professional standards. They then enable people to achieve peak performance.

Coach B may believe in encouraging people by creating a negative environment in which people feel edgy and uncertain. They act in a nervous manner and keep haranguing people from the side lines.

Good encouragers create a stimulating sanctuary in which people can feel at ease and able to talk about their goals. When appropriate, they aim to encourage, educate and enable people to achieve their aims.



Some encouragers demonstrate the qualities shown by good educators. They follow the old mantra that the learner learns what the learner wants to learn. They therefore aim to pass on knowledge that is personal, practical and profitable.

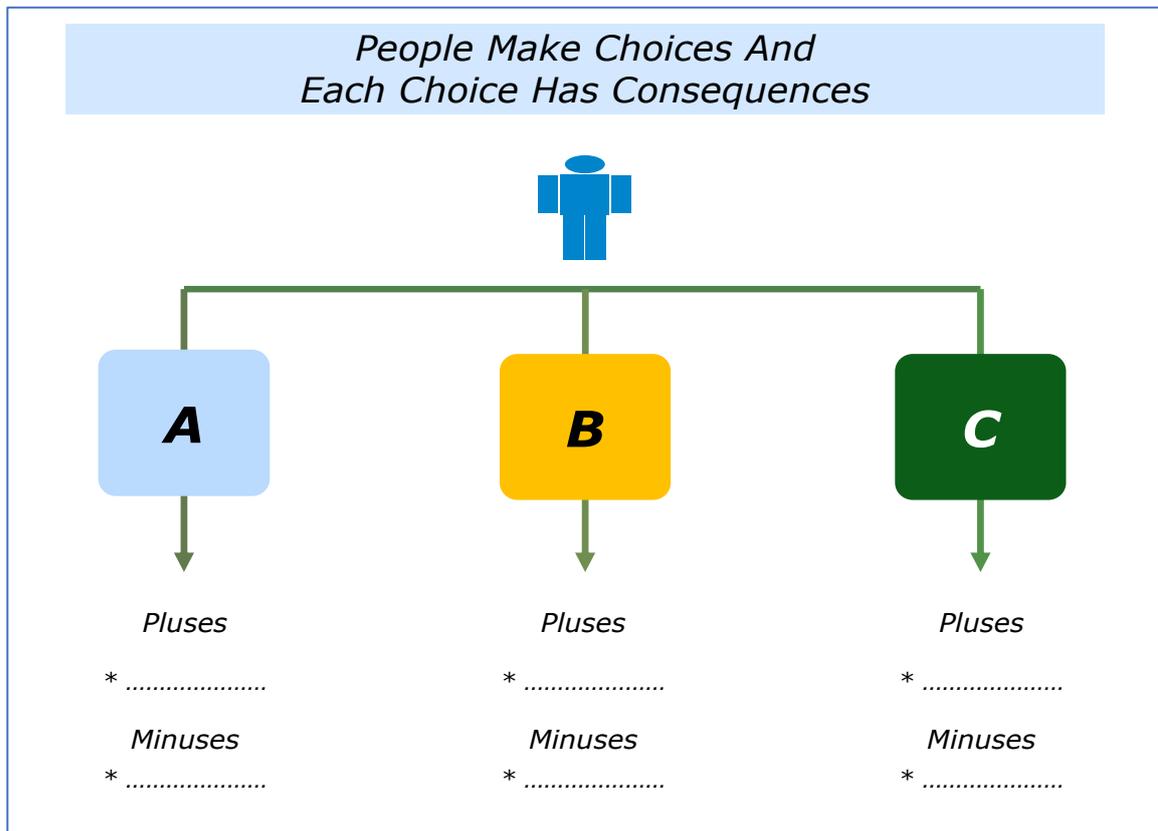
*Personal – It relates to the person and their goals*

*Practical – It is practical and provide tools that help the person to reach their goals.*

*Profitable – It is, in the widest sense, profitable and helps the person to achieve their goals.*

## Choices And Consequences

People make choices all the time. They can choose to help people or to hurt people, to be grateful or to be grumpy, to give to other people or grab from other people. Each choice has consequences.



This book explores how we can encourage both present and future generations. Encouragers are caring but they can also be tough.

They aim to build on the positive majority of people and not to pander to the psychopathic minority. The positive majority of people want to live in peace. They want to build on what they have in common and find creative solutions to challenges.

People can sometimes be affected, however, by the psychopathic minority who want to poison the atmosphere. This can lead to collateral damage in which innocent people suffer.

Encouragers often take the together view of life rather than the tribal view of life. The together approach believes that we can

combine our strengths and shape a positive future. We can also aim to find win-win solutions.

People who take the tribal view identify only with those who appear to be in the same tribe. They have little respect for those who are different. They try to make sure they win and other people lose.

Some people go through certain stages in their lives. They move from being protestors to being problem solvers to being positive contributors.

Some people contribute by caring for others in their work as nurses, counsellors, key workers, mediators, designers, scientists or in other roles. Some aim to serve something greater than themselves. They may choose:

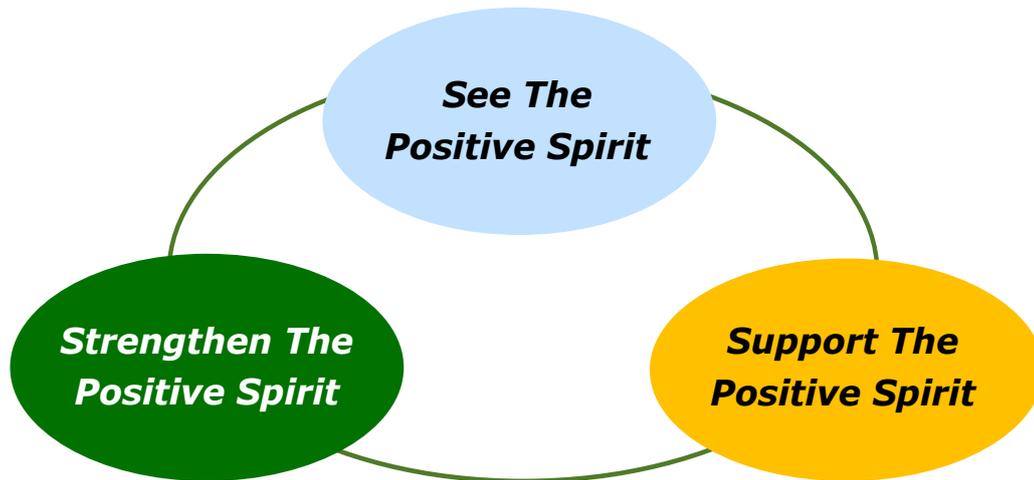
*To serve a spiritual faith, a set of values or a philosophy ... To serve a purpose, a mission or a cause ... To serve a vocation, a creative drive or a project.*

There are many ways to encourage people. One approach is to see, support and strengthen the positive spirit in people.

This is an approach that I have tried to follow, but in a realistic way. The aim has been to help people to build on their strengths, follow strategies that work and achieve their picture of success.

## *The Positive Spirit Approach*

*This approach aims to see, support and strengthen the positive spirit in people.*



Finally, some points on the writing style in this book. Some sections can be read and used in a standalone way. This means there is some repetition in parts of the book. Skip these if you feel the aspects have been covered elsewhere.

Parts of the book are laid out in short sections to make it easier for the reader to copy and use. Take the ideas you like and use these in your own way to encourage people.

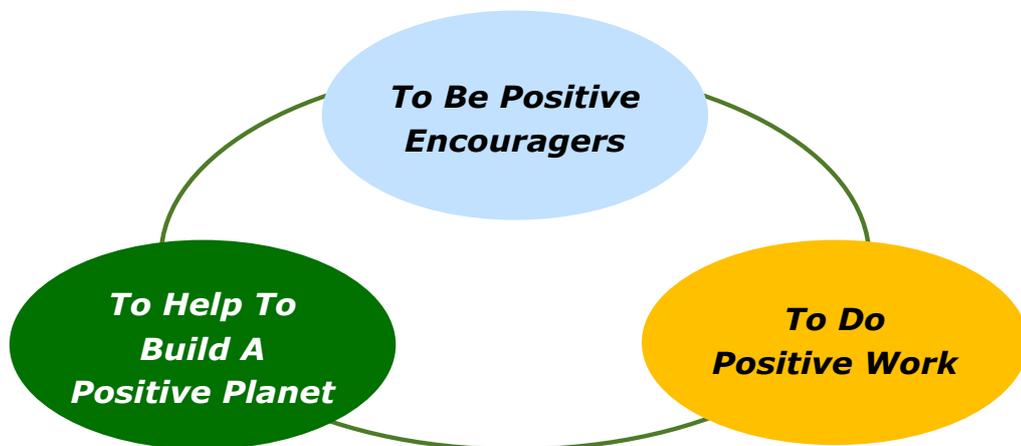
There is also lots of alliteration in the book. This approach has both pluses and minuses. The pluses are that it makes the concepts easy to remember. The minuses are that it can be dismissed as facile.

Nevertheless, I have decided to use this approach. Hopefully the concepts also show that there is some depth behind them.

There are many ways to help people. The following chapters explore how we can continue be positive encouragers, do positive work and help to build a positive planet.

### *The Positive Encourager's Approach*

*There are many ways to live life. One approach is to encourage people during our time on the planet. It is:*



*Continuing  
To Be A  
Positive Encourager*

## *Introduction*

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you encouraged a person? This could have been in your personal or professional life.

What did you do right then to encourage the person? What were the principles you followed? How did you translate these principles into action? What happened as a result of you taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

### *Being An Encourager*

*The specific situation when  
I encouraged a person was:*

\*

*The specific things I did  
then to encourage them were:*

\*

\*

\*

Encouragers are often positive realists. They have a positive attitude but are also good at reading reality. They see what is actually happening and want to shape a positive future.

They want to encourage and enable people to achieve success. Here is an introduction to the encouragement approach.

Most people want similar things in life. They want to be healthy, hopeful and happy. Many people love to have a sense of purpose, follow their principles and achieve their picture of success. They may also want to find a sense of peace.

The encouragement approach is based on what works. It studies what works, simplifies what works – but in a profound way – and shares what works. It aims to enable people to achieve success.

### *The Encouragement Approach*

*The approach starts by creating a positive environment and clarifying a person's picture of success. It then provides practical tools that they can use:*

- To build on their strengths, follow successful strategies and achieve success;*
- To find solutions to challenges by focusing on clarity, creativity and concrete results;*
- To maintain a sense of purpose, follow their principles and achieve their picture of success.*

There are many ways to encourage people. You can offer them practical, personal or professional encouragement.

### *Practical Encouragement*

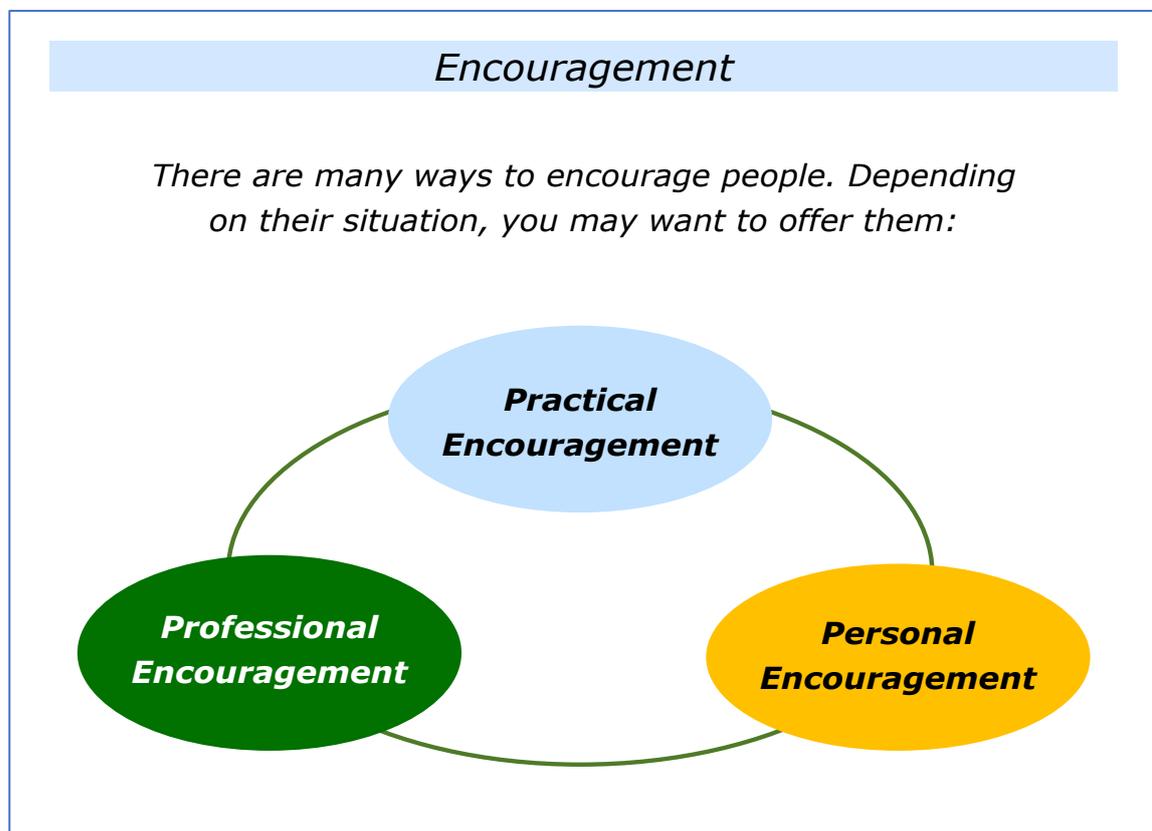
This can involve providing people with the basic materials for life. It can mean making sure they have the food, shelter and other resources needed to maintain their health, hope and happiness.

### *Personal Encouragement*

This can involve giving people the love and support they need to develop. It can mean helping a person to follow their principles and work towards achieving their picture of success.

### *Professional Encouragement*

This can involve helping people to build on their strengths, do satisfying work and achieve specific goals. It can also mean helping them to pass on their knowledge and leave a positive legacy.



Different people encourage others in different ways. Some do it by giving them practical help, some by acting as good models, some by spreading hope. Let's consider the steps that this may involve.

### *The Positive Attitude Approach*

People can choose their attitude towards events. Some use their challenging experiences to spread hope and happiness. They act as positive models who encourage other people.

Alice Herz-Sommer was such a person. A pianist and survivor of Nazi concentration camps, she continued to be optimistic well past the age of 100.

Her view of life reached a wider audience after an interview she gave to the BBC became popular on the web. "Life is beautiful," said Alice, and explained this in the following way.

*"I have lived through many wars and have lost everything many times – including my husband, my mother and my beloved son."*

*"Yet, life is beautiful, and I have so much to learn and enjoy. I have no space nor time for pessimism and hate.*

*"And life is beautiful, love is beautiful, nature and music are beautiful.*

*"Everything we experience is a gift, a present we should cherish and pass on to those we love."*



Life brings pain and beauty, said Alice, but she believed the secret of happiness was to focus on what is really important. She focused on gratitude, kindness, nature, music and the joyful things in life.

Caroline Stoessinger gave an insight to Alice's approach in her book *A Century of Wisdom: Lessons from the Life of Alice Herz-Sommer*. Concluding the book, Caroline provided a series of quotes in which Alice explained about her philosophy. These included the following.

*"Gratitude is essential for happiness ... Only when we are old do we realise the beauty of life ... Music is a dream ... It takes you to paradise ... I am richer than the world's richest people, because I am a musician ... Music saved my life ... Music is God.*

*"Every day is a miracle. No matter how bad my circumstances, I have the freedom to choose my attitude to life, even to find joy. Evil is not new. It is up to us how we deal with both good and bad. No one can take this power away from us.*

*"My optimism has helped me through my darkest days. It helps me now ... The more I read, think and speak with people, the more I realise just how happy I am ... When I die I can have a good feeling ... I have done my best ... I believe I lived my life the right way."*

Encouragers often do things they enjoy because this gives them strength to give to others. Alice did this through playing music and reflecting on the beautiful things in life.

Many encouragers develop a sense of gratitude. They then want to give to other people. Let's explore this approach.

## *The Gratitude Approach*

People who encourage others often count their blessings rather than their burdens. Bearing this in mind, they often want to be generous and give to other people.

The starting point is feeling grateful for what they have been given in life. They then want to express this feeling and help others during their time on the planet.

Grateful people appreciate their assets. They focus on what they do have rather than worry about what they don't have. Brother David Steindl-Rast described this philosophy in the following way.

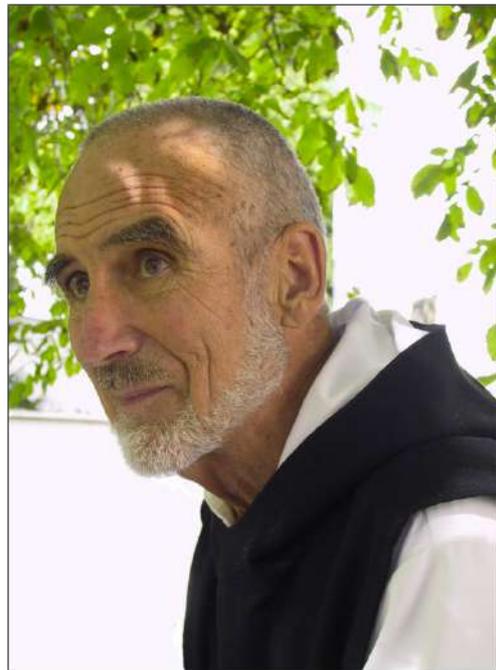
*"Gratefulness is the key to a happy life that we hold in our hands, because if we are not grateful, then no matter how much we have we will not be happy - because we will always want to have something else or something more."*

*"The root of joy is gratefulness.*

*"It is not joy that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us joyful.*

*"Count your blessings and you will find them to be countless, even in the midst of adversity and tragic circumstances.*

*"What we really want is joy. We don't want things."*



There is a joy in gratitude, says Brother David. The more grateful we are, the more reasons we see to be grateful and this develops our inner strength.

We get more ability to give to others and this can become a virtuous circle. We sow seeds that can spread joy in the world.

What are the things you are grateful for being given in your life? We will explore these theme in more depth later in this chapter.

In the meantime, however, you may wish to tackle the following exercise. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Gratitude*

*The specific things that I am grateful for being given in my life are:*

\*

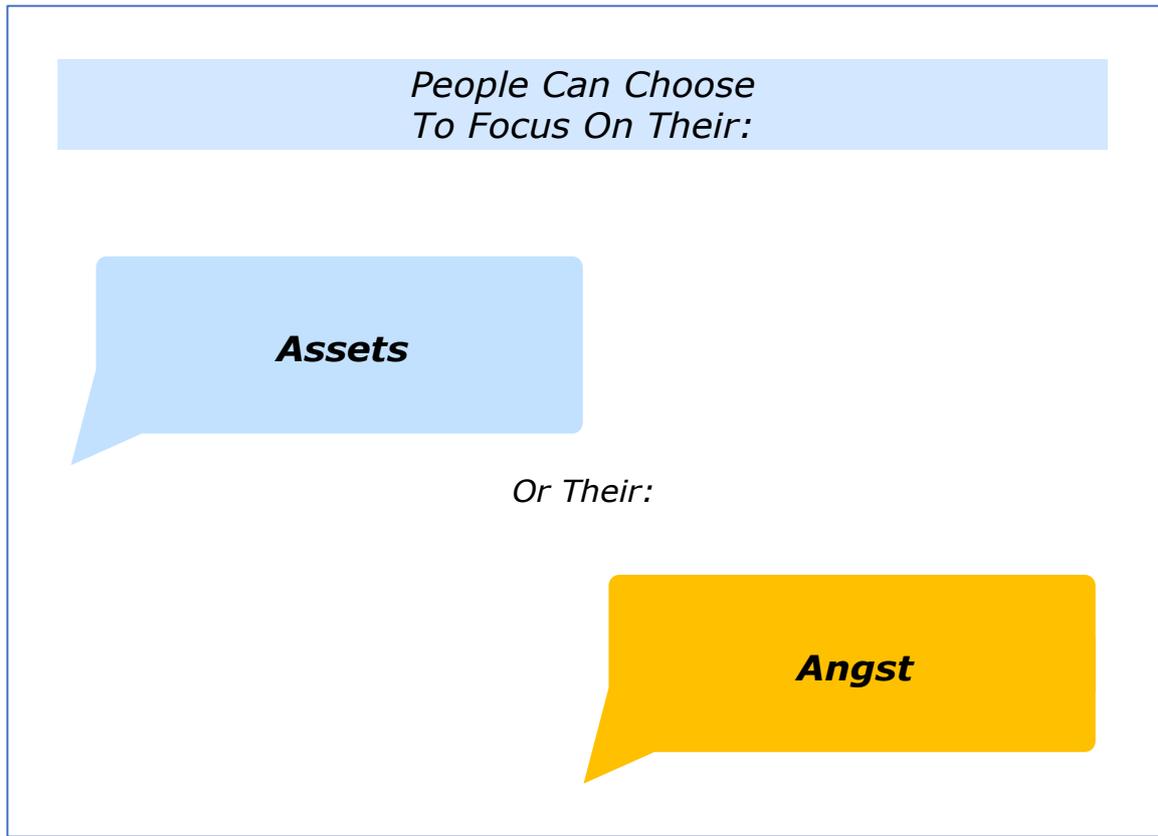
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## *The Assets Approach*



How to cultivate a sense of gratitude? One approach is to focus on your assets. Let's explore this approach.

Everybody experiences difficulties. Sometimes it can be useful to offer them tools they can use to deal with challenges. Certainly this is the case when helping people to recover from deep traumas.

Some individuals can become obsessed with their angst, however, and go around in circles. They keep talking about what is wrong with their lives.

People can be helped to deal with real challenges but they may also need to shift their attention. They may find it useful to focus on the assets approach rather than the angst approach.

Several ago I had a session with Dave. He had become depressed in his job and fallen into a negative spiral. Bearing this in mind, I

invited him to do the exercise called *My Personal And Professional Assets*. This invited him to clarify and build on these assets.

Within 30 minutes Dave had turned himself around. He aimed to tackle the challenges at work but also appreciate his true wealth. He explained this in the following way.

*"I have good health, a fantastic wife and two lovely children. We have good friends, a home, a garden and a bit of money in the bank. I also have a lot of drive, energy and skills that can help companies to improve. I need to get out and give to people in my network, because this could lead to other opportunities.*

*"I must tackle the issue at work but it is solvable, even if it means moving to a new job. Sometimes I have the occasional sulk, but I can limit that to ten minutes. I can then get my act together and try to succeed.*

*"Today it has been good to take stock of my assets. Maybe it would also be good for me to sit down with my wife and do a similar exercise. We can build on what we have and plan our next move forward."*

What are your personal assets? You may have a positive attitude, a strong drive and good imagination. You may have reasonable health, a caring family and encouraging friends. You may be resilient, focused and able to find creative solutions to challenges.

What are your professional assets? You may have particular strengths and the ability to do strategic thinking. You may be good at helping certain kinds of people to succeed. You may also have a wide professional network of people of friends, customers and potential employers.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe your personal and professional assets.

## *My Personal And Professional Assets*

*Personal Assets. The personal assets I have are:*

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*Professional Assets. The professional assets I have are:*

\*

\*

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*The specific things I can do to keep building on my assets are:*

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\*

## *The Building On What You Have Approach*

### *Building On What You Have*

*People can choose to take the following routes. They can choose either:*

- *To build on what they have*
- *To add to what they have*
- *To worry about what they don't have*

Different people choose different approaches to using their assets. The approach they take can colour how they feel about their lives and work. Let's explore some of these approaches.

### *Some people build on what they have*

Great workers take this approach to their assets. They aim to apply their specific talents as gardeners, athletes, crafts workers or doing other activities. They then translate these into stimulating projects.

Some individuals who have accidents take a similar approach. They wave aside sympathy, saying that other people face much greater challenges. Such a person may say things like:

*"I still have my sight, hearing and have great support in my life. I am going to focus on what I can do rather than what I can't do."*

Great teams take a similar approach. They aim to build on their strengths and their successful patterns – the strategies they find work for them. They then do their best to achieve success.

*Some people develop and sometimes, when appropriate, add to what they have*

Great workers continue to develop their specific talents. They also, when appropriate, aim to add certain skills. Sometimes they find this is possible. Sometimes they work with people who are better at using the desired skills.

Some individuals focus on becoming brilliant at a specific activity. They then add people or resources that can take care of the basics. This releases them to do what they do best and do their best.

Great teams aim to enable their team members to develop their talents. They may also get to the stage where they add people or resources that can help them to achieve peak performance.

*Some people worry about what they don't have*

Some individuals spend lots of time worrying about the things they don't have. Sometimes this is understandable – such as when they do not have the basic materials for life. They then need support to be able to shape their future.

Some people become addicted to focusing on what they don't have. They may become depressed, resentful or jealous of others. This approach does not necessarily help them or other people.

Let's return to your own life and work. How can you continue to build on and apply what you have? How can you develop and, when appropriate, add to what you have? What may happen as a result of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on these themes. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Building On What I Have*

*The specific things I can do to build on and apply what I have in my life and work are:*

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*The specific things I can do to develop and, when appropriate, add to what I have are:*

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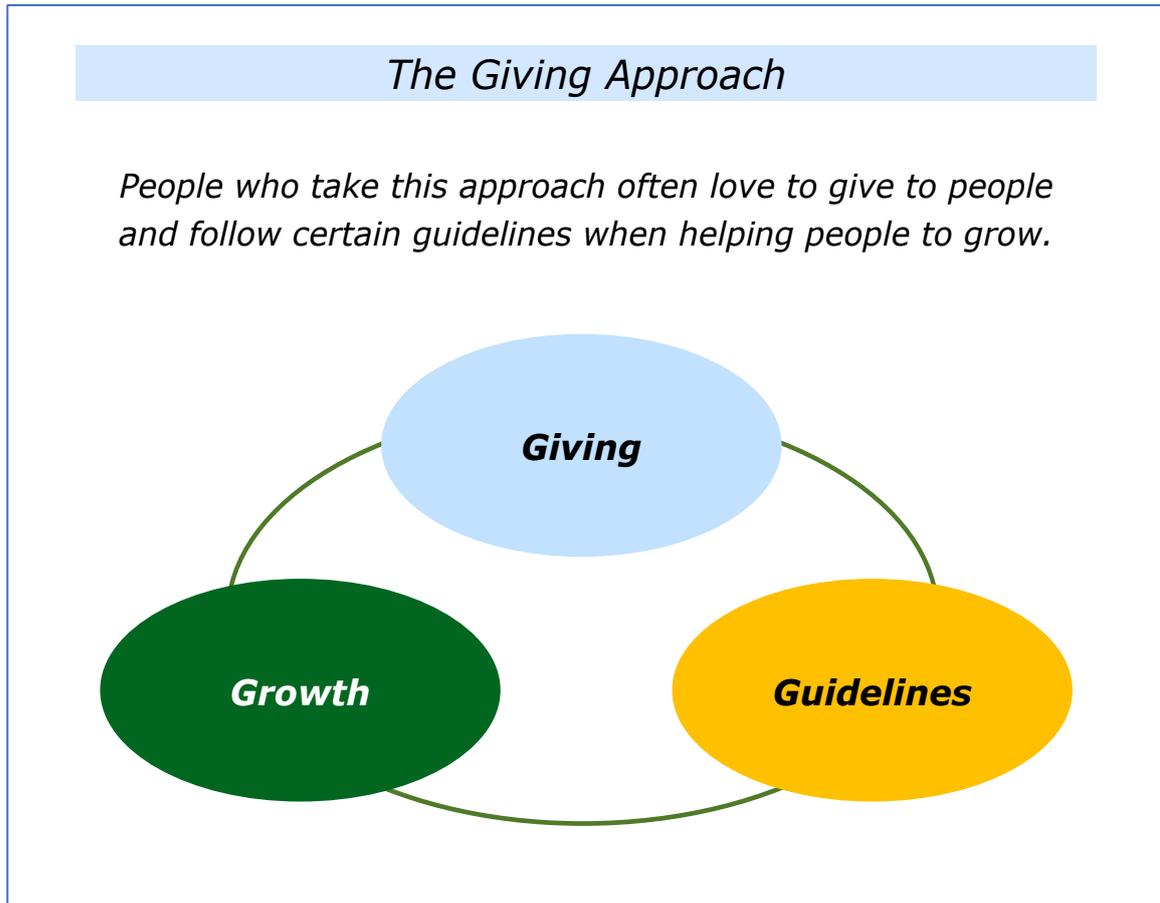
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## The Giving Approach



There are many ways to encourage people. One approach is to be a giver rather than a taker.

Givers are sometimes given titles – such as being a Sage or Mensch – but they see themselves as lifetime students. Such individuals have a sense of gratitude.

Thankful for what they have been given in life, they want to give to other people. They may ask:

*"What do I want to give to people? What are the guidelines I want to follow? How can I help people to grow?"*

Givers love to help people to achieve their goals. When appropriate, they clarify what people want to achieve. They then pass on

knowledge that individuals, teams and organisations can use to achieve their picture of success.

Adam Grant described how many aim to be givers in his book *Give and Take*. Below is an excerpt from the Brain Pickings website that provided a summary of the book.

*Adam Grant's Work On Givers, Matchers And Takers*



*Givers*

*They aim to give to other people and help them to succeed. They often experience the helper's high.*

*Matchers*

*They aim to match other people in terms of giving and taking on a relatively equal basis.*

*Takers*

*They aim to take from other people in ways that benefit themselves.*

***Givers*** prefer to give more than they get. *Takers* tend to be self-focused, evaluating what other people can offer them. *Givers* are other-focused and pay attention to what other people need from them.

*If you're a giver at work, you simply strive to be generous in sharing your time, energy, knowledge, skills, ideas, and connections with other people who can benefit from them.*

*In the workplace, however, few of us are purely givers or takers - rather, what dominates is a third style. We become matchers, striving to preserve an equal balance of giving and getting.*

*Matchers operate on the principle of fairness: when they help others, they protect themselves by seeking reciprocity. If you're a matcher, you believe in tit for tat, and your relationships are governed by even exchanges of favours.*

*Giving, taking and matching are three fundamental styles of social interaction, but the lines between them aren't hard and fast. You might find that you shift from one reciprocity style to another as you travel across different work roles and relationships.*

*Givers, takers and matchers all can - and do - achieve success. But there's something distinctive that happens when givers succeed: it spreads and cascades. Givers succeed in a way that creates a ripple effect, enhancing the success of people around them.*

Different people follow different guidelines to help other people. Here is one approach that some people follow.

### *Guidelines*

*There are many ways to give to people and help them to grow. One approach involves exploring the following themes.*

### *Giving To People And Helping Them To Grow*

- *What are my strengths? How can I use these to help people? What are the positive models and practical tools that I can pass on to people? What will be the benefits for them and other people?*
- *Who are the specific people that I want to help? What do they want at the moment? What is happening in their world? What are the challenges they face? What may be their goals and their picture of success?*
- *How can I help these people? What can I offer that will help them to achieve their goals? How can I offer these things in a way they can use in their lives and work? How can I help these people to achieve ongoing success?*

### *Giving Can Also Help The Giver*

The main reason for being a giver is to help other people, but there are many other by products. Giving to others can help to heal our bodies and souls.

People often feel good after helping others. They can experience a rush, followed by a sense of calm. It is as if they have served something much greater than themselves. Sometimes they experience what is called the helper's high.

Some people get their highs by helping people in their daily lives. The positive majority of people take this route. They love to encourage other people when acting as parents, educators, coaches, leaders, trusted advisors or playing other roles.

Some people help others directly – such as when working as a nurse, teacher, hospitality worker or the caring professions. Some

may do so more indirectly – such as when working as a software developer, scientist, researcher, architect or another profession.

Allan Luks and Peggy Payne underlined these themes in their book *The Healing Power of Doing Good*. They found that people who helped others also received benefits themselves.

Kamran Mofid described the work done by Allan and Peggy in an article called *Build a Better World: The Healing Power of Doing Good*. Here are excerpts from the article.

*Based on national research that Allan did 20 years ago, he introduced the term 'Helper's High' - the powerful physical feelings people experience when directly helping others - to explain the real benefits to volunteers' physical and emotional health.*

*People have known for ages that helping others is good for the soul. But the study that Allan Luks conducted of over 3000 male and female volunteers has proven it is good for the body and mental health too.*

*His research concluded that regular helpers are 10 times more likely to be in good health than people who don't volunteer.*

*And that there's an actual biochemical explanation: volunteering reduces the body's stress and also releases endorphins, the brain's natural painkillers.*

## Giving To Other People

- *It can contribute the maintenance of good health and diminish the effect of minor and serious psychological and physical diseases and disorders.*
- *It can lead to feelings of joyfulness, emotional resilience, and vigour and can reduce the unhealthy sense of isolation. It can reverse feelings of depression.*
- *It can lead to a sense of self-worth, greater happiness and optimism is increased and feelings of helplessness and depression decrease.*
- *It can lead to an affiliative connection with someone (a friendship, relationship, love, or some sort of positive bonding) and emotions that can strengthen the immune system.*

Let's return to your own life and work. How do you want to keep giving to people in your personal and professional life?

You may want to encourage people, serve nourishing food, pass on knowledge or do other activities. You may want to do work that helps people to shape their future lives.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe the specific ways that you want to give to people.

## *The Giving Approach*

*The specific things I want  
to give to people are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific steps I can  
take to give to people are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of  
taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Positive Energy Approach*

### *Positive Energy*

*People can choose focus on:*

- *The specific things that give them positive energy;*
- *The specific things that give other people positive energy;*
- *The specific things they can do to build on these and do their best to get positive results.*

Energy is life. Many encouragers like to give to other people but they also need support. Some do things that give them positive energy. Recharging their batteries gives them more strength to give to other people.

What are the things that give you positive energy in your personal and professional life? Here are some answers that people give.

*Personal Life. The specific things that give me positive energy in my personal life are:*

*Being with our children ... Writing ... Looking after our garden ...  
Listening to the sound of falling water ... Singing in the choir ...  
Taking walks by myself ... Spending time with my partner.*

*Professional Life. The specific things that give me positive energy in my professional life are:*

*Doing satisfying projects ... Encouraging people ... Caring for animals ... Building boats ... Teaching about wellbeing ... Playing to my strengths ... Acting as a trusted advisor.*

This is an exercise that can also be used to encourage other people – such as your child, partner, friends or other people. If appropriate, you can go through the following steps.

*The name of the person is:*

*The specific things that give them positive energy are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to encourage them to do more of these things are:*

\*

\*

\*

It is an exercise I often use with individuals and groups. Each person writes their lists on flip charts. They then form pairs and share what they have written. This helps people to understand what gives themselves and others positive energy.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Positive Energy*

*The specific things that give me positive energy in my personal life are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that give me positive energy in my professional life are:*

\*

\*

\*

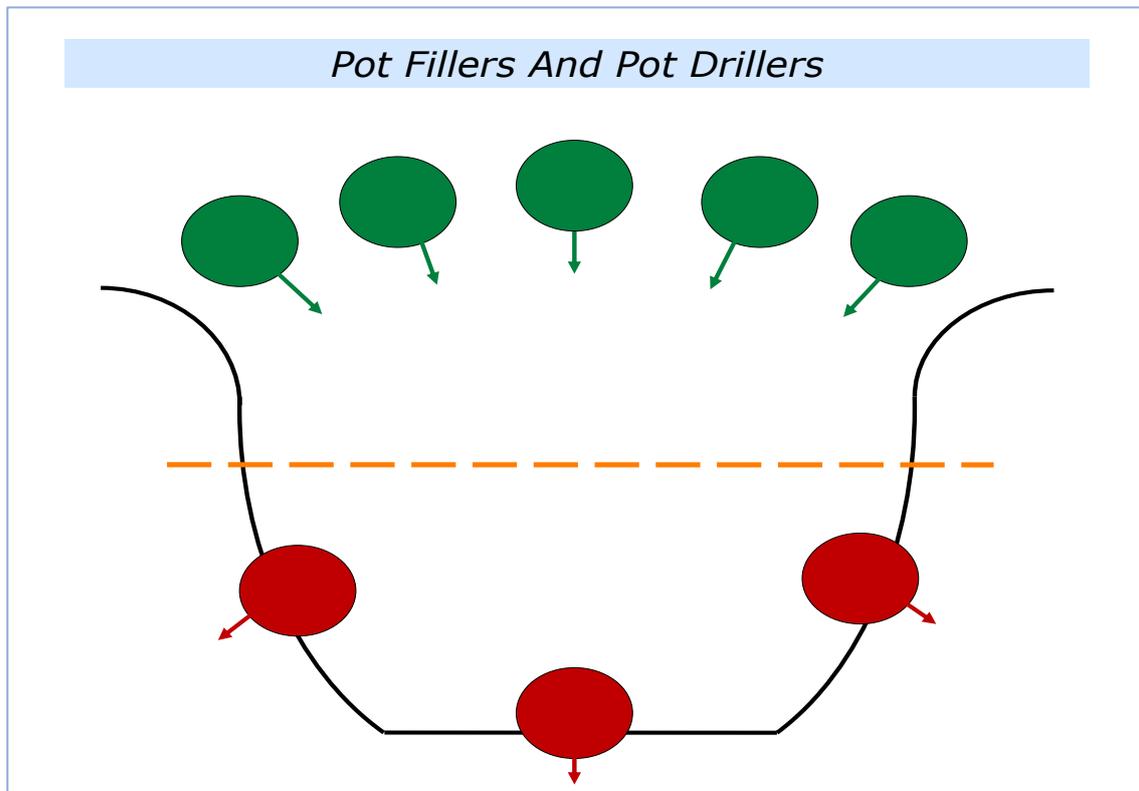
*The specific things I can do to continue doing the things that give me positive energy are:*

\*

\*

\*

## The Pot Filler Rather Than Pot Driller Approach



There are many ways to encourage people. One way is to be a pot filler rather than a pot driller. This approach is based on the work of Virginia Satir, a great family therapist.

Virginia introduced this idea in the 1960s. It was later adapted by many other people, but it is worth revisiting her work. She invited people to see their self-confidence as a pot.

Sometimes they would have lots of confidence in the pot, other times they would have little. Sometimes this was related to whether they were surrounded by pot fillers or pot drillers. She outlined this concept in her books, such as *Peoplemaking*.

If you wish, it can be worthwhile doing this exercise yourself. You can then focus on how to be a pot filler and, if appropriate, invite other people to do the exercise. They can focus on how to spend more time with fillers rather than drillers.

### *Clarifying your own level of self-confidence*

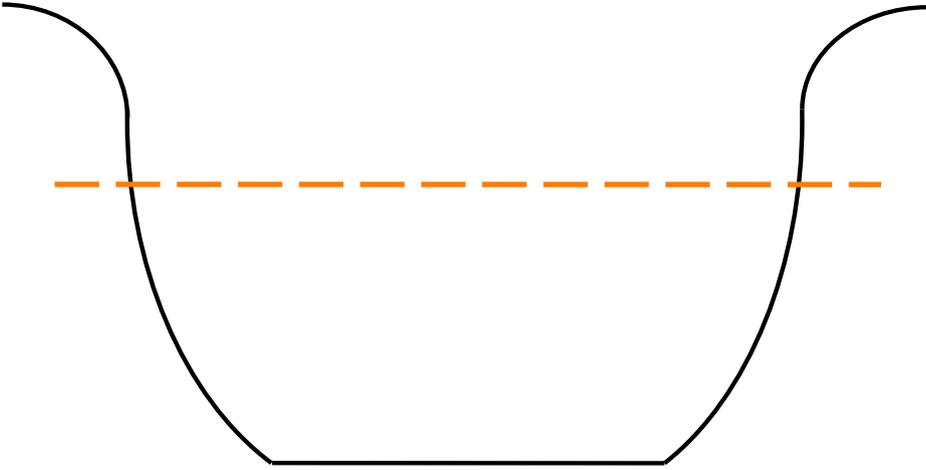
Imagine you are looking at your own level of confidence. Try tackling the following exercise. Start by drawing an imaginary pot.

Looking at the pot, draw a line that corresponds with how high you feel your self-confidence is today.

If you have high confidence, draw it high up the pot. If your confidence is low, draw it at a lower point in the pot. The next step explores why it may be at this level.

***The Self-Confidence Pot***

*Draw a line that shows how high your self-confidence is at the moment. If you have high confidence, it will be high up the pot. If low confidence, then it will be lower.*



The diagram shows a black U-shaped curve representing a pot. A horizontal dashed orange line is drawn across the middle of the pot, indicating a specific level of self-confidence. The curve starts high on the left, dips down to a flat bottom, and rises high on the right.

### *Clarifying your pot fillers and pot drillers*

Write the names of your pot fillers. These are the people who give you encouragement and energy. You look forward to seeing them and feel more alive after meeting them.

Describe the things you do to give yourself energy. You may enjoy listening to music, gardening, being with animals, designing beautiful things or doing other activities.

If you have lots of things that give you positive energy, then your pot will be overflowing. You will then be more able to pass on encouragement to other people.

## *Pot Fillers*

*The people who encourage me and fill my pot are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I do to encourage myself and fill my own pot are:*

\*

\*

\*

Write the names of the pot drillers. These are people who sap energy. They leave you feeling drained and discouraged. The more significant they are in your life, the nearer they will be to the base.

## *Pot Drillers*

*The people who I  
allow to drill my pot are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I do  
to drill my own pot are:*

\*

\*

\*

You may also do things to drill holes in your own pot. One athlete continually criticised himself with negative self-talk after

competitions. Reviewing performances is vital, but he devoted 90% of his energy to focusing on his failures, rather than his successes.

He finally managed to change his script by adopting a different approach. After each performance he focused on: a) the specific things I did well and how I can do more of these things in the future; b) the specific things I can do better next time and how.

Some people may be both pot fillers and pot drillers. They may have a pleasing–hurting pattern. Sometimes they do things to please people and then, without warning, they lash out. Clarify the specific things these people do to encourage or drain you.

### *Clarifying how to raise your level of self-confidence*

How can you continue to raise your confidence and also encourage other people? Below are some suggestions you may wish to consider.

You may want to spend more time with the people who give you energy. If possible, work with colleagues you find stimulating. People often find that, as they get older, they spend more time with personal and professional soul mates.

Do more of the things you love. You may enjoy listening to music, skiing, visiting the theatre or doing other things. Pursuing these activities will put more energy into your pot.

Spend less time - or no time - with the people who drain energy. Radical changes are difficult to make overnight but, unless the holes are filled, encouragement will simply flow out of the bottom. Energy is life. You need pure energy, rather than poisonous energy.

Faced by a person who is difficult, one approach is to make positive suggestions regarding how you would like them to behave in the future. You can also describe the benefits – both for themselves and others – of them behaving in that way.

Don't expect the person to respond immediately, but don't argue or fall into the blame game. What if the person refuses to respond? Make the decision whether you want to continue to see them.

### *Being an encourager and a pot filler for other people*

You can do your best to encourage people. Keep giving but don't become a victim. Do not stay around to have your pot drilled by people who choose to be miserable or who are observer critics. When in doubt, ask yourself:

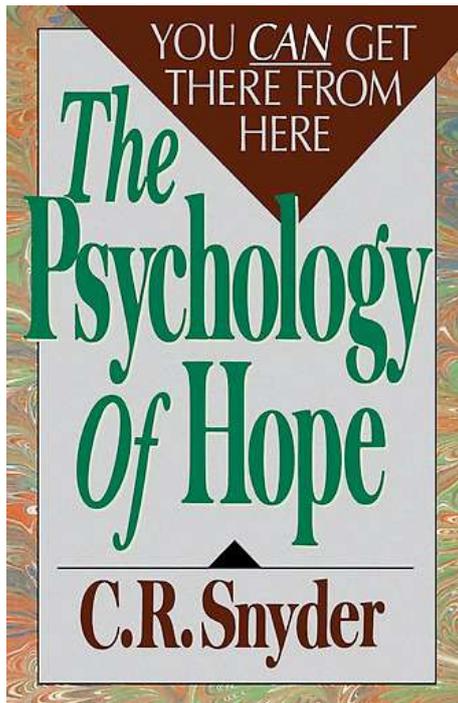
*"Does this activity give me positive energy?"*

If not, switch to spending time with the people and doing things that provide stimulation. You are then more likely to be a pot filler for other people.

There are many ways to encourage people. Let's explore another approach.

## *The Will Power And Way Power Approach*

Rick Snyder encouraged people by helping them to develop their way power as well as their will power. Here are some of the key messages he gave in his book *The Psychology Of Hope*.



*People are more likely to have a sense of hope when they score highly on both will power and way power.*

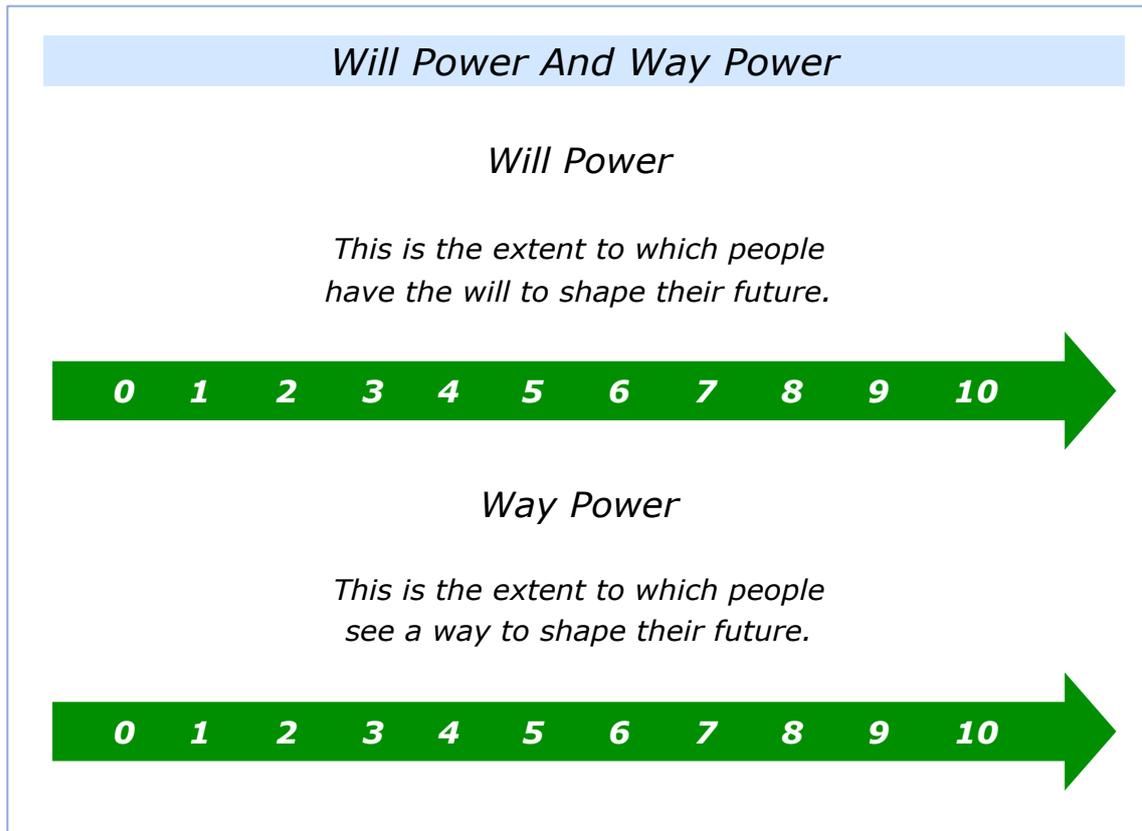
*We can offer people positive models and practical tools that they can add to their repertoires.*

*People will then have more options they can use to shape their futures. This can help to increase their way power.*

Let's explore what this means in practice. Imagine that a person is facing a difficult challenge. They will have a strong sense of hope if, for example:

*They score 8+/10 in terms of their will to solve the challenge.*

*They score 8+/10 in terms of seeing a way to solve the challenge.*



The person will then feel confident about how to achieve their picture of success. This is because they score highly on both will power and way power.

This model also explains why a normally positive person can be confused if they feel depressed when facing a particular challenge. They have a strong will to solve the issue but as yet they cannot see a way to find a solution.

Once the person sees a way through the problem, however, the cloud evaporates. Their hope returns and they feel reinvigorated to tackle the challenge.

We are often told that: "Where there's a will, there's a way."

But this phrase can be turned around to say: "Where there's a way, there's a will."

If a person sees a way forward, they are more likely to develop the will to make it happen.

## *The Positive Approach To Encouraging People*

There are many ways to encourage people. This book describes the positive approach rather than the persuading approach.

This involves focusing on the positive aspects of people, teams and organisations. Most people have a positive self and a not-so positive self. When appropriate, the aim is to help them to build on the former and manage the latter.

Good encouragers are positive but realistic. They help people to build on their successful patterns and manage the consequences of any unsuccessful patterns. They then help them to achieve their picture of success.

Such encouragers often begin by focusing on people's possibilities. This calls for having positive eyes rather than negative eyes. One mentor expressed this approach in the following way.

*"When looking at a person, it is important to focus on their positive spirit. It is to see when they come alive and generate positive energy."*

*"This may sound vague but it is something you can see if you look for it carefully. It is then to help them to build on this spirit, do satisfying work and achieve success."*

These mentors talked about the importance of seeing a person's successful style of working. When have they done satisfying projects in the past? What made these satisfying? What were the principles they followed? How can they follow these in the future?

Sometimes the principles a person follows can give clues to their vocation. How to take this step? One approach is:

*To watch a person in action or see an example of the work;*

*To focus on the vocational themes they pursue.*

Bearing in mind the themes they pursue, it is to check if any of these resonate with the person. It is possible to do this by asking them simple questions. For example:

*Do you like:*

*To encourage people ... To help people to heal ... To create enriching environments in which people grow ... To find solutions to specific problems ... To orchestrate people to achieve a compelling goal ...*

*To enable people to achieve their aims ... To create beautiful things ... To take people on a journey ... To build things that show a better way ... To show what it is possible for human beings to achieve?*

There are many other vocational themes it is possible to check with the person. You can keep going until the person says something like the following.

*"Yes, that is a theme that runs through lots of my work. For example, when I ... It is something I seem to do naturally. It is also something where I enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal."*

Later in the book we will explore how you can clarify your own vocation. For the moment, however, let's return to focusing on the positive aspects of people.

Here is an introduction to the themes it can be useful to explore when doing this with individuals, teams or organisations. We will be returning to many of these throughout the book.

## *The Positive Approach*

*There are many ways to encourage people. This approach involves focusing on the positive aspects of a person, team or organisation.*

*It involves watching people in action or seeing an example of their work. It is then to focus on their strengths and the strategies they can follow to achieve success.*

## *Strengths*

*What is the person's positive spirit? When do they come alive?*

- *What are the principles they are following then? What gives them positive energy? How can they do more of these things?*

*What are the deeply satisfying activities in which they deliver As rather than Bs or Cs? When are they in their element - at ease and yet able to excel? When do they flow, focus and finish?*



*When do they see the destination quickly? When do they go 'A, B ... and then leap to ... Z'? What are the activities where they see patterns quickly? When do they make complicated things simple?*



*What are the specific activities where they enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal? When do they have a sense of purpose, follow certain principles and achieve their picture of success?*



## Strategies

- *What is their positive history? When have they done superb work or overcome challenges in the past? What did they do right then? How can they follow these principles in the future?*
- *What is their successful style of working? When have they done satisfying projects? What made these satisfying? How can they follow these principles in the future?*
- *What are the vocational themes they pursue? Do they translate these into doing good work as encouragers, designers, builders, problem solvers, orchestrators or another role? How can they follow this vocation, find the right vehicle and do valuable work?*
- *When has the team or organisation performed brilliantly? What did they do right then? How can they follow these principles to perform brilliantly in the future?*

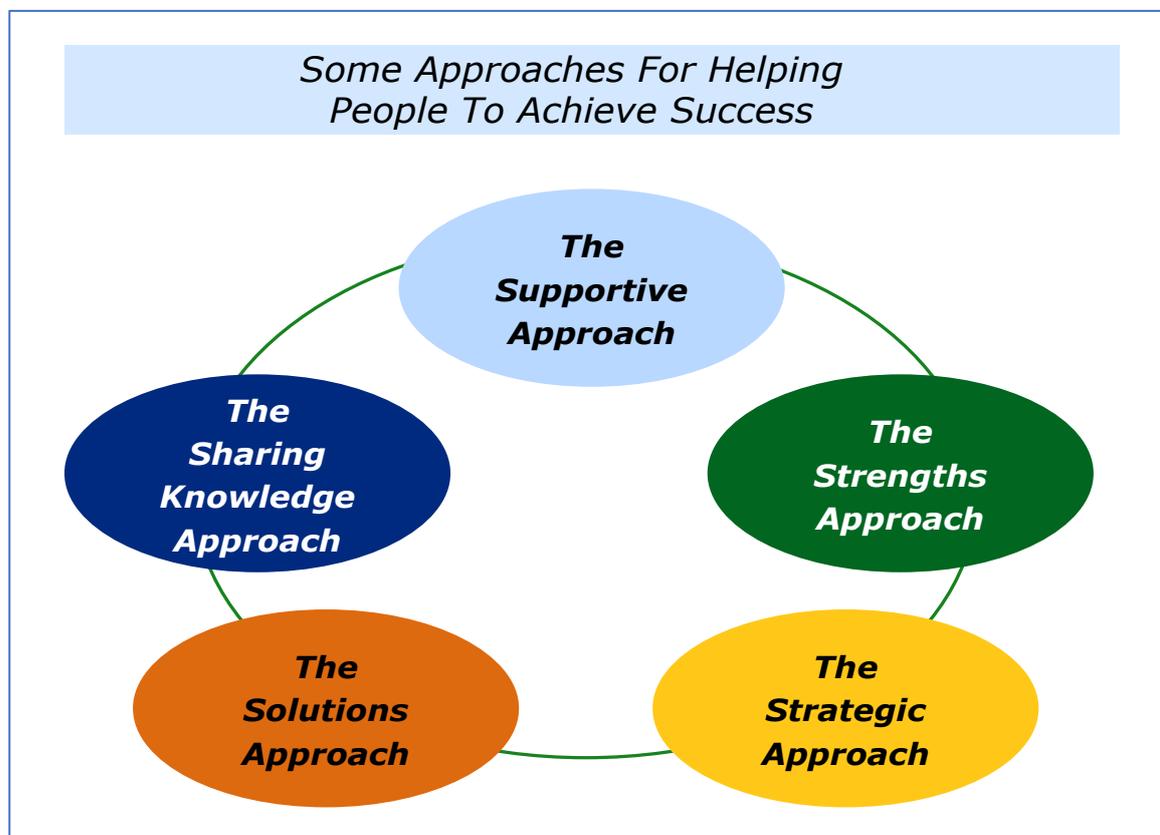
## Success

- *What are their aims? What do they want to do in their life or work? What are their possibilities? What do they have the potential to achieve? How can I help them to clarify their picture of success?*
- *How can they build on their strengths and follow their successful strategies when working towards achieving their goals? What can they add to their repertoire to increase the chances of success?*
- *How can they do superb work? How can they get some early successes? How can they anticipate and manage potential challenges? How can I help them on the journey?*
- *How can they keep doing the basics and then add the brilliance? How can they keep improving? How can they do everything possible to achieve their picture of success?*

## *Some Approaches For Helping People To Achieve Success*

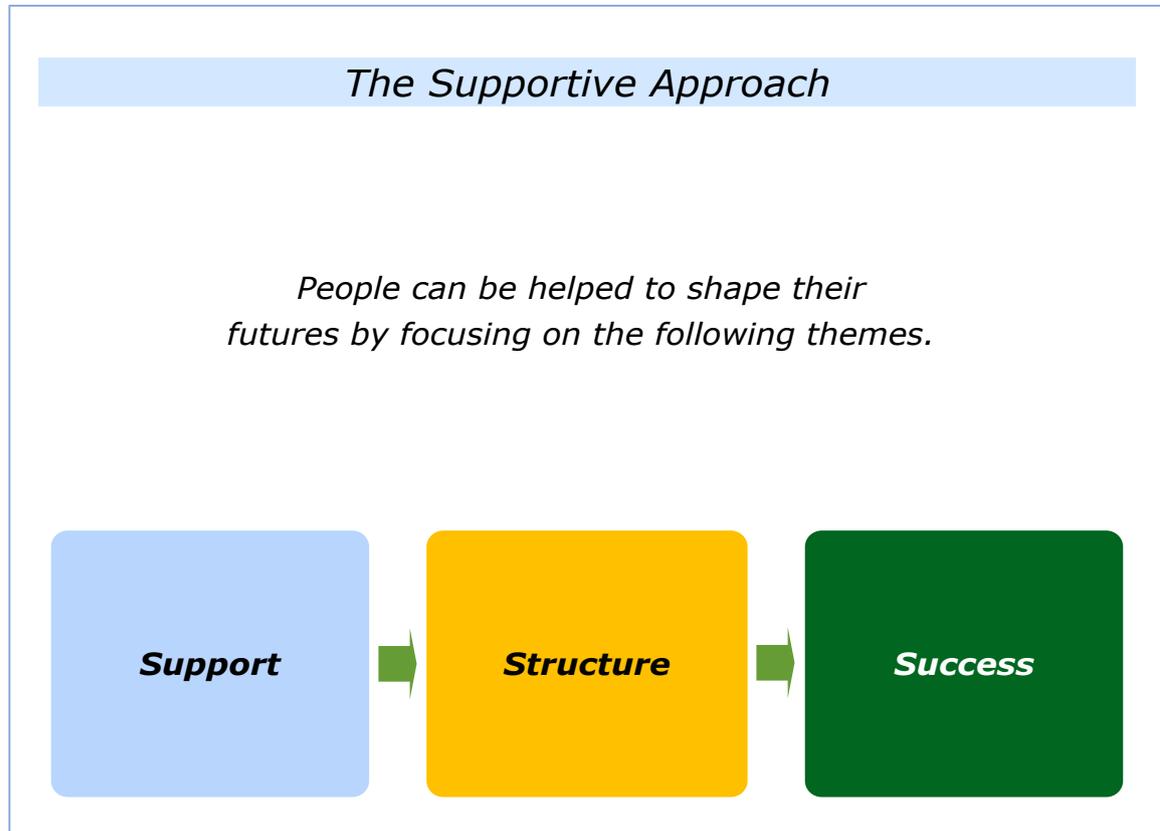
This section provides an introduction to some approaches to helping people. We will explore these and many others in greater depth later in the book. One key point, however, worth underlining.

Whatever approach they take, encouraging educators, therapists, leaders show individuals that they are important. They then help them to shape their futures and achieve their picture of success.



## *The Supportive Approach*

This approach starts by providing people with support. It then encourages them to follow their chosen structure and achieve success. Let's explore these themes.



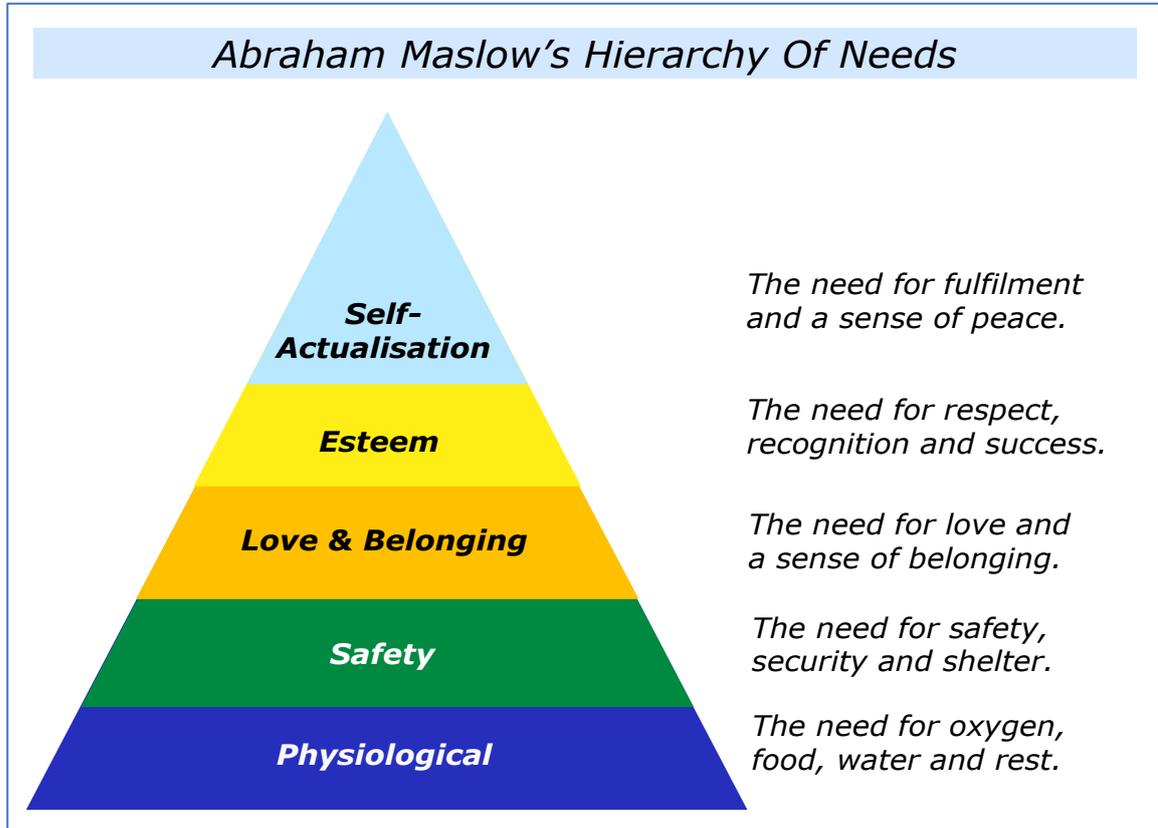
### *Support*

The first step is to provide people with the basic materials for life – food, shelter and encouragement. It is also to offer them practical tools they can use to be healthy, hopeful and happy.

The supportive approach is taken by many caring people in their daily life and work. They do practical things to help people to climb the hierarchy of needs that were described by Abraham Maslow.

People have an ascending set of needs, said Maslow. Once they are satisfied on one level, they are more likely to move onto the next level. These drives start with the physiological needs and climb towards self-actualisation.

People are more likely to fulfil their potential in environments that enable them to fulfil their needs, said Maslow. Many people have since expanded on his theory and translated it into action. Here is one summary of this hierarchy of human needs.



People in the caring professions often follow this approach. They provide an encouraging environment in which people can feel safe. They also encourage people: a) to support themselves; b) to support other people.

Those who take the second step – supporting others without becoming victims – are also more likely to get support in return. This can create a positive circle where they give and get encouragement.

## *Structure*

People like to feel in control. They also like to set specific goals, pursue strategies that work and follow their chosen structure. They can then do their best to achieve success. This is a topic we will

explore later in the book, but here are some themes to bear in mind.

People often feel better when they have a sense of purpose. This can be something relatively simple. Such as going for a walk, caring for their pets, getting themselves fit or working towards an achievable goal.

It can also be something bigger. Such as following their vocation, pursuing their principles, doing a creative project, working for a cause or doing another activity that provides a sense of meaning.

People like to follow a structure towards achieving their specific goal. It is important, however, for a person to create their own structure. They are then more likely to follow this discipline rather than one that is imposed on them.

Many people suffered during Covid-19 and these difficulties were multiplied by their previous daily structure being destroyed. Individuals needed to create a new structure they could follow.

Caring professionals encourage individuals to follow positive habits. They help them to follow a daily structure that encourages both themselves and other people. This can help people to move on to the next stage.

## *Success*

People want a sense of achievement. Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to encourage an individual:

*To set specific achievable goals;*

*To follow their chosen structure – this includes following their successful style and knowing how to deal with setbacks;*

*To do their best to achieve success.*

Some therapists also invite individuals to keep a *Success Diary*. They invite them to write down:

*The specific successes they have had that day;*

*The specific things they did right to create the successes;*

*The specific things they can do to follow these principles – plus the things they can improve - to get successes the next day.*

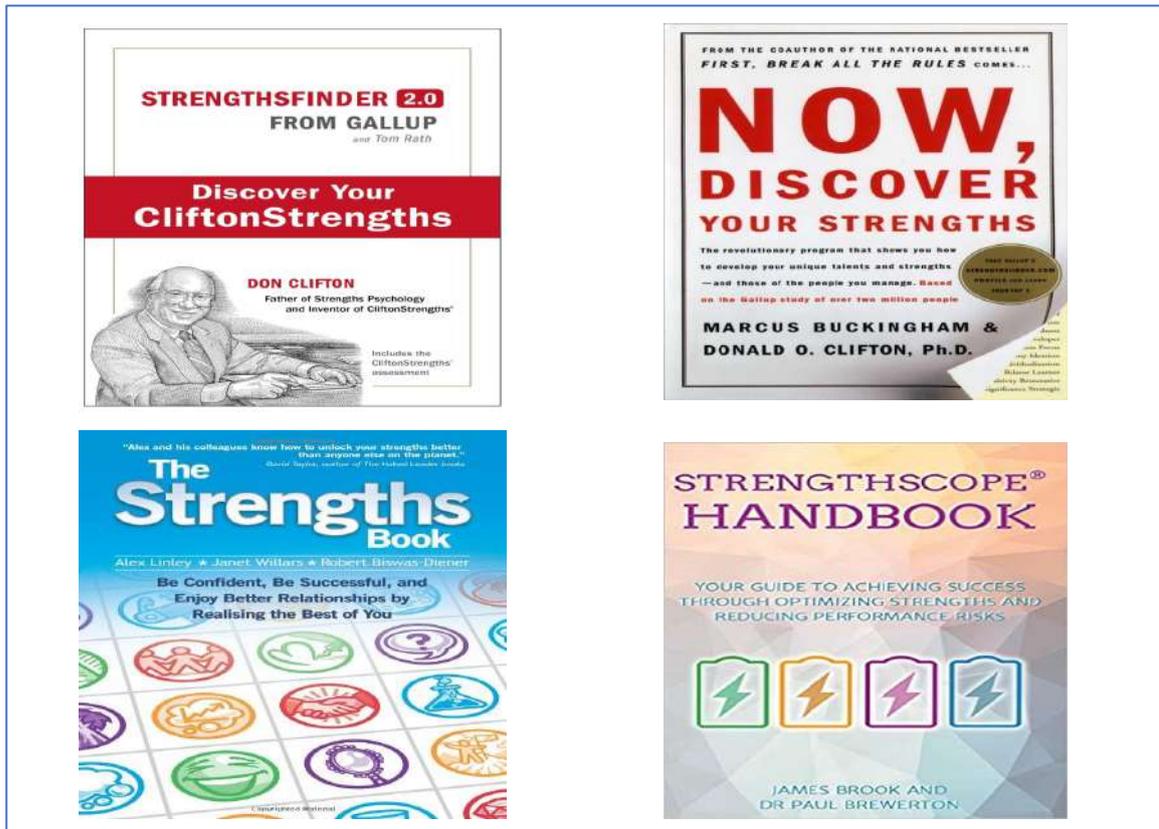
This sounds basic, but it is an approach I have seen work with people in many walks of life. The aim is to help people: a) to build on their positive habits; b) to, when appropriate, focus on what they can improve.

The support, structure and success approach is one that can be adapted in many ways. Let's explore one variation of this approach.

## The Strengths Approach

Bernard Haldane, Don Clifton and Tom Rath were some of the many practitioners who have helped to spread this approach. Bernard's work will be explored in more detail later in this book.

Here is a selection of other books that encourage people to build on their strengths.



The strengths approach is an organic approach and forms the basis for this book. As indicated earlier, it believes that:

*People have the seeds of development within them;*

*People already have strengths and successful patterns;*

*People can build on their strengths – plus add other skills – and achieve their picture of success.*

The approach combines elements of both Humanistic and Positive Psychology that studies humanity at its best. It then provides practical tools that people can use to follow these principles and achieve their goals.

Some practitioners combine the strengths approach with elements of Positive Psychology, Humanistic Psychology, Existential Psychology or Appreciative Inquiry.

Some then translate this into doing what is often called strengths coaching. Here is an introduction to how this can work in practise. We will explore this approach in more depth later in the book in the section on mentoring.



### *Setting The Scene*

Imagine that you are running a session with a person who has asked for your help. The first step is to create an encouraging environment in which they feel welcome and at ease.

You can focus on the topics a person wants to explore. Sometimes this calls for clarifying a person's picture of success.

Some people may simply aim to be happy. Some may aim to regain a sense of control, overcome setbacks and refocus on their life goals. Some may aim to encourage other people.

Some may aim to find creative solutions to challenges. Some may aim to do satisfying work that pays a salary. Some may aim to achieve peak performance. Some may aim to leave a positive legacy.

Bearing in mind what the person wants to explore, explain what you can and can't offer. You can then make clear working contracts. Moving on to the first topic the person wants to explore, clarify the real results they want to achieve. If appropriate, you may be able to offer some practical tools they can use to get some early successes.

Sometimes you may immediately help a person to focus on solutions to a challenge. On other occasions it can be useful to clarify the strengths they can use to achieve success.

## *Strengths*

You can clarify the positive aspects of person's personality. Here are some themes it can be useful to explore.

*What is the person's positive spirit? When do they come alive? What gives them positive energy? What are the person's strengths? What is their successful style?*

*What is their positive history? When have they overcome challenges or achieved specific goals? What were the principles they followed? How can they follow these principles in the future?*

Imagine you have clarified some of the person's inner resources. It is then time to move on to the next stage.

## *Strategies*

Let's return to the specific results the person wants to achieve. Here are some themes it can be useful to explore for clarifying their strategy.

*What is the person's specific goal? What are the key strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success? What is the support they need?*

*What are the potential difficulties they may face? How can they prevent such difficulties happening? How can they manage such difficulties if, despite their best efforts, these do happen?*

Imagine you have worked with the person to help them clarify their strategy. It is then time to move on to the next stage.

## *Success*

If appropriate, look ahead and help the person to translate their strategies into a clear action plan. Here are some themes it can be useful to explore with the person.

*How can they keep following their chosen strategies? How can they do superb work? How can they get some early successes and encourage themselves on the journey?*

*How can they keep reading reality? How can they clarify: a) what is working; b) what they can do better and how?; c) how can they find solutions to challenges?*

*How can they manage their energy properly? How can they buy time to think when necessary? How can they finish properly and achieve their picture of success?*

Different people employ the strengths approach in different ways. The main aim, however, is to encourage and enable the person to achieve their picture of success.

## *The Strategic Approach*

### *The Strategic Approach*

Some practitioners take a strategic approach towards helping people to achieve their goals. They make the person feel welcome and then use their expertise and knowledge:

- *To clarify the real results the person wants to achieve – the picture of success;*
- *To clarify the key strategies the person can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of achieving success;*
- *To help the person to follow their chosen strategies and achieve the picture of success.*

Trusted advisors may take this approach. Whilst they may be experts in their field, but they take time to make their client feel the centre of their world.

Such people clarify what the person wants to achieve. They then explain the big picture and the possible options for going forwards. They can also outline the pluses and minuses of each option.

They are often both caring and clear-headed. They help a person to consider the possible options for going forwards. When appropriate, they also pass on their knowledge.

Such professionals respect the person's right to choose their own ways forward. When appropriate, however, they will also use their knowledge to help the person to achieve their picture of success.

## *The Solutions Approach*

Professionals sometimes help people to get both short and long-term solutions to challenges. They may do this when working as a nurse, doctor, counsellor, technical specialist or in another role.

Many approaches they use are based on the Three C model for creative problem solving. This involves focusing on Clarity, Creativity and Concrete Results.

Good leaders also focus on finding solutions. During the early part of the Coronavirus crisis, for example, many took the following steps to help their people.

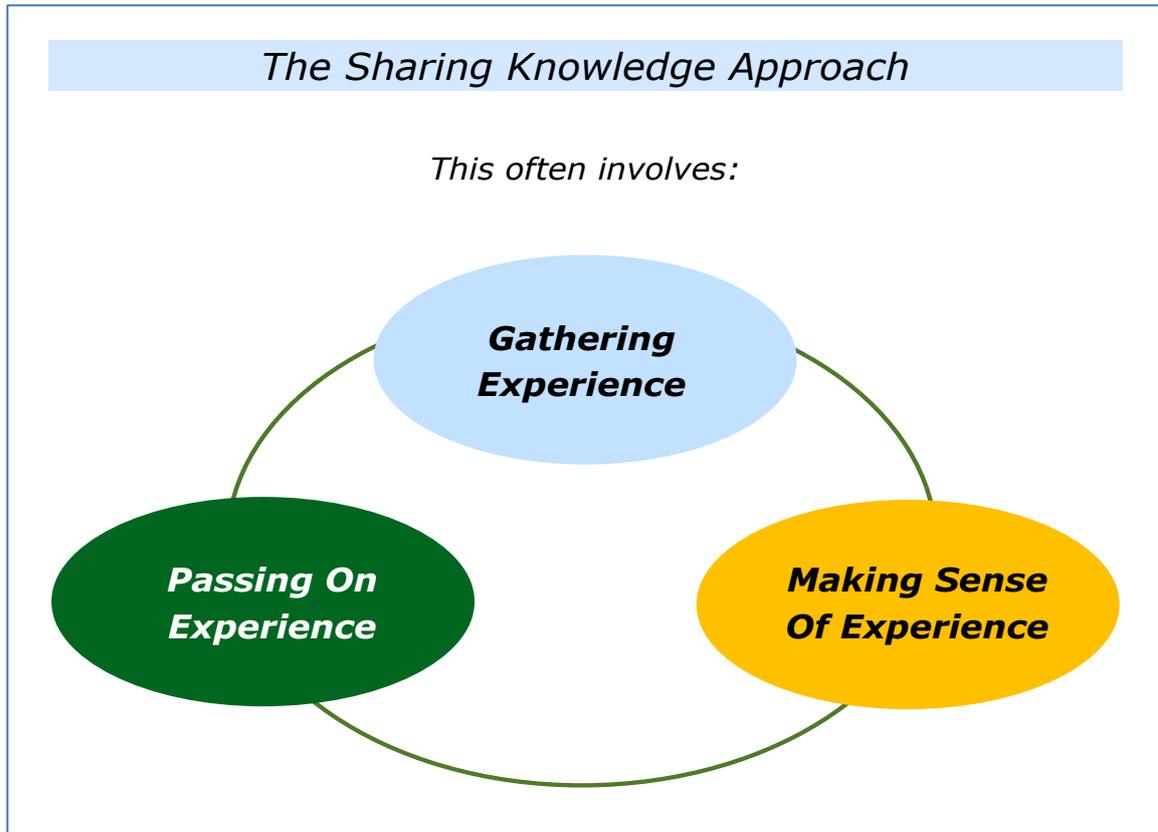
### *Good Leaders*

Some leaders focused on finding positive solutions during the Covid crisis. They aimed:

- *To care for their people – such as taking care of their wellbeing and wealth;*
- *To manage the present situation – such as dealing with any haemorrhaging and pressing challenges for their colleagues and customers;*
- *To shape a positive future – such as focusing on the specific things they could do to build a successful future.*

Leaders recognised that people want to feel in control. It was therefore important to offer them practical tools they could use to navigate the situation. We will be exploring the solutions approach in depth later in the book.

## The Sharing Knowledge Approach



This is an approach often used by educators, coaches, trusted advisors and other professionals. They believe in sharing knowledge that helps other people to succeed.

How can you take this step? One approach is to begin by clarifying the knowledge that you can pass on to people. One person explained this in the following way.

*"My first thought was that I had little to give, but then I reflected on my life-experiences. During the past 20 years I have had quite a few successes and setbacks.*

*"I have turned-around two failing businesses and helped two friends to set-up their own firms. I have created a pressure group to help dyslexic children. Like me, my son is dyslexic, and I know the difficulties such people face at school.*

*"I have also overcome a difficult illness and set up a website to help others who are given a similar diagnosis.*

*"Whilst nothing I say may be new, some of the lessons – especially those about setting-up businesses – could be worth sharing with people."*

What is the knowledge you can pass on? You may have expertise in gardening, counselling, building houses, managing crises, coding, leading teams, first aid, solving particular problems or whatever.

Sometimes it can be useful to brainstorm all the topics you may be able to teach about. You can then settle on, for example, three themes and describe these in 'How to ...' terms.

*The knowledge I want  
to pass on to people is:*

*How to ...*

*How to ...*

*How to ...*

Imagine you have clarified the knowledge that you can offer. How can you share this in a way people can use to achieve their goals?

Good coaches sometimes pass on knowledge after watching a person in action or seeing an example of their work. They then ask themselves the following questions before sharing their ideas.

## Sharing Knowledge

- *What is the person doing? What are the real results they want to achieve? What is their picture of success? What will be happening that will show they have achieved their goals?*
- *What is the person doing right that will help them to achieve their goals? How can they do more of these things in the future? What can they do better and how?*
- *What are the key messages I want to give the person? What are the positive models and practical tools I can share that can help them? How can I pass on this knowledge in a way the person can use to achieve their goals?*

Good coaches clarify the knowledge they can pass on to people. They then ask the person:

*"Is it okay for me to share some ideas?"*

It is important to make this psychological contract. The person may then be more open to ideas they can add to their repertoire.

## *The Positive Models Approach*

### *Positive Models*

*People like:*

- *To learn from positive models;*
- *To learn from positive ways that work;*
- *To learn how to follow these themes in the own ways and get positive results.*

People learn from two sorts of positive models. The first are individuals they learn from in the family, education, work and society. Such models show positive ways of behaving in our daily lives and work.

The second are positive models – such as philosophies and frameworks - that help people to make sense of life. Such frameworks also provide tools that help them to achieve their goals.

Looking back, can you think a positive person or framework that you learned from in the past? What did you learn from the person or framework? How did you apply these lessons in your life or work? Let's explore these themes.

### *Learning From Positive People*

Some individuals learn from people who act as good models. Here are some ways that people describe what they learned.

Person A

*"I had a teacher who believed in me. They were encouraging but tough. They explained that, even though I came from a troubled family, it was up to me to take responsibility for my life.*

*"They helped me to save me from myself. I learned to stay out of trouble and now have my own business. I also work as an informal mentor for young people who come from a similar background."*

Person B

*"My sports coach taught me about more than sports. They showed respect to everybody they met - the cleaners, the players, the opponents, the umpires and the owners.*

*"They taught me to be professional and prepare for everything - such as a meeting, a game or another event. My coach passed on lessons that I have been able to apply in my career and life."*

## *Learning From Positive Frameworks*

Individuals sometimes learn from philosophies or frameworks that help them to understand and navigate life. They may learn these from teachers, writers, scientists or other people.

What have been the frameworks that have helped you in your personal or professional life? A person may say such frameworks help them to learn:

*How to manage emotions ... How to understand certain kinds of people ... How to be a better teacher ... How to manage priorities ... How to help my child through school ... How to develop as a person.*

Good educators offer such frameworks. They start by clarifying the real results a person wants to achieve. They then provide positive models and practical tools that work. The person can use the ideas in their own ways to achieve success.

## *Good Educators*

*They clarify what a person wants to learn and the real results they want to achieve. They then offer the person positive models and practical tools they can use to achieve their picture of success.*



Looking ahead, can you think a situation where you may aim to act as a positive model or pass on a positive framework. How can you do this in your own way? What may be the benefits?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Positive Models In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future when  
I may act as a positive model or  
pass on a positive framework may be:*

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*The specific things I can do then  
to act as a positive model or  
pass on a positive framework are:*

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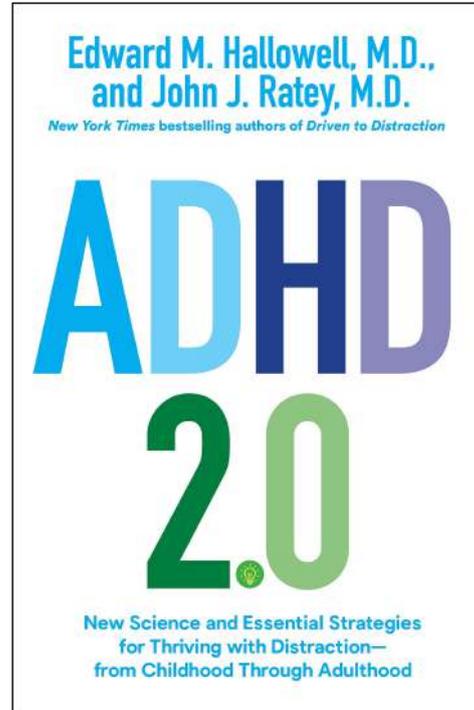
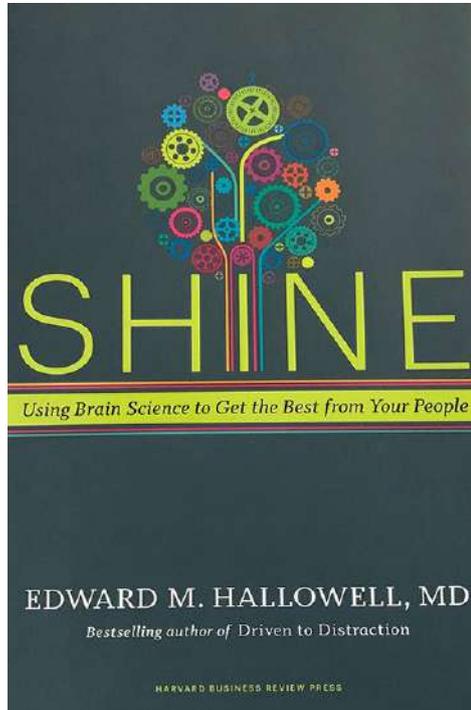
*The specific benefits of  
taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Shine Approach*



Ned Hallowell is known for his work on how people can manage ADHD in a positive way. His ideas also reached a wider audience with his book called *Shine*. This offered many practical tools that managers could use to help people to perform at their best.

Ned developed a framework that managers could use called *The Cycle Of Excellence*. This is something we will explore in the following pages.

Some people integrate this approach with several of the themes we have already explored. They use it to help individuals, teams and organisations to do fine work. This involves adapting the shine approach by focusing on the following themes.

## The Shine Approach

*This approach focuses on helping people to shine or do shining work. It can be used with individuals, teams, organisations and within society.*

*The approach involves encouraging people to build on their strengths, providing them with the right support and enabling them to shine.*



### Strengths

*It involves encouraging people to build on their strengths.*

### Support

*It involves following a strengths-based strategy, creating a certain structure and giving people the right support.*

### Shining

*It involves enabling people to shine or do shining work.*

Ned describes how some people have a strong desire to help others to shine. He gives the example of meeting such a person at Boston's Logan Airport.

He saw an elderly man sitting next to his metal walker. Approaching him, Ned asked where he could get his shoes shone. The man smiled, drew himself up and said:

*"I'm the shoeshine guy. Set you bags next to my walker here and step on up into my office. I am Doctor Shine."*

While shining the shoes, the man asked Ned what he did for a living. Ned explained that his speciality was to help people to make the best of their abilities. The man responded in the following way.

*"Interesting. Would you believe it, that is my speciality too!"*

*"I get up every morning, and I look forward to helping people get into the right frame of mind so they can shine, no matter where they go or what they do. When I do that, I'm happy."*

*"Every time you're with a person, you've got a big chance. I say, don't miss it. Don't worry about putting out the fire before striking the match."*

*"I always strike the match. I want to find that spark in the person, you get what I mean?"*

The man had been diagnosed with MS, but he wanted to keep working. Ned asked how he maintained his drive. The man replied in the following way.

*"When somebody is sitting up in that chair, all I think about is what he needs and that gives me energy. I love to find that spark."*

Ned's book goes on to describe how managers can enable their people to perform at their best. As mentioned earlier, he describes what he calls the Cycle Of Excellence.

Here is a summary of the themes he mentions. You will, of course, apply these in your own way to help people to shine.

## The Cycle Of Excellence

*Ned Hallowell offers the following framework that managers can use to encourage people to shine. It invites them to consider the following themes.*

- *Selection*

*To put the right person in the right role where they have the ability and opportunity to shine.*

- *Connection*

*To help the person to connect with other people and also to connect with a compelling purpose.*

- *Play*

*To encourage people to be creative and also, when appropriate, to have a sense of play in their work.*

- *Grapple And Grow*

*To encourage people to rise to challenges and, in the process, to develop and grow.*

- *Shine*

*To encourage people to perform at their best and to provide recognition when they shine.*

## *The Affirmation And Adding Approach*

### *The Affirmation And Adding Approach*

*There are many ways to help people. One approach is to affirm their strengths and, if they wish, to add to their repertoires of tools for achieving their aims.*



This an approach that can be used when helping a person to shape their future. It starts by clarifying what the person wants to achieve and then working through the following themes.

### *Affirmation*

This involves focusing on the person's strengths and, in a realistic way, giving specific examples of what they are doing well. It can also be helpful to encourage them to do more of these things.

### *Adding*

This involves focusing on what the person may want to add to their repertoire to achieve their goals. The key is to position these possibilities in a way the person can accept and use.

Let's look at one example of translating this approach into action. A newly arrived football coach was about to run his first session with the players at Manchester United. One session was with the young and often brilliant Cristiano Ronaldo. The coach asked himself:

*"How do you help Ronaldo to develop? There are parts of his game he can improve, but how to encourage him to be open and listen?"*

Bearing this in mind, he prepared what he would say on their first meeting. This was long the following lines.

*"Cristiano, as we know, you are doing many things brilliantly.*

*"We can focus on how you can keep building on these skills.*

*"If you are interested, I can also share some ideas you may want to add to your game.*

*"These could add to your repertoire of skills. Let me know if you are interested."*



The approach worked. Ronaldo said he wanted to add to his skills and be even more successful.

### *Achievement*

If appropriate, the next step is: a) to help the person to keep doing what they do well; b) to use what they have added to their repertoire; c) to encourage and enable them to achieve their aims.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of this model in your own way. Bearing in mind your strengths, you may want to consider what you can help a person to add to their repertoire. One approach to explore the following themes.

### *What Can I Add To People's Lives?*

Some individuals help people in a practical way. They may contribute part of their income to charities, social enterprises or other movements that provide people with the basic materials for life.

Some help people in a psychological way. They may encourage them as friends or in their work as a counsellor, medical worker, educator, coach, mentor or in another professional role.

Some pass on practical tools that people can use to take control of their lives. They do work that helps people to take care of their health, hope and happiness.

Bearing in mind your strengths, what can you add to people's repertoires? Imagine that you want to encourage a person.

How can you focus on the affirmation part? How can you clarify the person's strengths and what they are doing well? How can you share these specific examples with the person in a way that they can believe?

What can you help them to add to their repertoire? How can you position what you offer in a way the person can accept and use? How can you help them to apply this knowledge and work towards achieving their goals?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Affirmation And Adding Approach*

*The specific situation where I may want to help a person may be*

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*The specific things I can do to affirm the person and help them to add their repertoire are:*

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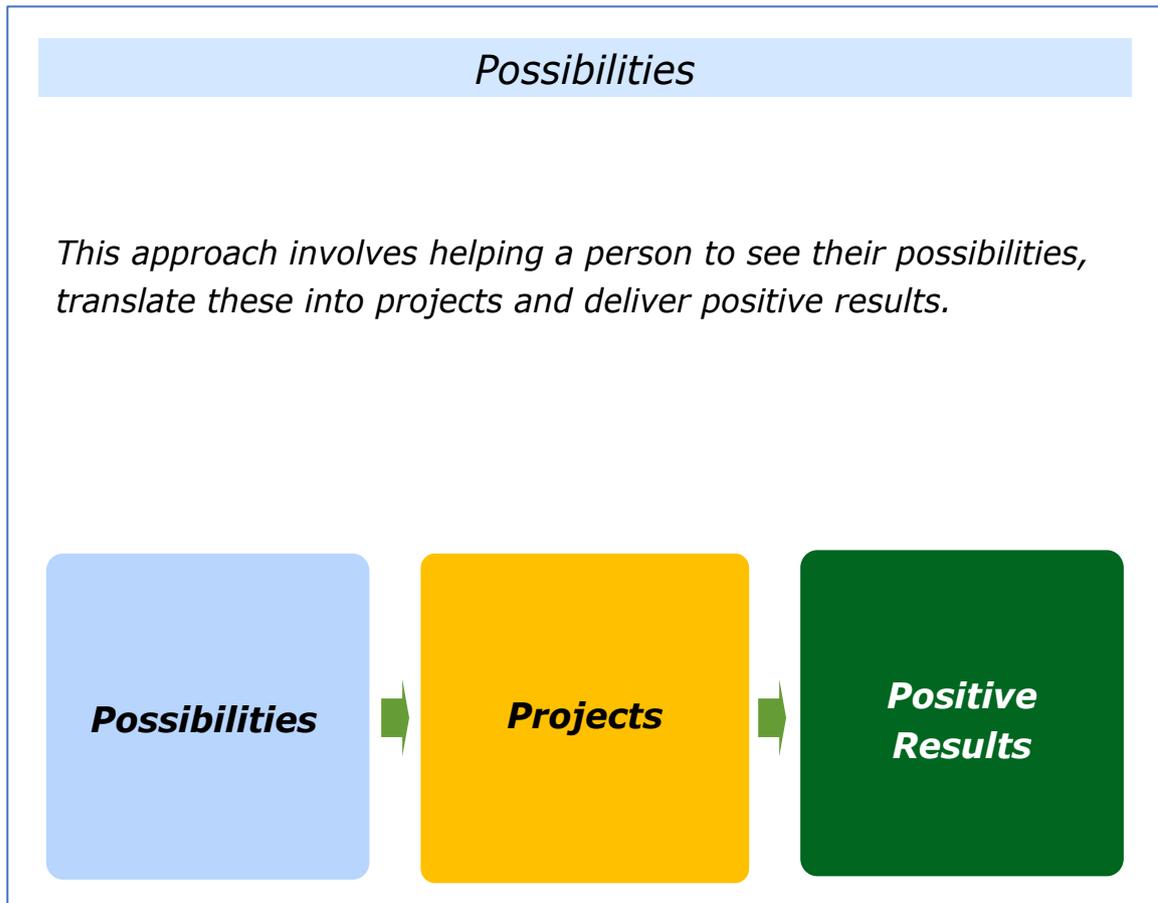
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Possibilities Approach*



There are many ways to encourage people. One approach is to help a person to see their possibilities. It is then to help them to translate these into specific projects and deliver positive results. Let's explore these themes.

### *Possibilities*

Mentors, coaches and educators sometimes help individuals to see their possibilities. They may look at a person and ask themselves the following questions.

*What are the person's strengths? What is their successful style of working? What may be their vocation? How can they express this in many different ways? What are the specific things they can deliver to help other people to achieve success?*

The possibilities approach can be useful when helping individuals who have spent a long time working in organisations. They may define themselves in terms of the roles they have played rather than exploring other possibilities. Here is one example.

Dave had worked in a big company for twenty-five years. During that time he had led projects that involved harnessing the talents of people across the world. When asked about his strengths, however, he defined himself in terms of his previous roles.

Dave had many strengths and was a superb orchestrator. He had led projects that involved being able:

*To clarify and communicate a specific goal;*

*To coordinate teams from many countries and channel their efforts to achieve the specific goal;*

*To coach people to build self-managing teams that continued to deliver ongoing success.*

He could apply these strengths in many fields. Certainly he needed to have a feeling for the activity, but the key was to clarify the specific results he could deliver. Dave was able:

*To coordinate teams that delivered wins for the company, wins for the customers and wins for the colleagues.*

He could also coach the members of the teams to become more self-managing. They would then be more likely to deliver sustainable success.

Dave had many possibilities. He recognised that he had become somewhat institutionalised, however, and needed to more entrepreneurial. This called for focusing on the following themes.

*Results. The specific results he could deliver to the various stakeholders.*

*Responsibilities. The specific responsibilities he would be prepared to take to deliver these results.*

*Role. The specific name of the role.*

People who are entrepreneurial start by thinking of the results they want to deliver. Those who have spent a long time in institutions often start by thinking of a role – but roles are often historical.

Shaping the future calls for focusing on: a) the results to deliver; b) the responsibilities; c) the name of the role. This can lead to exploring many options.

The possibilities approach is one I have seen work many times over the past fifty years. The aim has been:

*To clarify the person's strengths;*

*To clarify their successful style of working;*

*To clarify the many ways they can apply their strengths and successful style to help other people to achieve success.*

The next step is to explore how they can translate these into action. This can involve focusing on the next theme.

## *Projects*

The world of work has changed. There may or may not be many long-term career paths anymore, but there are certainly lots of projects. How to explore these possibilities?

Dave returned to what he could offer to potential employers and customers. As mentioned earlier, he had the ability:

*To coordinate teams that delivered wins for the company, wins for the customers and wins for the colleagues.*

Dave's offering could fill many organisation's needs. After Covid some had opted: a) to reduce their office space; b) to hire talented people around the world; c) to coordinate their talents and deliver outstanding results.

Dave brainstormed how he could use his strengths to help organisations achieve these aims. At first he focused on specific roles in organisations but then moved on to exploring possible projects.

Looking around, Dave had a big network. Bearing this in mind, we focused on:

*The specific people he knew who had moved on from his previous organisation;*

*The specific challenges that these people faced in their new organisations;*

*The specific results he could deliver to help them to tackle these challenges and achieve success in their organisations.*

Dave began connecting with the people in his network in a way that matched his values. He acted like a trusted advisor who wanted to share knowledge rather somebody who aimed to sell. This led to him doing several pieces of work before embarking on a big project.

(You can discover more about this approach to getting work later in the book. The aim is to get out and give to people. This can lead to working on projects and even getting a full-time role.)

### *Positive Results*

People buy success rather than the theory of success. Bearing this in mind, it is important to deliver positive results. Different people do this in different ways.

Dave eventually did a project that involved setting up and coordinating call centres in Asia, Europe and the USA. This led to producing excellent round-the-clock customer service for a company.

Over the years I have worked with many people who have expanded their possibilities. Some have found this to be relatively easy, some have found it to be more difficult.

Many have enjoyed the process and gone on to do satisfying projects. These have sometimes provided the springboard for shaping their future careers.

Imagine that a person has asked for your help in finding or creating satisfying work. How could you use elements of the possibilities approach in your own way?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Possibilities Approach*

*The specific situation where I may use elements of the possibilities approach to help a person may be:*

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*The specific things I can do to use elements of the approach in my way are:*

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*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Positive Goals Rather Than Negative Goals Approach*

**Positive Goals**

*A person is more likely to get positive results when they focus on positive goals rather than negative goals. For example, when they say:*

<b><i>I want to feel in control</i></b>		<b><i>I don't want to feel stressed</i></b>
<b><i>I want to do my best to succeed</i></b>	<i>Rather than:</i>	<b><i>I don't want to fail</i></b>
<b><i>I want to start feeling ...</i></b>		<b><i>I want to stop feeling ...</i></b>

This an approach that can be used to help a person to take more control of shaping their future. It is based on the principle that:

*A person is more likely to achieve positive results when they focus on positive goals rather than negative goals.*

Some people spend much of their lives worrying about what they want to stop doing. Sometimes it can be useful to help them to focus on what they want to start doing instead. They can then translate this into a positive goal. They can aim:

*To be the best they can be rather than worry about being the best ... To take control rather than be stressed ... To focus on their assets rather than their angst ... To follow positive addictions rather than*

*negative addictions ... To make magic rather than worry about making mistakes.*

There are many ways to help a person to take these steps. Let's have a look at one approach

### *Clarify the person's positive goal*

A person may say that they want to stop having a particular feeling or doing certain things. They may say something along the following lines.

*"I want to stop feeling stressed, angry, frustrated or behaving in a particular way."*

The person may find it easier to reach a positive goal rather than a negative goal. Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to ask them something along the following lines.

*"What do you want to start feeling or start doing instead? What would be the benefits of taking those steps?"*

This process can take time. The person may want to talk about why they feel a certain way or the difficulties they face. At a certain point, however, it is important to encourage the person to focus on what they can control in the situation. It is then to help them:

*To clarify what they do want to feel or what they do want to do ...  
To clarify and set a positive goal ... To clarify the benefits of achieving the goal.*

### *Clarify the person's strengths and the strategies they can follow to achieve the positive goal*

There are many ways to help a person to work towards their goal. One approach involves helping them to learn from their positive history. Much depends on the goal they want to achieve, of course, but it can mean exploring some of the following themes.

*"Looking back, when have you taken control in a difficult situation? When have you stayed calm? When have you bought time before making a decision?"*

*"When have you done things that gave you positive energy, helped you to feel happier or gave you a sense of peace? When have you behaved in a way that helped you or other people?"*

*"When have you chosen to follow a positive addiction – such as exercising, yoga or helping other people – rather than a negative addiction?"*

Imagine that you are helping a person. Bearing in mind the goal they want to achieve, you may then want to say something along the following lines.

*"You already have a successful pattern. What did you do right then – even for just a short time – to achieve your aim? What were the principles you followed?"*

*"Let's move on to the future. How can you follow some of these principles – plus maybe add other skills – to work towards the goal you want to achieve."*

This approach helps to affirm the person. If appropriate, however, you can also use element of the adding approach. Bearing in mind what the person wants to achieve, you may say something along the following lines.

*"If you are interested, I can offer some ideas and strategies that people use to get the kinds of results you want to achieve. Would you like me to share some of these?"*

You can then pass on strategies that work and practical tools the person can use to achieve their goal. It is important to share these in a way the person can accept and use in their life or work.

*Clarify the person's action plan  
for achieving the positive goal*

People need to believe in their chosen way forward, which is why it is useful to build on their successful patterns. The next steps are to help the person:

*To clarify their action plan for working towards the positive goal;*

*To rehearse following these strategies and how they will deal with any challenges along the way;*

*To get a quick success, maintain the momentum and do their best to achieve the positive goal.*

We will explore these themes in greater depth later in the book. These are in the sections called *The Managing Pressure Approach* and *The Managing Triggers Approach*.

The key point is worth underlining again. It is to encourage a person to focus on a positive goal rather than a negative goal. They are then more likely to achieve success.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach? How can you do this in your own way?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Positive Goals Rather Than Negative Goals Approach*

*The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of this approach may be:*

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*The specific things I can do to follow this approach in my own way are:*

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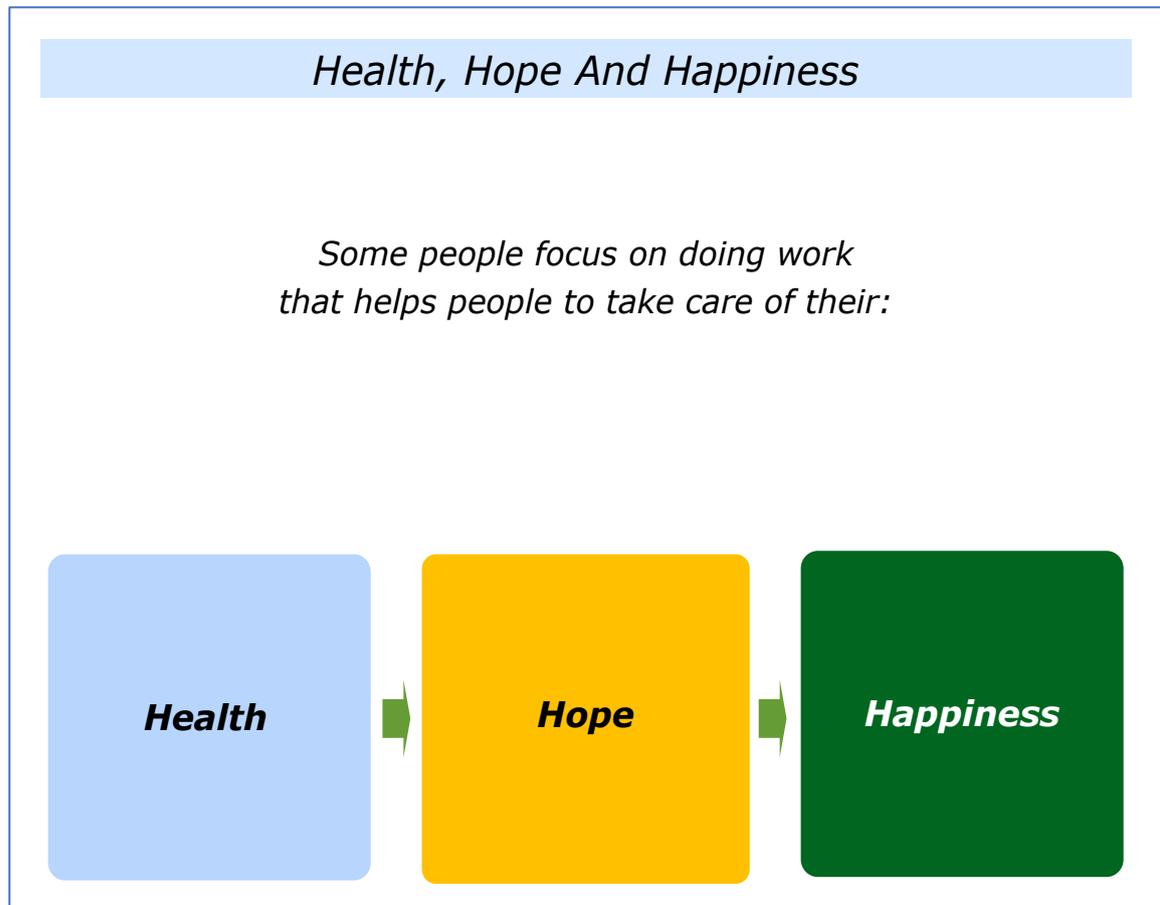
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Health, Hope And Happiness Approach*



There are many ways to help people to shape their futures. One approach is to focus on their health, hope and happiness.

Imagine you are facilitating a session where a person wants to explore these areas. There are many models and tools you can use. Let's consider some of these.

### *Health*

People want to feel physically and psychologically healthy. Unless you are medically qualified, it can be tricky to focus on a person's physical health. If wish, however, you can invite them to tackle the following exercise.

This asks them to explore their own view of their health. Bearing in mind the person's age and time in life, the exercise invites them to do the following things.

They can rate their physical health on a scale 0-10. They can then describe the specific things they can do to maintain or improve this rating.

## *Health*

*The rating I would give myself  
regarding being physically healthy  
for my age and time in life is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to  
maintain or improve this rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

If the person wants to explore this topic further, you can ask some of the following questions. (Again, it is vital to explain that you are not offering any medical advice or opinions.)

*"What are your goals regarding your energy and physical health? When have you felt most healthy? What were you doing right then?"*

*"What was the amount of sleep you were getting? What was the food you were eating? What was the exercise you were doing?"*

*"What do you want to do regarding your physical health? How can you get some early successes? What will be the benefits of doing these things?"*

## *Hope*

People want to feel hopeful. They want to feel in control and able to shape their futures.

This calls for having a positive attitude but also controlling the controllables. Positive people build on what they can control rather than become paralysed about what they can't control.

This has implications regarding having sense of hope. A person may feel hopeful about shaping their own future, for example, but concerned about the future of the planet. Being positive, however, they will focus on how they can help their loved ones and future generations.

As mentioned earlier, this can involve a person developing what Ricky Snyder called their Way Power. This includes them feeling they have the knowledge and practical tools they can use to shape a positive future.

Bearing these factors in mind, you can invite the person to tackle the following exercise. This invites them to do the following things.

They can rate their sense of hope on a scale 0-10. This is their feeling about being able to shape their future in a positive way. They can then describe the specific things they can do to maintain or improve the rating.

## *Hope*

*The rating I would give myself regarding being hopeful – feeling that I can shape my future in a positive way – is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve this rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

If appropriate, you can then use some of the following questions regarding their sense of hope.

*"When have you felt most hopeful in your life? What were you doing right then? How can you follow these principles again in the future?"*

*"Let's focus on controlling the controllables. What are the things you can control in your life and work? What are the things you can't control?"*

*"How can you build on what you can control and manage what you can't? Bearing in mind the will and the way, let's explore how you can develop each of these factors."*

*"What are your long-term goals in life? Imagine you are 80 years old and looking back on your life.*

*"What is your picture of success? What are the things you want to have done by then that for you will mean you have had a successful life? How can you work towards these aims? What will be the benefits of taking these steps?"*

If appropriate, you can pass on knowledge and practical tools that the person can use to shape their future.

## *Happiness*

When you ask parents what they want for their children, they often say:

*"We want them to be happy."*

So the question is: How do people achieve happiness? Some people say that happiness is an outcome of pursuing certain principles rather than an end in itself. During the past 40 years, however, Positive Psychology has researched the topic of happiness. It has asked:

*What kinds of people are happy? What are the principles such people follow to be happy? Is it possible for other people to follow these principles in their own ways to maintain or improve their happiness?*

The recent work on happiness was inspired by psychologists such as Martin Seligman, who wrote *Learned Optimism* and *Authentic Happiness*. Later he would express reservations about using the word happiness and preferred to use the term flourishing.

Since then he and many other researchers have focused on wellbeing and life-satisfaction. Here is an overview of some of the principles that have emerged. You will, of course, have your own views on the themes that could be added.

## *People Who Are Happy*

*They often follow certain eternal principles and, as a by-product, they sometimes experience happiness.*

## *They Have A Positive Attitude*

- They are grateful, generous and encourage other people to succeed.*
- They are positive realists and focus on what they can control.*
- They do things that give them positive energy and spend time with positive people.*

### *They Follow Positive Principles*

- *They develop a sense of purpose, follow their life principles and sometimes serve something greater than themselves.*
- *They aim to be the best they can be rather than compare themselves with others.*
- *They learn from their life experiences and develop skills for finding solutions to challenges.*

### *They Make A Positive Contribution*

- *They build on their strengths, do satisfying work and help people to succeed.*
- *They pass on knowledge that encourages both present and future generations.*
- *They want to give positive things to people during their time on the planet and they sometimes enjoy a sense of peace.*

If appropriate, you can ask the person the following questions.

*"What is your picture of happiness? What will you be doing, thinking or feeling? When have been the times you have felt happy? What were you doing right then? How can you follow these principles again in the future?"*

*"When do you feel fully alive or gain a sense of fulfilment? Would you like to do any more of these things in the future? If so, how can you take these steps? What will be the benefits?"*

If appropriate, invite them to rate their sense of happiness. They can then describe the specific things they can do to maintain or improve the rating.

## *Happiness*

*The rating I would give myself  
regarding being happy is:*

*\_\_\_\_\_ / 10*

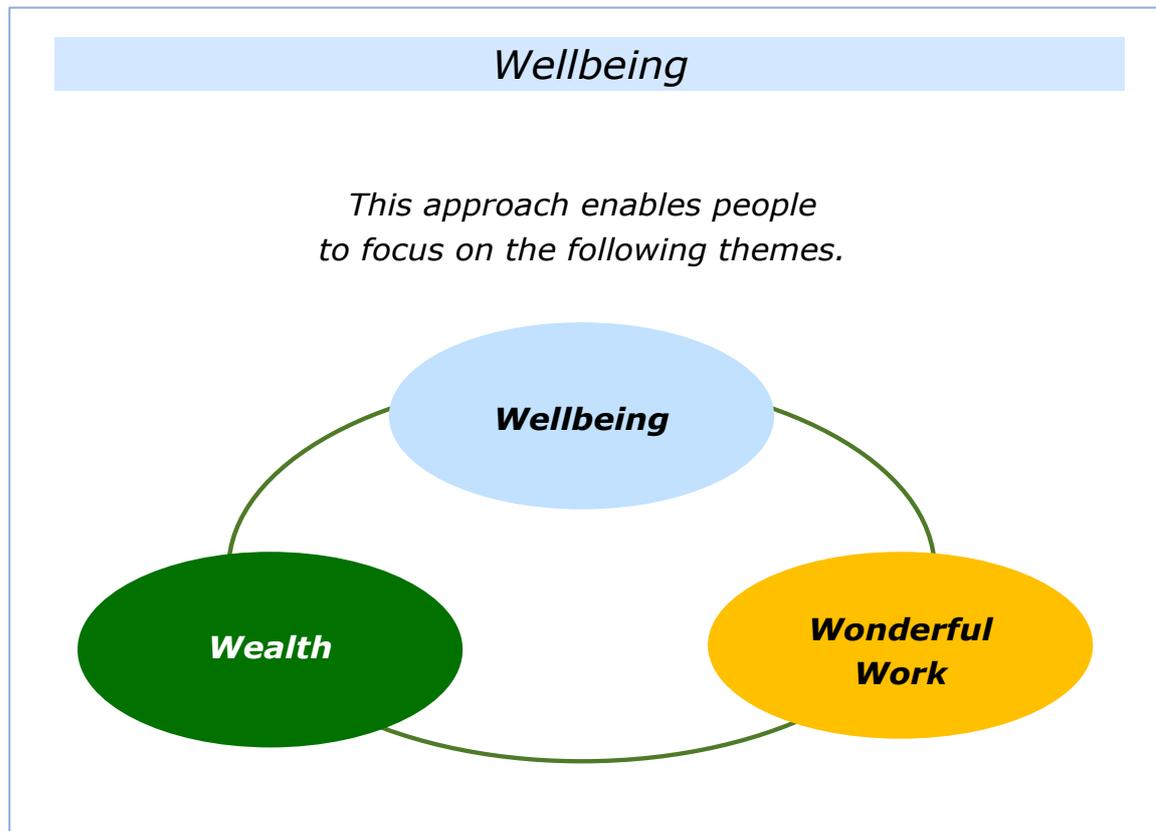
*The specific things I can do to  
maintain or improve this rating are:*

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## *The Wellbeing, Wonderful Work And Wealth Approach*



There are many ways to help people to develop. One approach is to help them to focus on the themes of wellbeing, wonderful work and wealth.

This section provides an introduction to these themes. We will explore these in greater depth later in the book in the chapter on *The Wholistic Approach*. Let's explore these themes.

### *Wellbeing*

There are many ways to help people with their wellbeing. Imagine that you have skills in this area.

You may be able to help people with their nutrition, exercise or other aspects of physical or psychological health. When doing this in a professional context, it is important that:

*You feel comfortable helping people in this way;*

*You are qualified to help people in this way and have a track record of success;*

*You know the specific areas where you can help people and those where it more appropriate to refer them to other professionals.*

Richmond Stace, who works as a Pain Coach, uses his skills to help people to shape a positive future. The people referred to him may be experiencing persistent pain or other symptoms.

He recognises the importance of a person wanting to immediately feel better and on the road to recovery. Bearing this in mind, he offers the following services.



*Richmond provides people with practical tools that they can use:*

*To manage, understand and, wherever possible, eliminate pain;*

*To care for their health by building on their inner resources and adding other practical skills;*

*To, if they wish, develop their ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle and shape a positive future.*

Many of his clients benefit from this approach. Here are a selection from some of the many testimonials.

*Back to running after a couple of weeks  
after struggling with plantar fasciitis for a year*

*Richmond Stace really helped me and more importantly empowered me to get out of a hole!*

*His holistic approach, with no stone left unturned, got me to see clearly where I was and provided me with the toolbox not only to get fit again but hopefully to stay healthy.*

*I'd had a year of plantar fasciitis and other on-going chronic injuries before I turned to Richmond.*

*With a range of mental and physical techniques, he helped me to heal and get back on track with my running.*

*Paul Cheetham, European Masters Marathon Champion (M45) 2017, World Masters Half Marathon: Team Champion (M45) 2019.*

*More hopeful and more energy - fibromyalgia*

*The Pain Coaching with Richmond has helped me to identify and focus my attention on the most important things in my life, introduce structure to my routines and take steps towards my goals and build my confidence.*

*Definitely I can say that I feel more hopeful and I have more energy to invest in what matters most for me in life.*

*I follow the exercise programme learned during the treatment, and use practices such as mindfulness, breathing, gratitude, pursuing my purpose and more.*

*As a result, I learned to shift my attention and focus on something more meaningful and enjoyable for myself rather than on my limitations.*

*The Pain Coaching enabled me to get in tune with my body and the sensations, be more focused and physically active.*

*AT, London 2018*

*Back to writing after a  
post-traumatic dystonia*

*Olivia was just 17 in January 2016 when she was diagnosed with viral meningitis and a tumour deep in her brain and in March she took a ball to the head in a lacrosse match which resulted in her having a stroke.*

*She was immediately thrombosed and spent 5 days on an acute stroke ward.*

*As a result of the stroke, she was diagnosed with post traumatic dystonia and we were referred to Richmond by Dr Marie Helene Marion in September.*

*Olivia's right hand would totally freeze, sometimes for hours or days, with the longest being for 2 months. The stress of being 17 and in the middle of university applications and big exams whilst being unable to write was huge.*

*We came to see Richmond weekly and he helped her enormously with not only coping with the stress levels but the total rehabilitation of her hand and how to retrain her brain in to making her hand move again.*

*The big breakthrough came after a few weeks when her fingers started to twitch and move again and she worked very hard on all the exercises that Richmond gave her to do to re-associate her brain to her hand and to love it again.*

*She re-learnt how to hold a pen and how to write and every week her writing would get smaller and neater and it is now totally back to normal.*

*It has been a very scary year for her but Richmond has always been very calming, explaining everything clearly and teaching her how to cope and how to improve.*

*We found him to be extremely kind and compassionate and there are not many people who could make a scared teenager feel totally at ease from the first meeting, so positive, encouraging and always at the end of an email if we had a query.*

*I can't thank Richmond enough for everything that he did for Olivia and for me!*

*He has restored her confidence and has taught her good coping strategies for the future.*

*Her hand is now fully functioning, she aced her exams, passed her driving test and has got amazing offers from top universities.*

*All things that 6 months ago looked impossible to achieve with the dystonia. We would have no hesitation in recommending Richmond – a nicer man you could not meet.*

*Liz and Olivia M.*

There are many philosophies about how a person can be helped to manage and, wherever possible, eliminate pain. Whatever the philosophy, however, the main thing for the person is that the approach helps to produce positive results.

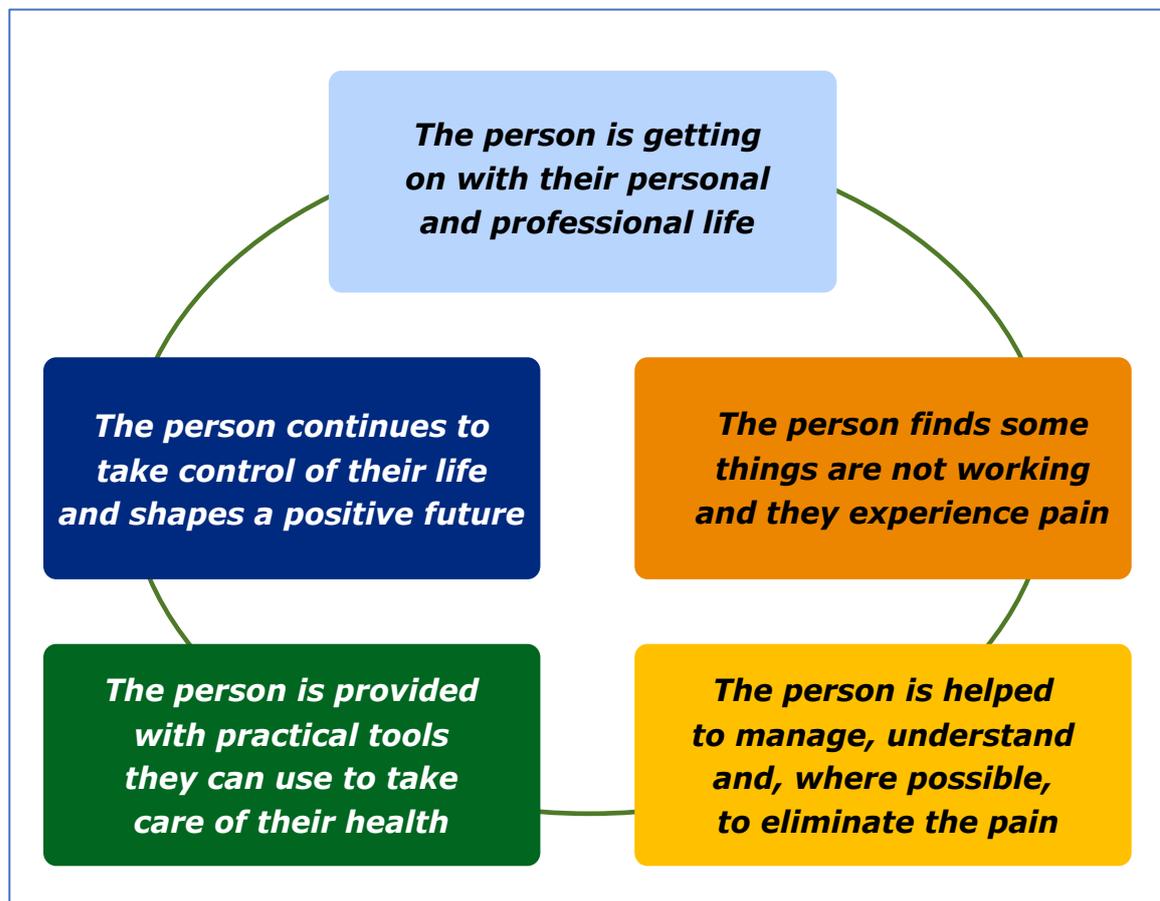
Richmond has his own approach, which will be outlined in his forthcoming book. The key is that many people who consult with him find they are more able to live healthy lives.

Here is an overview of the stages he sometimes takes people through on the way to shaping a positive future.

## *Pain Coaching*

*Richmond helps people to manage, understand and, wherever possible, to eliminate pain. He then provides practical tools that they can use to shape a positive future.*

*This sometimes involves a person going through some of the following steps. Every person is different, however, and is helped in ways that enable them to achieve their personal aims.*



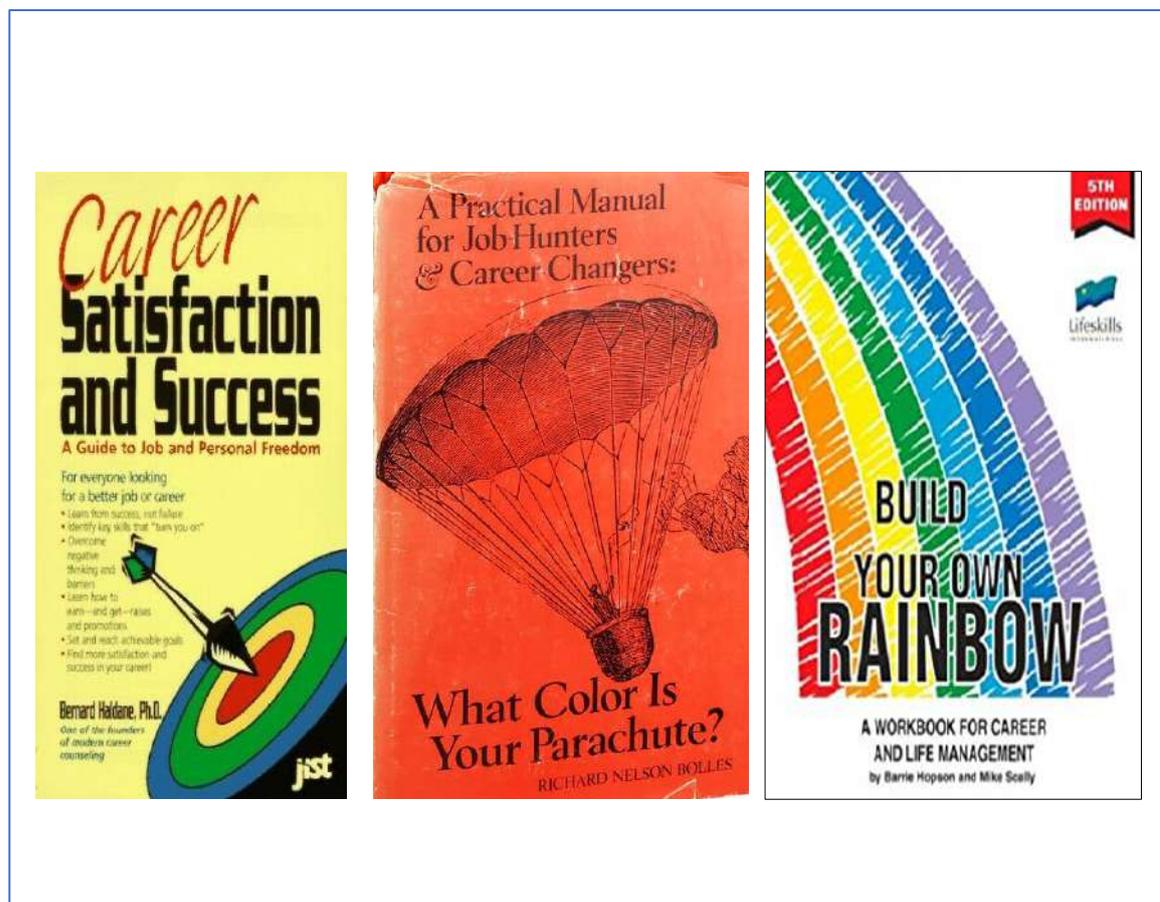
If appropriate, you may use your strengths to help people to maintain or develop their wellbeing. Let's move on to the next theme where it may be possible to help people.

## Wonderful Work

Some individuals use their strengths to help people do fulfilling work and also get funding. People are then more able to do wonderful work that nourishes their souls and may also help others.

There are now many books on this topic. Here are three that were published around fifty years ago that helped to establish this approach.

These were: *Career Satisfaction And Success* by Bernard Haldane, *What Colour Is Your Parachute?* by Richard Bolles and *Build Your Own Rainbow* by Barrie Hopson and Mike Scally.



These books provided practical tools that people could use to do more satisfying work. Other books helped people to learn from positive models who pursued such an approach.

Dame Cicely Saunders, for example, helped to create the modern hospice movement. Pauline Cutting used her medical skills to care for children affected by wars. Anita Roddick showed a new way of doing business.



Such books inspired many people to find their own path towards doing rewarding work. This is a topic that we will explore further throughout this book.

If appropriate, you may use your skills to help people to do rewarding work. This may also involve focusing on the next step.

## *Wealth*

Many people work to generate enough money to get the basic materials for life. They may also aim to achieve and maintain a certain lifestyle.

Different people have different views about what constitutes real wealth. Some see it as having enough money to live and appreciating the wonderful things life. Some see it as amassing worldly riches.

Imagine that you are helping a person who wants to do rewarding work but also get enough financial rewards. How can you help them to take this step?

One approach is to help them to pursue the principles followed by many creative people throughout history. This is a topic we will be exploring in greater depth in the later piece on *The Strengths Approach* to doing positive work.

Before then, however, here are the headlines. People who do satisfying work and earn a reasonable salary often focus on the following themes.

### *Strengths*

They clarify their strengths. They focus on the deeply satisfying activities where they deliver As rather than Bs or Cs. They identify the specific things that they can deliver and how these will help people to achieve success.

### *Sponsors*

They clarify their potential sponsors – people who may buy what they offer. They clarify the kinds of customers, employers and other people with whom they work best. They clarify the challenges these people face and also their potential goals.

## *Success*

They clarify how they can use their strengths to help these people to tackle their challenges and achieve success. They aim to connect with these people in a way that fits their values system. They then make clear working contracts, do superb work and deliver success.

As mentioned earlier, we will be exploring these themes in greater depth throughout the book. The key, however, is for a person to do work that they find rewarding and generates enough income to enjoy their definition of real wealth.

Let's return to your own life. Imagine that you want to follow some elements to the wellbeing, wonderful work and wealth approach. How can you do this in your own way?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Wellbeing, Wonderful Work And Wealth Approach*

*The specific situation where I would feel comfortable following elements of this approach be:*

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*The specific things I could do then to follow elements of this approach could be:*

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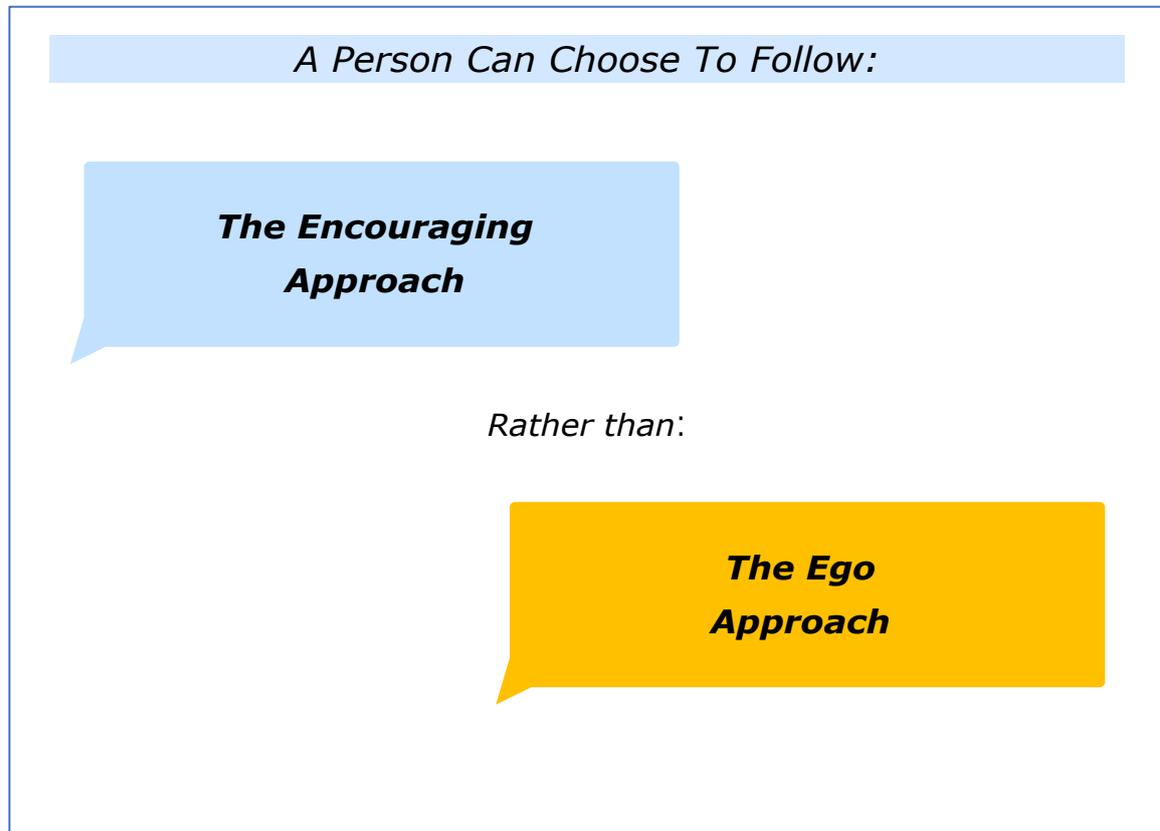
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Encouraging Rather Than Ego Approach*



Different people learn this approach at different stages of their career. Such people aim to build on their strengths and use these to help other people to succeed.

A person may do this when working as an educator, therapist, coach, performing artist or in another professional role. At a certain point they learn that:

*The work is about encouraging other people. It is not about their ego.*

Some people find this to be liberating. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"I used to get nervous before meeting a key person, making a presentation or going on television because I was scared of being judged. But then I was told that:*

*'It about using your strengths to encourage other people. It is about them, it is not about you.'"*

Some people get stuck because they follow the ego approach rather than the encouraging approach. They have an internal script that may say some the following things.

*"How can I promote myself? How do I compare to others? How can I keep being seen as a success? How can I always Number One?"*

This approach can be exhausting. A person may continually strive to be the best or may need constant praise.

Any failure or slight on their character causes problems. They may feel that they will never be good enough. Alternatively, they may react by blaming others or saying the world is wrong.

Great people workers often embrace what sounds like a paradox. They want to give their best to people but do not want to become victims. They sometimes takes the following route.

*They start by clarifying their strengths and how they can use these to help people to achieve success.*

*They clarify the specific kinds of people with whom they work best and the challenges such people face on the way to achieving success.*

*They clarify how they can put themselves in the background and use their strengths to help these people to achieve success.*

Great workers in other fields sometimes focus on encouragement rather than their ego. The following idea may sound odd, but I have seen it embodied by many fine workers.

They want to encourage other things – be these organisms, machines or processes – to perform at their best. They get satisfaction from helping these things to work superbly rather than worrying about their own self-image.

Some people go into a state of flow when serving something greater than themselves. Singers aim to serve the song. Actors aim to absorb themselves in the role. Scientists throw themselves into solving the problem and finding a solution.

What is your pattern for following the encouraging approach rather than the ego approach? Looking back, can you think of a time when followed elements of this approach?

What did you do then to use your strengths to encourage other people – a person or a group of people? How did you translate these into action? What happened as a result of taking these steps?

Many people take this approach as they get older. Some give in an encouraging way, some in an educational way, some in an economic way. Some combine different elements of giving.

Erik Erickson, the psychologist, said that people often reach what he called the Generative Age. He described this as:

*A concern for establishing and guiding the next generation.*

Different people express this in different forms. The most common way is parenthood. But it can also be expressed through passing on knowledge or leaving a positive legacy.

People often want to leave a legacy. They often want to encourage their loved ones and help other people to be happy. They also want to pass on the fruits of their labours and provide wisdom that helps future generations.

Erickson said that for much of our lives we define ourselves in relation to other people. These include our parents, siblings, friends,

teachers, peers and authority figures. The Generative Age brings a new awareness and we may then define ourselves in relation to humanity.

He believed that individuals face certain choices or conflicts at different stages of their lives. During adulthood, for example, they may experience the following feelings.

### *Erik Erikson – The Adult Stages Of Life*

- *Early Adulthood*

*Intimacy v Isolation*

- *Middle Adulthood*

*Generativity v Self-Absorption*

- *Later Adulthood*

*Integrity v Despair*



People can move towards the generative stage during their middle life. They are then more likely to develop a feeling of integrity – such as feeling they have lived a fulfilling life – rather than despair. He explained this in the following way

*Adults need to create or nurture things that will outlast them, often by having children or creating a positive change that benefits other people.*

*Success leads to feelings of usefulness and accomplishment, while failure results in shallow involvement in the world.*

*Older adults need to look back on life and feel a sense of fulfilment. Success at this stage leads to feelings of wisdom, while failure results in regret, bitterness, and despair.*

Human beings are often at their best when they choose to be generous. As the Buddha said:

*"A generous heart, kind speech and a life of service and compassion are the things which renew humanity."*

People can show such qualities at any age, but many display these even more as they get older. Many do this as individuals, whilst some join together to encourage future generations. Here is one such group of people.

## *The Elders*

The Elders is an independent group of global leaders. Founded by Nelson Mandela, they work who work together for peace and human rights. Here is an excerpt from the group's website.

*Elders no longer hold public office; they are independent of any national government or other vested interest.*

*They should have earned international trust, demonstrated integrity and built a reputation for inclusive, progressive leadership.*

*The Elders share a common commitment to peace and universal human rights, but they also bring with them a wealth of diverse expertise and experience.*

*The **peace makers** with decades of experience mediating and resolving conflicts around the world.*

*The **peace builders** who have helped post-conflict societies to heal wounds and rebuild.*

The **social revolutionaries** who transformed their own countries - whether by reducing poverty, improving the status of women, or championing nonviolent struggle.

The **pioneering women** who have governed their countries, led international institutions and spearheaded movements to empower women.



*The Elders continue to evolve. They build on the work of the founders with new people being added to the group.*

An Elder is also a **changemaker** - someone who can lead by example, creating positive social change and inspiring others to do the same.

The Elders represent an **independent voice**, not bound by the interests of any nation, government or institution.

They are committed to promoting the **shared interests of humanity**, and the **universal human rights** we all share.

*They believe that in any conflict, it is important to **listen to everyone** - no matter how unpalatable or unpopular this may be.*

*They aim to **act boldly**, speaking difficult truths and tackling taboos.*

*They don't claim to have all the answers, and stress that **every individual can make a difference** and create positive change in their society.*

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the encouraging approach rather than the ego approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

Looking ahead, how can you follow this approach in your own way? How can you use your strengths to help other people to succeed? What do you think may happen as a result?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Encouraging Rather Than Ego Approach*

*The specific situation when I may want to follow the encouraging approach rather than the ego approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to follow the encouraging approach are:*

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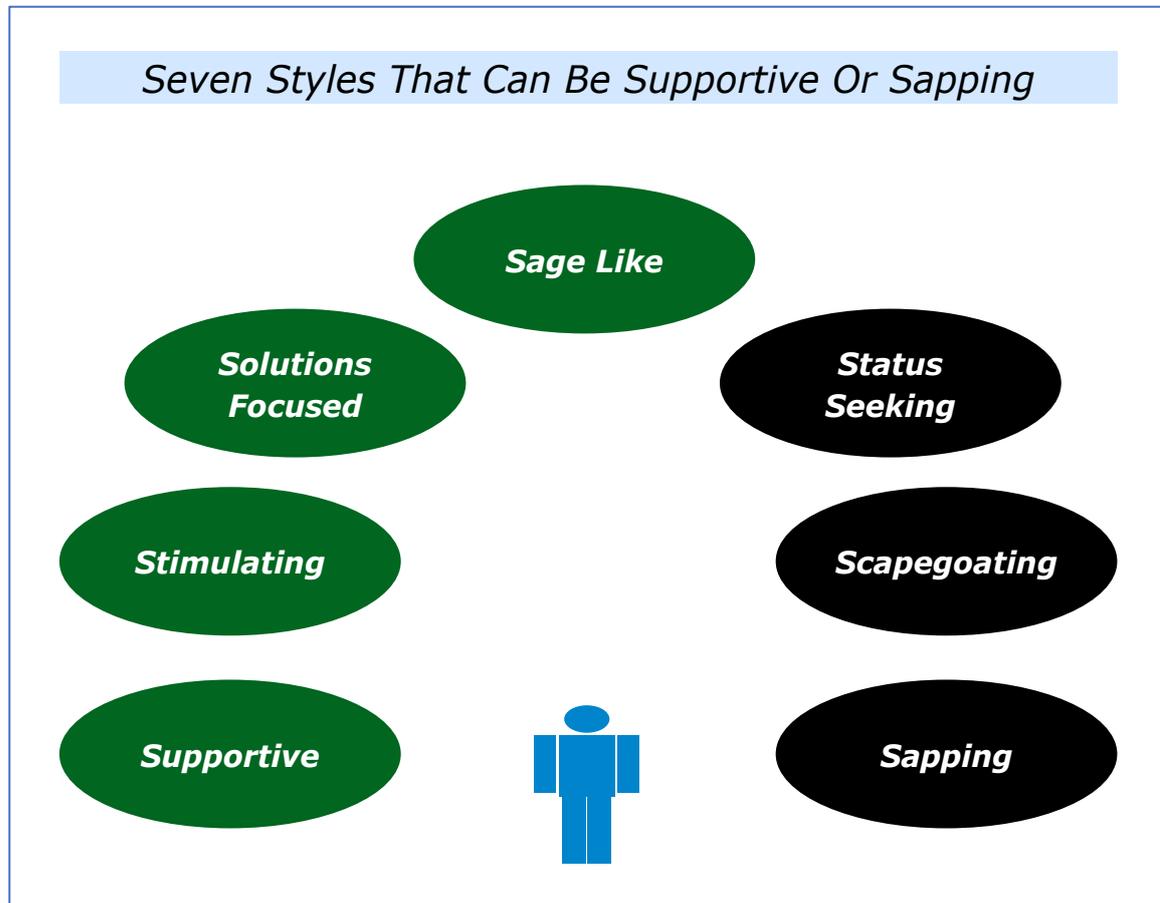
*The specific things that may happen a result of taking these steps are:*

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## *The Supportive Or Sapping Styles Approaches*



Every person has strengths and aims to achieve their picture of success. It is their style of operating – the way they interact with others – that may have consequences.

The way they behave may come across to others as supportive or sapping. Some individuals may therefore be asked to leave organisations because their style of operating creates collateral damage.

Here are some of the most common styles that people demonstrate. Some people may also display elements of each style.

### *The Supportive Style*

Such people behave in a way that is caring, supportive and helpful. They help to create an environment in which people feel able to be their real selves.

### *The Stimulating Style*

Such people may be energetic, positive or inspiring. They may behave in a way that other people find stimulating and helps to maintain a creative environment.

### *The Solutions Focused Style*

Such people are good at reading reality and quickly move into solutions mode. They focus on clarity – the real results to achieve – and aim to find positive solutions to challenges.

### *The Sage Like Style*

Such people want to encourage others. They are humble, kind and see themselves as lifetime students. They aim to pass on knowledge and practical tools that help other people to succeed.

### *The Status Seeking Style*

Such people want to be seen as important and successful. They may aim to do this is by seeking status, applause and admiration. They may even praise their own efforts in the expectation of getting adulation.

### *The Scapegoating Style*

Such people spread negative energy and look for people to blame. They focus on spreading discord or hate – which can have painful consequences of many people.

## *The Sapping Style*

Such people complain or behave in other ways that sap people's energy. They refuse to take responsibility, believe their feelings are the most important in the world and are not interested in finding solutions.

Imagine that you want to continue to behave in way that is supportive towards people. When appropriate, you may also want to apply elements of the stimulating, solutions focused and sage like approach.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to do this in your own way? This could be in your personal or professional life.

How can you continue to be supportive? How can help the person or group of people? What may happen as a result of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on these theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Supportive Style Approach*

*The specific situation where I want to support a person or group of people is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to be supportive and add elements of the stimulating, solutions focused and sage approaches are:*

\*

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\*

*The specific things that may happen as a result may be:*

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## *The Helping Rather Than Hurting Approach*

### *The Helping Approach*

*This sometimes involves asking:*

- *"What can I do to help people today?"*
- *"What can I do to help both present and future generations?"*
- *"What can I do to encourage others to help people?"*

People can choose to follow the helping or hurting approach. They can choose to help or hurt other people during their time on the planet.

Many people enjoy encouraging others and helping them to succeed. They enjoy being kind and planting seeds of hope. They want to do their best for both present and future generations.

Some people enjoy hurting others. Being cruel makes them feel powerful and gives them a temporary high, but this can have severe consequences for others.

Looking back on your life, when have you enjoyed helping a person or a group of people? You may have done this when acting as a friend, parent, counsellor, coach or in another role. What were the benefits of taking these steps?

People make choices every day. One of the most fundamental is to follow the helping or hurting approach. The choices they make have consequences – both for themselves and other people.

How can you continue to help people? If appropriate, how can you show other people the benefits of helping others? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Helping Approach*

*The specific things I can do to follow the helping approach in my own way are:*

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*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Positive Presents Approach*

### *The Positive Presents Approach*

*This approach involves focusing on:*

- *The positive presents you have been given during your life;*
- *The positive presents you want to give to people during your life;*
- *The practical steps you can take to give these positive presents to people during your life.*

What are the positive presents that you have been given during your life? Different people describe different things when exploring this theme. Here are some they mention.

*I have been given:*

*Love and encouragement ... A happy childhood ... Talents that I can use ... Great teachers ... Many opportunities to learn from challenging experiences ... A wonderful partner ... The ability to do satisfying work and earn a salary ... The chance to help other people.*

Warren Buffet alluded to this approach when reminding people of his luck in the ovarian lottery. Being white, male and born in America, he had many more opportunities than other people. It was up to him to how he used these assets.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe the positive presents you have been given in your life.

## *The Positive Presents I Have Been Given*

*The positive presents I have been given  
during my life include the following:*

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\*

\*

*The specific benefits of being given  
some of these presents have been:*

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Looking ahead, what are the positive presents you want to give to people? How can you do small things each day that give people support?

How can you help people to build on their strengths? How can you enable them to achieve success? You may have skills, knowledge and experience that you can pass on to people. How can you share these in ways that help them to shape their lives?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Positive Presents I Want To Give People*

*The positive presents I want to give people  
during my life include the following:*

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*The specific reasons why I would  
like to give these to people are:*

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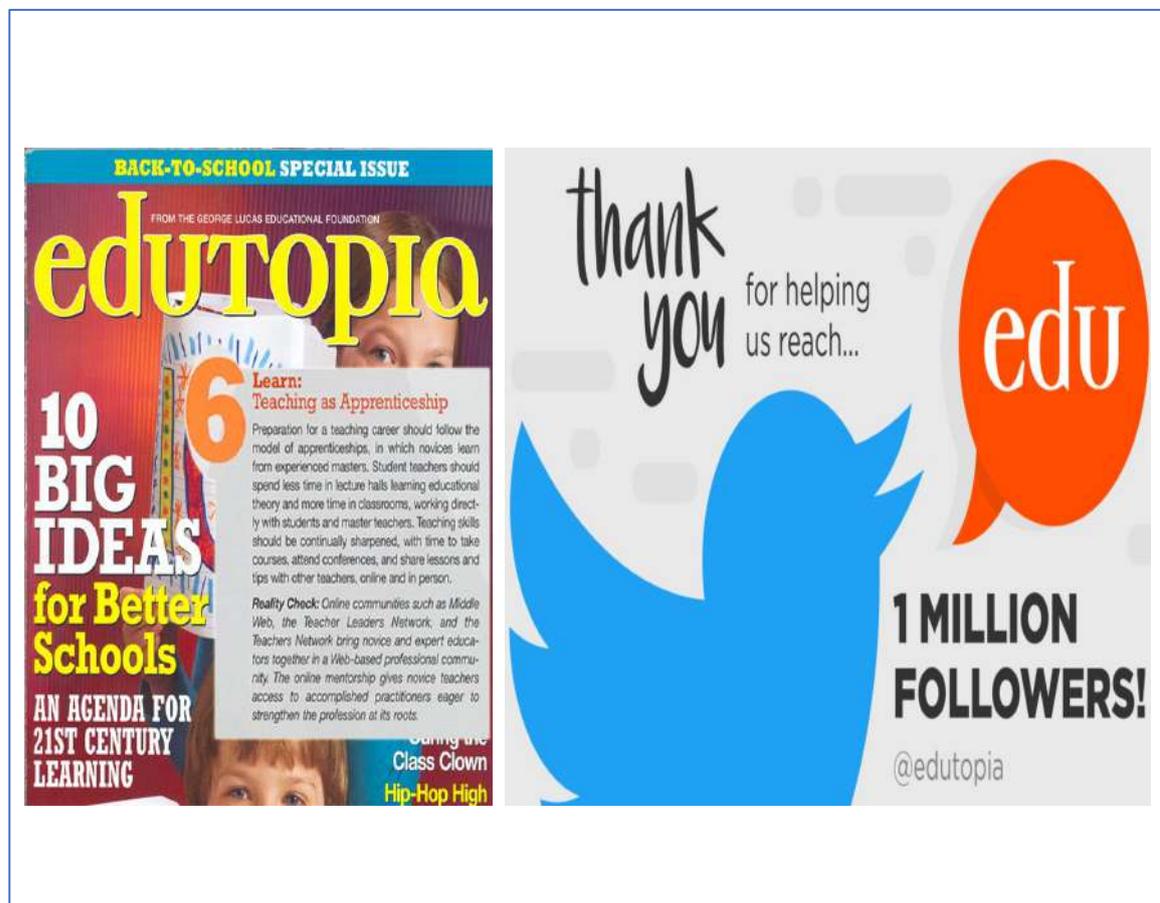
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Imagine that you want to follow this approach in your own way. What are the practical steps you can take to give some of these positive presents to people?

Different people do this in different ways. George Lucas and Steve Arnold founded Edutopia in 1991. This is a website that focuses on what works in education.

It provides a massive resource of positive models and practical tools that educators can use in their daily work. Below is an excerpt from the website that describes the organisation's vision.



## OUR VISION

Our vision is of a new world of learning based on the compelling truth that improving education is the key to the survival of the human race. It's a world of creativity, inspiration, and ambition informed by evidence and experience.

It's a world where students become lifelong learners and develop 21st-century skills. It's a world where innovation is the rule, not the exception. It's a world where schools provide rigorous project-based learning, social and emotional learning, and access to new technology. It's a world where students and parents, teachers and administrators, policy makers and the people they serve are all empowered with a shared vision to change education for the better.

We call this place Edutopia, and we provide not just the vision for this new world of learning but the information and community connections to make it a reality.

**In particular, in the 21st century, we believe three skills are fundamental**



George Lucas is passionate about education. Below are excerpts from an interview he gave many years ago about the role that teachers and education can play in a person's life.

### *Education: The Single Most Important Job*

*I didn't feel like the school system was designed for my learning style. It wasn't until college where I could pursue my passion, making films, that I found my way.*

*Recently we published observations from eighth graders about what they believe creates an engaging learning experience. Their answers were straight-forward and definitive: project-based learning, technology, and an enthusiastic teacher. I couldn't agree more.*

*Today, with the power of the Internet, we are experiencing a force that is revolutionizing education and offering opportunities to reach and engage diverse learners like me.*

*When technology is deployed effectively, it can free up teachers from standing in front of the class and presenting information. We can flip the classroom with lectures occurring at home via the Internet and rigorous project-based learning taking place in cooperative groups at school.*

*In this environment, teachers can be guides and coaches to the students. What is more powerful in education than a student who is guided by an adult who truly cares - someone who knows your name, who encourages you, and is committed to your success in life?*

*By learning about and replicating strategies that work in education, we have the potential to transform our schools.*

*By creating strong cultures of creativity and curiosity, we can engage students as active participants in their own education, rather than passive recipients of facts and formulas.*

*In a world where information is at our fingertips, our greatest challenge is help students learn how to find information, assess its accuracy and apply it to solve problems.*

*All around our country and the world, there are teachers and schools succeeding at the task, many featured in Edutopia.*

*There is no other job more important than education. It is the foundation of our democracy. By seizing on what's working, and recreating those successes from one classroom to the next, we can make it better for everyone.*

Edutopia uses the power of technology to encourage people, but everybody is different. You will have your own approach to passing on positive presents to people. How can you do this in practical ways?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Practical Steps*

*The positive presents that I want to give people during my life include the following:*

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\*

\*

*The practical steps I can take to give some of these to people are:*

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*The specific benefits of giving these to people may be:*

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\*

\*

Let's return to your own life and work. Here some things you can do to encourage yourself and other people.

## *The Perfect Days Approach*



"Near death experiences focus the mind," we are told. One outcome can be that they encourage us to focus on what is important in life.

This section describes exercises inspired by Eugene O'Kelly, who wrote *Chasing Daylight*. Diagnosed with a terminal illness, he and his loved ones aimed to create perfect moments, hours and days.

### *Clarifying your perfect personal day*

Imagine you could craft your perfect personal day. Maybe you would like to spend time with special people, create things or simply enjoy the moments. What would you like to feel at the end of the day?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Start by brainstorming and then clarifying your day. You aim:

*To have a leisurely breakfast ... To go for a run ... To spend time with your children ... To work in the garden ... To listen to music, paint, write or do some other creative activity ... To enjoy a siesta ... To go for a walk ... To visit the theatre.*

You may also wish to sketch out different kinds of perfect personal days. If you wish, try completing the following exercise.

## *My Perfect Personal Day*

*My perfect personal day would be:*

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## *Clarifying your perfect professional day*

Imagine you could craft your perfect professional day. What would you like to do during such a day? What would you like to feel at the end of the day?

People often like to follow their own rhythm during the day rather than be thrown off-course. How could you try, as far as possible, to feel in control of shaping your day?

How could you set up the day to succeed? How could you make good use of your prime times, the times of the day when you have most energy?

How could you spend time on stimulating projects? How could you set aside time to gather your thoughts during the day? How could you gain a sense of accomplishment from the day?

Different people will obviously have different days. For example, you may aim:

*To get to work early ... To spend time with a coffee rehearsing the day ahead ... To spend most of the day doing what you do best ... To spend time with stimulating customers.*

*To eat something healthy and nourishing every 2 hours ... To set aside time for yourself halfway through the day ... To rehearse the rest of the day ... To help others to succeed ... To do things that enable you to feel fulfilled at the end of the day.*

Again, you may have several different kinds of perfect professional days. If you wish, try completing the following exercise.

## *My Perfect Professional Day*

*My perfect professional day would be:*

\*

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\*

\*

### *Clarifying your perfect personal and professional day*

Imagine that you want to combine elements of your perfect personal and professional day. This is something that many people tried to do during Covid. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to map out such a day.

## *My Perfect Personal And Professional Day*

*My perfect personal and  
professional day would be:*

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## *Creating elements of your perfect days*

Life is for living: everything is temporary and nothing is permanent, we are told. Perfection may not be attainable and things may not always work out. But each day may be perfect with its imperfections.

Looking ahead, how would you like to introduce parts of your perfect days into your personal and professional life? How can you make this happen?

Some people go for a radical solution. They wipe the slate clean and start building their life around the things that are satisfying. Some people choose a different approach. They begin introducing elements of their perfect days into their actual days.

Such people begin with a few things. They may start the day by listening to their favourite music, spending more time with their favourite customers, building in times for reflection or whatever.

They then begin adding more elements, joining these together like a row of pearls. They develop the habit of doing more things that constitute their perfect days.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to do the following things.

*Describe the specific things you can do to take steps towards creating your perfect days.*

*Describe the specific benefits of doing these things – both for you and for other people.*

## *My Perfect Days – Making Them Happen*

*The specific things I can do  
to take steps towards  
creating my perfect days are:*

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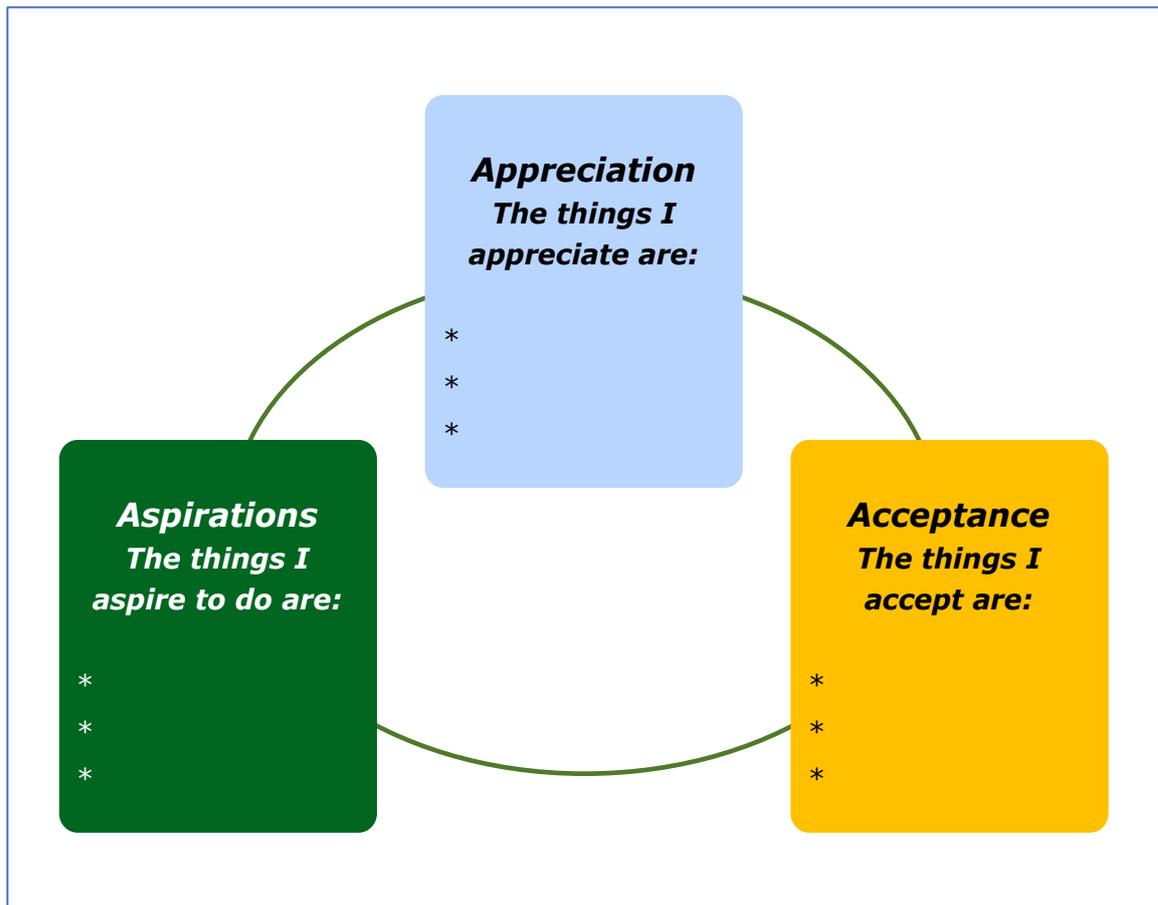
*The specific benefits of  
doing these things will be:*

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## *The Appreciation, Acceptance And Aspirations Approach*



There are many ways to live life. One approach is to focus on the themes of appreciation, acceptance and aspirations. Let's explore this approach.

### *Appreciation*

What are the things you appreciate in life? What are the things you are grateful for? What are the things that give you positive energy? What are the things that make life worth living?

Sometimes people find it easier to describe what they appreciate as they get older. Here are some of the things they mention.

*Appreciation. The things  
I appreciate in life are:*

*Waking up each day ... Being with my loved ones ... Breakfasts  
looking out of the window ... The birds in our garden ... The sound of  
our children laughing.*

*The love I was given by my parents ... The gifts I have been given  
... The imagination I have been given ... The opportunity to  
encourage other people in my work.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you  
to complete the following sentences.

## *Appreciation*

*The things that I appreciate in life are:*

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## *Acceptance*

What are the things you accept in life? What are those that you accept because you recognise the reality of these things? How do you accept these in a healthy way?

Some people get to the point where they accept their strengths, personality, body shape and other aspects of life. As they get older, they accept there are things they can control and things they can't.

Some accept they can do good work as an individual but cannot expect some institutions to change. They accept this in a positive rather than resigned way.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Acceptance*

*The things that I accept in life are:*

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## *Aspirations*

What are your aspirations? What are the things you want to do, create or give to other people?

Some people use the reverse bucket list exercise. They describe the things they have already done in their lives that have given them happiness. They then focus on the things they want to do in the rest of their lives.

Many people want to enjoy a sense of peace. They aim to do things that will pass on love, knowledge and hope to future generations. Each person chooses to do this in their own way.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Aspirations*

*The things that I aspire to  
do in the rest of my life are:*

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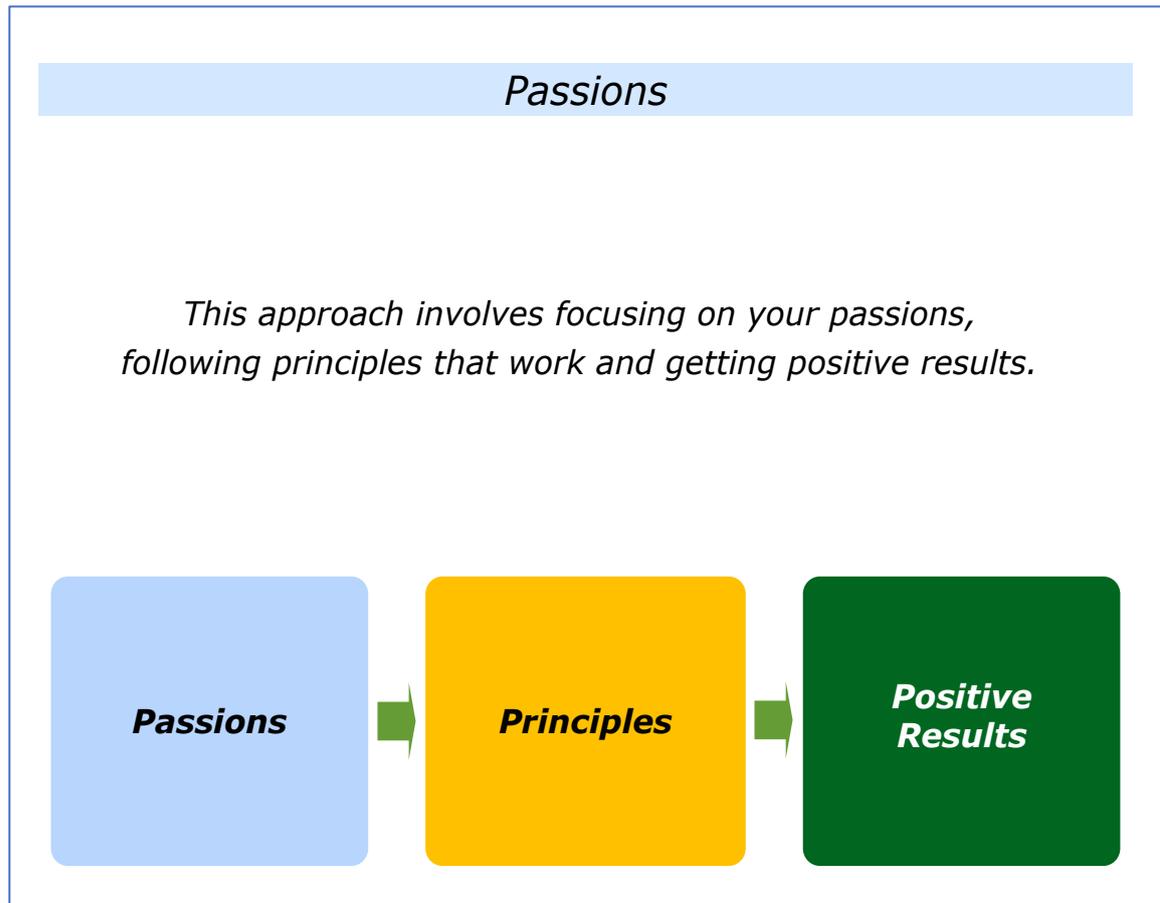
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## *The Passions Approach*



This is an approach that people can follow to feel fully alive and gain a sense of fulfilment. It involves focusing on their passions, following principles that work and getting positive results.

A person may follow this approach when encouraging other people, pursuing a hobby, doing creative work or tackling a challenge. They may aim to do their best and achieve their picture of success.

Looking back, can you think of situation when you followed elements of this approach? What did you do to pursue your chosen activity? How did follow principles that worked? What happened as a result of taking these steps? Let's explore these themes.

## *Passions*

Great workers often follow their passions or do things they feel passionately about. If you explore the internet, however you will find conflicting advice about this approach.

Some people say it is vital to follow your passions but others say this is not good advice. The latter group may urge people to focus on an activity where they can do good work.

Many people combine each of these elements. They do things they feel passionately about where they have the ability to deliver positive results. Such people then aim to flow, focus and finish. Sometimes they gain a sense of fulfilment.

## *Principles*

Great workers follow principles that work and translate these into action. Some aim to build on their strengths, follow successful strategies and do their best to achieve success.

Each person is different, however, so some people may follow other strategies. The key is to do what works. It is:

*To follow principles that work:*

*To translate these into practice;*

*To do their best to get positive results.*

Such people study what works. They then follow principles they believe in and aim to practise what works. They also focus on the next step.

## *Positive Results*

Great workers do their best to deliver the goods. They may aim: a) to follow successful strategies; b) to focus on continuous

improvement; c) to add that touch of class to get positive results. Different people follow this approach in different ways. Let's look at one example.

## *Sparknews And Positive Stories*



Christian de Boisredon founded Sparknews. This is a community of like-minded journalists, social entrepreneurs and individuals motivated by the common desire to illuminate solution-based stories.

The following pages give excerpts from the movement's website. This tells the story of its inception and its work to share positive solutions across the planet.

*At the age of 24, Christian de Boisredon and two friends set off around the world to discover positive initiatives, against the backdrop of the depressing information he found in the media.*

*Together, they gather their discoveries in a future best-seller: Hope Around the World (Pocket). Thus was born Christian's inner conviction: the media can reach their audience by being more constructive.*

*In 2012, he decides to explore new ways to convince editorial offices around the world to focus on solutions and funds Sparknews. The social enterprise organises collaborative editorial operations that highlight positive initiatives.*

*In 2016, the Sparknews team decided to use their expertise to help those who want to bring new narratives to the core of their business.*

*The Positive Innovation Club was created, and has by now brought together more than 3,000 managers and executives who want to help move their companies in a more sustainable direction.*

*In 2020, we launched la Fabrique des Récits! La Fabrique des Récits, is a collective that aims to raise awareness among artists and creators from all walks of life about the challenges of transition. Their creativity thus becomes a vector of messages to the general public.*

*So many sparks ignited, new narratives emerged and positive action encouraged.*

Let's return to your own life. How you focus on a specific passion? How can you follow principles that work? How can you aim to deliver positive results? What may happen as a result of taking this steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Passions Approach*

*The specific passion that  
I would like to focus on is:*

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*The specific things I can do to focus on this  
passion, follow principles that work and  
do my best to deliver positive results are:*

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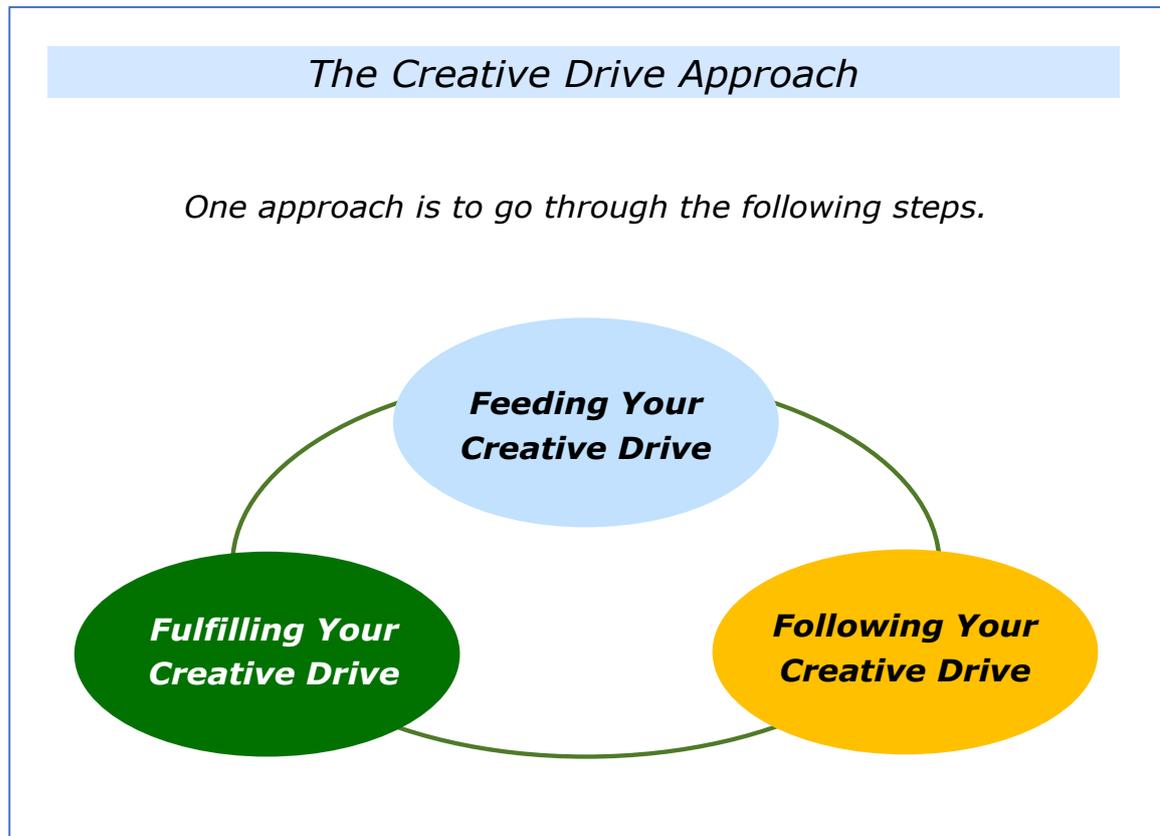
*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Creative Drive Approach*



This approach mirrors elements of the positive adventure approach and involves doing fulfilling work.

When do you feel most creative? When do you want to follow your creative drives? What do you feel when you have fulfilled these creative drives?

Different people feel compelled to create different things. They may want to help people, create encouraging environments, nurture beautiful gardens, design houses, make things work better or do another activity.

Creativity is something we often channel and obey. It is not something we own. But we do own the responsibility to our best with the gift we have been given.

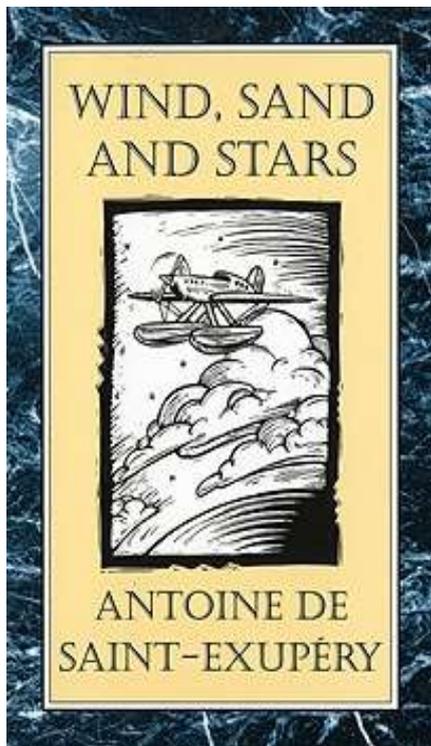
Everybody is an artist, everybody is creative, everybody has something special to give to the world. People can be encouraged to channel these gifts to help other people.

This approach was described by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry in his book *Wind, Sand and Stars*. He describes a long train journey in a crowded carriage in which he ponders on the possibilities within each human being.

*I sat down face to face with one couple. Between the man and the woman a child had hollowed himself out a place and fallen asleep.*

*He turned in his slumber, and in the dim lamplight I saw his face. What an adorable face! I bent over the smooth brow, over those mildly pouting lips, and I said to myself: This is a musician's face.*

*This is the child Mozart. This is a life full of beautiful promise. Little princes in legends are not different from this. Protected, sheltered, cultivated, what could not this child become.*



*When by mutation a new rose is born in a garden, all the gardeners rejoice. They isolate the rose, tend it, foster it.*

*But there is no gardener for men. This little Mozart will be shaped like the rest by the common stamping machine. This little Mozart is condemned.*

*What torments me tonight is the gardener's point of view. It is the sight, a little bit in all these men, of Mozart murdered.*

This passage fed my own desire to encourage people. You will have your own drivers that urge you to create. Imagine that you want to follow such drives. The following pages explore how you may be able to do this in your own way.

### *Feeding Your Creative Drive*

Some people get creative ideas out of the blue. Some get them at certain times of the day. One person described their approach in the following way.

*"I often get creative ideas at dawn. Or, more accurately, the time between waking up and being fully conscious.*

*"At night I think about what I want to work on the next day. Then I let the ideas incubate. This works for me, but I know other people have other approaches."*

How can you feed your creative drives? One approach is to ask yourself the following questions.

*When do I feel most creative? When do I feel most alive? How can I create fertile ground for getting ideas? What are the times of day when I get ideas? What gives me positive energy? What are the conditions that sometimes facilitate ideas? How can I feed my creative drives?*

Some people get ideas when doing certain activities. They may be having a bath, listening to the rain or simply pottering around.

Some get ideas when being in certain environments. They may be in their favourite place, playing music or appreciating beauty.

Some get ideas when doing what works for them. They may be recalling past experiences, learning from positive models or studying success.

How can you feed your creative drives? How can you do what works for you? How can you give your creative ideas time to incubate?

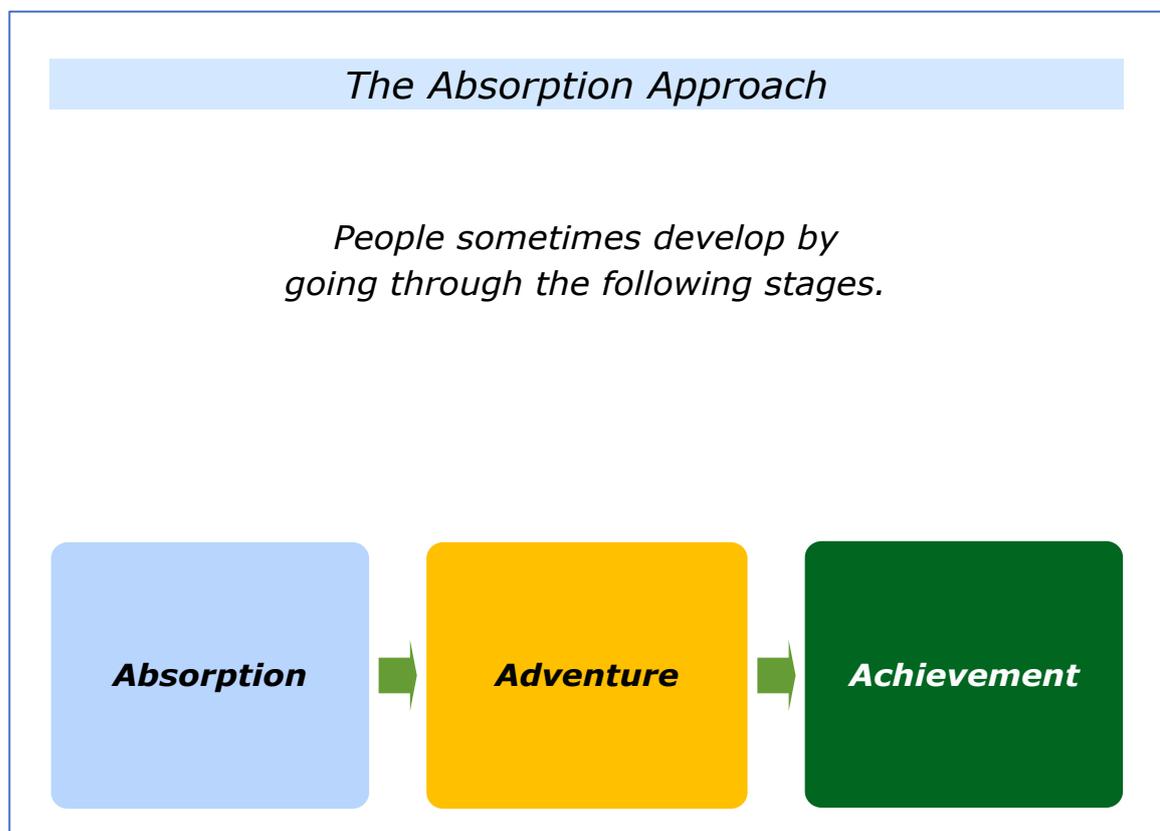
## *Following Your Creative Drive*

Imagine that you have found a creative drive you want to pursue. If appropriate, you can then explore the following questions.

*What is the creative drive I want to follow? How can I translate this into doing a specific project? What would I like to achieve by doing such a project? What is the picture of success?*

*How can I do my best to achieve these goals? How can I build on my strengths and follow my successful style? What are the key strategies I can follow to give myself the greatest chance of success?*

The following pages explore some approaches to following your creative drive. As mentioned elsewhere, this mirrors some of the themes in the positive adventure approach.



Imagine that you want to do good work. Sometimes this involves going through the stages of absorption, adventure and achievement.

You may take this approach when writing, gardening, painting, running or doing another activity. You may do so when encouraging a person, doing a project, running a workshop, leading a team or reframing a challenge.

People often feel alive when taking these steps. They enjoy the process of exploring, learning and creating. They may then reach their aim and enjoy a sense of achievement.

One key point is worth bearing in mind. Different people have different definitions of achievement. This can be useful to remember when encouraging other people to develop.

For some people achievement means enjoying an experience, helping others to grow or creating positive memories. For some it means gaining a badge, winning a prize or reaching a target. Let's explore how you can explore some of these steps in your own way.

### *Absorption*

Imagine that you want to absorb yourself in a specific project. You may simply want to do it for pleasure or to experience joy. This can be good for the soul. It can give you positive energy and be fulfilling.

You may want to translate your chosen activity into achieving a specific goal. This could be writing an article, renovating a house, developing a skill, solving a problem, tackling a challenge or your definition of success.

How can you absorb yourself in the activity? How can you move into action? How can you be fully engaged? How can you see it as a positive adventure?

## *Adventure*

Maria Montessori, the educator, said that children often become absorbed in an activity. They apply themselves, learn and enjoy the adventure of being creative. Finally they reach their goal and experience a sense of achievement.

Imagine that you want to pursue a particular activity or project. You may set aside time to write, cook, sing or do mountain biking. You may aim to do a creative project, tackle a challenge or do another stimulating activity.

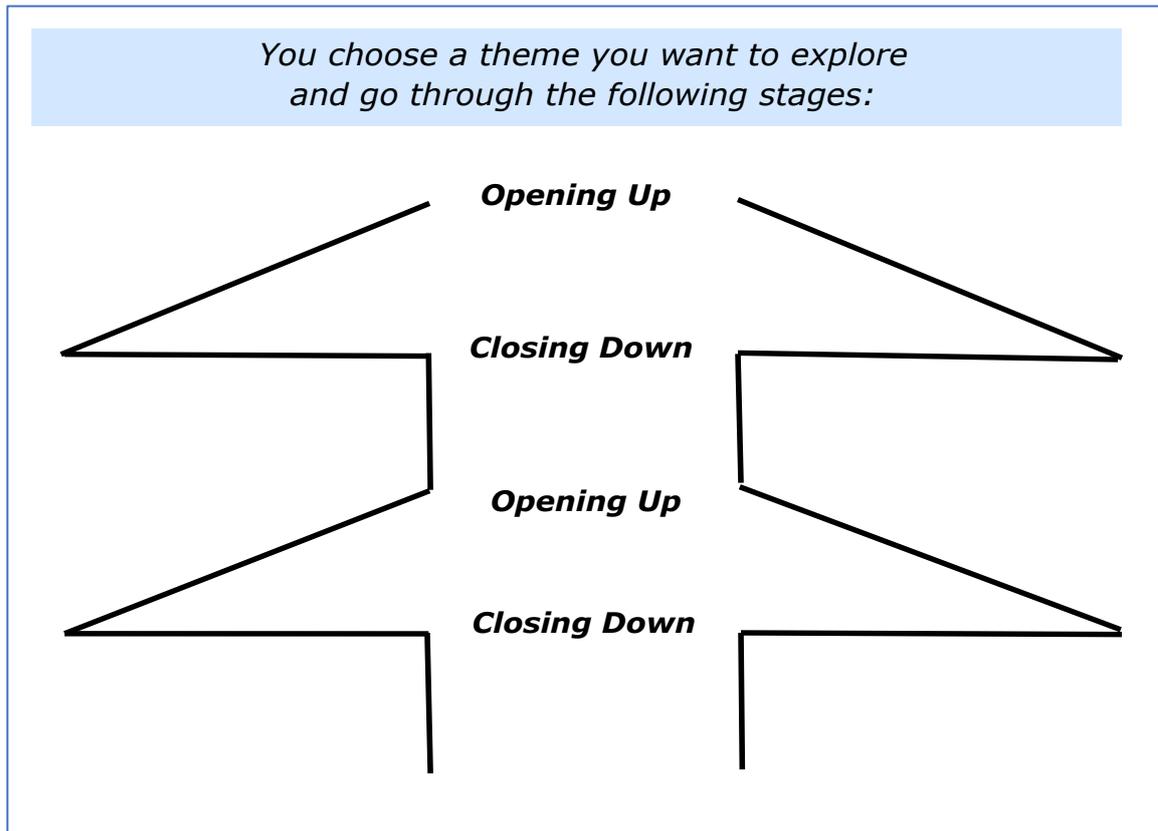
How can you use your abilities on the adventure? How can you build on your strengths? How can you improve your skills and add to your repertoire? How can you continue to develop?

Many people love to explore, learn and adventure. Sometimes this can involve pursuing the following aspects of the creative process.

### *The Creative Process Of Opening Up And Closing Down*

*This sometimes involves going  
through the following steps.*

- *You choose a theme you want to explore and open up to gather information.*
- *You close down to sort the information and clarify what you have learned.*
- *You go deeper into a topic that has emerged and repeat the process of opening up and closing down.*



Imagine that you are following this approach. You may start by choosing to focus on a particular theme you want to explore.

This will involve opening up and gathering lots of information. After a while you will want to summarise what you have learned. This will lead to closing down and clarifying what you have learned.

The information you have gathered may reveal topics you want to explore in more depth. You may again go through the process of opening up and closing down until you feel ready to move into action.

Clicking into action, you will build on your strengths and add what you have learned. Applying your skills, you will continue until you feel satisfied with the piece of creative work.

There are several points to bear in mind when following this approach. The first is knowing when to open up and when to close down. The second is knowing when to move into action. You will

have gathered lots of knowledge, but it will be important to apply this in practise. This can only be done by moving into action.

Sometimes you may not feel ready but decide to start the work. Believing that some answers may emerge on the journey, you say:

*"Let's crack on and do version 1.0"*

## *Achievement*

Imagine that you are pursuing an activity or doing a project. You will absorb yourself in the task and continue to develop. You may also work towards achieving a specific aim.

Sometimes the aim may be emotional. It may be to enjoy an experience or help others to take away positive memories. Sometimes the aim may be more tangible. It may be to see a finished product, achieve a target or lift a prize.

As mentioned earlier, people have different definitions of achievement. This is governed by what they set out to do. Bearing in mind what they can control, here are some things that people have said regarding what they want to achieve.

*The specific things I want to achieve  
by doing the activity or project are:*

*To regain my zest for life ... To create nourishing meals that give people enjoyment ... To provide a framework in which people can find fulfilment ... To share knowledge that enables people to shape their futures.*

*To make music that some people find inspiring ... To give people positive memories ... To achieve a personal best in a triathlon ... To lead a yachting team around the world and back home safely ...*

*To produce three players every year who move from the Academy to the First Team ... To make television films that encourage people*

*to care for animals ... To create a successful social enterprise ... To build and sell a pioneering company.*

## *Fulfilling Your Creative Drive*

Imagine that you are pursuing your chosen activity. You will aim to encourage yourself and enjoy the journey along the road. You will then aim to finish superbly and gain a sense of fulfilment.

You will have your own way of finishing, but here are some suggestions. It may be useful:

*To set aside a block of time to do the activity and make the best use of your prime times – the times of the day when you have most energy;*

*To follow your ritual for starting, follow your chosen rhythm and, if appropriate, achieve small goals on the road to achieving the bigger goal;*

*To follow your successful pattern for finishing – one you have followed before to finish properly – then to flow, focus, finish and find fulfilment.*

There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to feed, follow and fulfil your creative drive. Resting for a while, you may let your mind wander. It may then be time to go on the next journey.

Let's return to your own life and work. How can you continue to feed, follow and fulfil your creative drive? What may be the benefits of taking this approach?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *My Creative Drive*

*The specific things I can do  
to feed my creative drive are:*

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*The specific things I can do  
to follow my creative drive are:*

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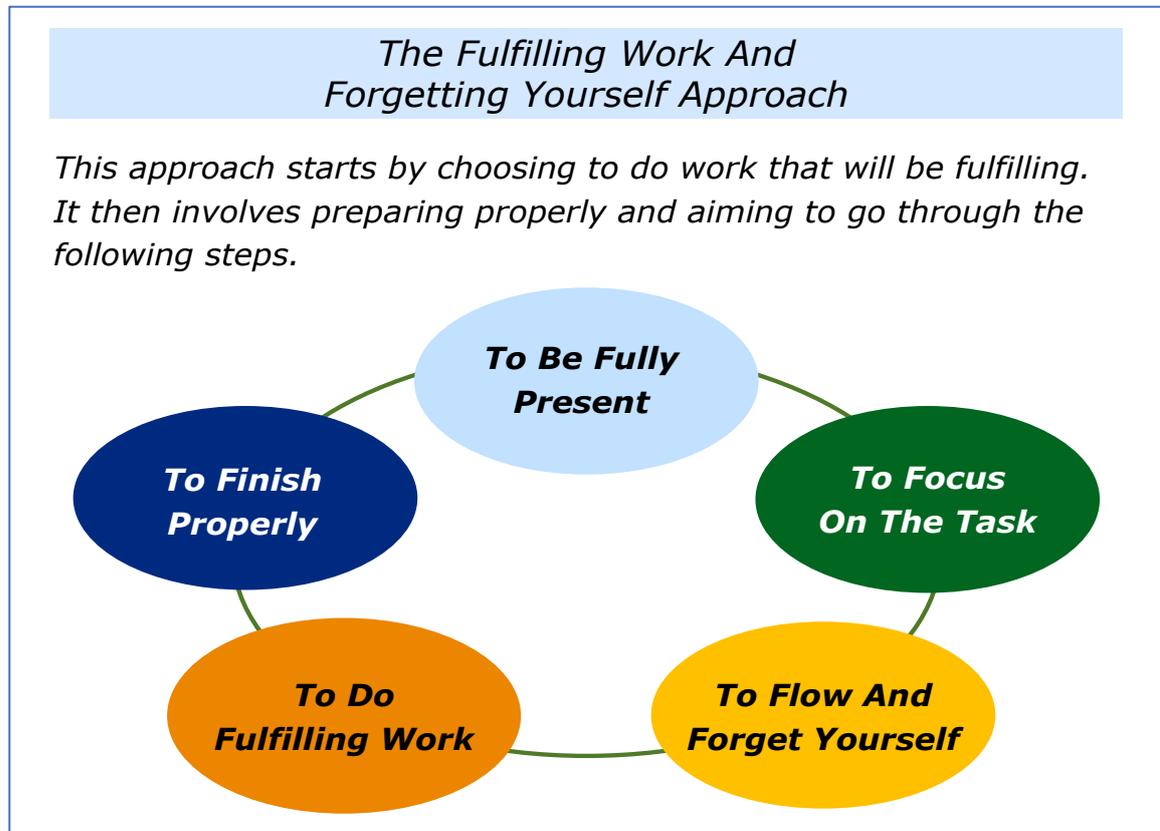
*The specific things I can do  
to fulfil my creative drive are:*

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## *The Fulfilling Work And Forgetting Yourself Approach*



There are many views about how a person can be fully present. One approach is to do fulfilling work where you go into a state of flow and forget yourself.

The following pages outline steps you can take to going into your equivalent of the zone. The approach describes a sequential process, but something there is an interesting by-product. Immersing yourself in the work, you may find yourself automatically following of the other steps.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach in your own way. Start by focusing on specific activity where you are more likely to do fulfilling work and forget yourself.

Different people mention different things when describing such an activity. Here are some answers they give.

## *Fulfilling Work And Forgetting Myself*

*The specific activity where I  
sometimes experience this feeling is when:*

*I am writing ... I am gardening ... I am playing music ... I am skiing  
... I am mentoring a person ... I am working as an osteopath ... I am  
tackling a complex technical problem ... I am performing on stage ...  
I am giving a keynote speech.*

Imagine that you have clarified a specific activity where this happens for you. You can focus on a specific situation where you will be doing this activity. The next step is to prepare properly. You can aim:

*To clarify the specific outcomes – the real results – you want to achieve in the situation;*

*To clarify the specific strategies you can follow – plus how to deal with potential challenges - to achieve these results;*

*To rehearse following these strategies – and tackling any challenges - on the way towards achieving the desired results.*

Imagine that you have set things up to succeed. You may then want to focus on the following steps.

## *Fully Present*

You can aim to be fully present. Different people do this in different ways. They may follow a certain ritual, repeat a certain mantra or do something special to move into action.

Some individuals create an environment that enables them to flow. Some remove all distractions. Some play certain kinds of music or surround themselves with beauty. They find that having this backdrop provides them with stimulation.

## *Focusing On The Task*

This is the key. It is to focus on the task and the outcomes to achieve. It is then to do your best to achieve those outcomes. You will do this in your own way.

Absorbing yourself fully, you will keep following your chosen strategies towards achieving the picture of success. This can carry you away into a wonderful land.

You may enter a state where you feel alive, alert and able to use your antennae to keep reading reality. Sometimes this may take you to the next stage.

## *Flowing And Forgetting Yourself*

Many people aim to be fully present and able to go into flow. This highlights an interesting paradox. As the old saying goes, you are most yourself when you forget yourself.

The flow approach is described in depth later in this book, but it can be worth highlighting several points. People who enter a state of flow sometimes take the following steps.

*They focus on a specific activity that they have a feeling for and where they have the ability to do fine work;*

*They develop their abilities in this activity to the point where they consistently deliver 8/10;*

*They focus on the specific piece of work they are doing, get to 8/10 and then aim to flow, focus and finish.*

Such individuals focus on performing superb work rather than being self-conscious. They regard themselves as resources that can be used to achieve the goals. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"My aim is to get to 8/10. At that point I decide on the strategy for going forwards. It is then to get out of the way and trust the talent that I have been given to takeover."*

Flow psychology describes how great workers get to a certain point and forget themselves. The paradox is that their self emerges stronger as they move on to the next stage.

### *Fulfilling Work*

People who do fulfilling work often enjoy the journey. They love the process of cooking, gardening, helping people, tackling certain challenges or doing other activities.

Imagine that you are doing fulfilling work. How can you keep building on your strengths? How can you keep improving? How can you continue to encourage yourself?

If appropriate, how can you do work that helps other people? How can you help them to improve the quality of their lives, solve problems or shape their futures?

### *Finishing Properly*

Great workers are good finishers in the areas in which they excel. You will have your own approach to finishing successfully. Some people take the following steps.

*They clarify their successful pattern for finishing – the specific principles they have followed in the past to finish things successfully;*

*They clarify how they can follow these principles – plus maybe add other skills – to finish the present piece of work successfully;*

*They get to the point where they have done much of the work and then follow their chosen principles to finish successfully.*

Imagine that you are approaching the finishing line. How can you keep doing your best? How can you then relax, follow your chosen rhythm and rise to the occasion? How can you finish successfully?

Let's return to your life and work. Can you think of situation where you do fulfilling work and forget yourself? What do you do then to follow this approach? Looking ahead, how can you follow elements of this approach in the future?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Fulfilling Work And Forgetting Yourself Approach*

*The specific situation in which I follow elements of this approach are:*

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*The specific things I do then to follow elements of this approach are:*

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*The specific things I can do to follow elements of this approach in the future are:*

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## *The Serving Something Greater Than Yourself Approach*

*Rabindranath Tagore said that discovering the way you want to serve can lead to joy. He expressed this in the following way.*

*"I slept and dreamt that life was joy.*

*"I awoke and saw that life was service.*

*"I acted and behold, service was joy."*



When do you feel that you are serving something greater than yourself? How do you submerge yourself in the activity? How do you aim to serve others or work for a particular cause? What may happen as a result?

You may be caring for your loved ones, pursuing a creative drive or helping other people to succeed. You may be following a spiritual faith, pursuing your vocation or working for a mission that you believe in.

Sometimes it can be useful to remember the phrase: "You are most yourself when you forget yourself." The paradox is that – like in a flow experience – sometimes your sense of self emerges stronger. When does this happen for you?

Many people who work in the service business follow this approach. They aim to use their strengths to do superb work and help other people to achieve success. This is an ethic I was taught during my early work with people. My mentors gave the following message.

*"It is always about the other person, it is not about you. It is about helping them to feel safe and explore their options for going forwards. It is then about helping them to achieve their picture of success."*

Let's return to your own life and work. What is the specific situation where you feel you are serving something greater than yourself?

What are the specific things you do then? What are the principles you follow? How do you translate these into action? How can you follow these principles in the future? What will be the benefits – both for other people and for yourself?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Serving Something Greater Than Myself*

*The specific situation where I feel I am serving something greater than myself is:*

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*The specific things I do then – the principles I follow - to serve something greater than myself are:*

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\*

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*The specific things I can do to follow these principles in the future are:*

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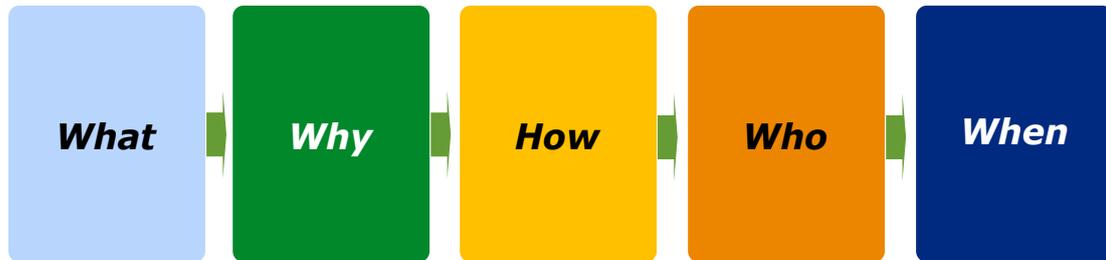
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## The Strategic Questions Approach

### The Strategic Questions Approach

*There are many ways a person can clarify their strategy when tackling a challenge or aiming to achieve a goal. One approach is for them explore the following themes.*

*This approach can adapted by individuals, teams and organisations. It involves focusing on the:*



This is an approach you can use in your own life or when helping other people. It can be useful to clarify the strategies that can be followed to provide the greatest chance of success.

One approach is to focus on the themes of What, Why, How, Who and When. The following pages provide questions that a person can ask when using this approach. These can also be adapted by teams who want to clarify their strategy.

People can focus on what they can control in situations. They can then build on what they can control and manage what they can't.

This approach also involves a different way of exploring the Why question It focuses on clarifying the benefits of achieving a goal. People sometimes find it easier to answer this question. Here are the themes.

**What**

*What are the real results I want to achieve? What is the picture of success? What are the actual words I want the various people to be saying after I have done the work? What will be happening that will show I have achieved the results?*

**Why**

*Why do I want to reach the goal? What will be the benefits for the various stakeholders? What will be the pluses? What may be any potential minuses? How can I build on the pluses and manage the consequences of any minuses.*

**How**

*How can I do my best to achieve the results? What are the key strategies I can follow to give myself the greatest chance of success? How can I perform superb work? What is the kind of support that I and other people need to achieve the results?*

**Who**

*What is my role in working to achieve the goals? If appropriate, who are the people I want to help me? What are the attitudes and abilities I want them to demonstrate? How can I encourage them to build on their strengths and make clear contracts about their best contributions?*

**When**

*How can I translate the strategies into a clear action plan? What is the road map with the milestones along the way? How can I get some quick successes? How can I keep doing reality checks about what is working and what can be improved? How can I reach the goals and then add that touch of class?*

## *The Great Work Approach*



Great workers want to make the use of their strengths. Such people also have a strong work ethic because they love their work. They then do their best to achieve their picture of success.

This book describes many models for taking these steps. The next section explores one approach that is followed by individuals. This can also be adapted by teams and organisations that aim to do great work. It focuses on the following themes.

### *Gifts*

The first step is for a person to clarify their gifts. One approach is for them to focus on the deeply satisfying activities in which they have the ability to do superb work.

Some people need help in taking this step. As ever, it can be important for a person to focus on the specific activities where:

*They look forward to doing the activity ... They have the equivalent of a photographic memory ... They enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal ... They have natural self-discipline ... They see the destination quickly ... They go 'A, B ... and then leap to Z'.*

*They rehearse what they are going to do ... They see patterns quickly ... They are simultaneously helicoptering over the scene whilst also being hands on ... They make complicated things appear simple ... They have the desire to keep improving ... They have a track record of finishing.*

Imagine that a person has clarified where they may have the ability to do superb work. They can then move on to the next step.

### *Guidelines*

This involves a person building on their gifts and focusing on the guidelines they can follow to do their best. One approach is for them to take the following steps.

*They get a good grounding by immersing themselves in their chosen field;*

*They study success – such as what works in their chosen field - and clarify the guidelines they can follow to do great work;*

*They set specific goals – such as aiming to deliver great work – and rehearse the strategies they can follow to achieve success.*

Imagine that a person has clarified the guidelines they want to follow to achieve their goals. They can then move on to the next step.

## *Grit And Gumption*

Great workers want to make the best of their talents. Sometimes this will involve them demonstrating grit. The concept of grit, however, needs to be seen in context.

A person may show the ability to persevere, improve and manage challenges in one area but not in another.

A student may demonstrate it when fixing motorbikes, for example, but not when doing algebra. A salesperson may show it when working to achieve targets but not in other areas.

It is important for a person to focus on the areas where they show this quality. Sometimes it is also possible help them to see how they can, if they wish, following similar principles to demonstrate grit in other areas.

This involves a person using their gumption – their savvy – on the way to doing great work. Here are some definitions of gumption.

*It was originally a Scottish term that meant having common sense or being shrewd. It is the ability to decide what is the best thing to do in a particular situation and then to do it with energy and determination.*

*It means bravery, get-up-and-go, drive or initiative. Someone who possesses gumption is a self-starter and has the nerve and motivation to succeed.*

Some people have gumption in certain areas but not in others. A person may have developed it through their natural feeling for an activity plus learning through experience.

Sometimes it is possible to help a person to expand their gumption. One approach is to enable them to improve their skills for self-learning and self-development.

This is an approach I have used many times with individuals and teams. The first step is to ask them:

*"Would you like to learn from what you have done and apply these lessons in the future?"*

It is important to make the psychological contract that they are prepared to explore and learn from the experiences. The next steps are:

*To invite them to reflect on an experience and to offer a framework they can use to clarify what they learned;*

*To invite them to clarify what they did well and what they can do better in the future;*

*To invite them to clarify how they can apply this learning and translate it into action in a specific situation.*

This approach takes time but it can be valuable. It helps a person or a team to clarify what works and to add to their repertoire of options for the future. It can help to expand their gumption.

## *Good Work*

The next step is for a person to get into the habit of doing good work. Different people do this in different ways, but many pursue the following principles.

*They build on their strengths, set specific goals and clarify the picture of success;*

*They set-up things to succeed, rehearse properly and follow their successful style of working;*

*They do superb work, keep managing their key stakeholders and deliver success.*

Such workers are also committed to continuous improvement. This sometimes leads to them taking the next step.

## *Great Work*

Great workers sometimes do work that goes into another dimension. Different people do this in different ways.

The paramedic saves a person's life at the scene of an accident. The gymnast executes a move that astounds people. The mediator makes a breakthrough that helps to solve a conflict.

Great workers make complicated things look simple. As we know, this is often the result of several factors. These include the following.

*They serve something greater than themselves, become lifetime students and want to keep improving;*

*They build on their strengths, focus on a specific niche and aim to do superb work in their specialism;*

*They do what they believe in, keep doing the basics and then, when appropriate, add the brilliance.*

Great performers do this in their work. The actor aims to be in the moment. The athlete aims to go into their equivalent of the zone. Each person does this in their own way. Sometimes they may do work that gives people a positive memory for life.

## The Builder Rather Than Blamer Approach

*People Can Choose To Be Builders Or Blamers*

### **Builders**

***They try to be builders.***

***They take responsibility.***

***They use positive language.***

***They aim to behave in a balanced way.***

***They put themselves in the background and want to help people to deliver brilliance.***

### **Blamers**

***They fall into being blamers.***

***They don't take responsibility.***

***They use negative language.***

***They sometimes behave in a bipolar way.***

***They put themselves in the foreground and want to be seen as brilliant.***

People can choose to be builders or blamers. The first route can help to create a positive future. The second can create pain for present and future generations. Some people reach a point when:

*They take a conscious decision to become builders;*

*They develop skills as builders and learn to manage challenging situations;*

*They act as builders and do their best to deliver brilliant results.*

Can you think of a situation where you chose to take this approach? This could have been in a relationship, in your work or in another situation. What did you do to be a builder rather than a blamer?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the

## *The Builder Approach In The Past*

*The specific situation in the past  
when I aimed to be a builder was:*

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*The specific things I did then  
to aim to be a builder were:*

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*The specific things that happened  
as a result of taking these steps were:*

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## *Choosing to be a builder rather than a blamer*

Builders often focus on the future. Whilst learning from the past, they are addicted to self-improvement. They focus on what they can do better to deliver future success.

Blamers often dwell on the past. They spent a lot of time looking to blame other people and finding scapegoats. They seldom focus on what they can have done better and how they can improve.

***Builders focus on self-improvement***

***They often focus on what they  
can do better to deliver success***

***Blamers focus on scapegoating***

***They often focus on blaming  
others and looking for scapegoats***

Different people choose to be builders for different reasons. Let's explore some of these motivations.

*They may have learned  
from positive models*

A person may have learned from a parent, teacher or other person who demonstrated how to find positive solutions to challenges. Their model may have stayed calm and said something like:

*"I am sure we can solve it. Let's look at the resources we have and the results we want to achieve. How can we find a positive solution? If appropriate, how can we - as far as possible - find a win-win?"*

*They may choose to be a builder  
because they see the benefits*

Imagine that somebody faces a challenging situation in their relationships or their work. They may be a parent, partner, recovering addict, former terrorist or another person.

Looking ahead, they consider how they want to behave. This may involve taking time:

*To consider whether they want to be a builder or a blamer;*

*To consider the pluses and minuses – both for themselves and other people - of following each route;*

*To then choose to follow the building route.*

Choosing to be a builder may seem obvious, but it calls for making certain decisions. These may include aiming to be positive rather than negative, to be resourceful rather than resentful. It may also involve taking the next step.

### *Choosing to develop skills as a builder*

The skills that a person aims to learn will depend on the situations they face in their life and work.

A spouse may aim to learn how to encourage their partner rather than get into negative cycles. A mediator may aim to learn how to build on what people have in common and find win-win solutions.

Most people want similar things in life. They want to be healthy, happy and create a hopeful future for their children. This is 'What'

they want. People sometimes get into conflict, however, about 'How' to achieve these aims.

Builders often focus on the real things that people want in life. They then use some of the skills we have described earlier in the book to find solutions and get positive results.

### *Builders*

*They often buy time to think and gather information. They then choose to be builders - rather than blamers - and aim to do the following things:*

- *To clarify the desired positive results;*
- *To clarify how it may be possible to get the desired positive results;*
- *To build on what they can do, get some quick successes and do their best to get the desired positive results.*

Builders may need to act in a balanced way and manage their own emotions in challenging situations. This calls for buying time and, when appropriate, communicating in a considered way.

They may need to take this approach when making tough decisions or communicating in emotionally loaded situations. Sometimes this calls for coming across as making balanced judgements rather than being judgemental.

*Builders sometimes try  
to come across as making:*

***Balanced Judgements***

*Rather than:*

***Being Judgemental***

### *Choosing to be a builder and help people to deliver brilliant results*

There are many ways to act as a builder. One approach to use your skills to help other people to achieve success.

This is the path sometimes taken by great educators, orchestrators and leaders. They do their best to encourage, educate and enable people to achieve brilliant results.

Jim Collins says this the hallmark of what he calls Level 5 Leaders. Such people combine personal humility with professional will. Writing in his book *Good To Great*, he describes how these leaders love to enable people to achieve ongoing success.

Jim described what he called the Yin and Yang of such leaders in an article he wrote for the Harvard Business Review. Here is a summary of some of these qualities that are described in the piece.

*Jim Collins – The Yin And Yang Of Level 5 Leaders*

***Personal Humility***

***They demonstrate modesty.***

***They act as positive models and demonstrate high standards to inspire people***

***They channel ambition into creating success for others rather than for themselves.***

***They look in the mirror and their responsibility to improve when things go wrong.***

***Professional Will***

***They create superb results.***

***They show an unwavering resolve to do what is required to deliver long-term results.***

***They focus on building an enduring great company and will settle for nothing less.***

***They look out of the window – focusing on other people’s work – to apportion success.***

Let’s return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to act as a builder? What can you do then to take this approach?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Builder Approach In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future when  
I may aim to be a builder may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do  
then to aim to be a builder are:*

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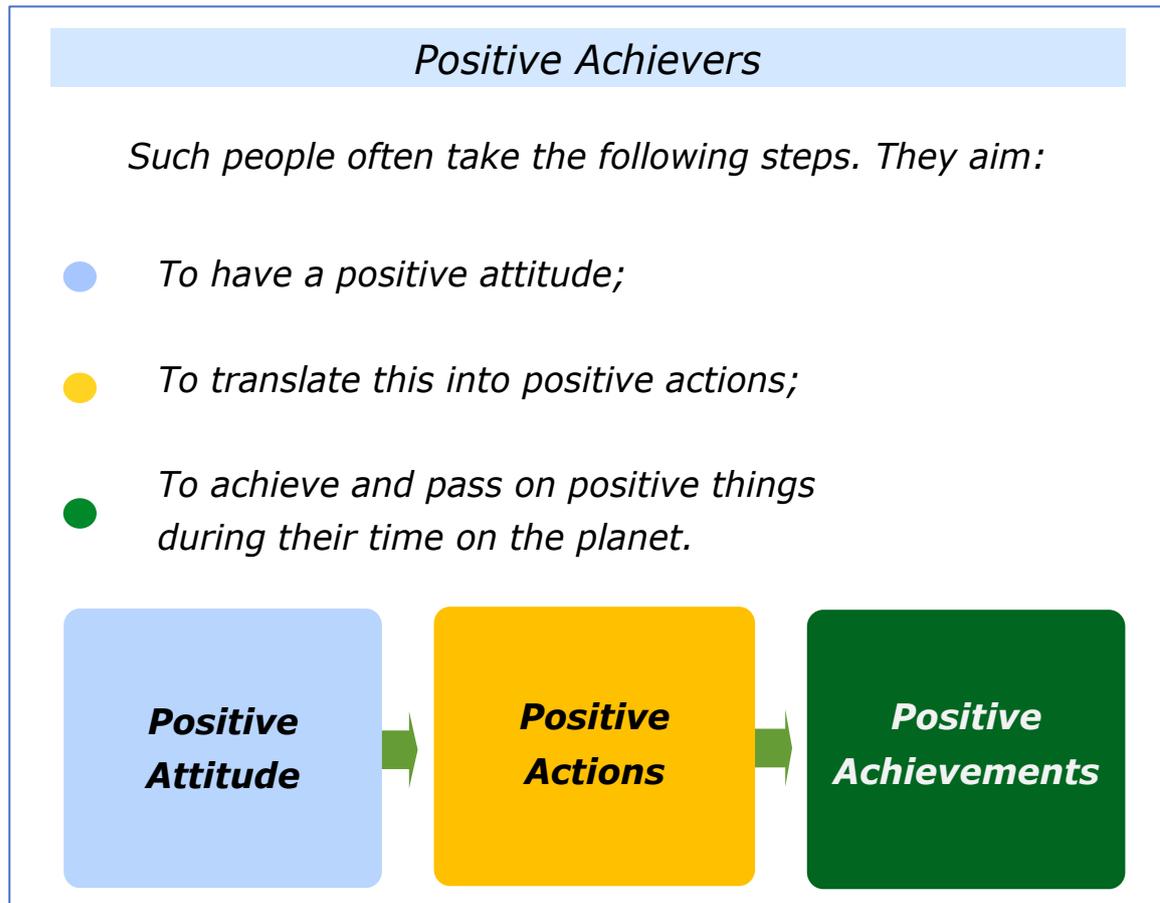
*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Positive Achiever Approach*



There are many ways to live life. Some people demonstrate the characteristics of positive achievers. Such people often take the following steps.

*They aim to have a positive attitude*

They aim to do their personal best. They choose: a) to have a positive attitude; b) to follow their principles; c) to focus on their picture of success. This leads to the next step.

*They aim to translate this attitude into positive actions*

They aim to follow their principles in their life and work. They aim to be positive towards other people. They may also aim to be professional in their work and aim to achieve peak performance.

*They aim to achieve and pass on positive things during their time on the planet*

They aim to encourage other people. They may aim to build on their strengths, do satisfying work and help other people to achieve success. They aim to do their best in life and pass on positive things during their time on the planet.

During the past fifty plus years I have been fortunate to meet many such people. This has led to being able:

*To encourage positive achievers or;*

*To encourage the positive achiever parts of each person or each group of people.*

This is an approach I learned during the late 1960s when working with people in therapy. The aim was to build on the parts of the person that wanted to be a positive achiever.

The approach was reinforced when moving on to work with educators, athletes, leaders, teams and peak performers. The aim has been to pass on tools that people can use to achieve their picture of success.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow some aspects of the positive achiever approach?

Imagine that you want to apply these to yourself. How can you continue to have a positive attitude? How can you translate this into action? How can you pass on positive things to other people?

Alternatively, you may want to apply these principles when helping another person. How can you do this in your own way? What may happen as a result?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Positive Achiever Approach*

*The specific situation where I may want to follow some aspects of the positive achiever approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to follow aspects of this approach in my own way are:*

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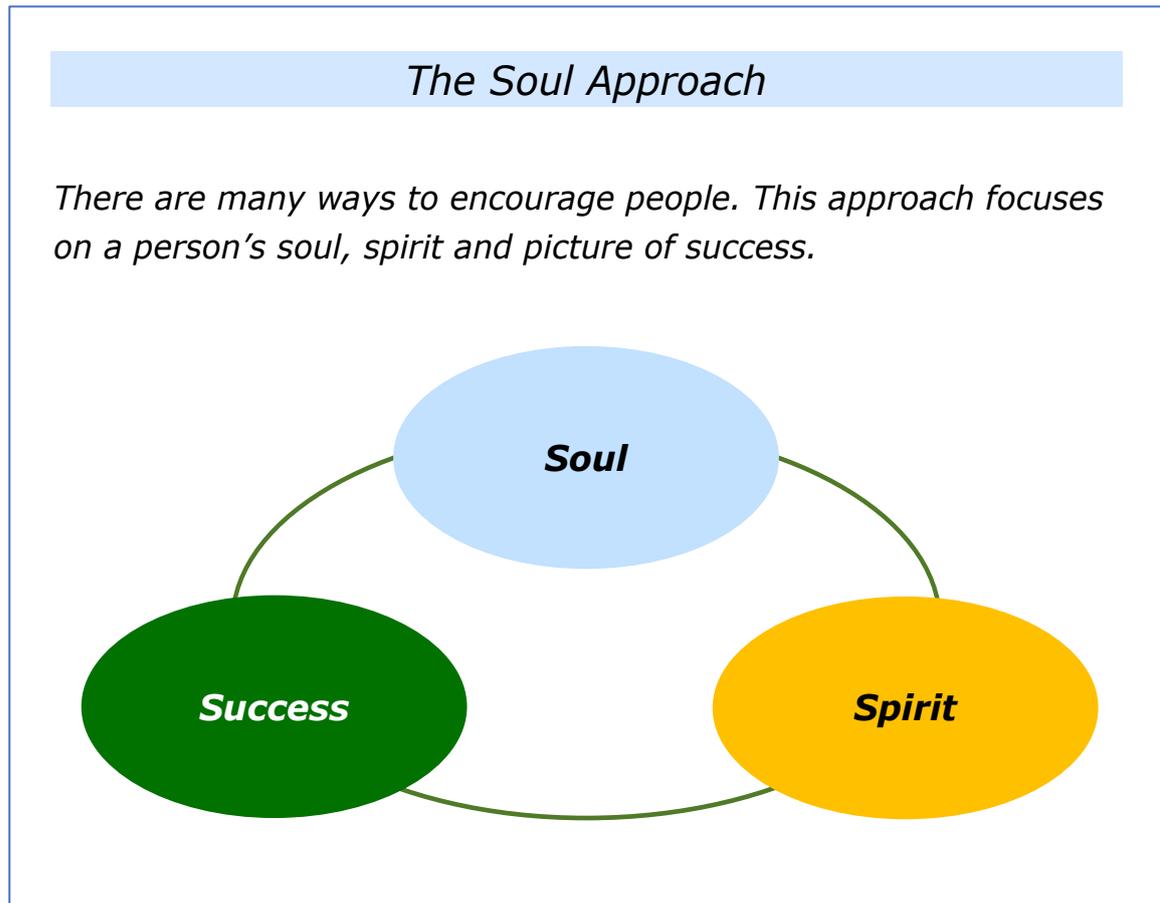
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The People's Souls Approach*



This an approach that has been followed by spiritual leaders, philosophers, therapists and many others down the ages. They may practice this in a philosophical way, a practical way or a combination of both.

The aim is to encourage individuals by focusing on the following themes.

*The person's soul – this is who they are;*

*The person's spirit – this is how they express themselves;*

*The person's picture of success – this is what they want to do and achieve during their time on the planet.*

Different people choose to focus on different parts of people's souls. They may do this when communicating with people or doing certain kinds of work.

### *The Positive Parts*

Some people focus on positive parts of people. They aim to build on what some call 'the better angels' of people's personalities.

Some leaders, mentors and educators take this approach. They remind people of their strengths and their successful patterns. They then encourage people to apply these qualities in the future.

Some great workers, singers and artists take this approach. They produce work that helps people to feel joyful, happy and alive. They create experiences that can give people positive memories for life.

### *The Possibilities Parts*

Some people focus on the possibilities parts of people. They encourage people to consider their ambitions, hopes and goals.

Some inspiring orators take this approach. They may use uplifting language and show the practical ways that people can work towards achieving deliverable dreams.

Some mentors, coaches and therapists take similar steps. They then encourage, educate and enable people to pursue their possibilities and achieve positive results.

### *The Painful Parts*

Some people focus on the painful parts of people. Sometimes the results are positive, sometimes they are negative.

People who are caring often show compassion and help others to manage their pain in healthy ways. This can lead to solutions that produce positive results.

People who are callous sometimes capitalise on other people's pain. Some tyrants aim to remind people of their grievances and look for scapegoats. They then use this pain to propel themselves to power.

Imagine that you want to follow the soul approach in your own way. This can involve taking the following steps.

You can support the positive parts of the person's soul. This involves helping them to feel safe and able to explore. If appropriate, you can encourage them to talk about their philosophy, strengths and goals.

You can support the positive parts of the person's spirit. This involves encouraging them to explore their principles and successful patterns. If appropriate, you can encourage them to focus on how they can express these in the future.

You can support the person's desire to achieve certain goals. This involves encouraging them to explore what they want to do in their personal and professional life. You can then pass on knowledge and practical tools they can use to achieve their picture of success.

Looking ahead, can you think of a specific situation where you may want to encourage a person by using elements of this approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

You may want to do this as a parent, partner or friend. You may want to do this when acting in the role of educator, counsellor, therapist, coach, mentor, trusted advisor or in another role.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The People's Souls Approach*

*The specific situation in the future  
when I may want to follow  
elements of this approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to  
follow elements of this approach are:*

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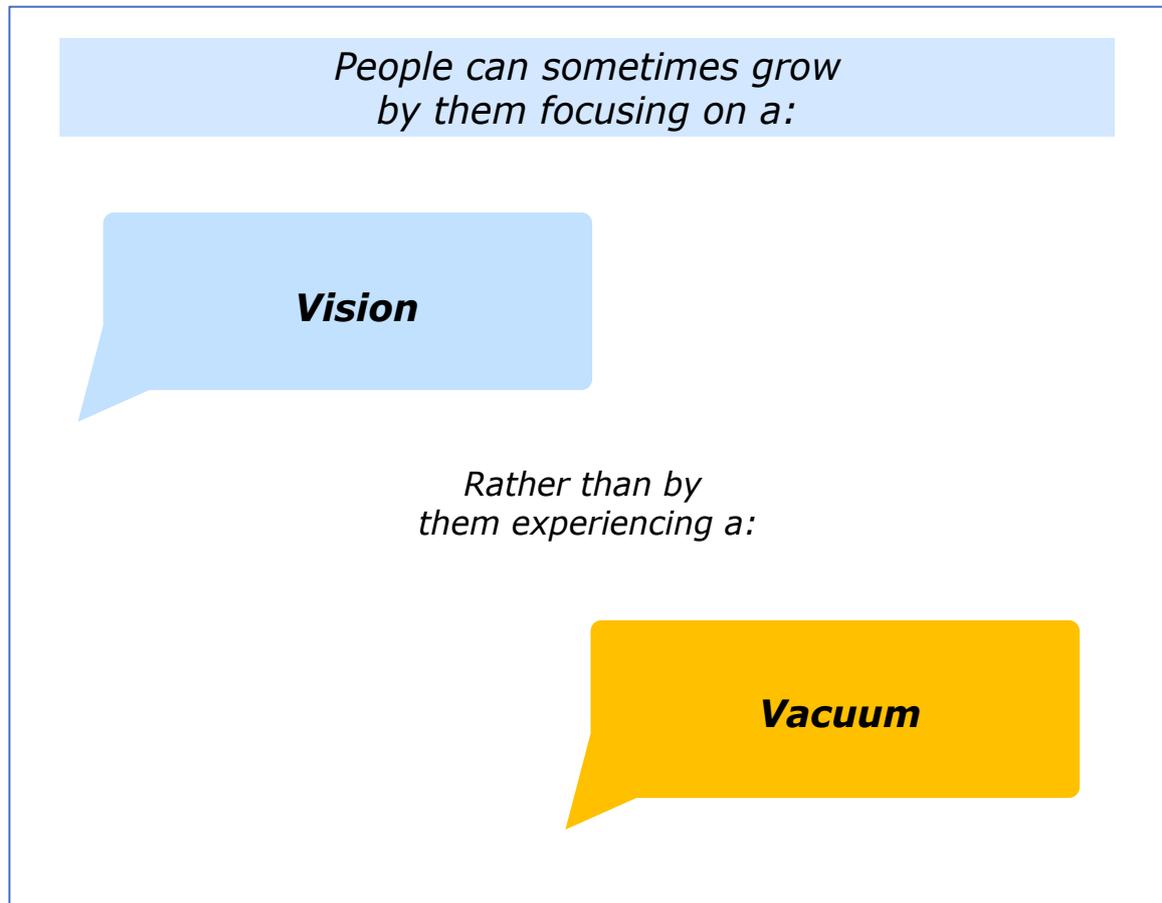
*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Positive Vision To Fill A Vacuum Approach*



This is an approach that I learned from some of sages I visited. Many aimed to help people in therapy, education, organisations and society. Here is a summary of how they explained this approach.

*"People can sometimes grow by helping them to focus on a positive vision. This is the case whether working with an individual, team, organisation or aspects of a society.*

*"People can get into difficulty when experiencing a vacuum. This can create angst for a person, team or organisation. Opportunists try to fill a vacuum in society by filling it with negativity and looking for scapegoats.*

*"When appropriate, you can aim to help people to find or create a positive vision. It is vital, however, that people can believe in the*

*goals. You can then help them to translate the ideas into action and achieve their vision."*

Different people help others to take these steps in different ways. Some of the people I learned from aimed to help people:

*To focus on their values and translate these into a positive vision;*

*To do things that enabled them to develop their vitality – their energy – and translate their values into positive action;*

*To deliver visible results and achieve their positive vision.*

As mentioned earlier, people can fall into difficulties because they experience a vacuum. This can happen for various reasons. For example:

*They may want to recover their zest for life ... They may want to feel decisive rather than feel they are drifting ... They may want to have a new sense of purpose in their personal or professional life.*

The approach I learned was to try to focus on a person's positive energy and help them to see a positive vision. It is vital that they believe in the aims and, with encouragement, feel they can achieve the vision.

The aim has to be to do this as early as possible in a session. People need to experience something that gives them practical hope. The next steps are to focus on strategies that can help them to achieve positive results.

Imagine that a person who is experiencing a vacuum has asked for your help. They could be recovering from a setback, wanting to find a sense of purpose or tackling another challenge.

How can you help them in your own way? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Positive Vision Approach*

*The specific situation in the future when I may want to help a person to focus on a positive vision rather than a vacuum may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to help them to focus on a positive vision are:*

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*The specific things I can do to help them to work towards the positive vision are:*

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## *The Supportive Contract Approach*

Imagine that you want to help others in your life and work. It can be important to be morally clear on what you can do to support people and help them to achieve success.

Imagine that you want to support people. It can be useful: a) to make a clear contract with yourself; b) to make a clear contract with others about the respective responsibilities in helping them to achieve their goals.

Some people care so much that sometimes they start taking over what are actually the other person's responsibilities. This does not always help.

### *The Supportive Contract Approach*

*Imagine that you want to continue to support people and help them to achieve success. It can be useful to clarify your philosophy about what you believe you can and can't do to help people.*

*This can help you to be morally clear on your responsibility and their responsibility in working towards the goals. One approach is to work through the following themes.*

*Clear Contracting.  
It can be important:*

- *To clarify the specific things you can do and can't do to support people and help them to achieve success;*
- *To clarify the specific things you see as your responsibilities and their responsibilities in helping them to achieve success;*
- *To make clear contracts about working together and then do your best to help them to achieve success.*

Different people identify different things when exploring these themes. Here are some that they mention.

*Can Do. The specific things I can do to support people and help them to achieve success*

*I can aim:*

*To create an encouraging environment ... To clarify what is happening in their world ... To clarify the topics they want to explore ... To invite them to focus on one of these topics ... To clarify their specific goal.*

*To clarify their successful pattern in the past for achieving similar goals ... To ask if it is okay for me to share some ideas ... To focus on how they can follow their successful pattern to work towards achieving the goal.*

*To offer them practical tools that work ... To see which of these ideas resonate and want to explore further ... To, if appropriate,*

*enable them to make an action plan that they believe in ... To go onto the next topic they want to explore.*

*Can't. The specific things I can't do to support people and help them to achieve success*

*I can't:*

*Motivate them if they are not motivated ... I can create a motivating environment and show what it is possible to achieve, but they must demonstrate the will before they can develop the skill.*

*Change things that are out of their control or my control ... I can help them to build on what they can control and manage what they can't, but there are certain things that are beyond our control.*

*Do the work for them or guarantee success ... I can enable them to do their best and increase the chances of reaching their goals, but there may be other factors that influence whether they achieve their goals.*

Good therapists, for example, also recognise what they can and can't do for a client. They also recognise their responsibilities and the client's responsibilities in working towards the client's goals.

This is an approach that I learned early on when working with people. After explaining the ways I could help the person, it was important to make clear contracts about the respective responsibilities in the professional relationship.

*My Responsibilities Were:*

*To prepare properly for the sessions ... To be encouraging ... To clarify the person's goals ... To build on their strengths ... To focus on their possibilities ... To always behave in a professional way ... To do my best to help them to achieve their goals.*

*The Person's Responsibilities Were:*

*To prepare for the sessions ... To take responsibility ... To clarify their goals ... To take the ideas they like and apply these in their own ways ... To do their best to work towards achieving their goals.*

This was an approach I continued to use when working with individuals, teams and organisations in many walks of life. The aim was:

*To show that I understood their picture of success;*

*To explain the practical ways I could try to help them to achieve their picture of success;*

*To make clear contracts about my role and their role in working towards achieving the picture of success.*

Clear contracting is crucial in many relationships. We will explore this topic in greater depth later in the book.

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that a person has asked for your personal support or your professional expertise in helping them to achieve their goals. Bearing in mind your philosophy about how people grow, try exploring the following themes.

What are the things you can do to help the person? What are the things you can't do? What do you see as your responsibilities in helping them to achieve their goals? What do you see as their responsibilities?

If appropriate, how can you make clear contracts about the respective responsibilities? How can you then do your best to help them to achieve their goals?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Supportive Contract*

*Can Do. The specific things I can do to help the person to achieve their goals are:*

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*Can't Do. The specific things I can't do to help the person to achieve their goals are:*

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*My Responsibilities. The specific things I see as my responsibilities in helping the person to achieve their goals are:*

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*Their Responsibilities. The specific things I see as their responsibilities in working to achieve their goals are:*

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*Clear Contracting. The specific things I can do to make clear contracts about working together to achieve their goals are:*

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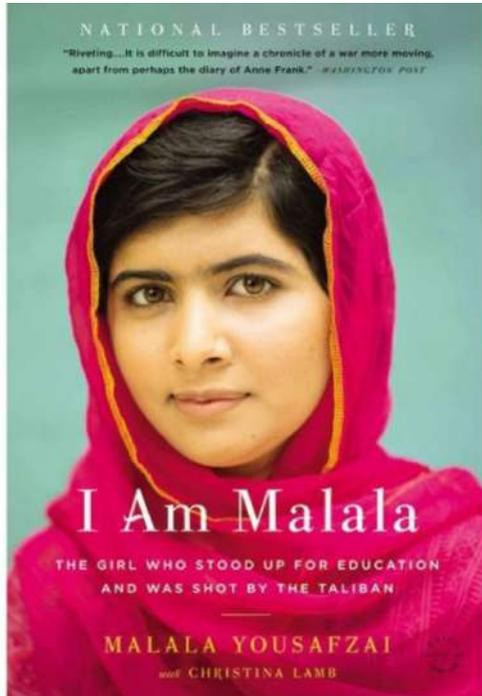
*The specific things I can then do to do my best to help them to achieve their goals are:*

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## *The Encouragement In Exceptional Circumstances Approach*



*"I had the choice to stay silent and be killed or to speak up and be killed.*

*"Let us pick up our books and our pens, they are the most powerful weapons.*

*"One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world.*

*"The extremists are afraid of books and pens, the power of education frightens them."*

Malala Yousafzai is somebody who encouraged other people in exceptional circumstances. Ordered to be executed by the Taliban because she believed everybody had the right to an education.

She went on to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Here are some things she has said along the way.

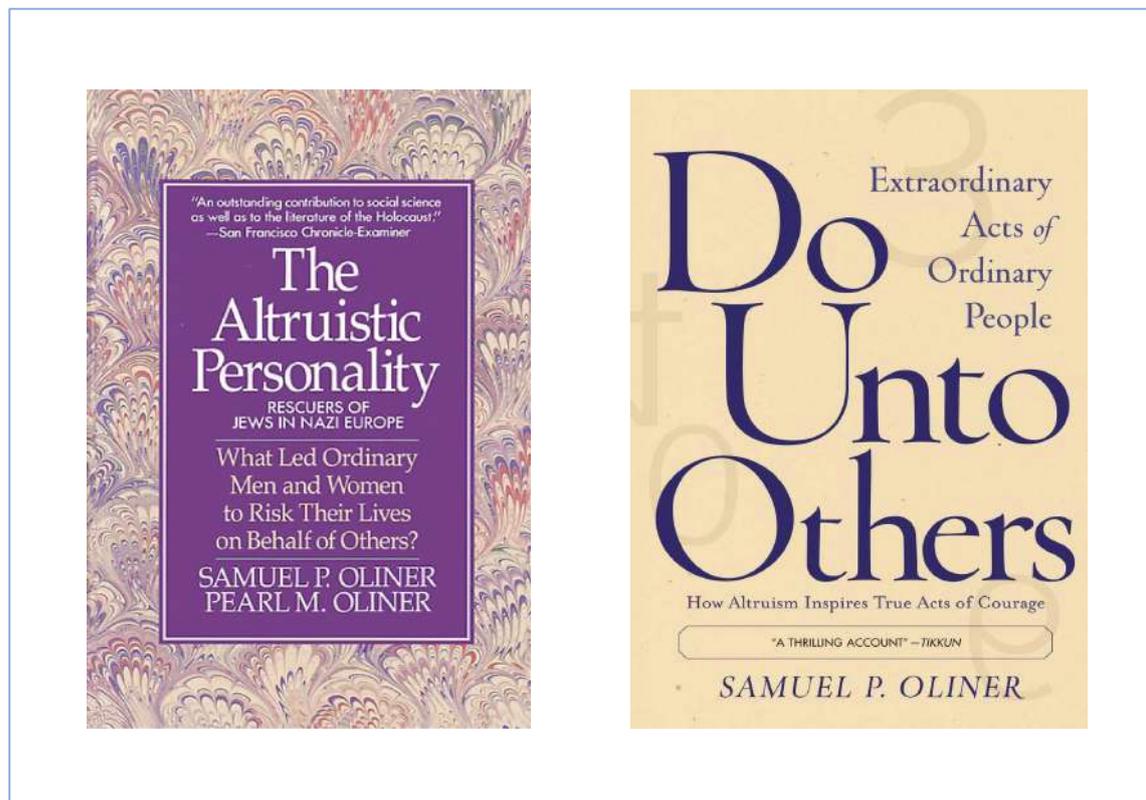
*"I don't want to be thought of as the 'girl who was shot by the Taliban' but the 'girl who fought for education.' This is the cause to which I want to devote my life."*

*"The terrorists thought they would change my aims and stop my ambitions, but nothing changed in my life except this: weakness, fear and hopelessness died. Strength, power and courage were born.*

*"If you hit a Talib with your shoe, then there would be no difference between you and the Talib. You must not treat others with cruelty and that much harshly, you must fight others but through peace and through dialogue and through education."*

Malala accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on 10 December 2014, with Indian children's rights and education advocate Kailash Satyarthi. She contributed her entire prize money of more than \$500,000 to financing the creation of a secondary school for girls in Pakistan.

Samuel and Pearl Oliner have devoted much of their lives to studying humanity at its best. Their books include *The Altruistic Personality* and *Do Unto Others*.



*The Altruistic Personality* chronicles the activities of people who protected Jews during the Holocaust. Up to 500,000 non-Jews risked their own lives to rescue the victims of Nazi persecution.

These were ordinary people, say Pearl and Samuel. They were farmers, teachers, entrepreneurs, factory workers, rich and poor, parents and single people, Protestants and Catholics.

Different people helped the Jews in different ways. Some offered them shelter, some helped them escape from prison and some smuggled them out of the country.

The rescuers committed themselves to helping Jews, knowing that capture would mean death for their families. Why? Many said, "It was the right thing to do." Individuals also said things like:

*"I was always filled with love for everyone, for every creature, for things. I am fused into every object. For me everything is alive."*

*"I sensed I had in front of me human beings that were hunted down like wild animals. This aroused a feeling of brotherhood and a desire to help."*

*"We had to help these people in order to save them, not because they were Jews, but because they were persecuted human beings who needed help."*

Let's return to the genesis of *The Altruistic Personality*. Samuel illustrates the moral of the book by describing his own experiences.

As a 12-year-old Jewish boy in Poland, he fled the Nazis after his parents were captured. Knocking on the door of a family he hardly knew, he was taken in by the mother, Balwina.

Protecting him from the Nazis, she gave her instructions. Change his name to Jusek; go to church every Sunday; learn the Catholic Catechism; get a job and ensure nobody saw him undressed.

Balwina protected him for a while, but then the situation became too dangerous. He trekked across the country with other refugees and finally found safety.

Samuel wrote another book on the theme of helping other people called *Do Unto Others*. In it he focuses on heroic, moral and philanthropic individuals who translated these values into action.

In addition to well-known names, he describes the activities of hidden heroines and heroes in many countries. Here is the introduction from the page on Amazon.

*A passing motorist stops to help the passengers of a car that has crashed into an embankment. A hospice volunteer begins her shift in hospital ward caring for people with AIDS.*

*A Vietnam chopper pilot stops the brutal execution of innocent civilians at Mylai by American soldiers. A firefighter responds to a routine call.*

*All of these people are considered heroes, but what motivates such brave and altruistic acts, whether by trained professionals or just ordinary people?*

*In **Do Unto Others**, Holocaust survivor and sociologist Samuel Oliner explores what gives an individual a sense of social responsibility, what leads to the development of care and compassion, and what it means to put the welfare of others ahead of one's own.*

*Weaving together moving personal testimony and years of observation, Oliner makes sense of the factors that elicit altruistic behavior - exceptional acts by ordinary people in ordinary times.*

*Samuel discovered that many such people had learned optimism and concern for others from their parents, teachers, peer groups and communities. They then chose to translate this moral code into action in challenging circumstances.*

*The Oliners have shown what we can learn from humanity at its best. We can choose to follow these principles in our own ways to show kindness and help other people.*

## *The Encouragement Approach In Action*

This section has explored some of the ways it is possible to encourage people. Many of these ideas can be used in both personal and professional situations.

Encouragers love to help other people to reach their goals. Many do this naturally in their personal relationships. Some also do this in their work.

Such people often prepare properly before meeting somebody they want to encourage in a professional situation. The following pages describe some of the questions I ask myself before meeting a person. You will, of course, have your own approach.



### *The Encouragement Approach*

*Different people prepare in different ways before meeting a person they want to encourage in a professional situation.*

*Here are some of the questions that I ask myself. You will, of course, have your own set of questions.*

## What Do I Know About The Person?

● *Who is the person I am going to meet? What do I know about them? What is their background? What are the things they have done in their life?*

● *What may have been the experiences they have been through? Where did they grow up? What may have been their interests when they were young? What are the things they have done in their working life?*

● *What may be their strengths? What may be their successful pattern of working? When have done satisfying projects? What may have made these satisfying? How can they build on their strengths and follow their successful style in the future?*

● *What may be their vocation? What may be the things that give them a sense of purpose? What may be the principles they want to follow in their life? How can they follow these in different situations?*

● *What do I know about the person's interests outside work? Are they interested in sports, music, the arts, design or other activities? What are the things that may give them positive energy? When may they feel most alive and creative?*

● *What do I know about their personal life? What is their living situation? If they are in a relationship, what may their partner do? If they have children, what may be happening in their lives? What may be their life goals?*

### What May Be Happening In Their World?

- *What may be happening their world at the moment? What may be happening in their professional life? What may be happening in their personal life?*
- *What may be happening in their work? What may the culture be like in their work place? What may be the good things they are experiencing? What may be their relationship with their manager and colleagues? What may be the challenges?*
- *What may be happening in their personal life? What may be happening with their health, relationships and other areas? What may be the good things they are experiencing? What may be the challenges they are facing?*

### What May Be Their Picture Of Success?

- *What may be the things they want to do in their professional life? What may be the real results they want to achieve? Looking ahead, what do they want to be feeling, saying and thinking when they look back on their professional life?*
- *What may be the things they want to do in their personal life? What may be the real results they want to achieve? Looking ahead, what do they want to be feeling, saying and thinking when they look back on their personal life?*
- *What are the positive things they want to give to people during their life? What do they want to feel, do and experience in their life? What can they do to continue to lead a positive life? What will give them a sense of peace?*

### *How Can I Help Them To Achieve Their Picture Of Success?*

- *What may be the topics they want to talk about when we meet? How can I create an encouraging environment where they feel at ease? How can we clarify the topics to explore?*
  
- *Looking at the first topic, how can I clarify the real results they want to achieve? How can I share knowledge and practical tools that they can use to achieve their goals? How can I check these resonate with them?*
  
- *How can continue to explore each topic in turn? How can I provide them with practical tools they can use? How can we finish the session in a positive way? What else can I do to help them to achieve their picture of success?*

This part of the book has explored how we can continue to encourage people. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

This invites you to explore how can continue to follow the positive encourager's approach in your life and work. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Positive Encourager's Approach*

*The specific things I can do to continue to encourage people are:*

\*

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*The specific benefits of doing these things may be:*

\*

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*Continuing To  
Do Positive Work*

## *Introduction*

There are many ways to do positive work that helps people or the planet. Different people do this in different ways.

Some people follow this path in their work as counsellors, educators, nurses, leaders or in other professional roles. They aim to enable people to shape their futures and work towards achieving their personal goals.

Some people aim to create positive teams. They start by communicating the team's purpose and principles. They then enable people to build on their strengths, do superb work and achieve the picture of success. Such teams often aim to leave a positive legacy.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you may have done positive work? Here are some answers that people give when exploring this theme.

*The specific situation in the past  
when I did positive work was:*

*When I taught in a primary school ... When I ran career development workshops in organisations ... When I worked as a grief counsellor ... When I worked as a mentor for young people starting their own businesses ... When I created software that helped people to manage complex issues.*

*When I helped prisoners of conscience ... When I worked in a football academy that helped young players to develop as both people and professionals ... When I helped to revitalise a local lake ...When I made TV programmes about the wonders of nature.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Positive Work In The Past*

*The specific situation in the past  
when I did positive work was:*

\*

*The specific things I did then  
to do positive work were:*

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*The specific things that  
happened as a result were:*

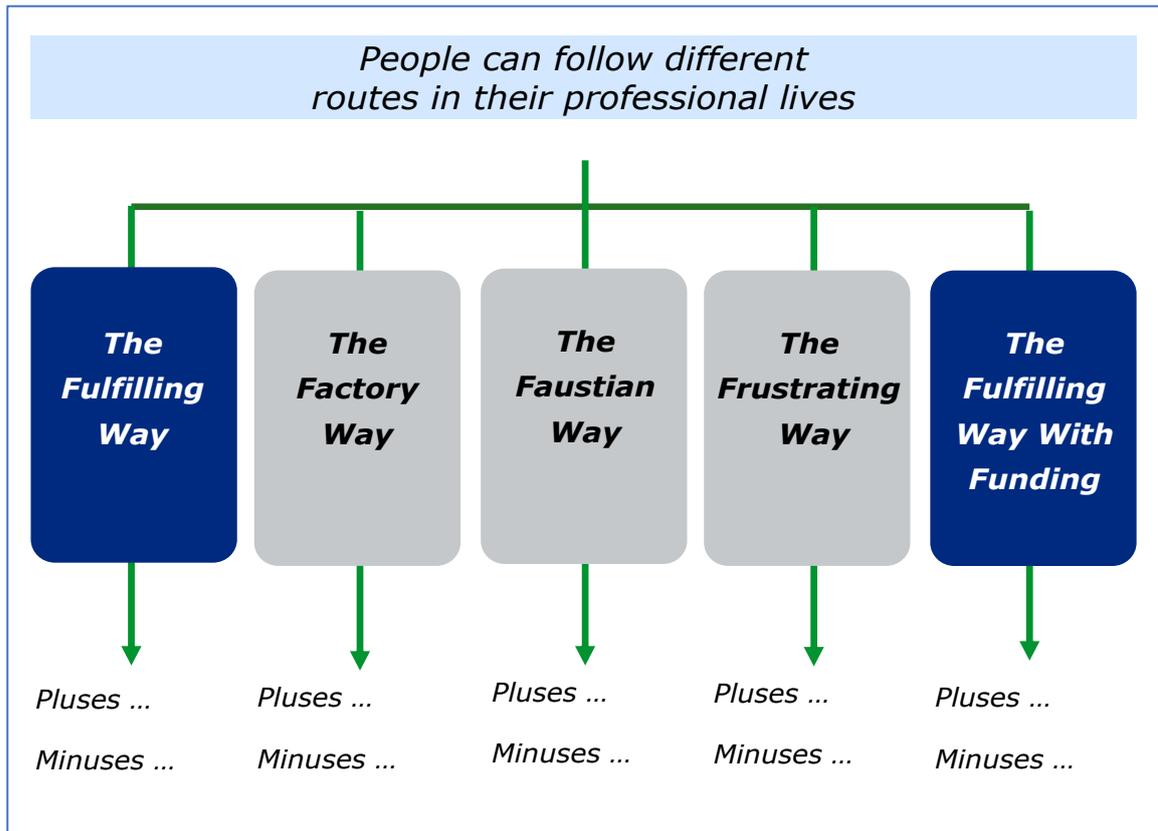
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## *People Follow Different Routes In Their Professional Lives*

Different people follow different journeys in their professional lives. The following pages describe some of these routes. There are, of course, pluses and minuses to following each of these routes.



### *The Fulfilling Way*

Some people simply focus on doing work they find fulfilling. They do what they enjoy and are not too concerned about money.

They may focus on music, dancing, painting, teaching, inventing, designing, architecture, computing, selling, psychology, cooking, nurturing or whatever.

They love to do such activities in which they feel alive and able to do their best. They follow this route, rather than listen to advisers who urge them to:

*"Study something that will give you a guaranteed career."*

Many peak performers take the fulfilling route early in their working lives. Later on, if appropriate, they learned how to get paid for following their passion.

### *The Factory Way*

Some people take this route because it is one that they were expected to take because of their background. They see doing repetitive boring work as the only way to make a living.

Schools can choose to follow The Fulfilment Model or The Factory Model in their approach to education. Those that follow the second approach see people as economic units rather than human beings.

Such schools teach to test and aim to get higher in league tables. They may say good things about equipping children to fulfil their potential, but instead they begin to resemble factories.

People who emerge from this system may or may not have what are now called the Four Cs required to thrive in the future. These are Clear Thinking, Creativity, Cooperation and Communication.

Some people find they manage to develop these by pursuing their hobbies. But it then calls for transferring these skills to shaping their careers.

Other people may emerge from the school system with little idea about their strengths and how they can do satisfying work. They are then more likely to follow their factory way in the future.

### *The Faustian Way*

Some people sell their soul for money and hope that one day they will be free to do what they really want. They accept messages such as:

*"Climb the ladder and get a good position that will provide security ... Take a job that has prospects – it may be boring, but you can do what you enjoy on the weekends ... The work may be mind-numbing, but the job has a good pension."*

If a person sells their soul, however, they may find it hard to reclaim their life and enjoy the anticipated rainbows.

### *The Frustrating Way*

Some people want to do work they enjoy but find it difficult to see how this is possible. They find that their lives become fragmented.

They may have occasional periods of doing fulfilling work but then find themselves doing lots of hamster-like activities. This can lead to becoming frustrated.

Some people find their own way to do more fulfilling work. Sometimes this may be an activity they do to the side of their day job. This can feed their soul, but they long for something more.

### *The Fulfilling Way With Funding*

Some people learn how to do fulfilling work and get funding. They find potential sponsors - people who will pay them for doing what they do best. They then help those sponsors to succeed.

Such people learn to balance their soul work and salary work, their mission and mortgage. Some do it by going freelance. Others create their perfect role in an organisation. They use their nous to craft a role that is a win-win for both themselves and the employer.

The following sections explore some of the many approaches people can follow to do satisfying work. You will, of course, choose to follow your own way.

## *The Architects, Builders And Craftsmen Approaches*

### *Architects, Builders And Craftsmen*

*Some people are architects, some are builders, some are craftsmen. Some combine all these approaches at certain times.*

#### *Architects*

*They focus on designing and overseeing the key strategies for building the house.*

#### *Builders*

*They focus on implementing the strategies for building the house.*

#### *Craftsmen*

*They focus on doing specialist work for building the house.*

Different people have different styles of working. They also like to focus on different aspects of getting the work done. The following section looks at three approaches that people follow to apply their talents.

### *Architects*

Some people are architects. They focus on the big picture and make key decisions about the 'house'. They shape the design of the project, team, organisation or company.

Such individuals also decide on and oversee the key strategies to be followed. They may then work with builders and craftsmen who use their skills to build the house.

## *Builders*

Some people are builders. They follow the agreed strategies, make sure these are implemented successfully and maintain high standards.

Such individuals make clear contracts with the architects about the desired outcomes. They then act as managers or project leaders who coordinate people's skills to build the house.

## *Craftsmen*

Some people are craftsmen. They often have specialist skills and apply these to follow the agreed strategies and do superb work.

Such individuals often like to know the outcomes to achieve and the principles to be followed. They like to be given support so they can use their skills to make their best contributions to building the house.

Some people move between the roles of being architects, builders and craftsmen. They often do this when focusing on a specific activity which they find interesting or feel is important.

Good leaders, however, often mainly focus on being architects. They then employ builders and craftsmen who pursue the agreed strategies and do superb work to build and maintain the house.

Let's return to your own work. What are the specific activities where you like to act as an architect? You like to be in charge of shaping the goals to achieve and also the strategies for achieving the picture of success.

What are the activities where, providing you agree with the brief, you are happy to be a builder? You may then enjoy implementing the strategies and making things happen.

What are the activities where, providing you agree with the aims and strategies, you do specialist craft work? You may then enjoy doing satisfying work on the detail and delivering success?

What are the specific activities when you may enjoy moving between the roles? You may want to shape the big picture, pursue the strategies and also sometimes do specialist work that delivers success.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Architects, Builders And Craftsmen*

*Architect. The specific activities  
where I enjoy being an architect are:*

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*Builder. The specific activities  
where I enjoy being a builder are:*

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\*

*Craftsman. The specific activities  
where I enjoy being a craftsman are:*

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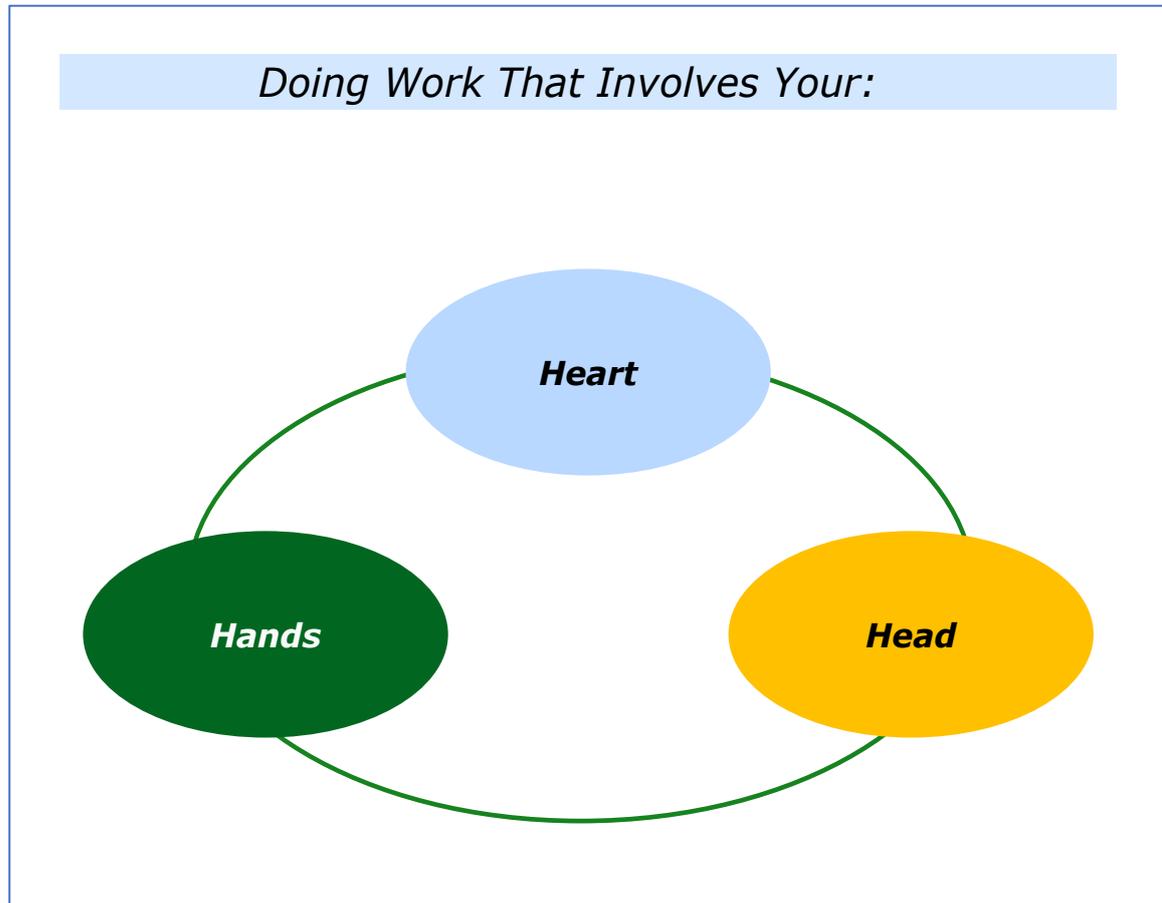
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*Architect, Building And Craftsman. The  
specific activities where I sometimes  
enjoy combining all these approaches are:*

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## *The Heart, Head And Hands Approach*



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to follow the old rule and do work that involves the heart, head and hands.

Your heart loves to do the specific activity. Your head has an understanding – a model or a picture – of what you are aiming to achieve. Your hands brings something into being.

By hands I mean, in some cases, literally your hands. You may paint, build, fix, type or do another activity.

But in other cases it may be using your whole being – your experience, body, voice or whatever to produce a result. Let's explore where you do such work.

## *Heart*

What are the activities that make your heart sing? You feel entranced and carried-away. You may love gardening, painting, teaching, cooking, solving problems, climbing, writing, inventing or whatever. You feel entranced and carried-away.

You may feel at home when doing the activity. Some people go on long journeys before discovering where they do their heart work and feel at home.

They may try many activities before finding something where they feel in their element. Feeling at ease and yet able to excel, they may say things like:

*"This is where I feel at home."*

Different people feel they are doing their heart work in different situations at different times of their lives. One former actress who is now a communications coach expressed this in the following way.

*"During my early career I felt at home in front of the TV camera or performing on stage. After a while, however, I began to feel more comfortable writing for others and directing programmes."*

*"Now I prefer to work with individuals rather than be in the public eye. I like to focus on their agenda and help them to develop their communication skills."*

*"My role is to help them to be true to themselves and communicate in a positive way. The vehicle I use is communication skills, but I find that people also grow in other ways. This is something I love."*

## *Head*

What is the specific activity that involves both your heart and your head? Your heart really wants to do it. Your head has a model for making sense of what you are doing.

Entering a situation, you go 'A, B ... and then leap to ... Z'. You have a strong feeling – or perhaps have a picture – about the goal.

Starting from this destination, you work backwards to the present. You rehearse different strategies to see which are most likely to succeed. When you feel ready, you pursue your chosen strategy.

Sometimes there will be challenges. You will then use your knowledge to find creative solutions and maybe even redraw the route. You will keep your eyes on the goal, however, and continue until you reach the destination.

## *Hands*

When do you use your hands to bring something into being? By hands I mean, in some cases, literally your hands. You may love to paint, build, fix problems, type on your laptop or do another activity.

But in other cases you may be using your whole being. You use your experience, body, voice or other senses to produce a result.

Translating intention into action, you may do something that aims to improve the world. You may be cultivating a garden, encouraging another person, teaching a class or implementing a solution.

How do you feel when doing these activities? One person said:

*"I am so involved that I forget myself but, afterwards, I feel more real, more myself."*

When does this happen for you? What are the specific activities where you use your heart, head and hands? How can you do more of these activities in the future?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. It invites you to describe a specific activity where you do these things. Try completing the following sentences.

## *The Heart, Head And Hands Approach*

*The specific activity where I feel I am  
using my heart, head and hands is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to  
pursue this activity in the future are:*

\*

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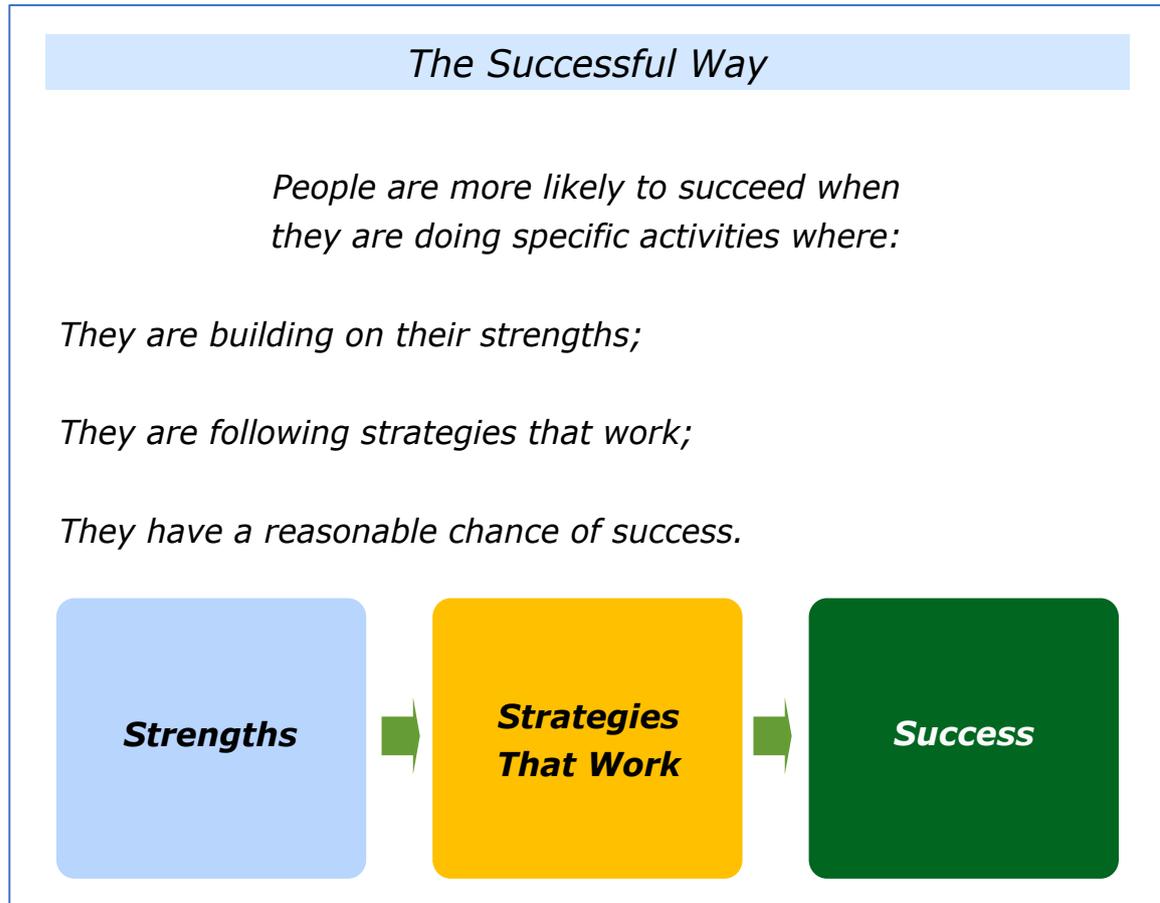
*The specific benefits of  
taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Successful Approach*



Many people want to do satisfying work. They want to look forward to events with self-confidence, set specific goals and do their best to achieve success.

How can they take these steps? People are more likely to succeed when they are doing specific activities where:

*They are building on their strengths ... They are following strategies that work ... They have a reasonable chance of success.*

This sounds obvious, but some people do not play to their strengths and do not follow strategies that work. They may also put themselves into situations where they have little chance of success.

People gain confidence as a result of achieving success. It can therefore be useful for a person to follow the successful way.

## *The Strong Work Ethic Approach*



There are many views about how people develop a strong work ethic. Some individuals seem driven from within. The Gallup Organization built on this approach when helping people to find their strengths. They used to ask a person:

*"What are the things you cannot help but do?"*

Some individuals develop such as drive as they get older. They pursue an activity that gives them pleasure. They then develop their professional skills and deliver peak performance.

People who have a strong work ethic often demonstrate similar characteristics which we will explore in greater depth throughout this book. They focus on enjoyment, effectiveness and excellences.

They focus on doing work they enjoy. They love the work and look forward to doing it each day. They enjoy the journey involved in doing the work as well as reaching the goal.

They focus on doing work that is effective. They study what works and apply these principles in their own way. They have a strong desire to keep improving and want to be even more effective in their work.

They focus on delivering consistently high standards. They then aim to expand their strategic thinking and skills to deliver excellence. They may sometimes go beyond this and do work that is extraordinary.

People who focus on these themes may not think they have a strong work ethic. Such an individual may say something like:

*"I am fortunate to do work that I enjoy. Not many people get that chance, so it is just natural to do my best when I am doing the work."*

Looking at your own life, can you think of a specific activity in which you demonstrate a strong work ethic? What do you believe are the reasons why you have such an ethic when doing the work? How do you translate this ethic into action?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Strong Work Ethic Approach*

*The specific activity in which I  
demonstrate a strong work ethic is:*

\*

*The specific reasons why I have a strong  
work ethic when doing this activity are:*

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\*

\*

*The specific things I do to  
demonstrate a strong work  
ethic when doing this activity are:*

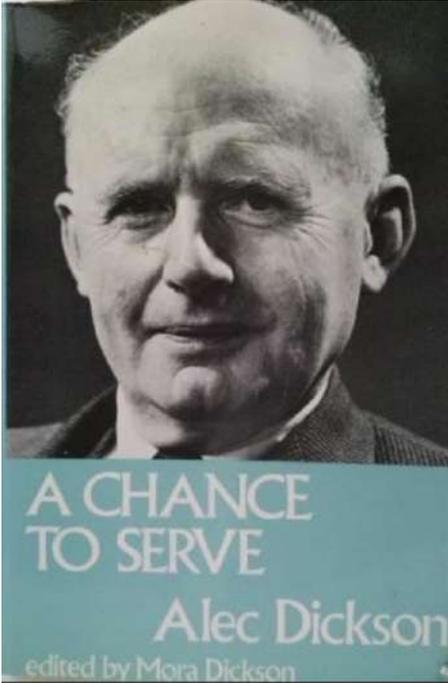
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## The Service Approach

### Alec Dickson – The Desire To Serve



*"I believe that young people have enormous idealism and, at the same time, there are many unmet needs in society.*

*"So why not match these two together? We can use the young people's energy to meet those needs and build a better world.*

*"The act of giving can show us a positive way forwards. The receiver is given help and the giver can also learn about themselves as a person. This can help to build a more humane and caring society."*

Some people like to serve something greater than themselves. They choose to take this approach rather than focusing on their own self-promotion.

The service approach was one I tried to learn from Alec Dickson, one of my mentors. He founded Voluntary Service Overseas and Community Service Volunteers.

It was Alec who gave me my first opportunity to work with people. Travelling to CSV's office in London in 1967, I had no idea how my life would change. Several years had been spent trying to get a full-time voluntary job helping others, but this had proved difficult.

During the visit to Toynbee Hall, I had a promising meeting with Elisabeth Hoodless, who was later to lead CSV. Alec then introduced himself to me.

The things he said struck an immediate chord. He believed that every person had strengths. My lack of education did not matter, he said. I had something to give.

Treating me as if I was extremely intelligent, he explained the philosophy behind VSO and CSV. Here is a summary of some of the things he said.

Alec believed that the giver often receives as much as the receiver. Why? Our self fades into the background when we are giving and yet we often feel more real afterwards.

Leaving the meeting, I floated along the pavement. Elisabeth and Alec had promised me they would find a place for me to serve.

They gave me the opportunity to become a housefather for mentally handicapped children. Since that day I have always had the opportunity to do fulfilling work.

Many people reported similar meetings that changed their lives. Here is an extract from an obituary written about Alec after his death in 1994. It was written by Martin Stephen for The Independent.

### *A Meeting Multiplied Many Times*

*I met Dickson on many occasions but the abiding memory is of the first: being summoned by him to a meeting at 11.30pm at Sheffield Midland station (he was, as usual, in transit), to discuss my recently announced placing as a volunteer at a northern remand home.*

*I was barely 17 years old. Though there were clear similarities between my recent experience in a public school boarding-house and life with 50 delinquents in a secure unit, my sense of panic was held at bay only by my sense of shock.*

*I do not remember his exact words, but he said he trusted me, as he trusted all his volunteers, to do the job, to help someone along the way and to end up just a little wiser after.*

*It was a turning point in my life and I know from countless conversations that I was one of many who were similarly affected.*

## ***Strengths, Service And Success***

There are many ways to follow the service approach. This can involve exploring the following theme. Different people do this in different ways. The following pages explore some of these themes.

### ***The Service Approach***

*This sometimes involves asking the following questions.*

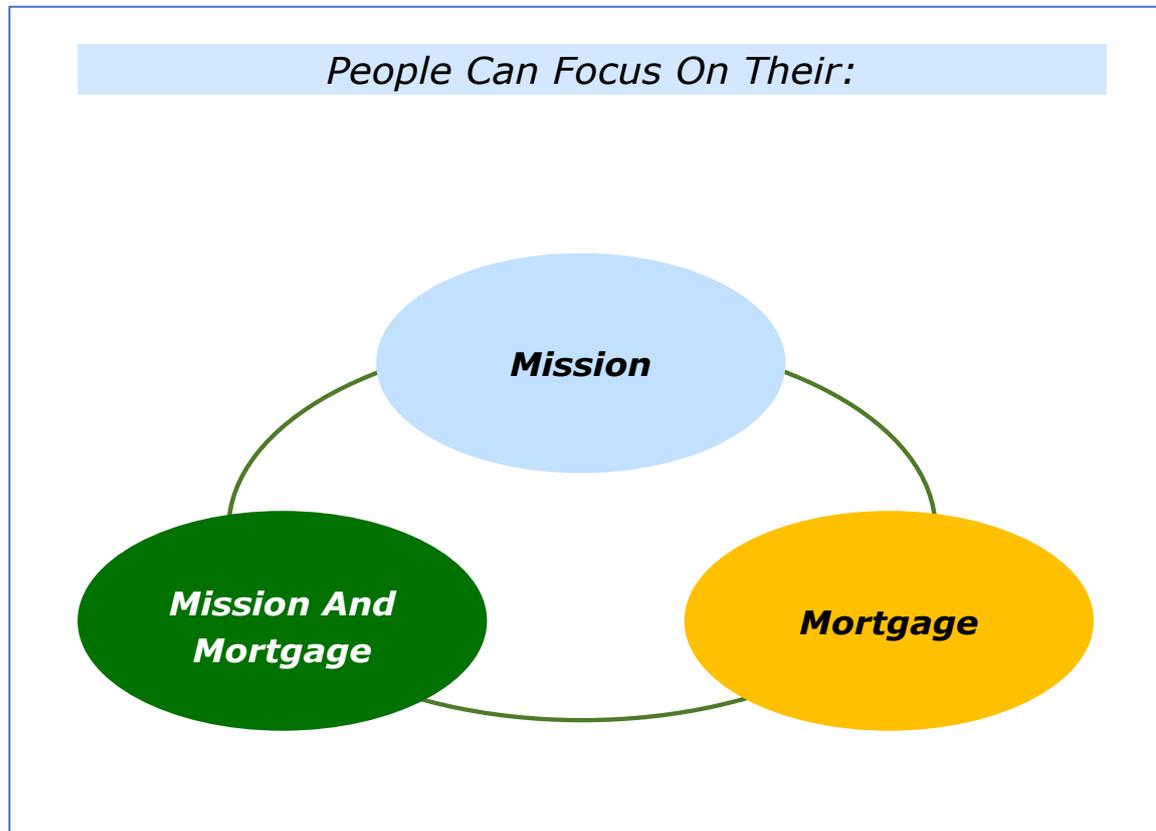
*How can I use my strengths to serve others and help them to achieve success?*

*How can I serve something greater than myself and deliver success?*

*How can I continue to do superb work and deliver success?*



## *The Mission And Mortgage Approach*



What gets you out of bed in the morning? Your mission, your mortgage or a combination of both? A person may aim to get the right blend in their life. They may say something like:

*"I'd like to pursue my labour of love, but also maintain a certain lifestyle. Is that possible?"*

Let's explore how you can balance pursuing your mission and paying your mortgage.

### *Pursuing Your Mission*

Many people who feel fulfilled in their work have a similar pattern. Early on in their professional lives – between the ages of 16 and 28 – they followed their passion.

Years later they may have learned how to make money, but during that formative time they pursued their mission. This may have been hazy, such as wanting:

*"To help people ... To create beauty ... To fight for justice ... To show a better way ... To make inspiring music."*

They did everything possible, however, to explore and then pursue their chosen road. Later they translated this mission into ways they could pay their mortgage. Bearing this in mind, somebody may ask:

*"Sound okay, but what about after 28, is there hope?"*

Of course, but this calls for regaining the habit of doing what you enjoy. Why? People make financial commitments from their mid-20s onwards.

They may want to regain their sense of purpose, but are not sure how to do so whilst, at the same time, paying their mortgage.

People who make this transition successfully often take the following steps.

*They clarify their mission – their purpose – by identifying their long-term picture of success.*

*They clarify the principles they can follow to pursue these goals.*

*They translate the principles into daily practise and work towards their picture of success.*

They do something each day – however small – that contributes to achieving their life goals. Such habits become a lifestyle and begin to fulfil their sense of mission.

## *The Guaranteed Income Approach*

There are many exercises that people use to clarify their mission. One approach is to invite a person to do the old exercise *My Guaranteed Income*.

As you may know, this invites a person to explore the following theme.

*"Imagine that you had a guaranteed income for the rest of your life. You had enough money live comfortably. What would you do?"*

Few people say they would do nothing. Many reflect for a while. Then they say:

*"What I would really like to do would be ..."*

They often describe things that would make their soul sing. Bearing in mind their answers, one approach is to explore how they can begin doing some of these things.

Sometimes later they can focus on how they can do fulfilling work and, if they wish, get some funding. At the very least, however, this exercise provides a good beginning for getting the creative juices flowing.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *My Guaranteed Income*

*If I had a guaranteed income  
for the rest of my life, the  
specific things I would do would be:*

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*The specific steps I can take towards  
doing some of those things now are:*

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*The specific benefits of  
doing those things will be:*

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## *Paying Your Mortgage*

Many people want to maintain a certain lifestyle. The often means earning enough money to pay the mortgage. Sometimes this works out well. Sometimes it can lead to over-stretching, which can lead to problems.

Sometimes unexpected events cause people to assess their life goals. One person explained this in the following way.

*"Five years ago our family went through a crisis. My partner became ill and I almost lost my job. Like many people in this situation, we asked:*

*'How much money do we need – as opposed to how much do we want?'*

*"Eventually we found it was possible to live on just over half our previous outgoings.*

*"Getting back in shape meant, for example, buying and using food carefully, rather than throwing lots of it away; reducing outgoings, such as certain kinds of insurance; and selling-off stuff at car boot sales.*

*"Looking back, the crisis taught us to value what was really important. We had spent years spending money on things that weren't necessary."*

Financial turnarounds take time and creativity. But it can be liberating to feel that you – rather than others – are shaping your financial future.

## *Pursuing Your Mission And Paying Your Mortgage*

How to get the right balance? If you are already following your mission, then it may be a case of aiming:

*To do more of the things you find fulfilling.*

*To get enough funding to pay the mortgage.*

By continuing to follow this pattern, eventually every piece of work will contribute to pursuing your mission, as well as paying the bills. If the gap between mission and mortgage work is too painful, however, then it could mean making a transition.

Let's consider how to make this happen. We are sometimes told:

*"Do what you love and the money will follow."*

This sounds good, but another mantra is:

*"Build on your strengths, do superb work and help your customers to succeed."*

*"Keep doing the right things in the right way every day. Then maybe the money will follow."*

Imagine that you want to take this step. Let's explore some of the potential options.

One option may be to build on the satisfying parts of your present role. It is then to expand these until they can be translated into a full-time role.

How to increase the chances of an employer being attracted to such a proposal? They are more likely to accept it if they can see how it will help them to be successful.

Bearing this in mind, it will be vital to show how doing this role will benefit the employer. You can then ensure it provides wins for both yourself and your organisation.

A second option is to move to another employer. When doing this, however, it will be vital:

*To clarify how you can build on your strengths, do satisfying work and help the employer to achieve success.*

You can then position what you offer: a) by showing the employer you understand their challenges; b) by showing how you want to use your strengths to help them to achieve success.

Imagine that you have tried these approaches but prefer to go another route. You may want to go freelance or set up your own business.

There are several routes you can follow to make this happen. Here are three of the most common approaches.

*People setting up their own business can choose to follow either:*

● *The Sink Or Swim Approach*

*They can give up everything and aim to start a new life.*

● *The Sideshow Approach*

*They can maintain their present role but build-up their new work during evenings and the weekends.*

● *The Serious Plan Approach*

*They can start by setting a date in the future. They can then implement a serious action plan for getting enough income by that date to make the transition to full-time enjoyable work.*

### *The Sink Or Swim Approach*

A person may get to this point because they feel overwhelmed and want to change everything immediately. They may say something like the following.

*"I am totally fed-up with my present job. So I will hand-in my notice on Friday, give-up everything and start afresh. I will make it or bust."*

Sounds brave and sometimes it works. Two types of people pursue this route successfully.

*Emigrants who leave their country and start again with few assets.*

They work hard from day one and are also streetwise.

*Entrepreneurs who start their business fired by anger.*

They may have got sacked or got frustrated trying to get an idea through the bureaucracy of an organisation. They may say things like:

*"I will show them. I will never be beholden to anybody again."*

There is one group for whom this approach is less likely to work. People who are semi-institutionalised, disaffected with their present job and think that if they have a good idea the money will roll-in.

The pluses of the approach are that you start straight away, are forced to use your creativity and feel great if you succeed. The minuses are that you have little security, have few customers and may use all your energy just to survive.

### *The Sideshow Approach*

A person may take a medium-term view. They may say something along the following lines.

*"I will keep my full-time job but develop my own business on the side. I want to make sure the side business works before making the transition."*

*"If the part-time business takes-off, then I will quit my present job. I will then invest the time and money needed to make my business into a profitable enterprise."*

The sideshow approach has become more common over the past decade. Previously frowned-upon by employers, it is now actually encouraged by many new media businesses, providing it does not clash with the corporate goals.

Frequently I hear people who take this route saying things like:

*"I enjoy working here, but I also have another business which I work on it in the evenings."*

*"My partner runs the company, but I provide consultancy."*

*"I had the initial idea, but I found two people who took it to market and I sit on the board."*

The pluses of this approach are you retain a sense of security. You can build from a position of strength and try many things to see if they work without risking everything.

The minuses are that you may feel split and exhausted. You may never progress beyond being a small business. You may also still take calculated risks when going full-time.

### *The Serious Plan Approach*

A person may take a calculated long-term view. They may say something along the following lines.

*"I will stay in my present job for the moment but aim to become a self-employed consultant in 6 months."*

*"By that date I aim to have customer orders totalling £25k for the first quarter."*

*"Starting from this goal and working backwards, I will make a specific plan showing the concrete things I must do to translate the dream into a reality.*

*"For example, I can probably get some work from my current employer, plus my previous boss who has left to join another company.*

*"Providing I do something every day towards getting future customers, I will probably achieve my goal by that date."*

The serious plan approach has a good chance of success, providing the person implements it with a sense of urgency. This final point is crucial.

Sometimes in mentoring sessions I invite a would-be freelancer to consider the following scenario:

*"Imagine that your present job is going to disappear in 6 months.*

*"You are then not allowed to work full-time with any company. But you are allowed to do freelance work for people in your present company and for other organisations.*

*"Who would be the first three people you would contact? What would you offer to these people? How could you help them to be successful? Do you think you would be able to survive?"*

People invariably say they would survive, perhaps even thrive. They may only leap into action, however, when the knife is on their throat.

The pluses of this approach are that you build from strengths and minimise the risks. You reach satisfying milestones along the road and create the basis for building a successful business.

The minuses are that you must be disciplined and encourage yourself on the journey. You may experience conflicts of interests,

especially with present customers who you may want to keep when you go freelance. You will never feel 100% certain of financial security.

A person may look at their various options and prefer to stay in their present role - even if it unsatisfying. This is also a choice and it has consequences.

The person can recognise that they have made this choice rather than feel resentful. They can then aim to build on the pluses and manage the minuses.

Let's return to your own life and work. How can you continue to get the right balance between your mission and mortgage? What will be the benefits of taking this approach?

Later in the book we will explore many practical tools you can use – and that you can help others to use – to do fulfilling work and get funding.

If you wish, however, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Mission And Mortgage*

*The specific things I can do to pursue my mission are:*

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*The specific things I can do to pay my mortgage are:*

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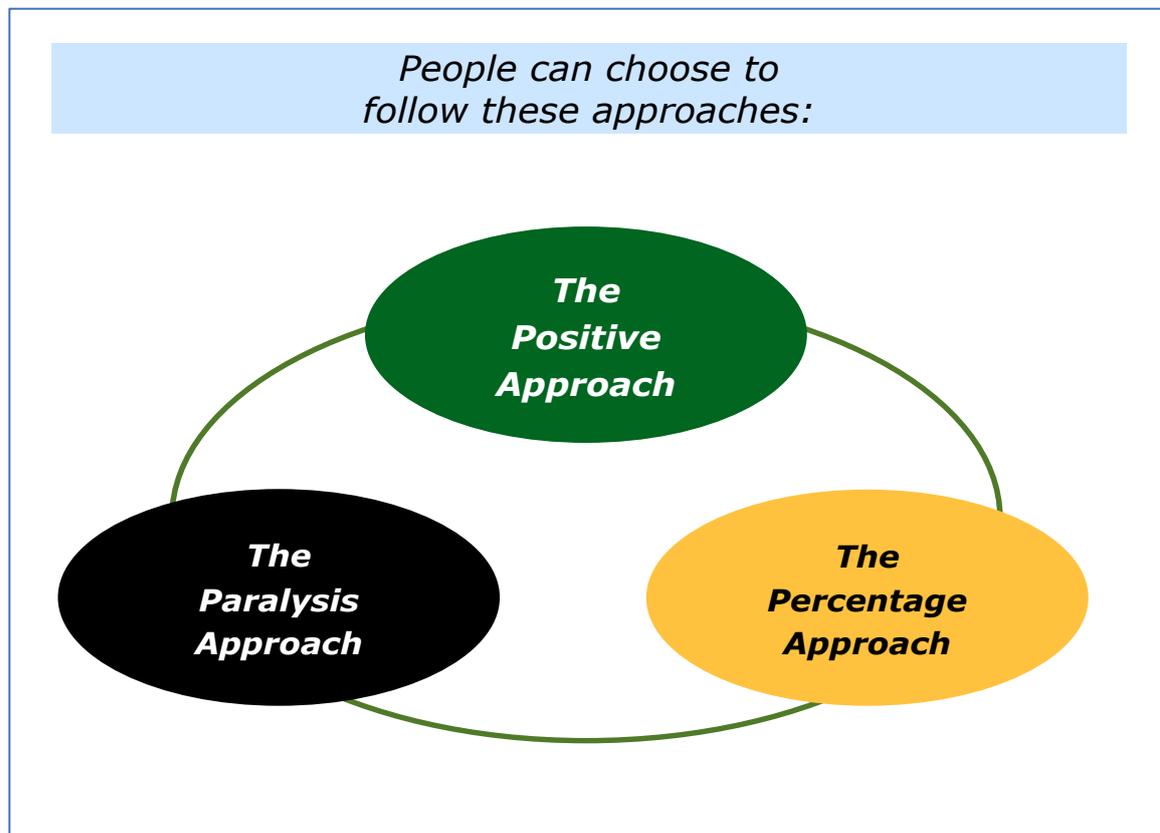
*The specific things I can do to get the right balance between pursuing my mission and paying my mortgage are:*

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## *The Positive, Percentage And Paralysis Approaches*



This is a model that can be applied in daily life or when tackling challenges. People can choose to follow the positive, percentage or paralysis approaches.

### *The Positive Approach*

A person can choose to be positive and proactive. They can aim to make things happen rather than wait for things to happen.

This is an approach I saw demonstrated when working with sports psychologists. Some coaches encouraged their players to start by clarifying their picture of success.

The key was to help the players to focus what they could control. They could aim to do their personal best but they could not control whether they always won. Going into their version of the arena, the

player could be positive, follow their principles and work towards their picture of success.

As in life, sometimes it was okay for the players to take the percentage approach, but it was important to avoid falling into paralysis. The latter approach, such as continually looking at the clock when leading, was a recipe for disaster.

Looking back on your life, when have you taken the positive approach? You may have done this when recovering from an illness, setting up a business, tackling a challenge or doing another activity.

What did you do to take this approach? You may have chosen to have a positive attitude. You may then have set specific goals, clarified your strategy and translated this into a clear action plan.

You may have followed a discipline and, when appropriate, found solutions to challenges. You may then have done your personal best to achieve the picture of success.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you want to take the positive approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

How can you build on the principles that have worked for you in the past? What are the other skills you may need to add? How can you anticipate and manage potential setbacks? How can you do your best to achieve success?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Positive Approach*

*The specific situation in the future where I may want to follow elements of the positive approach may be:*

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*The specific things I can do then to follow elements of the positive approach are:*

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*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Percentage Approach*

Sometimes it can make sense to take the percentage approach. You may take this approach to maintain stability, stay out of trouble or avoid making costly mistakes.

Playing safe is absolutely the right approach in some situations. It is particularly appropriate when managing your money, climbing a mountain or taking care of your health.

Sometimes the percentage approach is a way of getting back to basics. A golfer does this after hitting a poor shot. They aim to regain their rhythm and create a good foundation for the rest of the round.

A dieting person may choose to follow a sustainable diet. This is more reliable than going on crash diets that also lead to wild swings in their weight.

A football team that is closing in on victory may aim to keep doing the basics. These include keeping their shape, winning the ball and moving to give teammates passing options. This is more likely to be successful than remaining static and hoping to withstand pressure.

Pursuing the percentage approach may only enable you to reach 7/10. But it provides the platform for going on to be more positive and reaching 10/10.

One key point is worth underlining. The percentage approach can sometimes lapse into standing still and doing nothing. This can lead to falling into paralysis.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the percentage approach? How can you do this in your own way without lapsing into paralysis?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Percentage Approach*

*The specific situation in the future where I may want to follow elements of the percentage approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to follow elements of the percentage approach are:*

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*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Paralysis Approach*

A person may sit back and wait for things to happen. They wait for outside forces to shape their destiny. This creates negative energy and they can fall into a negative cycle.

Some people fall into paralysis because they are frightened. One view is that authoritarian figures try to break the human spirit so that people feel powerless to do anything. They therefore cede power to the authority.

Some people are afraid of making mistakes and adopt negative self-talk. One sports psychologist explained this in the following way.

*"Players who lose confidence often experience paralysis. Instead of using their strengths, they go into their shell. They may get into a negative spiral and feel everything is out of control."*

*"My first job is to establish whether a player wants to take responsibility for shaping their future. We spend a long time on that because some players look for excuses."*

*"We then move on to how they can control the controllables. I invite them: a) to describe the specific things they can do to take the percentage or positive approach; b) to describe the specific benefits of doing these things."*

*"The physical effects of this exercise can soon show. The players seem to walk taller, look you in the eye and volunteer for tasks. They begin to take more responsibility, both on and off the field."*

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to avoid the paralysis approach? How can you switch into the percentage of positive approaches?

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Paralysis Approach*

*The specific situation in the future where I may want to avoid falling into the paralysis approach may be:*

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*The specific things I can do to avoid falling into the paralysis approach and do my best to achieve positive results are:*

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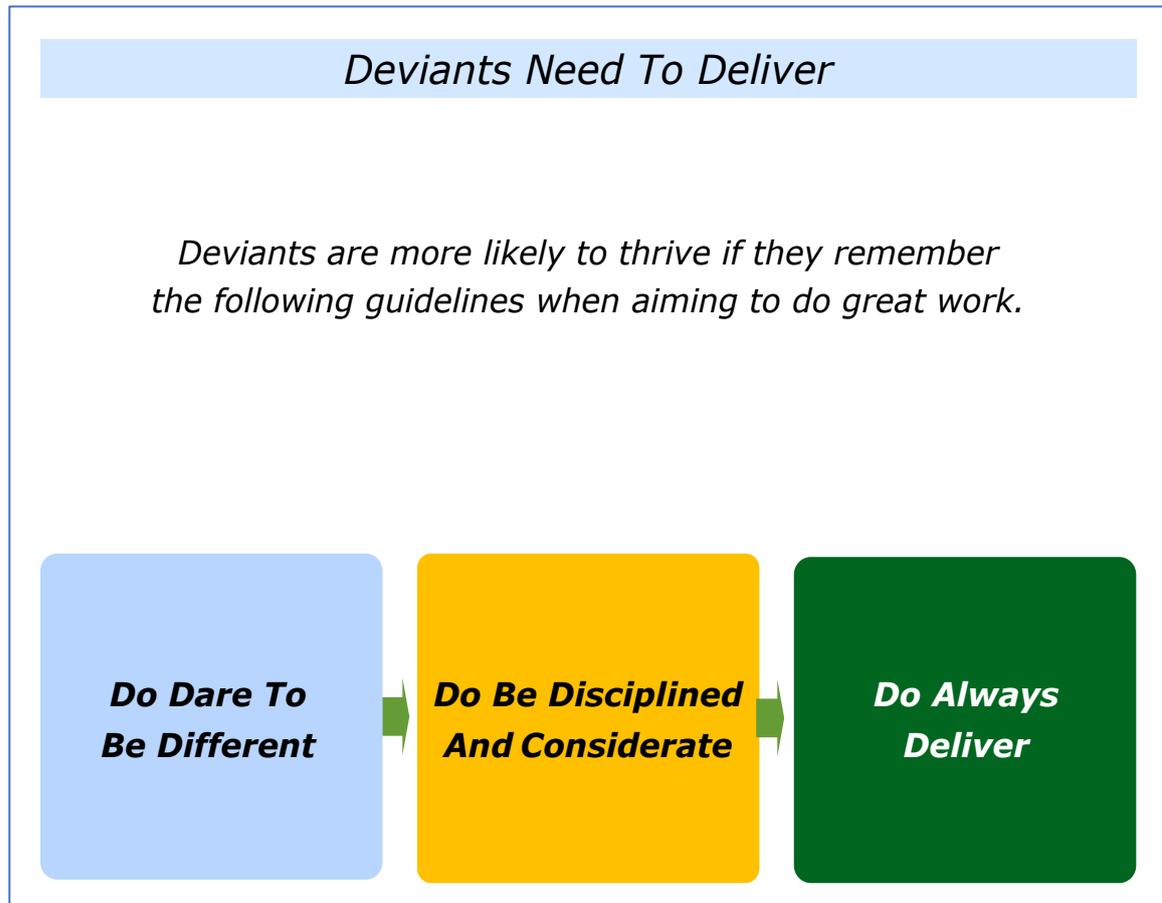
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Deviant Who Delivers Approach*



Creativity sometimes calls for doing things differently. But some organisations have an ambivalent relationship with people who are different.

Bearing this in mind, how can you survive - and even thrive - by doing things your own way? Sometimes this is exciting but failing to deliver the goods will have repercussions. The key message is:

*If you are going to be a deviant, you always have to deliver.*

Every person is different. They have a different life story, successes and setbacks. Some individuals learn how to channel their personality in a way that helps them and other people.

People who take this step sometimes follow certain guidelines on the ways towards doing great work. These are: a) do dare to be

different; b) do be disciplined and considerate; c) do always deliver. Let's explore these themes.

### *Do Dare To Be Different*

Many creative people have a background of feeling different when they grew up. As mentioned earlier, every person feels individual, but some may have been labelled as different.

A person may have been a late developer, dyslexic or be different in another way. Those individuals who went on to thrive often had certain things in common.

*They were supported by key people in their life - such as a parent, teacher or another significant person.*

*They were told to believe in themselves but were also taught how to survive or thrive in various situations.*

*They began to learn how use their differences to help themselves or other people.*

Such a person might still meet challenges, but they learned how to accept and use their feelings in a positive way. This often helped them during their first part of their life. This brings us to the second key message given to such people.

### *Do Be Disciplined And Considerate*

Many individuals met a coach or mentor who saw their talents and encouraged them to develop. Such a person sometimes also gave them messages along the following lines.

*"You do have talents, but it is up to you how you use them. Here are some things to bear in mind.*

*"First, do follow your drives but also be disciplined. Many people have ambitions but some do not make good use of their talents.*

*"Doing great work calls for doing what you believe in. It also calls for being disciplined – plus learning from both disappointments and successes.*

*"Second, be considerate to other people. You want to be understood, so it is important to show kindness to others.*

*"Be positive and professional towards both colleagues and customers. Show respect for people and help them to succeed.*

*"This can help to get goodwill in the bank. You may then find it easier: a) to get ideas through; b) to keep your job if you make a mistake – although that cannot be guaranteed."*

## *Do Always Deliver*

Creative people recognise this is the golden rule. It is vital to keep doing great work and delivering the goods. It helps if this work is seen as good for the customers, colleagues and organisation.

Deviants often need to over-deliver. Why? The way they operate may upset some people who wait for them to fail. These people may then pile in if the person makes a mistake.

The Chief Technology Officer of a company had this experience. Brilliant and customer focused, he became the lead person providing the company's services to the government. He also showed consideration to both colleagues and customers.

Being savvy, he developed a Plan B. He created a website that showcased pacesetting technologies that were helping governments around the world. This proved a good back up.

During the early 2000's the company he worked for decided to change the guard in the leadership team. The new CEO insisted that the senior managers spend more time in the office and they should also follow certain strict procedures.

The CTO managed to survive for a few months, but then was let go. The bizarre reason he was given – and this is true – was:

*"You have to spend more time in the office in internal meetings."*

Several months passed. The former CTO was then approached by the government to do contract work. In addition to liking the work he had done for them previously, they liked the ideas on his website.

The contract work eventually turned into a full-time role. This resulted in an odd twist – he was put in charge of selecting technology suppliers to the government. This included vetting sales pitches from his former company.

The technology company eventually fired the CEO and vowed to become more focused. This led to the former CTO giving them the opportunity to do a project to prove they were serious about customer service.

He continues to work for the government but also maintains a Plan B and Plan C. These include running a superb website, publishing a book and doing keynote speeches. He continues to be a deviant who over-delivers.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation in which you may want to follow elements of this approach?

What can you do then to follow your drive and be disciplined? How can you show consideration for colleagues and customers? How can you do great work and aim to over-deliver?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Deviant Who Delivers*

*The specific situation in the future  
where I may want to follow  
elements of this approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to follow  
elements of this approach in my way are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may  
happen as a result may be:*

\*

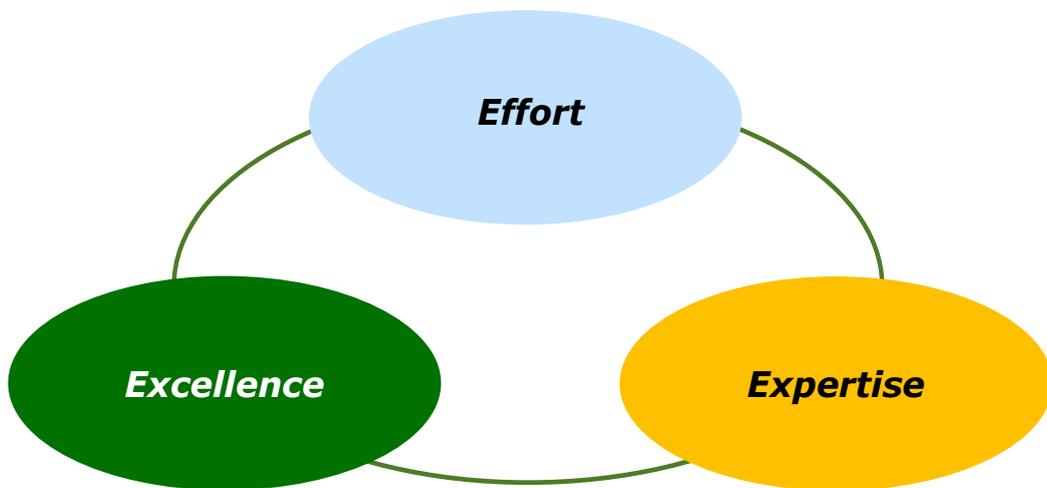
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## *The Earning Things Rather Than Entitlement Approach*

### *Great Workers Believe In The Ethic Of Earning Things*

*They focus on an activity where they are in their element – at ease and able to excel. They then pursue the following steps on the way towards earning things.*



Great workers believe in earning things rather than being entitled to things. They actually believe in following this ethic whilst also realising they may not always reap the rewards.

They often focus on a specific activity where they are in their element – at ease and yet able to excel. They also have an edge – the ability to quickly get to the heart of the matter - but actually feel at ease in potentially edgy situations.

Such people then put their energies into taking the following steps. They then often enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal.

## *Effort*

Great workers love putting in the effort required to do good work. They often use their strengths, strategic thinking and skills to apply themselves. They enjoy plunging into work that and using their whole being.

Such people love to pursue their craft. They take this approach whether working as counsellors, song writers, carpenters, designers or pursuing another path. They recognise that:

*You never retire from your vocation.*

They also learn to channel their effort and energy as they get older. They make good use of their prime times – the times of the day when they have most energy. They may also learn how to let their minds drift and get creative ideas when they are pottering around.

## *Expertise*

Great workers often have natural expertise in the activities in which they excel. They have a feel for the activity and demonstrate the following quality. They do things that:

*To them appear to be going slowly but to everybody else appear to be going swiftly.*

Such people do things that to them seem simple but to others seem difficult. Sometimes they do not realise they have such a gift. One person I worked with expressed this in the following way.

*"I did not realise I was good at something because to me it seemed simple. Then one day my coach explained this to me by saying that I was an ordinary person with an extraordinary gift.*

*"It was up to me: a) to learn how to manage my daily life; b) to make use of the gift I had been given."*

Great workers want to add to their experience and expertise. Some choose to start out at ground level.

Somebody who wants to learn about helping people, for example, may work as a volunteer as a homeless shelter, children's home, hospice or in an hospital.

They want to get the experiences into their body and bones rather than just into their brain. They want to do work they involves the heart, head and hands. They believe in getting the grounding right before aiming to great work.

Such workers love to gather knowledge and expand their expertise. They then aim to apply it by going through the stages of awareness, application and achievement. They want to apply the knowledge to deliver the next stage.

### *Excellence*

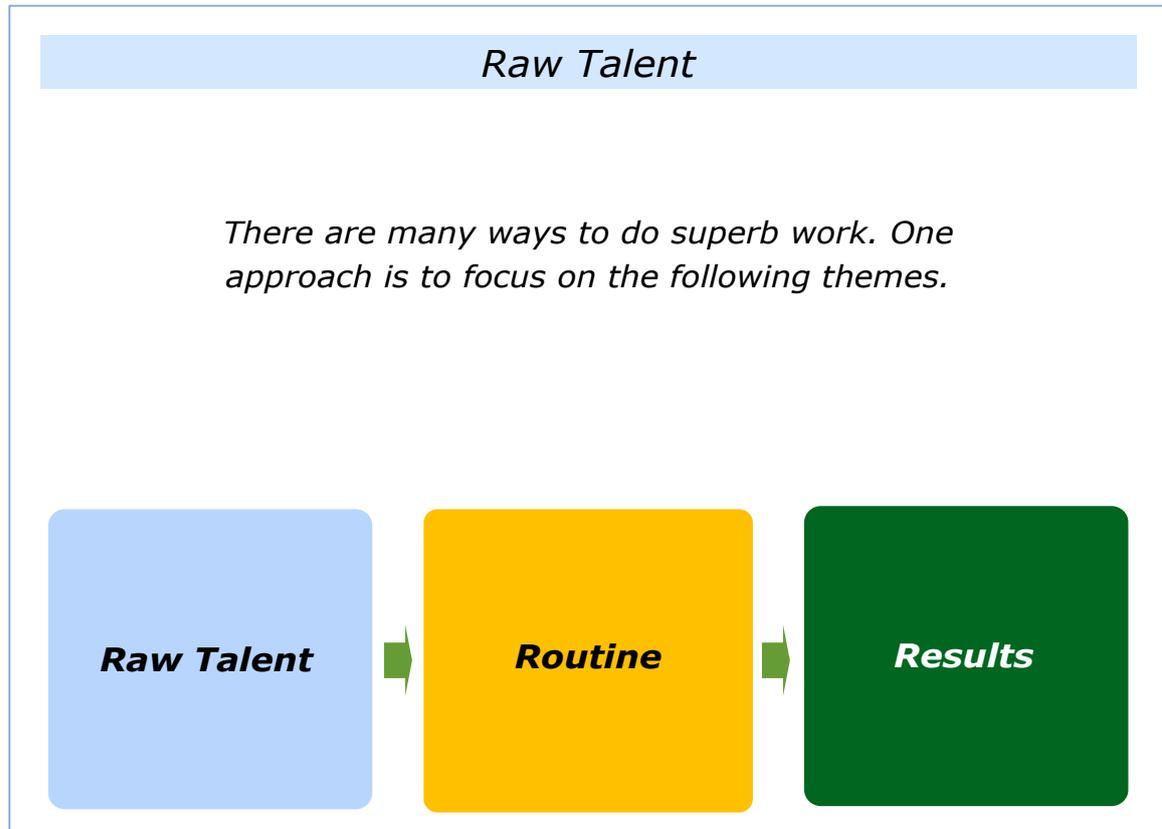
Great workers believe in the old maxim that excellence is a habit. Whilst building on their expertise and experiences, they believe in earning their corn each day.

Superb actors, artists, artisans and other workers believe in preparing properly. Whatever their age, they rehearse what they are going to do. They then click into action and do their best to achieve the desired results.

Such workers aim to do work that is a) effective; b) excellent. Sometimes they may do work that is exceptional or extraordinary. Sometimes they do work that goes into another dimension and give people positive memories for life.

Good leaders bear these things in mind when recruiting people. They look for people who have a track record of believing in earning things rather than entitlement. They then encourage these people to use their expertise to help the team to achieve excellence.

## *The Raw Talent, Routine And Results Approach*



There are many ways to help a person to do superb work. One approach is to help them to build on their raw talent, follow routines they believe in and deliver the desired results.

Imagine that you are working with a person who wants to take these steps. Let's explore how you may can help them by focusing on following themes.

### *Raw Talent*

There are many models for spotting a person's talents. You can look for when they are in their element – at ease and yet able to excel. If appropriate, you can also look for when a person demonstrates the following qualities.

## *The Enterprise Approach*

*There are many ways to spot a person's talents. One approach is to focus on when they demonstrate the following qualities.*



This approach involves looking for when a person comes alive. Let's look at one example of how this can be used.

During the 1970s and 80s I ran many programmes for young people. These aimed to help them to earn a living doing satisfying work.

During the sessions I invited the young people to do many different activities. Looking at each person in turn, the aim was spot when the individuals demonstrated the following qualities.

### *Energy*

*They were doing something they enjoyed that gave them positive energy*

## *Enterprise*

*They were proactive, showed initiative and found solutions to challenges.*

## *Excellence*

*They had expertise in the specific activity and the potential to deliver excellence.*

Many of the individuals went on to do satisfying work. One person built and sold a company that specialised creating clothing for mountaineers, fire fighters and steeplejacks. Another built and sold companies that produced medical solutions.

The aim was to look for when a person did work they enjoyed. It was also to look for when they showed enterprise and had the expertise to maybe go on to deliver excellence.

## *Routine*

Great workers often apply their talents by following routines they believe in. They then keep following these principles on the way towards performing superb work.

Some workers spend years before finding their successful style of working. They then keep following this framework to flow, focus and finish. Sometimes this leads to a sense of fulfilment.

Great workers often follow an organic pattern. They build on their strengths and follow their successful style of working. They do what they do best and work in the way they work best.

Some people intuitively adopt this approach early in their lives. Some people take much longer. They then keep following these principles and also add to their repertoires.

Imagine you are helping a person to apply their talents. If appropriate, you can help them find and follow routines they believe in. This sometimes involves focusing on the following themes.

## *Routines*

*You can help a person to find and follow routines they believe in:*

- *To build on their talents, focus on what they can control and clarify the desired results;*
- *To apply their talents, perform superb work and do their best to achieve the desired results;*
- *To develop their repertoire and manage challenges on the way towards achieving the desired results.*

You can help the person to follow their own routine for building on their talents and setting goals. One approach is to encourage them to work through the following questions.

*What are my talents? What are the specific activities where I may have the ability to deliver As rather than Bs or Cs? Which of these talents do I want to build on?*

*What are the things I can control when building on these talents? What are the things I can't control? How can I build on what I can control and manage what I can't?*

*Bearing in mind what I can control, how can I build on these talents? What are the goals I want to achieve? What are the desired results?*

You can help the person to follow their own routine for applying their talents and doing superb work. One approach is to encourage them to work through the following questions.

*How can I build on my strengths and follow my successful style of working? Looking back, what is my successful pattern for working?*

*When have I done successful work in the past? What did I do right then? What were the principles I followed? How can I follow those principles in the future?*

*What are the routines I can follow to pursue these successful patterns? What other skills can I add? How can I then perform superb work and do my best to achieve the desired results?*

Imagine that you have helped a person to focus on these themes. It will then be time to move on to the next stage.

## *Results*

Great workers often follow certain routines to keep performing superb work. They then do their best to deliver the desired results.

Such people often find and follow their successful pattern for finishing things. They may be good, for example, at managing their energy, organising their time in blocks and doing deep work.

They may be good at adding to their repertoire of skills. They may also develop their ability to anticipate challenges and manage difficult challenges.

You can help the person to follow their own routine for doing their best to achieve success. One approach is to encourage them to work through the following questions.

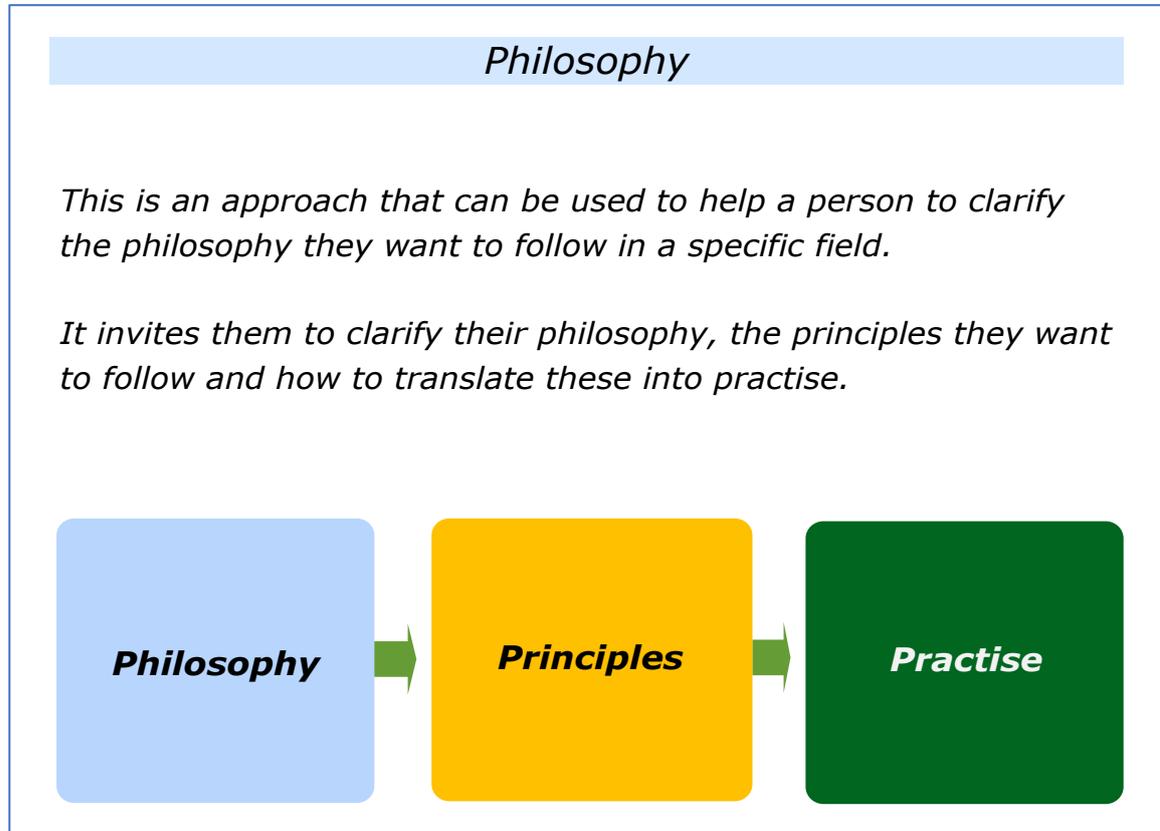
*How can I keep performing superb work? What can I do to keep following good habits? What can I do to keep focusing on what is working and what can be improved?*

*What can I do to keep adding to my repertoire? How can I keep developing my strategic thinking and practical skills? How can I anticipate any manage any potential challenges?*

*How can I follow my successful pattern for finishing? How can I do my best to deliver the desired results? How can I deliver ongoing success?*

There are many ways to help a person to develop. One approach is help them to build on their talent, follow their chosen routine and do their best to deliver the desired results.

## *The Philosophy, Principles And Practise Approach*



This is an approach that can be used to help a person to clarify the philosophy they want to follow in their professional work. They may be aiming to encourage people, pass on knowledge, lead teams or do another activity.

Th approach also helps them to focus on the guiding principles they want to follow. The aim is to help them:

*To clarify their philosophy;*

*To clarify the principles they want to follow to translate their philosophy into action;*

*To clarify the specific ways they want to put these principles into practise and, if possible, to get positive results.*

The following pages describe one approach to making this happen. The example given is from a person who was working in the helping professions.

You can adapt this approach in your own way to customise it to the person and their professional contribution. It involves helping a person to work through the following steps.

## *Philosophy*

John was already doing some work that involved counselling and coaching. Bearing this in mind, we began by exploring his strengths.

*What were the specific ways in which John liked to help people?*

*What were the specific activities that - when he did these - gave him positive energy?*

*Which of these activities were those where he may have the ability to help people do superb work?*

John enjoyed help people to develop. Sometimes he did this by counselling troubled people. Sometimes by helping people to take care of their wellbeing. Sometimes by helping young athletes to improve their performance.

Bearing these things in mind, I invited John to do an exercise that I have often done with people in the helping professions. This invited him to clarify his philosophy about how he believed people grew.

Here are the reasons for doing such an exercise with people in the helping professions. People workers can gain strength:

*By clarifying their philosophy – their beliefs – about how people grow;*

*By clarifying the principles they therefore want to follow to help people to grow;*

*By clarifying how they can use their strengths to translate these principles into practise and help people grow.*

Different people workers give different answers when exploring this theme. Here are some of the answers they give.

*I believe that people grow by:*

*Being given encouragement ... Taking responsibility ... Setting clear goals ... Working to achieve those goals ... Building on their strengths ... Learning life skills they can use to shape their futures ... Being committed to continuous improvement ... Helping other people ... Getting successes.*

John clarified how he believed that people could grow. This included caring for their wellbeing, doing fulfilling work and earning enough money to support their lifestyle.

As mentioned earlier, this kind of exercise can be adapted by people to fit their professional work. Here is a framework that people can use when clarifying their philosophy.

*My Professional Philosophy*

*The professional work I want to do is:*

\*

*The specific things that I believe in – such as the things that I believe are important - when doing such professional work are:*

\*

\*

\*

*An educator may say, for example;*

*"I believe it is important to encourage, educate and enable people to achieve ongoing success."*

*A designer may say:*

*"I believe it is important to design things that are simple – but in a profound way - satisfying and successful."*

*A technical expert may say:*

*"I believe it is important to provide technical products and services that help people to simplify their lives."*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to do the following things.

*Describe a specific activity or area in which you would like to clarify your philosophy.*

*Describe your philosophy in this specific activity or area.*

You may want to start brainstorming by beginning with the words: "I believe it is important to ..." or "I want to ..." Keep going until you feel empty. Then try to summarise your beliefs or the things you want to do. The things you write may evolve over the years. For the moment, however, write this summary as your philosophy.

*Describe the specific reasons why you believe in this philosophy.*

You may believe in it because it follows certain beliefs or principles. You may also believe that following it will bring benefits to people.

## *Philosophy*

*The specific activity or area in which  
I want to clarify my philosophy is:*

\*

*The specific things that I believe in –  
such as the things that I believe are  
important – in this activity or area are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific reasons why I  
believe in this philosophy are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Principles*

The philosophy clarifies what a person believes in and why. The principles describe the guidelines they want to follow to translate this philosophy into action.

How to take this step? One approach is for a person to revisit their philosophy. They can then brainstorm and settle on for, example, the three key principles they can follow to translate it into action. Here is the exercise on this theme.

*My Philosophy is:*

\*

*The principles I can follow to translate  
this philosophy into action are:*

\*

\*

\*

John revisited his philosophy. He wanted to help people to take care of their wellbeing, do fulfilling work and get enough wealth to support their chosen lifestyle.

Bearing in mind the work he enjoyed doing, John brainstormed the principles he wanted to follow when translating his philosophy into action. He wanted:

*To work with motivated people who wanted to shape their future lives and help them to set clear goals;*

*To pass on knowledge and practical tips they could use to achieve their goals;*

*To help them to integrate this learning into their lives and achieve ongoing success.*

Imagine that you want to define the principles you want to follow to translate your philosophy into action. Here is an exercise that you can use to begin shaping these principles.

## *Philosophy*

*The philosophy I have in the specific activity or area where I want to do professional work is:*

\*

\*

\*

*The principles I can follow to translate this philosophy into action are:*

\*

\*

\*

## Practise

### *Practise Is The Key*

*Many people aim to pursue their philosophy, follow certain principles and translate these into practise.*

*They recognise, however, that other people may only notice the practise. These are the things that they actually do in their personal or professional life.*



Now comes the crunch part. Many people believe in philosophies and principles, but sometimes they find it challenging to put these into practise.

How to make this happen? One approach is for a person to bear in mind their strengths and the satisfying work they enjoy doing. It is then:

*To clarify again their philosophy and the principles they want to follow;*

*To clarify the specific things they can do to build on their strengths and translate their principles into action;*

*To clarify their specific action plan for taking these steps and doing their best to achieve positive results.*

John chose: a) to continue his counselling work with young people; b) to provide coaching services for people in organisations and help them to deliver high performance; c) to pursue a professional qualification that would enable him to focus on a specific niche in wellbeing.

He went on to publish a book that helped to establish his credibility. This led to John working with more organisations that wanted their people to stay healthy whilst also delivering high professional standards.

Let's return to your own professional work. Imagine that you have clarified your philosophy and principles. How can you build on your strengths and translate these into action?

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Practise*

*The principles I want to follow in a specific activity or area are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to build on my strengths and translate these into action are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits – for myself and for other people – of taking these steps will be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Principles Rather Than Prizes Approach*

*Different people follow different approaches in their lives and work*

- *Some people follow the principles approach.*
- *Some people follow the prizes approach.*
- *Some people follow their principles and, as a by-product, they also get prizes.*

Some people do work they feel passionately about, follow their principles and do their best to get positive results. They are not worried about getting conventional prizes.

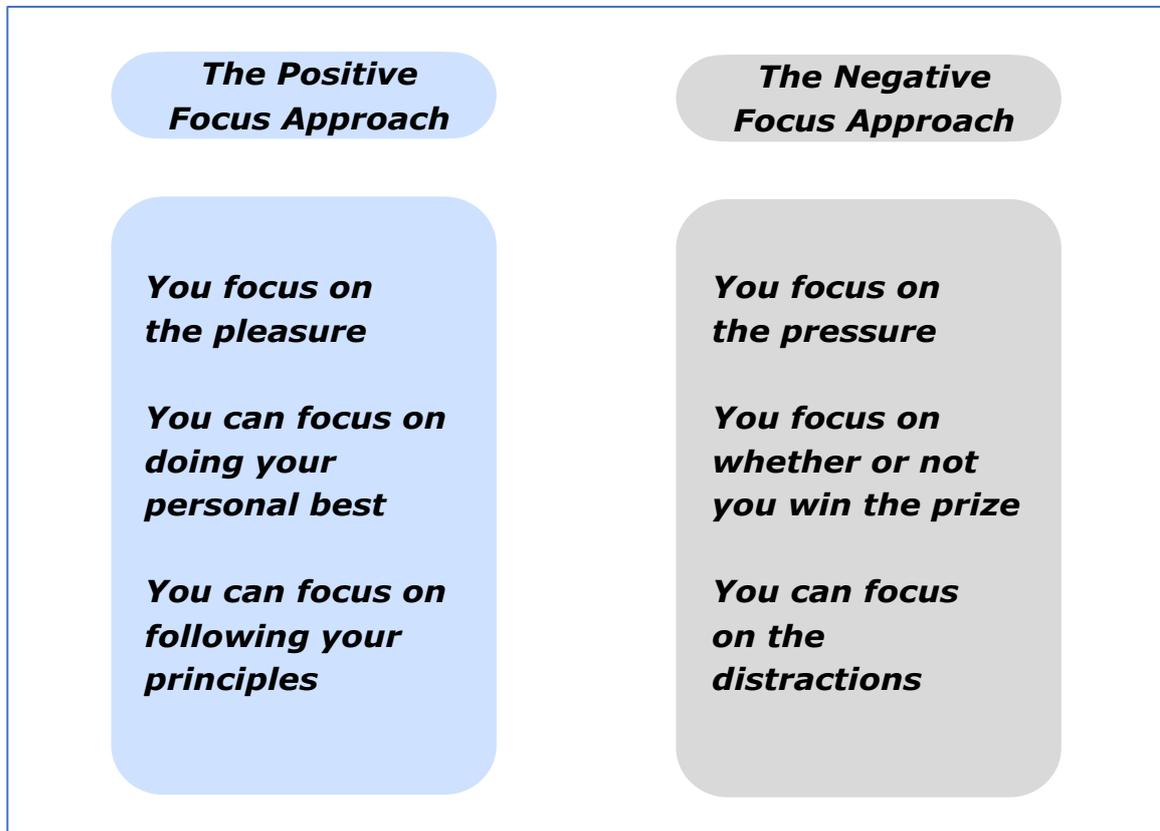
Some people spend a lot of time worrying about getting prizes. They worry about whether or not they will get promotion, gain status or be seen as successful.

Such an approach can lead to them tightening up and failing to do their best. Even if they do win a prize, they may then start worrying about whether they will win the next competition.

Some people get a prize each day by following their principles. The paradox is that, as a by-product, this can sometimes result in them getting conventional prizes.

## *The Focusing Approach*

Whatever route you follow in your work, it may involve the focusing approach. There are, however, different kinds of focusing.



Great workers aim to focus in a positive rather than negative way. Matthew Syed described the difference in his book *Bounce*. A superb table tennis player, he became distracted during a key game in the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

Peak performers hone their skills until things become natural. They can then go into the arena and always start from 7/10. They then apply their skills to deal with what is happening in the situation.

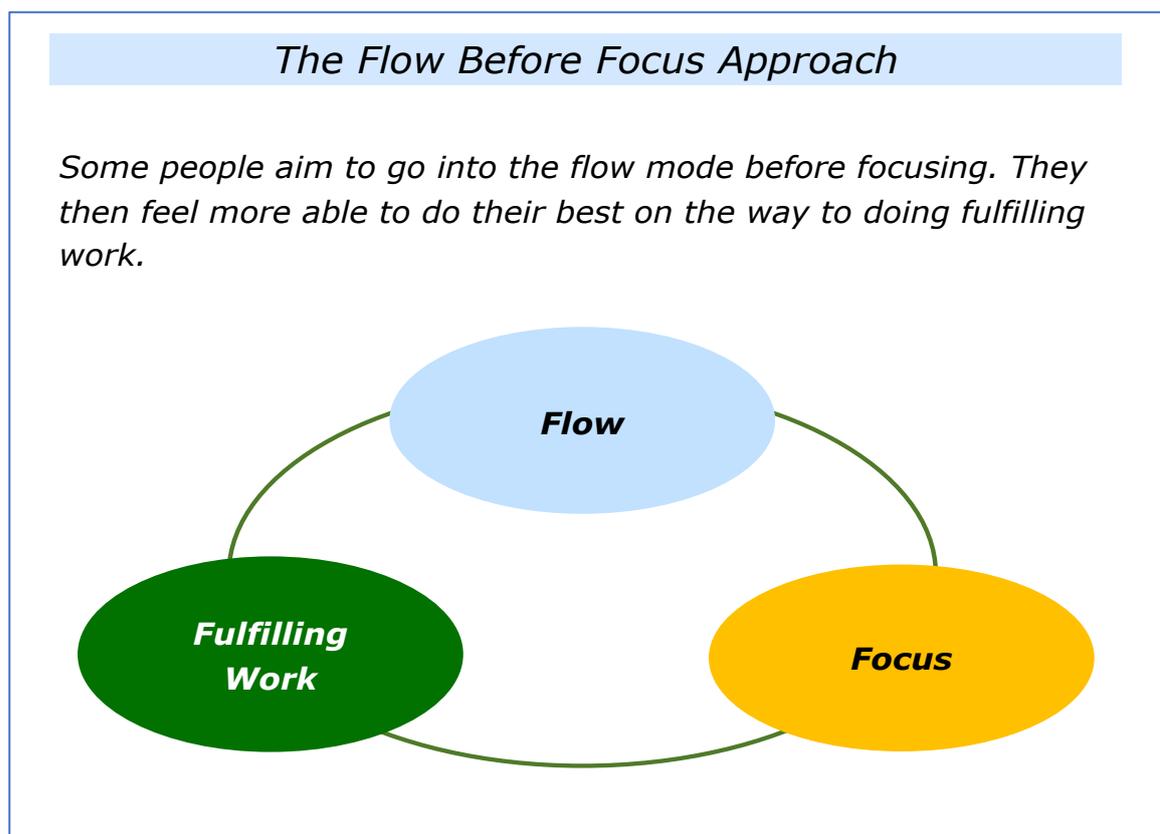
Matthew had previously followed this approach. During a key game, however, he began dissecting his strokes and became distracted. He describes this in the following way.

*Each time my opponent played a stroke, I found my body doing things that bore no relation to anything I had learned over the last twenty years of playing table tennis: my feet were sluggish, my movements alien, my touch barely existent.*

*I was trying as hard as I could; I yearned for victory more intensely than in any match I had ever played, and yet it was if I had regressed to the time when I was a beginner.*

Matthew emerged from the tournament with a greater understanding of how people can perform at their best. He now passes on this knowledge through his writing and other media.

Let's look at one approach that some people use to get into the right mode before focusing.



Some people aim to go into flow mode before focusing on the strategies to pursue. Different people do this in different ways.

An athlete will warm up properly. They make sure their muscles are loose and they are ready to move into action. A musician will ensure they are prepared and their instrument is in tune. They can then hit the right note when beginning the piece.

Some people skip the flow mode and concentrate on focusing. This can sometimes be necessary in order to be totally engaged. But sometimes it can have the effect of a person becoming tighter.

People who get into flow mode move on to focusing. They then feel looser – in a good way – and more able to do fulfilling work.

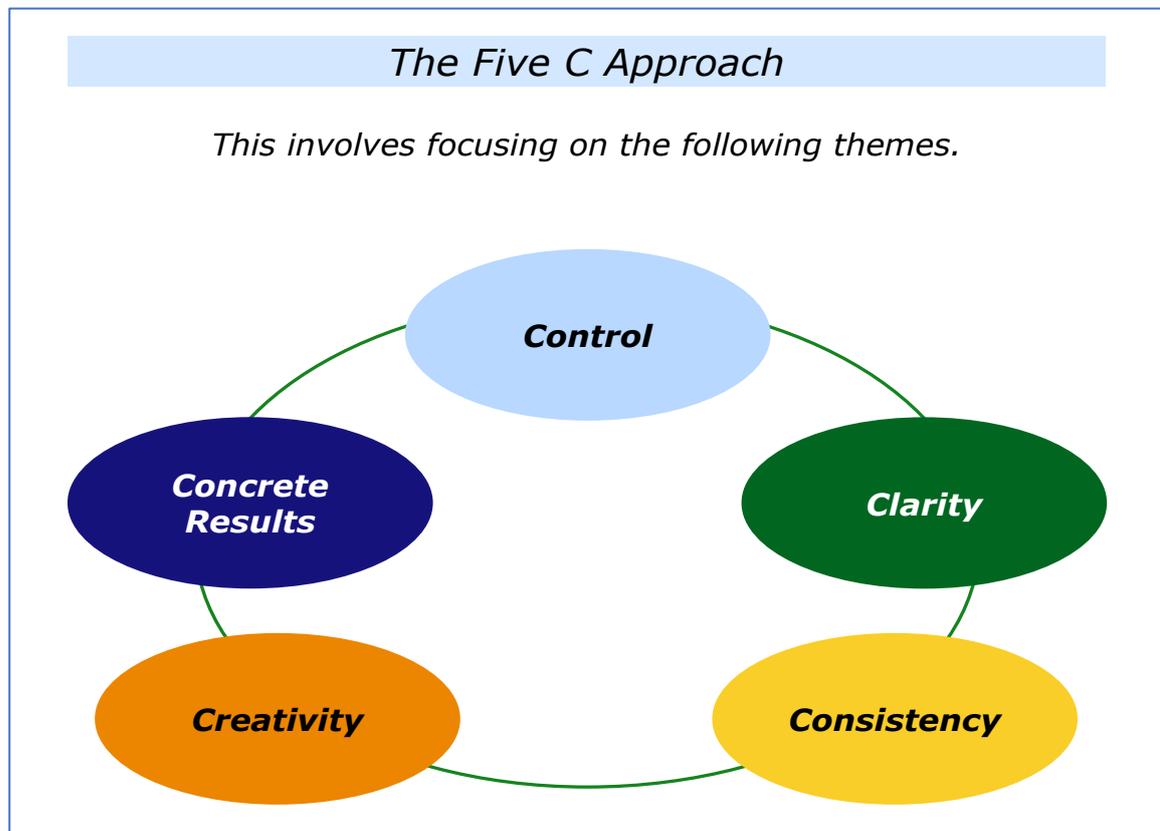
## *The Five C Approach To Delivering Concrete Results*

This is an approach that is used by people in many walks of life. They focus on control, clarity, consistency, creativity and concrete results. It is one that we will expand on throughout the book.

The approach can be used by individuals, teams and organisations. It is one I have seen work in daily life, education, sports, business and many other fields.

It is an approach that is often used in therapy, coaching and mentoring. It enables people to shape their futures and achieve their picture of success.

Imagine that you want to use the approach in your own way. You may want to use it when working as an individual, in teams or in organisations. Whatever the situation, it often involves focusing on the following themes.



## *Control*

This involves establishing what you can control in a situation. It also involves building on these things – plus managing what you can't control - when working towards your goals.

## *Clarity*

This involves establishing clarity. You can clarify; a) the real results you want to achieve; b) the specific strategies you can follow to give yourself the greatest chance of success.

## *Consistency*

This involves delivering consistently high standards and performing superb work. When working in teams, it involves implementing the right strategies with the right people in the right way.

## *Creativity*

This involves continuing to be consistent and, when appropriate, adding creativity. Sometimes it involves taking time to think, make good decisions and find creative solutions to challenges.

## *Concrete Results*

This involves doing the basics and then adding the brilliance. It calls for doing your best to deliver the picture of success. Sometimes it involves adding that touch of class.

## *The Strengths Based Approach To Achieving Success*

Different people do positive work in different ways. The following section describes some of the models that people can use to do fine work. Many of these are based on the following approach.



Normally I follow the rule of three when making models, but sometimes it can be important to give a bigger picture. The following framework mirrors some of the classic seven step models.

This approach can be used by individuals, teams and organisations. People who take this approach often focus on the following steps.

### *Strengths*

They build on their strengths. They do what they do best and put themselves into situations where they can do their best work.

### *Specific Goals*

They translate their strengths into setting specific goals. They clarify the real results they want to achieve and translate these into a clear picture of success.

### *Strategies*

They follow strategies that work. They clarify and pursue the key strategies they can follow that can give them the greatest chance of success.

### *Support*

They try to get the support needed to achieve success. They do, when leading teams, put the right people in the right places where they can do their best work.

### *Superb Work*

They perform superb work. They do, when leading teams, make clear contracts with people, manage by outcomes and enable their people to perform at their best.

### *Solutions*

They anticipate and find ways to manage potential challenges. They do, when faces by unexpected events, buy time to make decisions that improve the chances of achieving their goals.

### *Success*

They keep performing superb work, keep improving and do their best to achieve the goals. They learn from the experience and then, when they are ready, focus on the next picture of success.

The next section describes people who have used their talents to do positive work. This is followed by provide practical tools you can use to pursue this approach in your own way.

### *The Penny Brohn Cancer Centre*



Penny Brohn created a remarkable legacy. She helped to give birth to The Bristol Cancer Help Centre. The work done there has helped many people to develop their inner strength and improve the quality of their lives. It is now called Penny Brohn Cancer Care.

As Dr Rosy Thomson says in her book *Loving Medicine*, the Centre was born out of pain. Penny discovered a cancerous lump on her left breast in the autumn of 1979. An operation under local anaesthetic produced bruising, bleeding and left part of the lump behind.

Doctors advised an immediate mastectomy, but she felt that full recovery depended on more than amputating her breast. Penny became convinced that her illness was the result of her lifestyle. It

was a disease of her whole being, rather than being confined to any single part of her body.

Penny eventually met Pat Pilkington, Canon Chris Pilkington and Alec Forbes, a physician. The four people combined their talents to open the Centre in 1980. The Centre was then based on three key ideas.

*The body, mind, emotions and spirit are interrelated ... The improvement in the health of any of these will improve the health of the whole person ... The belief that where there's a will there's a way.*

These ideas were translated into certain guiding principles. These included the following.

*The Centre believes in a holistic philosophy.*

*The Centre encourages patients to assume some responsibility for their own health.*

*The Centre teaches and practises a lifestyle designed to prevent cancer occurring or recurring.*

*The Centre educates and informs patients about safe and gentle therapies they can use to counteract disease and enhance health.*

*The Centre is a non-profit-making organisation that is available to everyone.*

Holistic meant what it said. Far from turning on conventional medicine, the staff encouraged people to participate in choosing their own particular treatment.

While inviting patients to adopt a healthy lifestyle, diet and attitude, they did not rule out the benefits of radiotherapy and chemotherapy. Penny wrote:

*We encourage patients to pack up their own individual processes and techniques: we help them to make sense of what they are doing; we stand by them whatever they do.*

The Centre attracted national attention and moved into a new building at Grove House, which formally opened in 1983 by the Prince of Wales.

Penny's health was also improving at the time. During the 1980s she and the team provided inspiration for cancer sufferers across the world. Then came an enormous setback.

The Lancet published a report sponsored by two cancer charities. It said some patients who attended the Centre for treatment were twice as likely to die prematurely from the disease.

Penny, the Centre's team and the patients who had been interviewed threw themselves into refuting the report, which was eventually proved to be erroneous. This resulted in a public apology.

Penny Brohn Cancer Care moved to new premises in 2006 and continues to help people to change the way they live with cancer. It provides them with practical tools they can use to regain control of their lives.

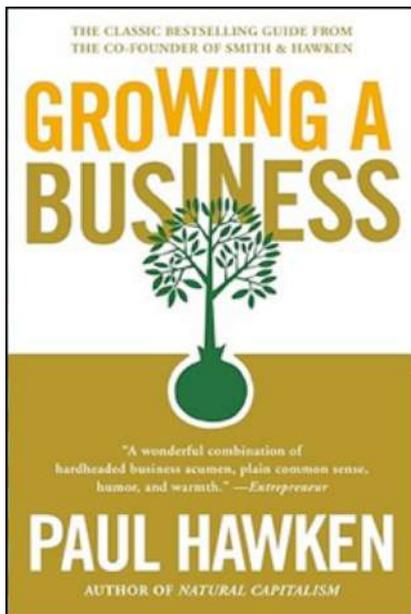
The aim is to enable people to live well with and beyond cancer. This includes providing a combination of physical, emotional and spiritual support. It comprises a range of complementary therapies, lifestyle information and self-help techniques.

Penny Brohn lived many years beyond the initial prognosis. During the 1990s, however, she suffered a spinal bone tumour. After deciding to have conventional surgery, she continued to work but also spent lots of time in Crete.

She lived there until her death in 1999, twenty years after the original diagnosis. Penny left a positive legacy.

## Paul Hawken - Growing A Business

### Paul Hawken - Growing A Business



*Deliver quality and give great service.*

*Recreate something that has been lost.*

*Make sure you have the character to run an honest business.*

*Be imaginative and also be a problem solver.*

*Develop or, when appropriate, buy-in tradeskills.*

Paul Hawken is somebody I earned from about business, though we never met. He has a long history of helping people to build on their strengths and make their best contributions to the planet.

He began by working as a press coordinator with Martin Luther King's team in Selma, Alabama. Whilst continuing to work for human rights, he moved on to creating several ethical companies.

Paul founded Erewhon, which was based in Boston, Massachusetts. This focused exclusively on organically produced fruits, vegetables, dairy, beans, eggs, juices, and condiments.

By 1973, Erewhon had two mills, two rail cars and warehouses on both coasts. It had contracts with farmers in 37 states on 56,000 acres to supply its four stores and more than 3,000 wholesale accounts.

Paul then created Smith & Hawken - a \$75 million catalogue and retail company, specialising in garden and horticultural products. It is credited with changing gardening in America by introducing European tools, techniques, varieties and literature.

His work as a practitioner – rather than just a theorist – led to him producing many books. These included *The Next Economy*, *Growing a Business*, *The Ecology of Commerce* and *Blessed Unrest*.

Paul reached millions of budding entrepreneurs through his 1980s American Public Television series *Growing A Business*. He advised people to develop their talents and produce quality. Many of the tips sound commonplace today, but back then they seemed radical.

### *Deliver quality and give great service*

Deliver quality and make people feel special. Even in a recession, customers will pay for quality products delivered in a quality way. Paul explained that it is vital to focus on helping your customers.

*You are trying to give your customer something other than what they are receiving from the competition. Remember that in business you are never trying to 'beat' the competition. It is a waste of time and energy trying to beat the competition because the customer doesn't care about that rivalry.*

People are attracted to nostalgia – so recreate something which they believe has been lost forever. The friendly small town bank; the reliable mail-order firm or the honest garage. The quality ice-cream shop; the traditional cheese store; the aromatic coffee shop; the company that fixes mistakes without complaint.

### *Be imaginative – because too much money is worse than too little*

Businesses suffer from a lack of imagination not capital, says Paul. Too much money tends to replace creativity. Companies without money are hungry; they must dream, imagine and improvise.

Companies awash with money try to buy solutions. They lavish vast amounts on consultants, lawyers, clever accountants, publicity agents and marketing studies. Cash and creativity are both necessary, but make sure you balance them properly.

### *Entrepreneurs are risk-avoiders*

The common wisdom holds that entrepreneurs love to take risks, says Paul, but that's mostly hype. He explains:

*Once the entrepreneur has seen how to create a product or service to meet demand, much of what the outsider perceives as risk in the situation is erased.*

Entrepreneurs are like mountain climbers. They set clear goals, clarify their strategy and anticipate ways to tackle problems. On-lookers think the mountaineer is gambling, but the climber would risk more by not following their dream.

### *Business tests character*

Business teaches you a lot about yourself, says Paul. You will face split-second decisions, to be honest or lie; to deliver quality or cut corners; to care for your customers or give shoddy service. He explains this in the following way.

*The moment you enter the world of business - as a provider - not merely as a consumer - you will have a hundred opportunities a day to act beneficially or wrongly, to deal with people fairly or otherwise, to enhance your social environment or pollute it.*

### *Businesses will always have problems*

Paul once searched for magic solutions. Providing he read more books by business gurus, one day he might find business nirvana. Such enlightenment would make all his problems disappear. But then another truth hit him one sunny autumn afternoon. He wrote:

*I had my nirvana, all right, but it was the opposite of what I had been seeking. On that pretty afternoon the actual truth finally struck me: I would always have problems.*

*In fact, problems signify that the business is in a rapid learning phase. The revelation was liberating. I couldn't understand why other people hadn't told me this earlier.*

Problems create either energy or paralysis, says Paul. Good managers mobilise peoples' energies to find solutions. Get used to problems, they are an eternal part of everyday business. They may also present a chance to improve.

### *Develop Tradeskills*

Tradeskills spell the difference between success and failure in a business, says Paul. People who have them demonstrate the following characteristics. (There are also other skills they need.)

*They know how to focus on a particular market niche and create a specific service or product. They understand what people want, how they make their decision and how much they will pay.*

*They have a sixth sense that enables them to make quick decisions rather than get bogged down in months of meetings, brainstorming and market studies.*

*They know how to manage money so their income is greater than their outgoings.*

*They know how to keep reading the present and future needs of the marketplace.*

You can still build a business without having tradeskills, says Paul. But then it may be useful to complement your strengths with people who do have tradeskills.

## Jack Sim (Mr. Toilet)



Jack takes a pride in being known as Mr. Toilet. He is committed to providing sustainable sanitation for people around the world. He founded the World Toilet Organization.

Here is some background about him and the organisation taken directly from its website.

*Jack Sim, Mr. Toilet, has broken the taboo on sanitation and brought issues about toilets and hygiene out into the open.*

*After attaining financial independence as a businessman in Singapore by 40, Jack decided to devote the rest of his life to development work in line with his motto:*

*"Live a useful life."*

*In 1998, Jack established the Restroom Association of Singapore (RAS) whose mission is to raise the standards of public toilets and*

*address the issues of poor toilet design, inadequate building codes and poorly trained cleaners.*

*As Jack began his work, he realized there were organizations similar to this in other countries and without any central governing body.*

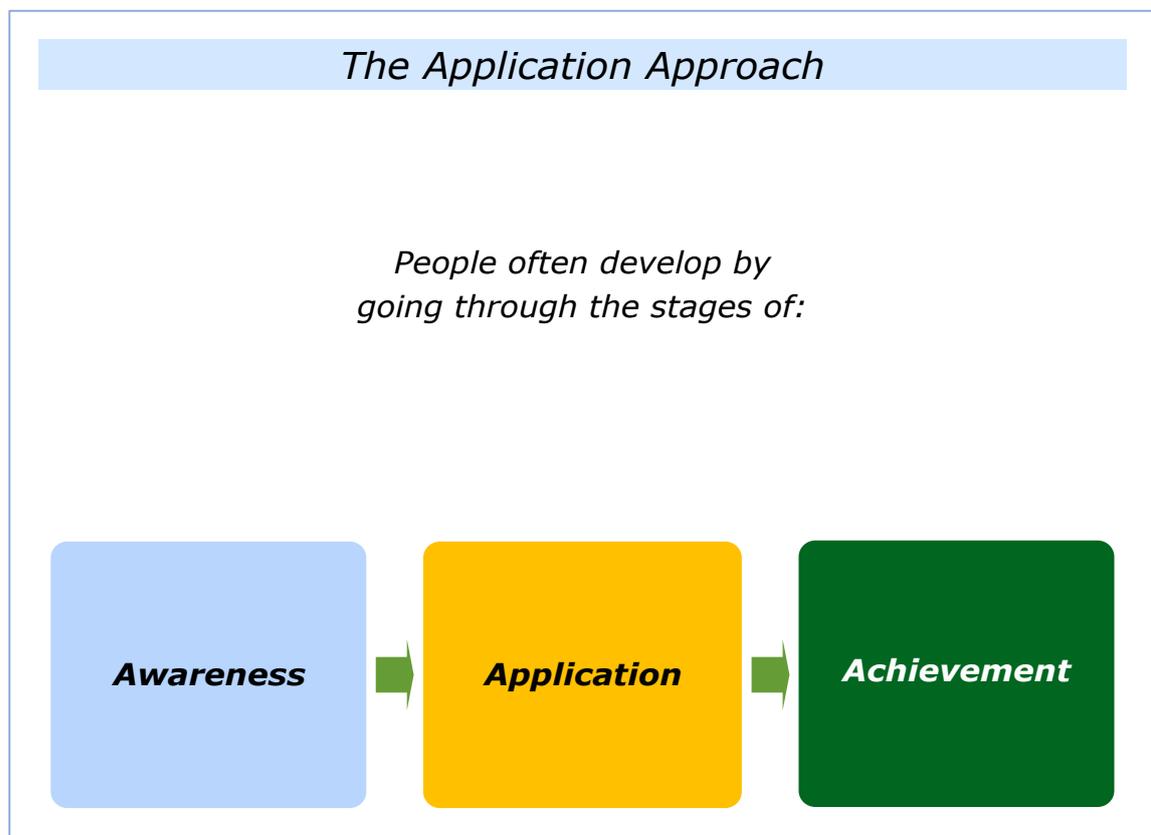
*Soon thereafter, he founded the World Toilet Organization (WTO) in 2001. Since 2001, Jack has been involved in sustainable sanitation efforts all over the world.*



## *There Are Many Ways To Do Positive Work*

Different people have different motivations for doing fine work. Some follow a passion, some pursue it out of pleasure, some do it to translate pain into making a positive contribution.

This section focuses on how people can do satisfying work. As mentioned earlier, the application part is crucial. Bearing this in mind, many of these models are based on the following approach.



People often develop by going through the stages of awareness, application and achievement. Awareness is a good starting point, but application is crucial. People can then work towards achieving their goals.

There are many models for taking these steps. The following pages show how it is possible to follow some of these and do satisfying work.

## *Positive Work*

### *Introduction*

*The following section describes many ways to do fine work. These approaches often build on the eternal themes of What, How and When. They focus on the following questions:*

- *What are the real results you want to achieve?*
- *How can you do your best to achieve these results?*
- *When do you want to do your best to achieve these results?*

*There are many ways to explore these themes. Sometimes this can involve going deeply and then translating the ideas into action.*

*Many of the following models do, of course, overlap. Take the ideas you like and use these in your own way.*

- *The Strengths Approach*
- *The Vocation Approach*
- *The Positive Realist's Approach*
- *The Building On What People Can Do Approach*
- *The Enjoyable Work Approach*

- *The Craft Approach*
- *The Picture Of Success Approach*
- *The Pioneering Approach*
- *The Class Act Approach*
- *The Flow Approach*

- *The Positive Teams Approach*
- *The Values Driven Organisation Approach*
- *The Mission Approach*
- *The Brilliant Teams Approach*
- *The Right Strategy Approach*

- *The Coordination Approach*
- *The Positive Leadership Approach*
- *The Taking Over A Team Approach*
- *The Communication Approach*
- *The Decision Making Authority Approach*

- *The Clear Contracting Approach*
- *The Three Waves Approach To Shifting A Culture*
- *The Entrepreneurship, Engine And Excellence Approach*
- *The Innovation, Implementation And Impact Approach*
- *The What Works Approach*

- *The Win-Win Approach*
- *The Facilitation Approach*
- *The Achievement Approach*
- *The Following Your Rhythm Approach*
- *The Design Approach*

- *The Inspiration, Implementation And Integration Approach*
- *The Caring Approach*
- *The Specialist Approach*
- *The Driven Approach*
- *The Genuine Approach*

- *The Establishing Credibility Approach*
- *The Managing Pressure Approach*
- *The Performing To Your Potential Approach*
- *The Decisive Moments Approach*
- *The Organic Development Approach*

- *The Frameworks For Fulfilment Approach*
- *The People Worker Approach*
- *The Professional Freelancer Approach*
- *The Overview Approach Approach*
- *The Offering Options Approach*

- *The Wholistic Approach*
- *The Skills For Success Approach*
- *The Appreciative Inquiry Approach*
- *The Personal Best Approach*
- *The Top Performances Approach*

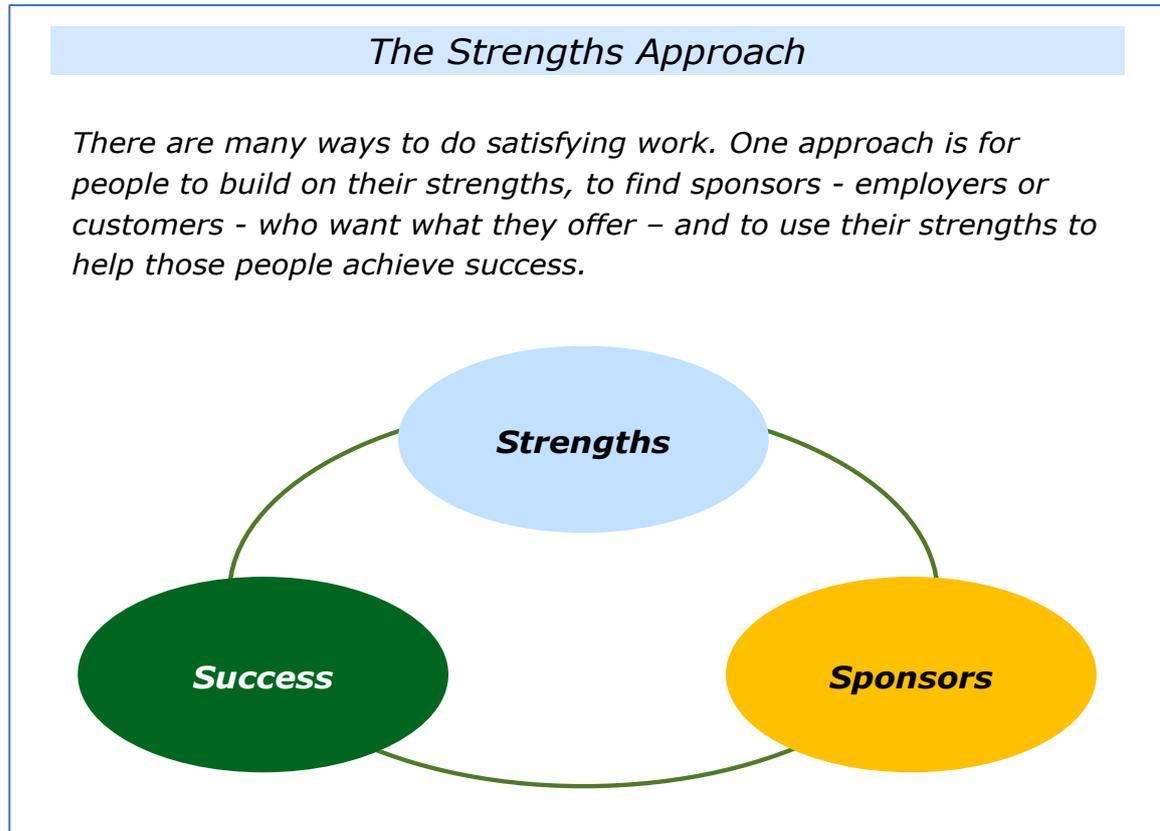
- *The Warrior Wizard Approach*
- *The Stimulating Project Approach*
- *The Rewarding Role Approach*
- *The Relaxed Relentlessness Approach*
- *The Money, Meaning And Magic Approach*

- *The Managing Emotions Approach*
- *The Radar, Repertoire And Results Approach*
- *The Pleasurable Work Approach*
- *The Positive Experiences Approach*
- *The Stretching Work Approach*

- *The Obsession Approach*
- *The Intense Person Approach*
- *The Great Days, Good Days And Grunt Days Approach*
- *The Setbacks As A Springboard To Success Approach*
- *The Pacing Approach*

- *The Generous Guide Approach*
- *The Enlightenment To Excellence Approach*
- *The Caring To Callous Cultural Approaches*
- *The Managing Challenges Approach*
- *The Mentoring Approach*

## The Strengths Approach



“The world of work keeps changing,” some people say. “It is hard to know what skills people should learn to shape their futures.”

Perhaps. As the saying goes, however, the more things change, the more some things stay the same.

Creative people throughout history have followed certain themes to earn a living doing what they love. They have built on their strengths and found sponsors – employers or customers - who hired them for doing what they did best. They then helped those sponsors to succeed.

People who develop such eternal skills are more likely to shape their futures. Let’s explore how this works in action.

## *Strengths*

Michelangelo, Anita Roddick and Steve Jobs had at least one thing in common. They did what they did best and got somebody to pay them for doing it. Some customers will always be interested in buying quality. And the best way of producing quality is to develop your top talents.

How can you clarify your strengths? One approach is to identify the deeply satisfying activities in which you deliver As rather than Bs or Cs.

You may be good at counselling, gardening, making furniture, singing, coaching a sport or developing software. You may be good at selling, customer care, nursing, leading certain kinds of teams or doing another activity.

Here are some questions you can ask to begin clarifying your strengths. You can then move on to clarifying the specific things you can deliver that will help people to succeed.



### *Strengths*

*Here are some questions you can explore to clarify your strengths*

- *What are the deeply satisfying activities in which you deliver As rather than Bs or Cs? When do you feel in your element – at ease and yet able to excel? What are the activities that give you positive energy – even when you think about them?*
- *What are the situations in which you see the destination quickly? When do you go 'A, B ... and then leap to ... Z'? What are the activities in which you are a good finisher and have a track record of delivering Z?*
- *What are the situations in which you see patterns quickly? Where do you have the equivalent of a photographic memory? Where do you have good personal radar - you seem to know what will happen before it happens?*
- *Where do you make complicated things appear simple? What are the activities in which you have natural self-discipline? Where do you score highly on drive, detail and delivery? Where do you always do the basics and then add the brilliance?*

## *Sponsors*

Anybody can do work they love, the art is getting somebody to pay you for doing it. Creative artists have faced this challenge throughout history.

How to find sponsors – employers or customers - who will hire you for what you do best? One approach is to start by clarifying your perfect customers or employers.

Who are kinds of customers with whom you work best? What are the characteristics of these people? When have you done good work for such people? What did you do to help them to achieve success?

If you mainly work within an organisation, what is the kind of manager with whom you work best? What are the characteristics of such a manager? What makes it good to work with them?

Here are answers that individuals give to these sets of questions.

*"I work best with achievers. They love to set goals, work hard and achieve success. Being adrenaline driven myself, I enjoy working with others who like to stretch themselves to achieve success."*

*"I work best with pioneering leaders. Such people often aim to be pacesetters. It is exciting to work with such people who are aiming to make the new rules for the game."*

*"I work best with people who have humanistic values. They often want to create workplaces that encourage people. At the same time, however, they are prepared to take tough decisions."*

Imagine you have clarified your perfect customers or employers. Looking at the world from their point of view, what are the challenges they face? How can you help them achieve their goals?

Imagine you are working with external customers. What are the pressures they face? What are their present and future needs? What are their professional goals?

Imagine you are mainly working within an organisation. Your internal customers are your colleagues, manager and the directors. What are their challenges? What are their professional goals?

Most employers want to improve the Three Ps. They want to improve their profits, product quality – including processes and service quality – and people. How can you help them to tackle these challenges and also achieve the organisation's goals?

Imagine you have identified your potential sponsors. How can you reach them in a way that fits with your values system? How can you create a showcase – a shop window – for your work? How can you give to people and help them to succeed?

Later we will go into greater depth regarding how to reach people in ways that work for you. Before then, however, here are some themes you can explore to clarify your potential sponsors.

## Sponsors

*Here are some questions you can explore to clarify your potential sponsors*

- *Who are the kinds of people - customers or employers - with whom you work best? What are the characteristics of these people? What are the reasons you work well with such people?*
- *When have you worked well with these kinds of people in the past? What did you do right then - what were the principles you followed - to help them to achieve success? What were the specific things you actually delivered?*
- *Looking at these kinds of people, what may be happening in their world? What may be the present and future challenges they face? What may they want to achieve for themselves, their team or their organisation? What may be their picture of success?*
- *How can you reach these people in a way that fits your values system? How can you clarify what they want to achieve? How can you give to these people and pass on knowledge that may help them to succeed?*

## *Success*

Imagine you have settled on your potential sponsors. How can you use your strengths to help them to tackle their challenges? How can you help them to achieve their goals?

Great workers provide specific services or products that help their potential sponsors: to solve problems, to have positive experiences or to achieve their picture of success.

Depending on their strengths, different people help others in different ways. They focus on what people may need or want. They then provide practical help or knowledge that helps them to achieve their aims.

A doctor may help people to regain their health. A chef may offer people wonderful food. A sports coach may help athletes to perform at their best.

A project director may ensure strategies are delivered on time. A crisis manager may solve problems that threaten an organisation. A film maker may produce films that give people pleasure.

Looking at my work, the aim has been to encourage and enable people to achieve their goals. This has taken the form of providing practical tools that people, teams and organisations can use:

*To build on their strengths; To do satisfying work; To build superb teams and organisations; To find solutions to specific challenges; To achieve their picture of success.*

There is a vast repertoire of positive models that can help people to reach these goals. The aim has been to pass on practical tools that people can use in their own ways to achieve ongoing success.

Imagine that you have managed to meet with potential sponsors. It will be important:

*To show that you understand the world from their point of view – such as their challenges and goals;*

*To, if appropriate, share how what you offer can help them to achieve their goals;*

*To, if they want to move things forward, make clear contracts on the specific things you will deliver to help them to achieve their goals.*

*To get some quick successes, provide great service and proactively keep them informed about the progress being made towards the goals;*

*To do superb work, find solutions to challenges, deliver the agreed goals and then add that touch of class.*

You will do this in your own way. But here are some themes it can be useful to explore on the road to help them to achieve success.



*Success*

*Here are some questions you can explore to clarify how you can help people to achieve success*

- *How can you use your strengths to help people to tackle their challenges and succeed? What are the specific things you can actually deliver? What will be the benefits to the various stakeholders of delivering these things to people?*
- *How can you make clear working contracts with these people? How can you agree on the specific things you will deliver? How can you show them that you will deliver some early successes?*
- *How can you perform superb work? How can you proactively keep people informed about your progress? How can you encourage yourself on the journey? How can you find solutions to potential challenges?*
- *How can you keep reassuring your sponsors by delivering results? How can you do everything possible to help people to achieve their picture of success? How can you then add that touch of class?*

Imagine that you want to build on your strengths and do satisfying work. You also want to help others to achieve success.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to explore the following themes.

### *Strengths*

Describe the satisfying activities in which you have the ability to deliver As. These may be particular kinds of projects, tasks or other activities. Try to be as specific as possible and give concrete examples.

Describe the activities in which you deliver Bs or Cs. The B activities are probably those that you can do reasonably well but may not necessarily be satisfying. The C activities are those where you have little aptitude or desire to learn.

## *Sponsors*

Describe the kinds of people – customers or employers – with whom you work best. These may be people with certain personality characteristics or other qualities. Describe the challenges they face or the goals they want to achieve.

## *Success*

Bearing in mind your strengths, describe the specific things you can deliver to help these people. The emphasis is on what you can *deliver* not what you can do. Lots of people can do lots of things, but customers or employers buy what you can deliver.

Describe the specific benefits – to the various stakeholders – of delivering these things. As the old saying goes, people buy benefits rather than features. It can therefore be useful to describe how delivering these things will benefit people.

## *Strengths*

*As. The specific activities in which  
I have the ability to deliver  
As - rather than Bs or Cs - are:*

*1) ...*

*For example ...*

*2) ...*

*For example ...*

*3) ...*

*For example ...*

*Bs. The specific activities  
in which I deliver Bs are:*

*1) ...*

*For example ...*

*2) ...*

*For example ...*

*Cs. The specific activities  
in which I deliver Cs are:*

*1) ...*

*For example ...*

*2) ...*

*For example ...*

## *Sponsors*

*The specific kinds of people – customers or employers with whom I work best - are:*

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\*

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*The specific challenges these people face and the goals they want to achieve are:*

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## *Success*

*Bearing in mind my strengths, the specific things I can deliver to help these people to achieve success are:*

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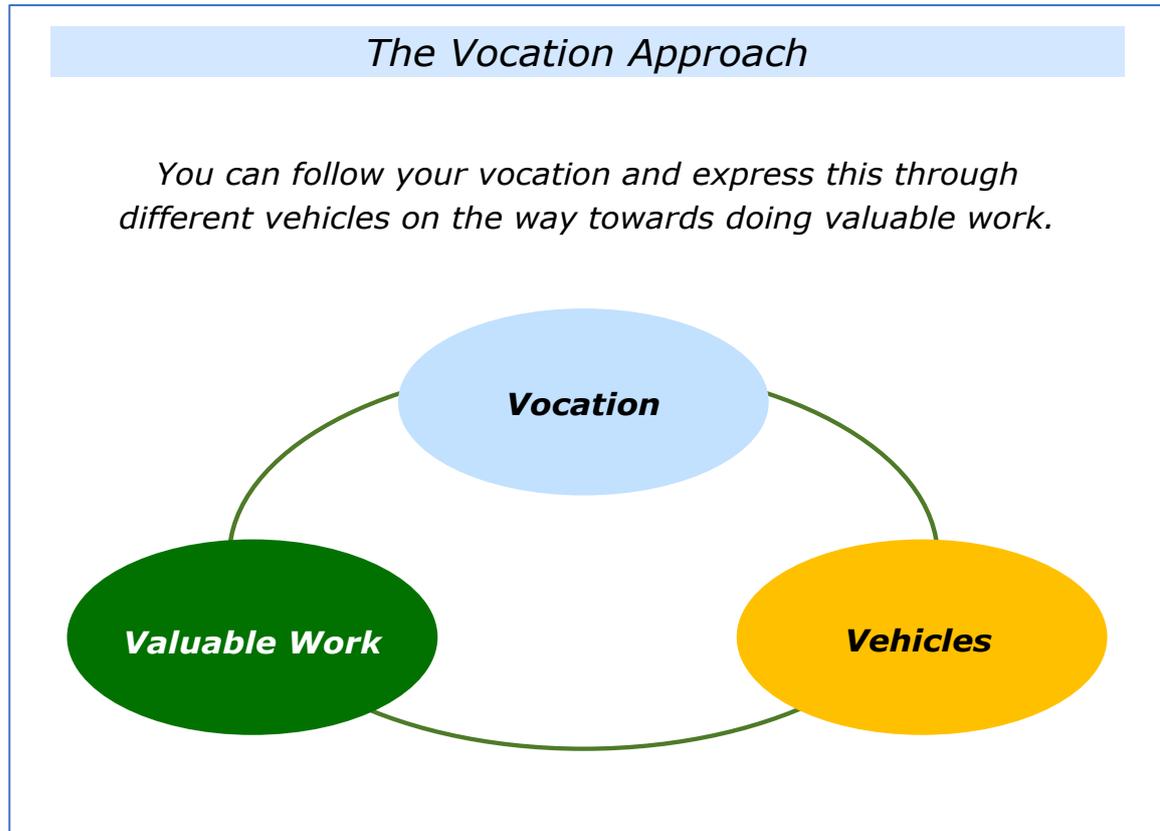
*The specific benefits of delivering these things and helping them to achieve success will be:*

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## *The Vocation Approach*



A person's vocation is their calling. It is what they are here to do. Their vocation may remain constant throughout their life.

They may express this through various vehicles, however, on the way towards doing valuable work. Let's explore these themes.

### *Finding Your Vocation*

There are relatively few vocational themes but the way a person expresses these will be unique. Most of the themes revolve around the eternal human activities. These include, for example:

*Encouraging ... Nurturing ... Educating ... Exploring ... Creating ...  
Designing ... Orchestrating ... Building ... Implementing ... Problem  
Solving ... Communicating ... Performing ... Or Doing Other Activities.*

How can you clarify your vocation? As mentioned earlier in the book, one approach is to focus on several satisfying projects that you have done in your life.

Looking at what made these satisfying can reveal your successful style of working. It can also provide clues to your vocation. Here is an exercise on this theme.

### *My Successful Style*

This is a long but worthwhile exercise that highlights when you have translated your strengths into action. It invites you to do the following things.

*Describe two or three satisfying projects you have done in your life.*

The word project can be used in its widest sense. For example: writing an article, organising a fun run, launching a web site, solving a particular problem, leading a team or whatever.

*Describe each of these projects in turn and the things that made each of them satisfying.*

Try to be as specific as possible, especially about the things that made them satisfying. Looking at these projects, can you see any recurring patterns? These provide clues to your preferred style.

*Describe your successful style of working - the principles you follow when doing satisfying work.*

You may, for example, find it satisfying to do something you really care about, set a stimulating goal, work with motivated people, have a manager who gives you freedom within parameters.

*Describe how you can follow these principles in the future.*

This part invites you to consider how you can keep following your principles and do satisfying work. This is something you can do to pursue personal projects.

If you want to get paid for doing professional work, however, it may mean finding or creating a project where you can follow your preferred style. This will also mean delivering specific benefits that help the potential sponsors – employers or customers - to succeed.

Here is the exercise on this theme. You can use this to clarify your successful style of working.

People develop, they seldom change radically. Bearing this in mind, you may continue to follow your successful style in the future.

It is possible, however, that you will express it differently in different situations. The key, however, will be to follow your successful style on the way to doing satisfying work and achieving success.



*My  
Successful  
Style*

## Introduction

Everybody has a successful style of working. Clarifying this style is often the clue to finding their real strengths and sometimes even finding their vocation.

People often develop rather than change radically and their style often becomes more pronounced as they get older. The key is for them to know how to channel their style successfully.

This is a long but worthwhile exercise that highlights when you have translated your strengths into action. It invites you to do the following things.

*Describe two or three satisfying projects you have done in your life.*

The word project can be used in its widest sense. For example: writing an article, organising a fun run, launching a web site, solving a particular problem, leading a team or whatever.

*Describe each of these projects in turn and the things that made them satisfying.*

Try to be as specific as possible, especially about the things that made them satisfying. Looking at these projects, can you see any recurring patterns? These often provide clues to your preferred style.

*Describe your successful style of working - the principles you follow when doing satisfying work.*

You may, for example, find it satisfying to do something you really care about, set a stimulating goal, work with motivated people, have a manager who gives you freedom within parameters.

You may then follow a certain rhythm in your daily work, build in quick successes, work to a deadline and present your work.

You may also have two successful styles: one when you are working alone, one when working with other people. See what the exercise reveals.

*Describe how you can follow these principles in the future.*

This part invites you to consider how you can keep following your principles and do satisfying work.

If you want to get paid for doing so, however, it may mean finding or creating a project where you can follow your preferred style.

It will also mean focusing on how to deliver specific benefits that help potential sponsors – employers or customers – to succeed.

*The first satisfying project was:*

\* *When I*

*The things that made it satisfying were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The second satisfying project was:*

\* *When I*

*The things that made it satisfying were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The third satisfying project was:*

\* *When I*

*The things that made it satisfying were:*

\*

\*

\*

\*

### *My Successful Style*

*Looking at the patterns that have emerged, I believe my successful style – my preferred way of working – is:*

\* *To ...*

### *My Successful Style - Following It In The Future*

*The things I can do to follow these principles in the future are:*

\* *To ...*

How to clarify your vocation? Looking at your satisfying projects, it is:

*To clarify a recurring theme in terms of what made them satisfying;*

*To clarify the specific things you aimed to do when pursuing that theme;*

*To clarify your possible vocation.*

Here are some of the examples of vocations that people give when exploring this topic.

*My Vocation Is:*

*To encourage people to become the best they can be ... To create enriching environments in which people grow ... To build successful prototypes that show a better way.*

*To share knowledge that people can use to maintain their wellbeing ... To help people to become the architects of their lives ... To design sustainable systems that deliver ongoing success.*

*To help people to find and follow their purpose ... To design things that are simple, satisfying and successful ... To produce films that encourage people to appreciate nature and our place in the world.*

*To create beautiful things that inspire people ... To show people how they can build on what they have in common ... To do practical work that helps to makes the world a better place.*

There are many other approaches to clarifying your vocation. The following pages illustrate some of these. We will then focus on clarifying your chosen vehicle for doing valuable work.

## *The Vocational Archetypes Approach*

*Here are some of the many vocational archetypes and themes. These often overlap and a person may display several of these themes when doing satisfying work.*

- *The Architectural Theme*  
*They like to shape and build things.*
- *The Artistic Theme*  
*They like to create things and share a vision.*
- *The Altruistic Theme*  
*They like to give to people and help them to succeed.*
- *The Adventuring Theme*  
*They like to explore, learn and develop.*

- *The Arranging Theme*  
*They like to arrange things and make them work.*
- *The Appreciative Theme*  
*They like to appreciate life and experiences.*
- *The Advocate Theme*  
*They like to advocate particular causes and views.*
- *The Active Theme*  
*They like to be active and develop by doing things.*

- *The Artisan Theme*  
*They like to make things or fix problems.*
- *The Analytical Theme*  
*They like to make sense of things and make models.*
- *The Advising Theme*  
*They like to help people and pass on knowledge.*
- *The Achieving Theme*  
*They like to do stimulating things and achieve success.*

### *The Vocational Themes Approach*

*A person may find it satisfying to pursue one or several of the following themes.*

- *The Encouraging Theme*
- *The Exploring Theme*
- *The Expressing Theme*
- *The Excelling Theme*

During the 1970s many people began taking a different approach towards shaping their careers. Previously they had tried to fit themselves into a traditional job.

But many became interested in the approach outlined by pioneers such as Bernard Haldane, Richard Bolles, Barrie Hopson, Mike Scally and William Bridges. These authors encouraged people to find recurring themes and transferable skills in their work.

Different authors grouped these themes in different ways. One approach was to focus on the eternal human activities such as encouraging, exploring, educating and excelling.

One exercise inviting a person to do a Card Sort. Different activities were written on different cards and the person identified those they find most satisfying.

These highlighted their potential transferable skills and, in some cases, the work fields in which they may excel. One established approach was to list the activities under the following headings.

*People – being good with people.*

*Data – being good at collecting and analysing data.*

*Things – being good at making or fixing things.*

Different people will be good at different things across and within each of these categories. At the same time, there are obviously more human activities than those that can be listed on the cards.

One approach invited a person to focus on activities that fell under the general headings of Encouraging, Exploring, Expressing and Excelling.

### *The Encouraging Theme*

- *Encouraging:      Helping, Caring, Giving.*
  
- *Educating:        Enabling, Empowering, Equipping.*
  
- *Coaching:         Facilitating, Developing, Mentoring.*
  
- *Protecting:        Preserving, Upholding, Enforcing.*

### *The Exploring Theme*

- *Exploring: Adventuring, Navigating, Discovering.*
- *Learning: Researching, Studying, Understanding.*
- *Mapping: Simplifying, Patterning, Charting.*
- *Solving: Fixing, Problem Solving, Harmonising.*

### *The Expressing Theme*

- *Expressing: Showing, Entertaining, Performing.*
- *Communicating: Relating, Connecting, Storytelling.*
- *Creating: Imagining, Inventing, Designing.*
- *Building: Making, Implementing, Completing.*

## *The Excelling Theme*

- *Leading: Inspiring, Shaping, Visioning.*
- *Managing: Planning, Orchestrating, Delivering.*
- *Selling: Influencing, Persuading, Trading.*
- *Excelling: Peak Performing, Succeeding, Pacesetting.*

The person was invited to clarify the specific themes they found most satisfying. They were then helped to translate these into doing work that could help individuals, teams or organisations to achieve success.

Imagine that you have begun to clarify your vocation. It is time to move on to the next stage.

### *Finding The Right Vehicle*

Different people will express their vocation in different ways. Imagine that your vocation may be:

*To create enriching environments in which people grow.*

You can express this theme through many different vehicles. For example, you may choose:

*To be an educator ... To be an interior designer ... To create inspiring music ... To do landscape gardening ... To lead a successful team in which people perform at their best ... Or whatever.*

There are many ways you can express your vocation. So how to find the right vehicle? It is important:

*To focus on your chosen field of activity;*

*To focus on your chosen form of activity.*

The following section describes several ways you can take this steps.

### *You Can Focus On Your Chosen Field Of Activity*

There are several ways to find the field in which you may feel and ease and also excel. Let's look at three of the most common ways. These are:

*To focus on the specific activity that you find fascinating, have a feeling for and have a track record of finishing;*

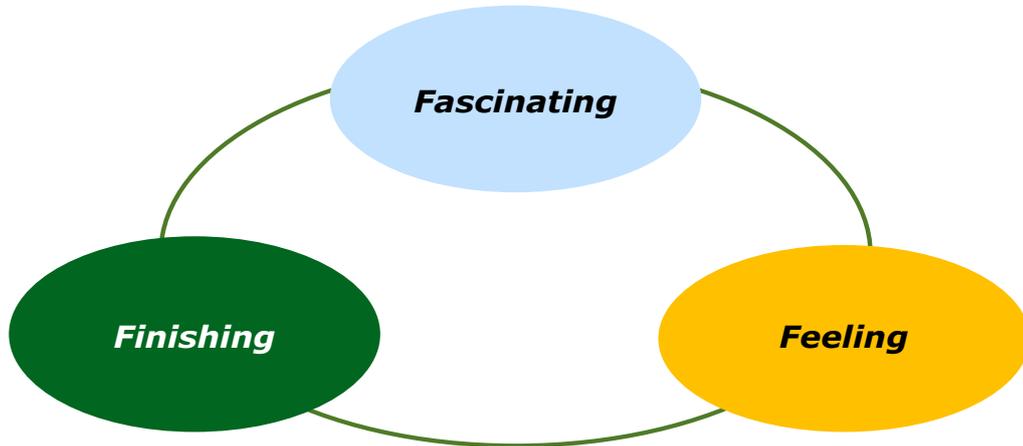
*To focus on the specific activity where you have the equivalent of a photographic memory;*

*To focus on the specific activity where things seem to go slowly yet swiftly and you deliver success.*

Let's explore these approaches.

### *The Fascinating, Feeling And Finishing Approach*

*You can focus on a specific activity that you find fascinating, have a feeling for and where you have a track record of finishing.*



Imagine that you want to find a good vehicle for expressing your vocation. One approach is to focus on a specific activity where you experience the following things.

#### *You find the activity fascinating*

What are the things that fascinate you? What are the activities where you want to explore and make sense of things? What are those where you want to build models?

One clue is to choose a field where you would pursue this activity even if you did not get paid for doing it. It is a positive addiction.

Derek Jacobi, the actor, explained this approach in a television interview. When approached by young people who want his advice on becoming an actor, he said something like the following.

*"If you want to become an actor, then don't do it. If you need to become an actor, then do it."*

### *You have a strong feeling for the activity*

Looking at the field of activity you have chosen, do you have a strong feeling for it? Are you good at it? If so, begin to explore how you can do more of this kind of work.

If not, take the time to reflect on other fascinating activities. Looking at these activities, where do you have the ability to do good work that is fulfilling? Settle on one you want to explore further.

### *You have a track record of finishing*

Let's return to the activity you find fascinating and have a feeling for. Is it one where you also have a track record of finishing? Here is an example given by one person.

*"I have a good record of building and selling successful prototypes. This normally takes between two and three years.*

*"I did run one company for five years. But scaling the business meant I got involved in the maintenance aspects. My staff took care of the day-to-day work, of course, but I lost interest in running the business.*

*"Some people create and sell larger businesses for massive sums, but that is not my forte. I prefer to build prototypes, provide proof of concept and then sell to buyers. This is what I am good at finishing."*

Let's explore another approach to finding the field of activity where you may be following your vocation.

### *The Photographic Memory Approach*

*Great workers often have the equivalent of a photographic memory in the areas in which they excel. They experience things through their senses and can describe these in great detail.*

- *They may see things in great detail.*
- *They may feel things in great detail.*
- *They may use other senses to experience things in great detail.*

Great workers often have the equivalent of a photographic memory in the areas where they excel. They sometimes recall, see or imagine every detail of doing an activity in their chosen field.

Every individual is different, however, so some may not see pictures. Some may feel, listen, smell, taste or use other senses to understand situations. They then apply this knowledge to do superb work.

*The golf champion remembers the exact lie of the ball in a tournament.*

*The dancer uses their muscle memory to demonstrate the steps they performed 20 years ago.*

*The chef use their senses to imagine the taste of the new dish they are preparing.*

Some people recall what they learned from a previous situation. They build on what worked and apply what they could have done better. They then use this knowledge to achieve success.

Some see the present situation from many angles. They hover above it, go around it and consider it from different angles to get the whole view. They then use this information to clarify and pursue their chosen strategy.

Some imagine situations in the future. Depending on their lead senses they may see, feel, hear, taste or do other things to create the successful experience. They then aim to make this happen.

Let's return to your own life and work. What are the specific activities where you have the equivalent of the photographic approach?

How can you put yourself into more of these situations? How can you then aim to do superb work? What may happen as a result of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *A Photographic Memory*

*The specific activity where I have the equivalent of a photographic memory is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to put myself into more of these situations and aim to do superb work are:*

\*

\*

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*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

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### *The Slowly Yet Swiftly Approach*

- *Great workers build on their natural strengths, stay calm and clarify the results to achieve in the specific activity.*
- *They practice the scenarios, strategies and skills required to perform superb work in the specific activity.*
- *They see things clearly and seem to do things slowly yet swiftly when performing superb work in the specific activity.*

Great workers sometimes seem to do things slowly yet swiftly. They seem to have more time and space than others when performing certain activities.

Some crisis managers seem calm when assessing the options and then moving into action in an effective way. Some dancers seem to go at their own speed and even hang in the air when delivering great performances.

Superb workers have natural strengths in their chosen activity. They have the ability to see the big picture, stay calm and clarify the real results to achieve.

They love to explore the various scenarios they may encounter when doing the activity. Looking ahead, they practice the strategies and skills they may need to achieve the desired results.

Such workers prepare properly before embarking on the activity. Seeing the big picture, they are fully present and focus on what they want to achieve.

They follow their chosen ritual for moving into action. They sometimes combine helicoptering above the situation with being hands-on. They then concentrate fully and do their best to perform superb work.

Some people go into an almost spiritual dimension. Looking back later, they say things like:

*"It was like an out-of-body experience ... Everything was going slowly but it was over very quickly ... I saw the ball clearly and seemed to have lots of time to do what I wanted ... Time went away and I went into a state of flow."*

Superb workers practice to reach this state. They then aim to move from being professional to going into another dimension. Sometimes they appear to do things slowly yet swiftly on the way towards achieving peak performance.

Let's return to your own life and work. Are there any activities where you may have this ability? How can you do more of these in the future? How can you continue to do superb work in the activity where things go slowly yet swiftly?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Slowly Yet Swiftly*

*The specific activity where I may have the ability to do superb work and sometimes things seem to go slowly yet swiftly may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to perform this activity more in the future are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to keep doing superb work in this activity are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *You Can Focus On Your Chosen Form Of Activity*

Imagine that you have begun to get some clues about your vocation. It is also important to choose a form of activity that fits your successful working style.

You may prefer to express your talents by teaching, leading, managing, writing, speaking, designing, making films or doing another activity. You may prefer to work alone, to be a leader, to work in a team, to work in an organisation or follow another path.

Let's look at some people who have employed various vehicles to follow their vocation. Person A's vocation is simplifying technology and showing how it can improve people's lives. Starting out as a techie, he also proved to be a gifted journalist.

He wrote articles that made technical things simple. Written in an accessible style, these led to him producing a much-acclaimed blog. He is now the official storyteller for a huge technology company.

Person B's vocation is creating events that enrich people's lives. Initially attracted to retail, she moved into the hospitality business. She built a business offering creative facilities for training events.

Highly successful, these centres offer great service, healthy food and a sense of theatre. They also provide sweets that adults remember from their childhoods. Sometimes the visitors talk more about these goodies than they do the training.

Person C's vocation is creating environments that empower people to take charge of their lives. He also has a great feeling for sport and, in particular, football. Following a personal tragedy, he focused on creating a World Cup for Street Football.

Running tournaments in local communities across the world, he used street football to bring people together. People made

connections and, in many cases, then harnessed their talents to tackle other challenges in their communities.

Clarifying one's vocation can be a lifetime search but some clues can be found quickly. Focus on the activities that give you positive energy and make your heart sing. While the theme may remain constant, the way you express this may change over the years.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise called *My Vocation*. This invites you to do the following things.

*Describe what you believe may be your vocation.*

Looking back at the satisfying projects you have done in your life, can you see any themes? Is there a red thread that runs through the projects? Does this give any clues to your possible vocation?

If so, describe what you believe may be your vocation. Don't worry too much about the actual wording - that can take years - have a go at describing your vocation.

Describe the times you may have expressed this vocation in various activities or projects. Try to put some flesh on the bones.

*Describe the possible vehicles you can use to express your vocation.*

You may already use a tried and trusted vehicle. This may be writing, painting, gardening, building, encouraging people, teaching, solving problems, broadcasting, communicating or whatever. Focus on the vehicles that you feel most attracted to using.

*Describe the specific things you can do to deliver valuable work when expressing your vocation through these vehicles.*

You may wish to prepare properly, organise your time in blocks, work with particular people, do certain things to produce superb quality work or whatever. Try to be as specific as possible when completing the following exercise.

## *My Vocation*

### *Vocation*

*Looking at the themes in the satisfying projects I have done, I believe my vocation may be:*

*\* To ...*

*The specific situations, activities or projects where I have expressed this vocation in the past have been:*

*\* When I ...*

*\* When I ...*

*\* When I ...*

## *Vehicles*

*The specific vehicles I can employ to express this vocation in the future are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Valuable Work*

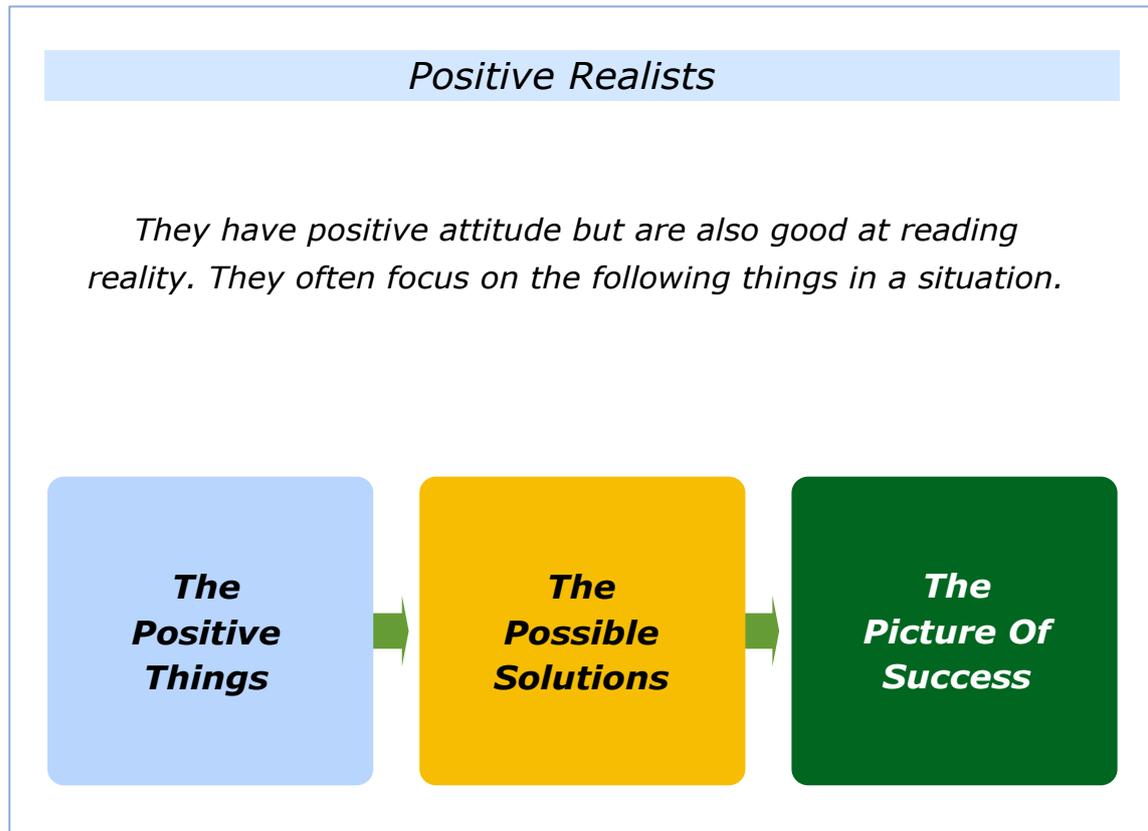
*The specific things I can do to deliver valuable work when expressing my vocation through these vehicles are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Positive Realist's Approach*



People who do fine work are often positive realists. They have a positive attitude but are also good at reading reality.

Going into a situation in which they excel, they quickly see: a) the successful patterns; b) the unsuccessful patterns; c) the possible picture of success.

Bearing in mind the results it may be possible to achieve, they then aim:

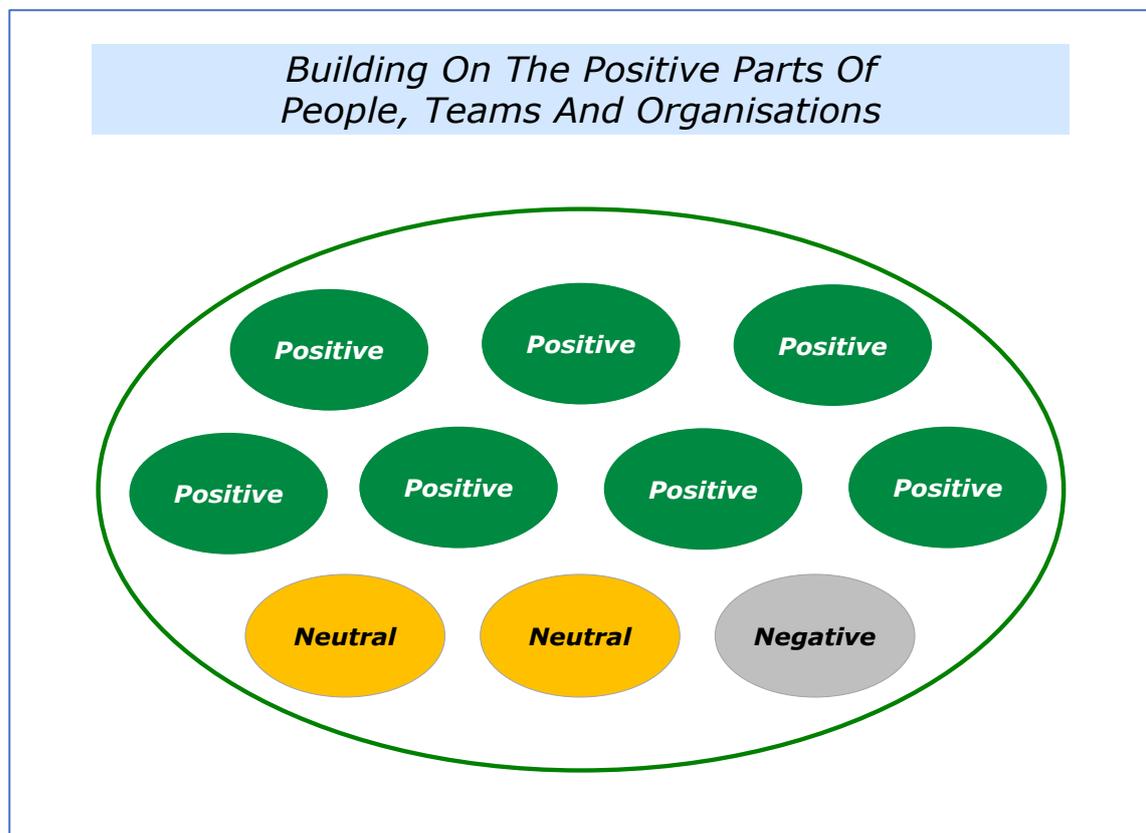
*To clarify the positive things they can build on – such as people's strengths and successful patterns;*

*To clarify the possible solutions to both present and future challenges;*

*To clarify the strategies they can follow to achieve the desired the picture of success.*

Such people act quickly to stop any haemorrhaging. They then build on the positive parts of people, teams and organisations and help them to achieve ongoing success.

Positive realists take this approach when encouraging people, doing work or tackling a challenge. They may do so when acting as a parent, educator, leader or in another professional role.



Caring parents, for example, focus on what a child can do rather than harangue them about what they can't do. The child can then explore, set goals and work to succeed.

Such parents also find ways to help a child to develop the resilience required to tackle difficult challenges. Children who have experienced dyslexia or other difficulties, for example, often describe how their parents took this approach.

Great leaders help their teams to build on their strengths and manage the consequences of any weaknesses. They also anticipate and manage any potential challenges.

Such leaders encourage their people to manage today's business and also shape tomorrow's business. They encourage, educate and enable them to achieve ongoing success.

Looking back on your life, can you think of a situation when you acted like a positive realist? You may have been retaking control of your life, encouraging people or managing a challenge.

What did you do to clarify the real results to achieve? How did you build on the positive things in the situation? If appropriate, how did you do your best to find possible solutions to challenges?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to do the following things.

*Describe a specific situation in the past when you aimed to be a positive realist.*

*Describe the specific things you did to aim to be a positive realist.*

*Describe the specific things that happened as result of taking these steps.*

## *Positive Realism In The Past*

*The specific situation in the past when  
I aimed to be a positive realist was:*

\*

*The specific things I did then to  
aim to be a positive realist were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that happened as  
a result of taking these steps were:*

\*

\*

\*

Positive realists do their due diligence before embarking on a venture. They then do their best to set up things to succeed. Let's look at how to apply this approach in a specific situation.

### *Leading An Organisation*

Later in the book we will take an in-depth look at how you can guide a team or organisation to success. Before then, however, let's imagine that you have been invited to lead an organisation that has hit difficulties.

Before taking the role it will be important to do your research. This involves clarifying:

*The specific results you will be asked to deliver – the picture of success;*

*The specific positive and challenging things that are happening in the organisation and its area of activity;*

*The specific positive and potentially challenging things that may happen in the future;*

*The specific authority and autonomy you will have to deliver the desired picture of success;*

*The success rating you would give – on a scale 0-10 - regarding the present chances of delivering the goals plus the specific things you can do to improve the chances of success.*

*Success Rating*

*Bearing in mind the things I can control, the present rating I would give regarding the chance of achieving the picture of success is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

Imagine that you have done your due diligence. Bearing in mind the things you can control, you rated the chance of success as 7/10.

You can then clarify the practical things you can do to improve the chances of success. These include aiming:

*To clarify your strategy for delivering the picture of success;*

*To make crystal clear contracts with the board about: a) the results to be delivered; b) the authority and autonomy you will have to deliver these results; c) the things you will do to proactively keep the board informed about the progress toward achieving the picture of success;*

*To build on the positive and professional people in the organisation;*

*To give the other people a chance to decide if they want to contribute to delivering success;*

*To get some quick successes that will reassure the board and give you freedom to implement your chosen strategy for achieving success.*

Imagine that you have taken these steps and have made clear contracts with the board. You have the authority and autonomy required to deliver the goods. Let's consider the next steps you may want to take.

### *Giving People The Big Picture*

Good leaders aim to build a positive environment in which motivated people can achieve peak performance. They also recognise that it is important to give people the big picture.

This is especially important when working with knowledge workers who like to understand the context. They can then see their part in helping the organisation to achieve its goals.

Good leaders therefore communicate the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success. (Later in the book we will provide specific exercises you can use to communicate these to people in the organisation.)

They give people time to reflect and decide if they want to work towards achieving the goals. If people choose to opt-in, they make clear contracts about their best contributions. People then do their best to achieve the picture of success.

Such leaders also explain the professional deal to people. This describes the responsibilities of the organisation and the individual in working to achieve the goals.

Here are some themes that leaders cover when communicating the deal. You will, of course, do this in your own way.

### *The Professional Deal*

*The following pages describe both the organisation's responsibilities and the individual's responsibilities in working towards achieving the picture of success*

### *The Organisation's Responsibilities Are:*

- *To be professional and help to build a positive environment in which motivated people can achieve peak performance;*
- *To keep communicating the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success;*
- *To build on people's strengths and make clear contracts with them about their best contributions towards achieving the picture of success;*
- *To give people the encouragement and practical support they need to do superb work;*
- *To manage by outcomes rather than by tasks and enable people to deliver the goods;*

- *To encourage people to take care of their wellbeing and provide the resources people can use to achieve this aim;*
- *To provide people with practical tools they can use to shape their future careers inside or outside the organisation;*
- *To, when necessary, make tough decisions that protect the culture;*
- *To keep sharing success stories that show how people are following the principles and keep people informed about the progress we are making towards achieving the picture of success;*
- *To ensure the organisation embodies the ethic of constant improvement and does what is necessary to achieve future success.*

### *The Individual's Responsibilities Are:*

- *To be professional and help to build a positive environment in which motivated people can achieve peak performance;*
- *To make sure they understand the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success;*
- *To keep following the principles and translate these into action in their daily work;*
- *To build on their strengths and manage the consequences of any weaknesses;*
- *To make clear contracts about their best contributions towards achieving the picture of success;*

- *To do superb work and proactively keep the key stakeholders – such as their manager and colleagues - informed about their progress towards achieving the agreed outcomes;*
- *To achieve their individually agreed outcomes and also keep contributing towards achieving the team's outcomes;*
- *To continue to develop and, when appropriate, use the practical tools the organisation offers them to shape their future careers;*
- *To take care of their wellbeing and, when appropriate, make use of the resources we provide for helping people to achieve this aim;*
- *To embody the ethic of constant improvement and make practical suggestions about what the organisation can do to achieve future success.*

Imagine that you have given people the chance to reflect and decide if they want to contribute towards achieving the goals. Looking around, it has become apparent that people are choosing either:

*To be positive and professional;*

*To be neutral;*

*To be negative or unprofessional.*

How do you want to work with the different kind of people? In the old days organisations often concentrated on turning-around the negative people, but that did not work.

Another approach is to build on the people who choose to be positive and professional. Let's explore some approaches to focusing on the different kinds of people.

### *The Positive People*

They are people you can build on. They are the engine, but they also need support. They often volunteer for tasks and do fine work, but they also get exhausted. You can encourage them:

- *To build on their strengths and make their best contributions to the organisation;*
- *To act as positive models for other people in the organisation;*
- *To produce success stories that demonstrate the professional standards required for building a successful organisation.*

"Reward the behaviour you want repeated," is the motto, so encourage these people. They will spread positive energy and inspire other people.

One soccer manager I worked with took this approach. Taking over an under-achieving club, he was appalled by the attitudes of some key players.

The manager brought in three top professional players who could lead the dressing room. They had credibility with the other players and became what are known as cultural architects.

Acting as good models, they demonstrated the required professional standards. They also acted as the manager's arm on the field. They inspired and urged the other players to perform at their best.

Good leaders often follow a similar path in organisations. They build on the positive people and encourage them to make their best contributions. Such people spread positive energy across the organisation.

### *The Neutral People*

They can be great assets if they choose to work towards the goals. They must make that decision, but you can increase the chances of them choosing to give their best by ensuring that:

- *They know the organisation's specific goals and strategy;*
- *They are given a sense of ownership in implementing their part of the strategy;*
- *They are given the support they need to do their job and deliver success.*

Some people may appear neutral or guarded. There can be many reasons for their behaviour. They may have seen new leaders come in before, make big promises and then fail to deliver.

Whatever their reasons, however, at some point it is vital for them to opt-in. Otherwise the organisation is trying to climb a mountain with some people who are only partly committed.

Such people can make a good contribution if they choose to become positive and professional. They must each make their own decisions, of course, but you can increase the chances of them choosing to give their best.

One approach is to spend time with these people to ensure that they know the strategy. They also need to know they will be given support to do the job.

Different leaders do this in different ways. One leader who took over the European arm of a multi-national company explained their approach in the following way.

*"I toured every country in the European region and did two-hour sessions in which I literally met every person. Meeting groups of around 20 people, I talked about last year's achievements, before outlining the goals for the next year.*

*"I used a flip chart and a few slides, but the tone was mainly conversational. Looking at the challenges ahead, I invited people to ask their questions and answered these as honestly as possible.*

*"Finally I reiterated the organisation's strategy and outlined what we could all do to get some quick successes. People seemed to appreciate the sessions."*

Sounds hard work? Perhaps, but it can be harder if leaders do not connect with people. Given the right kind of support, people will often do superb work and go that extra mile.

### *The Negative People*

They can choose whether they want to follow the professional guidelines required to achieve the goals. Bearing this in mind, you can again describe the following things;

- *The Organisation's Purpose – the specific thing it aims to do;*
- *The Organisation's Principles – the specific professional standards that people are encouraged to follow to achieve the purpose;*
- *The Organisation's Picture Of Success - the specific results it aims to deliver by a certain date.*

People who are negative or unprofessional need to make a decision. Do they want to follow the professional guidelines and make a positive contribution?

They must follow up with deeds, of course. rather than just say the right words. If they choose not to do so, there are consequences.

The soccer manager mentioned earlier took this approach. He describe the deal to his players. This was along the following lines.

#### *The Professional Deal*

*The club's responsibility is to communicate the strategy, provide a supportive environment and work to achieve success. The players' responsibility is to follow the required professional standards and help the team to achieve success.*

The manager held one-to-one sessions with each of the players. They were asked whether they would like to deliver the required professional standards and contribute towards achieving the goals.

If so, they were also asked what kind of support they would like to help them to do their best. Sometimes the support was professional, sometimes it was personal.

Many of the players were open to developing the mental side of their game. So they spent time with professionals who helped them to develop skills in that area.

Some players said they wanted to be part of the journey, but it was no more than words. They quickly got the message that the club was serious. Here is one example.

The manager explained that the daily training sessions on the field started at 10.00 sharp. Everybody should be warmed up by then and ready to go.

On the second day a star player arrived on the field at 10.01. In his view, being one minute late was not late. This was a pattern he had established under the previous regime.

On this occasion, however, he was in for a shock. He was immediately excluded from the session. The manager told him:

*"We have certain professional standards. These are there for a reason because we rely on each other each day. Training is also vital because this is when we do the work to prepare for matches."*

*"We believe in people developing good habits. We don't expect people to turn up one minute after kick off during a match. The same rule applies to training. Let me know when you are ready to meet those professional standards."*

The manager's strategy worked. He built on the players who followed the principles. The player who chose not to do so left for elsewhere. That season the club won its first-ever domestic trophy.

Positive realists who live in a positive universe rather than a negative universe. They focus on positive things, positive possibilities and positive solutions.

They frequently switch to finding such solutions when facing negative situations. They then aim to help people to employ their resources to achieve success.

### *People Who Live In A Positive Universe*

- *They have a positive attitude but are also good at reading reality.*
- *They focus on positive things and positive possibilities.*
- *They switch into positive solutions mode when faced by negative things.*

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to be a positive realist? This could be in your personal or professional life.

You may want to do so when living your daily life, shaping your future or tackling a challenge. You want to do so when acting as a parent, educator, leader or in another professional role.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Positive Realism In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future when I may aim to be a positive realist may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to aim to be a positive realist are:*

\*

\*

\*

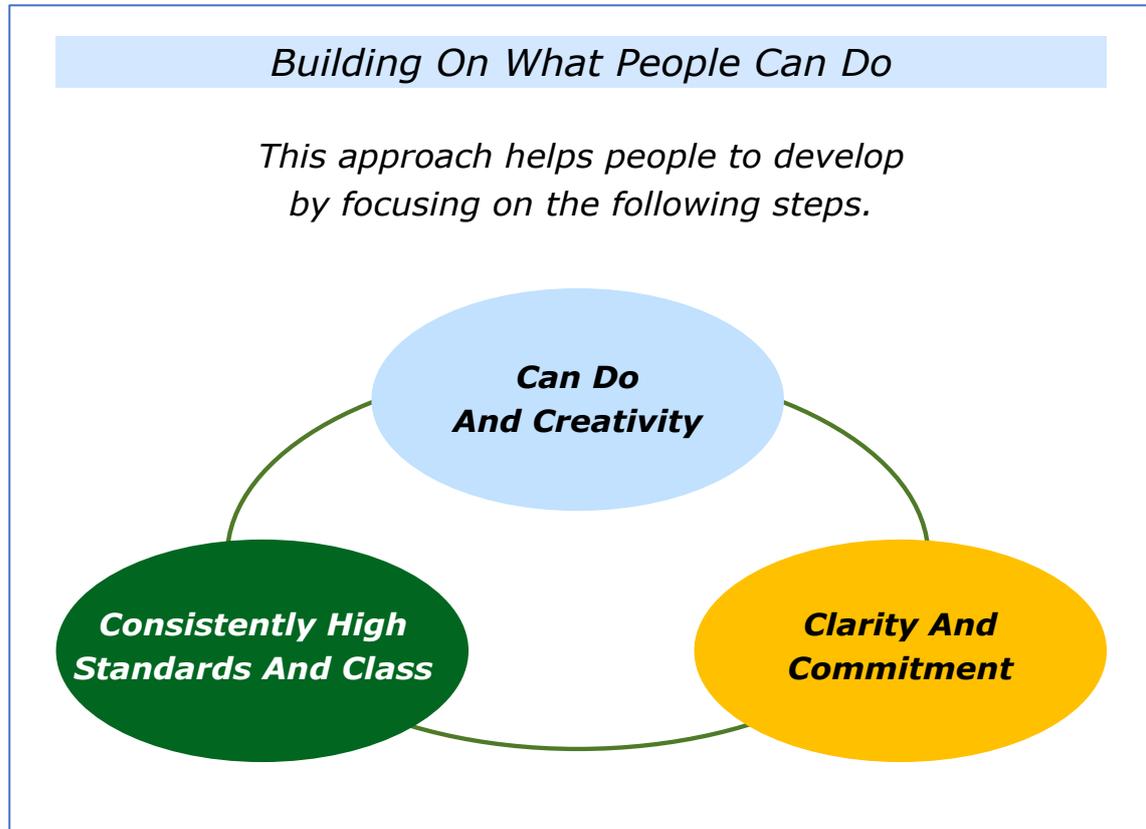
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Building On What People Can Do Approach*



This is an approach that can be used when working with individuals or groups of people. It encourages people:

*To build on their strengths rather than only focus on their weaknesses;*

*To build on what they have got rather than what they have not got;*

*To build on what they can do rather than what they can't do.*

I was reminded of this when working with a parent whose daughter was having difficulties with some subjects at school. Caring for their child, they had commissioned a special report from a psychologist.

Whilst it was possible this could help, being given a label might also have an adverse effect. Bearing this in mind, I asked the parent:

*"What are your daughter's top three strengths?"*

Pausing for a moment, the parent then gave the following answer.

*"She is kind and persistent. She takes the lead when helping others, especially caring for other girls who get bullied. She loves organising things – such as doing drama and creative activities with her friends."*

Several years ago I had a similar conversation with the newly installed leader of a business. Taking over the role, they had been met by people talking about the barriers to success.

The leader and I took another approach. Looking at the business, we explored the following themes.

*What are its strengths? What are its assets? What are the specific things it can do? How can it build on these things to shape a successful future?*

*When have people performed brilliantly in the past? What were the principles they followed? How can they follow these principles – plus add other skills – to perform brilliantly in the future?*

*Who are the positive people in the business? How can we build on these people? How can we encourage them to continue to be positive models, be professional and achieve peak performance?*

The leader built on the positive energy in the business. This involved forming task forces that focused on the specific things they could do: a) to manage today's business; b) to shape tomorrow's business. This helped them to shape a positive future.

Later in the book we will explore how this approach can be applied to teams and organisations. For the moment, however, let's return to focusing on individuals.

This approach is particularly useful when working with certain kinds of people. These include those who may be considered to have some of the following qualities.

*To be different ... To be a specialist ... To be introverted ... To be dyslexic ... To be autistic ... To be highly sensitive in some areas ... To have synaesthesia ... To have physical or mental abilities in some activities but not in others ... To be late developers.*

*To be adrenaline driven ... To be potentially brilliant in some areas but bored in others ... To have been given a psychological label ... To be somebody with a different neurological make up ... To be a positive deviant.*

*To be intelligent in ways not normally recognised ... To have extreme attention to detail in some areas ... To be a pragmatist who won't learn something unless they can see the point of it ... To be somebody who sees things differently.*

It is an approach I have seen used successfully in families, education, the arts, sports, workplaces and many walks of life. It encourages a person to develop by taking the following steps.

### *Can Do And Creativity*

This involves focusing on what a person can do, rather than what they can't do. It means building on their strengths and, at a later point, helping them manage the consequences of any weaknesses. It often calls for being creative in finding ways they can make their best contribution.

### *Clarity And Commitment*

This involves clarifying how the person wants to develop their abilities and what they want to achieve. It also calls for clarifying their inner commitment. It is up to the individual, however, to decide whether they want to do what is required to achieve certain aims.

## *Consistently High Standards And Class*

This involves helping the person to pursue the strategies and skills required to consistently deliver high standards. It sometimes calls for encouraging them to go a step further and use their strengths to add that touch of class.

Looking back on your life, can you think of a situation when you helped a person or a group of people to take some of these steps?

You may have done this in some of the following scenarios.

*When helping a young person to develop their confidence;*

*When helping somebody to build on their strengths and do satisfying work;*

*When helping a team to focus on the specific activities where they could do brilliant work.*

Looking back, how did you help the person or group of people to build on what they could do? How did you help them to identify their possibilities? How did you find creative ways they could channel their strengths?

How did you help them to clarify their goals and decide if they wanted to commit to doing the work? How did you help them to deliver consistently high standards and, if appropriate, add that touch of class?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe what you did, what they did and the things that happened as a result.

## *Building On What People Can Do*

*The specific situation when I helped  
a person or a group of people to  
build on what they could do was:*

\*

*The specific things I did to help them  
to build on what they could do were:*

\*

*The specific things they did to  
build on what they could do were:*

\*

*The specific things that  
happened as a result were:*

\*

## *Can Do And Creativity*

The first step is to focus on what a person can do. This sounds basic but it is often overlooked.

Several years ago I worked with a parent whose son had recently been found to be dyslexic. Worried about their son's future at school, the family began giving him extra lessons. The young boy cried when pushed to do tasks that created a seizure in his brain.

The parent and I looked at websites they described the strengths of people who were dyslexic. These included the following qualities.

### *Dyslexics*

*They are highly aware of the environment ... They are more curious than average ... They think mainly in pictures instead of words ... They like to move and experiment with things.*

*They are highly intuitive and insightful ... They use many of their senses – which means they think and perceive multi-dimensionally ... They have vivid imaginations.*

*Dyslexics often do well in certain kinds of work. These include entrepreneurship, some aspects of business, the arts, work where they can move or create things and engineering.*

Looking at these qualities, the parent paused for a moment. They then said:

*"Our son has many of these qualities. He also has fighting spirit and is tough."*

Many of my mentors focused on what people could do. Alex Dickson, the founder of Voluntary Service Overseas and Community Service Volunteers, took this approach. He encouraged people to use their strengths to help others.

Below is a summary of what he said during one conversation. On that occasion he had just returned from Northern Ireland after talking with people who had lost limbs in bombings.

Alec encouraged them to use their experiences to help other people. They had responded enthusiastically and offered their help. Alec told me about his approach to people.

*"When I look at a person in a wheelchair or a person in any situation, I look at their abilities.*

*"They may be able to teach young people to read, to counsel people who have had a life-changing accident, to listen to older people in a hospice, to make films that share their own experiences of being resilient.*

*"Whatever their situation, everybody has something to give. It is in the act of giving that people both forget themselves and find themselves. We can give people the chance to use their gifts to help to meet some of the unmet needs in society."*

During my work in sports I interviewed coaches in football. One coach expressed their philosophy in the following way.

*"Many coaches talk about what a player can't do, but I have a different approach. When scouting players I watch them in action – especially when things get tough – and ask the following questions.*

*"What is the player's character? What are their strengths and skills? What is it they can do? How could they contribute to the team? How could we build on their strengths and compensate for any weaknesses?"*

Different people focus on different things when exploring what a person can do. One approach is to focus on the person's attitude, ability and what they may be able to achieve.

Imagine you are watching a person in action or seeing an example of their work. It can be useful to explore the following themes.

### *Attitude*

*What is the person's attitude? Are they positive or negative? Do they take responsibility or avoid responsibility? How do they apply themselves when they are doing what they do best? How do they react to setbacks?*

*What is their attitude towards other people? What is their style of behaving, interacting and communicating with other people? What is their effect on other people? What are the three words you would use to describe their attitude?*

### *Ability*

*What are the person's abilities? What are their strengths? What are the specific activities in which they can do superb work? What is the evidence that they can do these things?*

*What is their successful style of working? When have they done superb work in the past? What did they do right then? What were the principles they followed? How did they translate these into action?*

### *Achievement*

*What are the specific things the person can achieve in the future? How could they do superb work and make their best contribution? What is the application they would need to demonstrate to achieve these aims?*

*What will be their best way of doing superb work? Will they work best by themselves, with other people or by leading projects? How can they use their strengths to help other people to achieve their goals?*

Imagine that you have taken this approach. The next stage is to explore creative ways they may be able:

*To build on their abilities and apply these to learn, develop, do superb work or help other people to succeed;*

*To, if appropriate, channel these abilities towards making their best contribution to a customer, team, organisation or society.*

This sometimes calls for doing creative thinking. Several years ago I worked with a team that took this approach.

The team had eight specialists who were tech evangelists for the larger business. They also sometimes acted as trusted advisors with customers and helped them to solve problems.

A new COO was appointed at head office. Coming from a retail background, one of his first acts was to tell people they must be more sales-driven.

Speaking at the annual company gathering, he told people that he saw little difference between running a retail company and a software business.

The company needed to improve its sales performance, he said, so everybody must see themselves as a salesperson. Teams would therefore be given a financial target they must deliver.

This went down like a lead balloon. But, sure enough, every team was given a sales target and sent on a sales course. This had a mixed reception.

The specialist team I worked with wanted to play to their strengths but also keep their jobs. Bearing this in mind, we explored the following options. They could aim either:

*a) To try to convince the bosses that their specialist function was different and they contributed to the company in other ways;*

- b) To follow the instructions and ensure that each of the eight specialists hit a specific sales target;*
- c) To develop their roles as trusted advisors to customers and find ways to sell when doing this role;*
- d) To hire a salesperson and business coordinator for the team – which would mean two specialists moving on in order to stay within the budget;*
- e) To hire a salesperson and a business coordinator, retain all the specialists and increase the team’s sales target in order to pay for these people.*

Looking at this final option, the company had a background of ratifying an increase in headcount providing a team increased its financial target.

The team considered all these options – plus other routes – together with the pluses and minuses of each option. After some discussion they chose to pursue option (e).

There were many twists and turns along the way, but eventually the leader got this approach signed off by their bosses. They recruited a salesperson and business coordinator. Cutting a long story short, the team hit its financial targets by playing to people’s strengths.

The specialists continued to develop their skills as trusted advisors and also increased their ability to get funding. This helped them to shape successful careers in the future.

Let’s return to the person you may want to help. How can you encourage them to build on and channel their strengths?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Bearing in mind the person’s abilities – based on the evidence you have seen - it invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Building On What A Person Can Do*

*The name of the person who I would like  
to help to build on what they can do is:*

\*

### *Can Do*

*The specific things I  
believe they can do are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Maybe Can Do*

*The specific things I believe  
they maybe can do are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Probably Can't Do*

*The specific things I believe they probably can't do are:*

\*

\*

### *Contribution*

*The specific things the person can do – and be helped to do – to build on their abilities in the future are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Clarity And Commitment*

Imagine that you are encouraging a person who wants to build on their strengths. The next stage is to explore the possible routes they can take in the future. This involves helping the person:

*To clarify what they want to do to build on their abilities and the specific results they want to achieve;*

*To clarify whether they want to commit themselves to doing the work involved in achieving their aims.*

Let's explore one example. The following section is based on a piece written by Bengt Elmén. Many years ago he attended a course I ran in Sweden. Here is his remarkable story, together with his views on how people can commit to achieving certain goals.

### *Decide Your Destiny*

*My own experiences with difficulty began early on – as early as birth, in fact. I had a rough delivery, during which I suffered lack of oxygen that resulted in a type of brain damage known as CP, or Cerebral Palsy.*

*As far as I'm concerned, though, CP actually stands for: "Cool and Powerful".*

*The brain damage diminished my ability to walk, talk and use my hands. Early on I had to learn to think of creative solutions to daily situations. I could sit for days, for example, using my mouth and nose to piece together a 500-piece jigsaw puzzle.*

*This taught me that it's always worth the effort to face your difficulties rather than trying to run away from them. Such lessons have been invaluable to me as an adult.*

*I also learned early on how to be intimate with people. However good I was at putting together puzzles, there were many other things I couldn't do without help.*

*This means that over the years, I have employed several hundred people, and from this I have gained a precious understanding of people from all walks of life.*

*After I earned a degree in Public Law at Stockholm's University, I worked five years as director of the Stockholm Cooperative for Independent Living (STIL).*

*I wrote a book called 'Your Responsibility and Mine' which, unfortunately, is available only in Swedish. Despite my physical disability and speech impediment, I began to travel around giving seminars and workshops.*

### *Taking Responsibility*

*Survivor speeches have become very popular at conferences over the last few years. I use humour to show how I coped with my 'tragic fate', explaining that it is possible to see hardships from two perspectives: positive or negative.*

*People often leave the session finding it harder to complain about trivialities, such as the food being too cold when they go home at night. The sessions show it is possible to overcome great difficulties, rather than drown in depression.*

*This is a message of hope and joy and people re-examine challenging situations in their own lives. But I have a confession to make. I am not interested in giving survivor speeches anymore.*

*Why? I am more interested in giving achiever speeches. I love working with Achievers.*

*Such people are prepared to take responsibility and build on what they have got. Deciding what they want to do, they then work hard to achieve their dreams.*

*People do not define the hand of cards they are given at birth, but they do decide how to use the cards. That is what I mean by 'Decide Your Destiny'. Whether giving keynotes or facilitating mentoring sessions, I focus on giving certain messages with people.*

### *Take Responsibility*

*Achievers are prepared to take responsibility for their lives. Perhaps that is why I like working with them.*

*As far as I know, this is the only life I have got. I met death already at birth due to lack of oxygen, but I disregarded him. I chose life.*

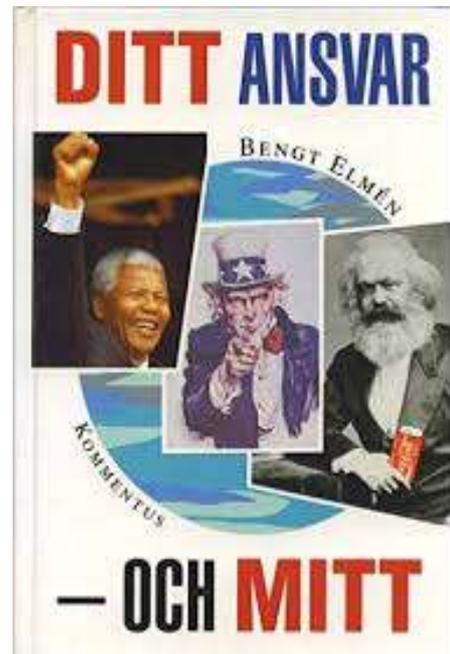
*Since then death has been a reality to me. Life is short and it's no use hiding from the fact that we all are going to die someday.*

*Therefore I want to be in charge of my own life. I want to decide how I spend the time that has been given to me. I don't want to leave that to anyone else. It is my responsibility and I am not ready to spoil a second.*

*My first book in Swedish, 'Your Responsibility and Mine', provoked quite a response. I was urging people to do what they could do, rather than complain about what they couldn't do. This links to my second message.*



*Bengt teaching a group - plus his book. The title translates as **Your Responsibility And Mine.***



## *Build On What You Have Got*

*Did Stevie Wonder stop singing because of his lack of sight? What about José Feliciano, Ray Charles and Andrea Bocelli?*

*Did Stephen Hawking shape his life based on his doctors' early death sentences? Did Helen Keller's difficulties stop her helping other people?*

*Did Franklin D Roosevelt refuse to carry-out the presidency because he suffered from polio?*

*If Ludwig van Beethoven had focused on what he lacked-rather than what he had - we would not have heard his Ninth Symphony and its tribute to the joy of life.*

*Life has taught me to build on what I have got. My physical abilities do not always reach 10/10! My walking ability is probably 3/10.*

*But I decided to transport myself from the physical world to the mental world - so I became fascinated by people's hopes, ideas, plans and ambitions.*

*I manage the physical world with the help of technical aids and my personal assistants. For example, let me explain how I write.*

*Right now I am hitting each key on my Mac with a stick that is fastened to a band around my head. It is not the fastest way in the world, but it gives me time to think about what I want to write. (Think different!)*

*While other authors use their hands at work, I use my head. (And heart.) So that is how you turn a limitation into a strength. That is how you build on what you have got.*

*And when you have chosen to concentrate on what you have got, then you also have to pick the direction of your life. This brings us to my third message.*

*Dare To Be An Achiever  
- But Do It In Your Way*

*Achievers have a special quality. They decide what they want to do and then they do it.*

*Perhaps all of us have listened to inspiring keynote speakers who urged us to follow our dreams. But then what happens? The instant motivation begins to fade away and we return to our daily lives.*

*If you look back at the times you have achieved, however, it is because: a) you made an inner decision to do something; b) you were prepared to work hard; c) you did it in your own way.*

*Pursuing your route can be affirming yet also lonely. In order to achieve greatness, you have to discover your own path.*

*Unfortunately, greatness never can be accomplished by copying someone else - and sometimes it means paying less attention to what others think.*

*You will find it more beneficial to listen to your own inner voice when making the most important decisions in your life. Ask yourself:*

*"What are my innermost aspirations? What do I really want? What do I lack in my life right now? What do I want to accomplish within this lifetime?"*

*Creating new rules in the world can be difficult - but fun. I like to challenge people's traditional views of how life should be. Can the future be rainbow coloured - rather than grey?*

*Speaking to people in the business world, the best response has always been from 'new' businesspeople. They are unconventional, enjoy being challenged and want to discover new ways of looking at the world.*

*The new business achievers are going beyond old preconceptions. Just like the blind, deaf or disabled people I mentioned, some are prepared to follow their hearts and do what they are here to do.*

*My passion is to help achievers to find their purpose, possibilities and peace in life. Why?*

*They love freedom - the freedom to be, the freedom to create - and so do I. Sometimes we all need somebody to say: "You can do it - let's explore how."*

*My work is about helping people to make that decision - then putting it into practise. Inspirational speeches can be a start, but then comes the sweat.*

*People are more willing to do the hard work, however, if they have taken the responsibility to decide their destiny.*

Let's return to the situation where you may be encouraging a person. If appropriate, you can clarify the specific route they want to follow to build on their abilities. You can then encourage them:

*To clarify the specific things they want to achieve and set clear goals;*

*To clarify the pluses and minuses involved in working towards achieving the goals;*

*To clarify their motivation – on a scale 0-10 – to do the work involved in achieving the goals. Make sure it is at least 8/10.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Building On What A Person Can Do*

*The name of the person who I would like  
to help to build on what they can do is:*

\*

### *Clarity*

*The specific things I can do to help them to  
build on their abilities and set goals are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Commitment*

*The specific things I can do help them  
to clarify their commitment to doing the  
work involved in reaching the goals are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Consistently High Standards And Class*

This step involves helping the person to pursue the strategies and skills required to consistently deliver high standards. It also calls for encouraging them to go a step further and add that touch of class.

Different people take this step in different ways. Some people develop a sense of purpose. They then keep focusing on delivering high personal and professional standards.

This is an approach described by Clayton Christensen in the book he wrote with James Allworth and Karen Dillon called *How Will You Measure Your Life?*

Well-known for his work on entrepreneurship, Clayton also taught his students at Harvard to focus on their core principles. Here are some of the themes he described in an interview he gave the Harvard Business Review.

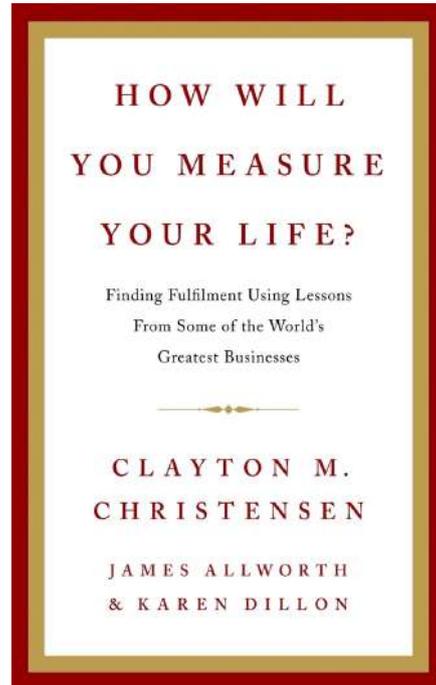
### *How Will You Measure Your Life?*

*I ask my students to find cogent answers to three questions.*

*How can I be sure that I'll be happy in my career?*

*How can I be sure that my relationships with my spouse and my family become an enduring source of happiness?*

*How can I be sure that I'll behave with integrity during my life?*



### *How Will You Measure Your Life?*

*Clayton encouraged his students to focus on following themes:*

- *To clarify their purpose - because this would provide a rudder for negotiating both calm and stormy seas;*
- *To be humble - because this would enable them to be gracious, generous and lifelong learners;*
- *To keep acting with integrity and be good managers who helped people to grow;*
- *To always bear in mind the following theme;*

*"Think about the metric by which your life will be judged, and make a resolution to live every day so that in the end, your life will be judged a success."*

Clayton often demonstrated a touch of class. He did this by listening to people and treating them with respect. When appropriate, he passed on knowledge that enabled them to achieve success.

Different people add class in different ways. Some do it by being kind. Some do it by using their strengths to produce something special that gives people a positive memory for life.

Let's return to the person you may be trying to help. How can you enable them to deliver consistently high standards? How can you encourage them to add that touch of class?

There are many ways to help people to build on what they can do. If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Building On What A Person Can Do*

*The name of the person who I would like  
to help to build on what they can do is:*

\*

*Consistently High Standards*

*The specific things I can do to  
encourage the person to deliver  
consistently high standards are:*

\*

\*

\*

*Class*

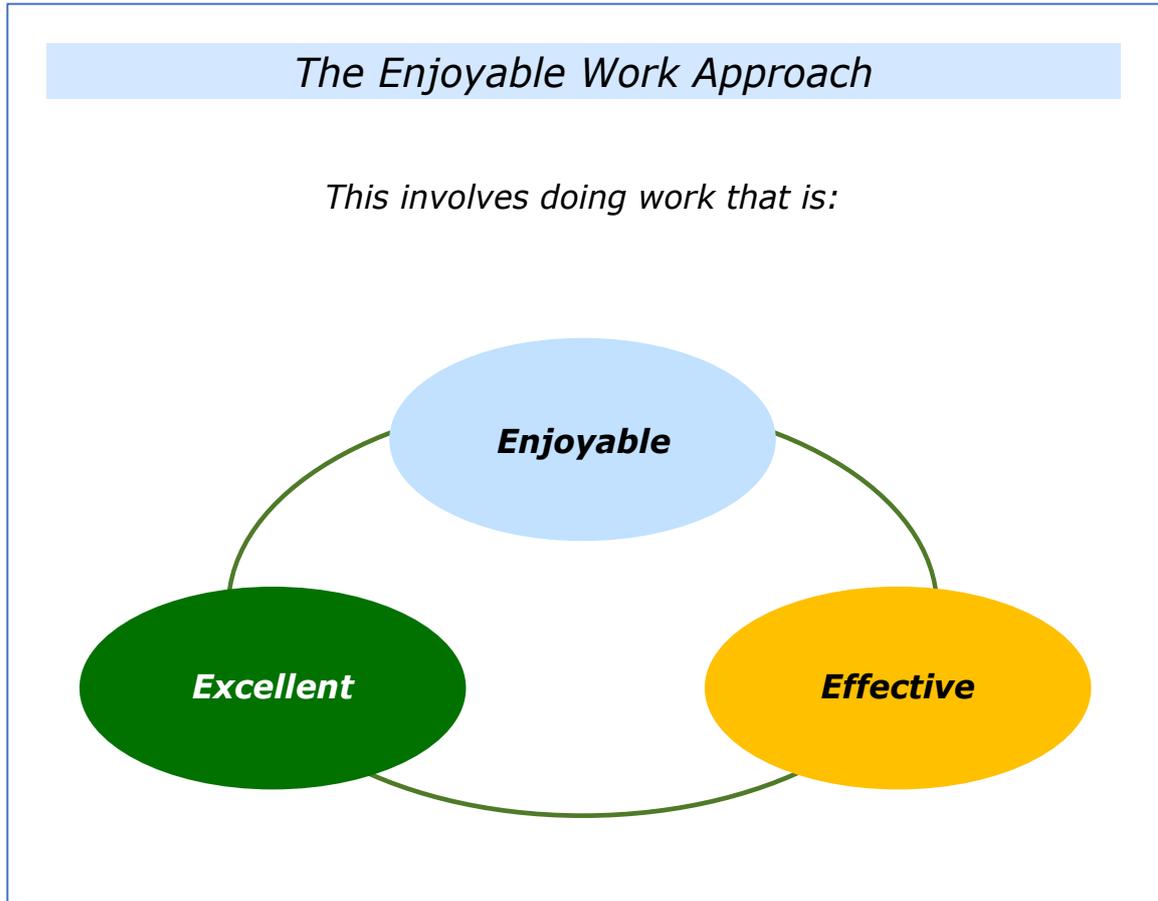
*The specific things I can do to encourage  
the person to add that touch of class are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Enjoyable Work Approach*



This approach involves doing activities where you enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal. You can translate these into doing a specific project.

Setting out on the journey, you can aim to do work that is enjoyable, effective and excellent. Sometimes you may go into another dimension and do work that is exciting or even enlightening.

Looking back, when have you followed some elements of this approach? You may have done so when doing a creative project, leading a team, tackling a challenge or doing another activity.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Enjoyable Work In The Past*

*The specific situation in the past  
when I followed some elements of  
the enjoyable work approach was:*

\*

*The specific things I did then to follow  
some elements of this approach were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that happened as  
a result of taking these steps were:*

\*

\*

\*

Imagine that you want to follow some of these steps in the future. Let's explore how you can do this in your own way.

## *Enjoyment*

What are the specific activities you enjoy doing? What are those where you feel at ease and able to excel? What are those where you enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal?

Some individuals feel at ease in situations where they feel at home. They say to themselves:

*"This is where I was meant to be."*

They feel confident and in control. They have the strengths and skills to deliver success. They feel at ease in situations that others may find difficult. They may enjoy tackling certain challenges, managing crises, performing on stage, competing in sports or doing other activities.

They love to stretch themselves, feel alive and, in some cases, get an adrenaline rush. They then apply their abilities to work towards achieving the stimulating goals.

What are the activities where you enjoy the journey – even though parts of it may be exhausting – as well as reaching the goal? Here are some answers that people give when exploring this theme.

*The specific activities where I enjoy the  
journey as well as reaching the goal are:*

*Helping people to overcome setbacks ... Restoring houses ... Solving certain technical problems ... Passing on knowledge to people ... Helping people to find or create satisfying careers.*

*Being a trusted advisor to clients ... Working to build a fairer society ... Producing solutions focused journalism ... ... Orchestrating people to achieve a compelling goal.*

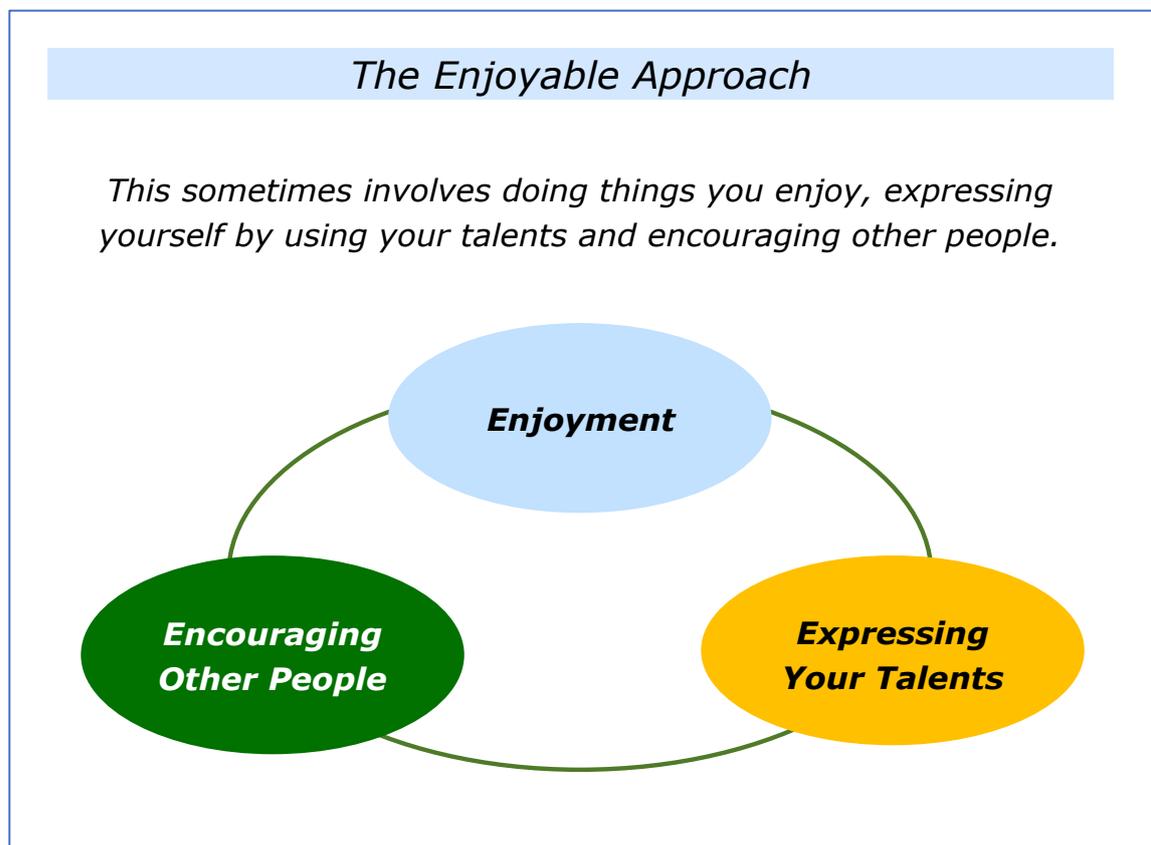
Imagine that you have highlighted a specific activity you enjoy doing. How can you pursue this in the future?

You may aim to encourage people, write an article, nurture a garden or do another activity. You may create a successful prototype, raise money for charity, start a social enterprise or build a business.

You may aim to do satisfying work as a teacher, medical worker, sports coach or crisis manager. You may work as a scientist, specialist, leader, trusted advisor or in another professional role.

Many people feel more alive when they do things they enjoy and express themselves in a creative way. Some people stop doing this and feel clogged up. A person can often come alive again by doing things that give them positive energy.

One approach is to do work you enjoy, express your talents and encourage other people. Let's look at one example.



Susan was a natural designer. She loved to design rooms, events and other experiences in which people felt happy. A series of outside pressures led to her stopping doing these things.

She wanted to get her creative juices going again but found it difficult to start. This led to her feeling down, losing confidence and getting into a negative cycle.

Susan started designing again. She began by renovating her garden and organising an exhibition for local artists. This led to her doing other creative projects. She recaptured the joy of going through the stages of design, development and delivery.

Different people choose different ways to do creative work. One approach is for them to do what they enjoy and express themselves by using their talents. They may then sometimes do work that encourages other people.

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine you have settled on an enjoyable activity that you want to pursue. You can then focus on turning it into a specific project. When doing this it can be useful to explore the following questions.

*What is the specific activity I want to pursue? How can I translate this into a stimulating project? Looking at this project, what are the real results I want to achieve? What will be the benefits of doing such a project? What is the picture of success?*

*Will this be a project where I can play to my strengths? Will it be one where I can enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal? Will it be one where I can focus on the pleasure of doing it even in so-called pressure situations?*

The final point is crucial. It can be important to choose a project where you find pleasure in tackling difficult challenges. This can make the work even more rewarding.

## *Effectiveness*

Imagine that you aim to do a specific project. You have clarified the results to achieve and translated this into a clear picture of success. The next step is to do effective work.

The calls for following the principles you believe in, being professional and doing superb work. It also calls for focusing on continuous improvement and finding solutions to challenges.

Great workers study success. When focusing on a particular challenge, they focus on what works. Here are some of the questions they may ask when aiming to do effective work.



### *Effective Work*

*Here are some questions it can be helpful to explore when focusing on how to do effective work*

- *When have I tackled a similar challenge successfully? What did I do right? What were the principles I followed? How can I follow similar principles – plus add other skills - to tackle this challenge?*

- *When have other people tackled similar challenges successfully? What did they do right then? What were the principles they followed? How can I follow these principles in my own way?*

- *What are real results I want to achieve from the project? What are the principles I believe in following? What the key strategies I can follow to give myself the greatest chance of success?*

- *How can I build on my strengths and follow my successful style of working? How can I manage the consequences of any weaknesses? How can encourage myself on the journey?*

- *How can I get some quick successes? How can I follow my chosen rhythm? How can keep following good habits? How can keep doing the right things in the right way?*

- *What are the potential difficulties I may face? How can I prevent these happening? How can I manage these if they do happen? How can I stay calm and find solutions to problems?*

- *Who are the stakeholders I want to satisfy? What are the actual words I would like them to say about the work I do for them? How can I do my best to ensure they are saying these things?*

- *How can keep doing reality checks? How can I build on what is working? How can I tackle the areas for improvement? What else can I do to increase the chances of achieving success?*

### *The Effective Plus Extra Approach*

*This approach involves doing effective work to get to seven. It is then to do something extra to get to ten.*



There are many models for doing excellent work. One approach is to do effective work to get to seven. It is then to do something extra to get to ten.

Great workers often apply this approach. They aim to follow effective strategies and build a solid platform. They then, when appropriate, do something special to achieve success.

Great teams also follow similar principles. Some soccer teams, for example, have a base of seven solid players who provide a strong defensive shield.

They have four sparkling forwards who can add something extra. They also put a lot of effort into practicing set pieces that can help them to achieve success.

The enjoyable work approach is not always plain sailing. Sometimes it can involve tackling difficult challenges. It is then important to remind yourself of why you are doing the work.

Sometimes it can be useful to focus on the pleasure of doing the work - even in so-called pressure situations. This philosophy of work is 180 degrees different from other approaches. Those views tell people to keep striving, accept the stress and pay the price for seeking a higher status.

It is important to retain your sense of joy because otherwise things can go awry. One athlete explained this in the following way.

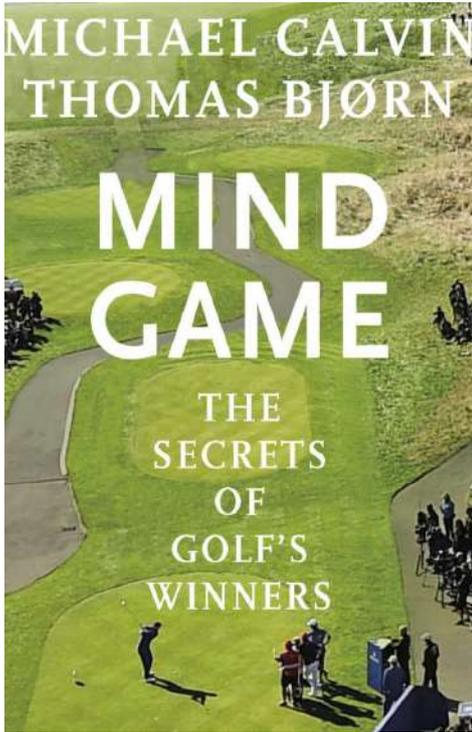
*"I had to rediscover my love for the sport. I had become caught up with the whirlwind of chasing money and comparing myself to others. This led to negative self-talk and frustration."*

Thomas Bjørn described a similar experience in the book he wrote with Michael Calvin called *Mind Game: The Secrets of Golf's Winners*. In it he recalls learning how to deal with the demons in his own head.

This involved returning to the love he had for the game as a child. Here is an extract from the book where he describes facing this challenge.

*"A light went out when I lost my swing for a couple of years. I look for myself today and realise I don't play the game with the same love I lavished on it as a kid."*

*"I don't run to practise or play golf for fun with my friends. To me, it is a job, and it is therefore a short-lived thing."*



Thomas began to rediscover his love for the game. He goes on to describe how this helped him.

*"It helped drive away the demons by reminding me of those beguiling moments when golf is just a game instead of a starkly defined, casually cruel profession."*

*"Innocence is lost quickly, easily. If you cannot reconnect with the sense of wonder you had as a child, then you, too, will be lost."*

Another athlete aimed to do their personal best but not at any cost. They expressed their philosophy in the following way.

*"I began playing sports for pleasure. I loved feeling alive and doing my best. My talent took me to the point where playing sport became a career. People then told me that I would need to sacrifice myself and even suffer if I was to reach the top."*

*"Looking at the people who had won titles, some said that it bought relief rather than joy. Some even lost things that were important in life – such as their marriages and contact with their children."*

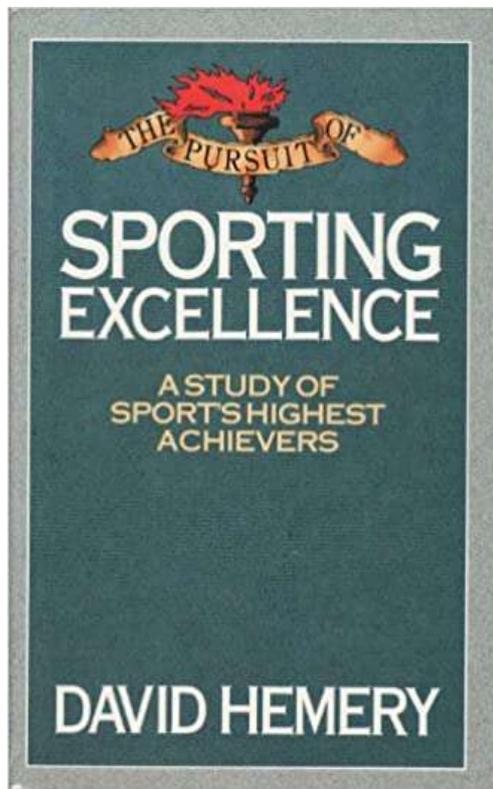
*"I continue to get pleasure from my sport and make a good living. The most crucial thing, however, is that I have managed to focus on what I believe to be the most important things in life."*

Let's return to your chosen project. How can you do effective work?  
How can you follow your principles and be professional?

## *Excellence*

Great workers aim to become the best they can be. They aim to deliver consistently high standards and produce excellence.

David Hemery, an Olympic Gold Medal winner, described the importance of athletes taking this approach in his 1991 book *Sporting Excellence*. Here is the official description of the book.



*David found that great performers had intrinsic motivation.*

*This began at an early age. They chose to play their sport because they wanted to play it rather to please other people.*

*They followed their inner drive and developed their inner discipline.*

*They then aimed to build on their talent and become the best they could be.*

*In his survey of over 50 world-class performers, David Hemery examines the common factors which separate the highest performers from the rest of the competition.*

*He asks over 80 questions covering subjects such as childhood, upbringing, parental guidance, coaching, personal relationships, destiny, stress and the influences of the mind.*

*Over the course of the study covering the performers' physical, social, mental and moral development, various patterns emerged and these are illustrated with direct quotes taken from interviews given by the performers.*

David aimed to spread this approach with his work in education, sports and business. His work includes creating a programme for schools which encourages young people to do their personal best.

The programme reached thousands of youngsters. It encouraged them to use their talents in the arts, sports, dance, maths, engineering, leadership and many other activities. David explained this approach in the following way.

### *Be The Best You Can Be!*

*Tens of thousands of young people from many backgrounds, ranging from the deprived to the privileged, are currently engaged in the Be The Best You Can Be! Programme across the UK.*

*All are enabled to follow their own unique learning journey to achieve their full intellectual, physical, social and spiritual potential as responsible individuals, citizens and member of their community.*

*There is a spark of greatness, something special and unique in everyone and Be The Best You Can Be! is designed to unlock more of each individual's untapped potential and is the translation of inspiration into action.*

Great organisations create an environment in which people are encouraged to do their best. This sometimes involves taking the next step.

## *Building An Excellence Culture Rather Than An Excuse Culture*

<b><i>Excellence Culture</i></b>	<b><i>Excuse Culture</i></b>
<b><i>The characteristics of people in an excellence culture are:</i></b>	<b><i>The characteristics of people in an excuse culture are:</i></b>
<b><i>They ...</i></b>	<b><i>They ...</i></b>

When have you encountered an excellence culture rather than an excuse culture? You may have visited a sports team, hospital, company or other organisation where people continually delivered high standards.

What did people do to create such a culture? How did they keep reminding people of what good looked like? How did they deal with any quality problems?

Many years ago I encountered two extreme cultures during the course of a week. The first culture exuded excellence.

The pathway to the building was clean and attractive. The reception people had been told I was arriving and had a badge ready. They provided coffee and fruit for visitors in the reception area where customer success stories were displayed on the walls.

Watching the employees arrive, they appeared friendly and wanting to work. The whole environment buzzed with a sense of energy. People took responsibility for maintaining the high standards.

The Chief Executive came to collect me rather than sending somebody else. Building on my comments about the reception area, she explained the company wanted the visitors to go away saying:

*"That is the best reception area I have ever visited. It exemplified what the company aims to do each day. I wish my company's reception area could be like that."*

### *Great Organisations*

- *They keep sharing the picture of success.*
- *They keep showing their people what good looks like.*
- *They keep rewarding the behaviour they want repeated.*

The second company I visited was much less inspiring. The grounds outside the main entrance were littered with cigarette butts, chewing gum and empty cans in the hedges.

The reception area was grubby and staffed by uninterested people from a security company. The meeting rooms were dark, had faulty window blinds and had packages stacked in the corners.

The company was grey. There were few signs of energy or love for the work. People failed to take responsibility for improving the standards. I left wondering how people got through each day.

Looking at your own experience, what do you think are the characteristics of an excellence culture? What are the values that people believe in? How do people translate these values into action? How do they actually behave?

Looking at the other extreme, what do you think are the characteristics of an excuse culture? How do people behave in such a culture? What happens as a result?

Good leaders reward the behaviour they want repeated. They also never walk past a quality problem - otherwise they have said it is okay.

A Managing Director taught me about this when I was due to meet him. Sitting in the reception area of his company's offices, I saw him park his car and begin walking toward the main entrance.

Suddenly he dived into the hedge and emerged with an empty drinks can. It was 7.30 in the morning and the can had obviously been thrown from the nearby main street during the night.

The MD explained his approach in the following way.

*"I refuse to walk past a quality problem. If we don't keep our hedges and car parks clean, visitors will think we don't pay attention to our products."*

***Never walk past a quality problem –  
because otherwise you have said it is okay***



This approach also applies to dealing with people who display poor professional standards. Here is one example.

Imagine the scene. It is 9.30 on a Monday morning and one team member arrives 30 minutes late for a 9.00 meeting at the office. He then says the following things to the rest of the staff.

*"What a terrible day. The trains are late and later I am due to meet the client from hell. What a way to begin Monday."*

What to do about such an entrance? You can ignore the person, confront them or adopt some other approach.

I witnessed such an incident when the leader asked the team member who arrived late to leave the room. He said:

*"I wonder if you can replay that situation. Everybody has found it hard to get into work today, but we want to get on with the job."*

*"I would like you to go out, then come in again. This time, think about the impression you are giving to people in the office.*

*"I don't want you to come in with a forced smile, but I do want you to think about the tone you are setting on a Monday morning. Do you want to try it? It's up to you."*

That approach sounds heavy, but it actually worked. The team member smiled wryly, accepted the message and said:

*"Sorry."*

They left the room and came in again 30 seconds later with a totally different attitude. The leader was not looking for clones, far from it, but he did want people who behaved professionally.

You will have your own way of never walking past a quality problem. This can be easy when it applies to physical products or customer service. But it can be harder with human behaviour.

People must get the message that certain actions are encouraged, however, whilst others are unacceptable. Corporate misdemeanours can often be traced back to ignoring people who behaved badly.

Good organisations encourage the people who take responsibility and deliver the required professional standards. They do not dilute their principles for those who do not want to fulfil the agreed contracts. It is about maintaining standards.

Imagine that you aim to build an excellence culture. You may wish to do this in a school, sports team, organisation or wherever. How can you do your best to make this happen?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Excellence Culture*

*The specific situation in which I would like to build an excellence culture is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to build an excellence culture in this situation are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Excellence Plus Approach*

Some people do excellent work and then go into another dimension. They may do work that is exciting or even enlightening.

Michael Murphy and Rhea White describe how great performers take this step in their book *In The Zone*. This explores transcendent experiences in sports, the arts and other fields.

One section describes how Mikhail Baryshnikov aimed to take ballet into another dimension. The authors do this by using the following quote from Herbert Saal, the ballet reporter.

*The most exquisitely chilling weapon in the arsenal of this complete dancer was his ballon, his ability to ascend in the air and stay there, defying gravity, especially in the double tour en l'air, in which the male dancer revolves two full times before landing.*

*The Stuttgart Ballet's Richard Cragun can turn three times in a blur of motion. But Baryshnikov did it in slow motion. And it was unbelievable.*

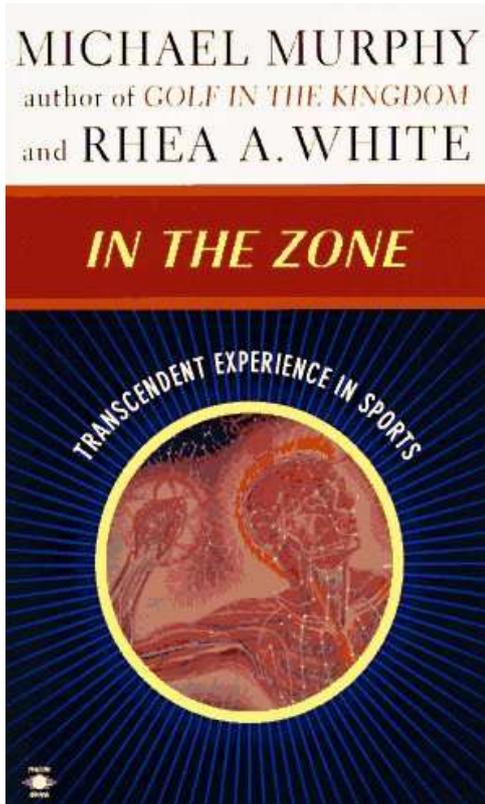
*He blasted off with the hesitation and majesty of a spaceship. He turned – once, twice – and every thread on his costume was plainly visible as he soared high above the audience like an astronaut looking back at earth.*

The authors describe a similar phenomenon happening in team sports. They quote Bill Russell, who played for the Boston Celtics, describing how the basketball team produced magic in games.

Bill explains how the process would start with three or four of the team's top players acting as a catalyst. He explained this in the following way.

*"The feeling would spread to the other guys and we'd all levitate. At that special level all sorts of odd things happened. It was almost as if we were playing in slow motion."*

Bill goes on to describe what happened next.



*"I could almost sense how the next play would develop and where the next shot would be taken.*

*"My premonitions would be consistently correct, and I always felt then that I not only knew all the Celtics by heart but also all the opposing players, and that they all knew me.*

*"These were the moments when I had chills pulsing up and down my spine."*

Some people experience this feeling in their daily lives. They do this by continuing to have a sense of gratitude, appreciate life or feel at one with the world. They may experience it when doing creative work, playing music or performing another activity.

Some people experience it through their senses. They immerse themselves in activities and feel fully alive. They then feel transported into another dimension.

Some people may also experience something like the original Greek definition of ecstasy. This involves standing outside oneself and becoming at one with the experience. Sometimes it involves being in a state of rapture or at one with the divine.

Some people experience this feeling through making a creative breakthrough. They may be deeply engaged in a piece of work or

searching to find a solution. The moment of enlightenment then brings a rush of happiness. Carl Sagan said, for example:

*"Understanding is a kind of ecstasy."*

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking to the future, imagine that you want to follow some elements of the enjoyable work approach.

How can you do work you enjoy? How can you translate this into doing a specific project? How can you do effective work? How can you deliver excellence? How can you maybe sometimes do work that is exciting or even enlightening?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Enjoyable Work In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future when  
I may want to follow some elements  
of the enjoyable work approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to follow  
some elements of this approach are:*

\*

\*

\*

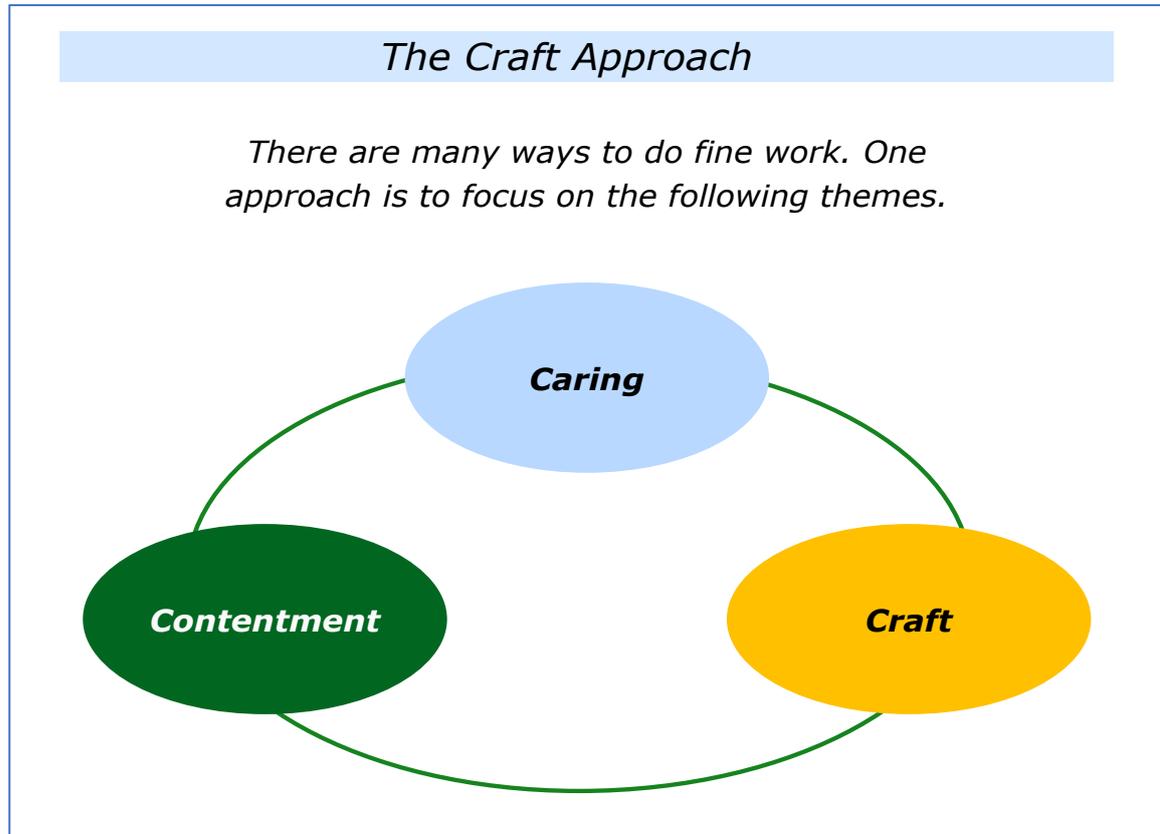
*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

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## The Craft Approach



What are the kinds of work you really care about doing? You may care about encouraging people, solving certain problems, helping people to succeed, building a better world or doing another activity

How can you translate what you care about into pursuing a particular craft? You may aim to do this by working as a counsellor, educator, nurse, writer, film maker, scientist, problem solver, leader or in another role.

How can you set aside time to pursue this craft? Bearing in mind your strengths, how can you focus on doing a specific project? How can you concentrate and do superb work? How can you use your creativity to find solutions to challenges?

How can you set goals each day and reach these aims? How can you encourage yourself on the journey? How can you finish properly? How can you, if possible, get a feeling of contentment?

How can you rest and reflect? Bearing in mind what you care about, how can you then continue to develop as an educator, coach, mentor, musician or in another role? How can you continue to pursue your chosen craft?

There are many definitions for craft. Originally it applied to making things by hand. More recently it has expanded to include other activities that involve the pursuit of excellence. One definition is:

*To create or make something with skill and careful attention to detail.*

Imagine you want to follow this path in your own way. Let's explore some of the themes you may wish to pursue.

## *Caring*

Seth Godin, the author, believes that sometimes it is difficult to find our calling. He recommends instead to focus on the things we care about. Here are some of the themes he explored in his blog.

### *Seth Godin - The Importance Of Caring*

*"I don't think we have a calling. I do think it's possible to have a caring."*

*"A calling implies that there's just one thing for you, just one thing you're supposed to do."*

*"What we most need in our lives, though, is something worth doing, worth it because we care."*

*"There are plenty of forces pushing us to not care. Bosses, systems, bureaucracies and the fear of mattering. None of them are worth sacrificing something as important as caring."*



Imagine you want to pursue this path. One approach is to start by clarifying the kinds of work you really care about doing. Different people give different answers when exploring this theme. Here are some of the things they describe.

*The Kinds Of Work I Really Care About Doing Are:*

*Helping people to care for their wellbeing ... Creating beautiful things ... Writing inspiring music ... Making sure everybody has access to clean water ... Making films that inspire people to care for nature ... Developing technology that empowers people.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Start by brainstorming the kinds of work you really care about doing.

Looking at this list, have a go at describing the top three things. Then rate the extent to which you care about these on a scale 0-10.

## *Caring*

*The specific kinds of work I really care about doing and the extent to which I care about these are:*

\* \_\_\_\_\_ / 10

\* \_\_\_\_\_ / 10

\* \_\_\_\_\_ / 10

The next step is to focus on one of these and translate it into doing a specific project. Depending on your chosen path, you may want:

*To write an article ... To run a series of seminars ... To produce a piece of art ... To direct a play ... To nurture a garden ... To coach a youth football team ... To perform in a choir ... To make a sculpture.*

*To help people find satisfying work ... To renovate a house ... To help children with dyslexia ... To care for animals ... To solve a specific problem ... To do another activity.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Caring*

*The specific kind of work I  
really care doing about is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to translate  
this into doing a specific project are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits – for myself and for  
other people – of doing this project will be:*

\*

\*

\*

## Craft

Imagine that you have clarified what you want to do. This may involve developing your skills when pursuing a craft.

As mentioned earlier, great workers often do work that involves the heart, head and hands. Their heart loves to do the specific activity. Their head has an understanding – a model or a picture – of what they aim to achieve. Their hands brings something into being.

By hands I mean, in some cases, literally their hands. They may paint, build, fix, type or do another activity. But in other cases it may be using their whole being – their experience, body, voice or whatever to produce a result.

Dave Gamache, a designer and builder, encourages people to follow certain principles to develop their craft. Here are excerpts from a piece he wrote for the lifehacker website.

### *Craftsmanship - Doing What You Love And Doing It Right*

- *The concept of craftsmanship fascinates and drives me. There are many definitions of craftsmanship.*
- *Some silo the term to physical trades like carpentry, while others pigeonhole it to artistic endeavors. My understanding of craftsmanship is much more fundamental.*
- *Craftsmanship is doing what you love and doing it right. No matter what you do - designer, baker, electrician, architect, author - your job is your craft.*
- *Learn to think of your work as practice towards becoming an absolute expert at what you do. Craftsmanship is not a destination; it's a life-long discipline.*

- *Love your craft every day. Designing a product, web site, or workflow shares the same core values as any other craft. It's experience, the quality of the work and a passion for betterment.*
- *Improve your work by learning from others and from your own experiences. Design the simplest, most delightful product you can. Watch people use your product and make it better for them.*
- *Craftsmanship is universal. It's near impossible to capture all the nuances 'craftsmanship' carries, but when you see it, feel it, experience it - you know it.*
- *Make things that you want to show to others. Build things that will make you proud ten years from now. Sweat the details and the final product will be something to be admired.*

Some people start following this path early in life. They begin by throwing themselves into a particular hobby or interest. They get into the habit of doing this activity deeply and well.

The next stage comes later in life. They settle on a particular passion they want to pursue. They then aim to follow certain principles and master certain skills to achieve their picture of success.

Pursuing this path becomes a lifetime journey. They may aim to become the best they can be as an artist, teacher, designer, mentor or whatever.

Here are some examples from women who have enjoyed this journey and helped others to develop their skills. These are based on their biographies for events celebrating female craftswomen on International Women's Day.

## *The Pleasure Of Pursuing Your Craft*

*The following pages provide quotes from  
women who have pursued their craft*

*Liz Wellby – Artist, Teacher and Maker*

*"I am a maker and a tutor and I love both roles. They allow me to play, explore and connect with other people, make me smile and bring me joy."*

*Lucille Scott – Little Duck Forge*

*"I love teaching and encouraging young people to develop their natural talent, when it comes to adults I feel I am making them more aware of the skills involved in such an amazing craft."*

*"As a female doing this craft, I am just one of many but I hope that every girl that sees me feels encouraged and that every person I work with won't give it a second thought."*

*"The metal industry is amazing and respects you for what you can do, most professionals are gender blind."*

*Jo Harris – Henley-on-Thames School of Art*

*"Being a female artist, as well as a tutor, I really get to witness firsthand the nurturing aspect of exploring our own creativity.*

*"There's something very special about welcoming fledgling artists into the studio and watching them come to life as they relax into their own drawing style."*

*Joe Gregory - Creative With Nature*

*"I'm a full time willow sculptor. Being a female craftswoman means freedom and independence, a way I can earn a living doing something totally sustainable, in something I love.*

*"I've been weaving for 12 years and this has led me to develop a series of popular & achievable full day and two day weaving courses in sculpture and basketry. Something I'm truly passionate about."*

*Kim Stoddart – Green Rocket Courses*

*"I'm been gardening for 30 years. I've been writing for the Guardian on all matters grow your own since 2013 and teaching gardening since 2014.*

*"My approach is very hands on and accessible and designed to debunk a lot of the jargon to make gardening accessible and wonderful for all.*

*"The nurturing of a seed into food is magical and increasingly important. I delight in teaching how by working with nature you can create a more resilient, productive and enjoyable space in which to be.*

*"I edit The Organic Way magazine and have gardening columns in the press. I am the author of The Climate Change Garden book."*

Alan Cooper, a pioneer in computing, described some qualities involved in pursuing a craft. Below are some key points he made in a speech at the Interaction Design Association conference in 2008.

### *An Insurgence Of Quality*

*Best to market, particularly in high tech, comes about only through craftsmanship. And craftsmanship is all about quality.*

*The goal of craftsmanship is to get it right, not to get it fast. The ultimate measurement of craft is not speed. It's quality. It's a pure measurement. And a delightful measurement.*

*Craftsman - craftspeople - do it over and over, until they get it correct. And in their training, in their apprenticeship, they build things over and over.*

*They learn how to do things correctly, so they can bring enormous expertise to create successful products. Thus the training of craftsman is a long and drawn-out personal process.*

Many people have tried to draw a distinction between the arts and crafts. Denis Dutton, the academic and entrepreneur, explored this topic in a Radio New Zealand broadcast in 1990. Below are some of the points he outlined in his talk *The Difference Between Art and Craft*.

*Denis Dutton - Craft Is  
One Of The Borderlands Of Art*

- *Craft work is skilled work. It involves the application of a technique and human intelligence. It produces things which are useful for various human purposes.*
- *Art involves involves craft. The training of practitioners in all the arts is based on the mastery of techniques. The artist then uses their talent to create art.*
- *Craft can also go beyond technique. It can involve exploring novel and undiscovered possibilities. Hence, in this respect, it can sometimes be considered to be art.*
- *Craft is, in fact, one of the borderlands of art.*

Imagine that you have translated what you care about into pursuing a certain craft and doing a specific project.

How can you set aside time to do the work? How can you rehearse what you are going to do? How can you follow your chosen ritual for beginning the work? How can you set yourself achievable goals?

How can you follow your principles when doing the work? How can you build on your strengths and your skills? How can you develop your craft on the way towards achieving the specific goals?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## Craft

*The specific project I want to do that will be an expression of what I really care about is:*

\*

*The specific goals – the real results I want to achieve - by doing this project are:*

\*

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*The specific things I can do to practise and improve my craft on the way towards achieving the specific goals are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Contentment*

Imagine that you are pursuing your craft and working towards achieving your goals. As ever, it can be useful to focus on the following steps towards doing superb work.

### *Step One: Strengths*

*You can build on your strengths and follow your successful style of working.*

### *Step Two: Strategies*

*You can set specific goals and clarify the key strategies you can follow to give yourself the greatest chance of success.*

### *Step Three: Success*

*You can do superb work, continue to develop and work towards achieving your picture of success.*

Pursuing your chosen craft may mean that sometimes you go into what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi called a state of flow. You become so absorbed in the activity that time goes away.

Different people do this in different ways. Malcolm McCullough described some of the steps that people take in his book *Abstracting Craft*. Below are themes he describes in the book.

### Malcolm McCullough - Pursuing Your Craft

- *This quality of engagement is personal. If you are like most people, you probably work well only when your attention is focused on the task at hand.*
- *Something must draw your interest. This might be the pleasure of handling a material or the concentration required not to ruin a piece of work.*
- *It could be the intricacies of solving a problem or the anticipation of a finished product. It might be the ambition to succeed, or the fear of failure.*
- *Or it could simply be the calming effect of routine, based on soothing motions, habitual expertise, and a sustaining commitment to practice.*
- *If enough of these engaging qualities are sufficiently strong, nothing will distract you from your work - the hours will fly by, and you might not even hear the phone ringing.*

Sometimes you will reach your daily goal and get a feeling of contentment. Sometimes you will enjoy such moments but then turn your thoughts to the next day's work

This highlights the different drives within a craft worker. They enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal. They then want to keep improving when pursuing their craft. Contentment can sometimes arrive by accepting and combining these different drives.

#### *Contentment For A Craft Worker*

*It can be the feeling of completeness when seeing their finished product.*

*It can be the feeling of following their desire to keep developing and making even better finished products.*

*It can be the feeling of using their talents to make their best contribution during their time on the planet.*

Seth Godin believes that, if we focus on the things we care about, we want to keep improving. He described this in the following way.

*When we care enough, we raise the bar*

*Practice alone, the 10,000 hours thing, doesn't produce work that matters.*

*No, that only comes from caring. From caring enough to leap, to bleed for the art, to go out on the ledge, where it's dangerous.*

*When we care enough, we raise the bar, not just for ourselves, but for our customer, our audience and our partners.*

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that you are pursuing your craft and aiming to achieve a specific goal.

How can you keep doing good work? How can you follow your successful pattern for finishing and reach the goals? How can you do your best and perhaps get a feeling of contentment?

How can you relax, reflect and revitalise yourself? How can you move on to the next stimulating project? How can you then do satisfying work? How can you continue to develop your craft?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Contentment*

*The specific project I want to do that will be an expression of what I really care about is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to do my best to achieve the goals and perhaps feel contentment are:*

\*

\*

\*

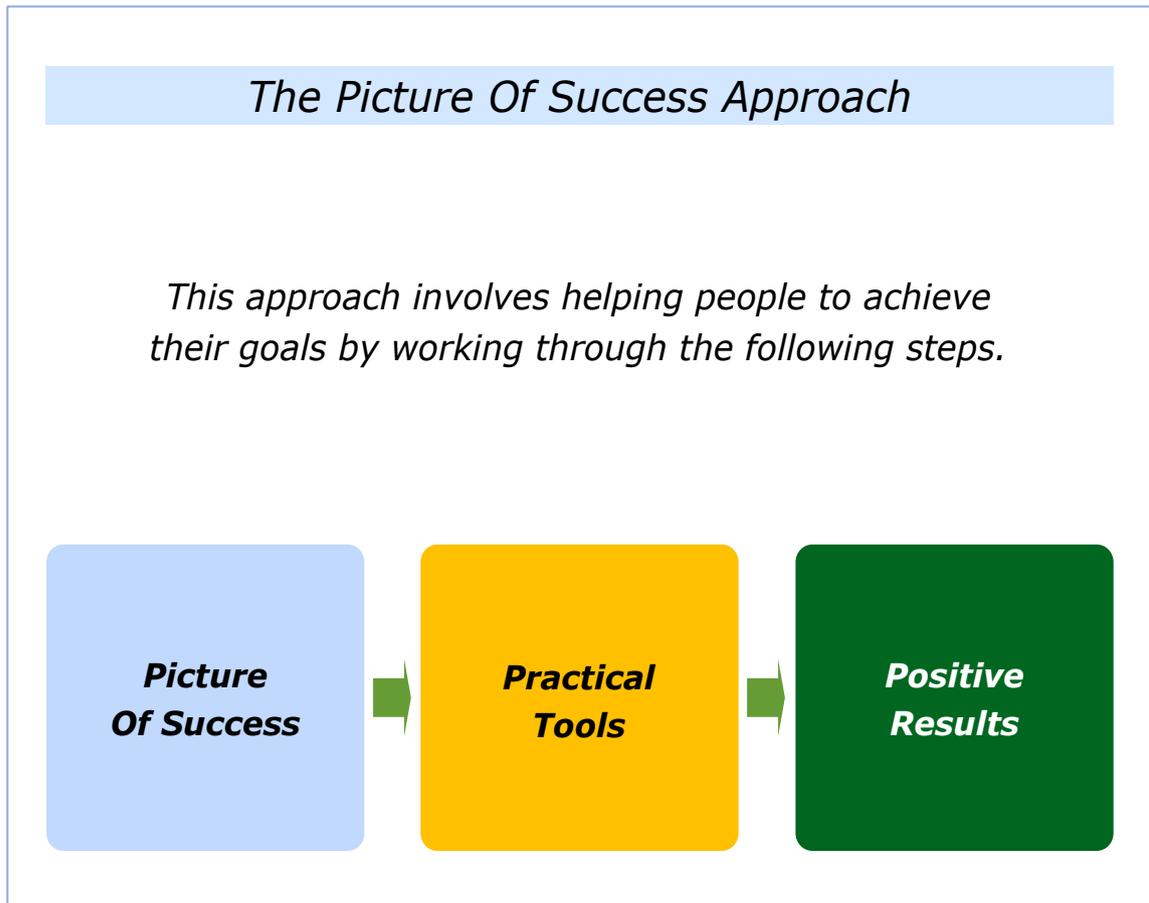
*The specific things I can do to focus on continuous development and keep improving my craft are:*

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## *The Picture Of Success Approach*



This approach can be used to help individuals, teams and organisations to achieve their goals. It can be used in face-to-face sessions, workshops or remote learning. It helps people to achieve their aims by focusing the following themes.

### *The Picture Of Success*

*What are their goals? What are the real results they want to achieve? What are the things they can control in the situation? What are the things they can build on to achieve their aims? What is their picture of success?*

### *The Practical Tools*

*What are the strategies they can follow to achieve success? What is the knowledge - the positive models and practical tools – I can pass*

*on to help them achieve their goals? How can I do this in a way they can use?*

### *The Positive Results*

*How can they translate their chosen strategies into action? How can they get some quick successes and encourage themselves on the journey? How can they do their best to achieve their picture of success?*

The approach invites people to start from their destination and work backwards. It involves them clarifying:

*The real results they want to achieve;*

*The actual words they would like to hear their stakeholders saying;*

*The specific things that will be happening that will show they have achieved their goals.*

Imagine that you have helped a person, team or organisation to clarify their aims. You can then pass on knowledge and practical tools that resonate with people and helps them to achieve success.

Looking back, can you think of when you have used some elements of this approach? You may have been encouraging a person, facilitating a workshop, leading a team or doing another activity.

What did you do to clarify their goals? How did you pass on knowledge and practical tools? How did you help them to do their best to get positive results?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Picture Of Success Approach In The Past*

*The specific situation in the past  
when I used elements of the  
picture of success approach was:*

\*

*The specific things I did then to use  
the picture of success approach were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that happened as  
a result of using this approach were:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Picture Of Success*

*The real results I/We want to achieve by ... are:*

● *To ...*

*For example ...*

● *To ...*

*For example ...*

● *To ...*

*For example ...*

There are many ways to clarify the picture of success. The following pages explore some of these approaches.

## *The Real Results Approach*

Imagine that somebody has asked for your help in clarifying their aims. Different individuals will want to explore different themes. They may, for example, describe some of the following aims:

*I want:*

*To help our son to pass the exams needed to get to university ... To keep progressing in my career ... To regain a sense of purpose in my work ... To become a marketing director ... To change the culture in our company ... To fulfil my potential.*

Imagine that a person wants to focus on one of their goals. It can be useful to clarify the real what – the real results to achieve.

What does a parent want to achieve, for example, by helping their son to pass exams? Do they want to help them to get into university or to have a satisfying career?

There may be other ways to help their son to have a satisfying career without going to university. They can help them: a) to build on their strengths; b) to do stimulating work; c) to earn a good salary.

What does a person want to achieve by becoming a marketing director? They may want to do strategic marketing work and build an outstanding reputation.

Some marketing directors are able to do this, but some join companies where the CEO sees themselves as the chief marketer. They simply want somebody who is an implementer. The person may be able to find other ways to build a reputation as a strategic marketer.

Imagine that a customer asks you to fix a specific problem. They may already have an idea about what needs to be fixed and how. They may say something along the lines of:

*"We want your help in fixing: a) ... b) ... c) ... The things we would like you to do to help fix it are: d) ... e) ... f) ..."*

The customer is understandably focusing on the immediate issue, but there may also be a longer-term issue. Bearing this in mind, you may say something along the following lines.

*"I can fix the present problems and make sure they never happen again. If you are interested, I can also build something that will ensure you achieve your future goals."*

You can clarify the real results to achieve in both the short and long-term. The customer may or may not be interested. If they are, however, you can help them to achieve ongoing success.

## *The Actual Words Approach*

*The Actual Words Approach*

*The actual words I/We want to hear the person or the group of people saying are:*

" .....

" .....

" .....

*The specific things I/we can do ensure they are saying these things are:*

\*  
\*  
\*

Imagine you are helping a team to set their goals. They may well focus on what they want to achieve in terms of profits, product quality and people's wellbeing.

You can bring these goals to life by inviting them to do this well-known exercise. People go into groups and take the following steps.

*They list each of the key stakeholders they want to satisfy – such as their bosses, the various customers, their colleagues and other stakeholders.*

*They describe the actual words they would like to hear each of these stakeholders saying about the work the team is delivering.*

*They describe the specific things they can do to do their best to ensure the stakeholders are saying these words.*

The team may want the customers, for example, to be saying the following things about the service it provides.

*"They really understand our business ... They deliver great service that helps us to achieve our goals ... They act as one-stop shop for dealing with problems ... They are true partners and help us to achieve success."*

The team may also want the leaders at headquarters saying the following things.

*"The team always delivers its targets ... It is self-managing, proactive and makes a good contribution to the business ... It delivers great service to its internal customers ... It produces people who go on to take important roles in the company."*

This is an exercise I have used many times with individuals and teams. People describe what they want their stakeholders to be saying. They then aim to deliver this picture of success.

## *The Stakeholder*

*The name of the stakeholder is:*

\*

*The actual words we would  
like to hear them saying are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things we can do to do our best  
to ensure they are saying these things are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Outcomes Approach*

### *The Outcomes Approach*

*This involves continually focusing on the following themes:*

- *To clarify the desired outcomes;*
- *To make clear contracts about the desired outcomes;*
- *To keep working towards the desired outcomes.*

This approach mirrors some of the themes explored in the picture of success approach. It is included here because many people apply it in their daily lives and works.

The outcomes approach can be used in different situations. It can be used when setting personal goals, helping a person or working with a group of people. Let's explore how this can work in practise.

### *Clarifying The Desired Outcomes*

The approach starts by clarifying the outcomes to achieve. These can be on many levels – such as concrete, emotional and other outcomes. It can also be useful to clarify the benefits of achieving these results.

This involves starting from the destination. It calls from clarifying the real What – the real results to achieve – before moving on to the How. It then involves translating these into a clear picture of success.

The next step is to explore the How. It is to clarify the key strategies you can follow to achieve the goals. Sometimes you will do his by yourself, but on other occasions you will involve other people.

This will obviously be the case if you are helping an individual. You will create an environment in which they are able to clarify their aims. If appropriate, you can then help them to settle on their strategy for achieving the desired outcomes.

Great leadership teams often clarify the real results to achieve – the What - and the key aspects of the How. When appropriate, then then involve their people in building up the complete picture.

Whether you are setting personal goals or working with other people, it is vital to clarify the outcomes to achieve. You can then move on to the next stage.

### *Clear Contracting About The Desired Outcomes*

Good leaders often communicate the following things to their people. They start by giving them the big picture and context. They then explain:

*The specific outcomes to achieve together with the benefits of achieving these outcomes;*

*The specific strategies for working towards achieving these outcomes;*

*The specific contributions that will be required to achieve these outcomes.*

They always give the big picture and the reasons for the strategies. They also give people the chance to ask questions and, when appropriate, add their ideas.

Such leaders then give people the chance to reflect and decide if they want to contribute towards achieving the goals. If so, they again describe the outcomes to achieve. They then go through the following steps.

*They make clear contracts with each person – or each team – about:*

*The specific things they will deliver towards achieving the outcomes;*

*The specific support they will need to deliver their part of the outcomes;*

*The specific things they will do to proactively keep others informed about their progress towards delivering their part of the outcomes;*

*The specific early successes they will get on the way towards delivering their part of the outcomes.*

Good leaders make sure that everybody knows what each person – or each department – is contributing towards achieving the goals. This helps to ensure that everybody is working towards the same picture of success.

Individuals sometimes make clear contracts with themselves. They may do this when working towards their personal or professional goals. Such people often go through the following steps.

*They clarify the outcomes they want to achieve and the benefits of achieving these goals;*

*They clarify the specific things they can do to do their best to achieve these goals;*

*They clarify the pluses and minuses involved and, bearing these in mind, rate their motivation – on a scale 0-10 - to do what is required to reach the goals.*

Such individuals make sure the rating is at least 7+/10. They then ask themselves the following questions.

*"Am I really serious? Am I prepared to do what is required to reach the goals?"*

They then decide if they really want to go for the goals. if so, they make a contract with themselves about the actual things they will do to do their best to achieve success.

### *Continually Working Towards The Desired Outcomes*

Great workers continually check that they are working towards the desired outcomes. They clarify what is working and what they can do better. They then keep following the disciplines required to achieve the goals.

Events sometimes occur that call for readjusting the goals. If so, people clarify what they can control. They then commit to achieving the new picture of success.

Good leaders also educate their people to continually focus on the desired outcomes. One leader I worked with did this when team members came to them to talk about challenges.

A person once asked him how to deal with a client that was causing problems. The leader said something along the following lines.

*"Let's go back to the outcomes we want to achieve. Do we still want to get wins for our company, wins for the customer and wins for our people? If so, what could that look like?"*

*"What is the profit we want to make as a company? What is the quality of service we want to give to the customer? What are the feelings we want our staff to have? How can we do our best to achieve these outcomes?"*

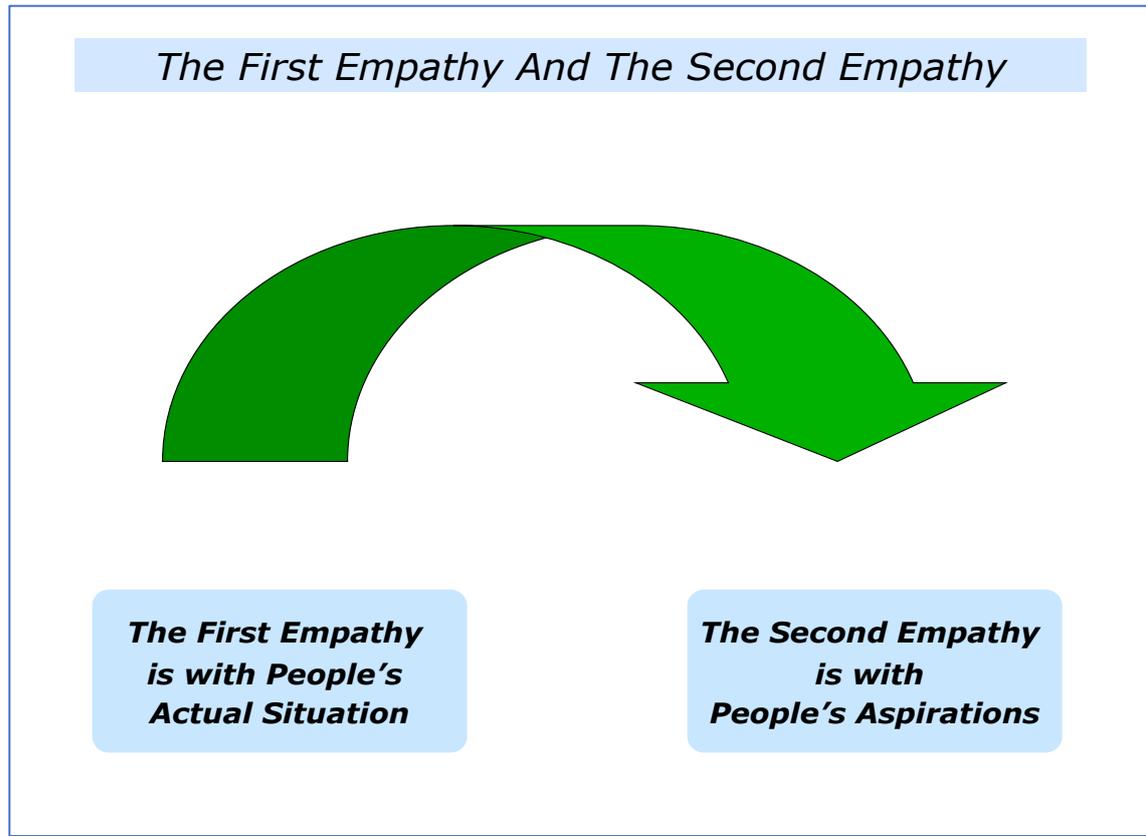
The leader and staff member clarified the real results to achieve. They then explored the possible options for going forwards – together with the pluses and minuses of each option.

Taking time to reflect, they considered if there were any other creative solutions. They then settled on the route they wanted to follow to do their best to achieve the picture of success.

There are many ways to use the outcomes approach, but it is worth repeating one key issue. The approach often calls for focusing on the more than the tangible results. It considering the emotional aspects.

Good decision makers often take this approach. They clarify the actual things they want people to be feeling, saying and doing after reaching the goals. These outcomes form part of the desired picture of success.

## *The Second Empathy Approach*



Good mentors, for example, often use both the first and second empathy. Let's explore what this means and how it relates to clarifying a person's picture of success.

### *The First Empathy*

Some mentors show that they can see, feel and experience the world from the other person's point of view. They play this back to the person to ensure they have got the right picture. This is the first empathy.

### *The Second Empathy*

Some mentors connect with people's aspirations. They do this in such a way that the person feels it is possible for them to achieve these goals. This is the second empathy.

How to practise the second empathy? One approach is to focus on when a person has used their strengths or followed their successful style – even if it only for a few seconds. It is then extrapolate this information to explore what the person can become in the future.

This involves using the organic approach. It is to focus on examples of when a person has done fine work. It is then to show how it may be possible for them to follow these principles to shape their future.

Belief is an inside job. People have to believe in their guts. If they have done something before, they are more likely to believe they can do it again. They can follow similar principles – plus add other skills – to succeed in the future.

Good mentors invite a person to talk about their aspirations. It appropriate, they also clarify what they believe the person can achieve. They may then say something like the following.

*"As far as I understand it, you want to ... Is that right? Let me ask you a question. Would you also like:*

1) To ...

2) To ...

3) To ...

*"The reason I ask is because, from what you have said and the things I have seen, I believe you could do achieve these aims. It would involve you setting certain goals and doing the work. But I believe that you could achieve these goals. What do you think?"*

This seems an enormous leap but I have seen it taken by many great counsellors, educators and mentors. Here is an introduction to what such mentors do when using the second empathy.

## The Second Empathy

*Some mentors are good at connecting with people. Some are good at connecting with people's aspirations. They sometimes do this by going through the following steps.*

### Step One

*They make the person feel welcome and at ease. They clarify what is happening in the person's world. They then invite them to focus on the first challenge or topic they want to explore.*

*They clarify what the person says they want to achieve. They also listen for any underlying themes. They clarify what they believe may be the person's short and long-term goals.*

### Step Two

*They watch the person, listen and ask certain questions. They quickly gather information about the person's attitude and abilities. They begin thinking about the person's possible ways forward and potential.*

*They do this by focusing on certain things. They focus on the person's positive spirit – the times when they come alive or do good work. They also focus on their strengths and successful style.*

### Step Three

*They clarify what they believe the person can achieve. They base this on the information they have gathered. They then clarify how they can best share this with the person.*

*They play back what they believe the person can achieve in their life and work. They see which of these themes resonate. They clarify the route the person wants to take and help them to achieve their aims.*

## *The Seeing Different Worlds Approach*

### *Seeing Different Worlds*

*Some people like to learn about what is happening in different worlds. They may aim:*

- *To see what is happening – the various situations – in different worlds;*
- *To see the challenges and potential solutions in the different worlds;*
- *To see what people can do to achieve success in the different worlds.*

Some individuals are skilled at helping others because they understand the challenges that people are facing. They often have a background of learning about what is happening in different worlds.

Such people gather information in a neutral way without rushing to judgement. They like to understand: a) the challenges that people face; b) the potential solutions; c) the things that people can do to achieve success in these worlds.

They often have a pattern of being curious since childhood. They may have read extensively, watched films, visited various countries or done other things that widened their horizons.

This is a quality often shown by good therapists, educators, interviewers, trusted advisors and people in other fields. It helps

them to understand other people's situations and, when appropriate, help people to manage challenges successfully.

### *Seeing what is happening in different worlds*

Looking back at your life, when have you explored what was happening in different worlds? You may have read many kinds of books, explored various spiritual faiths or thrown yourself into learning about aspects of sport, art science or other fields.

You may have developed empathy by putting yourself into many different situations. These may have included nursing, drama, teaching, volunteering or other activities.

You may have watched many television programmes that take you into different worlds. These help them to get an inside view of what is happening in hospitals, banking, technology, sport and other fields.

Some people gather such information to learn. They may have strong opinions, but they gather information in a neutral way. They want to widen their lens and develop their understanding. They do not see things through a narrow lens and rush to judgement.

Such individuals are aware of their confirmation bias. They like to gather information and then, when appropriate, decide on their chosen way forwards.

### *Seeing the challenges and solutions in different worlds*

Different people look for different things when exploring different worlds. Some people simply like to gather information and learn.

Some want to understand more about: a) the people; b) the challenges they face; c) the potential solutions. Such people may use the following framework when looking at a situation.

*What is happening in this world? What are the situations that people face? What are they doing to tackle the challenges? What are they doing to achieve success?*

*Who are the individual people? What is their background? What is happening in their lives? What are the reasons they are doing this kind of activity? How does this fit into the rest of their lives?*

*Looking again at this world, what is actually happening in the various situations? What are people aiming to achieve? What are the challenges? What are the potential solutions to such challenges?*

### *Seeing what people can do to achieve success in different worlds*

Some people focus on success when exploring different worlds. They may ask the following questions when looking at a situation.

*What are people trying to achieve in this kind of world? What works in the various situations? What are the successes? What are the benefits of delivering these successes?*

*What are people doing right to deliver these successes? What are the principles they are following? What are the strategies and skills they employ? How do they translate these into action?*

*What may people in this world want to achieve in the future? How can they do their best to achieve success? What will be happening that will show they have achieved their picture of success?*

Let's return to your own life and work. When do you sometimes explore what is happening in different worlds? What do you learn from exploring these situations? How do you sometimes apply this knowledge?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Seeing Different Worlds*

*The specific times when I explore what is happening in different worlds are:*

\*

\*

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*The specific things I sometimes may learn from exploring these different worlds are:*

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*The specific things I sometimes do to apply this knowledge in my life and work are:*

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## *The Flip Questions Approach*

### *Flip Questions*

- *"You say that you feel bad. What do you want to feel instead?"*
- *"You say that a person behaves in a way you that don't like. What do you want them to do instead?"*
- *"You say that people in the organisation failed to do something properly in the past. How would you like them to behave in a similar situation in the future?"*

This approach encourages people to channel their energies in a positive way. It can be used in situations where an individual or a group express themselves in a negative way. They may be saying:

*"I don't like it when x does y ... I can't understand why they behave in that way ... The organisation is messing up again ... etc."*

One approach is to just listen. If the person or the group keeps complaining, however, this may not help. Another approach is to ask Flip Questions.

These invite the person or the group to say what they would like to see the other party do instead. It is to say things like:

*"What would you like to see happen? What do you want the person or organisation to do instead? What could they do to encourage*

*you? What could they do to help you to achieve success?"*

People who are complaining may resist this approach at first or may choose to stay in the negative spiral. They may also say there is little point in trying because the other party will not change.

Good mediators, for example, stay patient. They keep inviting people to say what they would like to see happen. They ask them:

*To clarify what they would like the other party to do instead;*

*To clarify the specific things they can do to present these options in a positive way – including explaining the benefits to all parties;*

*To act as good models and do their best to achieve the picture of success.*

Therapists also use flip questions. Whilst they may show empathy, they sometimes invite the person to channel their energy in a positive way. They may suggest some of the following things to a person.

*"You say that you feel bad. What do you want to feel instead?"*

*"You say that you want to stop feeling angry. What do you want to you want to feel instead?"*

The therapist will help the person to clarify how they can do their best to achieve the positive results.

Looking back, can you think of a time when you have used elements of this approach? If so, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

## *The Flip Questions Approach*

*The specific situation in the past when I used the flip questions approach was:*

\*

*The specific things I did then to use the flip questions approach were:*

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*The specific things that happened as a result of using this approach were:*

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## *The Success Stories Approach*

This is an approach that can be used to help individuals, teams, organisations and even societies to achieve success. It is based on the principle that:

*People buy success rather than the theory of success.*

People are more likely to change their behaviour if they can see what works and see the benefits. Let's explore how this can work.

### *Helping people to learn from their own successes*

Imagine that a person or a group of people would like to tackle a challenge or achieve a specific goal. One approach is to invite them to learn from their own success stories. You can invite them:

*To recall when they have tackled a similar issue in the past and achieved success;*

*To clarify what they did right then – the principles they followed and how they translated these into action – to achieve success;*

*To clarify how they can follow similar principles – plus maybe add other skills – to tackle their present issue and achieve success.*

### *Helping people to develop by you doing superb work and producing success stories*

Imagine that you have been asked to do help people to succeed and maybe even shift a culture. You can try to get everybody in a system to change their behaviour. This seldom works, however, and can lead to frustration.

Another model is to take the success stories approach. This involves taking the following steps.

### *The Success Stories Approach*

*People buy success rather than the theory of success. It can therefore be useful to do superb work and share the knowledge by producing success stories. It be helpful:*

- *To choose a specific area where you can do superb work and produce a success story.*
- *To set things up to succeed, do superb work and deliver success.*
- *To share what worked and pass on the knowledge by producing a success story.*

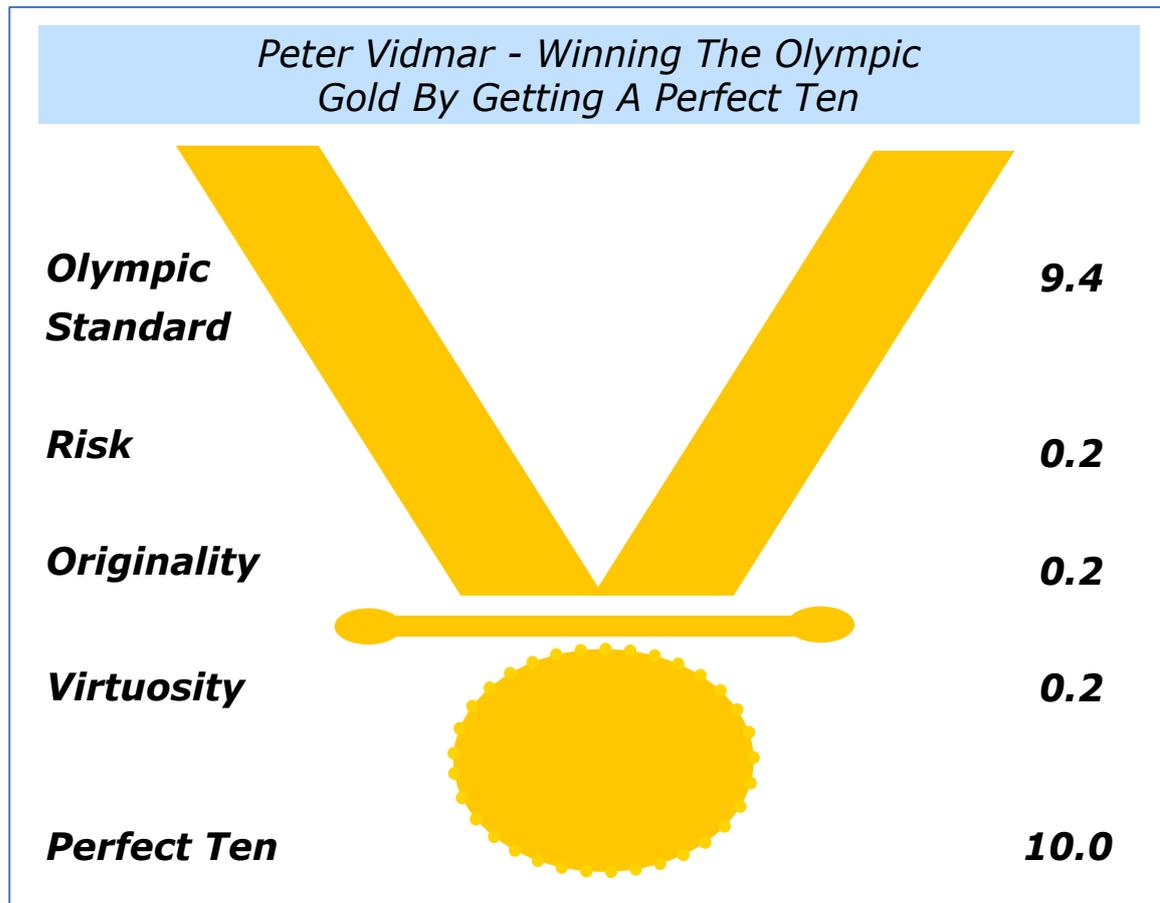
This approach is explained in greater depth later in the book in the section called *The Three Waves Approach*. It describes how to shift a culture by building prototypes and sharing success stories.

The first step is to focus on a specific area – such a topic, team, project or other activity. It is to choose one where, providing you do superb work, you stand a good chance of delivering success.

The second step is to focus on what you can control and set things up to succeed. It is then to get some early wins, do superb work and deliver success.

The third step is to pass on the knowledge by producing success stories. The aim is to show what works. It is then up to people to decide if they want to apply these principles in their own ways to achieve their picture of success.

## The Gold Medal Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to have a gold medal mentality.

Peter Vidmar won a gold medal in gymnastics at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. Looking back at how his event was scored in those days, he describes the steps people took to get a Perfect Ten, which was first achieved by Nadia Comaneci in Montreal.

They must first achieve the Olympic standard of competence. This often took years of dedication and would give them the 9.4.

They could then add 0.2 by taking a risk; 0.2 by demonstrating originality - something that had never been done before; and 0.2 by showing virtuosity - flair. Such a brilliant performance would produce a 10 and, hopefully, the Olympic Gold.

Peter is an inspiring speaker. Many people leave his sessions fired up. Some say:

*"We can now believe in our dreams. All we have to do is to be original, take risks and demonstrate virtuosity."*

They only forget one thing. Peter's most important message is that people must first achieve the 9.4. That is the first step towards winning an Olympic Gold.

Imagine you want to follow elements of this approach. Here are three steps you may want to take in your own way.

*You can choose an activity in which you stand a chance of achieving a 10*

Focus on an activity where you stand of a chance of delivering peak performance. What is your professional version of the Olympics? Which is the event – the activity - in which you stand a chance of competing for a gold medal?

On the other hand, you may not be interested in competition. You may be a pioneer who invents a new event. Great performers are, by definition, extremists. They are extremely good at what they do and are often brilliant niche suppliers.

Focus on the activity where you are able to excel. There is no point in going into an event where, at best, you can only get a 6.

*You can work to achieve the 9.4.*

Great workers build on their strengths and are also prepared to sweat. They pursue their chosen strategy, find solutions to challenges and work hard to achieve success.

As ever, you can start by clarifying what you can control in the situation. You can then aim: a) to clarify the picture of success; b)

to clarify the key strategies you can follow to give yourself the greatest chance of success.

Clarify your road map, complete with milestones, and set out on the road towards achieving your goals. Then follow daily disciplines. Start each day with an early success, perform superb work and encourage yourself on the journey.

Do the right things in the right way until they become second nature. Do everything possible to reach your equivalent of the 9.4.

*You can add the risk, originality  
and virtuosity to achieve the 10*

Great workers deliver the goods at vital moments. Providing the foundation is in place, they may take what appears to be a risk. But in their minds – or in their muscle memory - they have done it a thousand times. One person said:

*"People say that I take risks, but I have already rehearsed all the scenarios, explored the possible strategies and settled on the way forward.*

*"I feel comfortable with what I am doing. In fact, it would be a greater risk not to take what appears to be a risk."*

Great performers also do something that appears original. But it is the result of spending hours, days or months finding creative solutions to challenges. Then comes the final piece: virtuosity, flair or showmanship.

They may do something magical that stays in people's minds forever. How can you follow these steps in your own way? How can you build on the 9.4 and do your best to produce your equivalent of a 10?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Perfect Ten*

*The specific activity in which I may have the ability to achieve my equivalent of an Olympic Gold is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to achieve my equivalent of the 9.4 are:*

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*The specific things I can do to then add the other elements and do my best to achieve my equivalent of a 10 are:*

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There are many other methods that people can use to work towards a picture of success. Several of these are described elsewhere in the book. These include the following.

### *The Mission Approach*

People focus on delivering a crystal-clear mission. This often has the following characteristics:

*It has a clear and achievable goal;*

*It has a strategy that can work and the resources required to achieve the goal;*

*It has a clear time frame and the equivalent of an exit strategy.*

### *The Positive Legacy Approach*

People may want to pass on a positive legacy during their time on the planet. They may want to help others emotionally, financially or provide them with hope. They may do this by passing on models, knowledge or practical tools that enable people to shape a positive future.

### *The Positive Future Approach*

This section has explored several models for helping people. Many of these are based on the positive future approach. This helps people to move from their present situation and take practical steps towards achieving their picture of success.

## *The Positive Future Approach*

*This involves helping people to move forwards from their present situation and take practical steps towards achieving their picture of success.*



The first step is to help people to clarify their aims. It is then to offer them practical tools they can use to achieve positive results. As mentioned earlier, these are topics we will be exploring in greater depth later in the book.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of situation where you may want to use elements of this approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

You may want to encourage a person, support a team or enable an organisation to achieve its goals. How can you help them to clarify their picture of success? How can you then provide practical tools and help them to achieve positive results?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Picture Of Success Approach In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future when  
I may want to use elements of the  
picture of success approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do  
then to use this approach are:*

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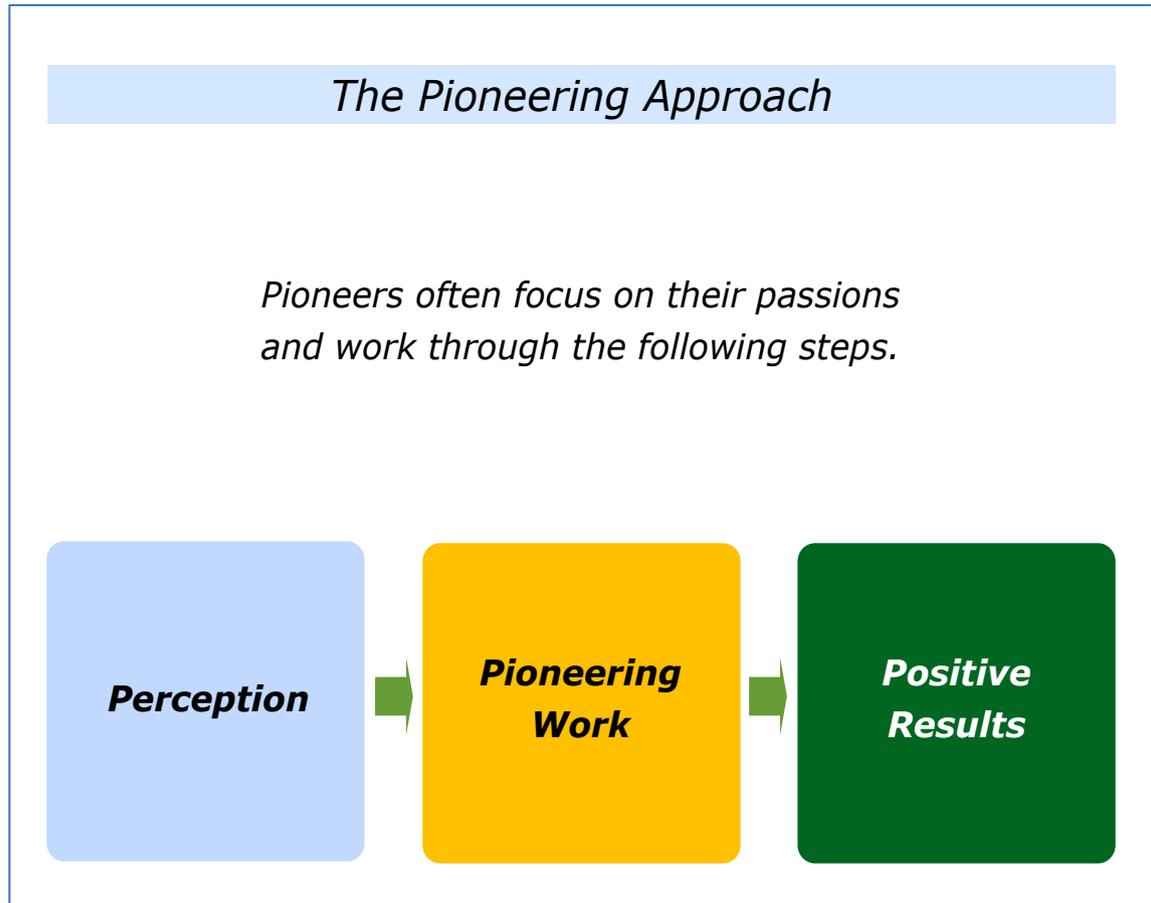
*The specific things that may happen as  
a result to using this approach may be:*

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## *The Pioneering Approach*



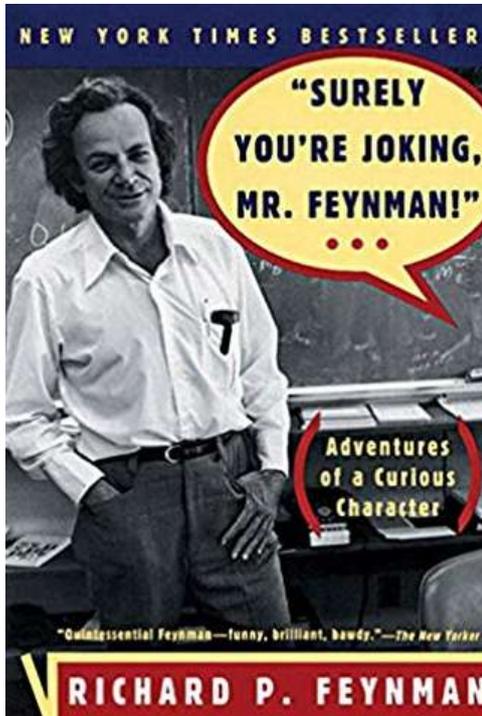
Pioneers focus on something they feel passionately about where they have the ability to do great work. They may be following their vocation, doing a creative project or tackling a specific challenge.

Such people perceive things in a certain way, do pioneering work and aim to get positive results. They may aim to build successful prototypes, do pacesetting work or provide a new paradigm.

Pioneers take their work seriously but also have a sense of play. Some retain this quality throughout their lives. Play powers our imagination. As George Bernard Shaw wrote:

*"We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing."*

Richard Feynman, the professor of physics, urged his students to focus on what they loved to do. This could take them into different dimensions. He kept returning to the following themes.



*Fall in love with some activity and do it!*

*Explore the world. Nearly everything is really interesting if you go into it deeply enough.*

*Work as hard and as much as you want to on the things you like to do best.*

*Don't think about what you want to be, but what you want to do.*

*Keep up some kind of minimum with other things so that society does not stop you from doing anything at all.*

Pioneers sometimes do pacesetting work. Such people keep developing – sometimes by surfing the sigmoid curve – and embark on the next piece of pioneering work. Let's explore these themes.

## *Perception*

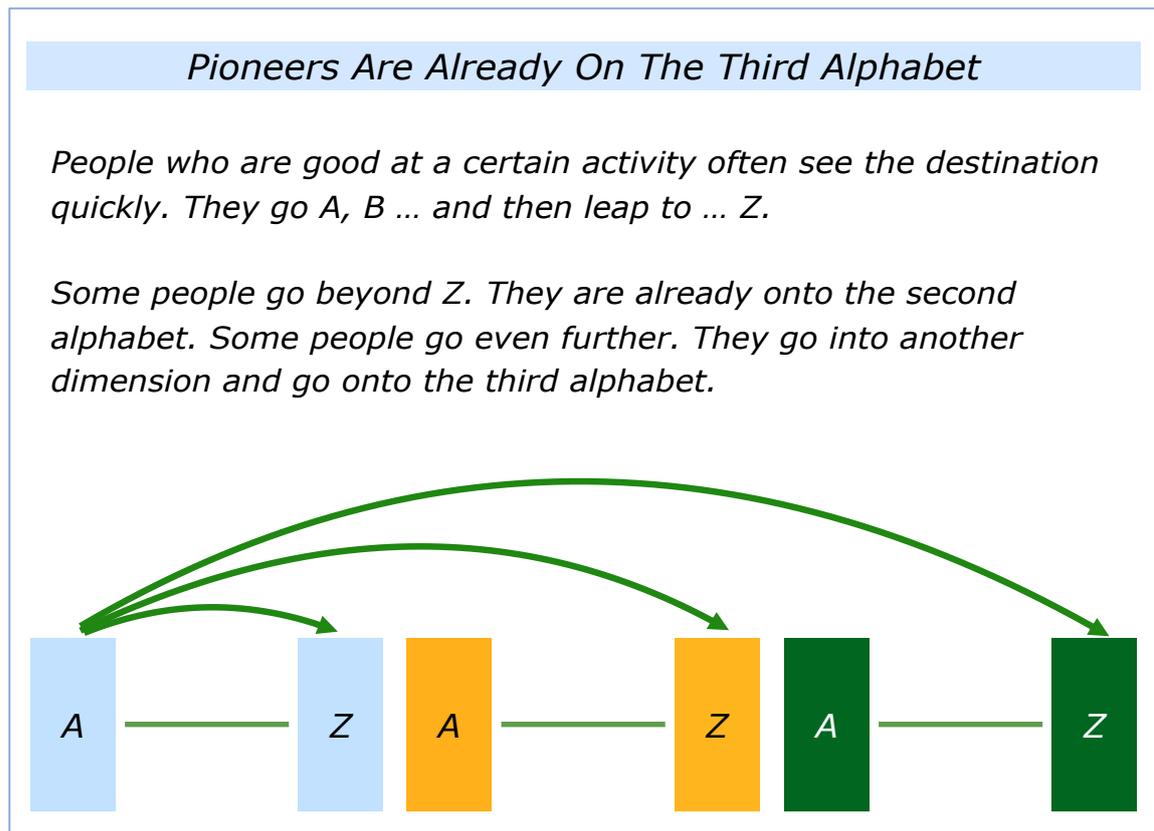
Pioneers have a different kind of perception. They see patterns and extrapolate what may happen in the future. They visualise how things can be and they want to deliver this vision.

Such people are able to see the destination quickly. When entering the situation in which they excel, they quickly see the potential picture of success. They go A, B ... and then leap to ... Z.

The architect walks onto a site and visualises the finished house. The innovator sees how a piece of technology can transform the

world. The mediator imagines a win-win solution for people who are stuck in conflict.

Some people go beyond the first Z. They go onto the second alphabet. Some people go even further. They go into another dimension and onto the third alphabet in their chosen field.



Such people can be inspiring to work with but also challenging. One Chief Operating Officer explained this in the following way.

*"Our leader is a real visionary. He sees the future and is years ahead of everybody.*

*"It is as if he is actually there. He can see, feel and experience what is happening. He can also describe the steps that have been taken to get to this place.*

*"Whilst a visionary, he can explain some aspects of the journey in great detail. He describes the steps to take and how to overcome*

*challenges. On other occasions, however, he gets exasperated with people who throw in objections.*

*"He simply says: 'We can solve that,' and goes on to explain the vision.*

*"Many people find him inspiring, whilst other want more detail and get frustrated.*

*"My job is to act as a translator. It is to clarify how we can keep running the business whilst also working towards his long-term vision."*

Some pioneers seem to see things that others don't. Such people often take the following approach.

### *The Seeing, Shaping And Succeeding Approach*

*This approach involves a person seeing something they want to achieve, shaping what they want to achieve and then succeeding in what they want to achieve*



Pioneers also often learn to channel their personalities rather than change their personalities. People who are labelled as different sometimes see things from a different angle.

They may be considered as introverted, highly sensitive, dyslexic, having synaesthesia or being slow learners at school. Such people develop strategies to survive.

These may be different from those needed to succeed by going a conventional route. On the other hand, developing such skills can enable them to thrive.

Creative people sometimes create their own field rather than try to succeed in an established field. They may invent a new sport, industry or activity. They then aim to perform at their best in this new field.

Pioneers do not subscribe to the cliché of thinking outside the box. They do not actually see a box. They improve things a transformational way and introduce a fresh paradigm. This can sometimes revolutionise whole industries or societies.

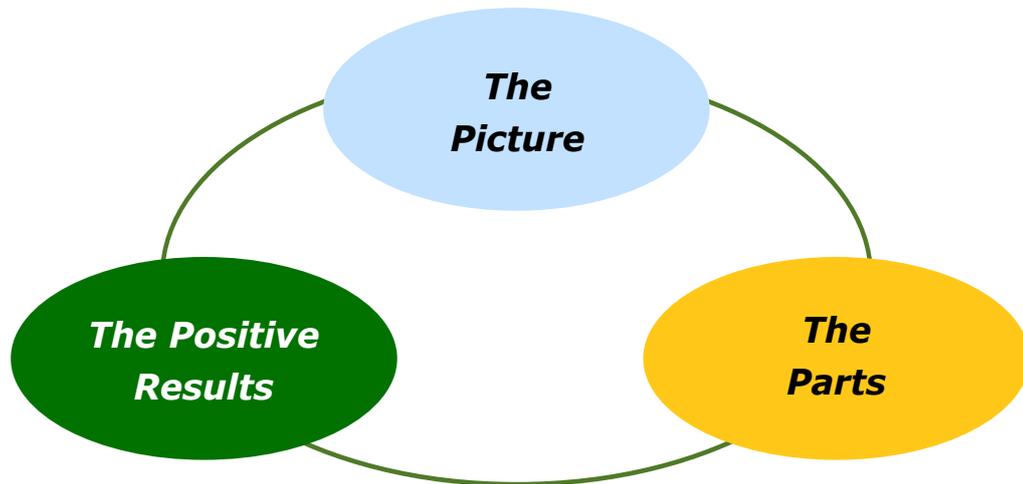
Thomas Kuhn popularised the term paradigm shift in his 1962 article on *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. He explained how breakthroughs in science sometimes come from seeing the world in a different way.

The example that is often quoted is the Earth once being considered the centre of the universe. Seeing that it actually revolves around the Sun enabled people to see reality in a different way.

People have different strengths. They also perceive the world in different ways. Some people take the following approach

## *The Big Picture Approach*

*This approach involves being able to see the big picture, to see how the parts are connected and to see how these can be coordinated to get positive results*



Some people take this approach when looking at various aspects of life, health, education, work, organisations, societies, the planet and other systems. They focus on the following themes.

### *The Big Picture*

They aim to see the big picture. They gather information, see patterns and explore both present and future scenarios.

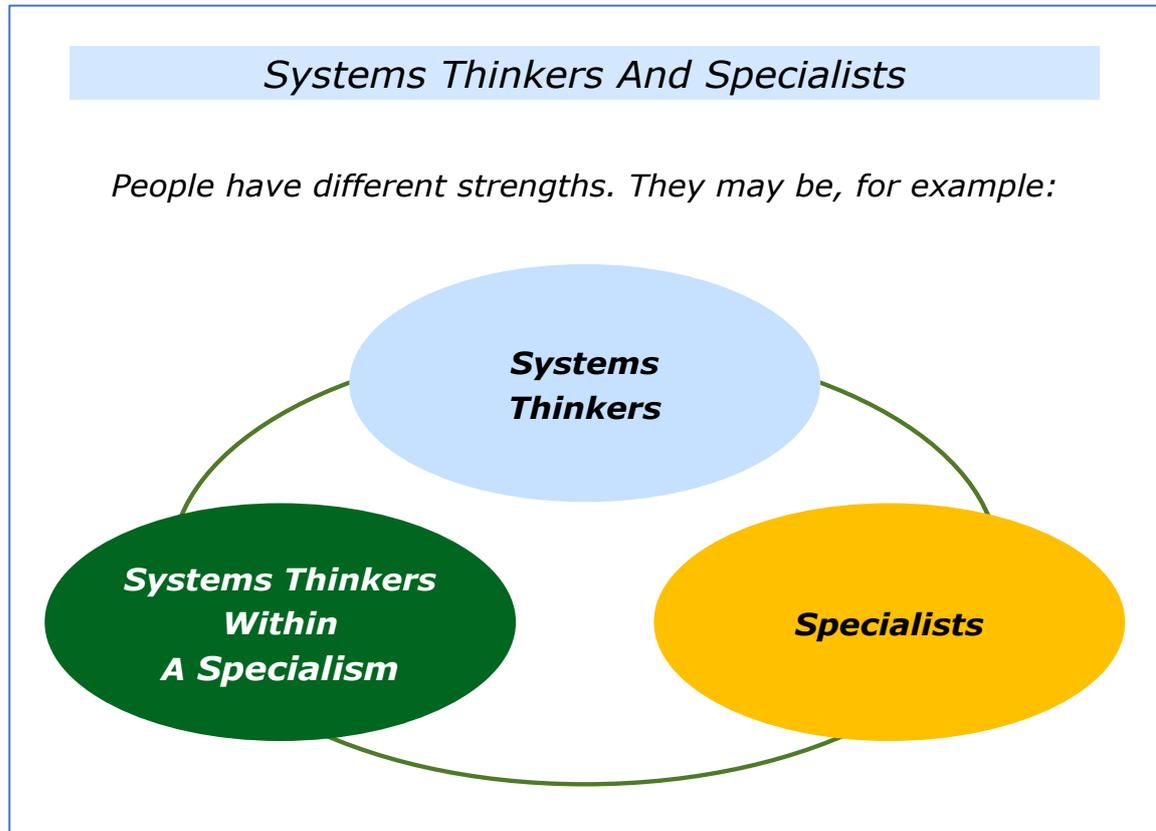
### *The Parts*

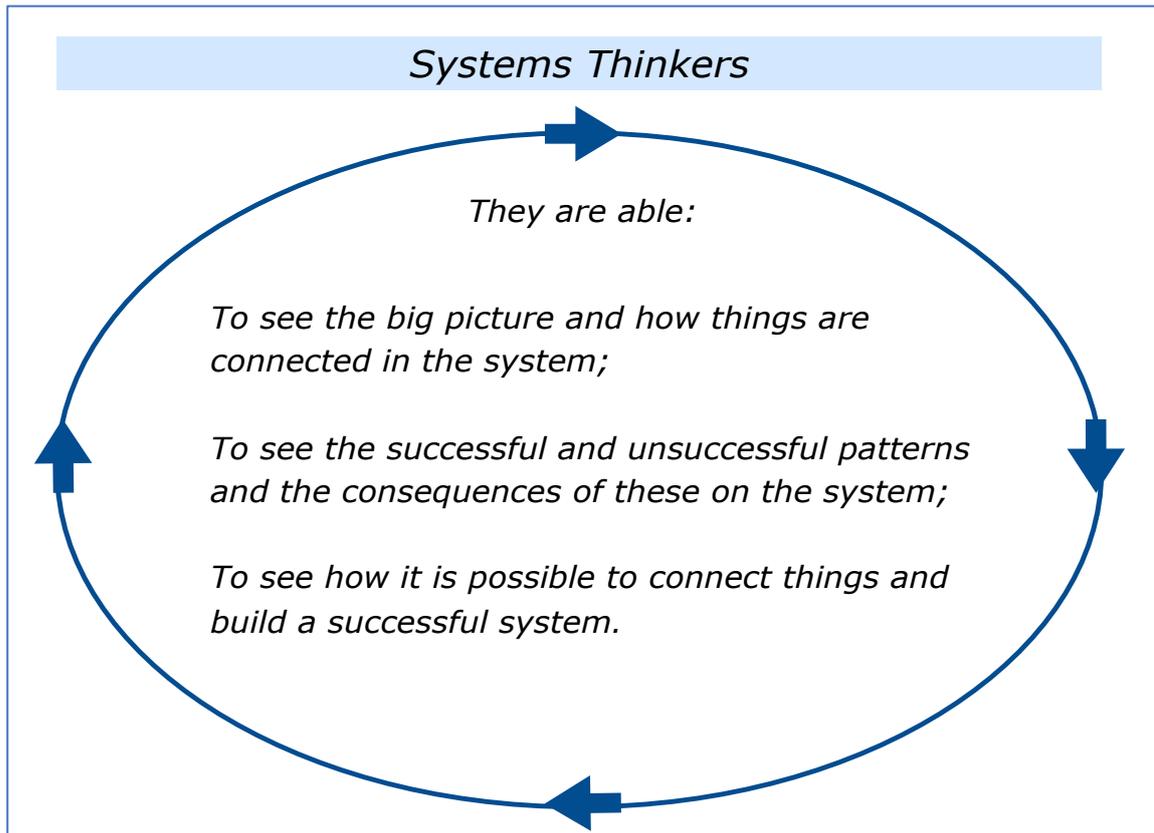
They aim to see how the various parts are connected. They clarify the present and possible future interactions between the various parts.

### *The Positive Results*

They clarify how some of the parts may work well together. They then coordinate these parts to achieve positive results.

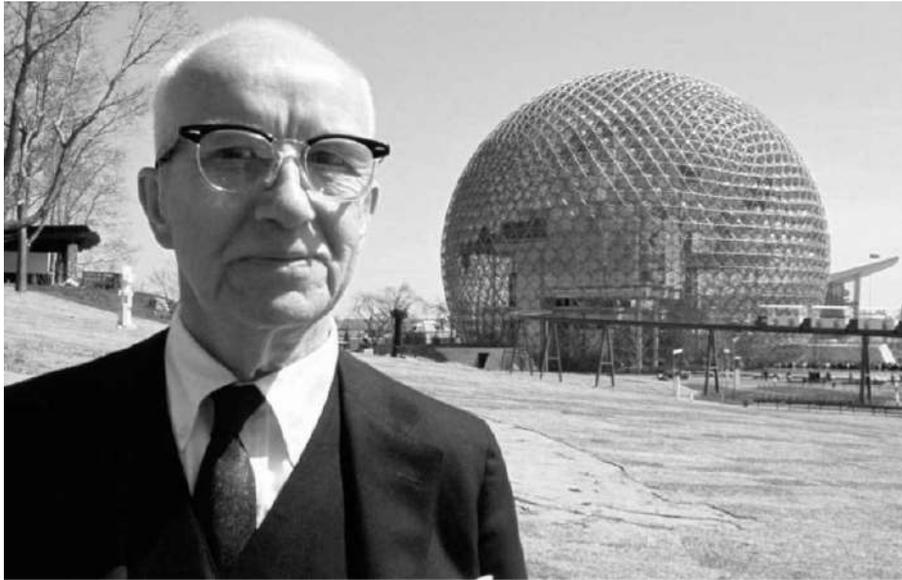
As mentioned earlier, different people see things in different ways. They may be systems thinkers, specialists or systems thinkers within their specialism.





Pioneers are often systems thinkers in their chosen field. They see:  
a) how things are connected; b) how things can be connected to achieve the potential picture of success.

Such people go beyond their own Eureka moment. They feel compelled to translate their perception into reality and show a better way. Buckminster Fuller expressed this view in the following way.



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

Arie de Geus, author of *The Living Company*, says that great workers look ahead to anticipate challenges and find potential solutions. They develop what he called a memory of the future.

Looking ahead, they explore scenarios in the activities they find fascinating. They use their imagination to take the following steps.

*They explore both the positive and challenging scenarios;*

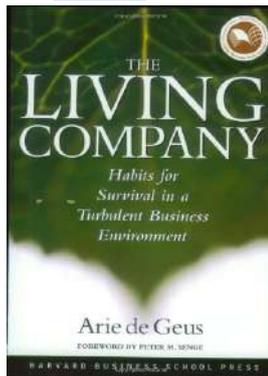
*They explore how to capitalise on the positive scenarios and how to prevent or, if necessary, manage the challenging scenarios;*

*They explore the best ways forwards for improving the chances of creating future success.*

Such workers find this homework helps them as events unfold. Even if the unexpected happens, they will have rehearsed strategies for dealing with many scenarios. This gives them an advantage over others who may not have rehearsed properly.

## Developing A Memory Of The Future

*Great workers continually look ahead to envisage what will happen and develop a memory of the future.*



Pioneers enjoy being creative. Some people like to start with a blank piece of paper and lots of resources. This sounds alluring but can lead to paralysis. A person may take a long time to decide what they actually want to create on the blank piece of paper.

Some people prefer to start with the equivalent of borders around the piece of paper. They are then forced to use their imagination to achieve their goals. The borders they are given may include:

*The results they aim to deliver ... The resources available for delivering the results ... The time limits within which they must deliver the results.*

Karen Hough described this approach in an article she wrote called *Creative Constraint: Why Tighter Boundaries Propel Greater Results*. Below is an extract from the article.

*It sounds counter-intuitive, but boundaries can actually boost creativity. Think about procrastination — deadlines are often the*

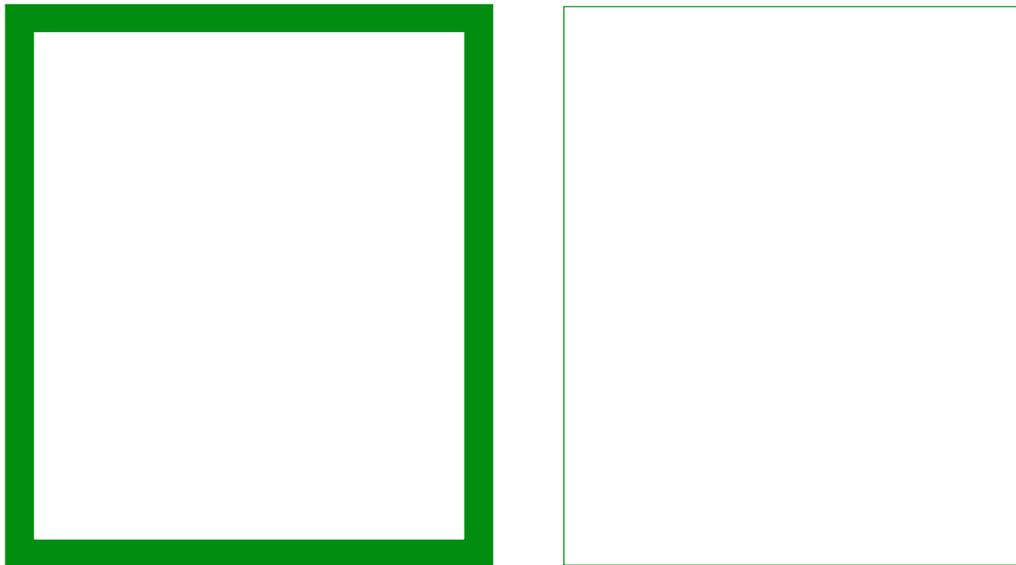
*single factor that ensures projects get done. As Dave Gray commented on his blog:*

*"Creativity is driven by constraints. When we have limited resources — even when the limits are artificial — creative thinking is enhanced. That's because the fewer resources you have, the more you are forced to rely on your ingenuity."*

*When there are no boundaries, the possibilities may seem too large. That's why some of the greatest art and innovation has come from a situation of constraint.*

### *Being Creative Within Borders*

*People can sometimes be more creative when forced to work within borders rather than when being given a blank piece of paper.*



### *Pioneers See Possibilities*

Pioneers often have a positive approach when faced by challenges. They ask some of the following questions.

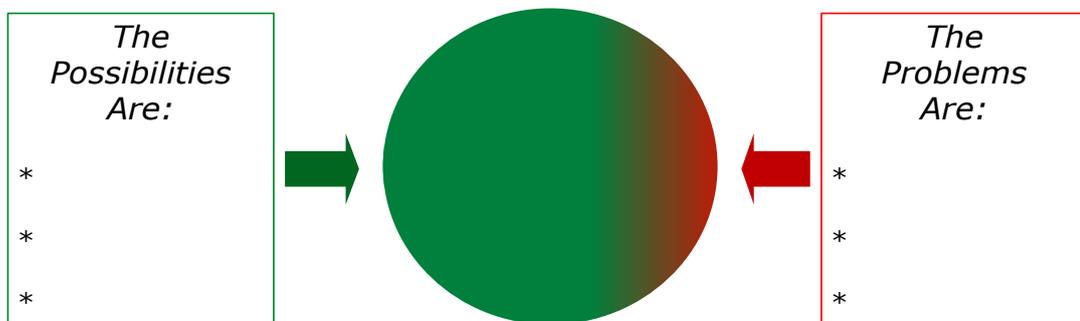
*What are the possibilities in the situation? What are the potential solutions? What are the opportunities rather than just the obstacles?*

*What are the principles I want to follow? What are the practical solutions? How can I do my best to get positive results?*

### **People Who See The Possibilities Rather Just The Problems**

*They have a positive approach and see things from a 180 degrees different angle compared to other people.*

*They focus on the possibilities, the principles they want to follow – including the practical solutions – and the positive results*



Thorkil Sonne took the possibilities approach by founding the Specialist People Foundation. This aims to create one million jobs globally for people with autism.

Such people often have outstanding memories, a remarkable eye for detail and do repetitive tasks with enthusiasm. These skills can be valuable for companies that specialise in developing technology.

Using a Dandelion as its symbol, here is an excerpt from the organisation's website.



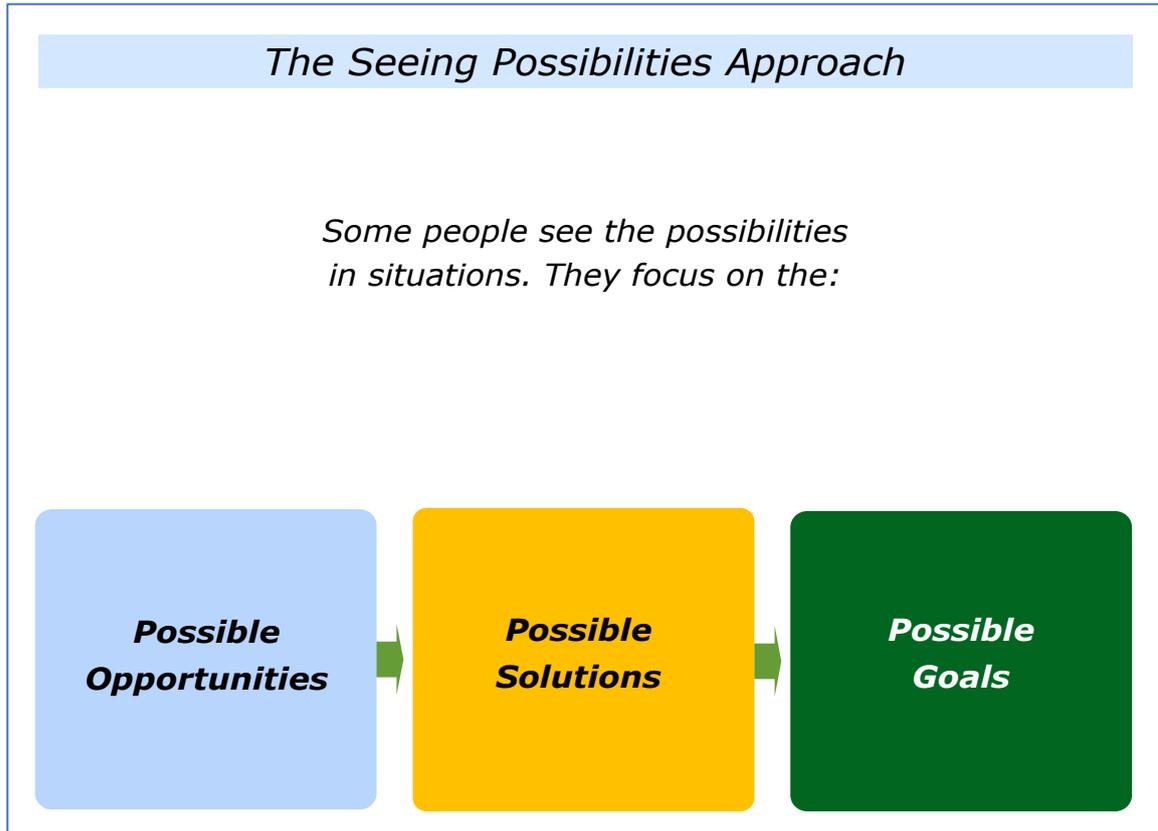
*Focusing On Strengths – Not Difficulties*

*One percent of the world's population may have Autism Spectrum Disorder. This is equivalent to 68 million people worldwide.*

*Even more people may have other disorders on the autism spectrum. These are all potential specialist people – with great business potential.*

*We have set our goal: to provide meaningful and productive jobs for one million people with autism and other invisible disorders.*

Different people choose to see possibilities in different ways. Let's explore this approach in more depth.



Some people seem to immediately look for possibilities in a situation. They channel their energy in a positive way by asking some of the following questions.

*"What are the possibilities? What are the options going forwards? What are the possible solutions? What are the possible goals we can achieve? How can we use this situation in a positive way?"*

Such people are often lifelong learners. Everybody is different, but creative thinkers may demonstrate some of the following characteristics.

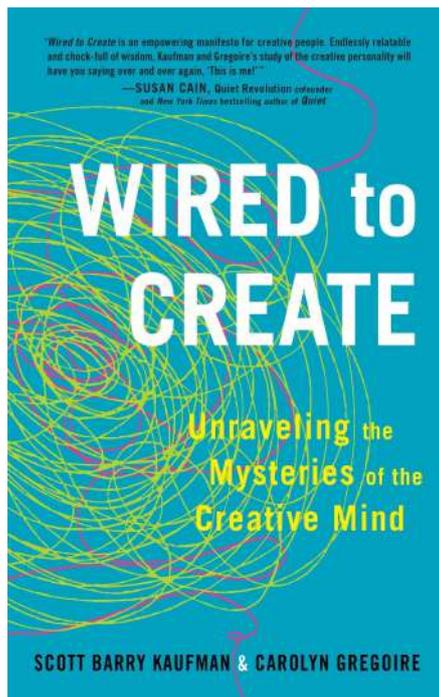
*They developed self-learning skills early in life. They explored through reading, experiences or other methods. They were encouraged to follow their passions or were left alone to adventure.*

*They explored many different philosophies and the many approaches to life. They may have met different kinds of people or lived in different cultures.*

*They have learned to see things from different angles. They learned to explore different options without passing judgement. They pursued the things they found fascinating before settling on their chosen specialism.*

There are many books on the topic of seeing possibilities. The following section describes some of the ideas outlined in *Wired To Create* by Carolyn Gregoire and Scott Barry Kaufman.

Here is an excerpt from the official description of the book. This is followed by some characteristics displayed by creative people. These are based on an article that Carolyn Gregoire wrote for the Huffington Post.



*This book shines a light on the practices and habits of mind that promote creative thinking.*

*Kaufman and Gregoire untangle a series of paradoxes – like mindfulness and daydreaming, seriousness and play, openness and sensitivity, and solitude and collaboration.*

*They show that it is by embracing our own contradictions that we are able to tap into our deepest creativity.*

## *Some Of The Things Highly Creative People Do Differently*

- *They daydream.*

*They let their minds wander and sometimes go through a process of creative incubation.*

- *They observe things.*

*They see possibilities and are constantly taking in information that becomes fodder for creative expression.*

- *They work the hours that work for them.*

*They will often figure out what time it is that their minds start firing up and structure their days accordingly.*

- *They take time for solitude.*

*We need to give ourselves the time alone to simply allow our minds to wander. It's important to take time to find and express your inner voice and vision.*

- *They turn life's obstacles around.*

*They sometimes use setbacks as a spur to doing work that improves things in their own and other people's lives.*

- *They 'fail up.'*

*Doing creative work is often described as a process of failing repeatedly until you find something that sticks, and creatives - at least the successful ones - learn not to take failure so personally.*

- *They ask the big questions.*

*Creative people are insatiably curious. They generally opt to live the examined life, and even as they get older, maintain a sense of curiosity about life. They look at the world around them and want to know why, and how, it is the way it is.*

- *They take risks.*

*Steven Kotler wrote the following in Forbes.*

*"Creativity is the act of making something from nothing. It requires making public those bets first placed by imagination.*

*"This is not a job for the timid. Time wasted, reputation tarnished, money not well spent - these are all by-products of creativity gone awry."*

- *They view all of life as an opportunity for self-expression.*

*They are more likely to see life and the world as a work of art. They constantly seek opportunities for self-expression in everyday life.*

- *They follow their true passions.*

*Writing in The Handbook Of Creativity, M.A. Collins and T.M. Amabile explain: "Eminent creators choose and become passionately involved in challenging, risky problems that provide a powerful sense of power from the ability to use their talents."*

- *They lose track of the time.*

*They may find that when they're writing, dancing, painting or expressing themselves in another way, they go into the zone or a flow stage that helps them to create at their highest level.*

- *They surround themselves with beauty.*

*Creatives tend to have excellent taste, and as a result, they enjoy being surrounded by beauty. Some surround themselves with things that are stimulating.*

- *They connect the dots.*

*If there's one thing that distinguishes highly creative people from others, it's the ability to see possibilities where others don't -- or, in other words, vision.*

*Many great artists and writers have said that creativity is simply the ability to connect the dots that others might never think to connect.*

People who see possibilities aim to see the big picture. They look for patterns and connections. They then do deep work on the way towards achieving a compelling goal.

Such people study success in many areas of life. They clarify what works and apply these ideas in their own way. They follow certain principles but are prepared to be pragmatic in how they apply these to achieve success.

Creative people are sometimes prepared to explore many options without rushing to judgement. They may consider what may seem contradictory ideas and love to keep adding colours to their paintbox. When hearing something, they may ask themselves:

*"What if the opposite is true? What happens if I turn the idea upside down? What if I see this as an opportunity rather than an obstacle? What if we turn this so-called limitation into something that is liberating?"*

Such continue to develop their strategic thinking. Some leaders, for example, often ask the following questions:

*"What are the real results we want to achieve? What are the key strategies we can follow to give ourselves to the greatest chance of success? How can we translate these into action and achieve the picture of success?"*

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the possibilities approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

What could you do then to see opportunities? If appropriate, how could you do explore possible solutions? How could you then translate your ideas into working towards possible goals?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Seeing Possibilities Approach*

*The specific situation in the future  
when I may want to follow elements  
of the possibilities approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to  
follow elements of this approach may be:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Pioneering Work*

Pioneers often translate their passion into pursuing a clear purpose and doing pioneering work. They believe in following their principles and delivering high professional standards on the way towards getting positive results.

They show people can be creative with limited resources. Forced to operate within certain parameters, they make full use of their imagination to do remarkable work.

Maria Montessori qualified as a doctor but then wanted to work as a teacher. Finding it difficult to get a role in the educational system, she was offered the opportunity to educate children in a mental hospital.

Able to work as she wished, Maria created what became known as the Montessori Method. This produced remarkable results and inspired many other educators to help children to develop. Here are some of the themes she followed in her approach to education.



*We must not dwell on a child's limitations but focus on their possibilities.*

*The teacher's task is to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child.*

*The essential thing is for the task to arouse such an interest that it engages the child's whole personality.*

*Childhood passes from conquest to conquest in a rhythm that constitutes its joy and happiness.*

Different pioneers choose different ways to pursue their chosen route. Some prefer to work alone or run their own businesses. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"I spent years working inside organisations trying to persuade people to change. But I was battling against the nature of systems theory.*

*"Systems move towards homeostasis – the drive to return to their present state. Sometimes this can be good because it creates stability. But sometimes it can be dangerous because it can be a question of develop or die.*

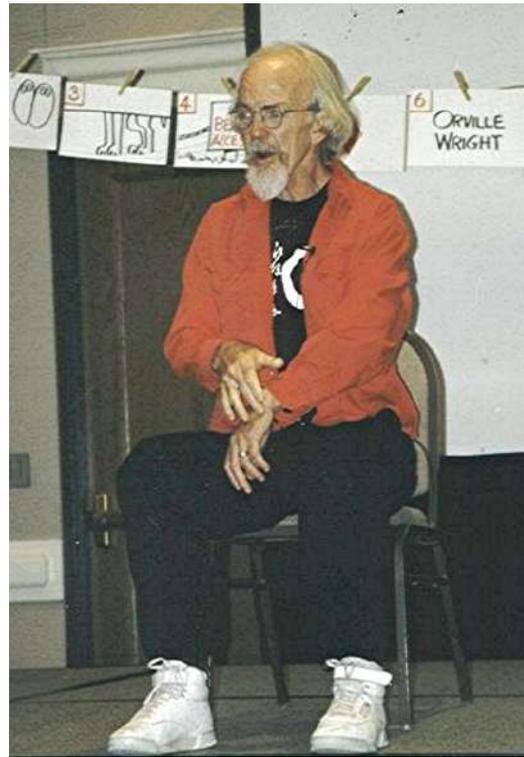
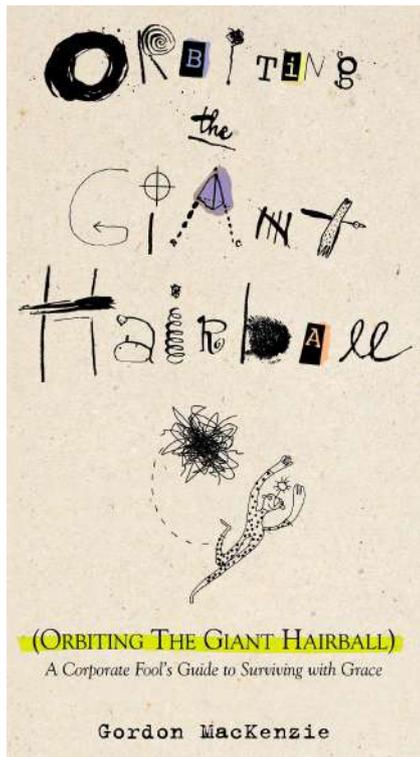
*"Systems sometimes drive out the creativity they need to survive. So I found other ways to develop new ideas."*

Gordon Mackenzie was somebody who did creative work within an organisation. He described how to do this in his book *Orbiting The Giant Hairball: A corporate fool's guide to surviving with grace*.

He spent 30 years working for the Hallmark Card Company and managed to orbit around what he called the hairball of organisational bureaucracy.

Gordon encouraged people to continue to dare, explore and be pioneers. One chapter in his book consists of just one sentence:

*"Orville Wright did not have a pilot's licence."*



Gordon believed that every person is an artist but the process of suppressing this spirit starts early. During his working career he often spent whole days in elementary schools and asked each group of children the same question. Starting the day in the kindergarten class, he asked:

*"Who here is an artist?"*

Everybody in the room put their hands up. Many wanted to show their paintings or other creative work they had done. The first grade class responded in a similar way, though with a little more caution.

Gordon continued to ask the question as he worked through the grades. By the end of the day few young people raised their hands. Something had happened to the spark within.

How can a person continue to be an artist? Some people choose to express their talents by being freelancers. Others go into organisations and try to change them from the centre.

Both routes are options, said Gordon, but there is another route. This is to contribute by orbiting around the centre rather than let it cramp your creativity. He explained this in the following way.

*"Orbiting is vibrancy. Orbiting is manifesting your originality. It's pushing the boundaries of ingrained corporate patterns.*

*"It's striking a relationship with the corporation so that you can benefit from what it offers - its physical, intellectual, and philosophical resources - without being sucked in by its gravitational pull.*

*"It's a symbiotic relationship: without the hairball, the orbiter would spiral into space; without the orbiter's creativity and originality, the hairball would be a mass of nothing."*

Certainly it is vital to fulfil your obligations to the organisation that pays your wages. At the same time, however, it is important to express your creativity. Here are some quotes from Gordon.

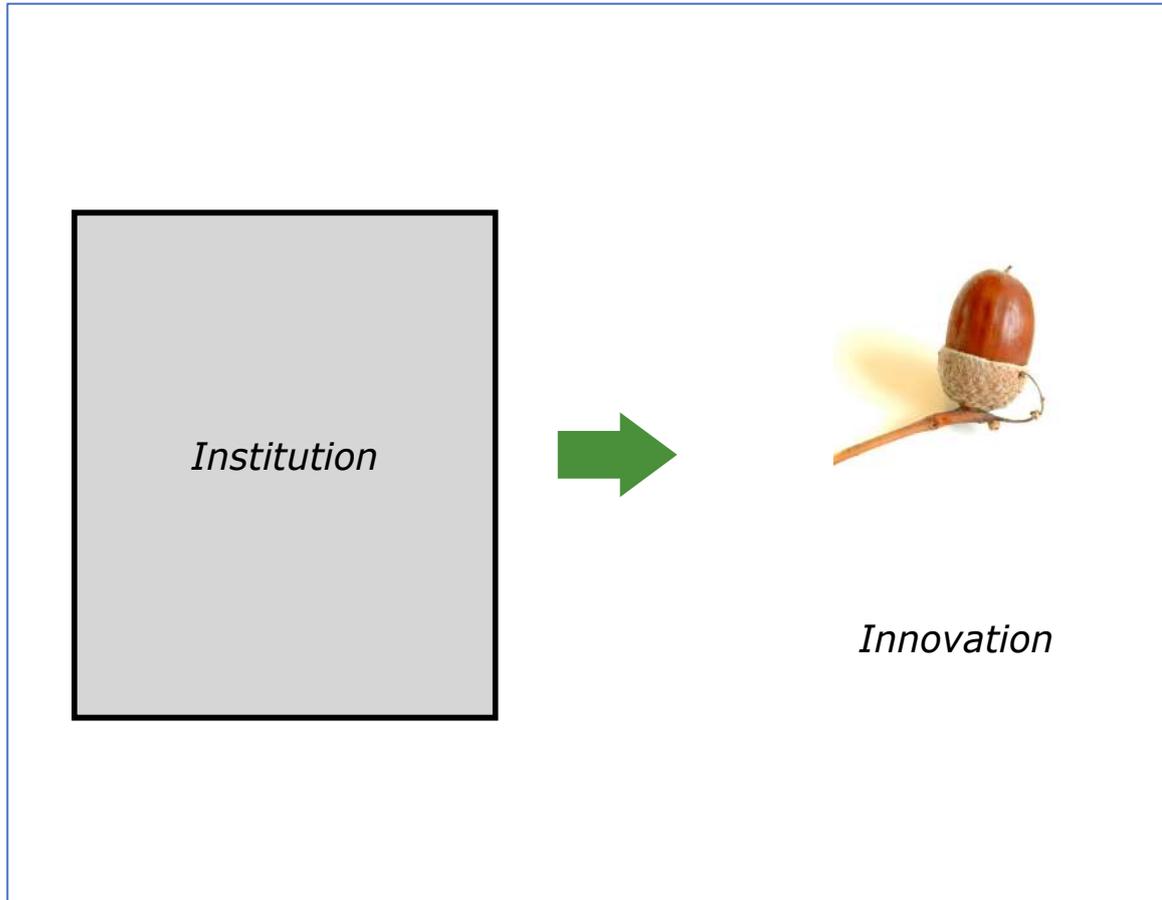
*"Everyone has a masterpiece within them from birth. When we are young, society draws pale blue lines, as if your life were a paint-by-numbers kit.*

*"The message is: If you stay in the lines your life will be a masterpiece. That's a lie. You have to constantly battle to be nobody but yourself."*

*"What is the biggest obstacle to creativity? Attachment to outcome. As soon as you become attached to a specific outcome, you feel compelled to control and manipulate what you're doing and in the process you shut yourself off to other possibilities."*

*"Creativity is not just about succeeding. It's about experimenting and discovering. If you go to your grave without painting your masterpiece, it will not get painted. No one else can paint it. Only you."*

## *The Innovation Often Takes Place Away From The Institution Approach*



Sometimes it is possible to encourage people to use their imagination within an institution. Many innovators, however, choose to spend time away from institutions.

The institution may be a building, organisation or other body that has an ambivalent attitude towards creative thinking. It can therefore be useful to go beyond such a situation and find other stimulation.

Some innovators may still belong to an organisation but they create some kind of distance. This may be a physical distance - such as working at home or in their own laboratory. Sometimes they aim to create a psychological distance - such as doing things differently.

Let's look at one example. Tom was a broadcaster who made compelling films that highlighted problems but also presented positive solutions. His work gained national prominence through regular appearance on television.

Two years after his breakthrough Tom was approached by a national organisation. They gave him the following message.

*"We like your innovative ideas and want to hire you to head our organisation. The challenge we face is that we need to revitalise our approach. Unless we do that, we may not be around in five years."*

He admired the institution and chose to take the role. Full of energy at the outset, Tom then ran up against barriers. At this point he and I explored how he could thrive and do good work.

Tom's strengths lay in certain areas. He believed passionately in improving activities that overlapped with the organisation's aims. A superb communicator, he also had a track record of making powerful films that brought about change.

The organisation did not seem to understand his strengths. Arriving for the first day at the office, he was given the following message.

*"We have mapped out your diary for the first two months. This includes running the Monday morning meetings and taking charge of operations."*

*"We also want you to dine with our traditional backers in the Shires. They are sceptical of change, but you can win them round."*

Tom launched into fulfilling the schedule but soon became disillusioned, which is when he contacted me. During our first meeting we focused on how to do good work. He soon realised that it was important:

*To focus on one area of the organisation's charter that he believed in and translate this into doing a specific project;*

*To use his strengths as a broadcaster and communicator to mobilise national attention around this topic;*

*To show practical ways forward in this area and do his best to deliver positive results.*

Tom took this route. He made regular appearances on national television, mobilised public opinion and the project was successful.

His employers were uneasy, however, and issued an ultimatum. They wanted him: a) to energise the organisation; b) to do this in a way that left many of the same things in place.

Tom decided to return to his first love – making compelling films and communicating with the public. He continues to do this and recognised as a respected figure in his field.

The organisation he left remains in a difficult place. Many of its traditional backers are no longer around, so funding is a challenge. It says it wants to follow its principles – which are sound – but has difficulty in applying these successfully in the modern world.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may be more innovative away from an institution?

The institution may be a workplace or a set way of doing things. Both of these can be useful at times because they can provide a framework for doing fine work. It may be that on some occasions, however, you may want to get away from such a familiar setting.

You may want to get stimulation by going for a walk, listening to music, appreciating beauty, being in a different place or having other experiences. There may also be other ways to spark your imagination.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Innovation Away From The Innovation*

*The specific topic where I would  
like to be innovative is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to try to be  
innovative away from the institution are:*

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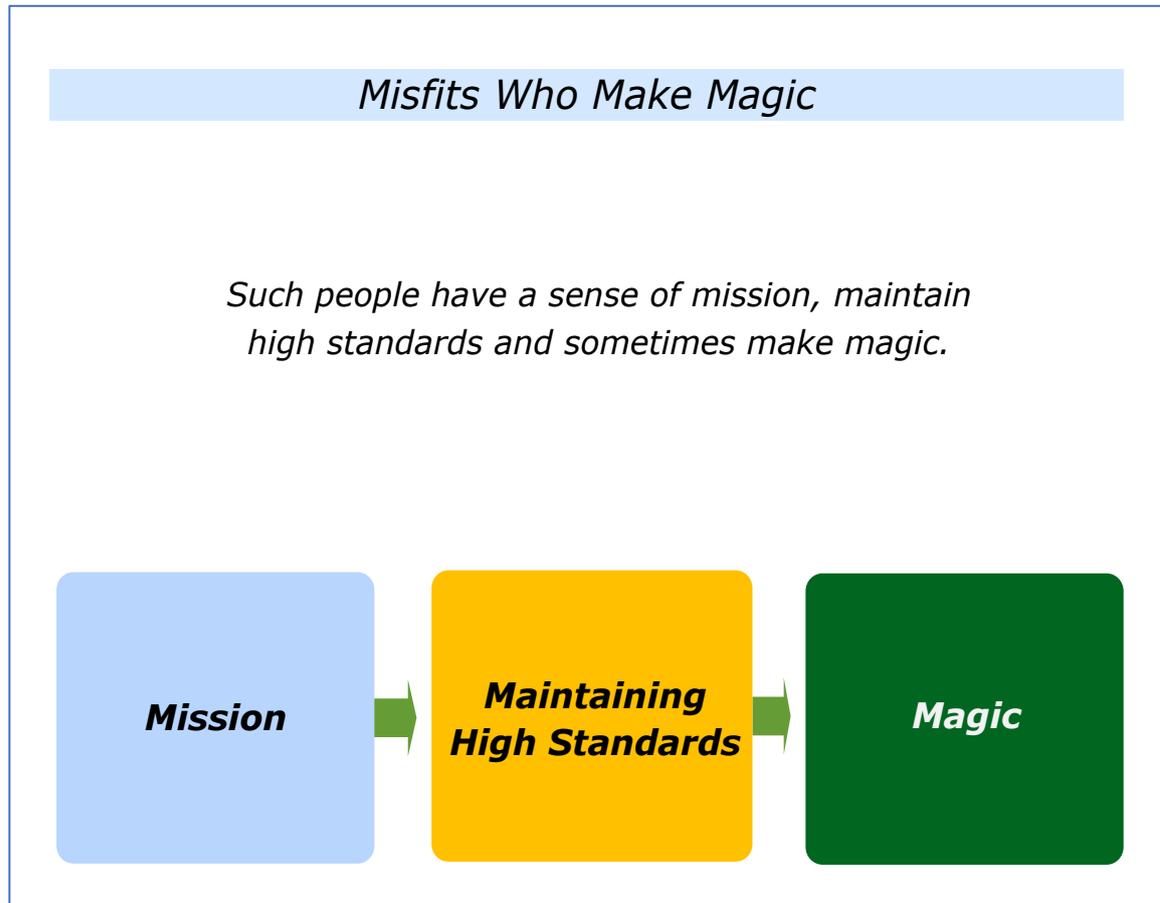
*The specific things that may happen  
as a result of taking these steps are:*

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## *The Misfits Who Make Magic Approach*



Many people feel like misfits. They may experience this feeling in their daily life, school, work or community. Different people manage this feeling in different ways.

Some individuals aim to fit in. Some try to find a group where they gain a sense of identity. Some go their own way. They may do this in ways that help or hurt themselves or other people.

Some misfits feel okay and find ways to express themselves. Some individuals do this in the following way.

### *They Develop A Sense Of Mission*

Some individuals focus on doing the things they believe in. They pursue their passion for writing, playing music, helping people or

doing other things that give them positive energy. They find an activity where they feel they belong.

They may then develop a sense of mission. Becoming obsessed by their chosen activity, they aim to become the best they can be. They may also want to pass on the fruits of labour to other people.

### *They Maintain High Standards*

Such individuals feel alive, alert and swept away when pursuing their chosen activity. They feel a sense of duty to serve their craft. They aim to do fine work, keep developing and maintain high standards.

They may also take this approach when working with other people. Whilst they may prefer to pursue their craft by themselves, they recognise it can be helpful to behave in a professional way. They therefore aim to maintain high standards in the way they work with colleagues and customers.

### *They Make Magic*

Such individuals feel a strong fit with their chosen mission but not necessarily with elements of the wider society. This means that they sometimes see things with an artist's eye. Such an approach has both strengths and weaknesses.

The pluses may include their strength of character, the ability to see possibilities and, on some occasions, being able to produce magical work. The minuses may include emotional ups-and-downs and the need to continually find people who may hire them for what they offer.

Some former misfits continue to thrive. This is because they have found an activity where they fit. They then develop a sense of mission, maintain high standards and sometimes make magic.

## *Positive Results*

Different pioneers choose different ways to deliver positive results. They may aim to build a successful prototype, pass on their knowledge or offer people a different paradigm.

Anita Roddick was somebody who acted as a role model for people who wanted to build ethical and successful businesses. Whilst it was important that The Body Shop was profitable, she also talked about different definitions of success.

She may have come across as an idealist, but Anita was remarkably savvy. She learned the 'can do' attitude from her Italian parents. They ran an American-style Diner café in Littlehampton, Sussex, during the 1950s.

Opening the café at 5.00 am to cater for the fishermen's breakfast, they kept serving throughout the day until the last customer was satisfied. Anita served in the café from an early age and felt what it was like to handle money.

Gilly Mckay and Alison Cork take up the story in their book *The Body Shop*. They say that Anita's apprenticeship proved invaluable when starting her first shop in Brighton in 1976. Here are some quotes from Anita that are in their book.

*"When I opened the doors, I was not thinking about changing the world. I simply had to take £1000 in the first week to feed the baby and pay the bills."*

Anita had learned, however, to provide good service that attracted and retained customers. Believing that retail is theatre, she tried to create a good atmosphere in the shop.

*"With £4000 borrowed from the bank I could only afford to spend £700 on products. But the 20 products we formulated looked pretty pathetic all standing on one shelf. So to make the shop look busy and full I produced them in five sizes of bottles."*

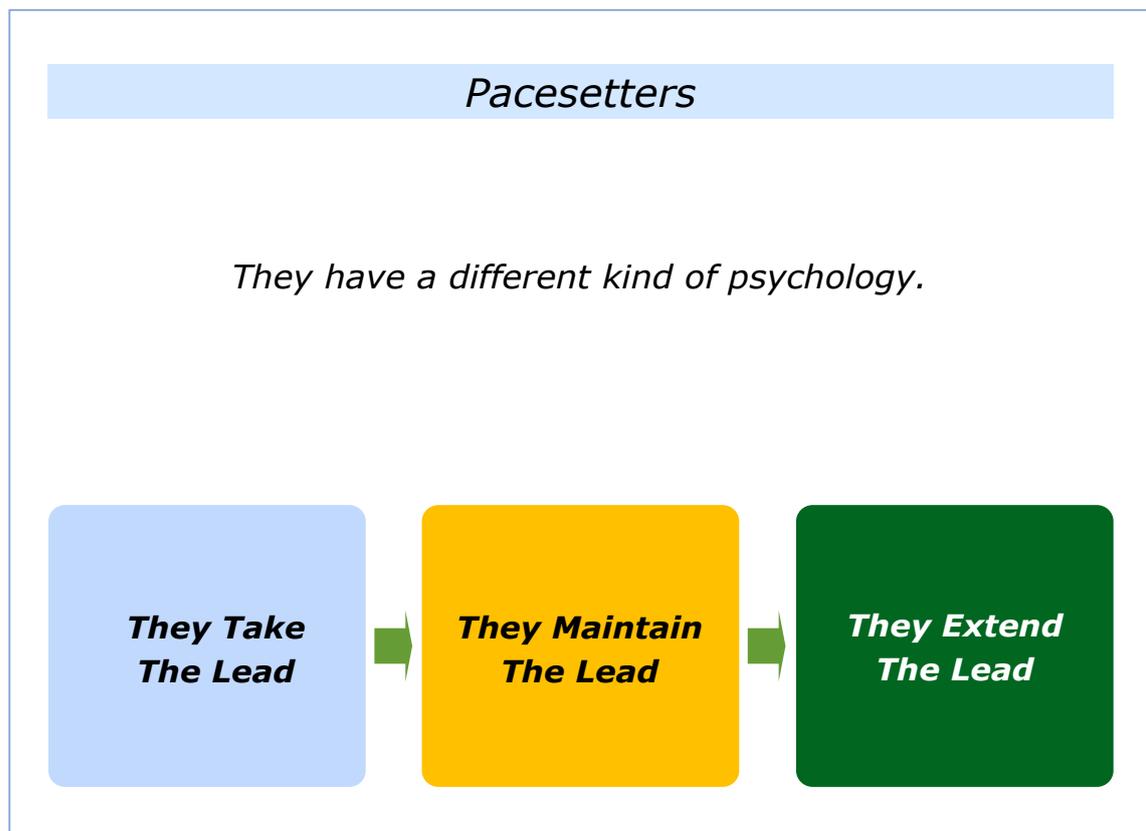
*"I couldn't afford fancy packaging so I bought the cheapest bottles available and the labels were handwritten. We painted the ceiling of our tiny shop green to cover the damp patches and put garden fencing on the walls to stop rain splashing the products.*

*"The first day we opened was a Saturday and we took £100. The other retailers in the street were laying odds of 10-1 against our surviving six months, but we were on our way."*

### *Pioneers Aim To Keep Developing*

Pioneers keep developing. Some choose to pass on their knowledge to other people and this can lead to a sense of satisfaction.

Many pioneers begin to feel restless, however, and want to pursue the next stimulating adventure. Pacesetters, for example, have a different kind of psychology.

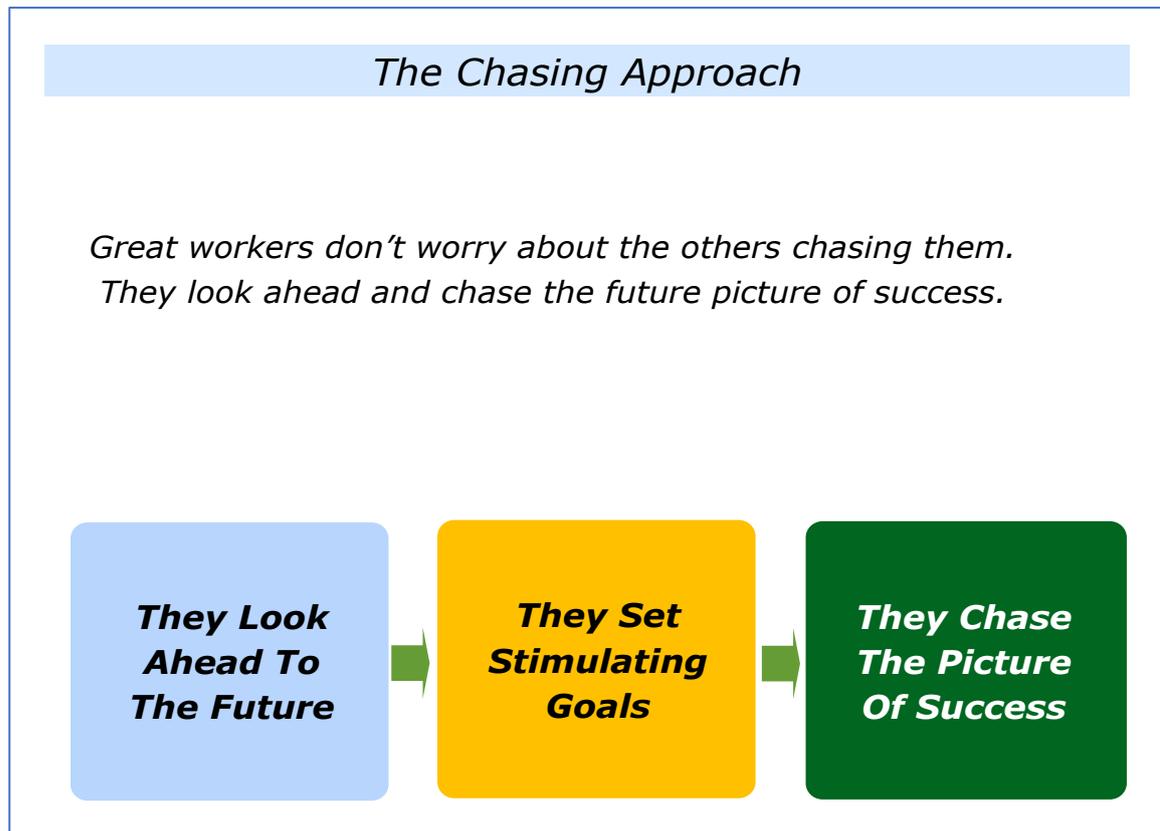


Pacesetters aim to take the lead, maintain the lead and extend the lead. They often act as pioneers by making the new rules for the game.

### *The Chasing Approach*

Great workers sometimes borrow an idea from sports psychology. Some frontrunners still see themselves as chasers even though they may be leading the field.

They keep looking ahead, setting stimulating goals and working towards their picture of success. They use their energy to look forward rather than look over their shoulder.



A golfer may take this approach when leading the Masters on the final day. They focus on posting their best score rather than anticipating putting on the famous green jacket.

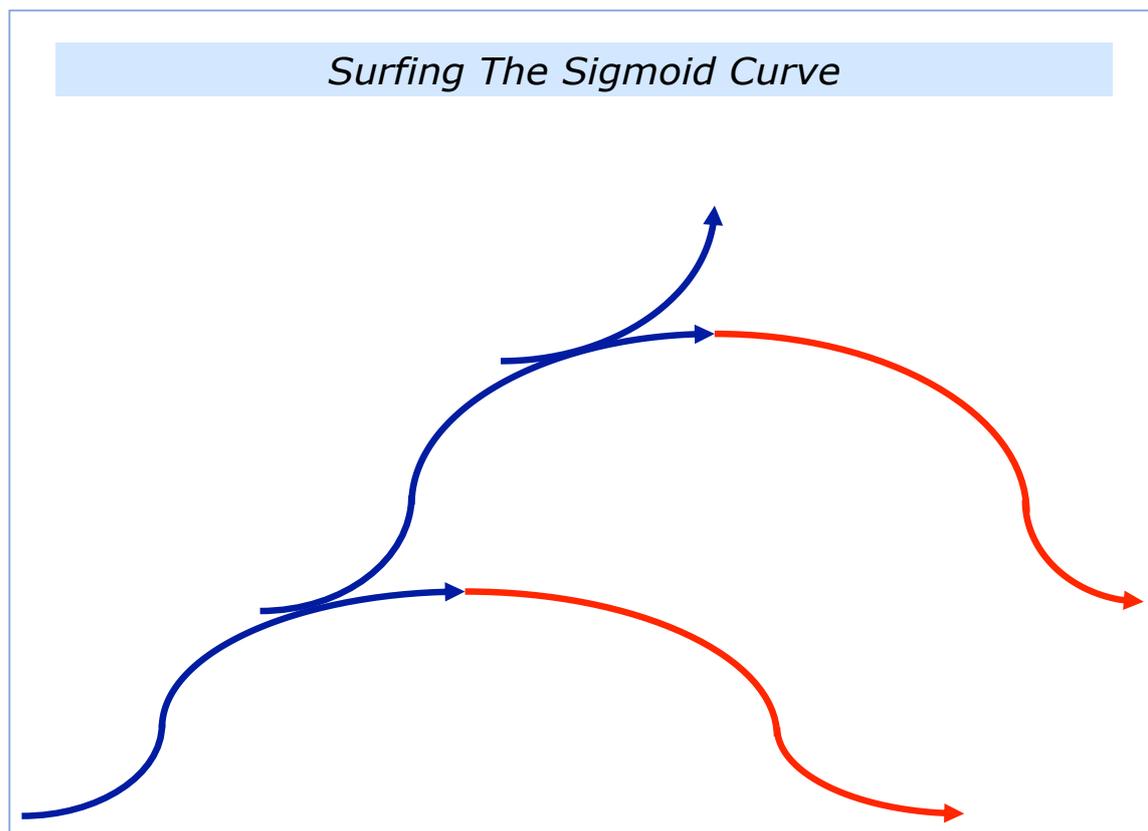
A slalom skier who is leading after the first run in the Winter Olympic Final will stay in the moment. They will aim to flow rather

than worry about failing. They will aim to do their personal best rather be concerned about where they finish.

Pioneers are often addicted to learning, developing and creating new things. Some keep developing by surfing the sigmoid curve.

Charles Handy popularised this in his book *The Age of Paradox*. Originally a mathematical term, it can also be used to track the development of a product, a person's career, an organisation or even a civilisation.

As one curve reaches its peak, some pioneers aim to create or surf onto the next sigmoid curve. They take this approach rather than lapse into what they see as decline.



Imagine you are climbing the curve in a specific aspect of your professional life. Where are you now?

Perhaps you are halfway up the curve. Feeling hungry, you may believe there is lots of scope for development. On the other hand,

you may have hit a ceiling or believe that your own growth - or the product or service you offer - is deteriorating.

The sigmoid curve approach has implications for businesses. Many companies invest heavily in research. But they make money from the products that have already reached their peak or are in decline.

Sometimes this also calls for employing different kinds of people in different parts of the business. Companies recognise that this can be a challenge. It is vital:

*To continue developing new products;*

*To continue capitalising on the older products that are providing the money for the new developments.*

Many people are attracted to creating the new products but the research and development stages seldom brings early returns. It is therefore important to provide encouragement for those who are making money from the older products.

Imagine you are still climbing the curve. How can you keep developing? How can you keep building on your strengths? How can you stay close to your customers and help them succeed?

### *Surfing onto the next sigmoid curve*

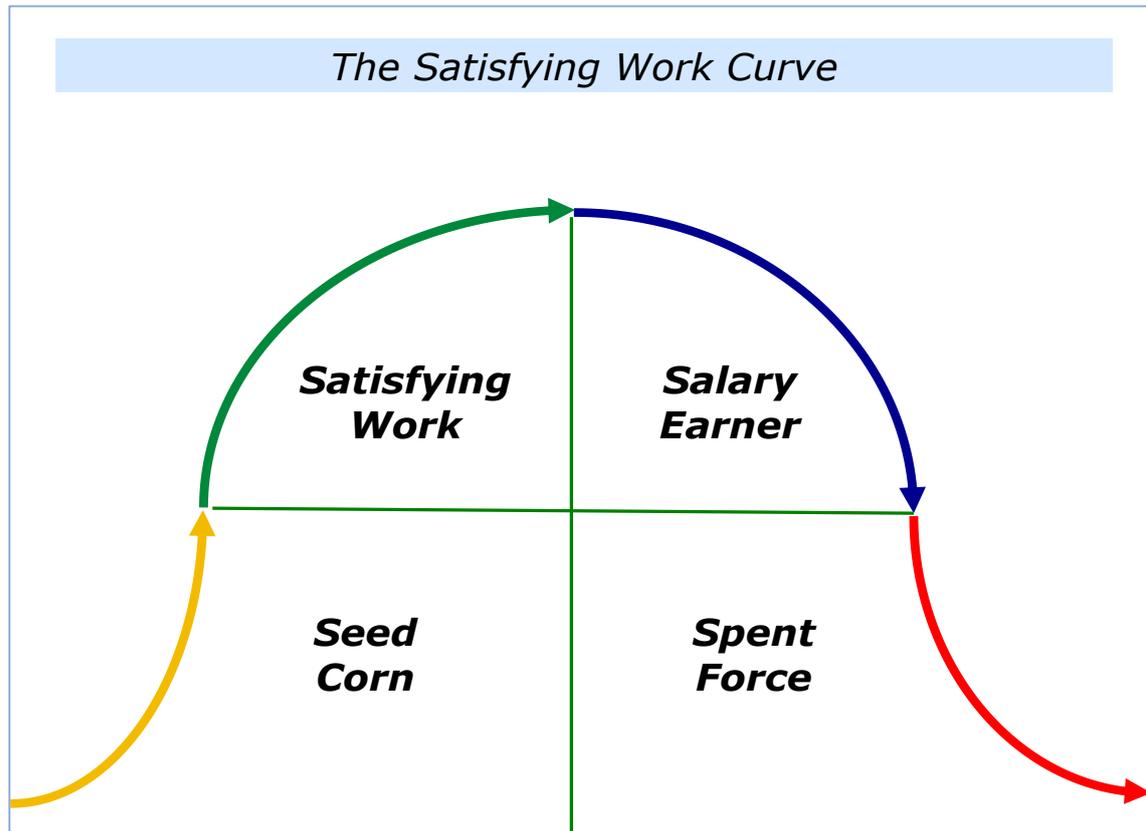
Imagine that you want to surf onto the next curve. Here are some questions that it may be useful to explore to make this happen.

*What are the things that give me positive energy? What are the things that I find fascinating? How can I continue to build on my strengths? How can I do projects that are stimulating?*

*Looking at my professional life, what will be happening in my field in the next three years? How can I spend time with pacesetting customers and explore the challenges they will face?*

*How can I stay ahead of the game? How can I create products or services that will help my pacesetter customers and others to succeed? How can I create or surf onto the next sigmoid curve?*

There are many adaptations of the sigmoid curve. One approach encourages a person to explore where they are on the satisfying work curve.



*Seed Corn*

A person explores many possibilities. They follow their interests and plants lots of seeds. Some of these turn into activities that they can develop. They then pursue a specific activity they find stimulating.

*Satisfying Work*

The person translates the activity into doing a specific piece of satisfying work. This may be a task, project or other activity. They continue to pursue this venture and, if appropriate, aim to find some funding.

### *Salary Earner*

The person translates doing the satisfying work into earning a salary. This produces both upsides and downsides. Sometimes they have spurts of growth; sometimes they feel they have plateaued. Sometimes they continue doing good work, but sometimes they experience the next stage.

### *Spent Force*

The person finds their energy begins to deteriorate. The cash is still coming in but doing the activity is no longer stimulating. They feel like a spent force. This does not matter if they have spent time nurturing their next crop of seed corn. They will then be ready to begin the next development cycle.

### *Pioneers Do Their Personal Best*

Pioneers love to finish properly. They love to see a recovered patient leave hospital, publish an account of their adventure, sell their start-up business or finish another activity.

Some move on to tackling other fascinating challenges. Some pass on their knowledge to other people. They may do this through coaching, mentoring, teaching, making films, writing or using another media.

Many pioneers want to feel at peace, but this can be difficult. Why? Such people often want to achieve perfection, but sometimes other forces mean this may not be achievable.

Some people take another approach and aim to do their personal best. Olivia Hurley, an assistant professor and sports psychologist, underlined why this is important in her article *What We Can Learn About Resilience From Elite Athletes*. Here is an excerpt from the article.

## *Have the courage to be imperfect*

*Too often in life, we aim for 'perfection'. As sport psychologists we should not recommend athletes use this term.*

*Instead we should work together to help them to produce Personal Bests (PBs), helping them to aim for performance excellence, but not expecting perfection.*

*Such PB targets should not stop anyone from giving one hundred per cent effort to their performances. But, by not feeling the need to be perfect, they are more likely to 'have a go', which often leads to the most effective performances.*

Pioneers who feel they have done their best may enjoy a sense of peace. Sometimes this feeling lasts for a long time; sometimes for only ten seconds. However long the feeling lasts, however, it can give them a positive memory for life.

Pioneers rest for a while and reflect on what they have learned. Some experience post-purpose syndrome. They felt so alive when pursuing a goal but now feel empty.

They then turn their attention to doing the next stimulating project. Different people manage this challenge in different ways. Some take the following steps.

*They give themselves permission to rest, reflect and then begin looking ahead;*

*They follow a structure each day and do things that give them positive energy;*

*They explore things they find stimulating and sometimes translate these into doing a satisfying project that provides a sense of purpose.*

Can you think of a piece of pioneering work that you would like to do in the future?

You may simply want to do a piece of creative work, find solutions to a challenge or build something new. You may wish to do so as a parent, educator, sports coach, mentor, leader or in another role.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Pioneering Work In The Future*

*The specific piece of pioneering  
work that I may like to do is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to do  
this piece of pioneering work are:*

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\*

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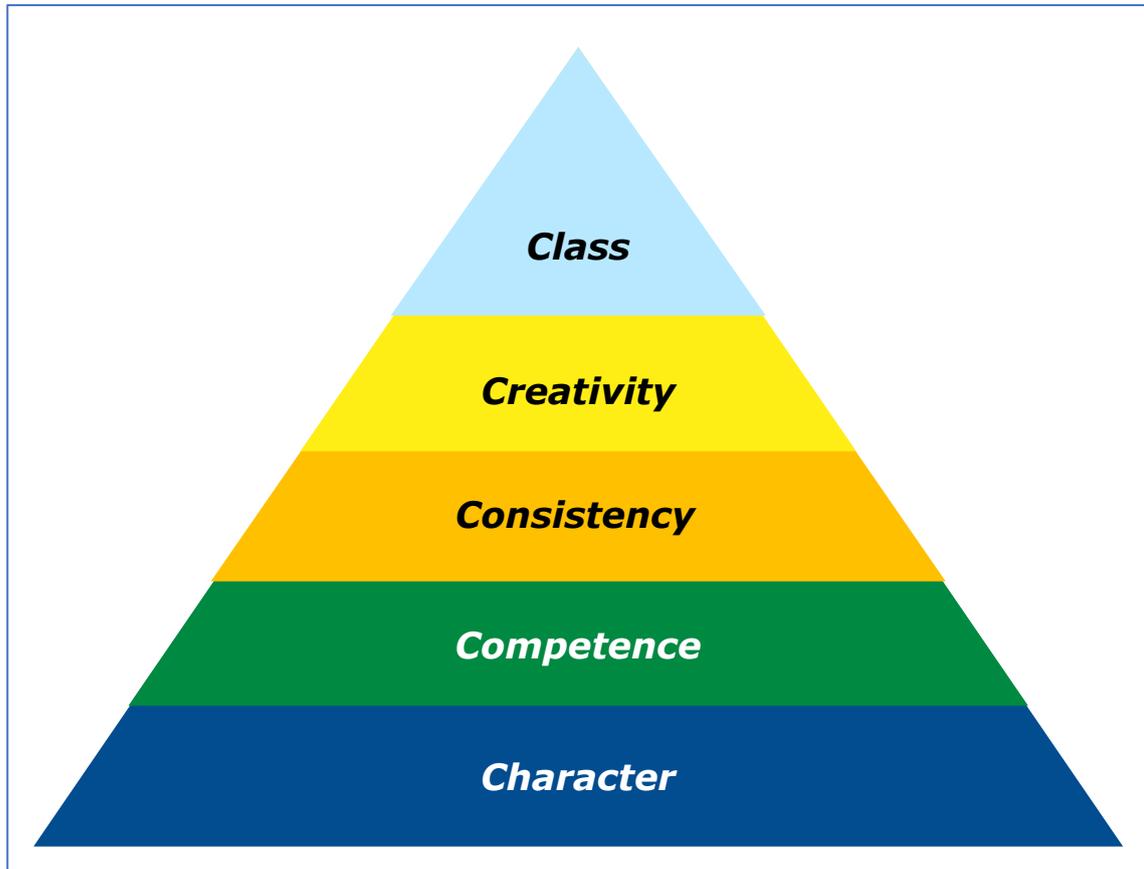
*The specific benefits of doing this  
piece of pioneering work may be:*

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\*

## *The Class Act Approach*



"They are a class act," is a phrase used to describe somebody who consistently performs brilliantly and also adds that touch of class.

The singer produces a memorable encore. The victor behaves generously, whilst the loser makes a gracious speech. Nelson Mandela turned away from violence and personally thanked his warders when leaving Robbins Island.

Looking back, can you think of when you did superb work and added that touch of class? What were the principles you followed? How can you follow these principles – plus add other skills – to add that touch of class in the future?

How to become a class act? One approach is to start by choosing a specific activity where you stand a chance of becoming a class act. You may want to choose one where:

*You are in your element – at ease and yet able to excel;*

*You move through the stages of doing work that is effective, excellent and extraordinary.*

A singer may have this ability when performing certain kinds of songs but not others. A footballer may have this ability when playing in one position but not another. A counsellor may have this ability when working with certain kinds of clients but not others.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Becoming A Class Act*

*The specific activity where I would like to become a class act is:*

\*

*The specific reasons why I believe I may have the ability to become a class act in this activity are:*

\*

\*

\*

Imagine that you have chosen to focus on a specific activity. Here are some steps you may consider on the road to doing your best.

## *Character*

Character is the foundation of success. Looking at the activity in which you aim to excel, do you have the character to deliver the goods? Do you have the right drive, discipline and determination?

A salesperson must have the drive to hit financial targets. An actor must have the resilience to overcome rejection. An athlete must have the discipline to train every day.

There are many models for exploring where you may have the characteristics for becoming a class act. One approach is to focus on a specific activity where you demonstrate calmness, clarity and the ability to deliver concrete results. Let's explore these themes.

## *Calmness*

Great workers often feel calm in the situations where they excel. Establishing clarity, they then do their best to deliver the desired results.

The paramedic stays calm when arriving at the scene of the accident. Seeing the whole picture, they recognise what must be done to help people recover. Picking their way through the wreckage, they take the necessary steps towards saving lives.

Where do you experience something like this feeling? You may be facilitating a one-to-one session, leading a team, tackling a particular kind of problem or doing another activity.

Going into the situation, you feel calm. You feel also alive, alert and able to make a positive contribution. Looking at the situation, you ask:

*"What is happening?"*

You see both the big picture and the small details. You use your personal radar to see patterns. Extrapolating these patterns, you anticipate what could happen.

### *Clarity*

Stepping back, you focus on what you can and can't control in the situation. You then move on to establish clarity by asking:

*"What are the real results to achieve?"*

Settling on the goals, you list these in order of priority. You consider the possible options for going forward together with the consequences of each option.

Casting your ideas wider, you look for potential creative solutions. You ask:

*"What are the key strategies to follow that will give the greatest chance of success?"*

### *Concrete Results*

You then move on to the next stage. Committing to your chosen course of action, you perform superb work.

You are fully present – yet at the same time able to be both helicoptering and hands-on. You then do your best to deliver the goods

Calmness, clarity and concrete results is a good starting point. But becoming a class act may call for other qualities. These may include having a positive attitude, encouraging others, being resilient or other characteristics.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Bearing in mind that activity in which you want to become a class act, describe the following things.

## *Character – Rating Myself*

*The characteristics that I believe somebody must demonstrate to be a class act in my chosen activity are:*

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*The rating I would give myself in terms of demonstrating these characteristics is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

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## *Competence*

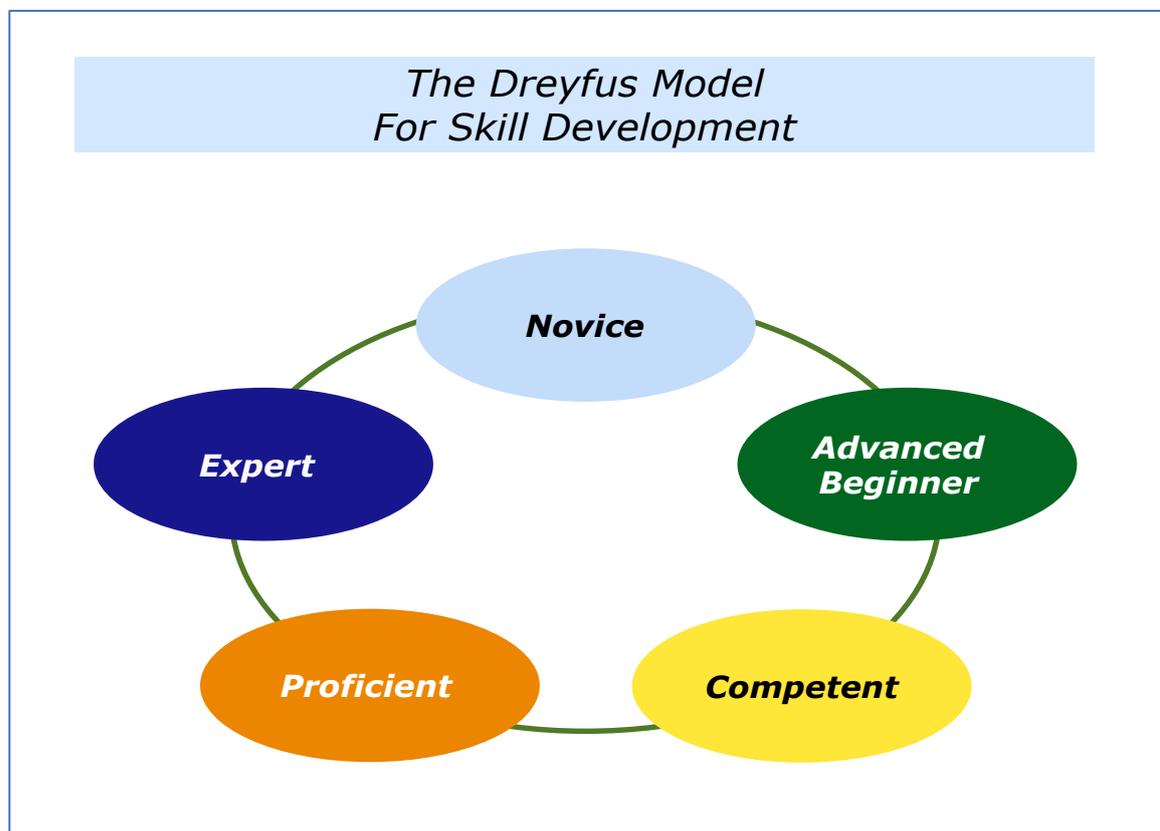
Character is a good starting point but a person must also have the required competence. This calls for having the right combination of strengths, strategic thinking and skills.

Chefs must have a natural feeling for food and have a good palate. Trouble-shooters must be able to quickly get to the heart of the matter and make good strategic decisions. Carpenters must have the right skills to produce works of craftsmanship.

Great workers continue to develop. Let's look at one approach to making this happen.

### *The Dreyfus Model*

Hubert and Stuart Dreyfus studied superb practitioners in many fields. Here is the model they created that describes the stages a person goes through to progress from being a novice to an expert.



Here are the descriptions they use to describe each stage of the model.

### *Novice*

*They have little or no experience. They have little situational perception or discretionary judgement. They have a rigid adherence to rules.*

### *Advanced Beginner*

*They start trying tasks on their own. They have difficulty troubleshooting. They want information fast. They can place some advice in the context required. They use guidelines but without holistic understanding.*

### *Competent*

*They develop conceptual models. They are able to deal with crowdedness. They develop conscious planning and routines. They troubleshoot on their own and seek out expert advice. They see actions in terms of long-term plans and goals.*

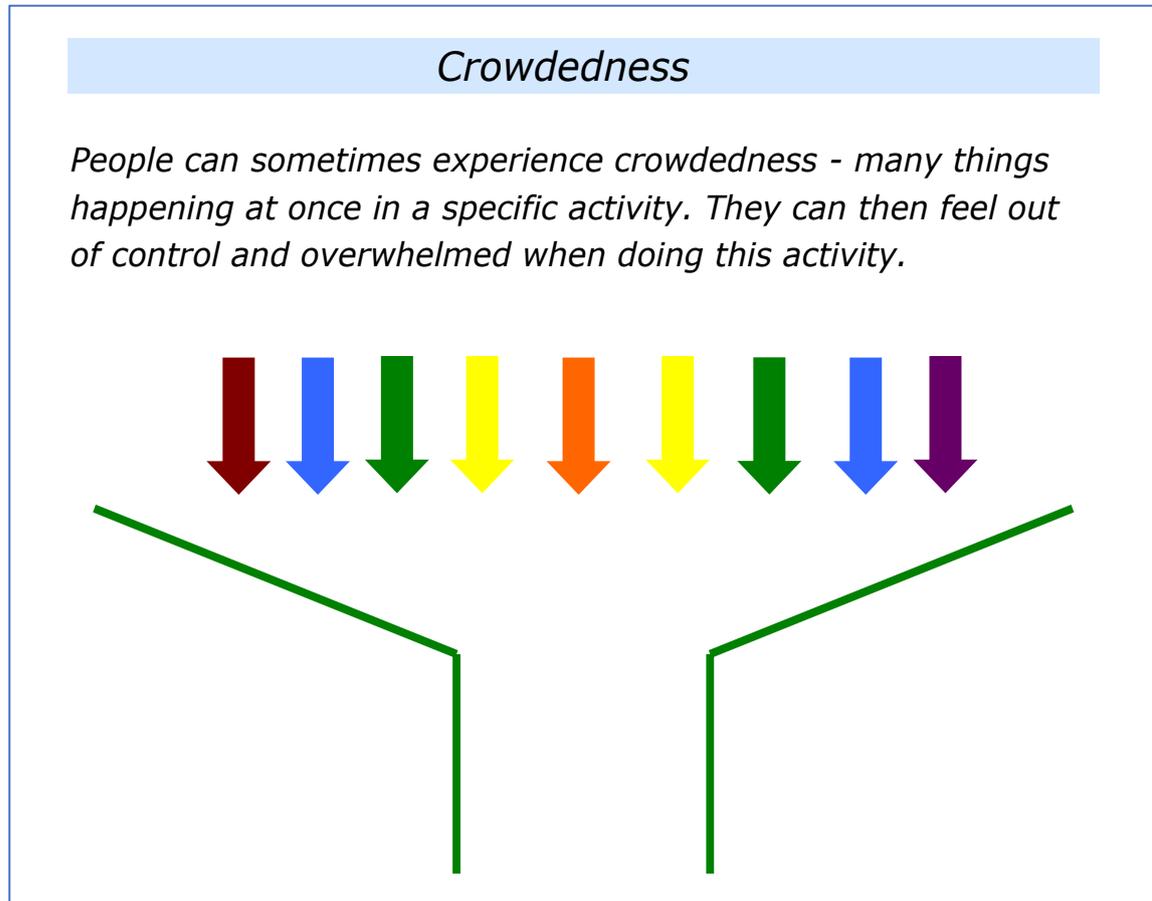
### *Proficient*

*They are guided by maxims but apply these to current situations. They see situations holistically and see what is important. They self-correct and learn from the experience of others. They make quicker and better decisions that achieve success.*

### *Expert*

*They transcend rules, guidelines and maxims. They work primarily on intuition based on deep understanding. They sometimes return to analytic approaches used in novel or problematic situations. They have a vision of what is possible and deliver it.*

Imagine that you are helping a person to go through some of these steps. One of the key factors is to help them to manage crowdedness.



Some people may feel comfortable managing complexity in certain activities but may get thrown off-course in other areas. The slightest complication or setback can lead to them feeling burdened. This highlights the following factors.

*Some people who are good at a specific activity may naturally be able to manage crowdedness in this particular activity;*

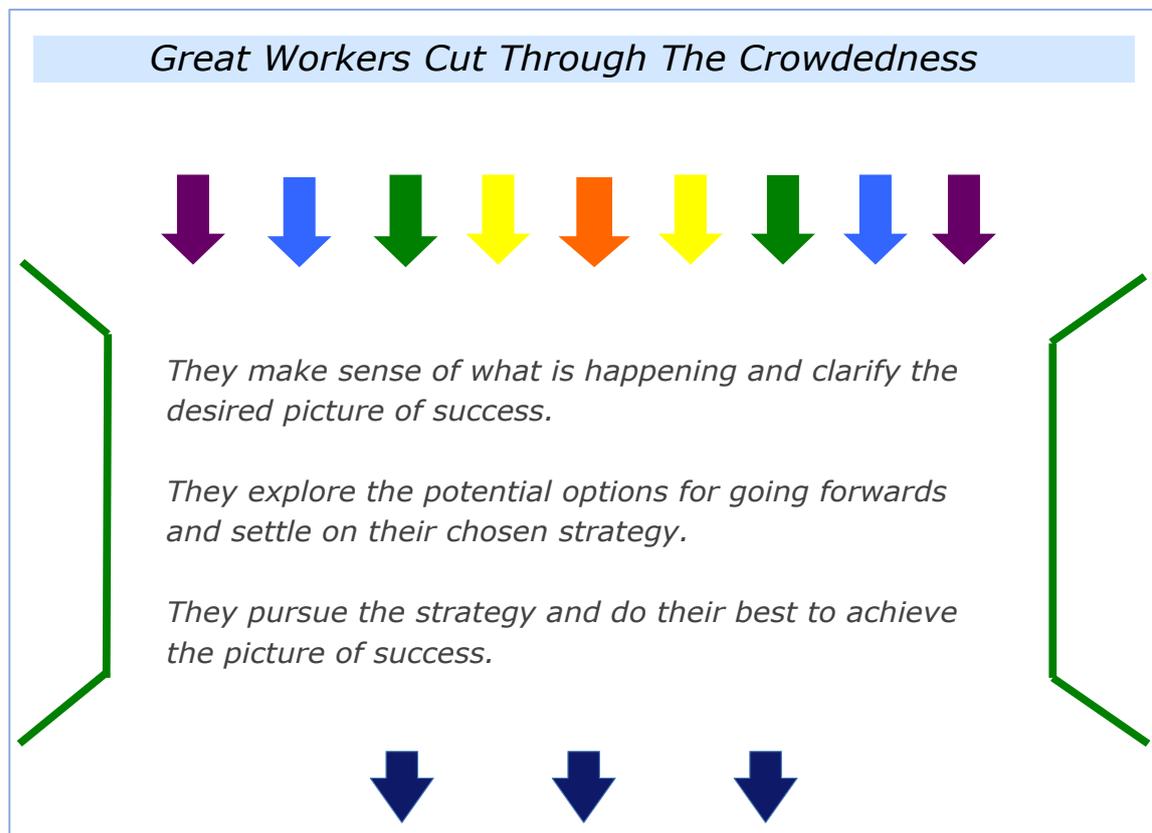
*Some people may be able to add to their repertoire of skills for managing crowdedness in a particular activity;*

*Some people will be good at managing crowdedness in some activities but often have difficulties in other areas.*

Great workers have the ability to cut through crowdedness in the activities where they excel. They can deal with masses of information - and many things happening at once - in situations that may confuse other people.

Different people demonstrate this skill in different situations. They may have it when solving technical problems, helping people who have emotional challenges, dealing with particular kinds of crises or whatever.

Such workers often have a strong feeling for the activity. They have a framework for making sense of the information, clarifying what is important and then pursuing their chosen strategy.



People can learn tools for dealing with crowdedness in the areas where they feel uncomfortable. Sometimes they can do this by themselves. They can identify the triggers that lead to them feeling out of control, getting angry or feeling overwhelmed.

They can develop a ritual for buying time to think. They can clarify the options for going forward – including the pluses and minuses of each option. They can then pursue their chosen strategy for achieving the desired results.

Some people may need help to take this step. If appropriate, you can help them learn how to manage their emotions. You can help them to develop their own rituals for taking control in the situation and working to achieve success.

Let's return your chosen activity. What are the kinds of competence you need to demonstrate? How can you keep developing and adding to your skills?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Competence – Rating Myself*

*The kinds of competence that I believe somebody must demonstrate to be a class act in my chosen activity are:*

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*The rating I would give myself in terms of demonstrating these kinds of competence is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

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## *Consistency*

Great workers have a strong work ethic. This is because they love their work. They therefore aim to deliver consistently high standards whether they are performing at the Village Hall or the Carnegie Hall.

They believe in honouring their work. Professional to their fingertips, they aim to do the right things in the right way every day. Different people develop consistency in different ways. Let's explore one model.

### *People Who Aim To Deliver High Standards*

*They have a strong work ethic because they love their work. They often take the following steps when starting their career.*

-  *They aim to build on their gifts and get a good grounding.*
-  *They aim to learn from good models and get good experiences.*
-  *They aim to keep developing, maintain high standards and do good work.*

### *They Aim To Get A Good Grounding*

People who want to build on their gifts often aim to get a good grounding. They do this whether they aim to go be good at nursing,

education, football management, performing on stage or doing another activity.

Great actors, for example, often describe the importance of them playing repertory theatre. They developed their skills by performing comedies, tragedies, musicals and other plays.

*They Aim To Learn From Good  
Models And Get Good Experiences*

Great workers often talk about learning from superb performers. These may have been senior professionals, coaches, mentors or other people who acted as good models.

People often aim to emulate people they admire. They may take this approach when developing as songwriters, teachers, footballers or doing other kinds of work.

Great workers often focus on the field of work where they can use their gifts. They may then try many different activities in this field before specialising in a particular niche.

People who aim to go into the caring professions, for example, may gather experience by working in care homes, hospitals and hospices. This can help them to settle on their chosen path.

Such workers have often had a background of good experiences, even if some of these may have actually been bad experiences. They translated the difficulties into a good experience by learning from the challenges they faced.

*They Aim To Keep Developing, Maintain  
High Standards And Do Good Work*

Great workers learn skills for self-development. Some ask themselves the following questions after an experience.

*What were the lessons I learned from the experience? What was good about it? What was challenging?*

*What were the things I did well? What could I have done better and how? How can I apply these lessons in the future?*

Such workers develop the habit of continuous improvement. This is a skill they continue to use throughout the years.

Great workers often have a pattern of starting to produce good work in their early careers. They may do this when working as a writer, chef, teacher, carpenter or in another role. They then begin to develop consistency.

Young footballers, for example, sometimes produce good performance but then fall away. Some commit themselves to their careers and continue to develop. This can result in them beginning to deliver consistently good performances.

Let's return to your chosen activity. What are the consistently high standards you need to deliver? How can you keep delivering these day after day?

## *Consistency – Rating Myself*

*The consistently high standards that I believe somebody must demonstrate to be a class act in my chosen activity are:*

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*The rating I would give myself in terms of delivering such consistently high standards is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

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## *Creativity*

Success calls for employing the right creativity at the right time to get the right results. Creativity comes in many different forms.

Class acts have great personal radar in their potential field. They quickly see patterns and see the potential picture of success. They seem to know what will happen before it happens.

They have a wide professional repertoire. They have the strengths, strategies and skills required to deliver the goods. They then employ their radar and repertoire to pursue their chosen strategy towards delivering the right results.

There are many approaches to being creative. One approach is to keep your eyes on the goal rather than the obstacles. It is then to find creative ways to reach the goal.

A teacher described this model during a lecture I attended in the early 1970s. He gave the following description.

*"There are creative thinkers and conventional thinkers.*

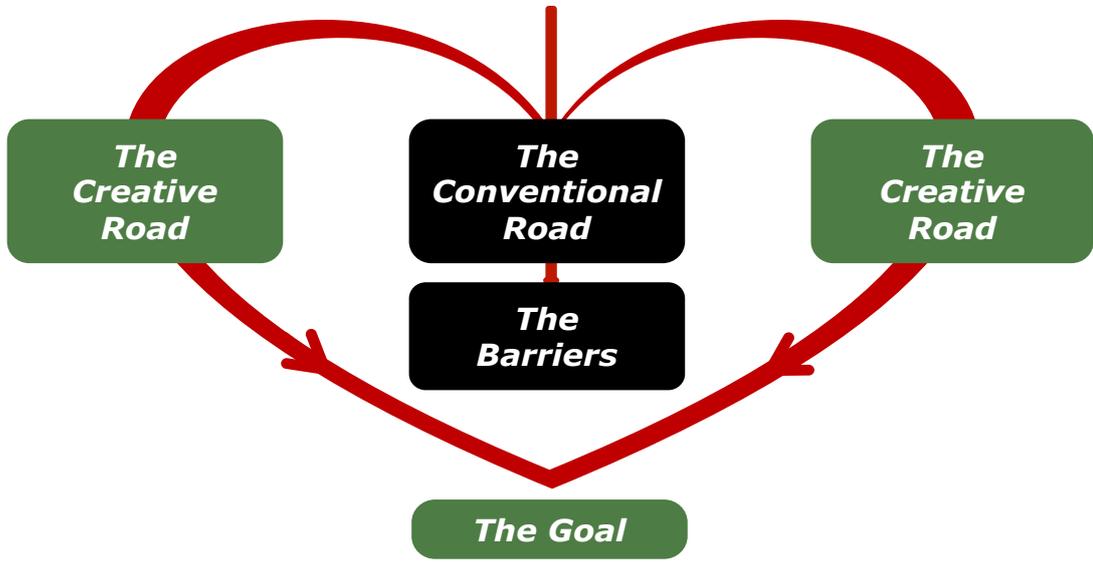
*"Creative thinkers spend a lot of time clarifying the What. They then find imaginative ways to reach the goals.*

*"Conventional thinkers quickly jump to the How. They spend lots of time analysing obstacles. They can sometimes become dispirited and feel that the problems are impossible to solve.*

*"Creative thinkers often follow the shape of a heart. They keep their eyes on the prize and think of creative ways forward. They go around obstacles to reach the goal."*

## The Creative Art

*The creative art is to sometimes follow the shape of a heart. It is to keep your eyes on the goal. It is then to follow the creative road – rather than the conventional road – and go around barriers to reach the goal.*



During the 1970s I got the chance to work with entrepreneurs and other creative people. Such people did not follow the cliché of thinking outside the box. They did not recognise there was a box.

The creative people I met used different approaches to making things happen. One approach they had in common, however, was to focus on the real results to achieve.

They did not keep banging their heads on the barriers. They went around barriers by following the shape of a heart. They kept following the creative art to achieve their goals.

Let's return to your chosen activity. What are the kinds of creativity that are required to do great work? Which do you have at the moment? How can you keep adding to your repertoire?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Creativity – Rating Myself*

*The kinds of creativity that I believe somebody must demonstrate to be a class act in my chosen activity are:*

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*The rating I would give myself in terms of demonstrating these kinds of creativity is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

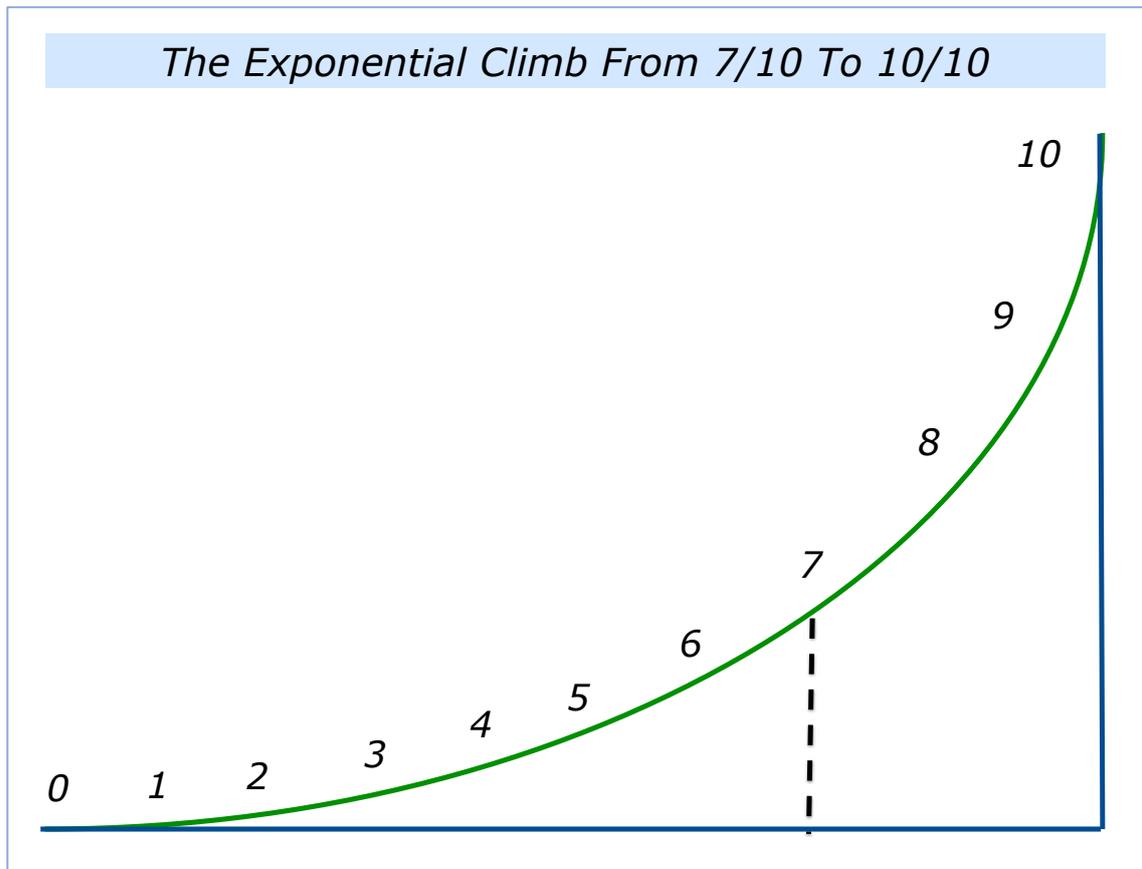
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## Class

Great workers keep doing the basics and then add the brilliance. Sometimes they reach the goal by adding that touch of class.

Great sprinters employ their talent and technique to get in sight of the tape. They then flow, focus and finish. This sometimes involves taking the following step.



Many people have the natural ability to get to 7/10 in a specific area. They may do this as an athlete, singer or in another professional role. But then comes the hard part - the exponential climb towards 10/10.

Great workers also aim to make the exponential climb from 7/10 to 10/10. This is the equivalent of going from county champion to national champion to continental champion to world champion.

Some people find they can do this occasionally, but then comes the hard part. It is to perform superbly on a regular basis.

Great workers play to their strengths and follow their successful style of working. They put themselves into positions where they can take their approach. Being realists, they also find ways to manage the consequences of their weaknesses.

They build on their strengths. They also keep developing their repertoire of strategic thinking skills and the practical skills. They aim to perform superb work and produce peak performances. They then repeat the cycle to keep doing great work.

Sometimes people reach their goals by adding that touch of class. Sometimes this can be spectacular. Sometimes it can be a simple act of kindness. Sometimes it can be something that gives people a positive memory for life.

Nelson Mandela demonstrated this quality on many occasions. Here is one instance I heard about from the staff of a London hotel where he stayed. He showed a personal touch that they all remembered.

When departing at 6.00 in the morning, Nelson saw 20 staff lining up to form an aisle towards the door. Though being asked to leave quickly by his security guards, he took the time to say goodbye to each of the twenty staff members.

Giving each person his famous two-handed handshake, he looked them in the eyes and said:

*"Thank you for looking after me."*

There are many models for doing great work. One approach is to focus on a specific activity where you have the ability to excel. You can keep developing the character and consistently high standards required to do superb work. You can then add that touch of class.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Class – Rating Myself*

*The specific touches of class that I believe somebody can demonstrate to be a class act in my chosen activity are:*

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*The rating I would give myself in terms of demonstrating these touches of class is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

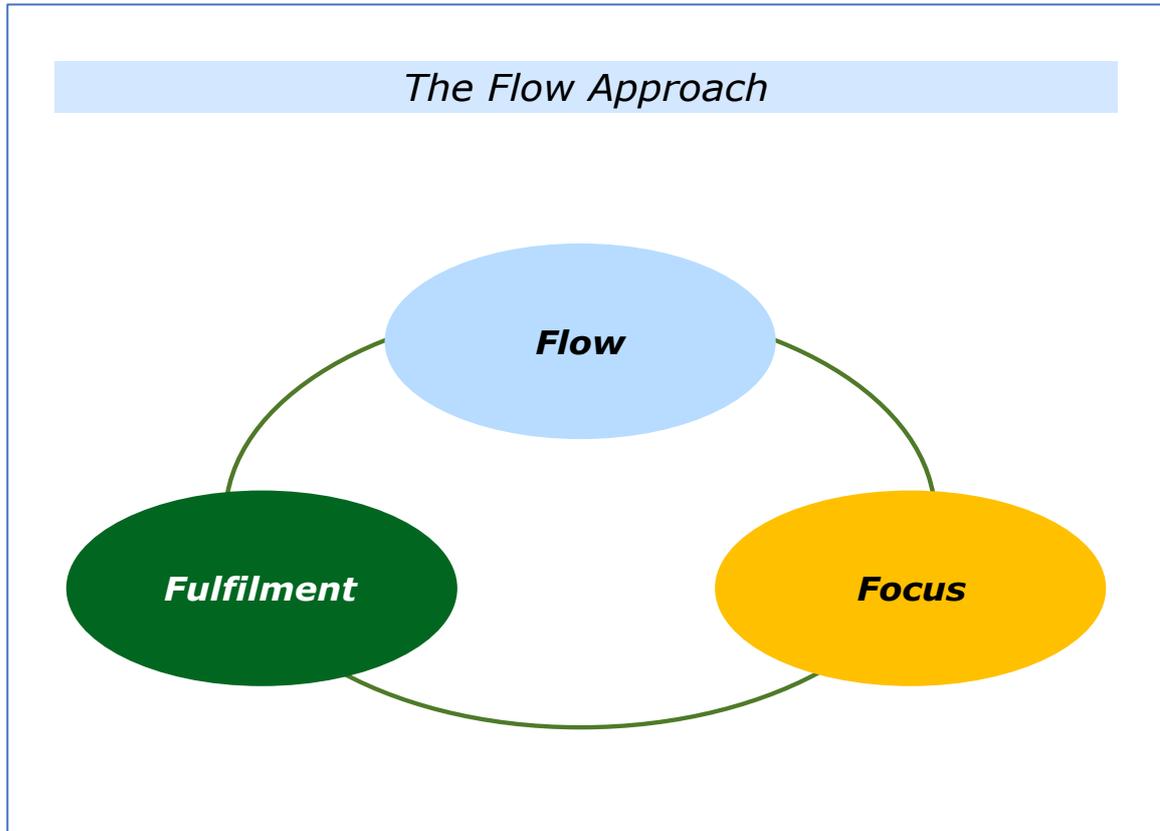
*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

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## The Flow Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to do a specific activity where you can flow, focus and sometimes find fulfilment.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi did much of the pioneering work on flow. He described his findings in books such as *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience* and *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention*.

Before Mihaly's work some people talked about flow in terms of being in the zone or having peak experiences. Timothy Gallwey also touched on these themes with his books on *The Inner Game of Tennis* and also *Inner Skiing*.

Mihaly says that flow experiences are those where you become completely absorbed in an activity and time goes away. He explains this process in the following way.

You start by tackling a stimulating task that you have a chance of completing. Setting clear goals, you embark on the work. You feel a sense of control, concentrate and get immediate feedback.

Becoming absorbed in the task, you experience a deep and effortless involvement that removes the frustrations of everyday life. The experience is so enjoyable that time goes away.

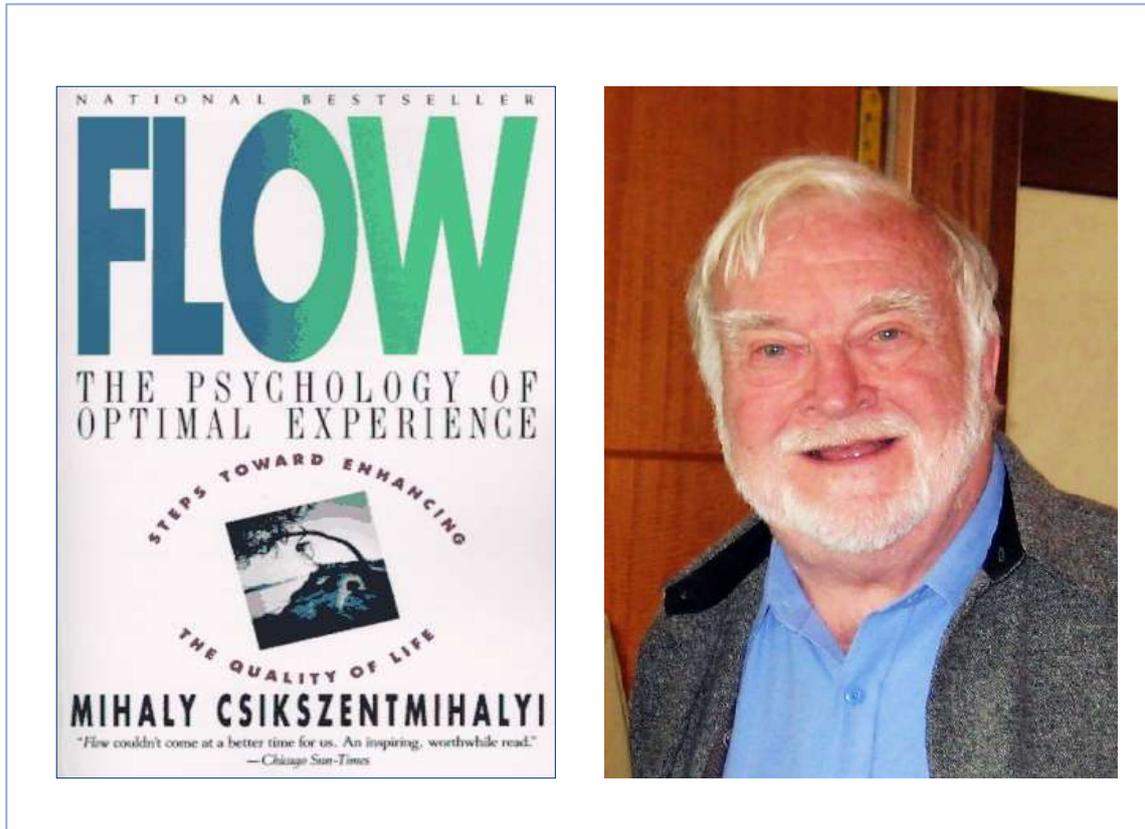
Your sense of self disappears when doing the task but afterwards you emerge stronger. Mihaly explains this in the following way.

*"We have all experienced times when, instead of being buffeted by anonymous forces, we do feel in control of our actions, masters of our own fate.*

*"On the rare occasions that it happens, we feel a sense of exhilaration, a deep sense of enjoyment that is long cherished and that becomes a landmark in memory for what life should be like.*

*"The best moments usually occur when a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile.*

*"Optimal experience is therefore something that we make happen."*



The following pages explore one framework that people can follow to flow, focus and find fulfilment. There are, of course, several parts to each of these stages. Let's explore these themes.

## *Flow*

Looking at your own life, when do you experience a sense of flow? You may do this when encouraging a person, gardening, painting, cooking, dancing, playing music, riding a horse, solving a certain kind of problem or doing another activity.

Later we will look at how you can do more of these things in the future. Before then, however, let's explore what inspired Mihaly to study this concept.

He was born in Rijeka, Croatia. His family was Hungarian, and his father Alfred, a diplomat, had been posted to Italy. Living in cities such as Rome and Florence exposed Mihaly to different cultures and he became fluent in Hungarian, Italian and German.

Despite being a child, he was interned in Italy for a while and tried to make sense of events. Interviewed years later by Dava Sobel for *Omni Magazine*, he explained this in the following way.

*"As a child in World War 2 Europe, I was dismayed to find that grown-ups had no idea what was going on and were helpless to extricate themselves from the mess they had created.*

*"I resolved to figure out how one could live a better life. I tried many things, such as art, fiction, philosophy and working in youth organisations.*

*"I discovered psychology through the writings of C.J. Jung, and thought that perhaps this was the best way to understand behaviour and history. I can't say I have, but in the process I learned a lot and had a good time."*

Travelling to Switzerland when he was around 16, Mihaly heard Carl Jung lecture about the human soul and this had a profound effect on him. He told Sobel:

*"Because as a child in the war I'd seen something drastically wrong with how adults - the grown-ups I trusted - organised their thinking.*

*"I was trying to find a better system to order my life. Jung seemed to be trying to cope with some of the more positive aspects of human experience."*

Choosing to study psychology at university level, he found the most attractive courses were in America. He applied to the University of Chicago and, despite speaking little English, was accepted.

Mihaly arrived in Chicago in 1956 with little more than a dollar in his pocket. He did well at university and went on to study for a Masters. Explaining his chosen field of study, Mihaly told Elizabeth Debold of *Enlightenment Magazine*:

*"I did my doctoral dissertation on young students at the Chicago Art Institute.*

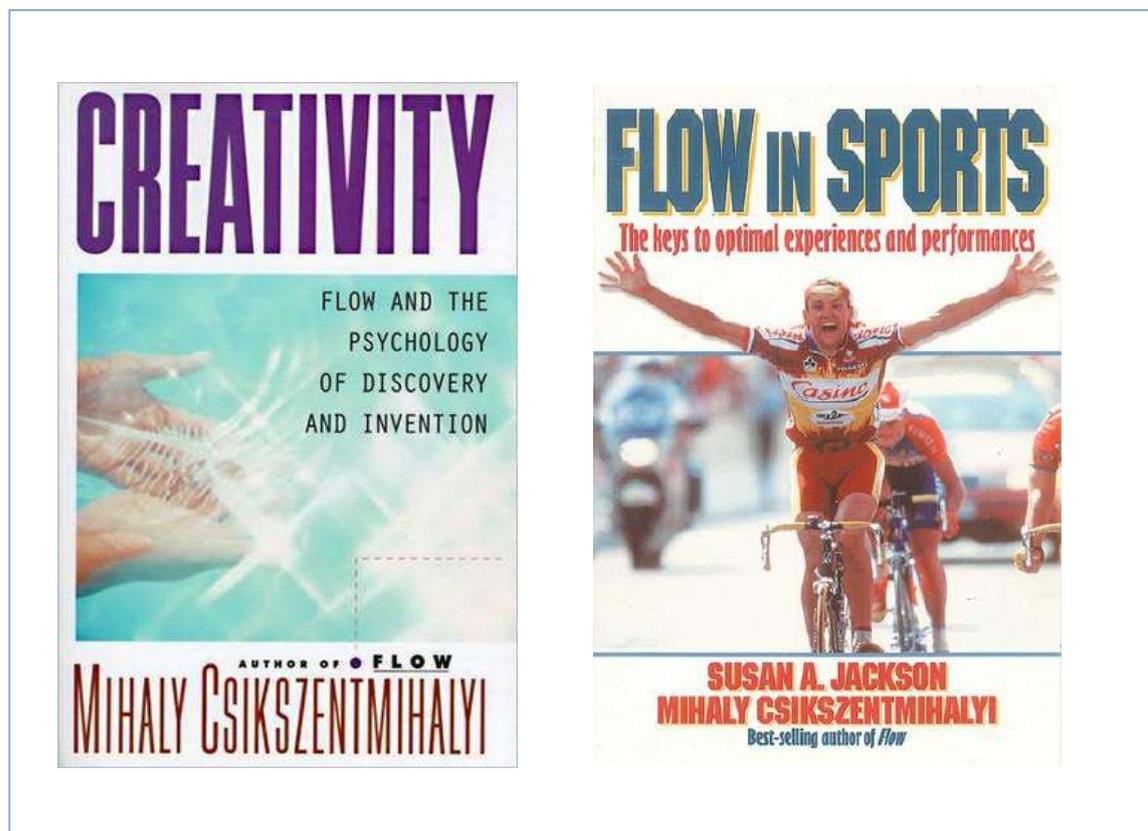
*"One thing that I noticed - and I knew also from my own experience - is that when they started painting, they almost fell into a trance.*

*"They didn't seem to notice anything, and they just moved as if they were possessed by something inside themselves.*

*"When they finished a painting, they would look at it, and they'd feel good for about five or ten minutes.*

*"Then they'd put the painting away and not look at it much after that. What became important was the next canvas.*

*"So I tried to understand what psychologists have written about this kind of thing, this state of complete involvement."*



Mihaly moved on to studying chess players, rock climbers, musicians and basketball players. He asked them to describe what happened 'when what they were doing was really going well'.

Despite coming from different fields, people reported similar experiences. Explaining this in an interview with Sarah Trevelyan, Mihaly said:

*"Women who weave tapestries in the highlands of Borneo, meditating monks in Europe, also Catholic Dominican monks, and so forth. They all said these same things. So 'flow' seems to be a phenomenological state that is the same across cultures.*

*"Many of the interviewees described their feeling as 'being carried away by a force greater than myself,' or 'being in a current,' or 'being in flow.' I chose the last of these analogies as being the most simple."*

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking at the activities where you enjoy a sense of flow, can you think of one you would like to build on in the future?

You may want to do this when helping people, cooking, writing, painting, designing or doing another activity. What are the reasons why you would like to pursue this activity? What would be the benefits for you and for other people?

## *Focus*

Great workers sometimes follow their flow and translate this into a specific goal. They may aim to write an article, climb a mountain, perform a piece of music, run a marathon or do another activity. They then take the following steps.

*They focus on achieving a specific goal;*

*They focus on the key strategies they can follow to achieve the specific goal;*

*They focus fully on the task they are doing when working towards achieving the specific goal.*

Individuals and teams take this approach. They prepare properly and then click into action. Looking at teams, Mihaly gave the following example.

*"Surgeons say that during a difficult operation they have the sensation that the entire operating team is a single organism, moved by the same purpose.*

*"They describe it as a 'ballet' in which the individual is subordinated to the group performance, and all involved share in a feeling of harmony and power."*

Great workers commit themselves fully to the task. They often do this after doing lots of research. Bearing in mind the activity they want to pursue, they take the following steps.

*They clarify the real results they want to achieve and the key strategies they can follow to achieve the goals;*

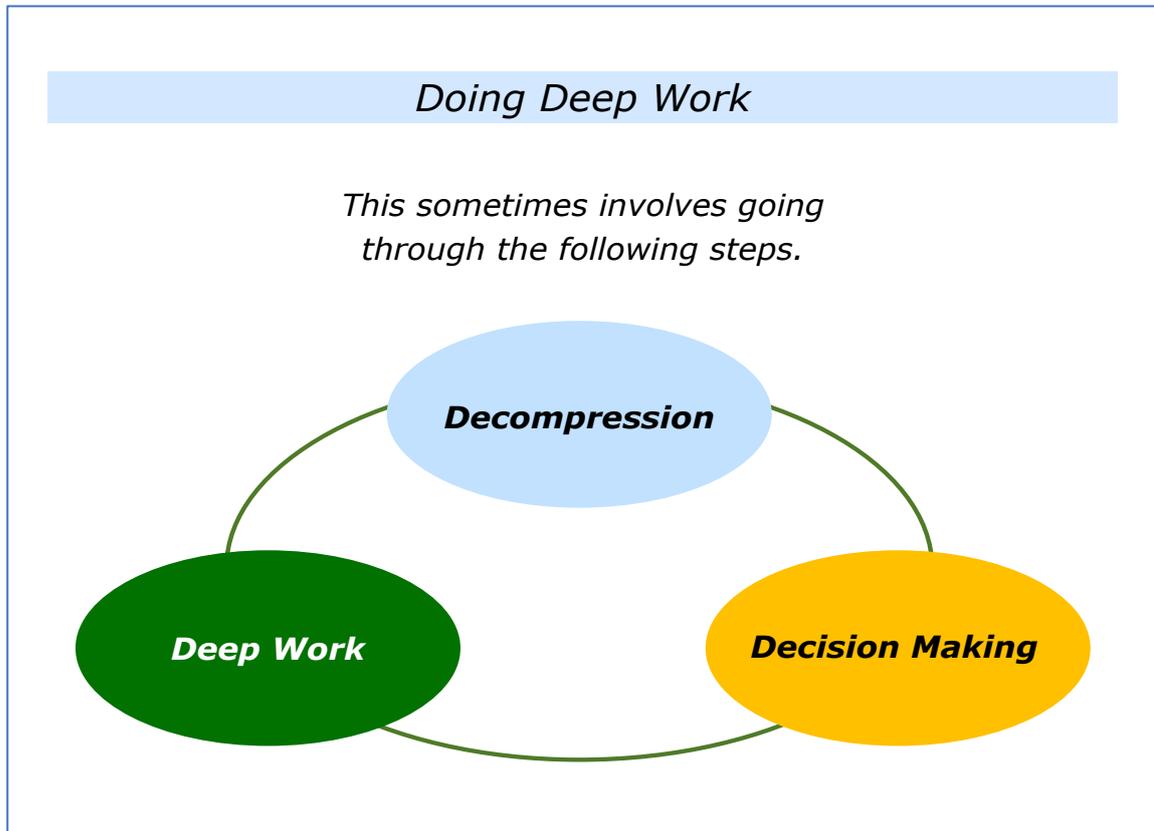
*They clarify the pluses and minuses involved in working to achieve the goals;*

*They clarify their motivation to achieve the goals and make sure it is at least 8+/10.*

*They then commit themselves fully to achieving the goals.*

Great workers sometimes demonstrate elements of what might be called self-chosen autism. They cut-out everything else and focus fully on the piece of work.

Some cut themselves off physically by going to a specific place where they can focus on the work. Some cut themselves off psychologically by going into their own world. Some make full use of their talent by pursuing the following approach.



There are many ways to do deep work. This approach involves going through the following steps.

### *Decompression*

The word decompression has many meanings. Most people associate it with a deep sea diver having to spend time in a decompression chamber to avoid getting what is known as the bends.

Some individuals also aim to decompress before embarking on doing a piece of creative work. They may slow down, sleep, walk or do other things to get into a clear state of mind.

This sometimes involves clearing themselves of any unnecessary internal or external pressures. They then feel ready to explore what for them may be the next stimulating challenge.

## *Decision Making*

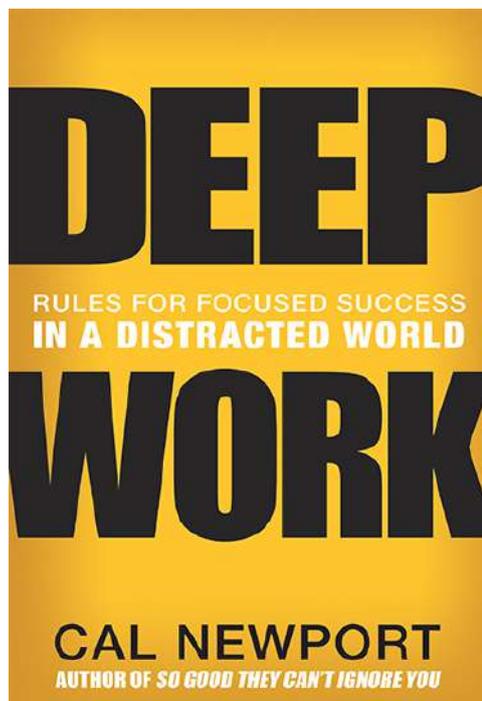
Different people choose different ways to decide on their course of action. Some let their minds drift, some sleep on things, some focus on the things that give them positive energy.

You will have your own approach to letting your mind open up and then close down on the topic you want to pursue. Bearing in mind the possible opportunities you have for going forward, you may settle on working towards a specific goal.

Great workers clarify the strategies they want to pursue and translate these into a clear action plan. You will do this in your own way. It will then be time to embark on the next stage.

## *Deep Work*

Cal Newport's writing has helped many people to take control of their diaries and do deep work. Here is an extract from his book that shows the benefits of doing deep work.



*Deep work is the ability to focus without distraction on a cognitively demanding task.*

*It's a skill that allows you to quickly master complicated information and produce better results in less time.*

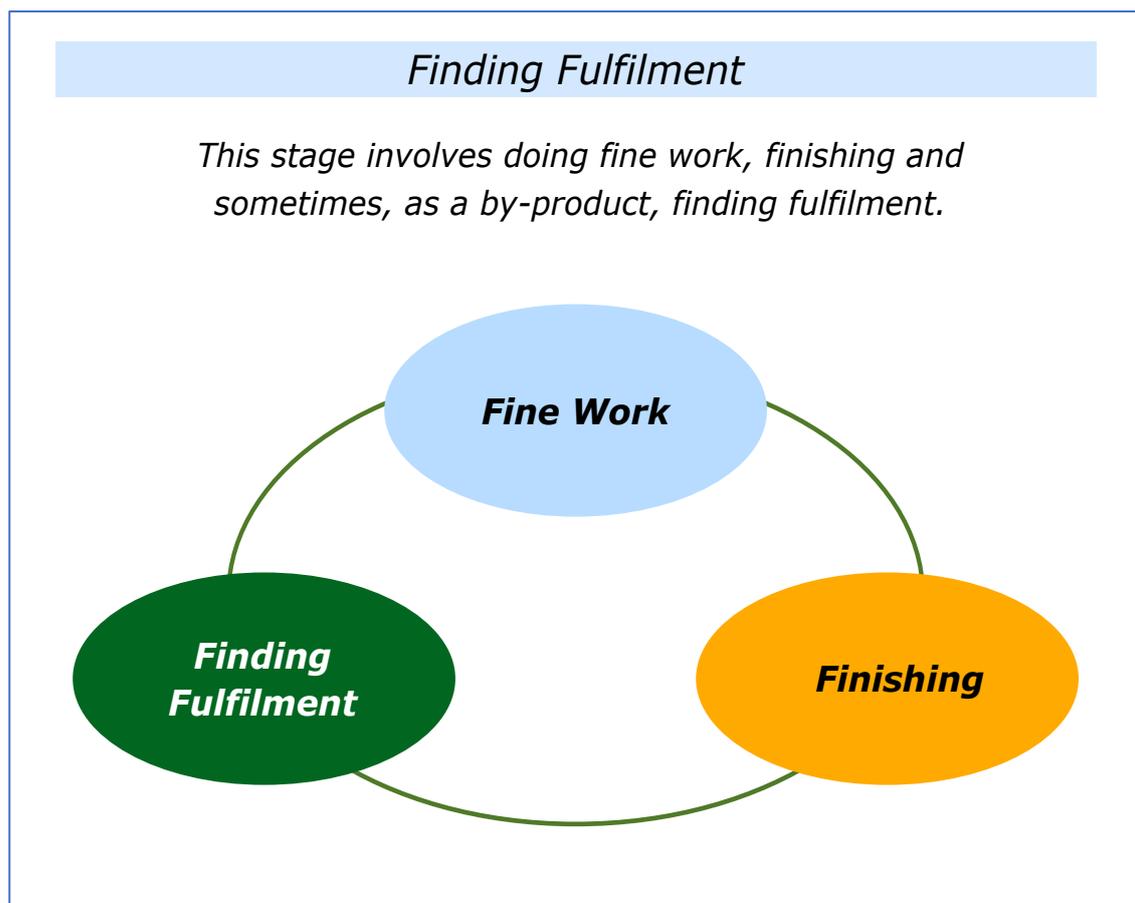
*Deep work will make you better at what you do and provide the sense of true fulfilment that comes from craftsmanship.*

You will have your own approach to doing such work. This may include elements of the decompression, decision making and deep work approach. You may then move on to the next step.

Imagine that you are pursuing an activity where you are able to flow and focus. You may then move into action and aim to take the final step.

## *Finding Fulfilment*

There are many parts to taking this step. These sometimes involve focusing on doing fine work, finishing and, as a by-product, finding fulfilment. Let's explore how you may want to follow these steps in your own way.



## *Fine Work*

Imagine that you are embarking on doing a specific project. How can you do fine work? There are many definitions for such work. These include the following:

*Great Workmanship ... Excellent ... High Quality ... Very Good ... Outstanding ... Superior.*

People who do work they care about are more likely to put their hearts into what they are doing. They may be encouraging a person, cooking food, painting, playing music, renovating a house or doing another activity.

Kahlil Gibran described this approach in his writing. Here is an extract from what he said.

*Work is love made visible*

*And what is it to work with love?*

*It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart,  
even as if your beloved were to wear the cloth.*

*It is to build a house with affection,  
even as if your beloved were to dwell in the house.*

*It is to sow seeds with tenderness and reap the harvest with joy,  
even as if your beloved were to eat the fruit.*

Different people have different approaches towards finishing. One approach is for them to do their best to achieve excellence.

Ron Berger encourages students to develop the habit of delivering excellence. He wrote the following piece when working in a small school.

## *Fostering an ethic of excellence*

*For 25 years I've led a double life. I'm a fulltime classroom teacher in a public school. To make ends meet for my family, I've worked during the summers, and sometimes weekends, as a carpenter.*

*In carpentry there is no higher compliment builders give each other than this: That person is a craftsman. This one word says it all. It connotes someone who has integrity, knowledge, dedication, and pride in work - someone who thinks carefully and does things well.*

*I want a classroom full of craftsmen - students whose work is strong, accurate, and beautiful; students who are proud of what they do and respect themselves and others.*

*In my classroom I have students who come from homes full of books and students whose families own almost no books at all.*

*I have students for whom reading, writing, and math come easily, and students whose brains can't follow a line of text without reversing words and letters. I have students whose lives are generally easy, and students with physical disabilities and health or family problems that make life a struggle.*

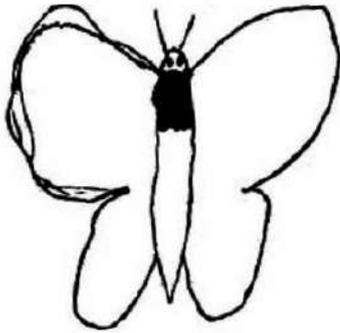
*I want them all to be craftsmen. Some may take a little longer; some may need to use extra strategies and resources. In the end, they need to be proud of their work, and their work needs to be worthy of pride.*

Ron has gone on to provide teachers with many practical tools they can use to help students deliver excellence. One of the most well-known is the video called *Austin's Butterfly*.

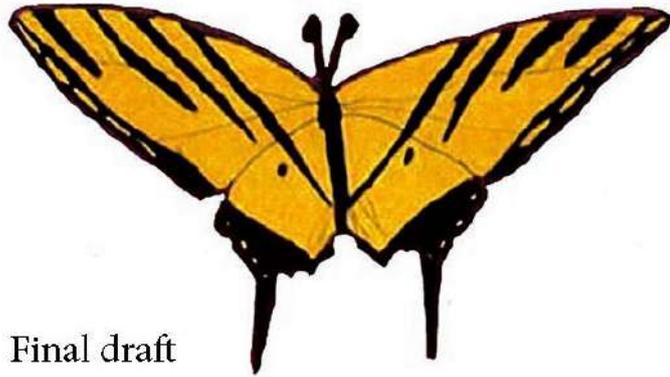
This showed how Austin, a first-grader, developed his original drawing of a butterfly. Below is a picture of his first version. This is followed by one where he had made improvements and finished properly.

### *Austin's Butterfly*

*Ron Berger believes that people can be helped to develop their work. The pictures below show how Austin, a first-grader, improved his drawing of a butterfly from his first version to his final version.*



First draft



Final draft

### *Finishing*

Imagine that you are doing a piece of work. How can you finish it properly? One approach is to follow your successful pattern for finishing.

Looking back, when have you finished something properly? You may have written an article, run a marathon, renovated a house, led a team to success or done another activity.

What did you do right then to finish? What were the principles you followed? For example, you may have chosen:

*To commit yourself to finishing properly ... To set aside time to finish ... To rehearse what you were going to do ... To break down the work into manageable pieces ... To set reachable goals for each work session.*

*To click into action ... To become absorbed in the work ... To keep doing the right things in the right way ... To encourage yourself on*

*the journey ... To build in time for rest and recovery ... To keep going until you felt satisfied you had finished properly.*

How can you follow some of these principles to finish things in the future? Are there any other skills you can add? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Finishing*

*The specific principles I have followed to finish things properly in the past are:*

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*The specific things I can do to follow these principles – plus add other skills – to finish things properly in the future are:*

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## *Finding Fulfilment*

Imagine that you have done fine work and followed some of your successful principles for finishing. You may then experience a sense of fulfilment.

Sometimes this can happen during the work, sometimes at the end. Sometimes it comes from stretching yourself to reach a goal that is stimulating and achievable.

Mihaly describes people who took this path when recovering after accidents. *Tragedies Transformed* is the title of a study conducted by Professor Fausto Massimini who interviewed paraplegics.

Many said their accident had produced both positive and negative consequences. Tragic events presented them with extremely clear goals. Learning to live again was in itself a matter of pride.

People who mastered the fresh challenges experienced a clarity of purpose they had not felt before their accidents. Lucio had been a 20-year-old gas station attendant when a motorcycle accident paralysed him below the waist. He explained what he had done since the accident.

*"When I became paraplegic, it was like being born again. I had to learn from scratch everything I used to know, but in a different way.*

*"I had to learn to dress myself, to use my head better. I had to become part of the environment, and use it without trying to control it. It took commitment, willpower and patience.*

*"As far as the future is concerned, I hope to keep improving, to keep breaking through the limitations of my handicap. Everybody must have a purpose. After becoming a paraplegic, these improvements have become my life goal."*

Franco also has paraplegia. Before his accident his most intense flow experiences came from acrobatic dancing on Saturday nights. Now paralysed from the waist down, he has set new targets. The most important goal in his life is:

*"To feel that I can be of use to others, help recent victims accept their situation."*

Franco, Lucio and other paraplegics have focused on what they want to accomplish in their lives. They have set specific goals and strived to reach them on the way towards achieving their pictures of success.

Different people apply the flow approach in different situations. Let's look at one such application

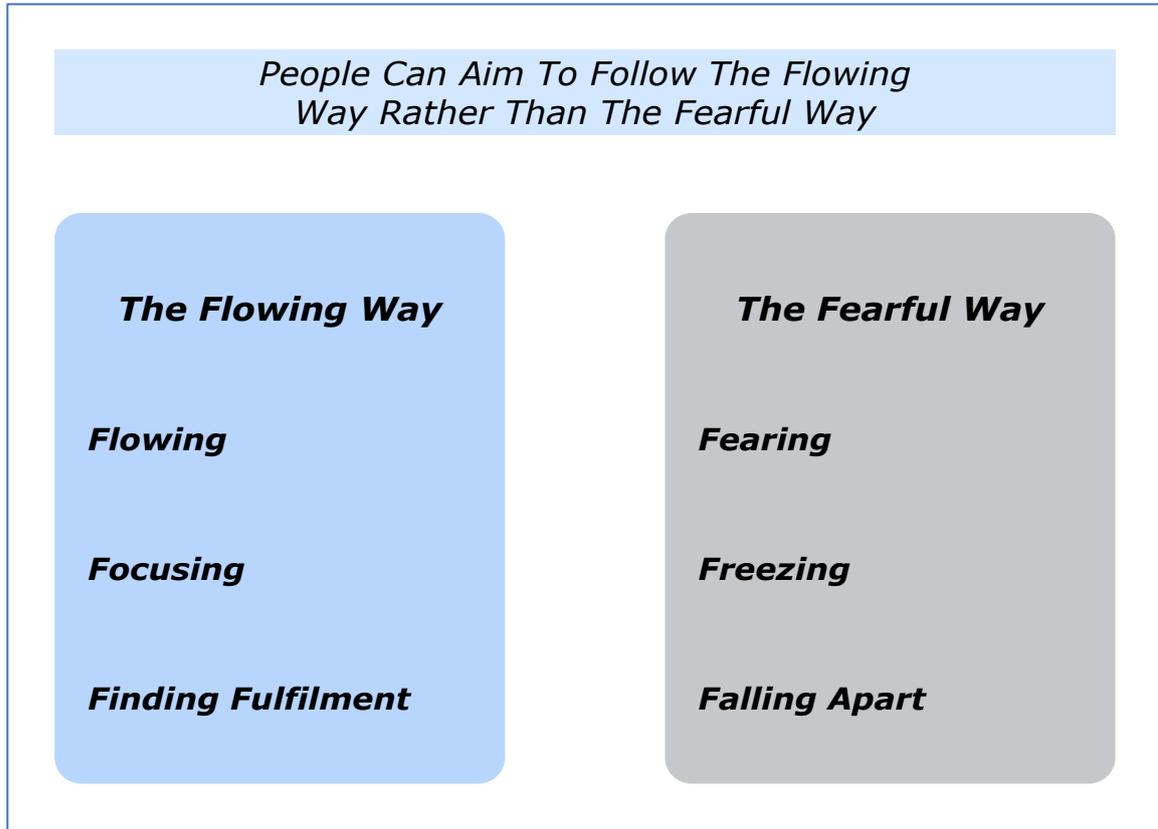
### *The Flowing Way Rather Than The Fearful Way*

This is an approach that is sometimes used with athletes, performers or others in certain situations. They may be playing a sport, auditioning for a musical role, giving a keynote speech or doing another activity.

The aim is to encourage them to flow rather than be paralysed by fear. Looking ahead, we focus on how they can relax, rehearse properly and then follow their rhythm.

The aim is to be positive and do their personal best. It is also to follow their principles rather than worry about the prize. The key is to emerge from the experience feeling that they have done possible to perform at their best.

This is an approach that works, but people may need to keep returning to it before every event. They can then aim to pursue the flowing way rather than the fearful way.



Great workers who go into a state of flow often enjoy the journey as much as reaching the goal. They see finishing as another name for beginning.

They feel satisfied for a while but then want to focus on the next journey. They love following the principles as well as achieving the prize. Mihaly explains this approach in the following way.

*The mystique of rock climbing is climbing; you get to the top of a rock glad it's over but really wish it would go on forever.*

*The justification of climbing is climbing, like the justification of poetry is writing; you don't conquer anything except things in yourself. The act of writing justifies poetry. Climbing is the same: recognising that you are a flow.*

*The purpose of the flow is to keep on flowing, not looking for a peak or utopia but staying in the flow. It is not a moving up but a continuous flowing; you move up to keep the flow going.*

*Looking ahead, can you think of a project you would like to do where you may be able to flow? This could be in your personal or professional life.*

You may want to do this when encouraging a person, renovating a house, playing a sport, doing a creative project, tackling a challenge or doing another activity. You may want to do this when acting as a parent, educator, medic, trusted advisor or in another role.

Looking ahead, how can you give yourself the chance to flow? How can you set things up to succeed? How can you also plan to encourage yourself on the journey?

You may set aside a block of time to do the work and follow certain rituals before moving into action. Focusing fully on the task, you may aim to follow your rhythm and do fine work. You may work for a while but then take time to recharge your batteries.

Looking ahead, you may relax, reflect and then rehearse what you are going to do next. You may then again immerse yourself fully in the task, do fine work and finish. This may then lead to having sense of fulfilment.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences

## *Flow*

*The specific project I would like to do where I may be able to flow is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to flow, focus and maybe find fulfilment are:*

\*

\*

\*

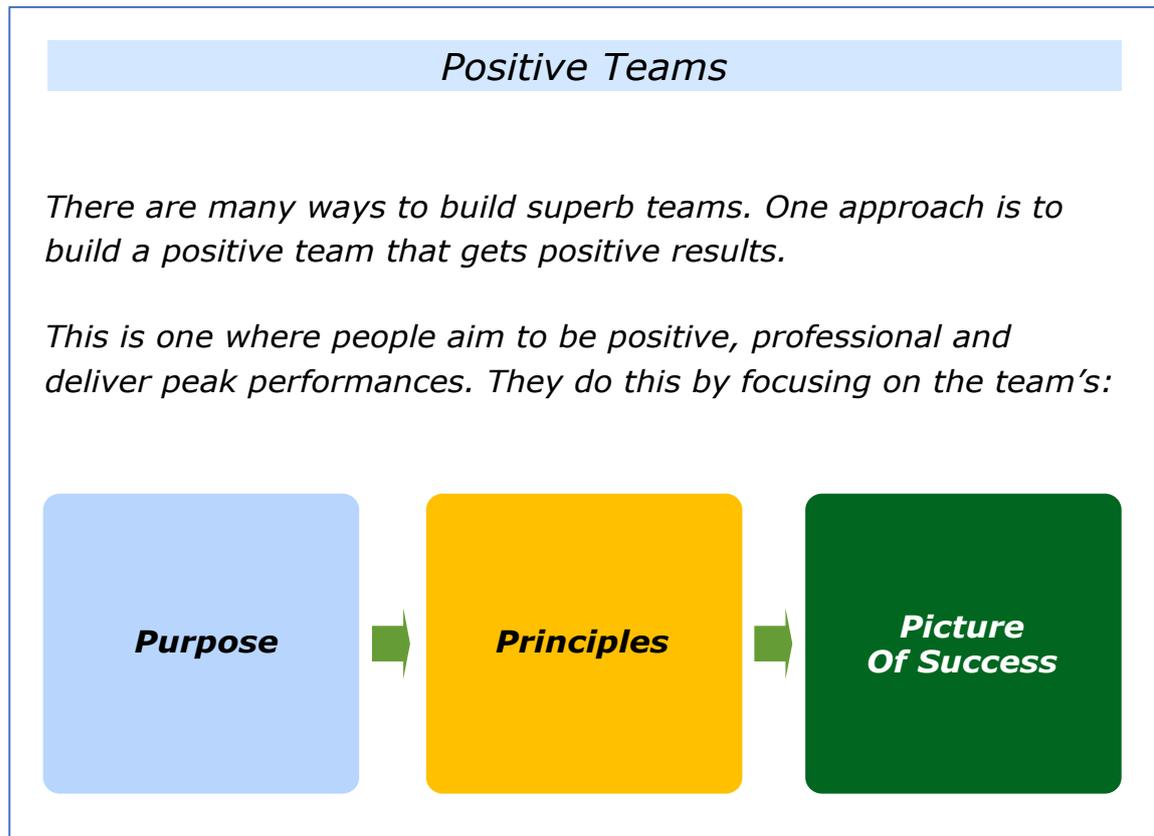
*The specific benefits doing this project may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## The Positive Teams Approach



This section looks at one approach to building superb teams. It is based on a model that I have seen work in many fields during the past fifty years.

Although here it is called Positive Teams, the organisations I have used it with have branded it in different ways. They have called it Super Teams, Peak Performing Teams or other names.

Whatever the name, however, the principles remain similar. They are based on what works and - providing people do the work - it works.

This piece on teams is long because it includes many models and tools you can use to build such teams. You can then use these in your own way. Let's explore these themes for building such teams.

## *Setting The Scene*

### *Positive Teams*

***They create a positive environment  
in which motivated people  
can achieve peak performance***

Good leaders start by creating a positive environment in which motivated people can achieve peak performance. They sometimes take the following steps towards making this happen.

Such leaders make sure that everybody understands the team's purpose, principles and picture of success. They do this because they believe that people work best when they have context and can see the big picture.

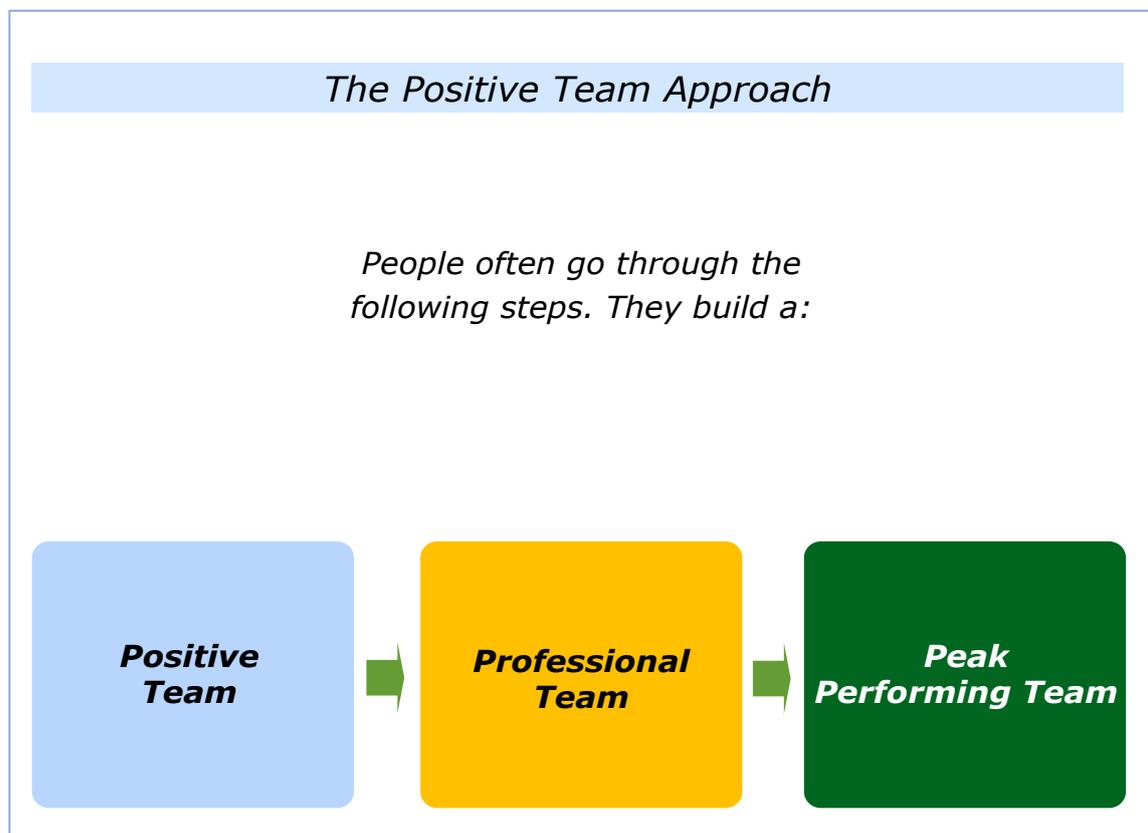
They then give people the chance to reflect and decide if they want to contribute. If so, they encourage people to build on their strengths and clarify their best contributions.

Positive teams are made up of people who aim to be positive, professional and peak performers. They also want to do superb work and do their best to help the team to succeed.

Good leaders make clear contracts with people about the results they will deliver towards achieving the goals. They also give people the support they need to deliver the goods.

They then manage by outcomes rather than by tasks. They encourage people to coordinate their strengths, perform superb work and find solutions to challenges. People then do whatever is required to achieve the picture of success.

People often go through the following steps on this journey. They choose to build a positive team, a professional team and then a peak performing team. They do not choose to build a poor team.



Imagine that you are leading a team that is about take the next step in its development. You will have your own framework for making this happen.

If you wish, however, you can use the following approach for enabling people to achieve peak performance. The following pages describe the specific things you can do:

*To clarify and communicate the team's purpose, principles and picture of success;*

*To make clear contracts with people about their best contributions towards achieving the picture of success;*

*To enable people to perform superb work and do their best to achieve the picture of success.*

## *Clarifying The Team's Purpose*

There are many ways for a person or team to begin clarifying their purpose. Here are some of the common approaches.

*People focus on something they want to serve - such as a set of values, vocation or mission - that is greater than themselves.*

*People focus on the things they feel passionately about in which they can also achieve peak performance.*

*People focus on how they can build on their strengths and do superb work that helps all their stakeholders to achieve success.*

Some people combine all of these approaches. They then translate their findings into a compelling purpose.

Many start by building on their strengths. This involves them taking the following steps.

*They clarify their strengths – the deeply satisfying activities in which they deliver As rather than Bs or Cs.*

*They clarify the specific kinds of people – customers, clients and other stakeholders – with whom they work best and the challenges these people face.*

*They clarify how they can use their strengths to do satisfying work and help these people to achieve success.*

Building on what they have discovered, they then do an exercise that involves them beginning to clarify their purpose.

Imagine that you want to take this step. Imagine also that you and your colleagues have already done some work on clarifying the team's strengths.

You can then invite them to build on the team's strengths and define the specific thing that the team really wants to do. Here is one approach you can take to begin the process.

Invite each person to complete the following sentence. They can write their ideas on Post-its.

*The purpose of our team - the  
specific thing we really want to do - is:*

*"We want to ...*

You can also invite people to give some examples of what this might look like in practise. They can write these examples on separate Post-its.

People can put their ideas on flip charts that are headed in the following ways. They can also explain what they have written on the Post-its.

## *The Team's Purpose*

*The purpose of our team - the specific thing we really want to do - is:*

\* *We want to ...*

*Here are some examples of the things that will be happening that will show we are achieving our purpose:*

\*

\*

\*

Imagine that you have done this exercise with your colleagues in the leadership team. It can then be useful:

*To build on the points people have in common;*

*To take time to reflect and then have a first go at wordsmithing the team's purpose;*

*To use this as the basis for focusing on the principles and picture of success - but also being prepared to return to the one liner and recraft it if you wish.*

There is one key point worth bearing in mind when doing this exercise. Some people may want to get into a discussion about the difference between a purpose, mission and vision.

Different people interpret these words in different ways, so try to avoid getting into a long discussion about semantics.

One view is that a team's purpose describes the specific thing people feel really driven to do. They then translate this into specific goals that they want to achieve by a certain date. This then becomes the team's vision or picture of success.

Some organisations prefer to use the word mission. A military mission, for example, must have achievable objectives. It must also be time based and, if appropriate, have a clear exit strategy. Military people then know what they must achieve by a certain date.

Susan Ward studied many organisations that took this approach. Here is her definition of a mission statement.

*A mission statement is a brief description of a company's fundamental purpose. It answers the question, "Why does our business exist?"*

*The mission statement articulates the company's purpose both for those in the organization and for the public. For example: "Tesla's*

*mission is to accelerate the world's transition to sustainable energy."*

Imagine you have focused on the team's purpose. The theme you have come up with may need some wordsmithing, which you can do later. It can be useful, however, to move on to the next step.

### *Clarifying The Team's Principles*

The next step is to define the principles - the guidelines - you would like people to follow to achieve the purpose. There are many ways to define these principles.

One approach is to simply invite people to describe the Dos and Don'ts that everybody in the team can follow to work towards achieving the goals.

If you wish, you can invite people to take this step by them writing what they believe are the Dos and Don'ts on Post-it Notes. They can then put these on flip charts under these respective headings.

The key thing about principles are that these describe the guidelines people can follow to increase the chances of achieving the goals. These are driven by the team's purpose rather than by the whim of the leader.

Here is a list of the Dos that one organisation communicates to people when they join. They describe these as their professional guidelines and use real examples to bring these to life.

#### *Principles*

*The principles we would like people to follow to work towards achieving our goals are:*

*Do be positive and encourage other people;*

*Do be clear on the organisation's goals and your part in contributing towards achieving these goals;*

*Do make clear contracts with people and fulfil these contracts;*

*Do focus on outcomes - the real results to achieve in a situation - and do your best to achieve these outcomes;*

*Do behave professionally, present solutions to challenges and help both colleagues and clients to succeed.*

You will have your own set of Dos and, if appropriate, Don'ts. It is also important to be able to give the reasons for each of the principles. When communicating these, you can say:

*The first principle we would like people to follow to increase the team's chances of achieving success is:*

\*

*The reasons why it is important to follow this principle are:*

\*

\*

\*

This helps people to understand the team's purpose and also why it is important to follow certain principles to reach the goals. If you wish, you can invite people in the leadership team to complete the following exercise.

## *The Team's Principles*

*The principles we would like people to follow - the Dos and Don'ts together with the reasons for these - when working towards achieving the purpose are the following.*

## *The Dos*

\* *Do ...*

### *The Don'ts*

- \* *Don't ...*
  
- \* *Don't ...*
  
- \* *Don't ...*
  
- \* *Don't ...*
  
- \* *Don't ...*

### *Clarifying The Team's Picture Of Success*

Imagine that you and the leadership team are reasonably happy about the team's purpose and principles. You can then translate these into specific goals to achieve by a certain date. These goals will then become the team's picture of success.

There are many frameworks you can use to take this step. One approach is to see it as clarifying the team's story, strategy and road to success.

This involves focusing on the What, Why, How, Who and When. It involves you using the following headings.

#### *The What*

*The specific goals we want to achieve are ...*

*The Why*

*The specific benefits of achieving these goals will be ...*

*The How*

*The specific strategies we aim to follow to achieve the goals are ...*

*The Who*

*The specific responsibilities of the various people in working towards achieving the goals will be ...*

*The When*

*The specific things that will be happening - and when - along the road towards achieving the goals will be ...*

Several points are worth bearing in mind when writing the team's road to success.

*You can choose your own time frame.*

Different teams choose different time frames. You may want to pick a date one year, two years or three years in the future.

Start by settling on your chosen date. Describe the specific things you want the team to have achieved by that date. This becomes your picture of success.

*You can be clear on the mandatory things the team must deliver to achieve success.*

The team will be expected to deliver its scorecard – the specific targets it must deliver - over the financial year. You can add other

things on top of this – such as stimulating projects and successes - that will enrich the team's story.

*You can clarify for whom you are writing the presentation.*

You may initially write it for your employees. This will ensure everybody knows the team's goal. Later you can adapt the presentation – whilst staying true to its spirit – so that it resonates with other key stakeholders.

*You can write the presentation by yourself or, if you wish, involve other key people at various stages.*

This will give people a sense of ownership in terms of shaping the future.

## *Choosing A Template*

Different teams use different templates for framing their goals. Many leaders in companies focus on the three Ps when clarifying their aims.

They focus on the Profits, Products – including Customer Satisfaction – and People. These are, of course, interrelated. For example:

*Profits - the profitability they want to deliver;*

*Products - the product quality, customer satisfaction and processes they want to deliver;*

*People - the culture they want to deliver.*

Here is one approach you can use to craft the picture of success.

*The Team's  
Picture Of Success*

*The What, Why,  
How, Who and When*

*The What - The Picture of Success*

*The goal we want to achieve by ... is:*

*\* To have ...*

*The specific things that will be happening then  
that will show we have reached the goal will be:*

*Profits*

*\* To have ...*

*\* To have ...*

*\* To have ...*

*Products*

\* *To have ...*

\* *To have ...*

\* *To have ...*

*People*

\* *To have ...*

\* *To have ...*

\* *To have ...*

*The Why*

*The benefits of reaching the goals will be:*

*For the company*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

*For the customers*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

*For the colleagues*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

*The How*

*The key strategies we can follow to give ourselves the greatest chance of success are:*

*Profits*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

*Products*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

*People*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

*The Who*

*The leadership team's responsibilities  
in working to achieve the goals are:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

*The manager's responsibilities in working to achieve the goals are:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ..*

\* *To ...*

*The colleagues' responsibilities in working to achieve the goals are:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

*Products*

\* *To have ...*

\* *To have ...*

\* *To have ...*

*People*

\* *To have ...*

\* *To have ...*

\* *To have ...*

## *The Why*

*The benefits of reaching the goals will be:*

*For the company*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*For the customers*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*For the colleagues*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

## *The How*

*The key strategies we can follow to give ourselves the greatest chance of success are:*

### *Profits*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

### *Products*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

### *People*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

## *The Who*

*The leadership team's responsibilities in working to achieve the goals are:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*The manager's responsibilities in working to achieve the goals are:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ..*

*\* To ...*

*The colleagues' responsibilities in working to achieve the goals are:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

## *Clarifying The Road Map*

The road map is the When part of the story. This will become the team's ongoing working document. Several things are worth remembering when making the road map.

*Start from the destination and work backwards.*

Start by picking a date in the future. Describe the specific goal you want the team to achieve by that date. Also describe the specific things that will be happening then that will show you have achieved the goal.

*Dating the road map.*

Start at the top of the Dates column and put the end date. Then work backwards towards the present day. You may want to break up the road map into quarters or other suitable periods.

This starting from the destination approach is used on many successful projects. It encourages people to keep focusing on the end goal.

*Choose a suitable template for chunking the goals.*

Here we have used the Three Ps framework – Profits, Products – including customer satisfaction – and People. You may prefer to use another template.

*Describe the cumulative targets.*

The totals under each heading for each quarter should be cumulative. This is illustrated below with Profits but you can do it with each heading. For example:

Q4. Profits £1 million

Q3. Profits £750k

Q2. Profits £500k

Q1. Profits £250k

This describes the headline under Profits, but this could be broken down into more detail. You might want to consider having three bullet points of deliverables under each of Profits, Products and People. This helps to flesh out the road map

*Bring the road map to life with quotations.*

Describe the actual words you would like to hear people saying at various stages of the journey. These can be quotes from leaders, customers, colleagues or whoever.

Here is the framework for the road map. This describes the specific things the team needs to have delivered by the end of each quarter over one year. You can use a longer or shorter time frame for the road map.

*The When - The Road Map  
Towards Achieving The  
Team's Picture Of Success*

*The 'one line' specific goal our team  
wants to achieve by the end of the year is:*

\* To



Q2		<i>Profits</i>	" _____ "
	*		
	*		" _____ "
	*		
		<i>Products</i>	" _____ "
	*		
	*		" _____ "
	*		
		<i>People</i>	" _____ "
	*		
*		" _____ "	
*			

Q1		<i>Profits</i>	" _____ "
	*		
	*		" _____ "
	*		
		<i>Products</i>	" _____ "
	*		
	*		" _____ "
	*		
		<i>People</i>	" _____ "
	*		
*		" _____ "	
*			

## *Communicating The Picture Of Success*

Imagine you want share this with the whole team. If this is the first time you have described the purpose and principles to your people, then it will be important to spend some time on these.

What you may find, however, is that people may simply see these as confirmation about the overall direction. They may be more concerned with their specific goals for the next year.

If you feel it is appropriate, you can give people further background about the purpose and principles. It will be important to explain the reasoning and bring the ideas to life by giving concrete examples.

You can then share the picture of success. Describe and bring to life the What, Why, How and Who, because this provides the overall direction for the team.

You can also give people a brief overview of the team's road map – the When. This can be explored in greater depth, however, after people know the team's direction and picture of success.

You may want to gather people together and say something along the following lines. You can supplement this with attractive slides that bring the ideas to life.

### *The Team's Purpose, Principles And Picture Of Success*

*Welcome to the session. Today we would like to look at how the team can continue to achieve ongoing success.*

#### *The Purpose*

*As you may know, the team's purpose is:*

\*

## *The Principles*

*As you may also know, the principles we encourage people to follow to work towards achieving the team's purpose are:*

*\**

*\**

*\**

## *The Picture Of Success*

*Looking ahead, there are certain goals we want to achieve in the next year. We have translated these into a provisional picture of success. Before describing this, we want to give you some context.*

*We want to explain the possible strategies we have considered for going forwards. We will then describe the strategy we have chosen to follow and the reasons for pursuing this route.*

*Bearing in mind the various challenges we face, there are many different routes the team can take towards achieving its goals. Here is an overview of some of the possible routes we could take in the future.*

*Option A would be to ...*

*The pluses and minuses of this route would be ...*

*Option B would be to ...*

*The pluses and minuses of this route would be ...*

*Option C would be to ...*

*The pluses and minuses of this route would be ...*

*Option D would be to ...*

*The pluses and minuses of this route would be ...*

*Option E would be to ...*

*The pluses and minuses of this route would be ...*

*Bearing these options in mind, we have chosen to take the following route ...*

*The reasons we have chosen this route are because ...*

*There are, of course, pluses and minuses involved in pursuing this route.*

*The specific things we can do to build on the pluses and minimise the minuses are ...*

*We have therefore put together the following picture of success.*

*Later we will describe the potential road map. We will then want your input regarding the action plan.*

You can then go through the slides that describe The Picture Of Success.

### *Getting Responses To The Picture Of Success*

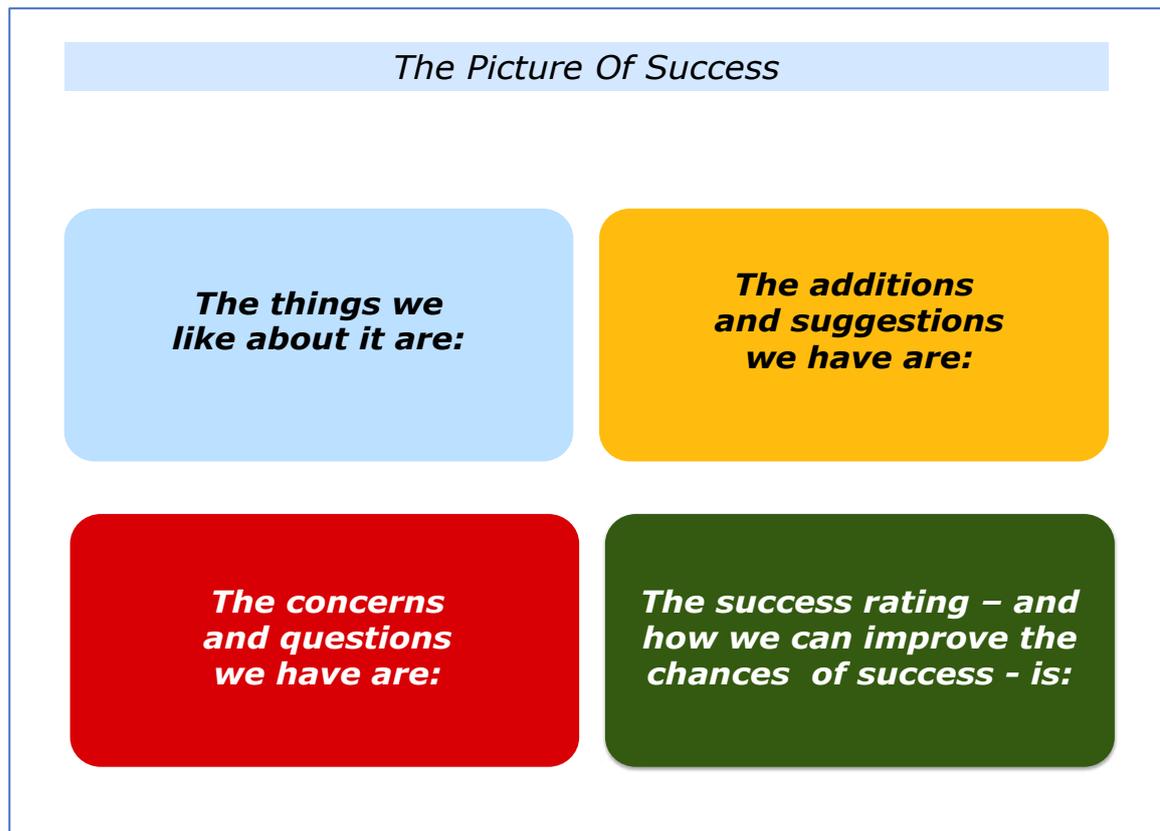
Imagine you have communicated the purpose, principles and picture of success. Again, if this is the first time you have communicated the team's purpose and principles, it will be good to get people's responses to these themes.

Imagine, however, that people are already generally aware of these. It can then be useful to explain that, whilst you are happy to

answer questions about the purpose and the principles, you mainly want their views on the picture of success.

How to get good quality responses from people? Instead of simply asking for questions, you can take the following steps to stimulate and involve the team.

Invite people to form groups. There is to be a scribe in each group. Ask people to give their responses under the following headings.



Give people at least 30 minutes to do the exercise. Each group's ideas can be written on flip charts as they go along.

If you are the leader – or if there is a leadership team that has introduced the strategy – you can give people twenty minutes to get started. You can then go around and look at the themes that are emerging.

This helps you to prepare to address the themes and answer any questions. (You will have told people beforehand that you will be going around to see the themes that emerging.)

The next step is to invite people to report back. It can be useful to cluster the themes and questions that emerge. You can then respond and answer more effectively. When answering questions, explain the following guidelines to people.

*You will aim to be honest and answer as fully as possible. You will do this because you want people to understand the strategy, the rationale behind it and the steps going forwards.*

*You will focus on the overall strategic issues when answering the questions. You will not be able to say exactly what each person in each job will be doing in a few months.*

*You will set aside time over the next week to meet individuals and answer their questions. They can book a time to see you.*

*You may not be able to answer all the questions in the session. You will be able to get back with some answers. There may also be questions that, because of certain issues, you will choose not to answer.*

*You will also take away the ideas and see which of these can be added to the strategy.*

Bearing these things in mind, you can embark on addressing the themes and questions that have emerged.

Good leaders often see these sessions as an opportunity to educate people about the strategy. People go away with a wider grasp of the issues. They are then more able to explain the strategy to new people who join the team.

Here are the exercises you can give to the team members to get their responses to the presentation.

*Like About It*

*The specific things  
we like about it are:*

\*

\*

\*

*Additions And  
Suggestions*

*The possible additions and  
suggestions we have are:*

\*

\*

\*

*Concerns  
And Questions*

*The concerns and  
questions we have are:*

\*

\*

\*

*Success Rating*

*Bearing in mind the things we can control,  
the present rating we would give regarding  
our team's chances of achieving the goals is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things we can do to  
maintain or improve the ratings are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Clarifying Everybody's Contribution Towards Achieving The Picture of Success*

Good leaders aim to build a culture in which people can thrive. They also recognise, however, that great teams are made up of people who have similarity of spirit and diversity of strengths. Diversity of spirit is a recipe for disaster.

Such leaders create teams that are made up of people who aim to be positive, professional and peak performers. They then invite these people to make their best contributions towards achieving the picture of success. They take the following steps to make this happen.

*They communicate the purpose, principles and picture of success.*

*They give people a chance to reflect and decide if they want to opt into achieving the goals.*

*They invite people – the smaller teams within the larger team and the individuals within those teams – to make clear contracts about their best contributions towards achieving the goals.*

Good leaders manage by outcomes rather than by tasks, so you may wish to take the following steps:

*To, if appropriate, ask each smaller team within the team to produce its road map towards delivering its contribution towards achieving the overall picture of success;*

*To pick a date – perhaps three weeks in the future – when the whole team will gather and each smaller team will present its road map;*

*To then set a date by which each individual will have made clear contracts about the contribution to achieving the picture of success;*

*To make sure that these contracts are written in outcome terms - the specific things people are going to **deliver** under the headings of profits, products and people;*

*To tell people that, after the contracts are agreed, everybody will gather each month to report their progress on the road towards achieving the picture of success.*

Imagine that you have clarified each small team's contributions. People can then clarify the outcomes they will personally deliver towards achieving these goals.

There are many frameworks you can use to help people to clarify their individual contributions. Here is one approach that can be used.

*My Contribution Towards  
Achieving  
The Picture Of Success*

*The Team Member's Pack*

*This pack to be sent to the team member two weeks before the planned meeting with their manager. They are then to send the relevant parts to their manager at least two days before the session.*

## *Introduction*

This pack invites you to do several things to prepare for the meeting with your manager where you will agree on your contribution towards achieving the team's goals.

Some of these exercises you may only need to do occasionally, such as clarifying your strengths. Others you may do on an ongoing basis. The pack invites you to do the following things.

*To clarify your strengths and your best contribution.*

*To agree on your contribution towards achieving the team's goals.*

*To clarify how you will keep your manager informed about your progress towards achieving the agreed goals.*

Here are the exercises.

## *My Strengths*

### *Some Background*

We aim to build a strengths based team and co-ordinate these strengths to reach the goal.

We must, however, deliver the Scorecard. These are the mandatory things the team must deliver. This will sometimes mean everybody getting involved in doing great work and helping to do the other tasks.

We want to encourage you to build on your strengths, because you are then more likely to do great work. At the same time, however, it is your responsibility to manage the consequences of any weaknesses.

We want to manage by outcomes rather than by tasks. Once the outcomes are agreed, we ask you to be accountable for delivering the goods. How you achieve this - providing you follow the organisation's agreed principles - is up to you and your team.

### *My Strengths*

*The specific activities in which I deliver As, rather than Bs or Cs, together with some examples are:*

1)

*For example:*

\*

\*

\*

2)

*For example:*

\*

\*

\*

3)

*For example:*

\*

\*

\*

*Bs. The specific activities in which I deliver Bs are:*

1)

*For example:*

\*

2)

*For example:*

\*

*Cs. The specific activities in which I deliver Cs are:*

1)

*For example:*

\*

2)

*For example:*

\*

*My Contribution Towards  
Achieving  
The Picture Of Success*

*Introduction*

Bearing in mind the team's picture of success and your strengths, this exercise invites you to describe the following things.

*The specific results you aim to deliver towards achieving the team's picture of success.*

*These aims should be written in outcome terms - such as the specific results you will deliver - rather than as a list of activities.*

*The specific benefits - to the various stakeholders - of delivering these results.*

*The specific things you will do to proactively update people about your progress towards achieving the results.*

*The specific support you would like to help you to achieve the results.*

*The specific early successes you will aim to deliver.*

Complete these exercises up to and including the page Specific Early Successes and send these to your manager. You can then agree on your goals for the year.

After the meeting you can then complete the section in which you write your agreed goals for the year.

### *Some Background*

We aim to build a strengths based team and coordinate these strengths to reach the goal.

We must, however, deliver the Scorecard. These are the mandatory things the team must deliver. This will sometimes mean everybody getting involved in doing great work and helping to do the other tasks.

We want to encourage you to build on your strengths, because you are then more likely to do great work. At the same time, however, it is your responsibility to manage the consequences of any weaknesses.

We want to manage by outcomes rather than by tasks. Once the outcomes are agreed, we ask you to be accountable for delivering the goods. How you achieve this - providing you follow the organisation's agreed principles - is up to you and your team.

### *My Specific Contribution*

*Bearing in mind the picture of success and my strengths, the specific results I want to deliver towards achieving the team's goals are:*

1) *To*

*For example:*

- *To*

- *To*

- *To*

2) *To*

*For example:*

- *To*

- *To*

- *To*

3) To

*For example:*

- To

- To

- To

### *The Specific Benefits*

*The specific benefits of making this contribution - for the team, customers, colleagues and other stakeholders - will be:*

1) To

*For example:*

2) To

*For example:*

3) To

*For example:*

### *The Specific Updates*

*The specific things I will do to proactively keep people informed about the progress towards delivering the results will be:*

1) To

*For example:*

2) To

*For example:*

3) To

*For example:*

### *The Specific Support*

*The specific support I would like to help me to achieve the goals, plus the support I will give to other people, is:*

1) To

*For example:*

2) To

*For example:*

3) To

*For example:*

### *The Specific Early Successes*

*The specific early successes I will aim to deliver will be:*

1) To

*For example:*

2) To

*For example:*

3) To

*For example:*

### *My Agreed Goals*

## *Introduction*

After clarifying your strengths you will then meet with your manager and agree on your goals.

When doing this, it is important to bear in mind the team's picture of success and your strengths. You will then agree with your manager on your contribution towards achieving this picture of success.

*Try to write your goals in outcome terms. Describe the actual things you will deliver, rather than a set of activities.*

You can then keep referring back to these goals when having ongoing meetings with your manager.

*After meeting with my manager, the agreed specific results I will aim to deliver are:*

1) *To*

*For example:*

- *To*

- *To*

- *To*

2) *To*

*For example:*

- *To*

- *To*

- *To*

3) *To*

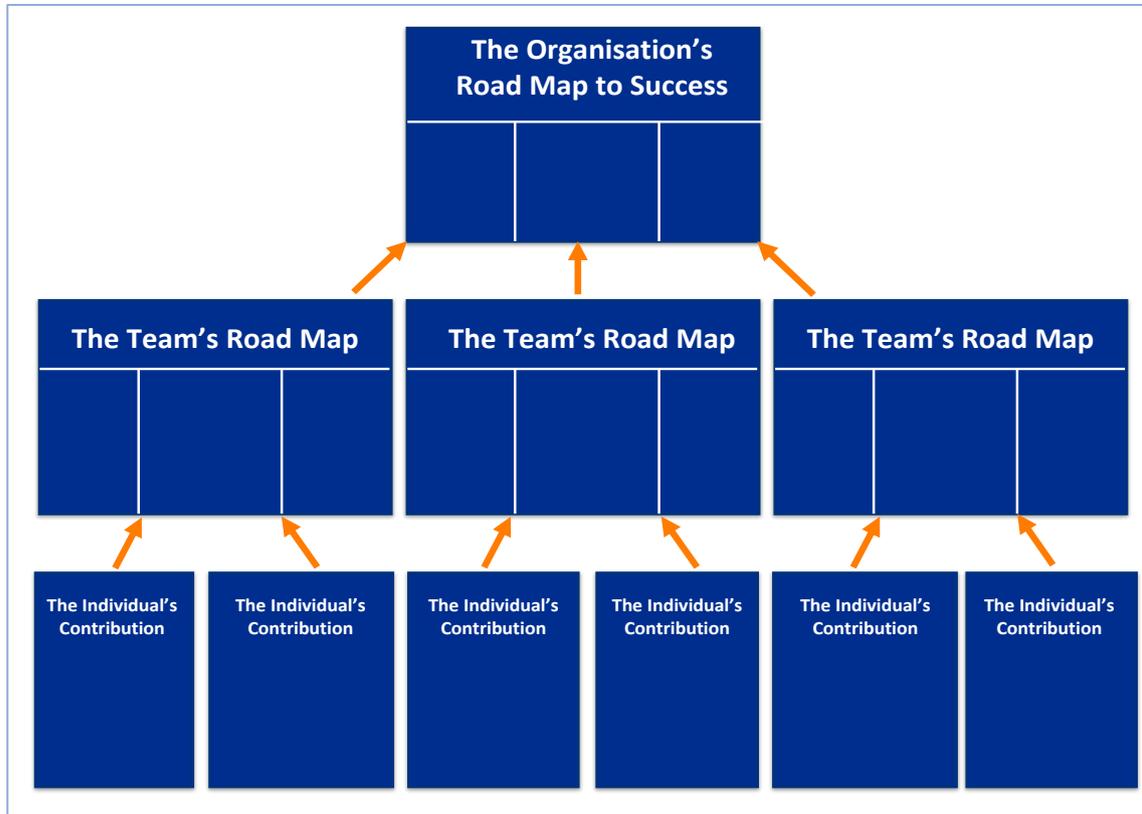
*For example:*

- *To*

- *To*

- *To*

Good organisations ensure that everybody knows the overall goals. Each team and each person then makes clear contracts about their contributions towards achieving the aims. So the overall picture may look something like the following.



### *Continuing To Focus On The Picture Of Success*

Good leaders encourage people to keep doing the right things in the right way every day. The road map may evolve, of course, but it is vital to keep people focusing on the goals.

Imagine that you have gone through the stages mentioned earlier. You can then encourage people:

*To perform superb work;*

*To proactively report on their progress towards achieving the goals  
- this also involves producing and publicising success stories;*

*To find positive solutions to challenges and achieve the picture of success.*

Good leaders enable people to take these steps. They also ensure that people keep reporting their progress towards achieving the goals.

One approach to doing this is to meet with each person on a regular basis. Here is one framework that they can follow for reporting the progress they have made and their plans for the future. They can then share this with you, for example, every month or another time frame.



*My Progress Reports*

## *Introduction*

This section provides a framework you can use for meeting regularly with your manager.

Bearing in mind the results you aim to deliver, it invites you to do the following things.

*Describe the specific outcomes you have agreed to deliver.*

*Describe the specific things you have delivered in the past month (or other time frame).*

*Describe the specific things you aim to deliver in the next month (or other time frame).*

*Describe any other things you would like to discuss in the meeting with your manager.*

## *The Specific Goals*

*The specific outcomes - the results - I aim to deliver by ... are:*

1) To

*For example:*

2) To

*For example:*

3) To

*For example:*

### The Past Month

*The specific things that I have delivered in the past month towards achieving these goals have been:*

1) To

*For example:*

2) To

*For example:*

3) To

*For example:*

### The Next Month

*The specific things that I aim to deliver in the month towards achieving these goals are:*

1) To

*For example:*

2) To

*For example:*

3) To

*For example:*

### *The Summary*

*The other things I would like to discuss - such as any challenges I face, my plans for tackling these, any support I need and any other topics I would like to explore - are:*

1) *To*

2) *To*

3) *To*

Positive teams are special. They pursue their chosen strategies, perform superb work and work towards achieving their picture of success. They also communicate the progress the whole team is making towards achieving its goals.

Here is one approach to sharing the team's achievements along the way. This is similar to the framework used with individuals, but you can adapt it to describe the team's successes and plans. People can then continue to build a super team and deliver the picture of success.

*The Team's  
Picture Of Success  
Progress Reports*

*The specific goal we want to achieve by ... is:*

*\* To ...*

*The specific things we want to have achieved by then under the following headings that will show we have reached the goal will be:*

*Profits*

- \* To*
- \* To*
- \* To*

*Products*

- \* To*
- \* To*
- \* To*

*People*

- \* To*
- \* To*
- \* To*

### *The Past Month*

*The specific things that we have delivered in the past month towards achieving these goals have been:*

1) To

*For example:*

2) To

*For example:*

3) To

*For example:*

### *The Next Month*

*The specific things that we aim to deliver in the month towards achieving these goals are:*

1) To

*For example:*

2) To

*For example:*

3) To

*For example:*

### *The Other Things*

*The other things that it may be useful for you to know about as we work towards achieving the picture of success are:*

1)

2)

3)

### *Questions and Answers*

*We would now like you to reflect and then let us know any questions you have. We will try to answer these here or, if more appropriate, discuss these with you individually or in your small teams. So let us know your questions.*

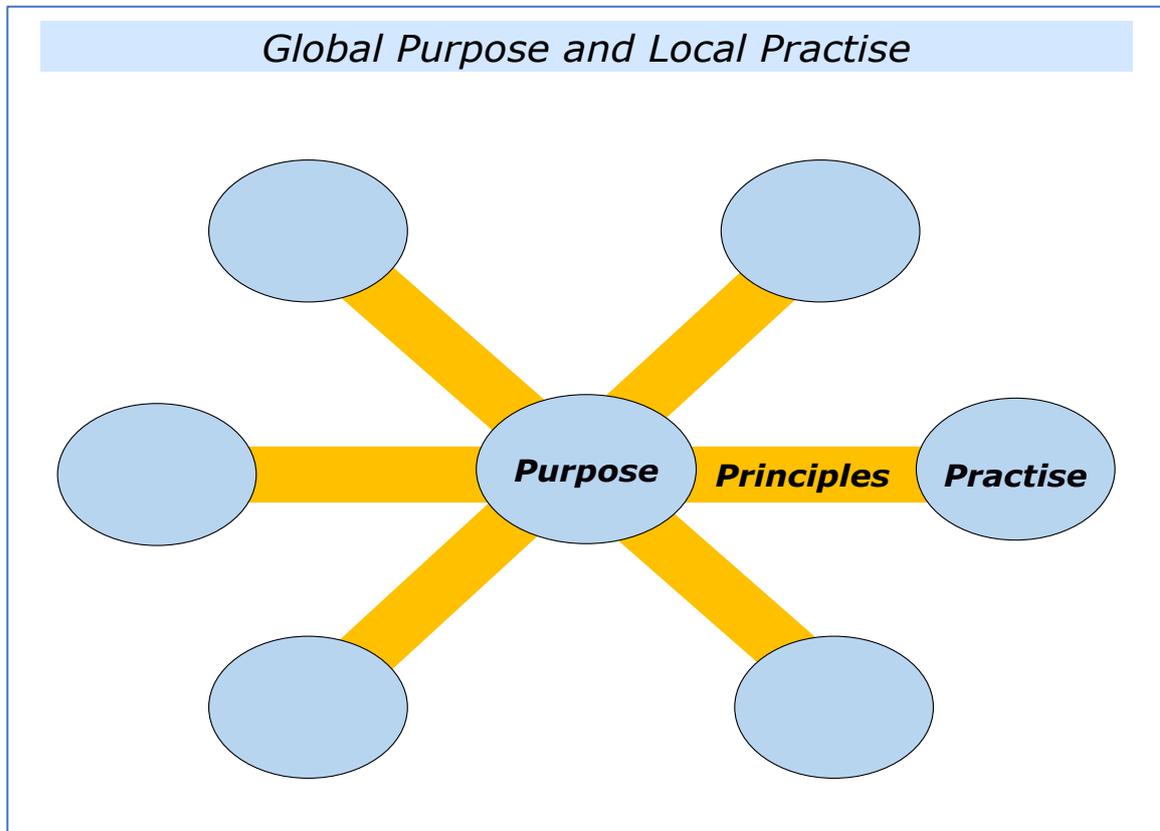
1)

2)

3)

Many organisations are now made up of people who are located in different places. Let's consider how to lead such organisations.

## *The Global–Local Approach*



Great organisations get the right balance between the global purpose and the local practise. They combine the best aspects of a big organisation with the spirit of a small enterprise. They also manage by outcomes rather than by tasks.

The centre communicates the purpose and the principles. The way that people practise these is up to them, within parameters, in their part of the organisation. But this comes with a proviso: people must show how what they are doing is following the principles and contributing to the purpose.

Good leaders encourage people to think global and act local. This calls for creating an adult-adult relationship, however, with everybody taking responsibility for making their best contributions to the company.

Imagine that you lead a large organisation and are addressing all the employees. You will aim to communicate the big picture whilst also encouraging people to take ownership for the local practise.

Different leaders will do this in different ways. One approach is to say something along the following lines. This covers some of the topics mentioned earlier regarding communicating with a team, but it also adds some important provisos.

*Welcome To Today's Session.*

*I am going to give an overview of our organisation's purpose and the part you can play in making this happen.*

*Later I will give some examples of how people have contributed to this purpose in the past and how they can contribute in the future.*

*But first let me give an outline of our overall approach to working together.*

## *The Purpose*

*The purpose of our organisation is:*

\* To

### *The Picture Of Success*

*The picture of success we want to achieve in the next year that will be an expression of our purpose is:*

\* To

\* To

\* To

## *The Principles*

*The key principles we aim to follow to pursue our purpose and achieve the picture of success are:*

*\* To*

*\* To*

*\* To*

## *The Practise*

*The way you practise these principles will - within parameters - be up to you in your part of the organisation.*

*But there is a key point. You must show how what you practise supports the principles and contributes toward achieving the purpose.*

*We want you to take time to reflect and decide if you want to contribute. If so, we will then make clear contracts with you about the outcomes you want to deliver towards achieving the picture of success.*

Good leaders build on the people who want to contribute. They then take the following step.

## *Managing By Outcomes*

Good leaders give people the big picture because they recognise that knowledge workers, for example, want context. They then manage by outcomes rather than by tasks.

They spend a lot of time with people agreeing on what must be delivered. Many people are used to writing lists of tasks and talking about what they will do. It can take time to educate them to focus on the outcomes they will deliver.

Good leaders make crystal-clear contracts about the real results to achieve. Why? Because from then on virtually every performance conversation will start by concentrating on the agreed outcomes, rather than get into supervising the tasks.

After such a contracting session, for example, here is how one team leader might describe their contribution under the Three Ps.

## *My Contribution To The Picture of Success*

### *Profitability*

*To ensure my team achieves its financial targets – a profit of £500k.*

*To develop 3 new customers and do work with them that delivers a profit of £100k.*

*To reduce our overheads by £100k.*

### *Products*

*To ensure more than 90%+ of our customers say they are extremely satisfied with our work.*

*To develop 2 new products and pilot these successfully with customers – then launch these products by the end of the year.*

*To simplify 2 of our complex products to ensure these are more user friendly for customers - then get a further £100k's worth of orders for these before the end of the year.*

### *People*

*To deliver an internal morale rating of 90%+ of our team members saying they enjoy coming to work each day.*

*To educate, equip and enable 2 of my team members to win promotion and move on to other roles in the company.*

*To recruit 4 new positive team members who take responsibility, build on their strengths and get some early successes that contribute towards achieving the team's goals.*

Why take this approach? People can get into a pattern of talking about details, making excuses or whatever. They may also confuse activity with results.

Certainly sometimes it is vital to revisit the aims to ensure these are still desirable and possible. Whether it concerns profits, product quality or people, however, the mantra is:

*"Let's focus on the desired outcomes. How can we do our best to deliver these results?"*

Sounds tough? Perhaps, but it is also a good way of leading a team. People learn:

*To clarify the specific goals that are written in outcome terms;*

*To make clear contracts about the goals, including the required support;*

*To take responsibility, be creative and do their best to deliver the agreed outcomes.*

### *Managing By Outcomes – The Rule Of Three Approach*

There are many ways to encourage people to focus on the outcomes to achieve. One of the simplest is the rule of three approach.

This involves communicating the three goals to achieve. If appropriate, each of these can be broken down into three sub goals. You can then aim to bring these to life with specific examples.

Here are some of guidelines it can be useful to follow when taking this approach.

## *Managing By Outcomes*

### *The Rule Of Three*

*You can use the rule of three approach when communicating the outcomes to achieve*

*You can aim to make these:*

- *Memorable*

*You can aim to make the goals easy to remember – simple yet also profound.*

- *Magical*

*You can aim to bring the goals to life by giving examples that resonate with people.*

- *Measurable*

*You can aim to describe the specific things that will be happening that will show the goals have been achieved.*

## *Managing By Outcomes In Challenging Situations*

Good leaders also focus on outcomes when people face challenges in their work. One leader I worked with took this approach when a team member asked them about how to deal with a problem client. The team member explained this in the following way.

*"We are having problems with a difficult client. They are always complaining, even though we give good service, and this is wearing down our staff. The client is part of a culture where the bosses rule by fear, which may be why they take the same approach with us.*

*"The client now wants us to lower our prices. This will be difficult, however, because we make little money from our work with them. I also fear for our staff who are near breaking point. I would be grateful for any ideas you have about what we can do."*

The leader listened to their team member. They then said something along the following lines.

*"Thanks for the background information. Of course, I am happy to offer some ideas. Before then, however, let's look at the outcomes we want to achieve. Do we want:*

*"To keep the client – at least until we have found another to replace them; to keep giving good service and make some profit; to care for our staff and encourage them whilst we are trying to replace the client?*

*"Are there any other things we want to achieve? Bearing these things in mind, let's explore the key things we can do to achieve these outcomes."*

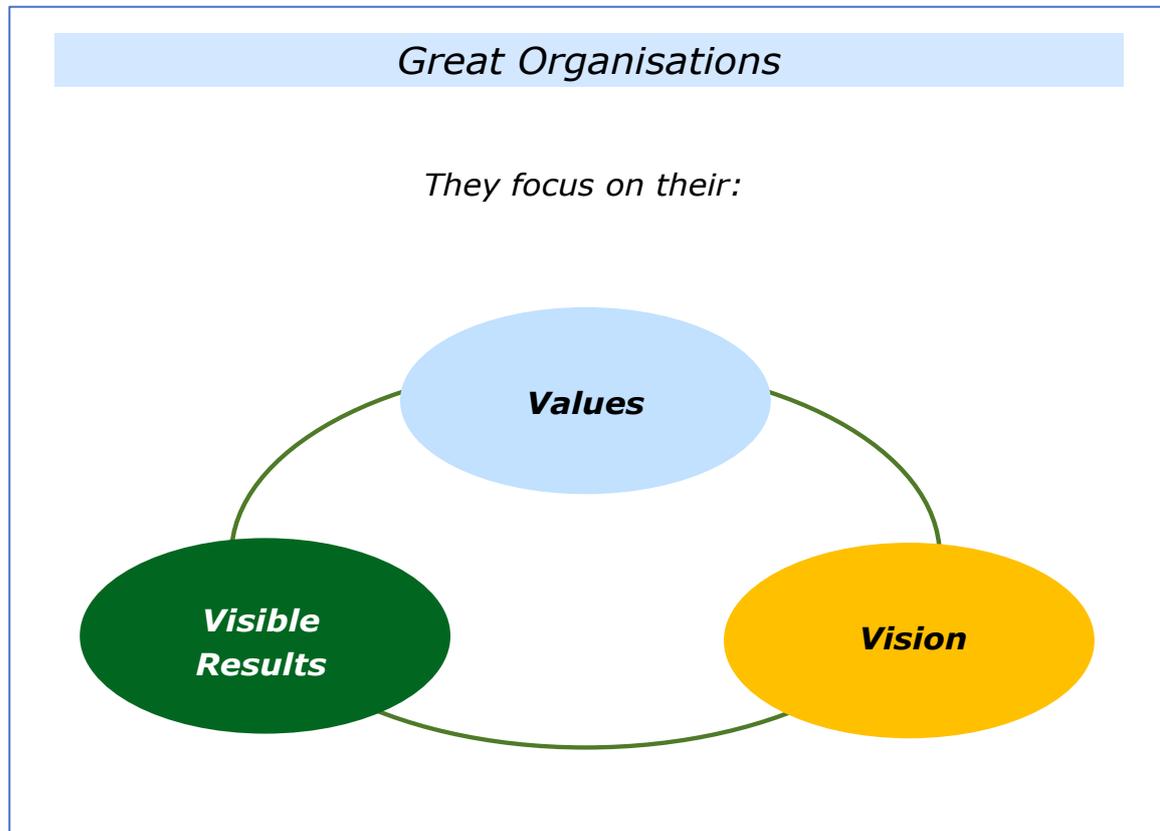
The leader and team member agreed on a plan: a) to continue to give good service to the existing client; b) to find a new client to replace the income stream; c) to give support to their staff in the

meantime. They translated their plans into action and resolved the issue within two months.

Many leaders find that over the years their control needs get stronger. They also realise, however, that they will be judged by the performance of their people.

How to square this circle? One approach is for them to manage by outcomes rather than by tasks. Taking this step can help them to build more self-managing and successful teams.

## *The Values Driven Organisation Approach*



Let's consider another approach to doing fine work. This is for people to build a values driven organisation. They then aim to follow their values, translate these into a clear vision and deliver visible results.

Great organisations are serious about taking this step. They provide a set of guiding principles that people can refer to every day. They aim to live the values rather than just laminate the values.

Such organisations encourage people to focus on this common compass when making decisions or doing their daily work. They also share success stories about how people have translated the values into action.

During the past 50 years I have worked with many organisations that wanted to take this route. When doing this it has been important to adopt the organic approach.

This involves ensuring the values build on when people in the organisation have performed at their best. Such an approach stands the greatest chance of success.

Different organisations obviously develop different values. Below is a combination of the values created by some of the organisations with whom I have worked.

These values may sound simple, but the organisations actually translated them into daily action. The values included:

*Take Responsibility ... Earn Trust ... Be Brilliant ... Pioneer The Way ... Encourage People ... Help Others Succeed ... Share Knowledge ... Give Great Service ... Keep Improving ... Deliver Success.*

"But those values are not unique," somebody may say. "Any organisation could say they have those values."

Great organisations are unique, however, inasmuch that they live their values. Like peak performers, they actually do what they say they are going to do. This is what makes them different.

Looking at my own work on this theme, it has been important to invite the key leaders to consider the implications of going the values route. It has then been to ask them:

*Are you serious?*

There are many pluses to focusing on values but there are also potential minuses. Here are some of these.

## *Building A Values Driven Organisation*

*The pluses and potential minuses*

### *The Pluses*

- The values provide a common framework and language that people can understand – something they can refer to every day;*
- They communicate the professional standards that the organisation wants people to demonstrate on the way towards achieving the goals;*
- They provide a common compass that people can use when making decisions, providing customer service, recruiting or promoting people and running every aspect of the organisation;*
- They provide guidelines for producing success stories that highlight people living the values in their daily work - this helps to keep showing what good looks like;*
- They make the organisation special - by actually living its values - and increase its chances of achieving ongoing success.*

### *The Potential Minuses*

- *The leaders may need to act as positive models and live the values because people will watch what they do rather than what they say;*
- *The values must be introduced in a way in which people say: "Yes, that is us," and gives them a sense of ownership - within certain parameters - which can be hard to do;*
- *The values must be written in concrete language plus illustrated with real life examples that people can relate to - rather than vague concepts - and this can be hard to do;*
- *The values must be translated into concrete actions for the foreseeable future - rather than being issued and then forgotten;*
- *The values will be tested - such as when making tough decisions - but these situations can also be a chance for the organisation to show it is serious about living the values.*

### *Similarity Of Spirit And Diversity Of Strengths*

There is another reason for focusing on values. Great organisations are often made up of people who have similarity of spirit and diversity of strengths. Diversity of spirit is a recipe for disaster.

Such workplaces start by defining the spirit - the values or principles - they want people to demonstrate. They get the right people with the right attitude.



Attitude is non-negotiable, but they want characters, not clones. People will express the spirit in many different ways, but they must always demonstrate high professional standards.

Spirit gets people so far. But it is the diversity of strengths that enables the team to produce something special when it matters.

Every organisation is different, but three themes consistently emerge regarding the required spirit. Different places use different wording, but here are the recurring themes.

## Great Organisations

*They often want their people to embody the following characteristics.*

- *To be positive*  
*To have a positive attitude, take responsibility and encourage other people*
- *To be professional*  
*To deliver consistently high professional standards*
- *To be peak performers*  
*To do their best, keep improving and deliver peak performances*

## Clarifying The Values

Imagine that you have been invited to help an organisation to clarify and follow its values. There are several ways to make this happen. Each route has both pluses and minuses.

One point is worth underlining. The leaders need to take charge of developing and then living the values. They are accountable for running the organisation.

Employees will watch what these people do rather than what they say. The leaders must therefore believe in the values and see these as the basis for shaping the future.

This does not mean that the leaders go into a bunker and emerge to email the values to everybody else. And it certainly does not mean they hire a marketing company to come up with the values.

The leaders need to craft the values in an organic way. The values must build on the organisation's strengths yet also provide the basis for shaping a successful future.

The leaders can also involve a wider group of people in shaping the values. This must be done properly, however, to give people a sense of ownership within certain parameters.

Imagine that are helping an organisation to craft its values. Here are three options for taking these steps. There are, of course, other approaches you can take to clarifying the values.

### *The Positive History Approach*

You can develop the values by focusing on when the organisation has performed brilliantly. Looking back at the organisation's positive history, you can clarify several things.

*The specific times when people in the organisation have performed brilliantly;*

*The specific principles people followed then to perform brilliantly;*

*The specific things people can do to follow these principles – plus maybe add other things – to perform brilliantly in the future.*

You can then make these principles the basis for shaping the organisation's values.

*The pluses of this approach are:*

It is organic and builds on the organisation's strengths. It can be a superb way of involving key people in clarifying the values. It is believable. When the values are presented, you can point to the times when people have followed them successfully.

*The potential minuses are:*

It may be important to add other principles that people may need to follow to be successful in the future.

*The Positive People Approach*

You can focus on the employees who embody the behaviours the organisation wants people to demonstrate in the future. You can take this approach by clarifying the following things.

*The specific employees who the organisation believes embody the values the organisation must demonstrate in the future;*

*The specific ways that these people translate the values into action;*

*The specific values that the organisation can build on to be successful in the future.*

*The pluses of this approach are:*

It is based on real people and can therefore lead to highlighting concrete examples. It is believable. When the values are presented, you can point to people and teams who have followed the values successfully.

*The potential minuses are:*

It may be limiting in terms of the values it reveals. It can sometimes focus only on the star players. So it is important to highlight the soul players – and the qualities they demonstrate – that make sure the engine of the organisation keeps running.

*The Blank Piece  
Of Paper Approach*

You can start with a blank piece of paper and invite people to clarify the values they believe the organisation must demonstrate in the future. They can brainstorm and agree on the following things.

*The specific values they believe the organisation should follow in the future;*

*The specific ways these values can be translated into action;*

*The specific ways the leaders are going to live the values and then ensure the values are lived throughout the organisation.*

*The pluses of this approach are:*

It can be appropriate if the organisation needs to be transformed in order to be successful. It puts the emphasis on the leaders being good models and living the values. It can provide a compass that enables the organisation to be successful in the future.

*The potential minuses are:*

It is not organic. The values may be taken from outside the organisation rather than from within. On the other hand, this may be exactly what is required to transform the organisation.

### *The Positive Mantra Approach*

This is an approach often used by teams involved in sports, expeditions or working together on other projects. It can be an effective and quick way to begin developing a certain culture. Let's look at one example.

One football manager gathered the whole squad together for a pre-season workshop. People were then invited:

*To recall when they had done positive work in a team;*

*To agree on three words they wanted to have as their positive mantra;*

*To focus on how they could translate this positive mantra into action in different situations.*

The entire squad brainstormed the possible words. These included word such as: together, resilient, supportive, classy, excellent, relentless plus many others. They then voted on these to produce the top three words.

People formed small groups to clarify how they as players and staff could translate each of these words into action. They then focused on how to follow their chosen words in challenging situations.

The squad settled on their final positive mantra – which comprised of three words. They put this in their dressing room and around the training ground. It replaced the old cut-and-paste motivational slogans.

People felt ownership of their mantra. Simple and memorable, it provided a guide they could follow when things got tough during the season.

*The pluses of this approach are:*

It is a quick yet effective way of setting the tone and beginning to build a culture. People feel a sense of ownership by producing their own positive team mantra.

They can then focus on how to translate these into action in real situations. The mantra can also act as a quick call to action – a reminder of how to behave – when they are working towards a goal.

*The potential minuses are:*

The leaders must set the scene properly and show they are serious about involving people in producing the mantra. They also need to show how it relates to building a certain culture.

If some participants refuse to take it seriously, it won't work. Of course, such people should not be part of the culture.

### *The Positive Mantra*

*The three words we want to follow as our positive mantra are:*

- .....
- .....
- .....

*We can then aim to keep translating these into action.*

### *The Actual Process Of Helping An Organisation To Agree On Its Values*

Imagine that the leaders in the organisation have chosen to pursue a particular approach to clarifying the values. Here are some things to bear in mind when helping them to take this step.

#### *The number and wording of the values*

Some organisations produce values statements that end up as long tracts full of good intentions and complicated sentences. Here are some guidelines that seem to work.

*It can be useful:*

*To have a maximum of four values – because this make them easier to remember;*

*To have a maximum of three words per value – because this makes them sharper;*

*To start each value with a verb – because this provides a call to action.*

Good organisations often follow these rules. They also, if appropriate, expand on each of the values and bring them to life with real examples.

### *The methods for agreeing on the values*

Imagine that you are helping the leadership team to begin clarifying the organisation's values. There are many ways to take this step. Here is one approach you can take.

#### *Step One*

You can invite people: a) to recall specific situations in the past when people in the organisation have performed brilliantly; b) to clarify the values that people followed then and how they translated these into action.

This can help to clarify the values that are demonstrated by people when they perform at their best. It can also provide food for thought when they take the next step.

#### *Step Two*

You can give each person four big strips of paper. You can then invite each person to write four values that they believe it is important for people in the organisation to follow in the future.

They are to write one value per piece of paper. When writing the values, they are: a) to start each value with a verb; b) to have no more than three words per value.

If people ask for a guide regarding the areas to cover, it can be worth mentioning that some organisations focus on the following themes when clarifying their values.

### *The Values*

*Here are some things to consider when writing the values.  
These are suggestions, however, rather than steadfast rules.*

- *To have a maximum of four values; to have no more than three words per value; to start each value with a verb.*
- *To have one value that relates to the attitude people need to demonstrate; one value that relates to being professional; one value that relates to working well together; one value that may be quirky, different or makes your organisation stand out.*
- *To make sure that you can think of concrete examples when people have lived some of the values.*

Imagine people have finished writing their suggestions. You can ask each person to go up in turn and put their four pieces of paper – their suggested values – on the floor. They are also to explain the reasons they have written their suggested value.

If you have ten people in the group, you will end up with 40 pieces of paper on the floor. Many of the values will appear to be similar, but that is okay.

### *Step Three*

You can then invite people to vote on their preferences regarding the values. This can be done in various ways. One approach is to give each person four Post-it Notes. These are weighted in the following way:

*One Post-it is worth 10 points and they can put this on their first choice value.*

*One Post-it is worth 8 points and they can put this on their second choice value.*

*One Post-it is worth 6 points and they can put this on their third choice value.*

*One Post-it is worth 4 points and they can put this on their fourth choice value.*

Invite people to all go up together and place their votes on their four chosen preferences. They can vote for the value they suggested and for other people's suggestions.

You can again remind them not to worry about any values that look similar. They are to put their votes on their preferences and any overlaps will be worked out later. People will vote and there will be lots of Post-it Notes on the various pieces of paper.

You can then invite people to add up the total votes on each of the values and write the total number on each of the papers. This will result in some values having lots of cumulative votes and others not so many.

Looking at the votes, invite people to see if there are any similar looking values that have quite a lot of votes. If so, people can consolidate these under the value that has the most votes.

The aim is to try to produce four – or at the most five – headings that cover most of the things that have been written by people.

My own experience is that people often produce about five or so main headings. This is okay. After the next step, however, they often find a way to consolidate these under fewer headings.

### Step Four

Imagine that people have sorted the paper strips into columns. You can then lead a discussion that will result in settling on the values.

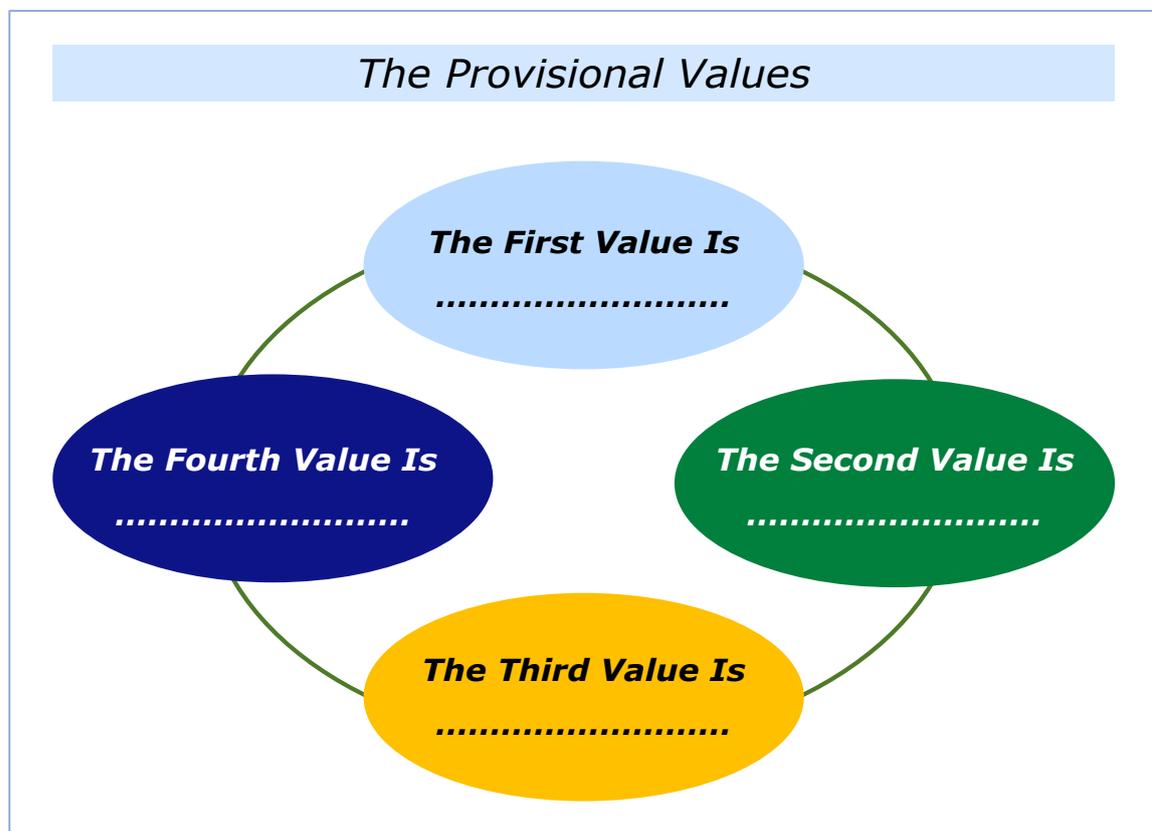
You can draw interrelated circles on a flip chart and aim to fill these with the agreed values. You can then ask people:

*Which is the value with the most votes?*

Write this in the top circle on the flip chart. You can also invite people to discuss which other values they have mentioned that might fit under this heading.

Move onto the value with the second most votes and repeat the process. Continue until all the circles have a value written in them.

Explain to people that these are still provisional values. They are not to be too concerned at this point about covering every eventuality or about wordsmithing.



### *Step Five*

You can continue the discussion until it feels like people are reasonably happy with what has been produced. You can check this by covering the following themes in your own way.

*Looking at the values, let me ask you a few things to check if they fit for you.*

*Do the values feel right for you? Can you think of people in the organisation who embody some of these values? What do they do to demonstrate some of the values in action?*

*If you were to show these provisional values to people in your organisation, do you think that some of them would say: 'Yes, that is us?'*

You can again emphasise that this is the start of the process and it will be possible to expand or add to the values. At a certain point, however, you may want to move on to focusing on how people can translate the values into action.

#### *Clarifying the specific things people can do to demonstrate the values*

Imagine that the leadership team has settled on some provisional values. You can invite them to do some in-depth work on exploring the implications of introducing the values. They can focus on each of the values and clarify the following things:

*The specific things they as leaders can do to translate the value into action;*

*The specific things that their people can do to translate the value into action;*

*The pluses and potential minuses of having this value;*

*The specific things they can do to build on the pluses and minimise the minuses;*

*The specific things they can do to encourage their people to live the value.*

If there are four values, invite them to form four groups and complete the following exercise. They can then present back their findings to the whole group.

*The First Value Is:*

\*

*The specific things we as leaders can do to translate this value into action are:*

- \*  
\*

*The specific things that our people can do to translate this value into action are:*

- \*  
\*

*The pluses having this value are:*

- \*  
\*

*The potential minuses of having this value are:*

- \*  
\*

*The specific things we can do to build on the pluses and minimise the minuses of this value are:*

- \*  
\*

*The specific things we can do to encourage our people to live this value are:*

- \*  
\*

Imagine the leaders have done these exercises and discussed the implications of following the values route. It can then be useful to invite them to make a considered decision regarding if they want to take the next step.

You can again ask them to reflect and decide if they are serious. If appropriate, you can cover of the following themes in your own way.

### *Are You Serious?*

*We have done some work on clarifying the values. There may be some more work to do on these, but before doing so it is important to consider the following things.*

*Bearing in mind the pluses and minuses involved, do you want to move forward with the values approach?*

*If so, we know there are certain things that work when pursuing this route. It will be important:*

*To polish the work done on the values and prepare these properly before presenting these to your people in the organisation;*

*To involve people in fleshing out the values – perhaps through values in action workshops which, when run properly, can be helpful in involving your people;*

*To clarify the concrete things you can do quickly to show you are serious about living the values in the organisation.*

*We can focus on what works when taking these steps. Before then, however, it is important to go back to one of the original themes.*

*Bearing in mind the benefits and possible challenges, are you serious about going the values route? If so, we can move on to making an action plan.*

## *Communicating The Values To People In The Organisation*

Imagine that the leaders want to go ahead and pursue the values route. One of the most effective ways is by involving their people in values in action workshops.

This will involve the leaders introducing the values to people. When doing so, it can be useful for them to bring the values to life with photographs of staff members who have demonstrated them in the past. People need to be able to look at the values and say:

*"That is us."*

Different leaders introduce the values workshops in different ways. One approach is for them cover the following themes in their own way at the start of the sessions.

### *Values In Action – Introduction*

*Welcome to today's session on values.*

*As you know, we have been focusing on the values that we believe it is important for us to continue to follow in the future.*

*Today is about sharing those values and giving you the chance to show how we can live them in the future.*

*These values are mostly based on the times when people in the organisation have done superb work. We will invite you to do an exercise on this theme early in the workshop.*

*We will then introduce each value in turn. When doing so, we will aim:*

*To highlight how people have demonstrated this in the past;*

*To focus on how we can live this value in the future.*

*There are, of course, pluses and minuses involved in aiming to follow certain values. We will be honest about these. We will also look at how we can build on the pluses and minimise the minuses.*

*We are sure that many of you have been to sessions where initiatives have been started and then petered out.*

*We will therefore conclude the session by describing the specific things we will do to show we are serious about following the values.*

*We are serious about maintaining the momentum so that, this time next year, you can look back and say:*

*"We have an organisation that is really serious about living its values."*

*Bearing that in mind, I will hand over to the facilitator.*

*They will start by highlighting the importance of building values driven organisations.*

*They will then invite you to do the exercise regarding when you have seen people in the organisation doing superb work.*

*Enjoy the day.*

The values in action workshops usually involve mixing people from different departments. They are interactive and involve a combination of short inputs, exercises and people working on fleshing out the values.

Here is an overview of the themes covered during such sessions.

## *Values In Action Workshops*

*Such workshops are a mixture of short inputs, exercises and people fleshing out the values. The aims are to do the following things.*

- *To focus on the importance of building values driven organisations.*
- *To introduce the provisional values by showing how these are based on:*
  - a) the times when people have performed well in the past; b) the other elements that can be added to perform well in the future.*
- *To give people an opportunity to flesh out the values by doing exercises on the following themes:*
  - a) the specific things that people can do to live the values; b) the specific pluses and minuses of having the values; c) the specific things the organisation can do to show it is serious about living the values.*
- *To show the how the organisation will encourage and support people in living the values.*
- *To show how the organisation will maintain the momentum and ensure it continues to live the values.*

## *Creating A Common Language*

Winston Churchill is quoted as saying that first we shape our buildings and thereafter our buildings shape us. We can also say:

*"First we shape our language, then our language shapes us."*

Great organisations often use their values to create a common language. This can help people to focus on certain themes and channel their energies in a positive way.

Simon Walker, a successful skipper in the BT Global Challenge round-the-world yacht race, involved his crew in creating such a mantra. The crew eventually agreed on three key principles. These were: "Safe, Happy, Fast."

People kept focusing on this mantra. It encouraged them focus on how they could travel safely, maintain a happy ship and keep finding ways to go faster.

"But isn't that dangerous?" somebody may say. "It sounds rather cultish."

Certainly that can be true, so it can be useful to follow certain guidelines. It is important that the language encourages people:

*To channel their energies in a positive way ... To focus on the key principles ... To work towards achieving the picture of success.*

## *Maintaining The Momentum*

Let's return to one of the earlier themes. Great organisations show they are serious. They also use many methods to maintain the momentum. These include some of the following.

*They keep focusing on the values – especially when making decisions.*

*They continually publish success stories that show how people are living the values.*

*They recruit, promote and reward people who embody the values. They never walk past a quality problem and instantly tackle any form of behaviour that goes against the values.*

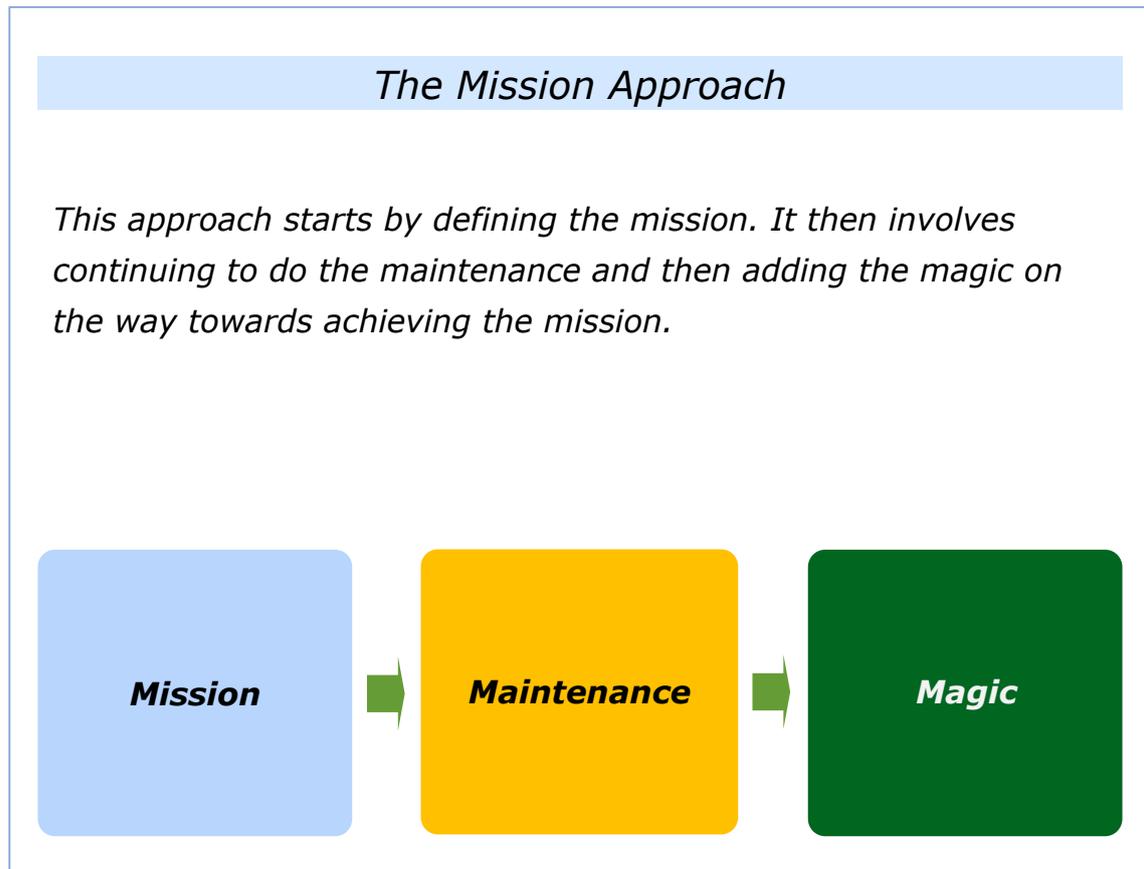
*They ensure the values are embodied in every aspect of running the organisation – such as recruitment, interviewing, induction, management style, customer service and other aspects.*

Sounds tough? Maybe, but it can be even harder to lead an organisation where people's values are not aligned.

Great organisations make sure they are serious before pursuing the values approach. As mentioned earlier, they then aim to live the values rather than just laminate the values.



## The Mission Approach



This section describes how individuals can pursue the mission approach to doing fine work. We also look at how these ideas can be applied by teams that want to encourage their people to achieve a specific goal.

Let's start with you as an individual. You may want to begin by defining the mission. This can be something you want to do or deliver in your personal or professional life.

The next step will be to do the maintenance. These are the necessary tasks that must be done. When appropriate, you will then add the magic and do your best to deliver the mission.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you followed some of these steps in your own way? If so, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Mission Approach In The Past*

*The specific situation when I focused on  
a mission, did the maintenance and,  
when appropriate, added the magic was:*

\*

*The specific things I did then  
to follow these steps were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that  
happened as a result were:*

\*

\*

\*

Imagine that you want to follow some of these steps again in the future. Let's explore how to make this happen.

## *The Mission*

People love to have a sense of mission. They love to feel they are contributing towards achieving something worthwhile. This can provide a sense of meaning to their lives and work.

Charles Garfield, the author of *Peak Performers*, said that people are driven by a sense of mission. A clinical professor of psychology, he saw this approach in action when he led a team of engineers, scientists and support staff on the *Apollo 11* project.

Charles said that people, teams and organisations mobilise great strength when pursuing motivating missions. People want to serve a cause, follow their vocation or deliver a stimulating project. He wrote:

*People want to feel proud of themselves, to achieve something, to leave a mark and a contribution, and they follow their plans for doing all that purposefully and tenaciously.*

*The most powerful human motivator of all is the desire to be proud of ourselves in the pursuit of something we care about deeply.*

Imagine that you want to take this approach as an individual. You may want to write an article, renovate a house, create a self-help group for recovering patients or do another activity.

Imagine you want to take this approach when leading a team. Your team may aim to find a cure for a disease, solve a pressing problem, build an innovative product or deliver a worthwhile project.

Different people have different views of what constitutes a mission. Military missions, for example, must often meet the following criteria.

*They must have an achievable objective, a strategy what will work, the required resources, a specific time frame and a clear exit strategy.*

Military people then know what they must achieve by a certain date. It is also vital to have an exit strategy or, in some cases, a transition strategy.

Susan Ward produced an excellent definition regarding mission statements which is reproduced below.

*A mission statement is a brief description of a company's fundamental purpose. It answers the question, "Why does our business exist?"*

*The mission statement articulates the company's purpose both for those in the organization and for the public.*

Let's return to your own life and work. What is the mission you as an individual would like to pursue? What are the key strategies you can follow to give yourself the greatest chance of delivering the mission?

What are the specific things that will be happening that will show you have delivered the mission? What will be the benefits – for yourself and for other people - of pursuing this mission?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Mission*

*The specific mission – the specific thing I would like to do or deliver - is:*

\*

*The key strategies I can follow to give myself the greatest chance of delivering the mission are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that will be happening that will show I have delivered the mission will be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Maintenance*

Imagine you have defined your individual mission. The next step is to make sure the maintenance gets done. This provides the platform for delivering the mission.

You will have your own approach to making sure these tasks get done. One approach is:

*To keep pursuing the strategies most likely to deliver the mission;*

*To keep delivering consistently high standards;*

*To keep making sure all the necessary tasks get done.*

Good leaders take a similar approach in teams. They recognise they are accountable for delivering the mission. They often have mission holders, however, who take responsibility for achieving aspects of the goals.

Imagine that you want to take this approach when leading a team. Who are the people you would like to be mission holders for aspects of the plan?

Many mission holders will be duty driven and already doing good work. They may need people to take over some of their current duties. This will release them to take the extra responsibility.

Mission holders will need to keep you informed, but they need to be given the authority and autonomy required to deliver the goods. Here are some things to bear in mind when considering who can play this role.

## *The Mission Holders*

*Good teams have many people who are prepared to be mission holders and help to deliver the picture of success.*

*Here are some of the themes to bear in mind regarding such people.*

### *Mission Holders*

- *They love to take responsibility. They often start their career by being eager beavers who make lists and implement action plans. They get a kick from getting things done and seeing positive results.*
- *They may then move into a more strategic role where they act as orchestrators, coordinators or project directors. They build agreed action plans, make clear working contracts and coordinate people's strengths to achieve the goals.*
- *They are prepared to take accountability. They must be given the authority and autonomy required to deliver the goods. They are then more likely to make their best contribution towards achieving the picture of success.*

Imagine you have clarified who you want to be the mission holders for aspects of reaching the goals. It can then be useful to set-up one-to-one sessions with such people. You can aim:

*To explain the strategies for achieving the mission;*

*To explain that you would like them to consider being a mission holder to deliver part of the mission;*

*To give them chance to reflect on whether they would like to contribute in this way to deliver the mission.*

If so, you can then make clear contracts with them about what they want to deliver. One approach is to invite them to complete the following exercise.

*The Mission -  
My Best Contribution*

*I would like to be a mission holder for delivering parts of the mission. Bearing in mind my strengths, here is what I believe would be my best contribution.*

*It would be good to discuss this and then make clear contracts about my best contribution towards achieving the mission.*

### *The Specific Goals*

*The specific outcomes - the real results - I would like to deliver towards achieving the mission are:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

### *The Specific Strategies*

*The key strategies I will aim to follow to deliver these results are:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

### *The Specific Updates*

*The specific things I will do to proactively keep you and other the key stakeholders informed about the progress being made towards achieving these results are:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

### *The Specific Support*

*The specific kinds of support I would like to help to deliver these results are:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

### *The Specific Early Successes*

*The specific early successes I will aim to deliver on the way towards delivering these results are:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

Let's return to your own life and work. What are the key strategies you can follow to increase the likelihood of delivering your mission?

What are the specific things that must be done to deliver the mission? How can you continue to make sure the maintenance gets done?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Maintenance*

*The specific mission – the specific thing I would like to do or deliver - is:*

\*

*The specific strategies to keep following and the specific maintenance tasks that must be done to deliver the mission are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to make sure these things continue to be done are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Magic*

Imagine you have delivered high standards when implementing the strategies and doing the maintenance. If appropriate, the next step is to add the magic.

Different people do this in different ways. You may go that extra mile to give great service, provide exceptional medical care or do something special to deliver success

Great teams also add something special. Imagine that you lead a team and want to encourage your people to take this step.

One approach is to invite them to do an exercise on this theme. You can introduce this in the following way:

*"Great teams keep doing the maintenance. This is mandatory. Such teams maintain high standards and do what is necessary to deliver the mission.*

*"Good service providers, for example, build on the old idea of blending high tech and high touch. They get all the technical things right and also add the personal touch. They do something extra to help their customers achieve success.*

*"Bearing this in mind, I would like you to each write Post-it Notes describing the specific things that we may be able to do to add the magic.*

*"We will then focus on how to do some of these things on the way towards delivering the mission."*

Depending on the kinds of work they do, different teams produce different ideas when doing this exercise. Here is a snapshot of some ideas that teams have produced.

*Magic. The specific things we can do to add the magic are:*

*To put the right people in the right places in the team ... To get the casting right by putting the right people with the right customers ... To encourage people to use their strengths to help our customers to succeed.*

*To keep delivering the scorecard – the mandatory things we must deliver to keep our bosses happy – and to also do stimulating projects that benefit the organisation ... To build successful prototypes and produce success stories.*

*To create a stimulating environment that works for introverts – who like quiet spaces – and extroverts ... To involve everybody in our regular monthly updates about the progress we are making towards achieving the mission.*

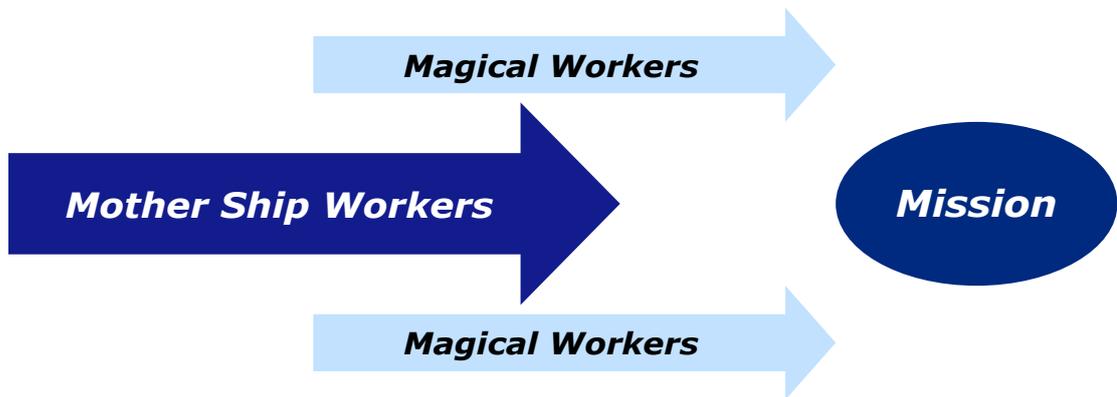
*To spend 50% of our time out with customers and become trusted advisors to them ... To work with pacesetting customers – those who are tackling challenge that others will face in the future - and help them to find solutions to these challenges ... To use this knowledge to produce our own future products and services.*

There is another approach to encouraging people to focus on the mission. Let's explore this theme.

### *The Mother Ship, Magical Workers And Mission Approach*

*The first step is to clarify the mission. The second step is to clarify the key strategies people can follow to achieve the mission.*

*The third step is for the Mother Ship workers – who may be doing both maintenance work and magical work – and the other potentially magical workers to align their efforts to achieve the mission.*



This approach was brought to life by the COO of a company. They described their challenge in the following way.

*"I am in charge of the Mother Ship. Our job is to make sure the daily operations are on track. But we have a challenge.*

*"We have a visionary leader and several other key contributors who can sometimes create challenges. They are brilliant at what they do – such as selling or producing new technology.*

*"These people can add a lot to the company. It is important to encourage them to use their strengths and focus on the future, however, rather than diving into the overall operations."*

The COO managed the challenge by doing the following things. They agreed on the following steps.

#### *Step One*

*This involved clarifying the mission.*

### *Step Two*

*This involved clarifying the key strategies people could follow to achieve the mission.*

### *Step Three*

*This involved everybody in the company continually aligning their efforts to follow the strategies and work towards achieving the mission.*

*The people in the Mother Ship continually focused on doing the maintenance work and sometimes adding the magical work required to follow the strategies towards achieving the mission.*

*The other individual workers aimed to do magical work that contributed towards achieving the mission.*

The COO coordinated all these efforts. They aimed to keep the Mother Ship on course. They also aimed to coordinate the individual workers' special talents in ways that contributed towards achieving the mission.

Let's return to the team in which you may be working. Imagine you are continuing to deliver the maintenance. How can you then add the magic? What else can you do to do your best to deliver the mission?

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Magic*

*The specific mission – the specific thing I would like to do or deliver - is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to, when appropriate, add the magic are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific other things I can do to do my best to deliver the mission are:*

\*

\*

\*

## The Brilliant Teams Approach

### The Brilliant Teams Approach

*There are many ways to build brilliant teams. One approach is for people to clarify what they believe they can achieve. They can then keep doing the basics and, when appropriate, add the brilliance.*



There are many ways to build brilliant teams. One approach is for people to clarify what believe they can achieve. They can then translate this into a clear picture of success and aim to build something that is brilliant.

Embarking on the work, they can pursue the right strategies in the right way. They can keep doing the basics and, when appropriate, add the brilliance. Sometimes they even make things beautiful.

This model can be used by individuals, teams and organisations. The following section describes how it can be applied in teams.

Imagine that you lead a team. You can invite people to do the following exercise. They can clarify the specific activities – the tasks, projects and other activities – in which the team has the ability to deliver As rather than Bs or Cs.

## *The Team's Strengths*

*The specific activities in which we have the ability to deliver As rather than Bs or Cs are:*

\* *To ...*

*For example:*

*To ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example:*

*To ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example:*

*To ...*

## *The Beliefs*

Belief is crucial. People work best when they believe in what they are doing. They also need to believe that - providing they do their best - they stand a chance of achieving their goals.

Charismatic leaders can sometimes inspire people to believe in themselves, but real belief must come from within. People need to develop a gut belief that they can reach their goals.

How to take this step? One approach is to invite people to revisit their positive history. It is to invite them:

*To clarify the times when they have performed brilliantly in the past;*

*To clarify what they did right then - the principles they followed and how they translated these into action - to perform brilliantly;*

*To clarify how they can follow these principles - plus add other skills - to perform brilliantly in the future.*

People are more likely to believe they can do something when they build on their successful patterns. It may be, of course, that they need to add other skills to achieve certain goals.

Imagine that people in the team are aware of their strengths and successful patterns. It is then time to help them to clarify what they believe the team can achieve.

Belief works best when people base it on what they can control rather than what they can't control. People can control their attitudes, application and professionalism. They can't control certain outside factors, though they can try to influence these issues.

Bearing in mind what the team can control, invite each of the individuals in the team to write Post-it Notes under the following headings.

### *Can Achieve*

*The specific things that I believe the team can achieve.*

### *Maybe Can Achieve*

*The specific things that I believe the team maybe can achieve.*

### *Probably Can't Achieve*

*The specific things that I believe the team probably can't achieve.*

Give people 15 minutes to write their Post-its and emphasise that you want people to be truthful. It is not about people pretending they think the team can achieve certain things or telling others they are wrong in their views.

Later there will be time to build on what people have in common and set the future direction. For the moment, however, invite each person to do the following exercise.

## *Beliefs*

*Can Achieve. The specific things I believe the team can achieve are:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

*Maybe Can Achieve. The specific things I believe the team maybe can achieve are:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

*Can't Achieve. The specific things I believe the team probably can't achieve are:*

\* *To ...*

When people have finished, invite each person to go up in turn and put their Post-it Notes under the respective headings. Ask people to give examples regarding what they have written.

Looking at what people have written, begin clarifying the team's shared beliefs. Facilitate a discussion around the main headings.

The discussion is to be conducted in a spirit of enquiry, rather than telling people they must believe. Make provisional agreements about what comes under each of the headings. You can then move on to the next stage.

### *Clarifying The Team's Shared Beliefs*

Imagine that you have completed the earlier exercise. It is now time to agree on the shared beliefs. When doing this it can be useful to explore the following themes.

*What are the things that people believe we can achieve? Do we have the ability to translate these into doing the basics and delivering brilliant results?*

*If we do not have the ability, what can we do to increase the chances of success? Do we need:*

*a) to recruit more people who can help us to achieve the goal; b) to be more selective and focus on fewer things that we believe we can achieve; c) to make sure we have the support required to achieve the goals?*

*Finally, are there any ways we can convert some of the 'maybe can achieve' column into the 'can achieve' column?*

Imagine you have had a discussion on these themes. You can then complete the following exercise.

## *The Team's Shared Beliefs*

*The specific things we believe  
the team can achieve are:*

\* *To ...*

*For example:*

*To ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example:*

*To ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example:*

*To ...*

## *Brilliance – Clarifying The Team’s Picture Of Success*

Great teams are made-up of people who believe they can achieve a particular goal. If there are people in the team who do not share this belief, then there are two options. You either get people who share the belief or you can change the goals.

Let’s assume that you are happy with what you believe the team can achieve. The next steps will be:

*To clarify people’s view of brilliance;*

*To clarify the real results they will have delivered by a certain date that will show they have done the basics and added the brilliance;*

*To translate this view of brilliance into the team’s picture of success.*

Imagine that the team has created a provisional picture of success. You can take it away and, perhaps with a few key people, and do a reality check. When doing so, it can be useful to ask yourself the following questions.

*Bearing in mind what we can control, what are the chances of delivering this picture of success? How would we rate the chances on a scale 0-10?*

*What can we do to improve the rating? Do we need to add people, move people around or replace people? Do we need extra resources? What can we do to increase the chances of success to 8+/10?*

You and the team will have your own approach to clarifying and finalising the picture of success. Whatever approach you use, it may resemble something like the following framework.

## *Brilliance – The Team’s Picture Of Success*

*The specific things we want  
to have delivered by ... are:*

*1) To ...*

*For example:*

*To ...*

*2) To ...*

*For example:*

*To ...*

*3) To ...*

*For example:*

*To ...*

## *The Basics*

Great teams focus on what they believe they can achieve. They then keep doing the basics required to achieve their goals.

Different teams will, of course, need to perform different basics to reach their desired goals. The principles they follow will depend on whether they work in sports, business, hospitality, medical care, therapy, technology or whatever.

Great teams implement the right principles with the right people in the right way. So it is vital to ensure you have the right people in the right places. You then stand a much greater chance of building a successful team.

How can you encourage people to keep doing the basics? One approach is to supervise the tasks. But this often has only a short-term effect.

Another approach is to manage by outcomes. You can explain the team's goals – the outcomes it must deliver - and then involve people in clarifying the basics.

This was the approach was taken by one leader I worked with who helped his team to focus on the basics and the brilliance. The leader explained what happened in the following way.

*"One year ago my team was in a difficult state. Some people were in love with doing the attractive stuff but they did not pay enough attention to the basics.*

*"This meant I spent lots of time supervising their tasks. This wasn't sustainable in the long term, so I made some key decisions.*

*"First, I decided who might be able to deliver the required professional standards.*

*"Looking at each person in turn, I rated their potential on a scale 0–10. I kept the people who had the attitude and ability to reach 7+/10 and replaced those who didn't.*

*"Two left because they had a poor attitude, one because their skills just did not fit. This was difficult, but it was necessary for the team.*

*"We also did our best to help people to move on in a good way. This approach sounds tough, but the alternative was to continue supervising people. This would not benefit anybody.*

*"Second, I then involved everybody in clarifying the basics and the brilliance.*

*"Gathering people together, I shared the overall goal. Each person was invited to write Post-it Notes regarding what they saw as the basics that must be done to deliver the goods.*

*"People went up in turn and put these on a flip chart. Eventually we agreed on what must be done to deliver the basics."*

During the 1980s I used this exercise with teams of talented young footballers. Believing they were super stars, the individual players often did their own thing. But success called for them combining their talents as a team.

When using this exercise with one team, they agreed on the following principles that everybody should follow.

### *Be Positive*

*Take responsibility ... Keep ourselves fit ... Arrive on time for training and all meetings ... Encourage each other.*

### *Play Positive Football*

*Be calm ... Take control of the game ... Keep following the team's game plan ... Keep moving and helping our teammates ... Accept the referee's decisions.*

### *Get Positive Results*

*Keep doing our best ... Keep overcoming setbacks ... Keep improving as people and as players ... Be good ambassadors for the club.*

You will have your own method for helping a team to focus on doing the basics. If you wish, however, you can adopt the following approach.

Start by reminding people of the things that they believe the team can achieve. Bearing these themes in mind, ask people to explore how they can translate these beliefs into action.

You can follow the approach mentioned earlier. Invite people to write Post-it Notes describing what they believe people in the team can do to always deliver the basics. Here is the exercise.

## *The Team's Basics*

*The specific things we can do  
to always deliver the basics are:*

\* *To ...*

*For example:*

*To ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example:*

*To ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example:*

*To ...*

## *The Brilliance*

Great teams keep doing the basics and then, when appropriate, add the brilliance. Different teams do this in different ways. The leader mentioned earlier explained his approach in the following way.

*"I asked my team to focus on adding that touch of class. Looking back, I gave concrete examples regarding when people had taken this step.*

*"Frequently they had done things that were a win-win. They had created a win for the customer and a win for the company.*

*"Sometimes the touch of class had been a creative breakthrough. Sometimes it had been providing a great piece of customer service.*

*"Frequently it involved people showing the personal touch and helping our customers to succeed. This made the customers more likely to do business with us in the future.*

*"Each person was invited to describe how we could add that touch of class in the future. People wrote their Post-it Notes and put them on a flip chart.*

*"Many of the ideas involved getting close to customers, understanding their agendas and doing that bit extra. We then agreed on the ways people could add that touch of class in the future."*

There are many models for building fine teams. One approach is to get people to build on their beliefs, keep doing the basics and, when appropriate, add the brilliance.

If you wish, invite the people in your team to tackle the final exercise on this theme. They can describe the specific things people can do to add the brilliance. You can encourage people to keep doing these things and deliver ongoing success.

## *The Team's Brilliance*

*The specific things we can do to, when appropriate, add the brilliances are:*

\* *To ...*

*For example:*

*To ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example:*

*To ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example:*

*To ...*

## *The Right Strategy Approach*



Great teams implement the right strategy, with the right people in the right way. This is more likely to produce the right results.

Imagine you are leading the team you work in at the moment. Let's explore how you can pursue these themes in your own way.

### *The Right Strategy*

Such teams clarify which mountain they want to climb. They also make sure they are climbing the right mountain. They sometimes do this by taking the following steps.

*They clarify their strengths;*

*They clarify their perfect customers and the challenges such people they face;*

*They clarify how they can use their strengths to help their customers to achieve success.*

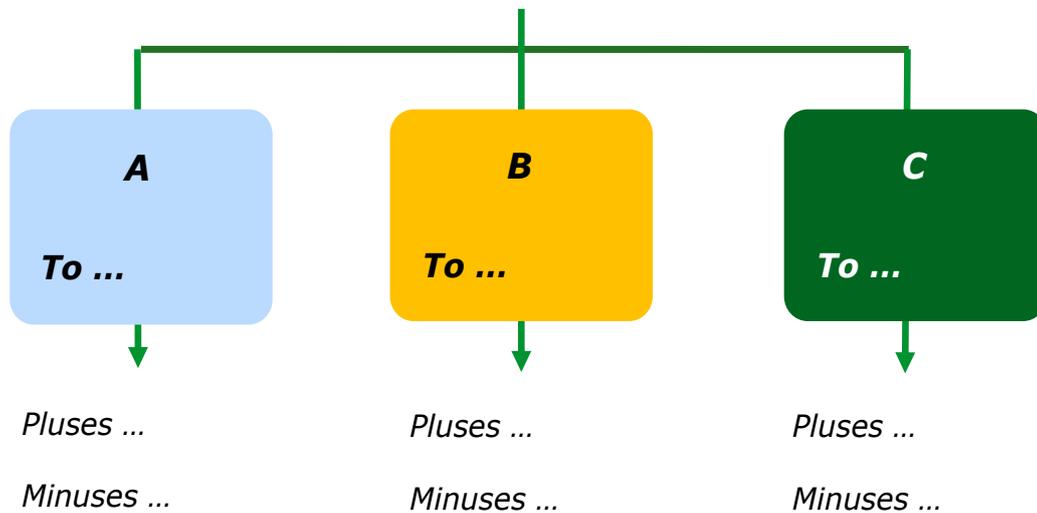
Great teams clarify the possible strategies – the routes forward – they can pursue in the future. They clarify the pluses and minuses of each route together with the attractiveness of each option.

After a period of reflection, they settle on their chosen strategy. Such teams complete the following exercise.



*The Team's  
Possible Strategies*

*The possible routes the team could follow in the future are:*



*The attractiveness of each option is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

\_\_\_ / 10

\_\_\_ / 10

*The Team's  
Chosen Strategy*

*The team's strategy  
for going forward is:*

\*

\*

\*

*The reasons we have chosen  
to pursue this strategy are:*

\*

\*

\*

Good leaders often communicate this strategy to their people. Why? The employees must be able to explain to new joiners why the team has chosen to pursue a specific strategy.

Such leaders also communicate the game plan. They explain the What, Why, How, Who and When by covering the following points.

*The What. The specific goals we are aiming to achieve are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The Why. The specific benefits of achieving the goals will be:*

\*

\*

\*

*The How. The key strategies we will follow to achieve the goals are:*

\*

\*

\*

Looking at the team you work in at the moment, to what extent do you believe it has the right strategy? Rate this on a scale 0 – 10. What are the specific things it can do to maintain or improve this score?

## *The Right Strategy*

*The extent to which I believe  
the team has the right strategy is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

\*

*The specific things we can do to  
maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of  
taking these steps will be:*

\*

\*

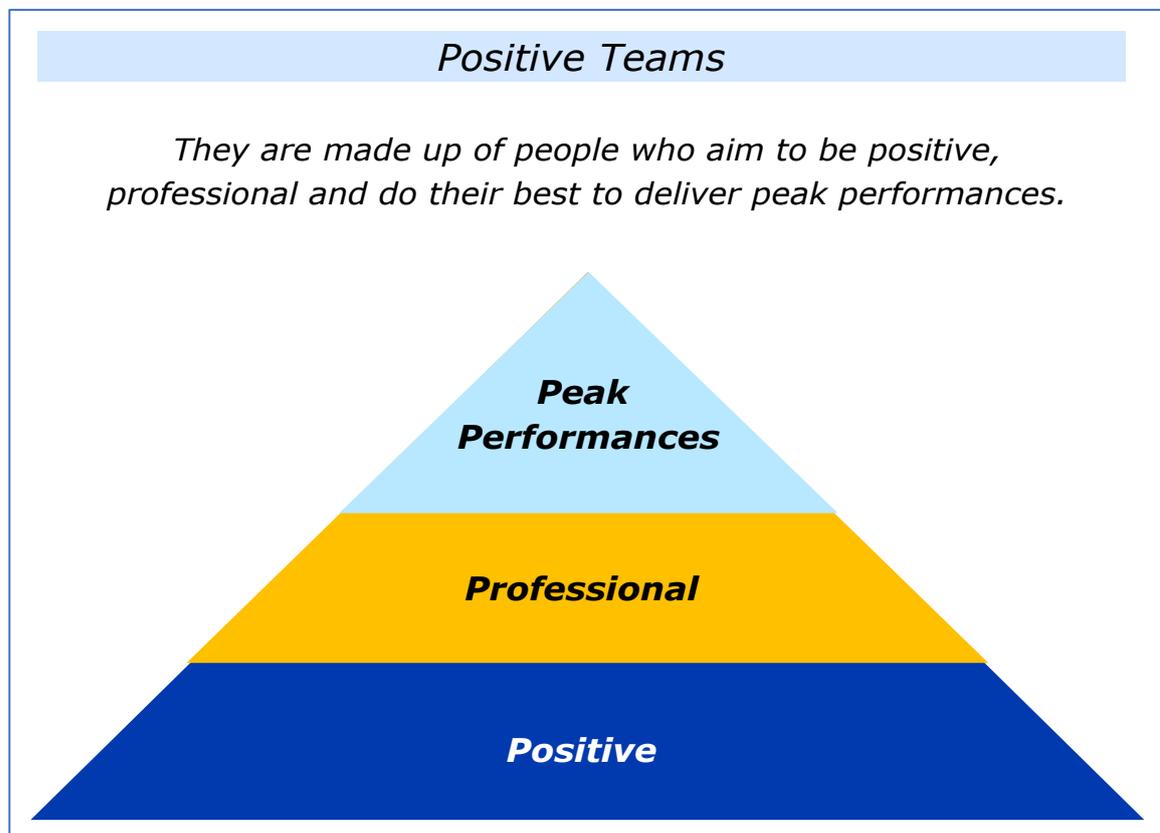
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## *The Right People*

Great teams employ people who have the right attitude and ability. They then put these people in the places where they are most likely to deliver the right results.

There are many models for getting the right people. The following pages explore some of these approaches.

### *The Positive, Professional And Peak Performers Approach*



Imagine that you lead your present team. What are the qualities you want your people to demonstrate?

One approach is to employ people who aim to be positive, professional and peak performers. Let's explore how you can identify whether the people in your team demonstrate these qualities.

## *Positive*

Start by looking at each person in your team or those you want to hire. Ask yourself the following questions.

*Do they have a positive attitude? Do they generate positive energy? Do they encourage other people? How do people feel after meeting them?*

*Do they take responsibility? Do they use volunteer language, saying that they want to make things happen? Or do they use victim language, saying that things happen to them?*

*Do they look for positive solutions to challenges? When appropriate, do they try to find win-win solutions to conflicts? Are they resilient? Do they rebound from setbacks?*

*On a scale 0 - 10, to what extent would I rate the person as being positive: a) towards customers; b) towards colleagues?*

Some employees can behave superbly with customers, for example, but may be difficult with colleagues. Great team members recognise that it is important to be positive with both groups.

Looking at each person in turn, rate them in both areas. Then describe what they can do to maintain or improve the ratings. Here is the exercise on this theme.

## *Positive*

*The name of the person is ...*

*The extent to which the person is positive towards customers and colleagues is:*

*Customers \_\_\_\_ / 10*

*Colleagues \_\_\_\_ / 10*

*The specific things the person can do to maintain or improve the ratings are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Professional*

Being positive is a good start, but it is also important for the team members to be competent. They need to support other people and deliver high professional standards.

Bearing this in mind, look at each person in turn and ask the following questions.

*Do they behave professionally? Are they customer focused? Do they deliver good service to their external and internal customers? Do they produce good quality work?*

*Are they self-managing? Are they proactive? Do they make clear contracts with people? Do they meet their promises? Do they want to improve?*

*Are they good at decision making? When making a decision, do they clarify the real results to achieve? Do they explore the possible options? Do they see the consequences of each option? Do they then make good decisions?*

*Are they good at proactively managing their key stakeholders? What are the words that their key stakeholders – their managers, customers and colleagues – would say about them?*

*On a scale 0 - 10, to what extent would I rate the person as being professional: a) towards customers: b) towards colleagues?*

Rate them in both areas and then describe what they can do to maintain or improve the ratings. Here is the exercise on this theme.

## *Professional*

*The name of the person is ...*

*The extent to which the person  
behaves in a professional way  
towards customers and colleagues is:*

*Customers \_\_\_\_ / 10*

*Colleagues \_\_\_\_ / 10*

*The specific things the person can do  
to maintain or improve the ratings are:*

*\**

*\**

*\**

## *Peak Performing*

What we are looking at is the extent to which a person consistently delivers 8+/10. They may do this by always being professional and then sometimes adding that touch of class.

Great teams are made up of people who continually do superb work and then rise to the occasion when it matters. They may do this when providing great service, managing crises or doing exceptional work.

Bearing these things in mind, ask yourself the following questions about a person.

*Do they consistently deliver 8+/10? When do they do work that is effective, excellent and sometimes exceptional? When do they go that extra mile and add that touch of class?*

*What are their strengths? What are the specific activities in which they deliver As rather than Bs or Cs? How can they use these to make their best contribution to the team?*

*If this was my own business – and my own money - would I employ this person? If so, what would I hire them to deliver? What would be the benefits to the team?*

*On a scale 0 - 10, to what extent do I rate the person regarding them delivering peak performances: a) when working with customers: b) when working with colleagues?*

Rate the person in both areas and then describe what they can do to maintain or improve the ratings. Here is the exercise on this theme.

## *Peak Performing*

*The name of the person is ...*

*The extent to which the person  
delivers peak performances  
with customers and colleagues is:*

*Customers \_\_\_\_ / 10*

*Colleagues \_\_\_\_ / 10*

*The specific things the person can do  
to maintain or improve the ratings are:*

\*

\*

\*

Imagine that you have done these ratings. What are the kinds of scores are you looking for? It can be useful to have people who score the following in each area.

*Being Positive: 8+. This is vital because the way they behave will affect other people.*

*Being Professional: 7+. This is providing they are willing to keep developing.*

*Being A Peak Performer: 7+. This is providing they are willing to use their talents to the benefit of the team.*

One leader explained how he had used this approach when focusing on some of his team.

*"The part I found most useful was rating one of my key players in relation to both customers and colleagues.*

*"He was superb with clients, but terrible with team members. He dismissed people's opinions and moaned aloud in the office.*

*"So I gave him the option of: a) choosing to be professional towards team members, or; b) carrying on being unprofessional and, as a result, being moved on from the team.*

*"After a period of reflection, he chose to be professional towards his colleagues. Since then he has been true to his word, but I am not taking any chances.*

*"So I have visited his customers, introduced them to other team members and have a back-up plan in case he reverts to his old behaviour."*

It can be good to have team members who aim to be positive, professional and peak performers. This provides the basis for continuing to build a superb team.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Building A Positive Team*

*The specific things I can do to build a team of people who are positive, professional and peak performers are:*

\*

\*

\*

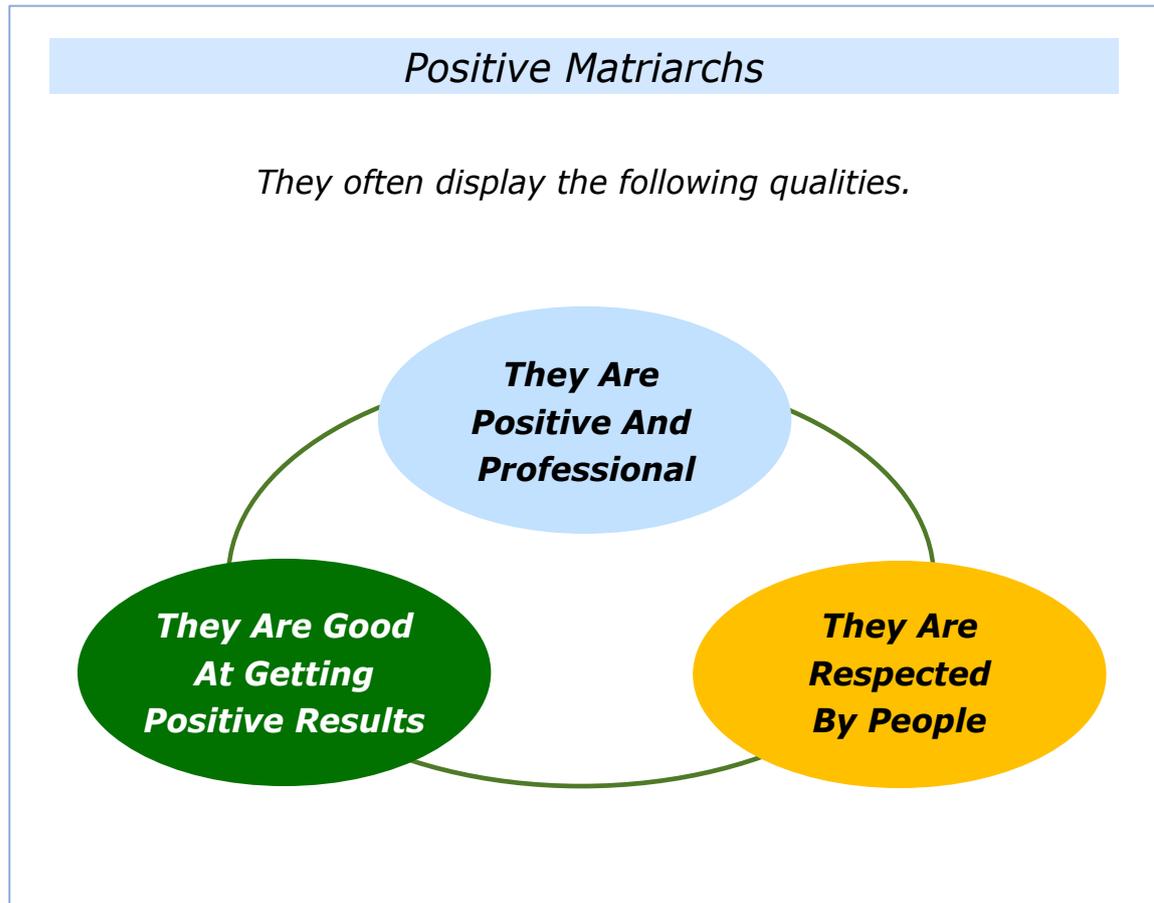
*The specific benefits of building such a team will be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Positive Matriarch Approach*



Positive matriarchs play a key part in helping teams and organisations to achieve success. They have formal professional roles but they also often act as custodians of the culture.

Such matriarchs act as positive models and demonstrate high professional standards. They are also savvy and know how to get positive results. People often like working for them, but also know what is and is not accepted.

Looking back, can you think of a woman who played such a role? What were the qualities she demonstrated? How did she translate these into action? How did other people respond to the matriarch?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *A Positive Matriarch In The Past*

*The name of the woman who  
acted as a positive matriarch was:*

\*

*The positive qualities  
they demonstrated were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The positive influence they had on  
the people and the workplace was:*

\*

\*

\*

Many positive matriarchs demonstrate some of the following qualities. Let's explore these themes.

### *They Are Positive And Professional*

Such people are often warm and welcoming. They show an interest in people but also have a strong work ethic. They expect themselves and others to deliver good work on a daily basis.

During the past fifty years I have worked in many places where women played this role. These have included therapeutic communities, schools, businesses and other organisations.

Such matriarchs often acted as custodians of the cultures. They safeguarded the principles and ensured these were translated into action. They created a positive atmosphere but also made sure that people got the work done.

### *They Are Respected By People*

Positive matriarchs provide the positivity and predictability that maintains an organisation. They are respected by people because of their personality and professionalism.

People also know that the matriarch expects them to deliver certain standards, however, so they don't try to get away with poor work. Some may do to begin with, but they soon decide to deliver the goods or move on.

Such women often act as good models for young professionals who aspire to develop their careers. They may also mentor such people and pass on knowledge about how to retain their sanity whilst also delivering success.

## *They Are Good At Getting Positive Results*

Many positive matriarchs have been around the block. They have had many different experiences in their personal and professional lives.

They have worked for superb leaders, dysfunctional leaders and many in-between. They have worked for great organisations and those that perform poorly.

They may have raised families, run refugee centres, coached sports teams, dealt with crises and led business teams. Most of all, they know how to get things done.

Let's return to your own work. Looking ahead, imagine that you lead an organisation. What may be the kind of situation when you may want to hire a positive matriarch?

What could be the benefits of bringing in such a person? What could you do to find such a person and then give them the support they need to do superb work?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *A Positive Matriarch In The Future*

*The specific situation where I may want  
to employ a positive matriarch may be:*

\*

*The positive benefits they may  
bring to the workplace may be:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to find such  
a person and then give them the  
support they need to do superb work are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Recruiting For Spirit Approach*

### *The Spirit Approach*

*There are many ways to recruit people. One approach is to clarify whether a person has the spirit and strengths that can help the team to achieve success.*

- *To clarify the spirit you want people in the team to demonstrate;*
- *To clarify whether a person may demonstrate the required spirit;*
- *To clarify how the person can demonstrate the required spirit.*

There are many ways to recruit people. One approach is to clarify whether a person has the right spirit and strengths to help the team to achieve its picture of success. This section focuses on the first theme.

Great teams are based on similarity of spirit and diversity of strengths. Diversity of spirit is a recipe for disaster. They want characters rather than clones, however, so they therefore often take the following step.

*They clarify whether a person has the spirit they want people in the team to demonstrate*

Some teams do this by focusing on the principles or professional standards they want people to demonstrate. One organisation I worked with took the following steps when interviewing people.

They sent the candidate a booklet that described: a) the values they wanted people in the organisation to follow; b) the reasons for following these values. It was illustrated with examples and success stories that showed employees living the values.

The candidate was invited to do some prework which they then presented at the interview. They were asked:

*To describe a specific time in when they had aimed to live some of these values – this could be in their personal or professional life;*

*To describe the specific things they did to translate this value into action;*

*To describe the specific things they would do to aim to live this value in their work in the organisation.*

This sounds an enormous task, but it was vital. Some candidates rose to the challenge, others did not.

The organisation saw recruitment as one of its most important tasks. It looked for people who took responsibility and aimed:

*To have a positive attitude;*

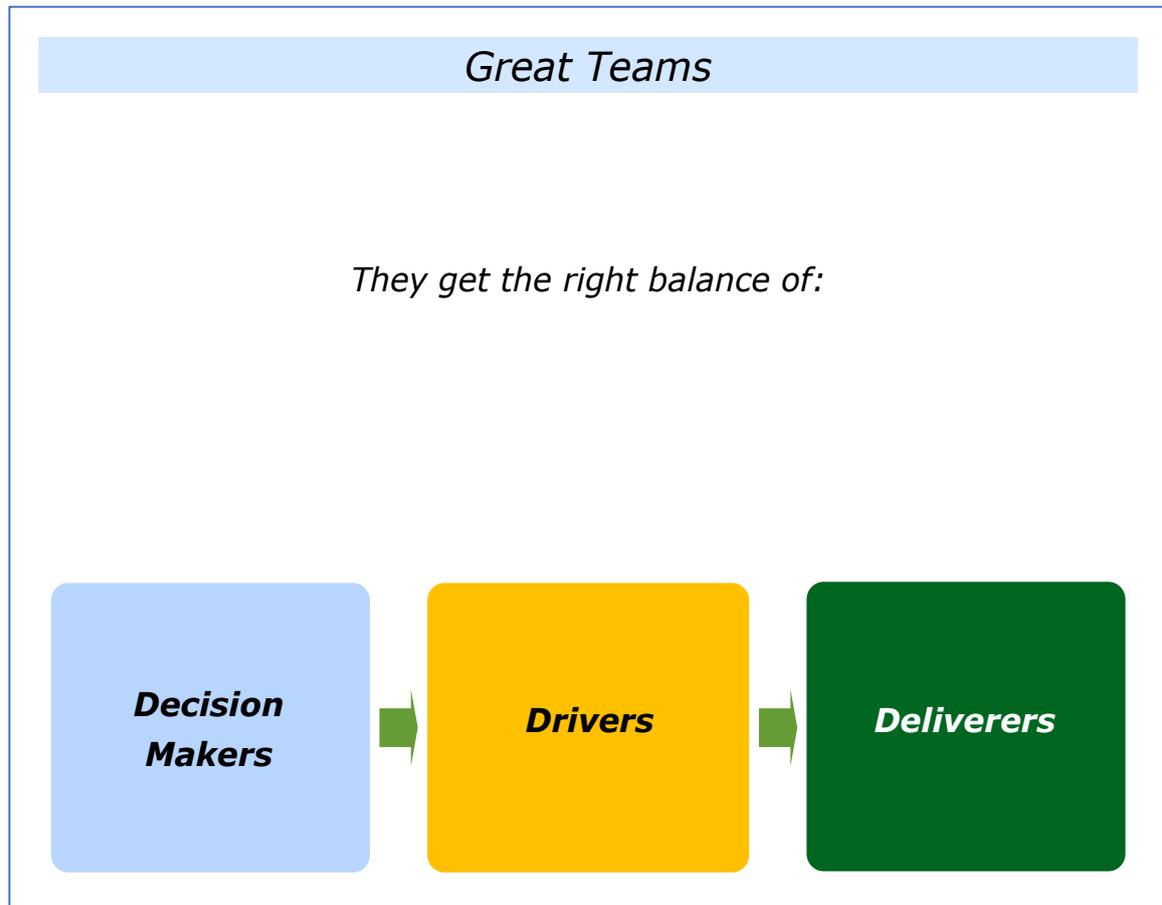
*To help other people – such as customers and colleagues - to succeed;*

*To keep developing as professionals*

The organisation aimed to recruit such people and involved them in a positive induction process. They then made decisions about the person's future towards the end of the probationary period.

The organisation found this often proved to be successful. It then took another look at the person's strengths and how they could use these to help the organisation to achieve success.

## *The Decision Makers, Drivers And Deliverers Approach*



Great teams get the right balance between decision makers, drivers and deliverers. Decision makers set the strategy. Drivers act as the gears and translate the strategy into action. Deliverers produce the goods.

People may move between all these roles at times but it is important to get the right balance in your team. Let' explore these different roles.

### *Decision Makers*

Decision makers set the compass and communicate the team's direction. Different people communicate this their people in different ways. Some describe the following themes.

## Decision Makers

- *They Describe The Destination*  
They communicate the team's destination – the picture of success – and the benefits of reaching the destination.
- *They Describe The Dos And Don'ts For Reaching The Destination*  
They communicate the Dos and Don'ts – the guidelines – it will be important for people to follow to work towards the destination. They describe the reasons for these guidelines.
- *They Invite People To Decide If They Want To Contribute Towards Reaching The Destination*  
They say something like: "Take time to reflect. Let us know if you want to use your strengths to follow the guidelines and work towards reaching the destination?"

Good teams frequently have two or three people at the centre who take responsibility for setting the overall direction. They often involve other key people, however, to ensure they have a real sense of ownership in terms of setting and implementing the strategy.

Imagine you are applying some of these ideas to the team in which you work at the moment. Ask yourself the following questions.

*Who are the good strategic decision makers in the team at the moment? How can they continue to make good decisions and, when appropriate, communicate these clearly to the whole team?*

*Who are the people in the team who could become good strategic decision makers? How can we help them to continue to develop their decision making skills?*

*Will we at any point need to add any more strategic decision makers? Where might we find such people? What could we then do to ensure they embody the team's spirit and also add to the team?*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Describe the good strategic decision makers you already have in the team – write their names. Describe the specific things you can do to, if appropriate, develop or add good strategic decision makers.

## *Decision Makers*

*The good strategic decision makers we already have in the team are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things we can do to, if appropriate, develop or add more strategic decision makers are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Drivers*

Drivers are the gears of the team. They act as positive models and often lead smaller teams within the whole team. They translate the strategy into action and ensure their people deliver results.

Such a driver approaches the leader and says something like the following.

*"As far as I understand it, the strategy of the overall team is: To ...*

*"My team's part in making the strategy happen is: To ...*

*"Is that correct? Right, I will go and make it happen."*

Leaders must make sure that all their direct reports embody these qualities. Otherwise they will leapfrog them and micro-manage the deliverers.

Great sports teams, for example, recruit drivers to form the spine of the team. Spurring-on their teammates, they ensure the strategy is translated into action. How does this work in your team?

Good drivers act as positive models. They keep reminding their people of the team's purpose and principles. They then manage by outcomes and enable their people to deliver the desired picture of success.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to do the following things.

Describe the good drivers you already have in the team – write their names. Describe the specific things you can do to, if appropriate, develop or add more good drivers.

## *Drivers*

*The good drivers we  
already have in the team are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things we can do  
to, if appropriate, develop  
or add more drivers are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Deliverers*

Deliverers are often doers who take responsibility. They make clear working contracts, do superb work and keep others informed about their progress. Good finishers in their areas of expertise, they make sure that things get done.

Some deliverers go on to become drivers, but this calls for adding to their repertoire of skills. They need to act as positive models and develop their skills as coordinators.

Some deliverers therefore prefer to remain as brilliant niche providers. This is okay: providing they have a positive attitude, do good work and contribute to helping the team reach its goals.

Good leaders know the strengths of their people. They know where each person is likely to deliver As rather than Bs or Cs. They therefore aim to put the right people in the right places. This makes it more likely that people will deliver the goods.

Great teams get the right balance of decision makers, drivers and deliverers. As mentioned earlier, however, sometimes each person may play each of these roles when doing certain kinds of work.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to do the following things.

Describe the good deliverers you already have in the team – write their names. Describe the specific things you can do to, if appropriate, develop or add more good deliverers.

## *Deliverers*

*The good deliverers we  
already have in the team are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things we can do  
to, if appropriate, develop  
or add more deliverers are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Rebuilding The Team Approach*

"But it is so difficult to get the right people," somebody may say. Maybe, but it is even more difficult working with the wrong people in the wrong places.

There is a much-quoted principle regarding government: "Personnel is policy." The personal beliefs and qualities of the key people will have a profound influence in the way the policies are implemented.

Imagine that you have a blank piece of paper to rebuild your present team. Imagine also that everybody in the team has left and reapplied to join. Let's explore how you can revitalise your team.

### *The Rebuilding The Team Approach*

*Imagine you had a blank piece of paper and could rebuild the team. Looking at the people, try answering the following questions.*

- *Who are the people that you would definitely rehire? What would you do to encourage them to play to their strengths? What are the specific things you would rehire them to deliver?*
- *Who are the people that you would maybe rehire? What would you rehire them to deliver? What would be the working contracts you would make with these people?*
- *Who are the people that you would not rehire? What would you do to behave toward them in a moral and professional way and help them to move on?*
- *Who are the kinds of people that you would add to the team? What would you do to hire these people and enable them to make their best contributions to the team?*

You need people who have a positive attitude and who aim to do professional work. Otherwise you may spend time dealing with people issues rather than working towards achieving the picture of success.

### *Clarify the people that you would definitely rehire*

Who are the people that you would definitely rehire? Bearing in mind their strengths, what would you rehire each of these people to deliver? How would you make clear contracts with them about their contributions to the team?

You will have your own criteria for making these decisions. Here are the headlines of a response that one leader gave to these questions.

*"I know exactly the people that I would rehire. There are several people that form the backbone of the team.*

*"Mary, the Operations Director, who makes things work. Sarah, the Sales Director, who is brilliant with certain kinds of clients. Dave, the Human Resources Director, who focuses on how people can use their strengths to implement the strategy."*

*"Looking at the next level, there are at least five people I would rehire immediately, two of whom could step into the leadership team."*

*"There are also fine people on Reception and in charge of Facilities. Looking overall, I would rehire about 60% of our people. They provide the backbone for the company."*

Imagine you lead your team. Who are the people you would definitely rehire? How would you encourage them to play to their strengths?

The next step would be to make clear contracts with them about their best contribution. You could agree with them on:

*The specific results they will deliver that will contribute towards achieving the team's goals.*

*The specific support they need to achieve the agreed goals.*

*The specific things they will do to proactively keep you informed about their progress towards achieving the goals.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this topic. This invites you to write the names of each person you would rehire and complete the following sentences.

*The People I Would  
Definitely Rehire*

*The person's name is:*

\*

*The specific things I would do  
to rehire them to deliver are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I would do to encourage  
and enable them to deliver these results are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Clarify the people that you would maybe rehire*

Who are the people you would maybe rehire? Bearing in mind their strengths, what would you maybe rehire them to deliver?

What is the attitude you would like them to demonstrate? What are the professional standards – the Dos and Don'ts – you would like them to bear in mind when contributing to the team? How can you give them these messages in a positive but clear way?

How can you then give them chance to reflect and decide if they want to follow these professional guidelines? If they want to opt in, how can you then make clear contracts with them about their best contribution to the team?

You will have your own criteria for making these decisions. Here is the response that the leader mentioned earlier gave to these questions.

*"There are one or two people I might rehire, but a lot would depend on their attitude. The leaders of our IT department, for example, must become more customer-focused.*

*"During the early days we just had a couple of people who took care of the internal systems. At the time they were contractors and really put in the hours. As the business grew, we offered them the chance to lead the department on a full-time basis, which they grabbed straight away.*

*"Since then the IT department has grown, but the leaders have become locked into their systems, rather than serving the internal customers.*

*"I might rehire the two original people, because they are talented. But I will invite them to decide if they want to show the commitment they did when working as suppliers.*

*"For example, I want them to deliver a service where our people say things like:*

*'The IT department provides great service that helps us to do our jobs ... They are responsive and sort out problems quickly ... They help us to get up to speed quickly with the newest technology ... They are the best IT department I have worked with in any company.'*

*"I will give them the chance to decide if they want to get these kinds of responses from our people. If so, I will invite them to produce a plan to ensure they achieve these goals. I will give them a deadline by which this plan should be produced, but I won't chase them.*

*"If they do not get back to me by the agreed date - or if they produce a plan but fail to deliver the goods - then that is their choice. I will find people who are prepared to deliver the required professional standards."*

Imagine that you have clarified how you would maybe rehire. The next step would be to make clear contracts with them about their best contribution. You could agree with them on:

*The specific results they will deliver that will contribute towards achieving the team's goals.*

*The specific professional standards required to make their best contribution to the team.*

*The specific support they need to achieve the agreed goals.*

*The specific things they will do to proactively keep you informed about their progress towards achieving the goals.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this topic. This invites you to write the names of each person you would maybe rehire and how you would encourage them to deliver the desired results.

## *The People I Would Maybe Rehire*

*The person's name is:*

\*

*The specific things I would do  
to rehire them to deliver are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I would do  
to encourage and enable  
them to deliver these results are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Clarify the people that you would not rehire*

Who are the people you would not rehire? What are the reasons why you would not rehire these people? How could you manage these situations in a moral and professional way?

Different leaders give different reasons for not rehiring certain people. Here are some that they offer.

*"They have the wrong attitude. They have crafted a role that suits them, but it does not add value to the company."*

*"They rose quickly in the company and got a great financial package. Now the company has changed and we need different things from a person at their level. But they want to carry on doing the same things and drawing a high salary."*

*"They are high-maintenance. They expect the company to satisfy all their needs rather than them taking responsibility for making their best contribution to the company."*

Imagine you have clarified the people you would not rehire. The next step is to handle the situation in a professional way.

Different people do this in different ways. One approach is to make sure all the legal areas are covered and also to be generous in any package you offer a person.

If appropriate, you may then write a script you want to follow when talking with the person. This may include the following messages.

*"As you know, the team faces many challenges as it moves forward. This means that people will need to demonstrate certain qualities to be the right fit with what is required."*

*"The characteristics that people will need to demonstrate in the future in order to help the team achieve success are:*

\*  
\*  
\*

*"Whilst you have certain qualities, unfortunately the ones you have do not fit with what is needed in the future team. We will, of course, offer you the best available package to move on."*

*"I am prepared to answer any questions you have about this decision. Also, we will provide as much support as we can in helping to make the transition easier for you and the team."*

*"If you want to reflect for a while, please do so. I will then answer any questions you have regarding the next steps for moving forwards."*

Imagine that you have given a person these kinds of messages. If the person asks for more information about the decision, it is important to be able to give specific reasons.

You can, for example, describe the positive qualities the person would need to have demonstrated. So you may say something like:

*"The professional attitude and standards that people need to demonstrate in the future team are:*

\*  
\*  
\*

*"You have certain qualities, but unfortunately have not shown the ones we require in the future. Therefore it is probably not the right fit for you or for the team."*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this topic. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The People I Would Not Rehire*

*The person's name is:*

\*

*The specific reasons why I  
would not rehire them are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I would do  
to manage the situation in a  
moral and professional way are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Clarify the people that you may want to add to the team*

If you wish, clarify the kinds of people you may want to add to the team. One approach is to start by asking yourself the following questions.

*What are the individual and collective strengths we have in the team? What are the strengths that we need to add? How can we do our best to hire people who will add those strengths?*

Imagine, for example, that you have many people who are entrepreneurial or experts. They have lots of ideas, but sometimes their efforts are not aligned. You may need to add several good coordinators. They will make sure that people align their efforts and get the work done.

Good leaders are like good sports coaches. They spend a lot of time looking for potential hires. Aiming to get ahead of the game - rather than being left in the lurch - they fill the recruitment pipeline with people who might want to work in their team.

The General Manager of one hotel chain I worked with, for example, took notice of people who gave him good service on his travels. If appropriate, he would hand them his card and say something like the following.

*"You gave us great service today. If you are ever interested in developing your career, let me know. Drop me an email and we can have an informal chat over coffee."*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this topic. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The People I Would Like To Add*

*The specific kinds of people I would like to add to the team are:*

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*The specific things I can do to find these people and then make clear contracts about their contributions to the team are:*

\*

\*

\*

*Clarify the specific things that  
you can do to rebuild the team*

How can you translate these ideas into action? One person explained this approach in the following way.

*"I do this exercise every year and act on it. At first it seemed a bit scary, but that was because there was so much to sort out.*

*"It took six months to get the team right, but now it functions brilliantly. Nevertheless, I still do the exercise to ensure we stay on track."*

Imagine that you have done the previous exercises. Bearing in mind the decisions you have made about people you may want to take the following steps.

*You can rehearse the conversations you  
are going to have with each person*

This is vital. Make sure you are crystal clear on the key messages you want to give to: a) the people you definitely would rehire; b) the people you maybe would rehire; c) the people you would not rehire; d) the people you want to add to the team.

*You can rehearse how to make clear contracts  
with the people who will be in the future team*

This will involve agreeing on the results they will deliver and the support needed to achieve the goals. Looking ahead at the different types of conversations, anticipate the potential challenges. Rehearse how you can deal with these in a professional way.

Let return the theme of having the right people in the team.  
Imagine that you lead your present team.

Do you have the right people in the right places in the team? What can you do to make this happen? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Right People*

*The extent to which I believe the team has the right people in the right places is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

\*

*The specific things we can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

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*The specific benefits of taking these steps will be:*

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## *The Right Way*

Great teams encourage, educate and enable people to implement the right strategy in the right way. People can then keep delivering high professional standards on the way towards achieving the right results.

Imagine you lead your present team. Let's assume you have communicated the purpose, principles and picture of success. Everybody has also made clear contracts about their best contributions. You can then aim:

*To make sure that every team member has the support required to do the job;*

*To hold monthly update sessions where each person presents the following;*

*a) the things they have done in the last month towards achieving the goals;*

*b) the things they plan to do in the next month towards achieving the goals;*

*c) the challenges they face, their strategies for tackling these challenges and the support they need to reach the goals;*

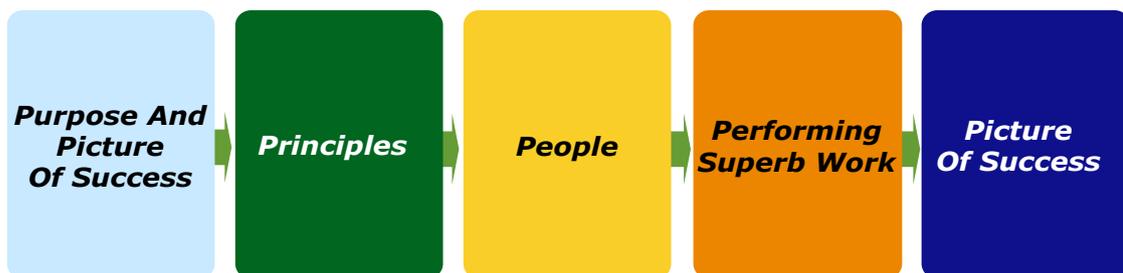
*To keep publishing success stories that highlight when people have performed superb work and how the team can follow these principles in the future;*

*You can also encourage people to embody the concept of continuous improvement and do what is necessary to ensure the team delivers success.*

It is also possible to apply elements of this approach when leading a project team. There are many models for running successful projects. Here is one approach.

## The Project Approach

*There are many models for running successful projects.  
One approach is to focus on the following themes.*



- *Purpose And Picture Of Success*

*This involves agreeing with the key stakeholders on the purpose of the project - the real results to achieve. It is then to translate this into a clear picture of success.*

- *Principles*

*This involves clarifying the key principles you want people to follow when doing the project. It means identifying people who you believe will want to follow these principles and deliver the picture of success.*

- *People*

*This involves employing the right people on the project and putting them in the right places where they can do superb work. It then involves doing the following things.*

*You can again communicate the picture of success. Make sure you have mission holders who take responsibility for doing the various parts of the work. You can then make clear contracts about people's contributions and give them the support they need to achieve the picture of success.*

- **Performing Superb Work**

*This involves encouraging, educating and enabling the people: to perform superb work; to keep others informed about their progress; to keep improving and find solutions to problems. People then do the work.*

- **Picture Of Success**

*This involves people doing their best to achieve the picture of success. It can then be useful to publish a success story that shows how people have followed certain principles and performed superb work to achieve the picture of success.*

Let's explore another theme regarding making your best contribution.

## *The Drive It, Delegate It And Ditch It Approach*

Good leaders aim to drive the key strategies for helping the team to achieve success. They manage their energy properly and aim to be selective to be effective.

Sounds simple in theory, but sometimes the leader's diary gets crowded as they take on more things to do. One leader described this in the following way.

*"My 'To Do' list is full and there are only so many jobs I can tackle. My days should be spent driving strategy, but they get consumed by catching-up on tasks.*

*"I only have so much energy, so it is important to channel this into the activities that will make a real difference. Sometimes at the end of a day it is hard to know what I have achieved."*

Imagine that you lead your team. How can you be effective? Start by listing the things that must be done to deliver the picture of success.

Divide these into three headings: Drive It, Delegate It, Ditch It. Then work through the following steps.

### *Drive It*

Looking at the 'To Do' list, start by describing the things that you personally want to drive. The leader mentioned above explained their approach to doing this in the following way.

*"I am clear on our team's goals. I am also clear on the three key strategies we can follow to achieve that goal. I plan to take responsibility for the top two strategies."*

*"The first strategy is to continually manage and reassure our key stakeholders – my bosses and the banks – by delivering the required profitability."*

*"The second strategy is to build and maintain a culture in which people can deliver peak performance."*

*"I will take a hands-on approach to making these two strategies happen. This will also involve working with the right people to ensure we deliver the required results."*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Bearing in mind your 'To Do' list, this invites you to do the following. Describe the specific things you want to take responsibility for driving and how you can make these happen.

## *Drive It*

*The specific things I want to drive to help the team deliver the picture of success are:*

\*

\*

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*The specific steps I can take to drive these things are:*

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## *Delegate It*

Looking at your 'To Do' list, move on to the things you want to delegate. Delegation sounds easy in theory, but it is vital to do the following things.

*To describe the specific outcomes that are required – the picture of success;*

*To delegate to people who are capable of delivering these outcomes – otherwise you will be spending your time micromanaging them;*

*To check they have understood the required outcomes – by asking them to play back their understanding – and make sure they want to do the job.*

*To give them the support required and how they will proactively keep you informed of their progress towards achieving the goals.*

The leader mentioned above explained their approach in the following way.

*"Looking at our key strategies, I decide to delegate our approach to developing a successful digital arm.*

*"Certainly I was still accountable for the results, but my Chief Technology Officer was more than capable of making it happen.*

*"We made clear contracts about the desired outcome, the support required and how they would proactively keep me informed about the progress toward achieving the goal.*

*"This meant I could sleep more easily at night."*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Bearing in mind your 'To Do' list, this invites you to do the following.

Describe the specific things you want to delegate and how you can delegate these properly.

## *Delegate It*

*The specific things I want to delegate are:*

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*The specific steps I can take to delegate these things properly are:*

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## *Ditch It*

Looking at your 'To Do' list, describe the things you want to ditch. It will also be important to describe how to manage the consequences of ditching these.

The leader mentioned earlier described their approach in the following way.

*"I find it easy to ditch things in theory, but it is more difficult in practise.*

*"I start out with good intentions, but then get guilty about neglecting certain activities. So I often end up doing these things anyway.*

*"Bearing this in mind, I gathered my leadership team and we focused on the following things.*

*"The key strategies we could follow and how we could deliver these successfully.*

*"The specific things we wanted to ditch – the tasks, projects and other activities – because these were time consuming and did not contribute greatly to achieving the goals.*

*"The specific things we could do to manage the consequences of ditching these things.*

*"The discussion became heated at times because it sometimes involved pet projects, but we got there in the end.*

*"Ditching some activities also had implications for some of our stakeholders.*

*Bearing this in mind, I spent quite a lot of time meeting these people and, where appropriate, provided alternative solutions.*

*"The ditching process eventually went well. It freed up more time for implementing the key strategies and achieving success."*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Bearing in mind the 'To Do' list, this invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Ditch It*

*The specific things I and the team want to ditch are:*

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*The specific steps I and we can take to ditch these things and manage the consequences are:*

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This section has explored ways to implement the right strategy with the right people in the right way. Taking this approach increases the chances of delivering the right results.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Right Way*

*The extent to which I believe the people in the team implement the right things in the right way is:*

*\_\_\_ / 10*

\*

*The specific things we can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

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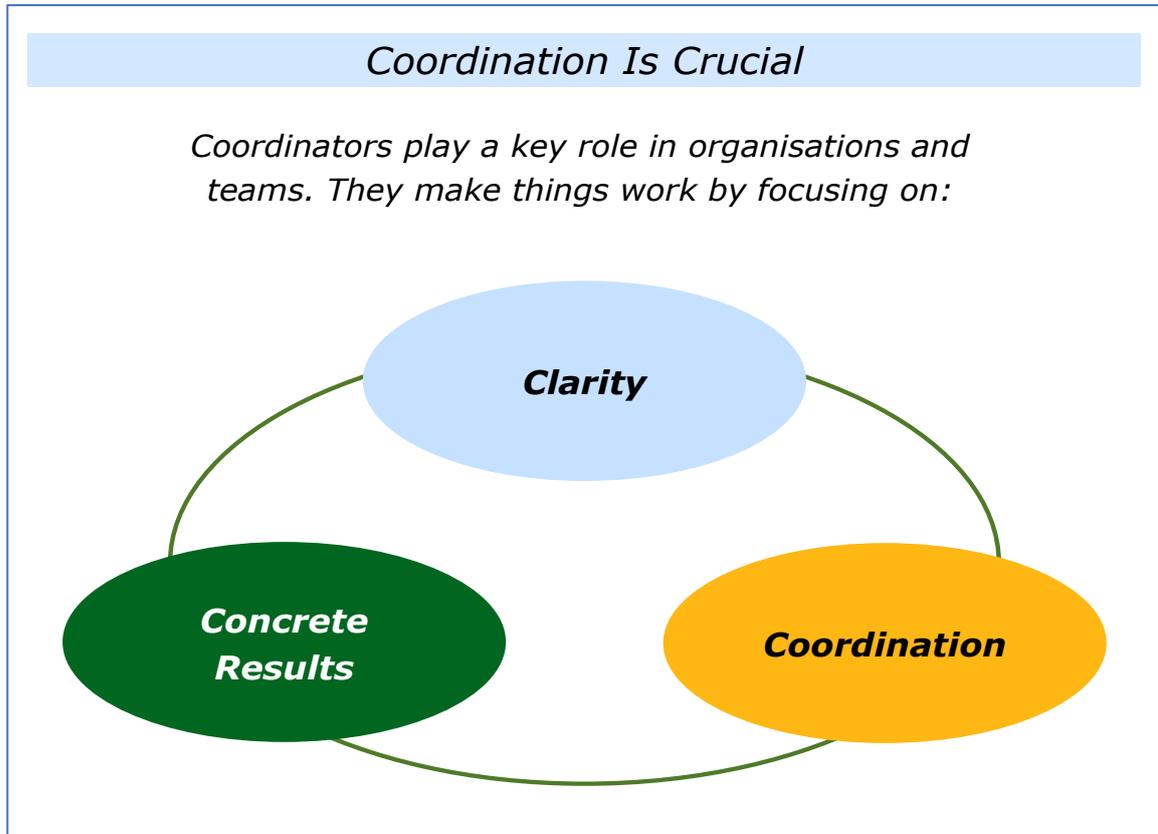
*The specific benefits of taking these steps will be:*

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## The Coordination Approach



People use different models for building great teams. Whatever model they use, however, it is vital for to coordinate people's efforts towards achieving the picture of success.

Coordinators are great orchestrators and make things work. They are often good at connecting with people and coordinating their strengths to deliver the desired concrete results.

Modern organisations recognise that coordination is crucial. Why? Getting creative people to combine their talents can be a challenging task at the best of times. Coordinators ensure that people channel their efforts towards achieving the agreed goal.

Clarity is vital. The leader's role is to communicate the purpose, principles and picture of success. The team member's role is to make clear contracts about their part in achieving the goals. People then deliver consistently high standards and do their best to achieve the picture of success.

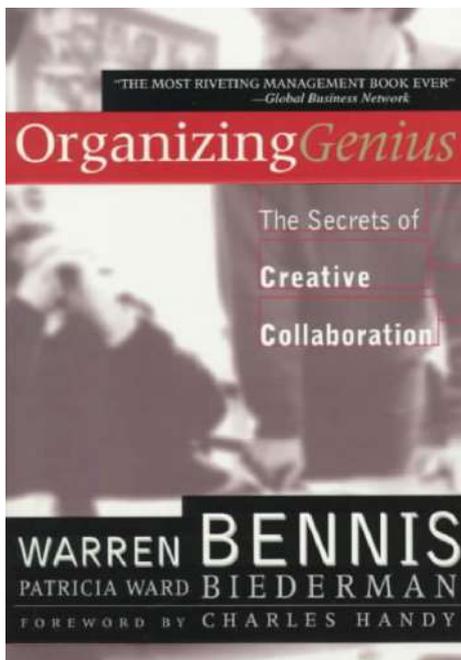
Great leadership and coordination plays a key role in all teams. Warren Bennis and Patricia Ward Bierdeman underlined these themes in their book *Organizing Genius – The Secrets Of Creative Collaboration*. Here is an excerpt from one summary of the book.

*The authors studied six Great Groups whose work affected and sometimes changed the modern worlds.*

*These include the Disney organization; the Xerox Corporation's Palo Alto Research Center, which designed the first user-friendly computer and the Black Mountain College in the foothills of North Carolina, which lasted only from 1933 to 1956 but attracted many major artists.*

*All of these groups, the authors stress, consisted of enormously talented people with a sense of mission, who worked under a strong leader and were imbued with pragmatic optimism.*

## Great Groups



Warren Bennis and Patricia Ward Bierdeman studied creative teams that performed superbly.

Their book *Organizing Genius* described how such people collaborate to do great work.

Here are some of the principles they highlighted.

- *Greatness starts with great people. Every great group has a superb leader. The leaders of great groups love talent and know where to find it.*
- *Great groups are full of talented people who can work together. In great groups, the right person has the right job.*
- *Every great group is an island, but has a bridge to the mainland. Sometimes it is a leader or other person that provides this bridge.*

- *Great groups are optimistic. They think they are on a mission from God or their equivalent. They often see themselves as winning underdogs.*
- *The leaders of great groups give their people what they need and free them from the rest. People in great groups have no distractions.*
- *Great groups ship. They always deliver a superb product. They also find that great work is its own reward.*

Strong coordination plays a vital part in channelling people's talents towards a compelling goal - otherwise individuals may do their own thing. Let's explore how this works in practise.

## *Clarity*

Coordinators are good at managing upwards and clarifying the real results the leader wants to achieve. They then communicate this clarity to other people in the organisation.

Sometimes this involves continuing to communicate the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success. Sometimes it may involve focusing on a specific piece of work and clarifying the real results to achieve.

Coordinators realise that sometimes the desired results can evolve. This can be the case when working with a visionary founder or leader who has lots of ideas.

Bearing this in mind, they keep in touch with the leader to confirm or develop the desired goals. Sometimes they may need to translate these new aims in ways that enable the employees to take them on board.

Coordinators may also sometimes need to provide air cover for their people. This can be necessary if other stakeholders start passing down tasks without first checking that these fit with the overall strategy.

Coordinators also encourage the leader to play to their strengths. They see their role as making sure the engine keeps running and delivers excellence. This helps the leader to feel more at ease and focus on where they excel.

## Coordination

Good coordinators make things work. They often do this by harnessing people's strengths to achieve the agreed picture of success. They aim to manage by outcomes rather than by tasks.

They start by explaining the big picture. This is especially vital with knowledge workers who want to know the context. They then take the following steps before making clear contracts with people:

*They remind people about the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success;*

*They explain where the specific piece of work fits into achieving the picture of success;*

*They explain the real results – the outcomes - to achieve by doing the piece of work;*

They then take these steps to coordinate people's strengths.

### *Coordinating People's Strengths*

*Coordinators often focus on the following themes and ask the following questions when coordinating people's strengths to achieve the goals.*

### *Clarifying The Picture Of Success*

*What are the real results – what are the outcomes - we want achieve? What is the picture of success? What will be happening that will show we have achieved the goals?*

*What are the key strategies we can follow to achieve the picture of success? How can do our best to follow these strategies and achieve the picture of success?*

### *Coordinating People's Strengths*

*What are people's strengths? What are the specific activities in which each person - or each team - delivers As rather than Bs or Cs? How can we coordinate people's strengths to achieve the picture of success?*

*What are the remaining practical tasks that must be done? How can we find creative ways to make sure these tasks are completed successfully?*

### *Clear Contracting About People's Contributions*

*How can we make clear contracts with people about their contributions? How can we agree on the specific outcomes they will deliver towards achieving the picture of success? How can make sure there are mission holders who will take responsibility for delivering specific projects?*

*How can we build in regular coordination meetings? How can we ensure that we keep tracking our progress towards the goals? How can we ensure that people keep others informed about:*

*The specific things they have delivered in the past month towards achieving the picture of success;*

*The specific things they will deliver in the next month;*

*The specific challenges they face and their solutions for tackling these challenges;*

*The specific kinds of support they would like to help them to deliver success?*

Good coordinators manage by outcomes rather than by tasks. They make clear contracts with people about the contributions they will make towards achieving the picture of success.

People must be able to describe what they will deliver in outcome terms. This can be challenging because many people are used to writing lists of tasks. They describe what they are going to do rather than what they are going to deliver.

Good coordinators spend a lot of time with each team and, when appropriate, each person agreeing on the outcomes to be delivered.

Why? Because from then on virtually every performance conversation will start by concentrating on this What – the agreed outcomes – rather than getting into supervising the tasks.

After such a contracting session, here is how one team leader might describe their contribution under Profits, Products and People.

### *My Contribution To The Picture Of Success*

#### *Profitability*

*To ensure my team achieves its financial targets – a profit of £500k;*

*To develop three new customers and do work with them that delivers a profit of £100k;*

*To reduce our overheads by £100k.*

#### *Products*

*To ensure more than 90%+ of our customers say they are extremely satisfied with our work;*

*To develop two new products and pilot these successfully with customers – then launch these products by the end of the year;*

*To simplify two of our complex products to ensure these are more user friendly for customers - then get a further £100k's worth of orders for these before the end of the year.*

### *People*

*To deliver an internal morale rating of 90%+ of our team members saying they enjoy coming to work each day;*

*To educate, equip and enable two of my team members to win promotion and move on to other roles in the company;*

*To recruit four new positive team members who take responsibility and who will contribute to helping the team to achieve success.*

Coordinators set-up people to succeed. They agree on the outcomes to achieve and give people the required support. They also like to be kept informed. They ensure that people proactively update them about their progress towards achieving the goals.

Coordinators focus on the outcomes to achieve when people are faced by challenges. During the conversation, they keeps returning to the agreed What. They say something along the following lines.

*Let's go back to the real results to achieve. How can we do our best to deliver those results?*

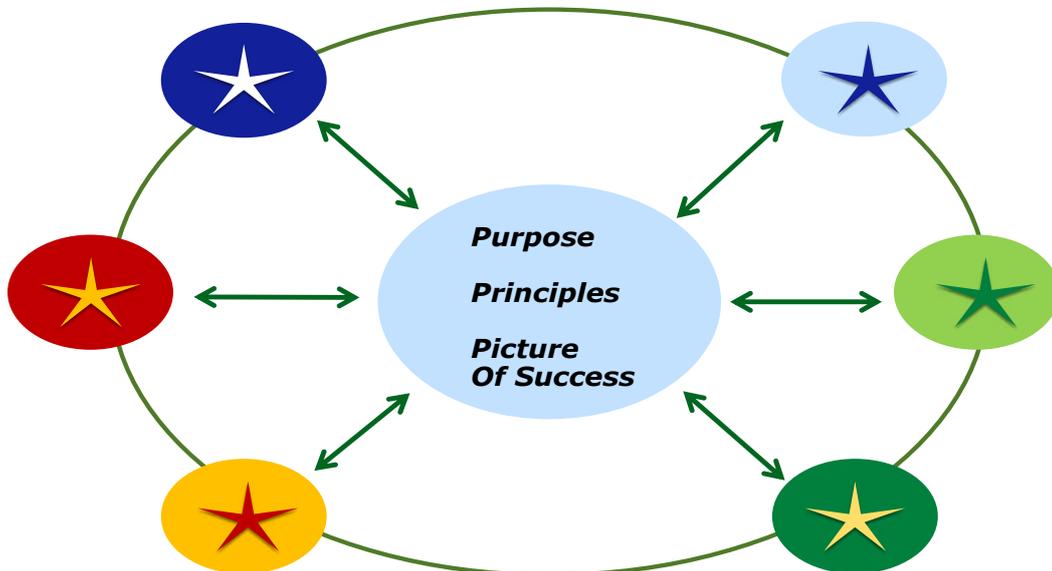
*What are the options going forwards? What are the pluses and minuses of each option? What is the route we want to follow? How can we follow this route and do our best to deliver the results?*

Why take this approach? People can get into a pattern of talking about details. They may also confuse activity with results. Whether it concerns profits, product quality or people, the mantra is:

*Let's go back to agreed outcomes. How can we do our best to deliver those results?*

## Coordinating A Constellation Of Stars

*You can make clear contracts with them about how they want to contribute to the purpose, principles and picture of success.*



Coordinators sometimes need to orchestrate the efforts of diverse individuals or teams to achieve a specific goal. This is quite possible, though can sometimes be challenging. One of my clients expressed this in the following way.

*"Every day here is like managing Glastonbury. We aim to deliver brilliant performances, but some people seem to on their own agenda. The work can be thrilling, especially when things go well, but it can also be challenging."*

Imagine that you are aiming to coordinate a constellation of teams, knowledge workers or talented individuals. One model that works is the framework outlined in the global-local approach. You can aim:

*To keep focusing on the purpose, principles and picture of success;*

*To make this the guiding compass and to explain to people:*

*"This is the purpose, these are the principles and this is the picture of success. Take time to reflect and decide if you want to contribute. If so, then we can make clear contracts about:*

*"The specific contribution you want to make; the support you need; the specific things you will do to proactively keep me informed about your progress; the specific things you will deliver and by when."*

One point is vital when coordinating teams. You can make clear contracts with the leader, but it is important to have a coordinator in each team.

They can make sure the plans are implemented and keep you up to date with the team's progress. You can then orchestrate everybody's efforts to achieve the picture of success.

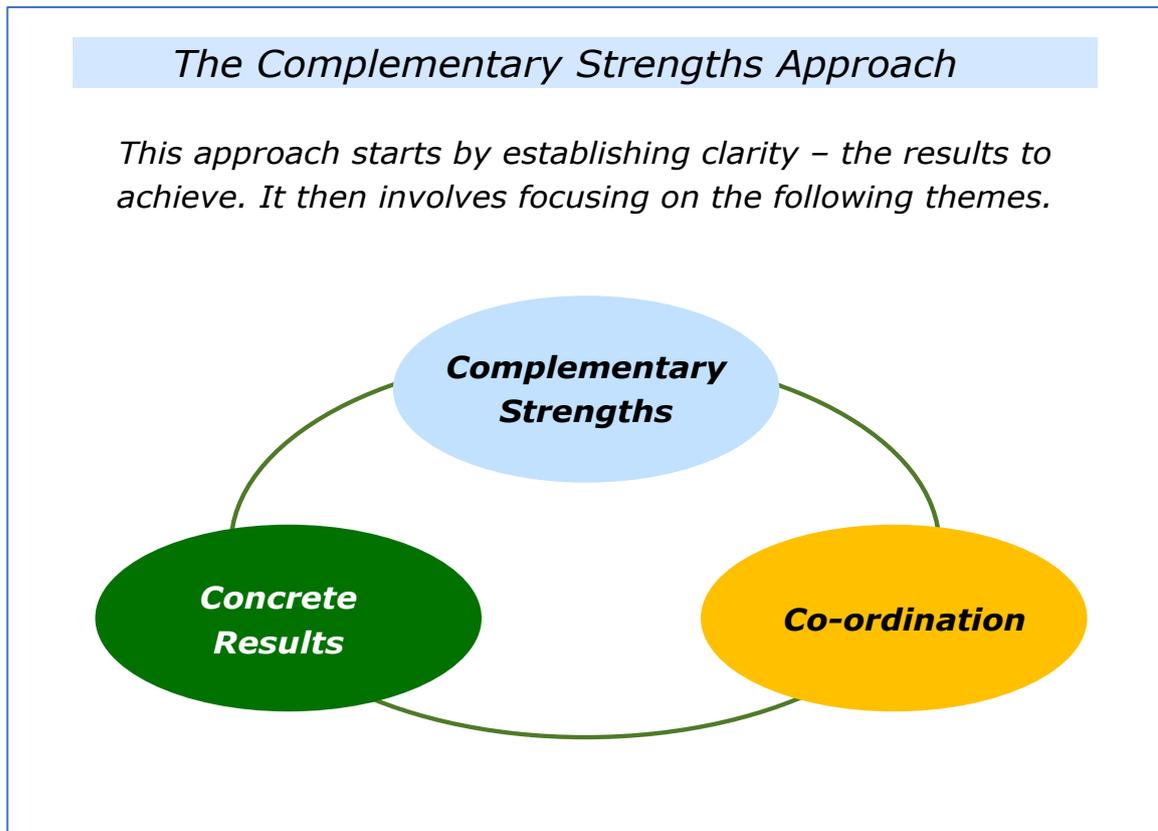
### *Clear Contracting*

*You can make clear contracts with them – each team or each person – by saying something along the following lines.*

- *"This is the purpose, these are the principles and this is the picture of success.*
- *"Take time to reflect to decide if this is something you want to contribute towards achieving?"*
- *"If so, let's make clear contracts about your best contribution."*

*It then calls for each person or each team – through its leader or its coordinator – to proactively keep you informed about their progress towards achieving the picture of success.*

## The Complementary Strengths Approach



Good leaders hire people who want to achieve the team's goals. It can be important to recruit people:

*Who embody the spirit required in the team;*

*Who have strengths that will contribute towards achieve the team's goals;*

*Who demonstrate consistently high standards and deliver the goods.*

Good coordinators may have some responsibility for putting together teams. If so, it can be useful to remember that:

*Great teams are often made up of combinations of people who have complementary strengths*

Each team member may have specific strengths. Some of these people may work best, however, when working with others who have complementary strengths.

A visionary leader may work best with a good coordinator. A brilliant technical person may work best with a good people manager. A superb sales director may work best with a good operator who manages the day-to-day activities.

Coordinators may sometimes be able to put together such teams. This may be the case, for example, when putting together project teams.

As ever, it is important to communicate the concrete results to achieve. It then:

*To put together teams of people who have complementary strengths and who want to achieve the results;*

*To help them to coordinate their efforts and deliver high standards;*

*To do everything possible to deliver the desired concrete results.*

Let's consider one of the key themes to focus on when working towards the team's goals.

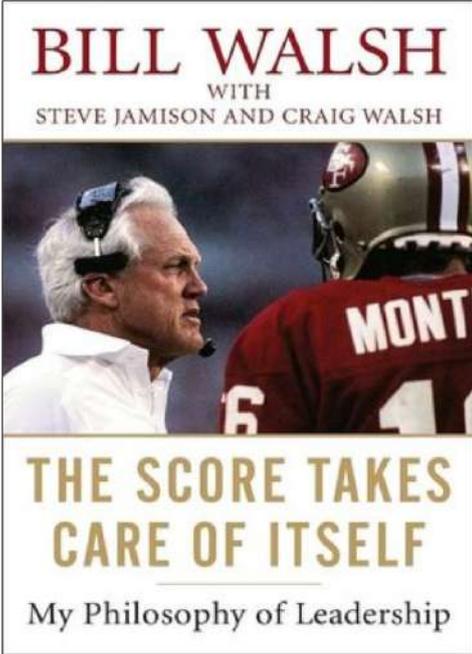
### *Consistently High Standards*

Coordinators encourage people to deliver consistently high standards. They make clear contracts with the teams and individuals about:

*The specific standards they will deliver when working towards achieving the picture of success*

There are many models for encouraging people to maintain high standards. One can be found in the work of Bill Walsh, the coach of the San Francisco 49ers American Football team.

Bill believed it was vital for everybody in an organisation to deliver a certain Standard of Performance. This was more important than striving for winning. He believed that, providing people consistently delivered the Standard of Performance, the score took care of itself.



**BILL WALSH**  
WITH  
STEVE JAMISON AND CRAIG WALSH

**THE SCORE TAKES CARE OF ITSELF**  
My Philosophy of Leadership

*Great players keep practicing their Standards of Performance until they achieve routine perfection.*

*They don't start hunching up, grimacing or trying to 'hit the ball harder' at critical points.*

*Great players aim to keep delivering the Standard of Performance. The score then takes care of itself.*

Did it work? Despite not focusing on winning, his team was hailed as a dynasty.

It took two seasons - 1979 and 1980 - to turnaround the ailing team. The 49ers then won the Super Bowl three times - in 1981, 1984 and 1988 - before Bill retired.

### *Taking Over The San Francisco 49ers*

Bill took over the team in 1979. Interviewed for the book *The Score Takes Care of Itself*, by Steve Jamison and Craig Walsh, he said that his aim was to create an environment of excellence.

The first two years were difficult. He aimed to build a top-notch organisation rather than one that was toxic.

This called for hiring great people and moving on those who chose not to meet the required standards. Bill explained this in the following way.

*"I came to the San Francisco 49ers with an overriding priority and specific goal – to implement what I call the Standard of Performance.*

*"It was a way of doing things, a leadership philosophy that has as much to do with core values, principles, and ideals as with blocking, tackling, and passing: more to do with the mental than with the physical.*

*"While I prized preparation, planning, precision, and poise, I also knew that organizational ethics were crucial to ultimate ongoing success.*

*"It began with this fundamental leadership assertion: Regardless of your specific job, it is vital to our team that you do that job at the highest possible level in all its various aspects, both mental and physical (i.e., good talent with bad attitude equals bad talent).*

*"There are also the basic characteristics of attitude and action – the new organizational ethos – I tried to teach our team, to put into our DNA.*

*"Of course, for this to happen the person in charge – whether the head coach, CEO, manager, or assembly line foreman – must exhibit the principles."*

This called for commitment to details, such as people having a positive attitude, no shirttails out when wearing the 49ers uniform, being prompt, showing good sportsmanship.

No strutting, posturing or cheap shots, controlling of profanity, treating fans with respect and always exhibiting professional behaviour.

## *The Standard Of Performance*

*Here are some excerpts from The Standard Of Performance.*

*These principles applied to the coaches, players, ticket sellers, receptionists and all people who worked for the 49ers.*

*Each person was expected to focus on how they could – in their role – deliver the relevant Standard of Performance.*

- *Use positive language and have a positive attitude. Demonstrate character. Be fair and demonstrate respect for each person in the organization and the work they do.*
- *Exhibit a ferocious and intelligently applied work ethic directed at continual improvement. Maintain an ongoing level of concentration and focus that is abnormally high.*
- *Seek poise in yourself and those you lead. Show self-control, especially where it counts most – under pressure. Deal appropriately with victory and defeat, adulation and humiliation (don't go crazy with victory nor dysfunctional with loss).*
- *Demonstrate and prize loyalty. Promote internal communication that is both open and substantive (especially under stress). Make sacrifice and commitment the organization's trademark.*

Bill believed that leaders must develop the right strategy for delivering success. This included developing the right planning for tackling various scenarios. He explained this in the following way.

*"The motto of the Boy Scouts, 'Be prepared,' became my modus operandi, and to be prepared I had to factor in every contingency: good weather, bad weather, and everything in between.*

*"I kept asking and answering this question: 'What do I do if...?'*

*You must envision the future deeply and in detail – creatively – so that the unforeseeable becomes foreseeable. Then you write the script for the foreseeable.*

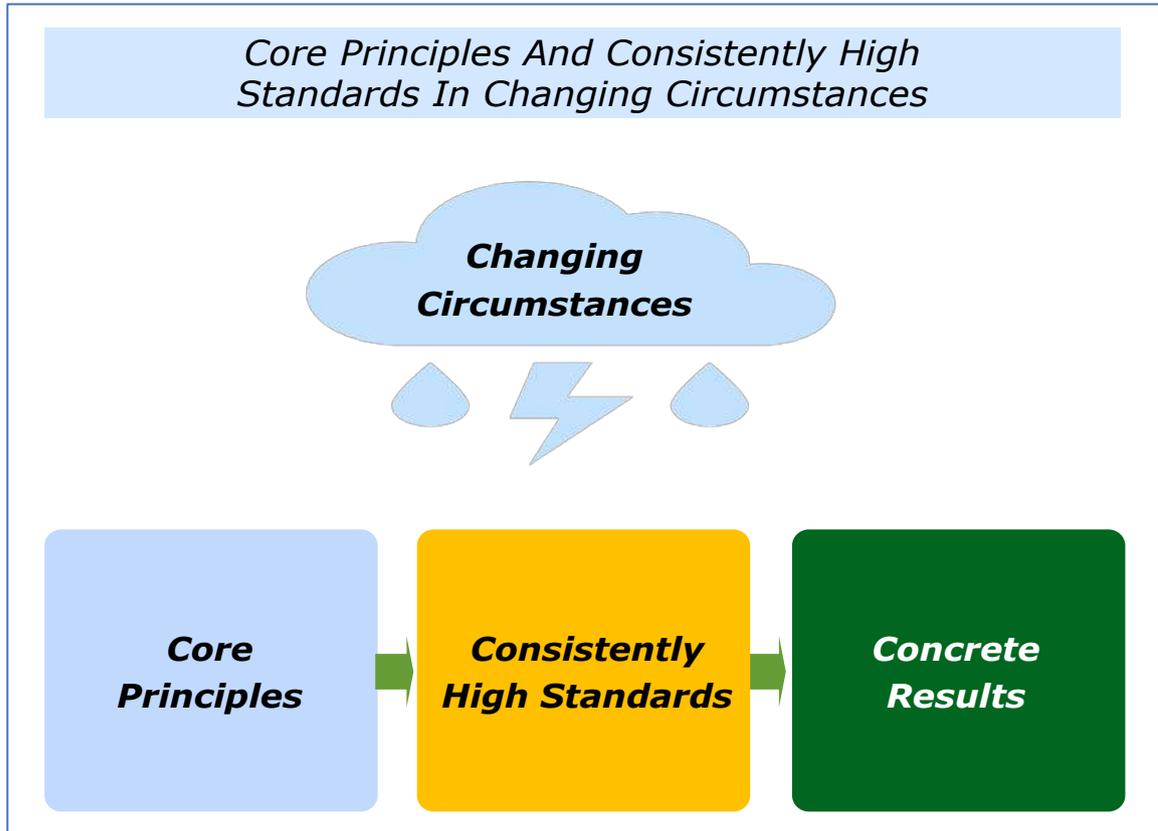
*"Of course, there's always something you can't anticipate, but you strive to greatly reduce the number of those foreseeable."*

He followed the 80/20 rule. The 49ers focused on maximising the 80% they could control in a game. There may be 20% they couldn't control, such as a referee's call, a bad bounce or fortune.

Bill encouraged his teams to prepare properly. People were expected to practice relentlessly until their execution at the highest level was automatic. He called this *routine perfection* and described it in the following way.

*"Maintenance workers, ticket takers, parking lot attendants, and anyone receiving a pay check with the emblem of the San Francisco 49ers on it were instructed as to the requirements of their own job's Standard of Performance and expected to measure up."*

Bill encouraged people to follow certain core principles and translate these into action. This called for them continuing to deliver consistently high standards in changing circumstances. Let's consider this approach.



Many people can follow their core principles when things are relatively predictable. Some people do certain kinds of work, however, where circumstances may always be changing and developing.

This can be the case if they are playing a sport, nursing in an emergency unit or doing another activity. It may also be case when they are making decisions in government or doing other activities that are affected by outside events.

Great workers aim to follow their core principles and delivers consistently high standards. They apply this approach in changing circumstances. They then do their best to achieve in the desired concrete results.

Good leaders, for example, often use the following framework in such situations. They also encourage educate their people to rehearse how to apply this to deal with changing circumstances.

## *Core Principles*

*What are the core principles we want to follow in our work? How can we follow these in the specific situation?*

### *Consistently High Standards*

*How can we translate our principles into action? How can we deliver consistently high standards in the specific situation?*

### *Concrete Results*

*What are the concrete results we want to deliver? How can we do our best to deliver these concrete results in the specific situation?*

Bill Walsh embodied elements of this approach. He saw himself as a teacher as well as a coach. He believed in encouraging and enabling motivated people to consistently deliver the basics. They could then add the brilliance.

Looking back at his time at the 49ers, Bill said the turnaround took time. Some people chose not to meet these standards, so they were moved on. Despite setbacks, people began to deliver the required standards. He explained this in the following way.

*"Eventually – within months, in fact – a high level of professionalism began to emerge within our entire organization.*

*"I moved forward methodically with a deep belief that the many elements of my Standard of Performance would produce that kind of mindset, an organizational culture that would subsequently be the foundation for winning games.*

*"The culture precedes positive results. It doesn't get tacked on as an afterthought on the way to the victory stand. Champions behave like champions before they're champions; they have a winning standard of performance before they are winners."*

Bill was true to his philosophy and principles. The key was to ensure that people delivered the Standard of Performance.

The approach that Bill took was one I saw mirrored by other sports organisations and teams that achieved success. This was an area I focused on when working with people in sports in the early 1980s.

The first work included running workshops at the sports universities in Scandinavia. The participants came from athletics, skiing, swimming, orienteering and other activities. Much of the subsequent work since then has involved working with football coaches.

Successful sports teams embody similar principles to those found in many organisations that aim to achieve peak performance. The following pages provide an introduction to those principles.

### *Successful Sports Teams*

*They often focus on the following themes.*

- *Their Philosophy*

*They are clear about their philosophy, principles and picture of success.*

- *Their People*

*They are clear about the character and competence their people – such as the coaches, players and all their staff - need to demonstrate to follow the principles.*

- *Their Playing Style*

*They are clear about the specific ways they aim to translate their principles into practise and achieve peak performance.*

## *Philosophy*

They provide clarity from the top. This starts at board level and is communicated throughout the organisation.

*The board has a clear philosophy, principles and picture of success;*

*The board employs a sporting director and coaches who use their strengths to follow the agreed principles and work towards achieving the picture of success;*

*The board supports the coaches – providing they are behaving in a professional way – and enables them to do their best to achieve the picture of success.*

The leaders ensure that everybody knows the approach and their parts achieving the goals. Sports teams get into trouble when there is a constant switching of philosophy and approach.

## *People*

Such teams employ people who have the character and competence needed to follow the principles. They employ a sporting director, coaching staff and support staff who have the attitude and ability required to achieve the goals.

The leaders encourage their people to use their strengths to implement the principles. They expect their people to demonstrate certain professional standards. They act quickly if somebody chooses not to meet these standards.

## *Playing Style*

Such teams translate their principles into practise by pursuing a specific playing style. Some do this by having the following kinds of players – controllers, consistent and creatives.

## Controllers

*Such people have strong personalities and operate down the spine of the team. They also have the skills to control the game.*

## Consistents

*Such people consistently deliver high professional standards. They ensure the team always delivers 8+/10.*

## Creatives

*Such people demonstrate both consistency and creativity. They add that touch of magic that enables the team to achieve its goals.*



Sports teams aim to achieve this blend and encourage people to deliver peak performances. Great work teams take a similar approach.

Here is an example of the Professional Standards described by one organisation. Potential employees were given illustrations of how these worked in practise. They were then invited to decide if they wanted to join the organisation.



*The Professional Standards*

## Introduction

*Welcome to our work place. We want to encourage you to build on your strengths and make your best contribution towards achieving the picture of success.*

*We want to create a positive environment in which motivated people can achieve peak performance. This calls for following certain principles that can help us to achieve ongoing success.*

*The organisation's part of the professional contract is to create a positive environment. It is also to encourage, educate and enable our people to succeed.*

*This is something we will continually try to do. Taking these steps will lay the groundwork for achieving ongoing success.*

*We do, however, invite people to fulfil their part of the professional contract. We employ people who want to follow certain principles and deliver certain professional standards.*

*These are based on the specific things we need to do to deliver the organisation's goals. We do not try to persuade people who do not want to follow these standards. We work with people who want to follow these principles and help us to achieve peak performance.*

*At the same time, however, we want characters not clones. The ways that you follow these principles will be up to you.*

*The one key proviso, however, is that it is important to encourage other people and help the organisation to achieve success. Here are the suggested guidelines.*

### *The Professional Standards*

*The guidelines we would like people to follow are these.*

- *Do have a positive attitude, be professional and encourage other people.*
- *Do be clear on the organisation's goals and your part in contributing towards achieving these goals.*
- *Do make clear contracts with people and fulfil these contracts.*
- *Do focus on outcomes - the real results to achieve in a situation - and do your best to achieve these outcomes.*
- *Do perform superb work, present solutions to challenges and help both your colleagues and clients to succeed.*

Let's return to the theme of coordination. Good coordinators stay calm in challenging situations but also act with appropriate urgency. They also sometimes need to find creative solutions to challenges. Let's explore this theme.

### *Creativity*

Coordinators plan ahead and aiming to prevent potential difficulties. They also consider how to solve problems if, despite everything, these challenges do happen. Some people do the following exercises to prepare for such challenges.

*Managing  
Potential Challenges*

*The specific difficult challenges we may face on the way towards achieving the picture of success may be:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things we can do to prevent some of these challenges happening are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things we can do to manage some of these potential challenges if, despite our best efforts, they do happen are:*

\*

\*

\*

Good coordinators often enjoy finding solutions to challenges. They often aim to buy time to think, gather information and explore the possible ways forward.

Different people use different approaches for creative problem solving. One approach is to use the Three C model which involves focusing on Clarity, Creativity and Concrete Results. We will be exploring this approach later in the book.

## *Concrete Results*

Good coordinators get some early wins rather than embark on long process analyses. Success breeds success. It also buys time to tackle the more long-standing challenges.

They keep in touch with the leader and see their role as being proactive rather than that of being a glorified progress chaser.

They have regular meetings with the leader to look ahead to the next week, the month and the next quarter. They clarify the challenges facing the team and agree on the potential solutions.

Good coordinators ensure that people proactively keep them informed about their progress towards achieving the goals. They set up sessions where each team, for example, continually reports on the following themes.

### *Progress Report*

*The specific things we have delivered in the past month towards achieving the goals are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things we aim to deliver in the next month towards achieving the goals are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific other topics we would like to highlight – such as positive suggestions, solutions, challenges and any other issues – that are relevant in terms of working towards the goals are:*

\*

\*

\*

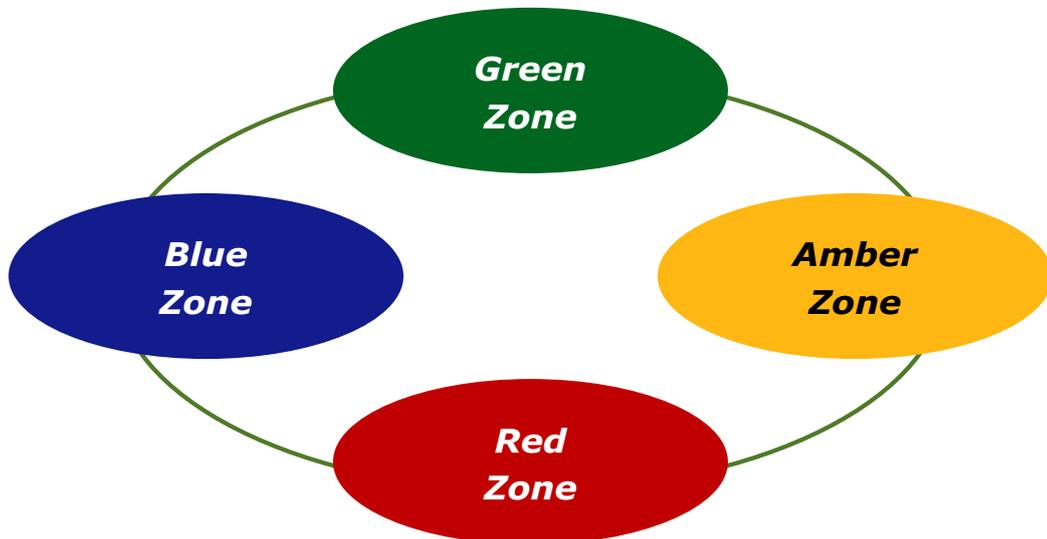
Some coordinators take another approach to making sure things are on track. They have a dedicated room or other place that shows the state of play regarding pursuing the various strategies.

People flag up the activities that are currently in the green, amber and red zones. They also suggest what can be done to maintain or improve what is happening in these areas.

One company I worked with had a dedicated room where people constantly updated the progress towards achieving the goal. It had charts that covered the following areas.

### *Coordination Is Crucial*

*Coordinators encourage people to keep track of their progress by focusing on the things that may be in the:*



### *The Picture Of Success*

People could keep referring to the company's aims that were displayed on one wall. These were grouped in terms of what it wants to achieve under the Three Ps: profits, products – including customer satisfaction – and people.

## *The Picture Of Success*

*The specific goal we want to achieve by ... is:*

*\* To ...*

*The specific things we want to have achieved by then that will show we have reached the goal will be:*

*Profits*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*Products*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*People*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

The other walls had the following charts that described the current state of play regarding various activities.

### *The Green Zone*

People listed the things that were going well. They also provided concrete suggestions regarding how to maintain or build on these activities.

Great workers build on what is working. If things are going well with a particular customer, for example, they explore how to continue providing great service. This can lead to developing the relationship even further.



### *The Green Zone*

*The specific things that are going well*

***The specific things that people are doing well or that are going well at the moment are:***

\*

\*

\*

***The specific things that we can do to build on these things are:***

\*

\*

\*

## *The Amber Zone*

People described where there were warning signs. They also provided suggestions regarding how to improve these activities.

Great workers worry about things that are in the amber zone. They are concerned that, unless these issues are addressed, these may quickly slide into the red zone. So they focus on how to move these activities more towards the green zone.



### ***The Amber Zone***

*The specific things where there are warning signs*

***The specific things where there are warning signs at the moment are:***

\*

\*

\*

***The specific things we can do to take action and improve these things are:***

\*

\*

\*

## *The Red Zone*

People listed the things that were going badly and gave suggestions regarding how to improve these activities. These could involve making radical improvements or for taking key decisions.

Great workers think ahead to ensure that things do not slide into the red zone. Crises do occur, of course, so then it is vital to find positive solutions.

There may be some issues, however, that are continually falling into the red zone. If systems are breaking down, for example, these may well need replacing.

A more challenging issue could be if a particular customer continually makes life difficult. Certainly it is vital to do whatever possible to provide great service. In some instances, however, a customer may prove impossible to please.

They may also prove to be a massive drain on resources. In such cases it may mean deciding to move on from the customer. This can be a difficult but necessary decision.

***The Red Zone***

*The specific things that are not going well*

***The specific things that are not going well at the moment are:***

\*

\*

\*

***The specific things we can do to make decisions  
and take action about these things are:***

\*

\*

\*

### *The Blue Zone*

The company also went further and added another area called the blue zone. This was the space for both practical and imaginative ideas.

People listed the specific ideas, suggestions and other things that it might be worth considering to help the team shape a successful future. This led to some of the ideas being implemented and delivering positive results.

Great workers continually look for ways to improve. It can be useful to create different forums for exploring these ideas and then translating some of these into action.

## ***The Blue Zone***

*The specific ideas, suggestions and other things  
that may help us to shape a successful future*

***The specific ideas and suggestions that it may be worth  
considering to help us to shape a successful future are:***

\*

\*

\*

## *Taking Action*

Good coordinators also encourage people to embody the ethic of continuous improvement. They invite people to build on their strengths and also tackle areas for improvement.

There are many models for making this happen. One approach is to invite people to review the piece of work they have done by completing the exercise at the end of this section.

Good leaders and coordinators get their act together. They know that clarity is the starting point for any venture. But coordination is the bridge to producing concrete results.

*Continuous  
Improvement*

*The specific piece of work we did was:*

\*

### *Building On Strengths*

*The specific things we did well - and how we can follow these principles when doing similar pieces of work in future - are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Tackling Areas For Improvement*

*The specific things that we can do better - and how we can make these improvements - when doing similar pieces of work in the future are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Continuous Improvement - Our Action Plan*

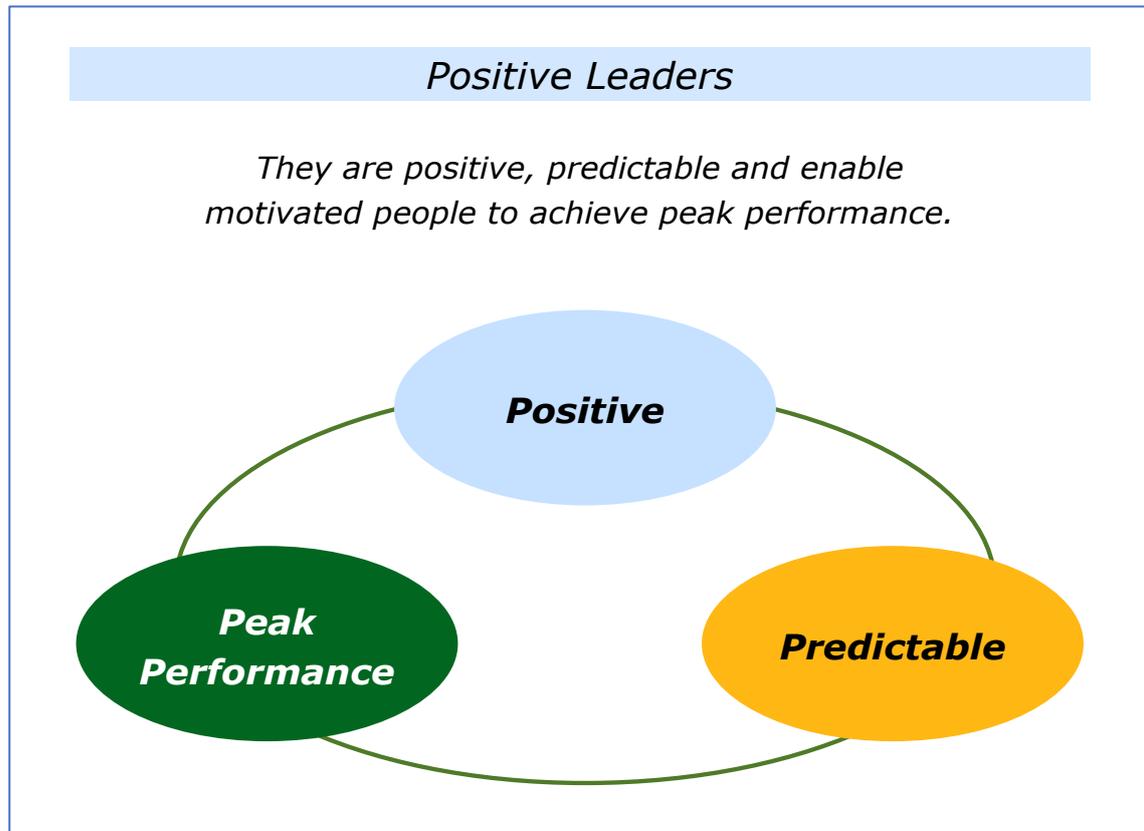
*The specific things we can do to keep building on our strengths and also tackling the areas for improvement when doing similar pieces of work in the future are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Positive Leadership Approach*



There are many models for leadership. Let's consider one of these approaches.

Good leaders are often like good parents. They are positive and predictable. They also enable motivated people to achieve peak performance.

Difficult leaders are like difficult parents. They are negative and unpredictable. The result is that people feel unsure and unable to do their best.

Good leaders are credible. Whilst being positive, they are good at explaining challenging situations and the possible solutions. People see them as truthful and also sometimes inspiring.

They are predictable. They explain the principles they believe in following and they aim to be consistent. People know what to expect and this helps to create a feeling of predictability.

Good leaders each have their own ways of enabling people to do their best. Depending on their strengths, they may be good at inspiring, educating or a creating a framework in which people can do great work.

They do have one thing in common, however, when taking this step.

*They create a positive environment in which motivated people can achieve peak performance.*

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you demonstrated positive leadership? This could have been in your personal or professional life.

You may have done this when acting as a teacher, coach, manager, leader or in another role. You may have done it when helping a group of people, coaching a sports team, directing a play, leading a project, building a successful prototype or doing another activity.

What did you do then to behave in a positive way and also be predictable? What did you do to communicate the picture of success? What did you do to enable people to do good work and maybe even achieve peak performance?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Positive Leadership In The Past*

*The specific situation when I was positive,  
predictable and did my best to enable  
people to achieve peak performance was:*

\*

*The specific things I did then to follow  
these principles in my own way were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that  
happened as a result were:*

\*

\*

\*

Different leaders follow these strategies in different ways. Let's explore some of these ways.

## *Positive*

Imagine you lead a team. On a scale 0-10, to what extent do you believe people perceive you as positive? What can you do to maintain or improve the rating?

Why pose the question this way? Some leaders see themselves as positive, but the way they behave towards other people can come across as negative.

Positive leaders act as good models and create an encouraging environment. The ways they behave can affect people throughout an organisation. Here are two examples that I witnessed.

### *Leader A*

Leader A arrived at the office in the morning and greeted people personally. They spent time talking with the cleaners, reception staff and other people. They aimed to make each person feel the centre of their world.

They believed it was vital to give people the big picture and gathered everybody together every month. This included the catering staff and other background workers. They kept communicating the team's purpose, principles and picture of success.

They updated people on: the progress being made; the plans for the next month; the challenges ahead and the strategies for tackling these challenges. They also shared stories highlighting good work by people.

Leader A was positive but also communicated the required professional standards. They acted as a custodian of the culture and acted quickly if people chose not to follow the required standards.

Leader A established credibility in their own way. They explained their role was: a) to keep focusing on the organisation's goals; b) to provide the experts with the support they needed to deliver success.

They managed by outcomes rather than by tasks. These often involved getting wins for the organisation, wins for the customers and wins for the colleagues. When a person came with a problem to solve, they would say:

*"Let's focus on the outcomes we want to achieve. How can we do our best to achieve those results?"*

They were good during crises. They acted quickly to deal with any problems and communicated the future strategy. People felt involved and helped each other to achieve the goals.

Leader A helped the organisation to hit its targets, but then left to take another role. The board decided to change direction. It brought in another person who promised to increase the organisation's profits.

## *Leader B*

Leader B arrived at the organisation in a blaze of publicity but there were soon warning signs. He tried to make himself feel important rather than make the staff feel important.

Gathering people together, he started by describing the prizes he had won in his career. He then announced:

*"Things are going to change around here."*

Leader B tried to make himself look big by making other people feel small. Looking for scapegoats, he publicly criticised several employees who had previously done good work.

He replaced two well respected senior managers with two acolytes who bullied people. This created a climate of fear that led to many fine people leaving the organisation.

Leader B had been hired by the board. Despite representations from the staff, at first the board refused to believe the reports about his behaviour. They said that:

*"People are just afraid of change."*

More good workers left. Those that remained played safe and put their heads down. The collateral damage included people taking sick leave and the organisation becoming understaffed.

The Board remained in denial. The reports of bullying became so persistent, however, that eventually he was asked to leave the organisation.

This led to one of the previously fired senior managers returning to take over the role. Many people breathed a sigh of relief, but it took a long time for the organisation to heal.

Let's return to your own work. Looking at the people you lead or work with, to what extent do you think they rate you as being positive?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe the extent that you believe other people see you as positive. Do this on a scale 0-10. Describe the specific things you can do to maintain or improve the rating.

## *Positive*

*The extent to which I believe  
other people see me as positive is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to  
maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Predictability*

Good leaders are predictable. People know what to expect from them and the guidelines they can follow in their daily work. They don't have to spend time guessing how the leader will behave that day.

Negative leaders can be unpredictable. They can veer from being stable to being sarcastic, ranting or cruel. People spend time guessing the leader's mood. This does not help them to do good work.

Good leaders are caring rather than callous. They aim to build a positive culture where people are clear on 'the way we do things around here'. They therefore take the following steps.

*They communicate the required professional standards and give the reasons for these standards;*

*They personally follow these professional standards and keep sharing success stories that highlight how employees are translating the standards into action;*

*They act immediately to maintain the professional standards and protect the culture if somebody chooses not to follow these standards.*

Good leaders sometimes go a step further. When taking over a team, for example, they explain their leadership style. People then know what to expect from the leader rather than spend six months guessing.

Different leaders do this in different ways. The following section describes an exercise I have used with leaders to help them explain their leadership style to people.

Afterwards the team members often say that it is good to know what they can and can't expect from the leader. They can then take a stand towards how they respond.

Imagine that you are taking over a team. Here are some steps you can take to communicate your leadership style to people.

### *Clarifying Your Leadership Style*

This exercise invites you to clarify and then communicate the following things to people.

*\* The things you will and won't do as a leader.*

*\* The Dos and Don'ts for working well with you.*

\* *The consequences of your style.*

Be very honest when completing the exercise. This is about your actual leadership style. It is not your aspirations.

Remember, there are not necessarily good or bad styles. But there are consequences. Below is the exercise. This is accompanied by an example of what one person wrote when communicating their leadership style.



*My Leadership Style*

## *The Way I Will And Won't Work As A Leader*

### *I Will:*

- *Provide a clear vision for the team. I also give you freedom, within parameters, on how you get to the goal.*  
  
*For example: I will agree with you on the outcomes to achieve and the support you need. I will expect you to proactively keep me informed, but I won't micromanage you unless you fail to deliver.*
- *Be full of energy in a morning.*  
  
*For example: I am a morning person, so I am quite energetic early on and want to make sure everybody is clear on what we are aiming to do that day. I may also ring you before 9.00.*
- *Get to the point quickly in conversations rather than do social chat.*  
  
*For example: I tend to be impatient, so I want to get to the headline. I won't always start by asking how you are.*

- *Talk quickly, but sometimes not check out that you have understood what I have said.*

*For example: I often have a vision in my head about what we should do, but sometimes forget to tell people, even though I think I have communicated it.*

- *Protect you from unnecessary interference from my bosses - but expect you to deliver on your promises.*

*For example: I will provide air cover so you do not get overloaded with information from above, but I expect you to take responsibility and also be good at managing our key stakeholders.*

- *Try to play to your strengths.*

*For example: I will ask each of you to clarify what you do best and how you can make your best contribution. But there will be times when we need to do other kinds of work to deliver the goods.*

### *I Won't:*

- *Always look at you directly when you are speaking.*

*For example: I will look at you when we start the conversation, but then may look away when trying to make sense of the information. Don't take this personally. I am listening.*

- *Micromanage you unless you fail to deliver.*

*For example: As mentioned earlier, I will agree with you on the outcomes to achieve. It is then up to you to keep me informed in an appropriate way and to deliver. If you don't, then I may start micromanaging you.*

- *Get involved in lots of social events.*

*For example: I will go to bed early on off-sites rather than sit around talking into the early hours.*

## *The Best Way To Work With Me*

### *Do:*

- *Be professional.*

*For example: Make clear contracts about what you will deliver. Keep your promises. Deliver great service to customers. Encourage your colleagues. Be contactable between 9.00 and 18.00. Prepare properly for meetings with me. Start by explaining what you want to discuss and what you want from me.*

- *Be honest.*

*For example: Let me know bad news quickly. It's good if you can outline the possible options for moving forward. But don't hide bad news if you have not yet thought of a strategy.*

- *Accept that we work for a big multinational company.*

*For example: This will not always be easy, but we are adults and knew the deal before we joined.*

## Don't

- *Be unprofessional.*

*For example: Don't be late for meetings. Don't be unprepared. Don't do your emails during meetings. Don't pass the buck. Don't treat your colleagues badly.*

- *Put your own agenda before that of the team.*

*For example: Don't pursue your goals at the cost of other people. Don't compete with your colleagues - we are here to help each other. Don't expect me to manage your career. I will give you lots of opportunities to develop. It will be up to you to take these and shape your future career.*

- *Wing it.*

*For example: Don't waffle. Get to the point. It is also okay to say you don't know something and you can then get back to me later.*

## The Consequences Of My Style

### The Pluses:

- *It is likely that we will reach our goals.*

*For example: I will aim to keep our key stakeholders happy and give you the tools for doing the job. Providing we combine our strengths, we have a good chance of reaching the goals. This will benefit all of us.*

- *Self-managing people will thrive.*

*For example: People who make clear contracts on the outcomes will have freedom, within parameters, to use their talents to deliver the goods. This will enable them to develop.*

- *I will encourage you to shape your future career.*

*This sounds counter-intuitive but, providing you deliver the goods, I will encourage you to keep developing your career. This can mean that, at some point, you decide to move on. That is okay. I prefer to work with people who keep growing rather than those who decide to stagnate.*

### The Potential Minuses:

- *Sometimes I may not immediately give you my full attention.*

*For example: I am an introvert who likes to think a lot. This means that sometimes I am in my own world and it takes time for me to switch into giving you my full attention.*

- *People may feel I am not taking an interest in what they are doing.*

*For example: After agreeing on the outcomes to deliver I will provide the support you need. I will not keep checking on you, but I expect you to keep me appropriately informed. Just contact me if you need help.*

- *I am not good with people who want lots of reassurance but I can help during crises.*

*For example. I can sometimes be a good counsellor, listen and help a person come through a crisis. But I am not good at working with people who often want a lot of reassurance. As I said, however, please come to me if you want help with a difficult challenge.*

## *Communicating Your Leadership Style*

If you wish, find an appropriate time to share your leadership style with your team. I have often invited leaders to do this during a leadership team workshop, but other times can also be appropriate.

Providing it is communicated properly, the response is normally positive. People like to know how their leader operates, so it's good to make the implicit explicit. They can then take a stand towards how they work with you.

This exercise also works with leaders who have been with a team for a long time. After one such leader shared it with their team on a workshop one person gave the following reactions.

*"We have been working together for five years, but this document sums you up, warts and all. For example, it took me six months to figure out that you have a memory like an elephant, even though you seldom write anything down."*

*"I thought you weren't paying attention during our conversations, but later you could recount every detail. Now I tell new starters to ignore your body language, which can be a bit disconcerting."*

*"They need to know that you notice every detail about them and the conversation. Some people find this intimidating, but most eventually get used to you."*

*"I wish somebody had told me your rules when I first joined the team."*

The leader who gave the examples mentioned above later met with me. They explored how to build on the pluses and minimise the minuses of their style. They explained this in the following way.

*"Building on the pluses, I will continue to provide direction and give people the tools they need to do their jobs."*

*"Aiming to minimise the minuses, I will spend one hour with each person each month. Ahead of the meeting, I will ask them to do some preparation.*

*"I will provide them with a framework they can use to send me an email describing:*

*a) the specific things they have done well during the past month and how they can build on these;*

*b) the specific things they can improve in the future and how;*

*c) the plans they have for the next month and the practical support they need from me.*

*"We can have some quality time together. I will aim to help them to keep developing and also make their best contribution to the company."*

Team members often appreciate the honesty a leader puts into this exercise. Some leaders also invite their people to do a similar exercise about themselves.

Good leaders are predictable. Even though, in some cases, this means that people know that the leader is sometimes unpredictable in a positive way.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Looking at yourself as a leader, describe the extent that you are predictable. Do this on a scale 0-10. Describe the specific things you can do to maintain or improve the rating.

## *Predictable*

*The extent to which  
I am predictable is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to  
maintain or improve the rating are:*

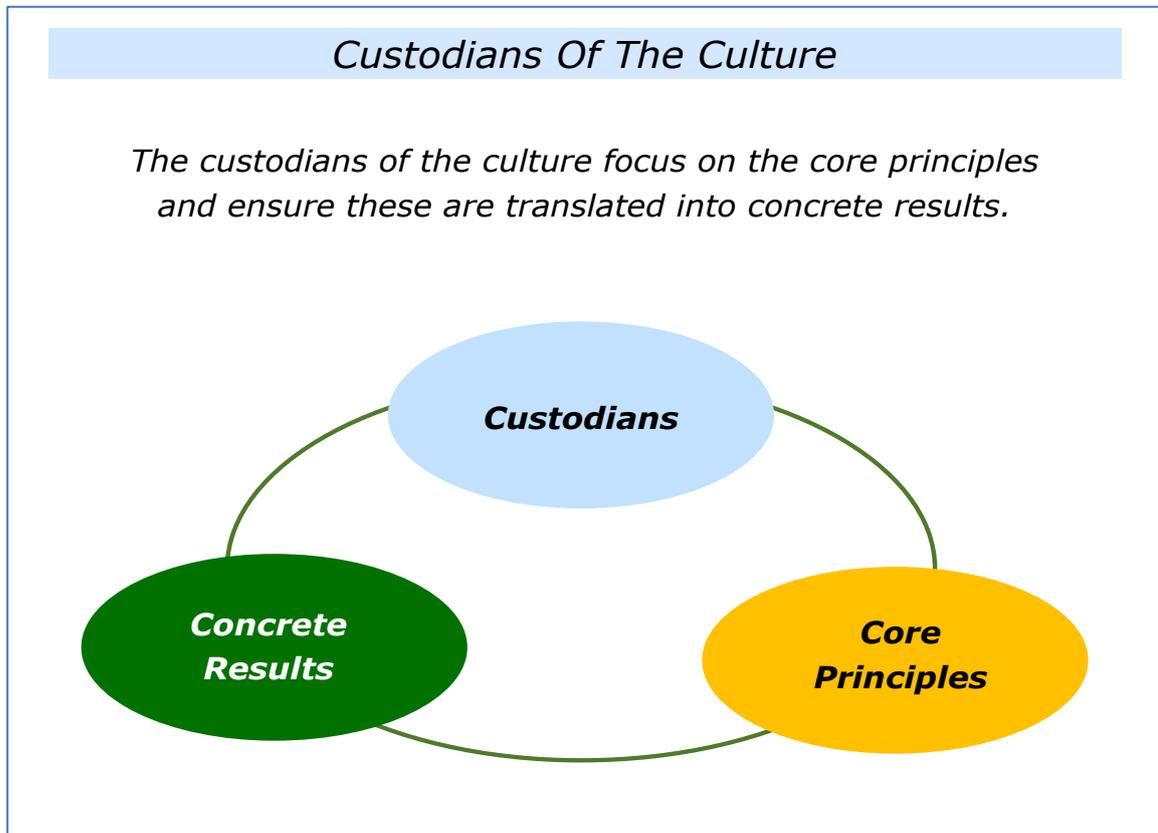
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Some leaders maintain predictability in their teams or organisations by taking the following route. They appoint custodians who ensure people keep focusing on the core principles. Let's explore this approach.

## *The Custodians Of The Culture Approach*



The custodian approach is used in many teams and organisations. Here are some definitions of the word custodian.

*A person who is responsible for protecting or taking care of something ... A person who protects particular principles or ideas ... A person who guards or maintains something that is valued.*

Great organisations appoint many custodians who embody the desired culture. Such people are often demonstrate the following qualities.

*They are strong characters who are caring and consistent;*

*They embody the core principles and act as good models;*

*They translate these core principles into practise – especially in challenging situations - and deliver concrete results.*

Some organisations say they have such custodians in place, but they have not followed these guidelines. They have instead appointed a committee or people who don't follow the agreed principles.

The following pages describe two examples of where I have seen the custodian approach work successfully. These are drawn from teams and organisations in different fields.

### *The Start-up Company*

During the early 2000s I acted as a mentor to a digital start-up. The company grew exponentially to a successful sale within five years. One reason for this was that it built a positive and peak performing culture.

The CEO had certain strengths. He was good at providing an inspiring vision, clarifying the strategy, getting financial backing and being a thought leader. Aware of his weaknesses, he built a good leadership team.

The CEO also nominated three senior people to act as custodians for the culture. These people continued to perform their professional roles. When appropriate, however, they reminded the leadership team of the company's principles.

They did this in a positive way. At certain times, they would say something like the following.

*"Looking at the challenge we face, there seem to be several options for going forwards. Each of these have pluses and minuses.*

*"Bearing these in mind, it may be useful to return to our core principles. As you know, our principles are: 1) To ... 2) To ... 3) To ...*

*"Looking at the possible options, which of these will fit closest to our principles? What else could we do to ensure we are following our principles?"*

The company kept returning to this compass. It used the principles as the basis for recruiting people and also for educating staff how to find solutions when faced by challenges.

The company was sold after five years. The buyers said that one of the main attractions was the company's culture. Unfortunately the buyers destroyed the culture within a few months.

The CEO and several leaders moved on to founding another company. They again focused on pursuing certain core principles and their business proved successful.

### *The Sports Team*

One football manager I worked with used the custodian approach when taking over an ailing team. He brought in three senior internationals who were respected by players in the existing squad.

The three players were good models. They acted as what people call cultural architects. They provided inspiration and the club went on to win its first national trophy.

The custodian approach has been adopted by many other teams. Some managers appoint what they call a leadership group. Sometimes this works, sometimes it doesn't.

The key factor is to appoint players who demonstrate the required professional standards. Some managers put talented but difficult players in the leadership group. This produces mixed results.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to use elements of the custodian approach?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Custodian Approach*

*The specific situation where  
I may use elements of the  
custodian approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to  
use elements of the custodian  
approach in the situation are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of  
taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Peak Performance*

Good leaders often combine personal humility and professional will, says Jim Collins. Writing in his book *Good To Great*, he says that such people – those he calls Level 5 Leaders – often get the best from people. They also create a positive legacy.

Such leaders enable motivated people to achieve peak performance. Different people do this in different ways. Depending on their strengths, they may be good at inspiring people, educating people or a creating a framework in which people can do great work.

*Some lead a team that focuses on its purpose, follows its principles and achieves its picture of success;*

*Some lead a team that focuses on its values, translates these into a clear vision and does valuable work;*

*Some lead a team that enables people to flow, focus, do fine work, finish and find fulfilment;*

*Some lead a team that encourages people to build on their strengths, do superb work and achieve ongoing success;*

*Some lead a team that follows Robert Greenleaf's approach to servant leadership – they serve the people who aim to serve a particular cause.*

Good leaders realise that they are judged by the performance of their people rather than just by their own performance. This is an obvious but often overlooked concept that can come as a profound realisation to some leaders.

Benjamin Zander, the conductor, described his own insight regarding this concept. This came when he was invited to conduct the Berlin Philharmonic. Here is a summary of what Benjamin said.

*"Walking into the auditorium for the first rehearsal with the orchestra, I had a realisation about my role as a conductor. This came as an epiphany, because in the music world the conductor is seen as all powerful.*

*"My realisation was this. It did not matter how much I waved my arms around. The audience was going to judge my work by the performance of the musicians in front of me."*

People leaders need to develop certain skills to create superb teams. One rising leader I worked with in a giant tech company had such an epiphany. Here is the gist of what he said.

*"For me this will mean changing my mindset. I have got to this stage of my career by being driven and hitting certain targets.*

*"I now want to be a good people leader. Whilst I have some of the necessary skills, I want to learn how to create a framework that helps other people to succeed.*

*"I'm not sure how this approach will be perceived, however, because we are still an organisation that rewards individual performance. But I want to help the people in my part of the business to thrive and perform at their best."*

## *The Positive Approach To Giving People Empowerment Within Parameters*

Good leaders start by clarifying the specific outcomes the team aims to deliver. They then clarify the strategies people can follow to achieve the picture of success.

Such leaders sometimes involve their people in adding ideas. When doing this, they communicate the parameters within which people can make suggestions. They incorporate some of these ideas in the plans for achieving the picture of success

They then make clear contracts with people about their parts in achieving the aims. This includes giving people empowerment – within parameters – about their best contributions towards achieving the picture of success.

Imagine you want to take this approach. Here is one framework that you can adapt in your own way.

*The Positive Approach To  
Giving People  
Empowerment Within Parameters*

*This involves clarifying the specific outcomes to achieve and the key strategies for achieving the picture of success.*

*You can then involve your people – and give them empowerment within parameters - by focusing on the following themes.*

**The Picture Of Success**

- \*
- \*
- \*

*You can communicate the outcomes to achieve and the strategies. You can explain the reasons for pursuing these strategies towards achieving the picture of success.*

**The Parameters**

- \*
- \*
- \*

*You can encourage people to add ideas. Communicate the parameters within which they can make suggestions. Then settle on the plans for achieving the picture of success.*

**The Personal Contributions**

- \*
- \*
- \*

*You can make clear contracts with people – including empowering them within certain parameters – about their best contributions towards achieving the picture of success.*

Different leaders take this step in different ways. One leader gathered their team together and said something along the following lines. (I have omitted the quotation marks.)

*The Picture Of Success*

*Welcome to the session. I want to give you the big picture about the specific outcomes we aim to achieve in the next year.*

*This involves delivering certain results in terms of our profitability, our product quality and our people. We want to create wins for our company, our customers and our colleagues.*

*As you know, there are certain mandatory things we must deliver. We have also added other stimulating projects and these have been included in the goals.*

*I want to share the key strategies we aim to follow. I also want to explain the reasons for pursuing these on the way towards the picture of success.*

*After doing this I am happy to take any questions. We will then move on to the next stage.*

### *The Parameters*

*I then want to involve you in adding your ideas regarding the strategies and the picture of success. It is only fair, however, to explain that these need to be within certain parameters.*

*As mentioned earlier, there are certain mandatory goals and other things we want to deliver. Bearing these in mind, I would like you to share the specific suggestions you have:*

*To add to the goals;*

*To add to the strategies and how these can be implemented successfully;*

*To add to anything else you believe we should consider – this includes giving you the support needed to deliver success.*

*After collecting these ideas, we will and discuss these together. We will then settle on the plan for going forwards to achieve the picture of success.*

### *The Personal Contributions*

*We will then move to the next stage. This will be to make clear contracts with you about the outcomes you will deliver towards reaching the goals.*

*We will also give your freedom – within certain parameters – regarding how you apply your talents. We will also ask you to proactively keep us informed about your progress toward delivering the picture of success.*

This is an approach I have seen used by many fine leaders. Let's look at another example.

The CEO of one company adapted it when involving people in clarifying the company's values. Bringing together twenty-four managers from around the world, he asked me to run a two-day workshop in London.

One week before the session he contacted me to express a concern. Here is a summary of what he said.

*"I am bringing together these people, but I am worried in case they come up with values I do not believe in. What do you think we can do?"*

Talking about this issue, it transpired that there were two key values he believed the company should follow. He did not want to go through the pretence of trying to get people to come up with these values.

We agreed that, as the founder, he had the right to define some values he wanted the company to follow. At the same time, he wanted to give his managers a sense of ownership.

We therefore created an email to send to his managers. This was along the following lines.

#### *The Values Workshop Next Week*

*I am looking forward to seeing you all in London next week. As you know, we are going to be working on creating the company's values. Bearing this in mind, there are three things I want to mention.*

*First, as the founder, I obviously believe that we should follow certain values. At the same time, I want to make sure you have some ownership of creating the values.*

*Second, I do not want to bring you all to London on false pretences. Therefore I would like to start with two values being in place. These are:*

1) To ...

2) To ...

*The reason I believe in these values are because ...*

*Third, I would like to give you the chance to add to these values. This is important, because it is vital to involve you in creating and then living the values.*

*I wanted to let you know the guidelines before you come to the workshop. I hope you are still happy to come along and then we can craft the rest of the values together.*

*Please contact me if you have any questions before then. I look forward to meeting you in London.*

The CEO's people responded in a positive fashion. Many said it was good to know the guidelines for the session and they later contributed superbly to the workshop.

Many years later the company still takes a pride in how it lives its values. This was helped by the CEO being clear at the outset. He gave his people empowerment within parameters.

## *Enabling People To Achieve Peak Performance*

Let's return to your own situation. Imagine that you lead a team. How can you enable motivated people to achieve peak performance? Here is one practical exercise that I have seen work.

### *You Can Clarify Each Person's Preferred Working Style*

This is an approach that can be used in one-to-one meetings. If you feel it would be useful, however, you can invite people to do the following exercise individually and then share their work in a group setting.

The next section explores this second approach. There are several points to bear in mind when doing the exercise.

*The exercise is most effective when each person in the team wants to deliver professional performances. You can then help them to make their contribution to the team's picture of success.*

*The exercise is **not** about working in a group setting with individuals who are delivering poor performances. You can hold those kinds of discussions elsewhere in a one-to-one meeting.*

Start by asking each individual to complete the following pack about how they work best. Explain that the team will then meet together to explore how to build on people's strengths.

Explain that the sharing will be done in a positive atmosphere. It will not be about getting people to change. Several points are worth bearing in mind when introducing the exercise.

*Ask people to be as honest as possible. There are no good or bad working styles - there are just consequences.*

*Ask them to be as specific as possible. When in doubt, they are to describe things in behavioural terms.*

*Talk them through each part of the pack, perhaps giving examples from your own style to bring it to life.*

Here is the pack that you can invite people to do. There is an introduction to each part.



*My Preferred  
Working Style*

## *Introduction*

The following exercises invite you to describe your preferred working style - the way you work best.

Several things are worth bearing in mind when doing the exercises. Be as honest as possible. There are no good or bad working styles - there are just consequences.

Try to be as specific and give examples of your style. When in doubt, describe things in behavioural terms - what you actually do.

The exercises invite you to do the following things. There are more detailed explanations at the start of each section in the pack.

- \* *Describe the specific kinds of work you like doing, feel okay about doing and don't like doing.*
- \* *Describe the way you work best.*
- \* *Describe the way people can get the best from you.*
- \* *Describe some of the consequences – the potential pluses and minuses - of your style.*

This sounds a long list, but people often find the exercise worthwhile, especially when working in a team. Over to you.

## *The Work I Like Doing*

### *Introduction*

This part invites you to describe the following things.

\* *Describe the specific kinds of work you like doing.*

You may like doing specific kinds of projects, tasks or other activities. You may like working with certain kinds of customers.

\* *Describe the specific kinds of work you feel okay about doing.*

You may do a professional job when performing these tasks and feel okay about doing them.

\* *Describe the specific kinds of work you don't like doing.*

It is important to know about these activities, though it may be the case that these need doing at times.

*Like Doing. The specific kinds of work I really like doing - with some examples - are:*

1)

*For example ...*

2)

*For example ...*

3)

*For example ...*

*Okay Doing. The specific kinds of work I feel okay about doing - with some examples - are:*

1)

*For example ...*

2)

*For example ...*

3)

*For example ...*

*Don't Like Doing. The specific kinds of work I don't like doing - with some examples - are:*

1)

*For example ...*

2)

*For example ...*

3)

*For example ...*

*The Way I  
Like To Work*

## *Introduction*

This part invites you to describe the following things.

\* *Describe the way you work best.*

Different people will obviously describe different ways of working. You may, for example, say that you like:

To work on projects that you really care about ... To agree with the key stakeholders on the outcomes to achieve ... To have freedom, within parameters, how you achieve these goals.

To work with certain kinds of customers or colleagues ... To, if you are an introvert, work in a quiet space ... To, if you are more extrovert, occasionally bounce ideas off people ... To do your best work at certain times of the day ... Etc.

\* *Describe the way you don't work best.*

You may, for example, say that you don't like:

To work on tasks where you can't see how they fit into the big picture ... To be micromanaged ... To work with certain kinds of customers or colleagues ... To work in noisy offices.

\* *Describe some characteristics you display when you work.*

These may include certain patterns you follow or behaviours you display. They may also include some quirky things you do. At least, others may consider these behaviours a bit different.

\* *Describe the consequences of your style.*

There are no right or wrong styles - but there are consequences. Describe the potential pluses and minuses of your working style.

*The way I  
work best is:*

\*

\*

\*

*The way I don't  
work best is:*

\*

\*

\*

*Quirky Things. Some of the characteristics and maybe even quirky things about me and the way I work are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The Consequences – The Possible  
Pluses And Minuses – Of My Style*

*The pluses of my working style are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The potential minuses of my working style are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to build on the pluses and manage the consequences of the minuses are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The Best Way  
To Work With Me*

### Introduction

The following sections invite you to describe the overall guidelines - the Dos and Don'ts - people can follow to encourage and get the best from you.

Different people will obviously describe different things. Here are some things that people have written when outlining these guidelines.

*Do give me the big picture as well as the task to be done, because this helps me to see the context.*

*Do give positive suggestions rather than just problems.*

*Do, on the other hand, be honest and tell me the truth about issues even though you have not yet found a solution.*

*Do be professional but also human.*

*Do double-check things with me if you are unsure about something I have asked you to do. This is because sometimes I think I have given the full picture and I haven't.*

*Do make allowances for my body language when I reflect on things. For example, sometimes if you start talking to me I will then look away. This is because I am thinking and trying to make sense of things, so please don't take it personally.*

*Do let me know how I can encourage you. Sometimes it helps me to have some guidelines rather than me guessing.*

*Do give me positive suggestions if you want me to do some things differently in the future.*

The Don'ts may be the opposite of these kinds of things, plus perhaps some other points.

### *The Dos*

\* *Do*

\* *Do*

\* *Do*

\* *Do*

\* *Do*

### *The Don'ts*

\* *Don't*

\* *Don't*

\* *Don't*

\* *Don't*

\* *Don't*

Imagine that you have given people time to do these exercises. As mentioned earlier, you can follow up with them in one-to-one sessions. Another approach is to take the following step.

*You can facilitate a session in which people share their preferred working styles*

Create an informal atmosphere in which people feel able to share their working style. You may then wish to take the following steps.

*Explain The Rules*

Each person will have fifteen minutes to share their answers to the exercises. People can ask questions when the team member presents, but mainly for information. It is again worth underlining the following point:

*The aim is to understand the person. It is not to get them to change.*

Fifteen minutes seems a long time, but it can take longer. If people have done the exercise properly - and the group asks questions for information - it may take up to thirty minutes per person.

Providing you have created a positive atmosphere, you will find that people open-up and are willing to be honest. This is an approach that – providing it is done properly – can help people:

*To understand each other's working styles; To understand how to encourage and get the best from each person.*

If appropriate, you can then meet each person to make clear contracts about their best contribution to the team. You can then employ your strengths to enable the team to achieve peak performance.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Peak Performance*

*The extent to which I enable motivated people to achieve peak performance is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

There are many ways to demonstrate positive leadership. The following pages describe different ways that people implement this approach.

## *The STAGE Model of Leadership*

### *The STAGE Model*

*This involves covering the following aspects of leadership.*

- *Strategic*
- *Tactical*
- *Administrative*
- *Grunt Work*
- *Emotional*

The STAGE model works well for leaders whose strengths lie in strategic and emotional leadership. They can focus on these aspects and ensure that others manage the tactical, administrative and grunt work parts.

Imagine you are a leader who has such strengths. Here are some themes to consider when following the STAGE model.

### *Providing The Strategic Leadership*

Good leaders keep communicating the team's strategy. Your job is to keep people's eyes on the following themes.

*The What: The specific goal the team is aiming to achieve.*

*The Why: The specific benefits of achieving the goal.*

*The How: The specific strategy for achieving the goal.*

*The Who: The specific responsibilities of various people in working to achieve the goal.*

*The When: The specific milestones along the road towards reaching the goal.*

It is important to keep communicating the big picture, especially when it gets tough. This helps people to make a link between their daily actions and the long-term picture of success.

## *Managing The Tactics, Administration And Grunt Work*

Good leaders may have grand strategies but these must be translated into action. As a leader, you can try to do everything yourself, but you will then be doomed to failure. Your job is to focus on the strategic and emotional leadership.

Good teams often have a superb coordinator. So, if possible, get a coordinator to oversee the TAG part. Otherwise the danger is that you will keep dipping down into the detail and fall into firefighting.

The coordinator's job is to oversee three things.

### *Tactics*

It is to ensure that grand plans are translated into tactics that contribute to achieving the goals.

### *Administration*

It is to ensure that diaries are kept up to date, meetings scheduled and the hygiene factors managed, otherwise the team falls into chaos.

## *Grunt Work*

The leader and coordinator ensure people are equipped and enabled to do the daily tasks and that these are completed.

Imagine you have a good coordinator who acts as a mission holder for making things work. They may not actually do all the work themselves, but they do ensure it gets done.

"Must it be one person?" somebody may ask. "I have four people reporting into me. Can't they all act as coordinators?"

Yes, they can. But be wary of having too many people who report to you directly. The danger is that you will turn into a micro-manager, rather than operating as a leader.

## *Providing The Emotional leadership*

Good leaders harness people's emotional energy to achieve the goals. Different leaders do this in different ways.

Some are good in one-to-many situations. They give inspiring speeches and provide rallying calls to action.

Some are good in one-to-few situations. They prefer small groups where they can listen, connect with people's agendas and find positive solutions.

Some are good in one-to-one situations. They provide the personal touch, make individuals feel valued and encourage them to do their best work.

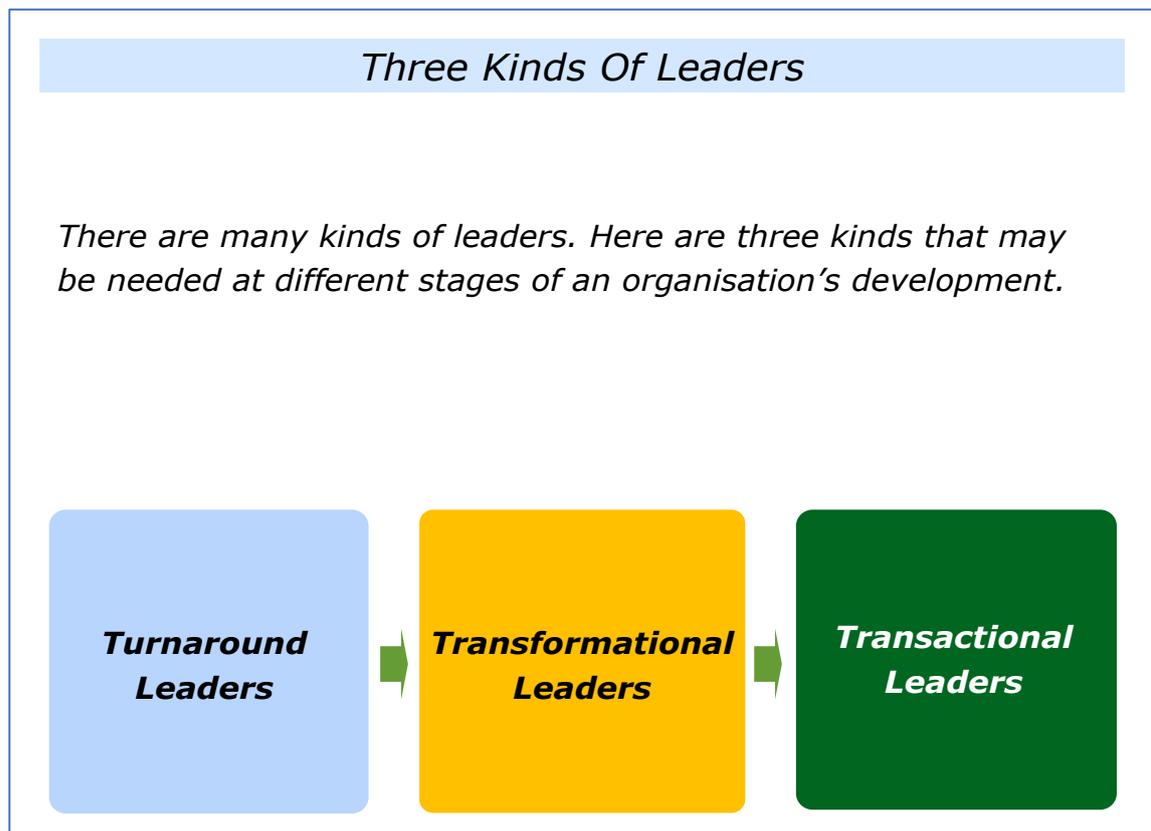
Good leaders play to their strengths. They then surround themselves with people who can compensate for any of their weaknesses.

The STAGE model is just one approach to leadership. The keys are the strategic and emotional parts. It is crucial to inspire people to put their hearts, as well as their heads, into achieving the picture of success.

## *Three Other Kinds Of Leaders*

Imagine that you want to be a positive leader. Depending on your strengths, you may thrive in certain types of leadership roles but not in others.

How to identify the situations where you are more likely to succeed? One approach is to distinguish between three kinds of leaders.



James MacGregor Burns coined some of these terms in the 1970s. He mainly studied political leaders, but the ideas have since been researched in organisations, business and other fields. This has resulted in expanding some of the original definitions.

Different organisations may need different types of leaders at different times in their development. So it is useful to know which type of leadership characteristics you demonstrate. Let's explore the three kinds of leaders.

### *Turnaround Leaders*

Such people love the challenge of turning around a failing system and making it work. They have a strong belief in their own ability to make this happen. They also have the resilience required to overcome obstacles and achieve the goal.

This can be a lonely job. So some take around with them a core team of people who help to make change happen. One such leader said:

*"I love to go in and fix things. Maybe it is because of my background as an engineer.*

*"I analyse what's wrong and get a picture of what is required. Then I implement the tough decisions required to make it work.*

*"Interestingly, once it is functioning well, I tend to lose interest. I can take something from 3/10 to 8/10 but am not motivated to take it to 10/10.*

*"I then get fascinated by the next turnaround project."*

This is not the case with all such leaders, but I have heard it from many. Some also take the further step of coaching their successors who will deliver ongoing success, but that involves developing a different skill.

Turnaround leaders often have the following characteristics.

*They are able to quickly analyse what is required to turn around the project, set clear goals and drive the key strategies to achieve success.*

*They make clear contracts with their stakeholders regarding the brief and the mandate. They do this to make sure they will get the support needed to deliver the picture of success.*

*They move into the situation and act decisively. They focus on doing the key things that will give them – and the project – the greatest chance of success.*

*They may take action quickly, for example, to improve the profits, products and people.*

*They mobilise people to focus on the purpose, principles and picture of success. They will also implement the necessary tough decisions.*

*They keep their stakeholders proactively informed. They deliver quick results and make sure there are no surprises.*

*They keep pursuing the key strategies and get reality checks. This feedback is crucial. They focus on: a) The things that are working and do these more; b) The things that could be better and how.*

*They overcome obstacles and find creative solutions to challenges. They do whatever is required to deliver the agreed goals.*

*They may hand over the reins and coach others to achieve sustainable success.*

Alternatively, they may simply move on. They then look for the next turnaround project.

## *Transformational Leaders*

Burns believed that transformational leaders connect with people on a values level. They translate this into an inspiring vision and energise people to deliver visible results.

Some people love working for such leaders. They are encouraged to take ownership, combine their talents and continue to develop.

Transformational leaders are now seen to go much further than the original definition. Whilst connecting with people's aspirations, such leaders often take some of the following steps:

*They transform an existing system – such as radically changing an organisation.*

*They create a new system – such as building a successful prototype.*

*They introduce a new paradigm, a new way of thinking and change people's consciousness.*

Transformational leaders may pioneer the way by changing the rules of the game. They may work as a sole contributor – such as an inventor, writer or philosopher - who shows people a new way of looking at the world. Alternatively, they may prefer to work with people on a tangible project.

Building on Burns' original definition, they encourage a group of believers who translate the ideas into behaviour and deliver brilliant results. The new approach transforms the way people feel, think or behave in the future.

### *Transactional Leaders*

Such leaders often operate within a given system and make things work more effectively. They get satisfaction from making incremental improvements on the road to achieving success.

Transactional leaders are vital if an organisation is to move from, for example, entrepreneurship to execution to excellence. One such leader said:

*"My role is being an implementer. I like to have a clear goal and guidelines within which to operate.*

*"I then enjoy designing and delivering processes that enable people to succeed. Most of all, I enjoy doing real work and seeing a tangible result."*

Transactional leaders were somewhat tarred in the past because they were seen as process driven. But such leaders play a vital part in delivering the goods.

This is because not much gets delivered without good transactions taking place in a team, organisation or society. Warren Bennis, the respected author on leadership, wrote:

*Leaders are people who do the right things; managers are people who do things right.*

Good transactional leaders combine elements of both. They enable people inside a system to follow key principles and do the right things in the right way. Such leaders demonstrate some of the following characteristics.

*They clarify the goal and the guidelines for implementing the strategy.*

*They get satisfaction from making things work successfully. So they may double check with the sponsors to ensure they are absolutely sure regarding what must be delivered and by when.*

*They have high professional standards and demand these from other people.*

*They are often hard working and diligent people, so they may fall into doing many of the tasks themselves.*

*It is vital for the stakeholders to ensure the transactional leader has the support to do the job. It is important to encourage the person:*

*To keep an overview of the tasks; to hire the right people, those with similar professional standards, and to delegate properly; to keep themselves healthy, because they can burn themselves out.*

*They translate the strategy into specific tasks that must be completed to achieve the goals.*

*They design processes that ensure the tasks are implemented properly. They do, if they are good leaders, give people a sense of ownership in implementing these processes.*

*They perform superb work, solve problems and ensure people deliver the required quality.*

*They continue improving the system's effectiveness and efficiency. They keep their stakeholders informed and deliver the agreed goals.*

Some people combine elements of being a turnaround, transformational and transactional leader. It can be important, however, for a person to decide which kind of situation they prefer. They are then more likely to guide people to success.

## *The Setting A Positive Agenda Approach*

### *The Positive Agenda Approach*

*It can be important to clarify and communicate a positive agenda to people. This can help to fill a vacuum that may otherwise be filled by people with other agendas. It can also be helpful:*

- To encourage people and communicate clear and compelling positive goals;*
- To show people the benefits of working towards these positive goals;*
- To, when appropriate, channel people's energies towards working to achieve these positive goals.*

This is an approach that is used by many good leaders. They aim to clarify and communicate a positive agenda to people. They may aim to do when:

*They are communicating with the public, the media or other groups of people;*

*They are communicating with their people about the team's purpose, principles and picture of success:*

*They are communicating with their people – whether they are running group meetings or having other sessions.*

Good leaders aim to communicate a positive vision to people. They do this:

*To encourage people and communicate clear and compelling goals;*

*To show people the benefits of working towards the positive goals;*

*To, when appropriate, channel people's energies towards achieving these positive goals.*

Such leaders also recognise that it is important provide a positive vision to fill a vacuum. Otherwise this vacuum may be filled by people with other agendas.

They keep focusing on the vision and, when appropriate, explain the aims. They do this to give people context and the big picture.

They take this approach, for example, when being interviewed by the media. Whilst being prepared to give direct answers, they give these within the wider context. They do not fall into being distracted by the latest item in the news cycle.

Good leaders also set a positive agenda for running team meetings with their people. They follow the tried and trusted format for such internal meetings. (This sounds rather basic, but some organisations fail to do such simple things.)

They communicate with their people ahead of time and may position the session in the following way.

### *The Purpose*

The purpose of the meeting is to help us to continue to channel our energies towards achieving our picture of success. We will begin by reminding ourselves of the goals we want to achieve this year.

### *Agenda*

We will then focus on the following themes that we can follow to achieve these goals:

*How to ...*

*How to ...*

*How to ...*

*Any other business.*

I would like you to come with your ideas about how we can pursue these themes and do our best to achieve the picture of success.

Please let me know in advance about any other topics you would like us to cover. It can also be useful if you can make any suggestions about how we can tackle these issues in ways that help us to achieve success.

*We will finish the meeting by aiming:*

*To agree on the action steps we want to take to implement what we have agreed;*

*To agree on who will be the mission holders for implementing these actions and the support they will require to deliver success;*

*To, if appropriate, agree on the equivalent of a press release that we can communicate to our people to describe the big picture and the actions we will be taking to achieve success.*

Good leaders aim to set a positive agenda. They aim to connect with people and, when appropriate, encourage them to channel their energies towards achieving positive goals.

Let's explore another way of taking this step.

## *The Positive Leader's Approach To Communicating With Their People*

Let's conclude this section by focusing on how such leaders communicate with their people. They sometimes take the following steps to show people how they can contribute towards achieving the picture of success.

*They give people the big picture – such as by reminding them of the team's purpose, principles and picture of success.*

*They again explain the principles the team aims to follow and, when appropriate, the priorities it needs to focus on to achieve the picture of success.*

*They invite people to make clear contracts about their contributions towards achieving the picture of success.*

Different leaders do this in different ways, but the aim is the same. It is to give people the big picture – the context – and show individuals that they have an important contribution towards achieving the picture of success.

## *Positive Leaders*

*They encourage people to focus on their personal contributions towards achieving the picture of success.*

*They sometimes do this by communicating the following things to their people.*

- *The Picture Of Success*

*They give people of the big picture. They may do this by reminding people of the team's purpose, principles and picture of success. They also show the benefits of achieving the goals.*

- *The Principles And Priorities*

*They again explain the principles the team aims to follow and, if appropriate, the priorities it needs to focus on to achieve the goals. They explain the progress made, the potential challenges and the next steps towards the picture of success.*

- *The Personal Contribution*

*They invite people to clarify the contributions they want to make towards achieving the goals. They then make clear contracts about their contributions towards achieving the picture of success.*

Let's return to your own work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow some of the principles of positive leadership? This could be in your personal or professional life.

How can you aim to be positive? How can you be predictable and create an encouraging environment? How can you use your strengths to enable people to achieve peak performance?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Positive Leadership In The Future*

*The specific situation when I may want to be positive, predictable and enable people to achieve peak performance may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to follow these principles in my own way are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as a result may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Taking Over A Team Approach*

### *Taking Over A Team*

*You can aim:*

- *To meet with the key stakeholders to agree on the team's goals;*
- *To find and follow your successful leadership style;*
- *To meet the team members to clarify their strengths and contributions towards achieving the team's goals;*
- *To, if appropriate, build a good leadership team;*
- *To develop your skills for communicating with people in the team.*

Imagine that you are taking over a team. In the old days leaders were given one hundred days to make their mark. Nowadays people make judgements more quickly. Let's assume that you have already done the following things:

*You have done your research and know what must be done to lead the team to success;*

*You have made clear contracts with the key stakeholders about the team's goals;*

*You have a clear mandate from these stakeholders to do whatever is necessary to achieve the team's goals.*

Imagine you have taken these steps. The following pages describe some steps you can take in your own way when taking over a team.

## *The Following Your Successful Leadership Style Approach*

### *Following Your Successful Leadership Style*

*You can aim:*

*To clarify your successful leadership style*

*To follow your successful leadership style*

*To complement your successful leadership style*

There are now many books about leadership. Whilst many of these models can be helpful, it can be useful to clarify your own successful leadership style. You can complement this with other skills to deliver success.

There are many different kinds of leaders. There are people leaders, thought leaders, creative leaders and other leaders. Let's explore how you can find and follow your style in your own way.

### *Clarifying Your Successful Leadership Style*

Most people have led something successfully at some point of their lives. They may have led a team, a task force, a campaign, a sports team or another group.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to go through the following steps.

*Describe the specific times when you have led something successfully*

Looking back at your life and work, when you have led something successfully? These could have been big or small events. They could have been personal or professional.

You may have been leading a specific project, an activity, a team or whatever. If possible try to think of two or three examples. Here are some that people have described.

*I led something successfully:*

*When I put together a team to solve a difficult problem for a client ... When I organised my own wedding ... When I organised a fun run at university.*

*When I was captain of the national under-16 football team ... When I led the launch of a software package ... When I made a film for charity ... When I created an induction programme for my company.*

*Describe what you did right then – the principles you followed – to lead each of these things successfully*

Looking at each example in turn, what did you do right to lead it successfully? Some of your answers may sound repetitive, but don't worry about that.

Some may also sound rather conceptual. If so, try to bring these to life with specific examples of what you actually did. Here are some that people have described.

*The specific things I did were:*

*I chose to do something I felt passionately about ... I set myself a clear goal ... I spent a lot of time clarifying the What before moving to the How ... I agreed with my manager on the results to be delivered.*

*I put together a team of people who wanted to achieve the goal ... I put people in places where they could play to their strengths ... I had a team of people who were good at overcoming setbacks.*

*I kept people's eyes on the overall goal ... I kept my manager informed about our progress ... I ensured that we celebrated success ... I ensured that people rose to the occasion and delivered the goal.*

What did you do right then to lead the team successfully? What were the principles you followed? How did you translate these into action? What did you – and other people – actually do? Here is the exercise.

## *My Successful Leadership Style*

*The specific time when I lead something successfully was:*

\*

*The specific things I did right then – the principles I followed – were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific time when I lead something successfully was:*

\*

*The specific things I did right then – the principles I followed – were:*

\*

\*

\*

*Describe your  
successful leadership style*

Looking at the things you have led successfully, can you see any patterns? If so, describe what you think may be your successful leadership style.

One person I worked with found that their pattern was clear. He loved building prototypes. Sometimes he had done this within the company he was working in at the time. Other times he had found an employer who wanted to change the rules of the game in their particular industry.

Looking at when he had done such work, we explored the recurring patterns that made up his successful leadership style. These were:

*To find a place where he could build a successful prototype;*

*To agree on the goals with his key stakeholders;*

*To set a deadline to work towards – because that was how he worked best – and for this to involve some sort of public launch;*

*To build a team of committed people who wanted to achieve the goals;*

*To explain the professional deal clearly to people before they joined the team;*

*To play to his own strengths and surround himself with people who could do the other work;*

*To encourage the team members to play to their strengths;*

*To get some quick wins that reassured his stakeholders;*

*To use these wins to buy time but also ensure he had the autonomy required to reach the goals;*

*To find solutions, make sure the prototype worked and produce success stories;*

*To do a public launch and show how the approach could help other customers to achieve success.*

We then looked at each of these steps in depth. What did he actually do to make each of them happen? This helped to clarify his successful leadership style.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to look for any recurring patterns and then describe what you believe may be your successful leadership style.

## *My Successful Leadership Style*

*Looking at the recurring patterns that have emerged, here is what I believe may be my successful leadership style*

### *My Successful Leadership Style May Be:*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

## *Following Your Successful Leadership Style*

Looking ahead, how can you follow your successful leadership style in the future? How can you follow it by, for example, finding or doing a specific project?

The person mentioned above took this route. They did this by taking the following steps. He clarified:

*The specific kinds of prototypes he found stimulating to build;*

*The specific places where he could build such prototypes – such as for companies that wanted to be ahead of the game;*

*The specific ways he could position this offering by showing how building such a prototype would benefit the company.*

Another person I worked with loved to make things work. She was superb at working for founders who wanted to get the right balance between consistency and creativity in their organisation.

She showed that she understood the founder's picture of success. She then implemented certain strategies to deliver the goods.

Showing respect for the knowledge workers, she ensured people followed similar principles – albeit using their own strengths – right across the company.

Few people have this skill, so she was often in demand. Bearing this in mind, she continually kept in touch with business owners she respected. There were always people who wanted her help to make sure the engine worked properly in their business.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe the specific things you can do to follow your successful leadership style.

## *My Successful Leadership Style*

### *Following It In The Future*

*The specific things I can do to follow  
my successful style in the future are:*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

## *Complementing Your Successful Leadership Style*

Some psychometric tests tell people that they need to be well-rounded, but this ignores several factors. Great leaders are often extremely good at some things and not good at others. The key is for them to be aware of both their strengths and weaknesses.

Great leadership teams are often made up of people who complement each other's strengths. Sometimes people operate as pairs or trios to get the work done successfully.

Bearing this in mind, let's return to your own leadership style. It can be worthwhile asking the following questions.

*How can I build my strengths as a leader – the activities where I deliver As? How can I manage the potential consequences of my weaknesses as a leader – the activities where I deliver Bs and Cs?*

*How can I get people who complement my strengths and compensate for the areas where I am not so good? How can I add to my skills and continue to develop as a leader?*

Good leaders realise it is vital for them to build a good leadership team. They need people who can ensure the organisation delivers outstanding work in specific areas. These include being able:

*To manage the key stakeholders ... To implement the strategy ... To deliver the sales ... To market a compelling story ... To run the operations ... To build a positive culture ... To manage the finances ... To deliver great customer service ... To develop new products ... To maintain high staff morale ... To manage today's business and shape tomorrow's business.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe how you can complement and add other skills to your leadership style. You can then implement these ideas on the road to achieving success.

## *My Successful Leadership Style*

*Complementing It To Deliver Success*

*The specific strengths I have as a leader are that am able:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to complement my leadership style by adding people with other strengths are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Meeting With Individuals To Clarify Their Best Contributions*

Imagine that you are clear on the successful leadership style. The following pages focus on how you can meet with the people in your team and clarify each person's best contribution.

Good leaders focus on clarity, competence and consistently high standards. They have a clear view about the team's goals. They also clarify the competence that each of the people will bring towards helping the team deliver consistently high standards.

Imagine that you want: a) to connect with each team member; b) to clarify their character and competence; c) to clarify their best contribution.

Different people do this in different ways. One leader explained their approach in the following way.

*"Three years ago I took over the European arm of an American company. I spent the first month travelling to Rome, Madrid, Stockholm, Berlin and the other offices."*

*"People seemed a bit anxious about my visits. But I spent the time listening to their ideas, sharing my hopes and exploring how the company could be successful."*

*"Certainly I knew where to take the business, but I also wanted to connect with people in the different countries."*

*"My predecessor had not bothered to involve people. He told them that things needed to change and he was going to show them how to run a business."*

*"The meeting with individuals took time, but it was valuable. The sessions also told me a lot about the people I could build on and those who might not be ready for the journey."*

*"One month after the sessions I gathered everybody together to focus on the team's goals. During the presentation I referred to some of the ideas people had shared during our meetings.*

*"People understood it wasn't a democracy. But they enjoyed seeing how some of their ideas had influenced the vision."*

How to do this in your own way? One approach is to hold one-to-one sessions with each team member. Here is an introduction to the approach.

Explain that before the sessions you would like each person to do some pre-work. Say that you obviously have a view of the team's strategy and goals. You would, however, also like to hear their views.

Invite each person to complete the following piece of work and send it to you before the session.

Hold the one-to-one sessions, listen to people's ideas and share some of your own views. Say you will soon be getting back to people to finalise the vision.

Here is *The Leader's Pack* for holding such sessions. This includes *The Team Member's Pack* that you can send to individuals before the meetings.

(This pack repeats several of the exercises already describe in *The Positive Teams* section of the book. I have included these here to produce a stand-alone section in case you to ever want to use it when taking over a team.)

*The Leader's Pack For  
Meeting Individuals  
When Taking Over A Team*

*Introduction*

Imagine you are taking over a team and you will have already taken the following steps.

You will have done your research and know what must be done to lead the team to success.

You will have made clear contracts with the key stakeholders about the picture of success.

You will have a clear mandate from these people to do whatever is necessary to guide the team to success.

It can be useful to have meetings with the people in the team you are taking over. You will obviously do this in your own way, but here is one approach.

Explain that before the sessions you would like each person to do some prework.

Say that you obviously have a view of the team's strategy and road to success. You would, however, also like to get their input.

Invite each person to complete the following piece of work and send it to you before the session.

*The Team Member's  
Prework Pack For  
The One-To-One Session*

## *Introduction*

Dear ...

As you know, I have recently taken over the leadership role in the team.

Obviously I have some clear ideas about the team's goals, strategy and road to success. But it is also important to get your input. So I would like to meet with you for a one-to-one session.

Bearing this in mind, I would like you to do some prework before the session. You can send it to me ahead of the session.

We can then use it to focus on how we can work well together to achieve the team's goals.

Here is an overview of the exercises. These are explained in more detail in the pack.

- \* *My View Of The Team's Goals*
- \* *My View Of The Team's Strategies*
- \* *My View Of The Team's Challenges*
- \* *My Strengths And My Best Contribution*

There is also space for highlighting any other topics you would like to discuss in the one-to-one.

The prework will take some time. It invites you to focus on the team's overall strategy, as well as your part. Set aside some time to do the exercises. You can send the pack to me ahead of the session and we will explore it together.

## *My View Of The Team's Goals*

*The following pages invite you to describe what you believe should be the team's goals if we are to achieve success.*

*As mentioned, some goals will be given to us and are mandatory, but we would also like your views.*

## *The Team's Goals*

*I believe the team's top  
three goals should be:*

*1)*

*For example:*

*\**

*\**

*\**

2)

*For example:*

\*

\*

\*

3)

*For example:*

\*

\*

\*

### *My View Of The Team's Strategies*

*The following pages invite you to describe what you believe should be the team's strategies for working towards achieving the goals.*

## *The Team's Strategies*

*I believe the team's strategies for working towards achieving the goals should be:*

1)

*For example:*

- \*
- \*
- \*

2)

*For example:*

- \*
- \*
- \*

3)

*For example:*

- \*
- \*
- \*

## *My View Of The Team's Challenges*

*The following pages invite you to describe what you believe are the team's key challenges and what we can do to tackle these challenges successfully.*

## *The Team's Challenges*

*I believe the team's challenges are:*

1)

*The specific things I believe we can do to tackle this challenge are:*

\*

\*

\*

2)

*The specific things I believe we can do to tackle this challenge are:*

\*

\*

\*

3)

*The specific things I believe we can do to tackle this challenge are:*

\*

\*

\*

*My Strengths*

## *Introduction*

This exercise invites you to clarify your strengths. Please be as honest as possible when doing the exercise.

*\* Describe the deeply satisfying activities in which you deliver - or have the potential to deliver - As rather than Bs or Cs.*

These may be particular kinds of projects, tasks or other activities. Try to give concrete examples.

*\* Describe the activities in which you deliver Bs and Cs.*

The B activities are probably those that you can do reasonably well. The C activities are those where you have little aptitude.

## *My Strengths*

*The specific activities in which I deliver - or have the potential to deliver - As are:*

1)

*For example:*

\*

\*

\*

*Bs. The specific activities in which I deliver Bs are:*

1)

*For example:*

\*

2)

*For example:*

\*

*Cs. The specific activities in which I deliver Cs are:*

1)

*For example:*

\*

*My Best Contribution*

## *Introduction*

The following pages invite you to describe your potential best contribution.

Start by bearing in mind the team's goals. Try to link your strengths and best contribution to achieving these goals.

If possible, also outline the potential pluses and minuses of making this contribution.

We cannot guarantee that it will be possible for you to do all these things. But it would be useful to know what you believe would be your best contribution.

## *My Best Contribution*

*Bearing in mind the team's goals and my strengths, I believe my best contribution towards achieving the goals would be:*

1)

*For example:*

\*

\*

\*

2)

*For example:*

\*

\*

\*

3)

*For example:*

\*

\*

\*

*Pluses: The pluses of making this contribution – for the team, customers and colleagues - would be:*

\*

\*

*Minuses: The potential minuses could be:*

\*

\*

*The specific things I/we could do to build on the pluses and manage the consequences of any minuses would be:*

\*

\*

*Other Topics*

*The following page provides space for describing any other topics you would like to discuss or explore in the meeting.*

*The Other Topics I  
Would Like To Discuss Are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *You can set the tone and ensure people are working towards the team's goals*

Imagine that you have held the one-to-one sessions with people. You can then set the tone by gathering people together and creating a positive environment.

Explain that you want to give an overview of the team's strategy and goals. You can also explain that you have had the opportunity: a) to meet with each person; b) to get their ideas; c) to clarify their best contribution. You can then describe:

*The What – the team's specific goals;*

*The Why – the specific benefits of achieving the goals;*

*The How – the specific strategies for achieving the goals.*

*The Who – the specific role that each person can play in reaching the goals;*

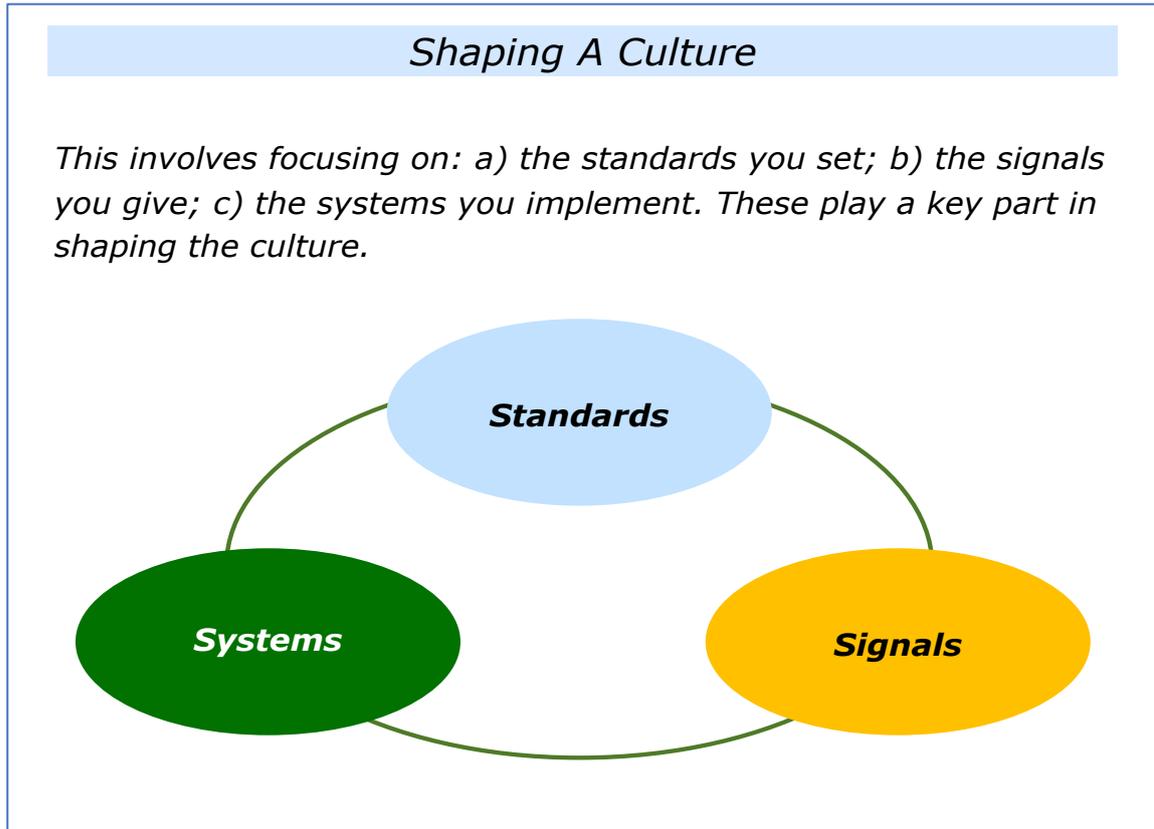
*The When – the specific milestones on the way towards achieving the goals.*

You can again make the professional deal clear. It is important to be honest about: a) your responsibilities and; b) the team members' responsibilities in working to achieve the goals.

You can explain professional standards required. It can then be useful to give people time to reflect and decide if they want to opt into the future culture.

Meeting again with each person, you can agree on their best contribution. You can encourage and enable people to achieve the team's goals.

There are many ways to then shape the culture. One of the most common approach involves focusing on the following themes.



### *Standards*

Good leaders communicate the professional standards that are required to deliver the goals. They aim to demonstrate these in their own work.

They know that people are watching them to see if their words match their actions. They recognise that people believe what they see rather than what they hear.

### *Signals*

Good leaders recognise the importance of the signals they give to people about 'the way we aim to do things around here.' These are given in the following areas.

*The signals they give in the way they personally relate to people.*

Good leaders treat people with respect – whether these are the company’s backers, the customers, the colleagues, the cleaners or other people in the community.

*The signals they give about customer service*

Good leaders show respect to their customers. This involves making sure the symbols are right. For example, simple things like the customer’s parking spaces – rather than the managing director’s space – being nearest to the reception area.

*The signals they give about what is rewarded in the organisation.*

Good leaders reward the behaviour they want repeated. For example, they promote people who live the values rather than those who don’t.

## *Systems*

Good leaders set up systems that embody the organisations values. They make sure that the organisation’s procedures and processes aim:

*To promote the wellbeing of their people;*

*To promote customer service and make it easy for customers to do business with the organisation;*

*To promote the organisation’s values and translate these into action.*

This section has focused on how you can take these steps when taking over a team. When appropriate, you can take a similar approach to building a good leadership team. Let’s explore this approach.

## *The Building A Strengths Based Leadership Team Approach*

### *Strengths Based Leadership Teams*

*They clarify their purpose, principles and picture of success.*

*They clarify the strengths they have and the strengths they need to add to achieve the picture of success.*

*They then coordinate these strengths to achieve the picture of success.*



There are many models for building good leadership teams. Some draw on the work done by Meredith Belbin. They aim to build teams that include a Shaper, Coordinator, Implementer and other roles.

Some are based on the roles in what people call the C-Suite. These include Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief People Officer and other roles.

Such teams must cover the following areas. They need people who can communicate the big picture, manage the finances, shape the culture and coordinate the operations.

They also need people who can lead the marketing, deliver the sales and provide great customer service. Most all you will need people who can coordinate these resources and deliver the picture of success.

Another approach is to build a strengths based leadership team. This embodies the approach described by Tom Rath. He explained that:

*"Great leaders are not well-rounded, but great leadership teams are well-rounded."*

Different leadership teams apply this approach in different way. Whichever route they take, it is important to have people who can use their strengths:

*To communicate the team's purpose, principles and picture of success;*

*To build a positive culture in which motivated people can do superb work on the way towards achieving the picture of success;*

*To manage by outcomes and enable people to do their best to achieve the picture of success.*

Imagine that you lead a leadership team and want to apply this approach. Let's assume that everybody is clear on the team's picture of success. You may then want to work through the following steps.

### *Clarify The Strengths The Team Already Has*

You will do this in your own way. One approach is to look at each team member and clarify the specific activities in which they deliver As rather than Bs or Cs.

*Person A. Their strengths are:*

*They can ...*

*They can ...*

*They can ...*

*Person B. Their strengths are:*

*They can ...*

*They can ...*

*They can ...*

*Person C. Their strengths are:*

*They can ...*

*They can ...*

*They can ...*

Continue with this until you have described the specific activities where people deliver good work. You can then summarise these by completing the following exercise.

### *Strengths We Have*

*The strengths we already have in the team that can help us to achieve the picture of success are:*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

### *Clarify The Strengths The Team May Need To Add*

This stage involves being honest about the strengths in the team and the potential gaps. You can then complete the following exercise.

#### *Strengths We Need To Add*

*The strengths we need to add to help us to achieve the picture of success are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things we can do to add or develop these strengths are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Coordinating The Strengths To Achieve The Picture Of Success*

Imagine that you have clarified the team's strengths. You have also been able to add some of the other required strengths to your team.

Earlier in the book we focused on how to coordinate a team's strengths to achieve its goals. Bearing this approach in mind, you can then complete the following exercise.

### *Coordinating The Team's Strengths*

*The specific things we can do to coordinate the team's strengths to achieve the picture of success are:*

\*

\*

\*

Imagine that you have worked through these steps. You can then aim to do your best to coordinate people's strengths to achieve the picture of success.

As mentioned earlier, there are many ways to build a good leadership team. This section has looked at one approach.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to focus on your present team and complete the following sentences.

## *Building A Strengths Based Leadership Team*

### *The Picture Of Success*

*The real results we want  
to achieve by ... are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Strengths We Have*

*The strengths we already have  
in the team that can help us  
to achieve these results are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Strengths To Add*

*The strengths may need to add –  
and how we can add these – to  
help us to achieve these results are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Coordinating The Strengths To Achieve Success*

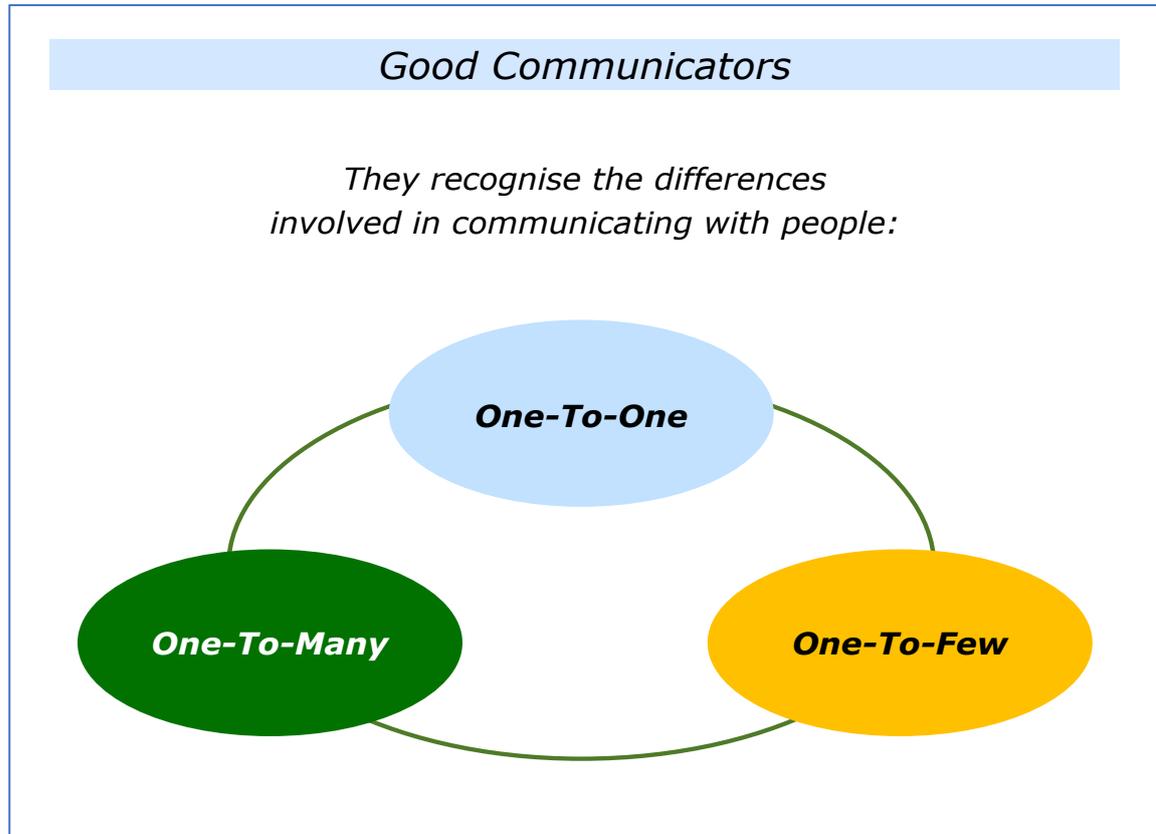
*The specific things we can then do to  
coordinate these strengths to do our  
best to achieve the picture of success are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Communication Approach*



Imagine you are a leader. Your work will probably involve meeting with individuals, small groups and large gatherings. Whilst you may follow similar communication principles in each situation, the way you express these will differ in practise.

Good communicators aim to connect with people. They often start by building on what people have in common and clarifying the goals for the conversation.

They give and receive information, find creative solutions to challenges and make clear contracts about the future. If appropriate, they ensure that everybody moves forward towards a shared picture of success.

Good communicators look ahead and rehearse interactions. They focus on:

*The specific results to achieve – for both them and for the other people;*

*The specific strategies they can follow to do their best to achieve these results;*

*The specific challenges they may face and how to deal with these successfully.*

Whilst this may sound mechanical, such preparation allows them to be fully present and spontaneous with people.

Poor communicators are often more concerned with what they want to say rather than with the results to achieve from the conversation. This means they may not be fully present. They may miss cues and find it difficult to achieve mutual success.

Later we will explore how to connect with people in one-to-one, one-to-few and one-to-many situations. Before then, here is a short introduction to some of the principles followed by good communicators.

## *Good Communicators*

*They often rehearse by focusing on the Who, What, Why, How, When and Where. Here are some of the questions they may ask before meeting a person or a group.*

### *The Who*

- *Who are the people - the person or group – that I will be communicating with? What are they like? What are their values? What are their personality styles? What are their communication styles?*
- *What will they want to get from the communication? What is happening in their world? What are the challenges they face? What is their picture of success?*
- *What are the Dos and Don'ts for communicating with these people? What are the examples I can use to show I understand their world? What for them would make it a good conversation or session?*

### The What And Why

- *What are the real results I want to achieve from the communication? What are the results the other people want to achieve?*
- *What are the key messages I want to give people? What do I want people to be feeling, thinking and saying after the communication?*
- *Why do I want to achieve these results? What will be the benefits for the various people? What will be happening afterwards that will show that the communication or session has been successful?*

### The How

- *How can I do my best to achieve the results? How can I connect with people? How can I build on what we have in common?*
- *How can I establish clarity? How can I position the topics we are going to explore? How can I make sure we agree on the goals for the session? How can I double check everybody is okay with the agenda?*
- *How can I communicate clearly? How can I put the key messages in a way that people can receive? How can I bring the messages to life with real examples from people's world? How can I make sure people have received the messages?*

- *How can I show I am listening? How can I show respect for people? How can I show I understand their point of view, even though I might have another view? How can I encourage people to work towards the agreed results?*

- *How can I, if appropriate, help us to clarify the possible ways forward? How can I help to find creative solutions to challenges? How can I summarise what we have agreed? How can I double check we all have the same picture?*

- *How can I make clear contracts with people about who needs to do what and by when? How can I make sure people get the practical support they need? How can we get some early wins? How can I help people to achieve the agreed picture of success?*

### The When And Where

- *When do I want to communicate with people? Where would be the best place to hold the conversation or session? How can I create the right physical and psychological environment?*

- *How can I prepare properly? How can I mentally rehearse all the possible scenarios? How can I rehearse the strategies and solutions for achieving success? How can I help the other people to prepare properly?*

- *After the conversation, how will I know we are on the right road going forward? What will be happening that will show we are achieving the agreed concrete results? How can I continue to encourage people to achieve success?*

## Communicating One-To-One

Imagine you are meeting a customer, a team member, your manager or another person. or whoever. You will probably ask some of the questions mentioned above. You will focus on:

*Who is the person? What is their agenda? What are the results they want to achieve? What are the results I want to achieve? How can I do my best to get win-wins?*

Having rehearsed the meeting, you will then click into action and be fully present. You will then do your best to have a good conversation and achieve the desired positive results.

Let's focus on a different kind of one-to-one situation where you may be acting as a counsellor, coach or mentor. This may also call for you to use your listening skills. Let's explore this theme.

### Good Listeners

*They create an environment in which the person feels safe and at ease. They invite the person to talk and then go through the following steps.*

-  *They listen for the theme in what the person is saying.*
-  *They make sure they understand the picture inside the person's head.*
-  *They may invite the person to describe their picture of success.*

Good listeners listen for the theme in what a person is saying. They then play back what they have heard to check that they understand the picture inside the person's head.

This approach can be applied in both your personal and professional life. You can use it when encouraging a team member, clarifying a brief with a customer or listening to your partner. Let's explore this approach.

Imagine that a person has asked to meet with you to get some advice. They may want to talk how to tackle a challenge, how to take the next step in their career or some other topic.

Good listeners start by creating an environment in which the person feels safe and at ease. They then encourage the person to open up and talk. Different people do this in different ways. One approach is to ask the person some of the following questions.

*"What would you like to talk about? What is on your mind? What is happening in your world? Are there any challenges or other topics that it might be useful to explore?"*

Imagine that you have created such an environment. The person has opened up and begun talking about a particular topic. It can then be useful to take the following steps.

### *You can listen for the theme in what the person is saying*

Good listeners pay attention to what a person is saying. They often look beyond the words, however, and look for recurring patterns. They listen for the theme in what a person is saying.

They may invite a person to go beyond generalities and give specific examples. This is because some people talk in concepts or use sweeping terms. They may say, for example:

*"I feel stressed ... People upset me ... I want a more satisfying job ... The world has gone mad and nothing seems certain anymore."*

Imagine that somebody is talking with you about their situation. It can be useful to listen for any recurring theme in what they are saying. You can then play back your understanding by saying something like:

*"Are you saying that ...?"*

Keep going until the person says:

*"Yes, that is right."*

You can then move on to the next step.

### *You can make sure you understand the picture inside a person's head*

People see and interpret the world in different ways. So it is vital to understand what a person means when they explain their situation or talk about their goals. This calls for making sure you understand the picture inside a person's head.

Later we will look at how to take this step. Before then, however, here is a communication exercise that illustrates how people see things differently.

The exercise is called *What Colour Is Your Horse?* It is one that I have used many times on workshops.

This involves explaining to people that I am going to give them an exercise on communication. The next step is to invite people to close their eyes and give them the following instructions.

*Imagine a field in the country. In the field there is a horse. It is up to you what colour the horse is. It could be black, brown, white or another colour.*

*There may be other animals around. There might be a farmhouse or other buildings nearby. It is up to you what kind of day it is.*

*The horse runs around the field, jumps over a fence and runs away into the distance.*

*You can open your eyes now. Form pairs and each spend 30 seconds describing your picture.*

Calling people back together, I then ask:

*"What colour was the horse?"*

Different people give different answers. They may say brown, black, white or another colour. So I say something along the following lines.

*"People interpret information in different ways and every person's picture is right for them.*

*"You would think it was crazy if you saw a black horse and I said you had got the wrong colour – that it was a white horse. But have you ever been in that situation?"*

*"You may think you have made an agreement with somebody. But then, when you follow up afterwards, they say you have got the wrong picture. This can happen with a boss, colleague or other person.*

*"Good communicators often finish a conversation by making clear contracts. They make sure everybody has agreed on the colour of the horse."*

Good communication calls for double-checking your understanding of the other person's view. It is vital to understand the agreed picture.

Imagine that your manager says they want something done 'as quickly as possible'. Does this mean when you have finished your present task, when you have time or immediately? (They probably want it done yesterday!)

Imagine that a person says they want you to encourage them. Do they mean to praise them all the time, give positive but realistic feedback or make suggestions about how they can improve?

Imagine that your partner says they want you to change your behaviour. Do you understand the actions they want you to stop? Do you know what they want you to do instead in the future?

Let's explore another step that can be taken to understand the goals a person wants to achieve in their personal or professional life.

*You may invite the person to describe their picture of success*

Imagine that you have listened to a person and shown you understand the issues they face. If they have asked for your advice, for example, you may say something like the following.

*"As far as I understand, this is what is happening. Is that right? If so, is it okay if I share some ideas about the possible ways forwards?"*

Good mentors always go through this step. They check with a person that it is okay to share ideas. Why do they take this step?

Some people simply want to talk about problems but not do anything about solving them. Other people are prepared to do the work involved in exploring solutions and achieving success.

Good mentors follow the rule that a person must have the will before they can learn a skill. They therefore check if it is okay to share knowledge with the person.

Imagine another situation. What can you do if the person simply keeps talking about negative things?

One approach is to use what are called Flip Questions. It is to invite the person to describe their positive picture of success. Here are some examples of using such questions when helping a person.

*"At the moment you say that you feel bad. What would you like to feel instead? Would you like to feel calm, at ease or have some other feeling? If you wish, we can explore how you can increase the chances of feeling this way in your life and work."*

*"At the moment you say that a certain person behaves in a way that causes problems. How would you like them to behave instead? What are the actual things you would like them to do in their interactions with people?"*

*"At the moment you say that some people in the team behave in ways that hurt others. I can offer some practical tools for dealing with these situations, but we can also look at your longer-term goals."*

*"Looking 6 months ahead, what would you like the people in your team to be saying, thinking and feeling? If you wish, we can look at how to achieve these things and build a successful team."*

You will have your own approach to inviting a person to describe their picture of success. If appropriate, you can then pass on knowledge or offer practical tools they can use to achieve their goals.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a one-to-one situation where you may be meeting with a person?

What may be the results that: a) they want to achieve from the meeting; b) you want to achieve? How can you connect with the person, communicate clearly and do your best to make it a successful meeting?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Communicating One-To-One*

*The specific situation where I may be communicating with a person may be:*

\*

*The real results I want to achieve by communicating with them one-to-one are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to connect with the person, communicate clearly and do my best to achieve the desired results are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Communicating One-To-Few*

Imagine you are the leader in such a situation. You may be conducting a meeting, catching with a work group or facilitating a workshop. When meeting the people, it will be important:

*To clarify the specific goals for the meeting;*

*To check if anybody would like to add other items to the agenda;*

*To begin exploring the first topic.*

It may be useful to open up the first topic, explain the goals to achieve, invite others to share their views, listen carefully and then, at an appropriate time, close down the topic.

Making a decision, you will ensure everybody is clear on the way forward. Moving onto the next topic, you will continue until the agenda is completed.

Sometimes you may play a different role in a group - such as when meeting with peers or simply contributing to a departmental meeting. Preparation is the key to participating in a group. You can choose:

*To clarify the role you want to play and the contribution you want to make to the situation;*

*To anticipate everything that may happen in the situation;*

*To rehearse how you want to communicate and contribute to achieving a successful meeting;*

You can then go in and do your best to make a positive contribution to the meeting.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Communicating One-To-Few*

*The specific situation where I may be communicating one-to-few may be:*

\*

*The real results I want to achieve by communicating with them are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to connect with people, communicate clearly and do my best to achieve the desired results are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Communicating One-To-Many*

Communicating with large groups can be challenging. One person expressed their feeling about this in the following way.

*"I enjoy individual and small group meetings, but I feel uncomfortable talking to large groups.*

*"Maybe it is because in smaller sessions I can see how people respond and also get into dialogue. This is more difficult in big groups. The things you say seem to disappear into the ether.*

*"For somebody like me, who thrives on instant feedback, it can be quite challenging to speak to big groups."*

Some leaders develop their ability to communicate in one-to-many situations. They may do this by focusing on the following themes.

*They aim to be themselves in the situation. They use their own voice, language and examples. They aim to be professional but also express their personality.*

*They know their audience. They know the challenges these people face in their daily work and world.*

*They clarify the key messages they want to give people. They know how to communicate these messages in a way people can receive. They give examples to bring the messages to life.*

*They spend a lot of time preparing. They practice until they can forget. They go through the process of rehearsing, relaxing and then rising to the occasion.*

*They start the session by positioning what they are going to say. They often give the context – the bigger picture - before going on to give concrete examples. This helps people to see things in a wider context.*

*They give the key messages to people by moving between the concept and the concrete. They give an idea and then illustrate it with an example that people can recognise in their daily lives.*

*They conclude the session by outlining the next steps. They also, when appropriate, give people the chance to integrate and implement the ideas in their daily work and lives.*

Some people are good communicators one-to-one, some one-to-few, some one-to-many. Whatever situation they enter, they find it useful to prepare properly and then do their best to achieve the desired picture of success.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on the theme of communication. This invites you to do the following things.

*Describe the specific situation where you may want to communicate with people on a one-to-many basis.*

*Describe the real results you want to achieve from the communication in the situation.*

*Describe the specific things you can do to connect with the people, communicate clearly and achieve the desired results.*

## *Communicating One-To-Many*

*The specific situation where I may be communicating one-to-many may be:*

\*

*The real results I want to achieve by communicating with them are:*

\*

\*

\*

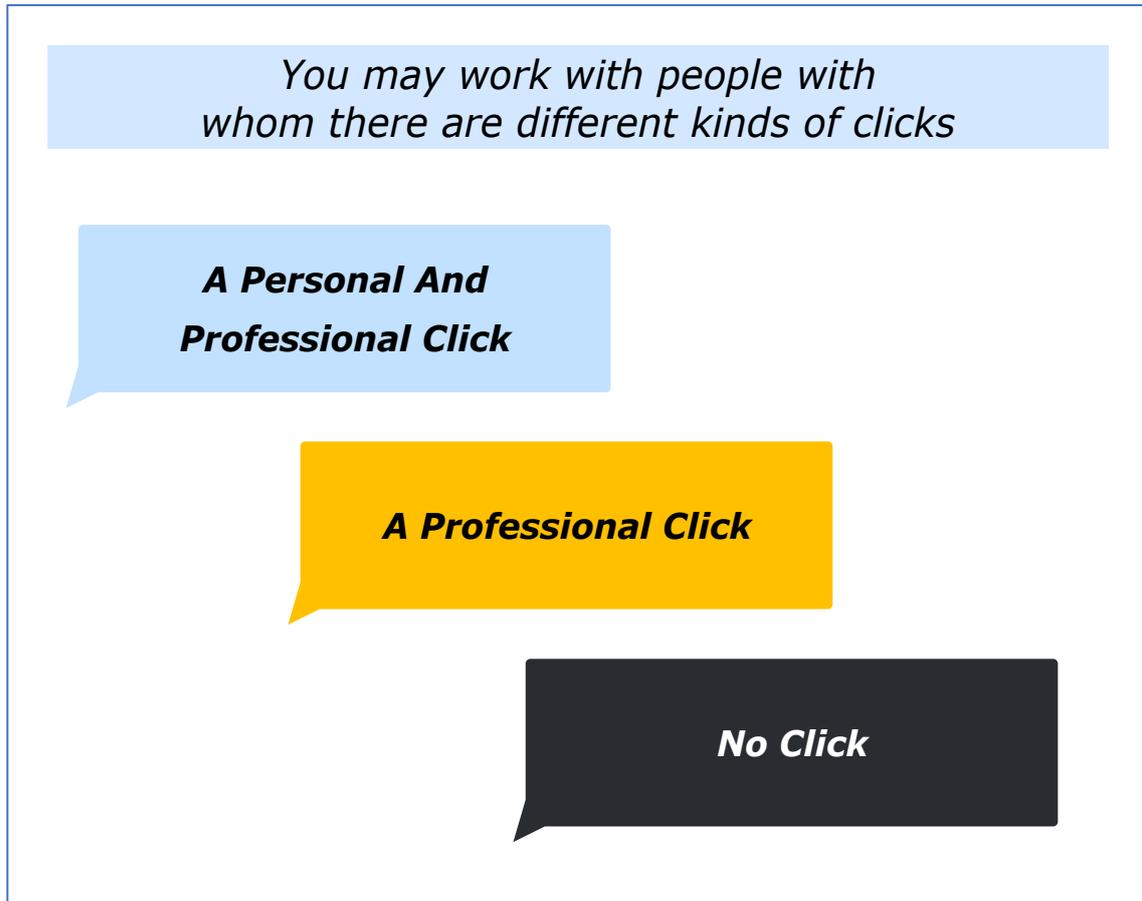
*The specific things I can do to connect with people, communicate clearly and do my best to achieve the desired results are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Different Kinds Of Clicks Approach*



This section involves another aspect of communication. You may find it easy to work with some people but find others more challenging. With some people there is both a personal and professional click. With some there is a professional click. With some there is no click.

This aspect is important to consider if your role involves communicating with stakeholders. This can be challenging if it is difficult to connect with them. Let's explore these themes.

*There is both a personal  
and professional click*

You may share similar values with these people and have a similar view of the world. Connection is easy because you start from common assumptions.

You therefore begin at 7/10. This provides a springboard for getting to 10/10. Let's consider how you can build with such people, beginning with colleagues.

Who are the colleagues with whom you share similar values? How can you help them to succeed? How can you co-operate to achieve success? One person explained this in the following way.

*"During the past 15 years I have worked on several projects with two colleagues I met when working at my first company.*

*"Since then we have set up and sold two marketing companies. We know each other, warts and all. We also know how to work with our respective strengths and weaknesses.*

*"People describe me as a serial entrepreneur. Wherever I go, however, I will always take these two people.*

Let's move onto your customers. Who are the customers with whom you work best? What are their personality characteristics? How can you do more work with these customers? How can you help them to succeed?

They may recommend you to similar kinds of customers, but this should not be forced. Providing you do good work, this may well happen naturally.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Looking at both colleagues and customers, this invites you to do the following things.

Describe the people with whom you have both a personal and professional click. Write their names. Describe the specific things you can do to build with these people.

## *Personal And Professional Clicks*

*The names of people with whom there is a personal and professional click are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to build with some of these people are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *There is a professional click*

You may find this happens when working with somebody in your professional life. Whilst having differing personalities, you both strongly believe in achieving a specific goal.

Many famous comic partnerships in show business, for example, comprised of people who seldom saw each other socially. Once on stage, however, they produced fine performances.

Similarly, you may have customers with whom there is little social talk. It is quickly down to the matter in hand. You will probably take several steps to manage such relationships.

You will prepare properly. Looking ahead to any interaction, you will ask yourself:

*"What will be the person's goals? What will they want to achieve in the short, medium and long-term? How can I help them to succeed?"*

You will be professional. When starting a meeting you will double check what they want to achieve in the session. You will aim to deliver high professional standards in everything you do with the person.

You can aim to deliver positive results. You will aim to perform superb work and deliver the agreed results. Sometimes you may add go into another dimension and achieve peak performance.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Looking at both colleagues and customers, this invites you to do the following things.

Describe the people with whom you have a professional click. Write their names. Describe the specific things you can do to build with these people.

## *Professional Clicks*

*The names of some people with whom there is a professional click are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to build with some of these people are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *There is no click*

Sometimes you may find yourself in work situations where there is absolutely no connection between you and the other person.

It is best to avoid such problems, but circumstances may mean it is necessary to work together to achieve a specific goal. You may feel on guard, however, and unable to relax.

How to deal with such difficulties? Imagine there is a video camera on you all the time. You will aim to be professional and behave in a diligent way. It will be hard work, because you may need:

*To mentally rehearse every situation that may arise;*

*To be fully alert and pay attention to everything;*

*To make crystal clear contracts before, during and at the end of each meeting or interaction;*

*To be super professional, perform superb work and deliver the goods;*

*To be prepared for increased demands or criticism and be able to manage such behaviour in a professional way.*

We frequently do our best work with kindred spirits, but this is not always possible. It is therefore useful to clarify your strategies for working with different types of people. You are then more able to perform superb work and achieve an agreed picture of success.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. Looking at both colleagues and customers, this invites you to do the following things.

Describe the professional situations where you may be with people with whom there is no click. Describe the specific things you can do to behave in a professional way in such situations.

## *No Clicks*

*The professional situations where  
I may be with people with  
whom there are no clicks are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to be  
professional in these situations are:*

\*

\*

\*

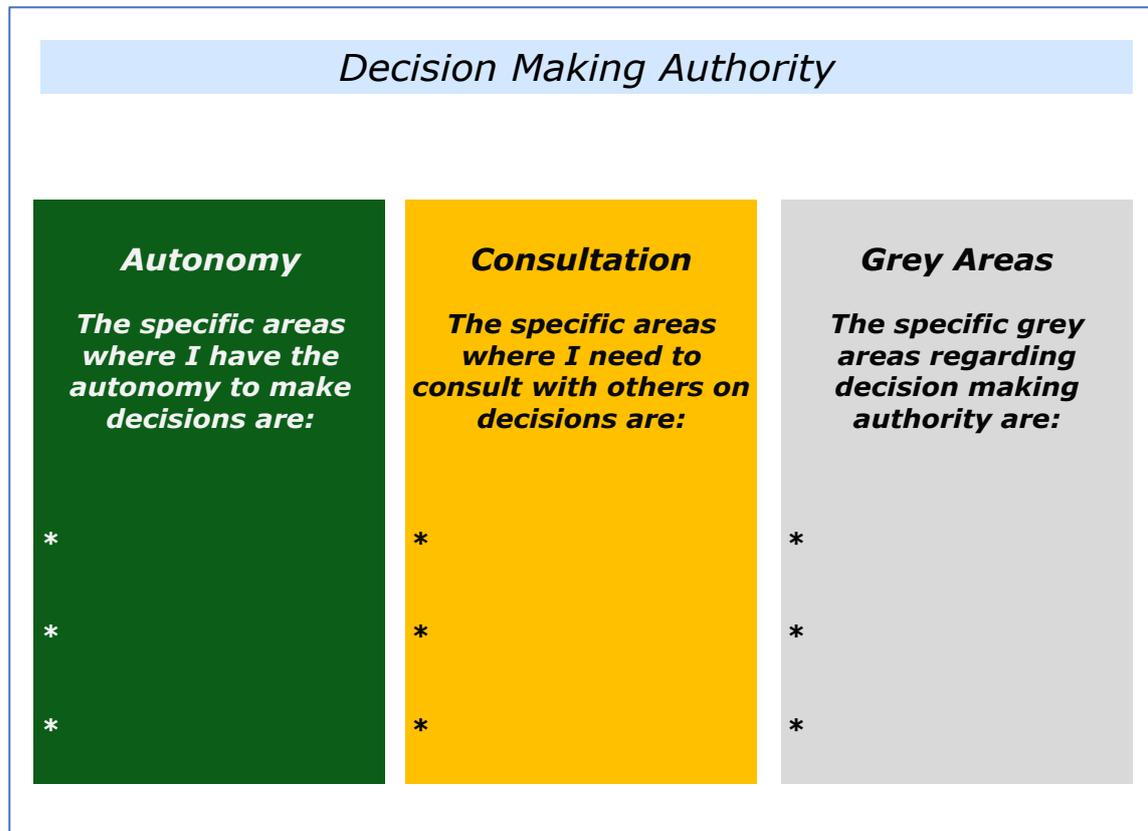
*The specific benefits of  
taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Decision Making Authority Approach*



People can get into difficulty because of confusion about their decision making authority. This section explores how it is possible to make clear contracts regarding decision making.

Imagine you have recently taken a new role in an organisation. You started with enthusiasm and agreed your goals. After trying several creative ideas, however, you met resistance.

When taking the job, you believed you had a clear brief and mandate. But several departments feel you are treading on their toes. How to tackle this challenge?

One approach is to meet with the manager to whom you report - and the other stakeholders - to make clear contracts about your decision making authority. Let's explore how to take these steps.

## *Agree with your manager about your decision making authority*

You are prepared to be accountable, but you also need clarity. Bearing this in mind, arrange a meeting with your manager and get their views on the following topics.

### *Autonomy*

Start by focusing on the areas where you both agree you have such autonomy. These may include aspects of the budget, the people in your team, managing certain issues with customers and other topics. Agree with your sponsor on the following aspects.

### *Autonomy*

*The specific areas where I have the authority to make decisions are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Consultation*

Sometimes there may be other stakeholders you need to involve before taking action. This is especially true in large organisations.

Clarify the areas where you have to consult with other people – and with whom - regarding making decisions. This can slow things down, but it is important to keep the key stakeholders on board.

Bearing this in mind, agree with your manager about whom you should consult with and about what. Later you can make clear contracts with these people.

## *Consultation*

*The specific areas where I may need to consult with other people – and with whom – regarding making decisions are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Grey Areas*

These are the areas that can lead to confusion. People may not know whom can decide about what. This can result in individuals making assumptions, invading each other's areas or letting things fall through the net.

It is often the grey areas that can create problems. Bearing this in mind, brainstorm with you sponsor what may be the topics that fall into this category. You can then focus on these areas and try to establish clarity.

## *Grey Areas*

*The specific areas where there may be confusion about decision making are:*

*\**

*\**

*\**

### *Clarify The Decision Making Authority*

Imagine that you have done some initial work on these themes. You can then begin making clear contracts with the various stakeholders.

The following section describes how John, a manager I worked with, applied this approach. He began by meeting with his manager.

*"The first step was to agree on the specific activities where I had the power to act autonomously. This proved relatively easy, though there was slightly less freedom than I had imagined.*

*"The second step was to explore the areas where I had to consult. My manager agreed it was important that as few people as possible be involved in making certain decisions, otherwise there would be paralysis. So we agreed on the activities:*

*a) where other people should be fully consulted in making a decision; b) where other people should be given a sense of*

*ownership, but that I had the final say; c) where other people had the final say and I had to try to work with them to get a win-win.*

*"The next step was to explore the grey areas. These were the activities where it was not clear who could make a decision and this was creating difficulties.*

*"We began moving these grey areas into one of the first two sections – those where I had the authority to make decisions or where I needed to consult with others. It was important to take this step, otherwise there would be continued confusion."*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe how you can make clear contracts with your manager about your decision making authority.

## *Decision Making Authority*

*The specific things I can do to make clear contracts with my key sponsor about my decision making authority are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Agree with the various stakeholders about the decision making authority*

John then moved on to having conversations with other stakeholders. He described how his manager laid the groundwork for these meetings.

*"Before I approached the other stakeholders – such as the heads of departments – he requested their help. He sent the following message.*

*'As you know, we are all aiming to achieve a common goal. This calls for making clear contracts about each person's – and each department's – decision making authority.*

*"Bearing this in mind, John will be meeting each of you to agree on the respective areas of decision making authority.*

*'At the moment, you each have areas: a) where you have the autonomy to make decisions; b) where you need to consult with others; c) where the areas are somewhat grey.*

*'I would like you to work together with John to make clear contracts about the respective areas of decision making authority. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of your meetings.'*

The manager's message set the scene for the meetings with other stakeholders. John explained this in the following way.

*"My manager also talked with some individuals heads to ease the way. Although there were still some challenges, we worked together to find win-win solutions. We managed to work out the respective decision making authority."*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe how you can make clear contracts with other key stakeholders about your and their decision making authority.

## *Consultation*

*The specific things I can do to make clear contracts with the other key stakeholders regarding decision making authority are:*

*\**

*\**

*\**

### *Continue making clear contracts about the decision making authority*

Unexpected events or poor communication can jeopardise working relationships. So it is important:

*To keep making clear contracts;*

*To keep connecting with key sponsors and stakeholders to update how things are going and review or change the contracts;*

*To anticipate future events and clarify the respective responsibilities when tackling these challenges.*

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe how you can continue to make clear contracts with your manager and other key stakeholders.

## *Decision Making Authority*

*The specific things I can do to continue to make clear contracts about the decision making authority are:*

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\*

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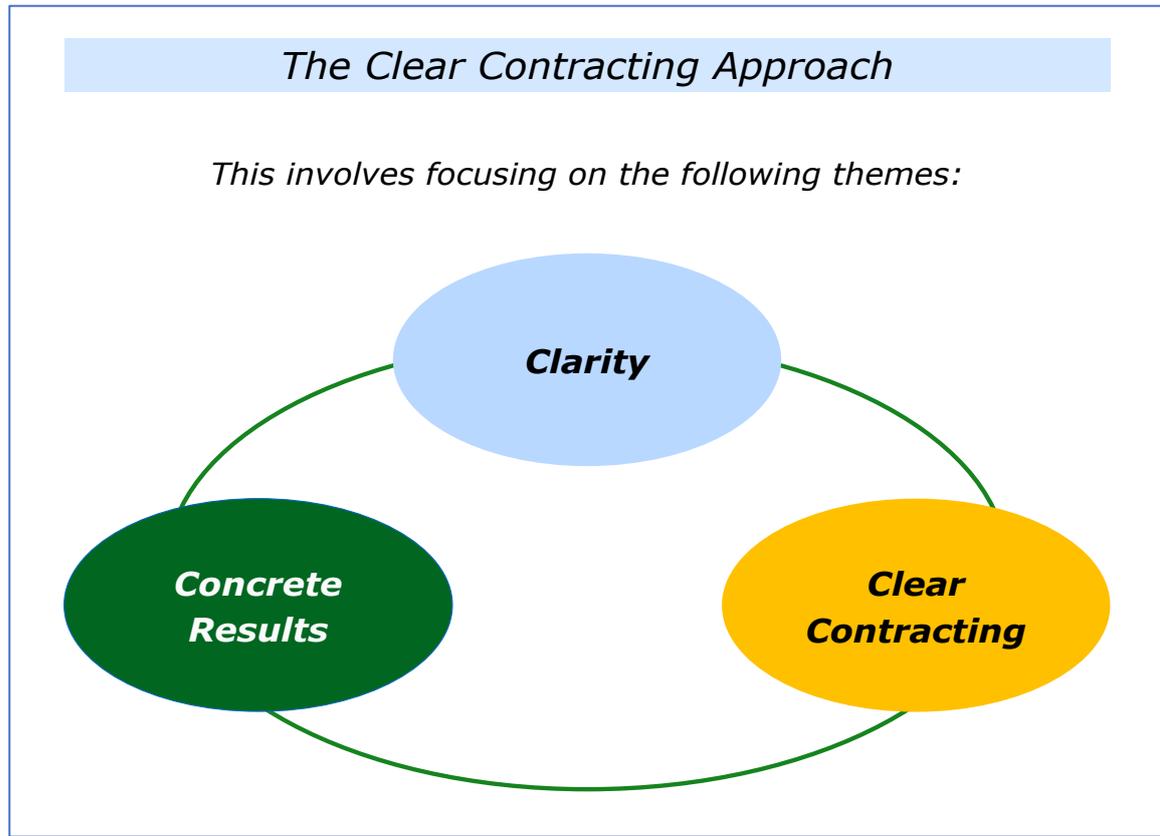
*The specific benefits of taking this approach will be:*

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## *The Clear Contracting Approach*



Clear contracting plays a crucial role in both personal and professional relationships. Keeping promises helps to build confidence. People are then more likely to trust each other and work together to achieve future success.

Some contracts may be practical – such as legal or working contracts – but others might be psychological. Professional contracts often involve people agreeing to follow a certain code of conduct on the way towards achieving certain goals. Personal contracts often involve people agreeing about how they will behave when living or working together.

Sometimes contracts involve signing a piece of paper. Sometimes there is a spoken agreement. Sometimes the agreement is assumed but unspoken. The latter can, of course, lead to misunderstandings.

Different people make contracts in different ways. They do, however, often focus on the following themes.

### *Clarity*

*This involves people clarifying and agreeing on the real results to achieve. It involves making sure everybody is clear on the picture of success.*

### *Contracting*

*This involves people agreeing on the guidelines to follow - the Dos and Don'ts - to achieve the goals.*

*It also involves agreeing on: the responsibilities of each party in working to achieve the results; the support they need; the specific things they will do to proactively keep others informed about their progress.*

### *Concrete Results*

*This involves people playing back their understanding of what has been agreed. It then involves people fulfilling the agreed contracts and doing their best to achieve the picture of success.*

Clear contracting plays a key part in educational, coaching and other professional relationships. Sometimes this contract is extremely explicit.

This is the case when, for example, a therapist is working with a recovering alcoholic or addict. The therapist will make it clear that they will only work with a client if they want to be healthy and act in a responsible way. Breaking the agreement will lead to the end of the therapeutic relationship.

Looking at your own life, can you think of a situation when you made clear contracts with somebody or a group of people? What did you do to make the clear contracts? What did people then do to carry out what was agreed and fulfil the contracts?

## *Clear Contracting In The Past*

*The specific situation in the past  
when I made clear contracts  
with a person or a group was:*

\*

*The specific things I did to then to make  
sure we made clear contracts were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I and they did to make  
sure we fulfilled the agreed contract were:*

\*

\*

\*

As mentioned earlier, there are different kinds of contracts. This section of the book focuses on three themes. These are making contracts in professional relationships, making contracts in personal relationships and making contracts with yourself.

People often follow similar steps in each of these cases. As mentioned earlier, they focus on the following themes.

*Clarity - people agree on the specific goals to achieve.*

*Contracting - people agree on the actions required - and who will do what - to achieve the goals.*

*Concrete Results - people carry out the actions and achieve the goals.*

### *Making Contracts In Professional Relationships*

People often enter into a contract when taking up a professional role. Sometimes this is made explicit by them agreeing to follow a certain professional credo. This may require them to sign a formal agreement.

Sometimes it takes the form of people making a verbal agreement to follow certain principles. The guidelines that people are expected to follow will differ depending on the task.

They may be aiming to climb a mountain, build an elite sports team, run an Accident & Emergency Unit, find a breakthrough medical cure or whatever. People can be given chance to decide if they want to opt into following these guidelines to achieve the mission.

Good coaches often use the contracting approach when working with people. They do this when encouraging athletes, learners and in other professional situations.

They start by establishing a coaching contract. The following process seems very structured, but you can adapt it in your way.

The coach begins by inviting the coachee to have an initial go at filling in the coaching contract. The coachee is asked to describe:

*The specific goals they want to achieve;*

*The specific things they see as their responsibilities in working towards achieving the goals;*

*The specific kinds of help they want from the coach and other people in working towards achieving the goals;*

*The specific things that will be happening that will show they have achieved the goals.*

The coachee and coach then meet to agree on the coaching contract. This forms the basis for their work together.

What happens if the coachee breaks the contract? Depending on the situation, the coach may immediately stop working with the person. On other occasions, they may ask them:

*"Let's go back to the goals you want to achieve? Do you still want to achieve these goals?"*

*"What do you see as your responsibilities in working to achieve the goals? Are you prepared to do those things?"*

*"If so, then we may have the basis for working together. If not, then that is your choice. And, as we know, every choice has consequences. If you wish, take time to reflect. Then let me know your answer."*

Good encouragers are supportive, but they can also be tough. They give people clear messages and are prepared to follow through on the consequences. Here is the framework for the coaching contract.

## *The Coaching Contract*

*The coachee starts by filling the following pages. They then meet with their coach to agree on the coaching contract for working towards the coachee's goals.*

*The Goals. The specific results I want to achieve are:*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

*My Responsibilities. The specific things I see as my responsibilities in working towards achieving the goals are:*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

*The Specific Help. The specific kinds of help I would like from the coach and others in working towards achieving the goals are:*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

*The Measures. The specific things that will be happening that will show I have achieved the goals will be:*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

### *Making Contracts In Personal Relationships*

Good relationships often involve clear contracting. Looking at your own life, you will know the people who will do exactly what they say they will do. There may be others about whom you are less certain. Breaking the agreements can lead to breaking the relationships.

People often enter into contracts in their personal lives. Some involve both verbal and written agreements. These may include getting married, drawing up a will or making financial agreements.

People also make verbal contracts when living together. They agree on who will take care of the various tasks involved in earning money, looking after the house, caring for the children and doing other activities

Individuals also make assumptions, rather than clear contracts, with their friends and loved ones. They develop ways of relating to each

other that, whilst seldom spoken about, form the basis for their interactions.

They may get upset if others behave in ways that veer from what they expect. If appropriate, they may then try to rectify matters by talking about the issue and making clear contracts for the future.

During my early career I worked with both healthy and unhealthy families. This highlighted how clear contracting played a part in building good relationships.

Healthy parents were positive and predictable. They were supportive, created a safe environment and encouraged others to develop.

Such parents gave clear messages, however, about how people were expected to behave. People in the family felt valued but also knew the consequences if they behaved in ways that hurt others.

Unhealthy parents were negative and unpredictable. They often gave conflicting messages that caused chaos and confusion. As a result, other people felt scared and unable to develop.

During family therapy we invited people to make clear contracts about how they wanted to treat each other. Every family already had contracts. Some contracts were unspoken, however, and some caused difficulties.

One father, for example, told their teenage addict son that he must learn to take responsibility and get a job. At the end of the session, however, they gave the son money to go and spend with their friends. The unspoken agreement was:

*"I am going to tell you to take responsibility, but then I am going to enable you to stay in your role as an addict."*

Both parents were asked if they were serious. Did they really want their son to take responsibility? If so, it was important to make clear contracts about him looking after himself.

The parents agreed and, despite a few difficulties, stuck to their parts of the bargain. The son left home and stayed with friends. He was a survivor and began to put his life together.

Imagine that you want to make a clear contract with somebody. Sometimes this will be relatively simply. Both yourself and the other person may want similar things. You can then agree on common goals and work together to achieve the picture of success.

Sometimes it is more complicated. People may want some things in common but have differences in other areas. You may then want to apply the approach described elsewhere in the book in the section on finding win-win solutions.

There are many ways to make contracts with people in personal relationships. This often involves taking the following steps:

*To focus on a specific topic about which you want to make a clear contract;*

*To, when looking at the topic, create an environment where each party feels able to say what they would like to do or achieve;*

*To build on what you have in common – or focus on win-win solutions to differences - and clarify the real results to achieve;*

*To clarify each party's responsibilities in working towards the goal and make sure that everybody has the same picture;*

*To encourage each other and do your best to fulfil the contracts and achieve the desired results.*

One approach is to use the following framework. This sounds very structured, so you may wish to adapt it in your own way.

## *Clear Contracting*

*The following framework can be used when people make clear contracts. The approach looks formal, but it can be adapted to different situations.*

*The key is to make sure that everybody is clear on the results to achieve, the guidelines to follow and each party's responsibilities. They can then work to achieve the agreed goals.*

*The What. The specific results we want to achieve are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The Why. The specific benefits of achieving the results will be:*

\*

\*

\*

*The How. The guidelines to follow when working towards achieving the results are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The Who. The specific responsibilities of each party in working towards achieving the goals are:*

*Party A will:*

- \*  
\*  
\*

*Party B will:*

- \*  
\*  
\*

### *Making Contracts With Yourself*

Sometimes the most important contract you make is with yourself. You may believe in following certain principles in life, for example, and aim to follow these, even when things get tough.

Faced by a challenging situation, you may buy time to think. You may then ask:

*"What is actually happening in the situation? Bearing in mind the things I can control, what do I want to do? What are the real results I want to achieve?"*

*"What are the principles I believe in following in life? How can I follow these principles in this situation? How can I do my best to achieve the picture of success?"*

Peak performers, for example, make a clear contract with themselves about what they want to do in their personal or professional lives.

They start by clarifying their goals. They then do due diligence and clarify the pluses and minuses involved in working towards achieving the goals.

Such people then commit to pursuing their chosen path. They keep returning to this internal contract – which acts as a compass – when making decisions about their future actions.

Making an internal contract calls for translating ideas into action. A person may choose to get up at a certain time, eat certain foods, behave in certain ways or do certain activities. They develop a rhythm for doing these things and this becomes part of their daily life.

Some people make a contract with themselves to follow a certain mantra. A person may, for example, keep saying the following things to themselves (other people may follow other scripts).

*Keep being positive.*

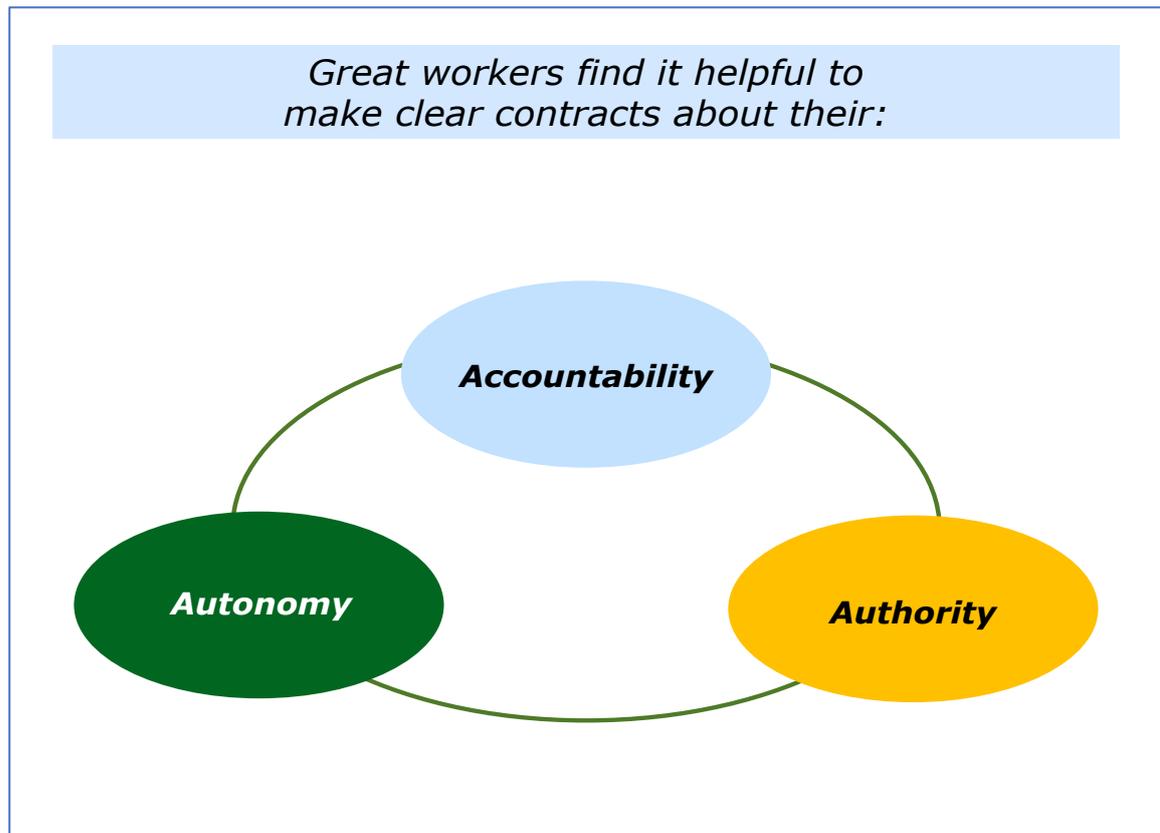
*Keep doing your best.*

*Keep encouraging other people.*

Such a mantra acts like a personal contract that they aim to follow in different situations. As one person said:

*"My contract with myself is always to do my best."*

## *Clear Contracting When Taking A Professional Role*



Imagine that you are on the point of taking a role in an organisation. During the interviews you established credibility by doing the following things.

*You showed that you understood the organisation's goals;*

*You described the specific results you would deliver to contribute towards achieving the organisation's goals;*

*You described how you would keep the stakeholders informed about your progress toward delivering the organisation's goals.*

Before taking the position, it can be useful to make clear contracts about various aspects of the role. Whilst you will be happy to be accountable, you may also need the required authority and autonomy to deliver success.

You can explore these themes with your potential employer. It is important to do this in a positive and professional way, however, rather than being seen as demanding.

### *Clarifying Your Accountability*

As mentioned earlier, you will have clarified the results to achieve. Agree with your potential employer about what must be delivered and by when.

Play back your understanding to ensure that you all agree on the same picture. It is important to be absolutely clear about the results on which you will be judged.

Imagine that you take the role. Events can occur that mean your employer needs to change what they want you to deliver. Bearing this in mind, it will be useful to - in a diplomatic way - keep making clear contracts about the picture of success.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Looking at the role for which you are applying, this invites you to do the following things.

*Describe the specific results you will be accountable for delivering.*

*Describe, on a scale 0 – 10, the extent to which you believe you will be held accountable for delivering these results. (It will probably be 10/10.)*

*Describe the specific things you can do to keep making clear contracts about the results to be delivered.*

## *Accountability*

*The specific results I will be accountable for delivering will be:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific extent to which I will be held accountable for delivering these will be:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to keep making clear contracts about the results to deliver are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Clarifying Your Authority*

Clarify the authority you will have to perform the role. Make sure it feels like you have at least 8/10 in terms of having the power to act.

Authority and autonomy are intertwined, of course, and you may need both to operate successfully. One manager explained this in the following way.

*"Several years ago I took a high-profile European position with a stretching brief. Unfortunately I was not given the authority to do the job.*

*"The company told me to implement a customer service programme across the region, but we were in the midst of matrix madness. Dotted lines abounded everywhere and nobody took responsibility.*

*"Lacking direct power, I was supposed to use my influencing skills to improve customer service in ten countries. My time was spent circling in the holding position above airports, attending meaningless meetings and eventually becoming dispirited.*

*"Learning from the tough experience, I got a clear brief and mandate before taking my present job."*

If you wish, try completing the exercise on this theme. This invites you to do the following things.

*Describe the kinds of authority you would like to have in order to deliver the results.*

*Describe, on a scale on to 10, the extent to which you feel you will have the authority to act.*

*Describe the specific things you can do to maintain or improve the rating.*

## *Authority*

*The specific kinds of authority I would like to have in order to deliver the results are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific extent to which I feel I will have the required authority is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Clarifying Your Autonomy*

Clarify the freedom you will have to perform the role. Make sure it feels like you have at least 8/10 in terms of having the autonomy to shape things as you wish.

You must operate within parameters, of course, but you need oxygen to breathe. Agree with the employer on the autonomy you will have, for example:

*To set the team's goals ... To set the team's strategies ... To manage the team's budget ... To decide who to hire and fire ... To do whatever is necessary to achieve the team's goals.*

As mentioned earlier, it can be useful to clarify your accountability, authority and autonomy before taking a role. There may be times, however, when you feel that the original deal has changed. This can happen as events evolve.

You can then make new clear contracts with your employer. If you feel that there is not enough authority and autonomy in the role, however, you may need to make a decision.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to do the following things.

*Describe the kinds of autonomy you would like to have in order to deliver the results.*

*Describe, on a scale on 0 - 10, the extent to which you feel you will have the autonomy required to deliver the results.*

*Describe the specific things you can do to maintain or improve the rating.*

## *Autonomy*

*The specific kinds of autonomy I would like to have in order to deliver the results are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific extent to which I feel I will have the required autonomy is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that you want to make a clear contract with a loved one, friend, colleague at work, customer or another person.

What is the topic you would like to make a clear contract about?  
What will be the benefits of making a clear contract?

How can you find out what each party wants? How can you agree on the results to achieve? How can you make sure that each party has the same picture?

How can you agree on each party's responsibilities? How can you make sure everybody has the required support?

How can you keep each other informed of the progress being made?  
How can you and the other party do your best to achieve the agreed picture of success?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you complete the following sentences.

## *Clear Contracting In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future when  
I may want to make a clear contract  
with a person or a group may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to  
make a clear contracts with them are:*

\*

\*

\*

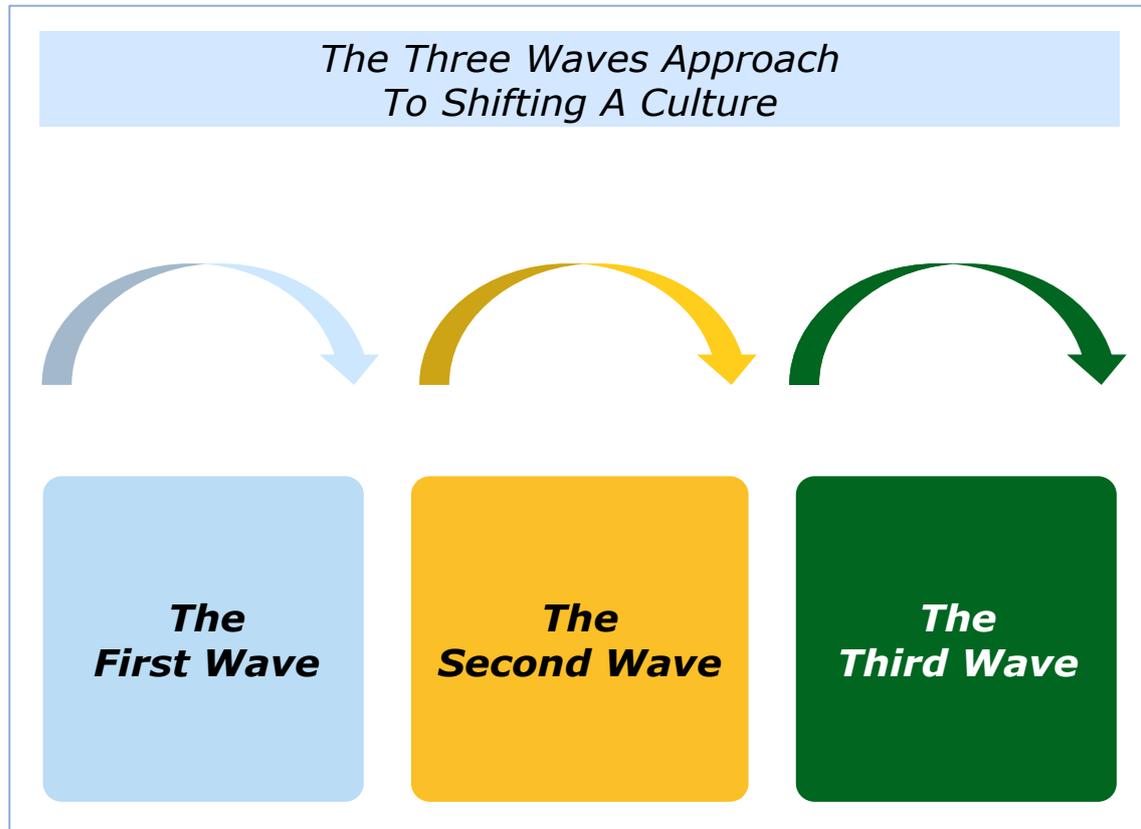
*The specific things I and they can do to  
make sure we fulfil the agreed contract are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Three Waves Approach To Shifting A Culture*



Imagine you are a leader. You have been given the authority to do whatever is necessary to shift an organisation's culture. Some leaders invite the employees to change, but this seldom works.

Another approach is to use the three waves approach. This involves aiming to go through the following stages.

### *The First Wave*

*Building successful prototypes that embody the desired culture and produce success stories.*

### *The Second Wave*

*Working with more people who follow the principles, deliver success and produce success stories.*

## *The Third Wave*

*Making the principles mandatory, providing people with the support they need and keep producing success stories.*

You then invite people to choose whether or not they want to be part of the new culture. Let's explore this approach.

### *The First Wave: Building Successful Prototypes*

You can start by clarifying your picture of success. Start from your destination - perhaps 18 months in the future. Describe what you want to see happening at that date.

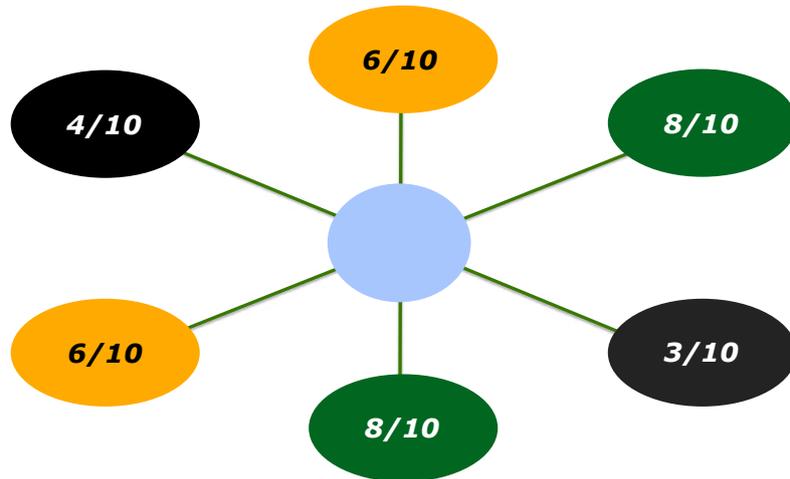
Working backwards, describe the things that must be achieved by the end of each quarter and work back to the present day. That is your road map towards achieving the picture of success. Then move onto the next stage.

Looking around the organisation, identify where you can build prototypes that will embody the future culture. These must stand at least a 7+/10 chance of success.

If you are running an organisation that covers a continent, for example, identify the country leaders who will support the approach.

## Building Successful Prototypes

*Begin by looking at the various opportunities and rate the chances of success. Rate these on a scale 0 – 10. Build on where there is positive energy and then deliver success stories.*



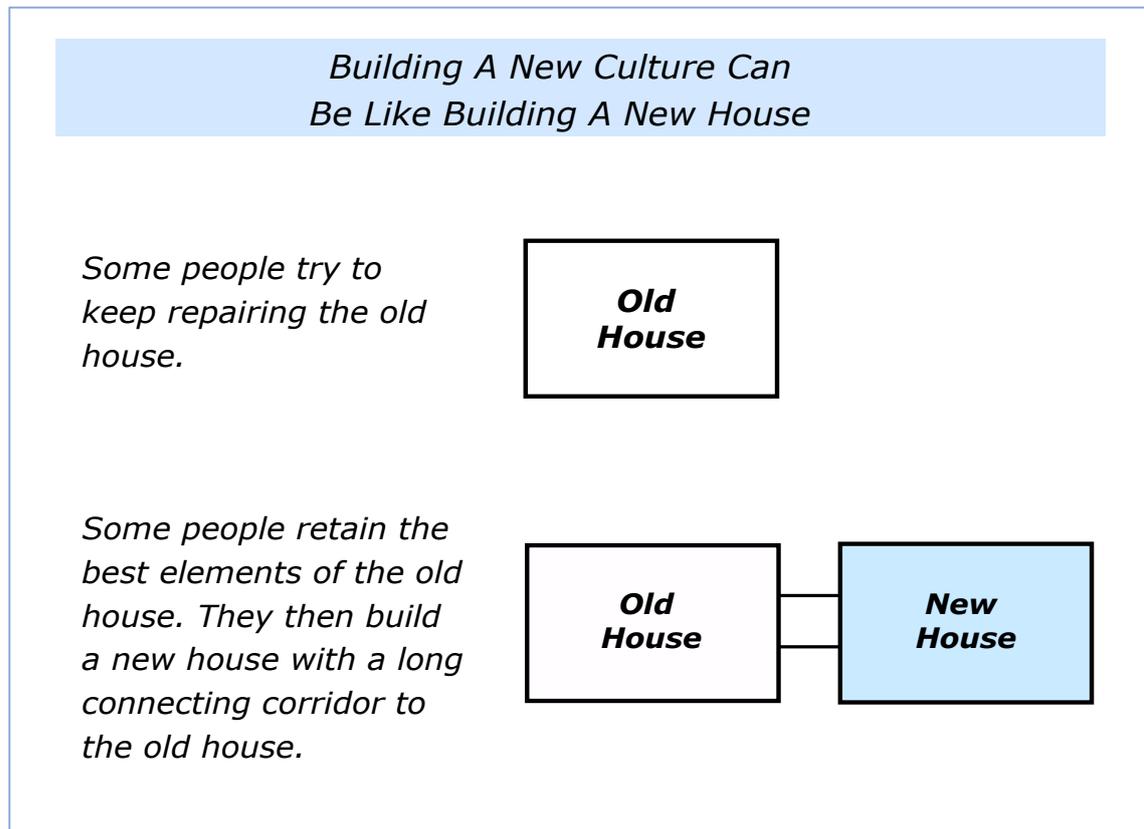
Good leaders communicate the organisation's story, strategy and road to success. They aim to do this in a compelling way that resonates with people.

Explain to everybody in the organisation that you are building the future business. You would like volunteers who want to act as models. But make sure you have already earmarked three such places. Others may want to join, but make sure these are prepared to work hard to succeed.

This approach is the equivalent building a new house rather than renovating an old house. It is to build a new system that shows a better way.

Repairing an existing house – or an organisation – can be challenging. Sometimes changing a system meets resistance. Too much time can be spent trying to persuade people, rather than delivering the required results.

Shifting a culture sometimes calls for retaining the best elements of the old house but building a new house – a new way of doing things. One key point is worth underlining. It is important to have a long connecting corridor - some distance - between the old house and the new house.



The new house may develop a different culture and a fresh way of doing things. There is no point in rushing back every half hour to ask if it is okay to do things in the new way. If you do that, the old system will take over.

You are aiming to build a new system that delivers the goods. Bearing this in mind, it is important to ring fence the fresh approach. At the same time, however, it is vital to deliver success.

Do everything possible to help people to build the successful prototypes. Get people to share the success stories at an organisational event. Then go onto the next stage.

## *The Second Wave: Working With Volunteers Who Follow The Principles And Deliver Success*

People have shown the approach works. So now ask for other volunteers to model the desired culture. There are certain Dos and Don'ts during this crucial stage.

### *Dos*

*Do be certain you have the right leaders in place in each of the next wave of models.*

*Do work with them on clarifying their picture of success.*

*Do make sure they follow the principles embodied in the new way of doing business - rather than simply modify their present ways.*

*Do encourage them to work through the potential tough decisions.*

*Do provide the support they need to do the job and encourage them to get some early wins.*

*Do help them to do whatever is required to achieve success.*

### *Don'ts*

*Don't back leaders who say the right words but don't translate these into action.*

*Don't be half-hearted – people need to be serious about making change happen.*

Deadlines focus the mind. Give people a deadline for presenting their success stories at another organisational event in, for example, six months.

At the same time, encourage the first wave of prototypes to move onto a higher level. They can also present their new successes at the next organisational event.

There are many ways to build and maintain a positive culture. One approach is to show what good looks like by continually producing success stories. Below is one framework for producing such stories.

People choose a title for the story. They then describe the specific situation they encountered. They could be helping a client, solving a problem, making systems work better or whatever. They describe the challenges they faced and the desired picture of success.

People move on to describing the key strategies – such as the principles they followed - to tackle the issue. They describe the results that were delivered to achieve the picture of success. They then summarise what was learned from the experience.



*The Success Story*

*The title of the success story is:*

\*

### *Specific Situation*

*The specific situation we faced – including the specific challenges and the desired picture of success - was:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Specific Principles*

*The specific things we did - the principles we followed and how we translated these into action - to tackle the challenge and achieve the picture of success were:*

\*

\*

\*

## Success

*The specific results that were delivered were:*

\*

\*

\*

## Summary

*Here is a summary of: a) the specific things that worked and how we can follow these principles in the future b) the specific things we could do better next time and how; c) the specific other things of interest that emerged.*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Third Wave: Make The Successful Principles Mandatory And Build The Desired Culture*

The first and second waves of prototypes present their success stories.

You then give people clear messages about the behaviours that are necessary for the future culture, but the future is now. The message you are giving in the third wave is that:

### *The principles are now mandatory*

People can choose whether or not they want to opt-into the new way of working. They are to communicate with you - or their manager - within a month to show how they would like to contribute to the organisation's goals. You will also provide them with the support they need to achieve ongoing success.

If they do not want to take this route, then it may simply be a matter of 'fit'. The organisation will do its best to find a good way for them to move-on.

Sounds tough? Perhaps - but not tackling this issue is even tougher. The future is beckoning, however, so you present the organisation's new picture of success. People realise that you are announcing the next first wave. They can be part of shaping the future.

Many people ask: "How do you change a culture?" One approach is to say:

*"You create a new culture rather than try to change the old one.*

*"It is up to people to decide if they want to follow the principles.*

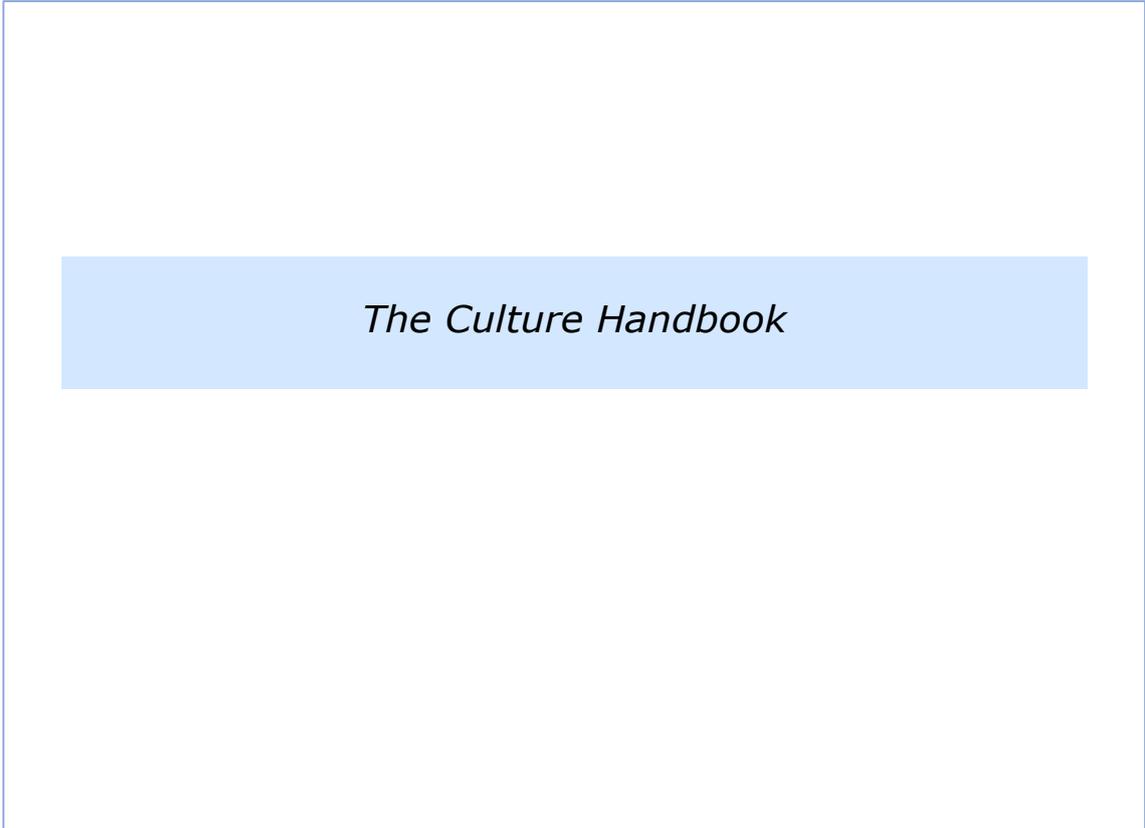
*"If so, you encourage them to use their strengths to work towards achieving the picture of success."*

Imagine that you have taken this step. It will be important to ensure that the people who apply to the organisation know what they are getting into. How to make this happen?

One approach that has been re-invented by many organisations is to return to producing a Culture Handbook. This needs to be short, attractive and with lots of illustrations. (It is certainly not a procedure manual.)

The handbook is given to new joiners and shows examples of how people have lived organisation's principles. It then invites people to focus on how they want to follow these in their own way and work towards achieving the goals.

Below is a framework that some organisations use for producing such a handbook.



*The Culture Handbook*

## *Introduction*

*Welcome to our organisation. This handbook gives an introduction to our purpose and the principles we aim to follow. It also describes the goals we want to achieve - the organisation's picture of success.*

*It can be useful to read the handbook and see how people have translated these principles into action. We have tried to bring these to life with real examples and illustrations.*

*You can then meet with your manager. Bearing in mind your strengths, you can clarify how you can make your best contribution towards achieving the picture of success.*

## *Purpose*

*The purpose of our organisation - the specific thing we really want to do - is ...*

*\**

*Here are some examples of the things that will be happening that will show we are achieving our purpose:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Principles*

*Here are some of the professional guidelines we encourage people to follow to achieve the purpose:*

\*

\*

\*

*Here are some examples of the specific things our people have done to follow the principles and translate these into action:*

\*

\*

\*

### *The Picture Of Success*

*The specific goals we want to achieve by ... are:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

*We can give you more information about these goals.*

*The Benefits Of Achieving These Goals Will Be:*

*For Our Customers:*

\*

*For Our Colleagues:*

\*

*For Our Company:*

\*

*The Positive Results*

*Here are some of the actual words we would like to hear  
our various stakeholders saying about our organisation.*

## Our Customers

*The actual words we would  
like to hear them saying are:*

"....."

"....."

"....."

## Our Colleagues

*The actual words we would  
like to hear them saying are:*

"....."

"....."

"....."

## *Our Company Backers*

*The actual words we would like to hear them saying are:*

"....."

"....."

"....."

## *Personal Contribution*

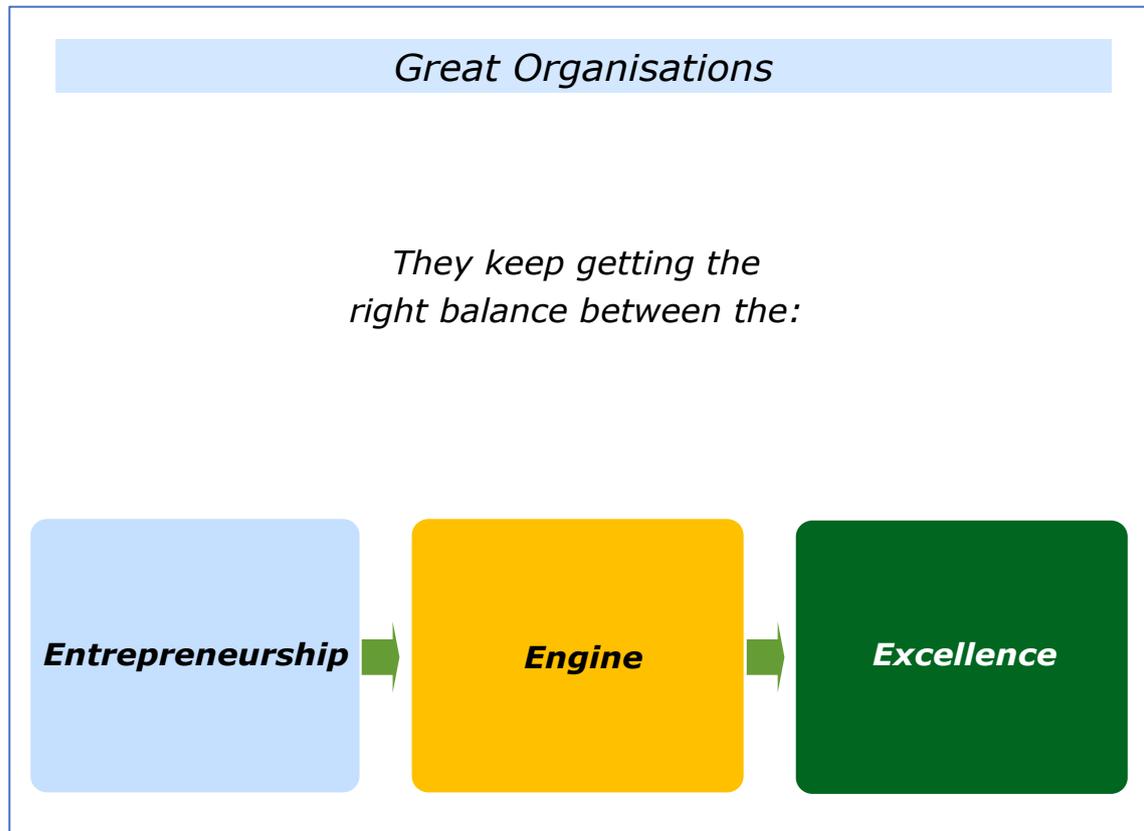
*Bearing in mind the goals we want to achieve, the next steps are these.*

*You can take time to reflect and decide if you want to contribute towards achieving the picture of success. If so, then move on to the next step.*

*You can clarify how you can build on your strengths and make your best contribution towards achieving the goals.*

*You can then meet with your manager and make clear contracts about your agreed contribution towards achieving the picture of success.*

## *The Entrepreneurship, Engine And Excellence Approach*



There are many models for developing and innovative idea and implementing it successfully. One approach is to focus the themes of entrepreneurship, building an engine and delivering excellence. Let's explore these steps.

### *The Entrepreneurship*

Imagine that you are part of a leadership team in a start-up company or that you want to scale a business idea within a larger organisation. Here are some steps to consider at the entrepreneurial stage.

*Start with an idea that will deliver success*

This is the spark. Sometimes the idea may be innovative. Sometimes it may imitate or improve an existing idea. Sometimes it may simply be a way to improve implementation.

*Show how the idea will deliver success*

Success breeds success - so show how the idea will deliver the goods. Demo or Die is the motto. It is important to get your first customer or to build a prototype that produces tangible benefits.

*Show how the idea can be scaled and  
Get backing for delivering this success*

Some entrepreneurial ideas can be delivered by an individual. Others may need to be implemented on a larger scale. This may call for building an engine that will deliver excellence.

Imagine that you want to follow the latter course. This may call for demonstrating a business case and getting backing from decision makers. You may therefore wish to present the following steps.

*The What: The specific results it will deliver in terms of success.*

*The Why: The specific benefits for the various stakeholders.*

*The How: The specific strategies that will deliver success.*

*The Who: The specific responsibilities of people in delivering success.*

*The When: The specific milestones on the road to delivering success.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Entrepreneurship*

*The specific entrepreneurial idea that I would like to implement is:*

\*

*The specific benefits for the various stakeholders would be:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to get support for this idea and build an engine to make it happen are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Engine*

Let's assume you have got the necessary sign off for implementing the idea. The entrepreneurial spark can provide the idea, but you may need to build an engine to deliver success.

Engines can take many different forms, but the following steps are often required. It will be important to clarify:

*The strategies for delivering success;*

*The systems and standards required to achieve success;*

*The staff – the people who will set up and run the engine – and the support required to deliver success.*

You will need to ensure that the right strategies are implemented by the right people in the right way. The people must be implementers who want to make things work.

There is no point in trying to coax or coach people who don't have the right attitude or aptitude. One leader described his approach in the following way.

*"My strength lies in producing strong commercial ideas. I can outline and oversee the strategic plan and make sure it delivers the required results. My weaknesses lie in doing the day-to-day implementation.*

*"My best work has been done when working with a good coordinator who has shared similar professional standards. They have translated the strategy into action and made sure that things worked on the ground."*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Engine*

*The specific entrepreneurial idea that I would like to implement is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to make sure we build an engine that implements the idea successfully are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific kinds of support I can give to the staff to enable them to implement the idea successfully are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Excellence*

Leaders need to ensure that the organisation delivers consistently high standards. If the engine does not work, however, they can spend much of their time fixing daily problems.

Imagine you want to ensure that people continue to run the engine and deliver excellence. Let's explore some steps you can take.

*You can continue to employ the right people and ensure they run the engine successfully*

As mentioned earlier, it is vital to employ people who enjoy making things work on a daily basis. You will need a key mission holder takes responsibility for delivering the goods.

This mission holder needs to lead a team of people who are committed: a) to running the engine and maintaining high standards; b) to doing what is required to help their stakeholders happy.

This is vital for several reasons. First, it will be important to make sure the daily systems keep working. This will provide a platform for helping the organisation to achieve success.

Second, it will also be important keep their key stakeholders happy and at bay. The last thing they want is for senior people donning their overalls and making impromptu visits to instruct them how to run the engine.

*You can encourage people to build a self-managing team that ensures the engine runs successfully*

Looking at your own role, at some point it may be important to help the team to become more self-managing. One approach is for you to take the following steps:

*To employ people who want to be self-managing and also want to ensure the engine keeps running;*

*To, at an appropriate time, meet with the team to ask them if they would like to become more self-managing;*

*To make clear contracts with them about: a) the specific outcomes to be delivered; b) the role they want to play in running the engine; c) the role they want you to play; d) the support they need and the specific things they will do to proactively keep you informed.*

*You can build and maintain a culture  
in which people deliver excellence*

You can keep in touch with the mission holder and other key people. They will be doing a vital but sometimes unglamorous job. Such people can be taken for granted.

Whilst they may be self-managing, it can be useful to meet with them to have regular one-to-ones. You can then aim a) to provide them with the necessary support; b)) to help them to maintain the job satisfaction and also focus on their professional development.

You can continue to publish success stories. People who run the engine may be soul players who don't go in for self-promotion. It can therefore be useful to highlight the principles people are following to run the engine successfully.

You can encourage people to keep meeting with their stakeholders. They can get feedback on: a) the specific things they are doing well; b) the specific things they could do better; c) the specific things they could do to deliver excellence to their stakeholders.

How can you ensure that the engine then delivers excellence? If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Excellence*

*The specific entrepreneurial idea that I would like to implement is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to make sure we build an engine that continually delivers excellence are:*

\*

\*

\*

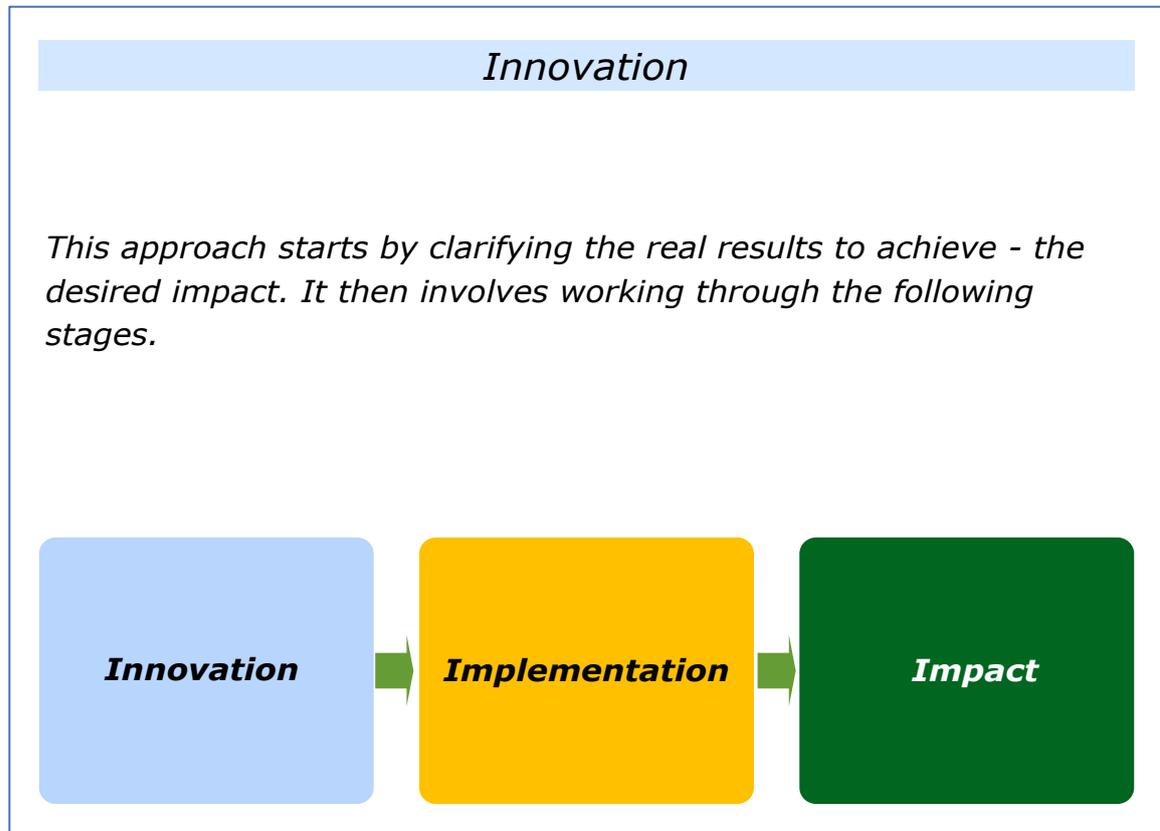
*The specific benefits of making sure it continually delivers excellence will be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Innovation, Implementation And Impact Approach*



This approach starts by clarifying the real results to achieve. It then invites people to go through stages of innovation, implementation and checking they have achieved the desired impact.

The model can be used by individuals, teams and organisations. It can help them to build on their strengths and manage the consequences of any weaknesses.

Some companies, for example, are good at innovation. Some are good at implementation and delivering impact. Some may be good at all three, but that is a rarity.

The following section gives an introduction to how I used this approach with two companies. Both worked in the digital space, but the principles we explored can be used in many fields.

Company A and Company B both had around 30 employees. Each was considering whether to scale up and increase their numbers. The exercise resulted in each company making different decisions about shaping their futures.

As mentioned earlier, this approach can be used by individuals. It can help a person to build their own business or clarify their best contribution to an employer. They can focus on their strengths and how they can use these to help others to achieve success.

The approach can also be used by teams and departments in organisations. They can clarify: a) the areas where they are strong; b) the areas where they are weak; c) the specific things they can do to make their best contribution to the organisation.

Let's return to the two companies mentioned earlier. Each company held a day workshop that focused on them shaping a positive future.

Before the session I asked them to do some homework. They were invited:

*To clarify their strengths by describing the principles they had followed – and the ways they had translated these into action - to do brilliant work for customers in the past;*

*To clarify the specific kinds of customers with whom they worked best and: a) the challenges these customers faced at the present time; b) the challenges they would face in the future;*

*To clarify the specific things they could do to build on their strengths to help these customers: a) to manage their present challenges; b) to achieve success in the future.*

The following section describes some activities we did during the leadership team workshops. The outcomes were interesting.

Company A chose to be an innovations house; Company B chose to become an implementation house. Both went on to achieve good results. Let's explore some of the steps we went through during the sessions.

## *Clarifying The Desired Impact*

Company A started by clarifying how good it was at connecting with customers and clarifying the desired impact. The leader explained their approach to establishing clarity – the real results to achieve.

*"Our people are relatively good at clarifying a customer's brief and playing this back to them.*

*"The customer is often already suggesting how they believe it is possible to solve the present problem. Those ideas may or may not work. But we have to be careful how we position what we can do to help them succeed.*

*"We are good at producing innovative solutions. Bearing this in mind, we could probably use our expertise more: a) to solve their present challenges; b) to solve the challenges they will face in the future.*

*"This probably has implications for the way we shape our company in the future. But we can look at that later."*

The leadership team then did an exercise. Each person gave the company a rating regarding the following area.

### *Impact*

*The rating I would give our company regarding  
clarifying the desired impact – the real  
results the customers want to achieve – is:*

\_\_\_ /10

Company B had different strengths and were good at implementation. Bearing this in mind, the leader explained their approach to clarifying the desired impact.

*"Businesses often hire us to improve and run their systems. This calls for making crystal clear contracts about:*

- a) The specific systems and service outcomes to deliver;*
- b) The specific principles and processes to be followed;*
- c) The specific key performance targets by which we will be judged.*

*"This means that we have to check and re-check before signing up to a contract.*

*"The pluses of this approach are that the customer and we agree on clear targets. This makes it easy to organise our resources and measure the success.*

*"The possible minuses are that we may narrow our focus too much on solving the present problems. There may be future business opportunities that we miss."*

Company B's leaders gave themselves 9/10 in terms of clarifying the desired impact. They felt that sometimes they were too reactive, however, and could be more proactive in focusing on the customer's future challenges.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Imagine that you work in a team, organisation or company. This could be your present workplace or one where you have worked in the past. Try completing the following sentences.

## *Impact*

*The rating I would give us regarding clarifying the impact – the real results the customers want to achieve – is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things we can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Innovation*

Company A was good at doing innovative work that helped customers to achieve success. The leader recognised, however, that the business had reached a crucial point in its development. They expressed this in the following way.

*"Looking at innovation, we probably score at least 8/10. We have a track record of designing and delivering creative solutions.*

*"The customers often like our innovative work. They then ask: 'Can you implement it for us?' This has led to us doing more long-term contracts, which can be lucrative.*

*"We have hired lots of people who are good at doing ongoing work. This has led to us having more than 30 people in different locations.*

*"The question is: do we really want to be in this kind of business? Perhaps that is a question we can explore later. In the meantime, when it comes to innovation, we score highly."*

Company A's core people loved being problem solvers and prototype builders. This was difficult to scale, however, so the business faced some challenges.

Company B's leader knew its strengths. She expressed these in the following way.

*"We do some innovation, but not much. I would give us a 6/10 in this area. We are best at doing hands-on work for customers. They rely on us to make things work over a long period of time.*

*"We have tried to bring in people who might help us to be more innovative, but this has not worked out. Some wanted to do their own thing and not blend into the company. These hires also cost us a lot of money."*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. How would you rate your workplace in terms of being innovative in helping customers to succeed? How could it maintain or improve the rating? Try completing the following sentences.

## *Innovation*

*The rating I would give us regarding being good at the innovation stage is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things we can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Implementation*

Company A was good at clarifying the strategic implementation principles that their customers could follow to achieve success. It was not great at managing the daily work involved in helping customers to run operational processes.

Such projects paid well, but these seemed like an add on to the core business. The leadership team therefore rated the company 6/10 in terms of ongoing implementation with customers.

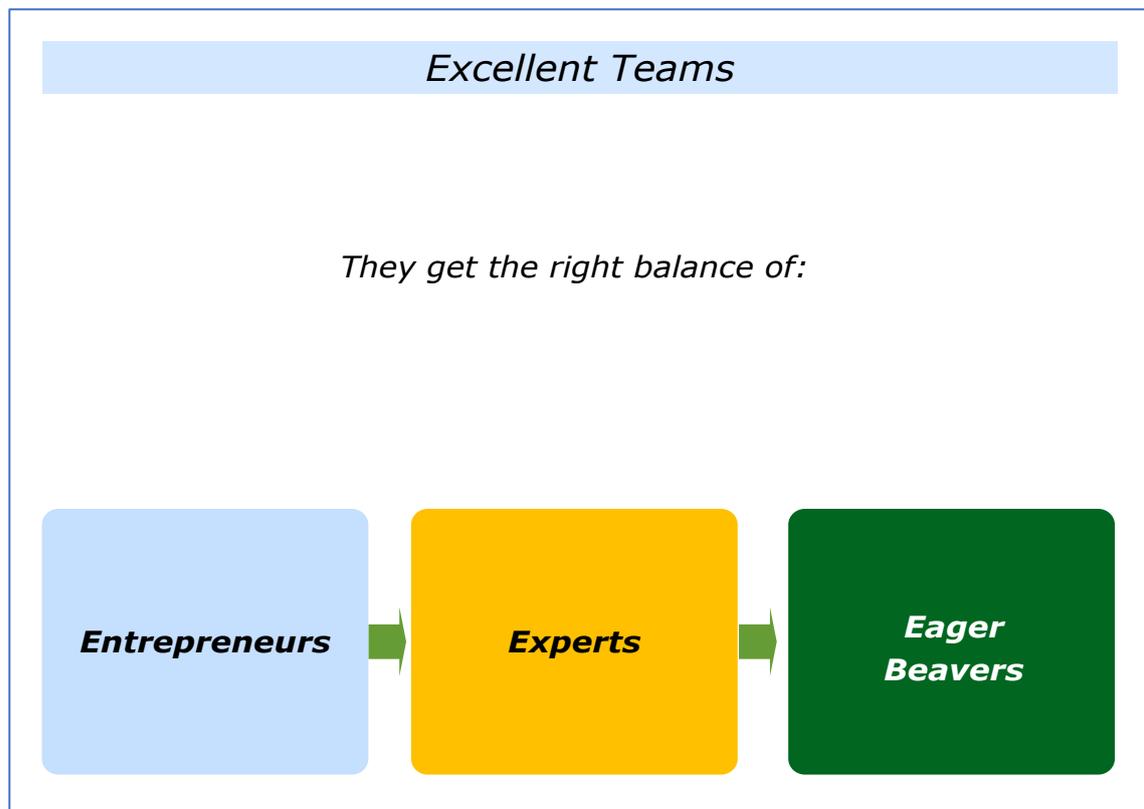
Company B was strong on implementation. Their leaders expressed in the following way.

*"Most of our work involves doing long-term projects for customers. Some we can do from our office but we also spend a lot of time on-site in their workplaces.*

*"Previously we thought our business would be threatened by off-shoring. This has happened in some fields, but many of our clients want us to support them by running different projects.*

*"Many of our people enjoy following a structure, doing technical work and getting things done. Looking at implementation, I would rate us as 9/10."*

Company A and Company B were made up of people who had different drivers in terms of doing satisfying work. Company A had many people who were either entrepreneurial or experts in their fields. Company B had many more eager beavers who enjoyed getting things done.



## *Eager Beavers*

*Excellent teams explain the outcomes to be achieved. They then employ lots of eager beavers who want to deliver these outcomes. Such people are self-managing and savvy. They like to make things work and often have the following characteristics.*

- *They are energetic and enthusiastic.*
- *They enjoy being effective by focusing on the outcomes to achieve and making clear contracts about the agreed picture of success.*
- *They enjoy translating the strategies into action by working through lists and delivering excellence.*

Excellent teams often get the right balance of entrepreneurs, experts and eager beavers. This balance they aim to get will, of course, depend on their chosen work.

Teams that focus on innovation will need to be enterprising and use their expertise to generate solutions. They will also need a few coordinators and eager beavers who make sure things get done.

Teams that focus on implementation need some people who are entrepreneurial. They may also need many coordinators and technical experts. Such people need to be industrious and channel their efforts towards getting things done.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Try completing the following sentences.

## *Implementation*

*The rating I would give us regarding being consistently good at implementation is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things we can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Impact*

Company A and Company B looked beyond the headline issue of delivering the goods. They focused on the following things;

*Being good at delivering the agreed impact – the required results – for the customers;*

*Being good at documenting, describing or, when appropriate, publicising the impact;*

*Being good at building a reputation about the impact the company delivered.*

Company A's leadership team gave differing marks for each of these themes. They believed that, when the business played to its strengths, it was good at delivering the desired impact. The leader expressed this in the following way.

*"When we focus on what we do best, we probably get 9/10 for delivering the desired results. This often leads to getting more business.*

*"We are not so good at publicising our success stories. This is something we could do better, providing we get the client's permission."*

Company B gave a similar response. They were driven by results because their funding depended on hitting certain performance targets. These often involved delivering high quality standards and fulfilling the agreed service contracts.

Their work often came from previous clients who trusted them to deliver. Some work was highly confidential, so they were not able to share it publicly. Nevertheless, they felt it was possible to improve their reputation for doing good work.

Both companies decided to find ways to share success stories. This needed to be done sensitively, however, in order to maintain their good relationships with customers.

Look at your own workplace, how would you rate it in the following areas? Being good at: a) delivering the required impact; b) publicising the impact; c) building a reputation about the impact it delivers?

You will probably have different scores for each theme. Bearing these in mind, describe the specific things your workplace can do to boost the ratings.

## *Impact*

*The rating I would give  
us in the following areas*

*Being good at delivering the agreed impact  
– the required results – to customers*

*\_\_\_\_\_ / 10*

*Being good at documenting, describing  
and, if appropriate, publicising the impact*

*\_\_\_\_\_ / 10*

*Being good at building a reputation  
about the impact we deliver*

*\_\_\_\_\_ / 10*

## *Shaping A Successful Future*

Both companies moved on to the final stage. Bearing in mind their strengths, they each took decisions and translated these into action. As mentioned earlier, these resulted in each business doing certain things to shape their futures.

Company A decided to focus on their talents as innovators. They rebuilt the business around their core strengths and focused on their perfect customers. These were often pacesetting businesses that were already ahead of the field.

They spent time with these customers, clarified their challenges and found solutions. They built prototypes that worked and helped the customers to achieve both present and future success.

They decided to split the business. There were 12 people in the core business. They still delivered impact, but mainly through developing innovation solutions.

This core business proved profitable. It delivered high quality work and had much fewer overheads. The leader realised that it would be harder to sell such a knowledge-based business because it relied on its key people. But they were happy to go this route.

Company A sold its implementation arm. This was taken over by managers in that part of the business. It improved its delivery to clients and continued to make profits.

Company B chose to focus on implementation. The leadership team spent masses of time with both present and potential future clients. This led to more contracts and ongoing work.

The company needed good managers to coordinate so many moving parts. This proved a challenge. Some managers they recruited behaved like supervisors and this caused problems. Several crises led to the leaders moving back into operational roles to get things on course.

Company B is still doing well. It has encouraged and educated its managers to maintain good teams. It has also created an excellent wellbeing programme for its people. This has contributed to helping people to deliver success.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. Imagine that your workplace has worked through the stages described in this piece.

What decisions may it now need to make? How can it build on its strengths? How can it do its best to shape a successful future? If you wish, try completing the following exercise.

## *Shaping A Successful Future*

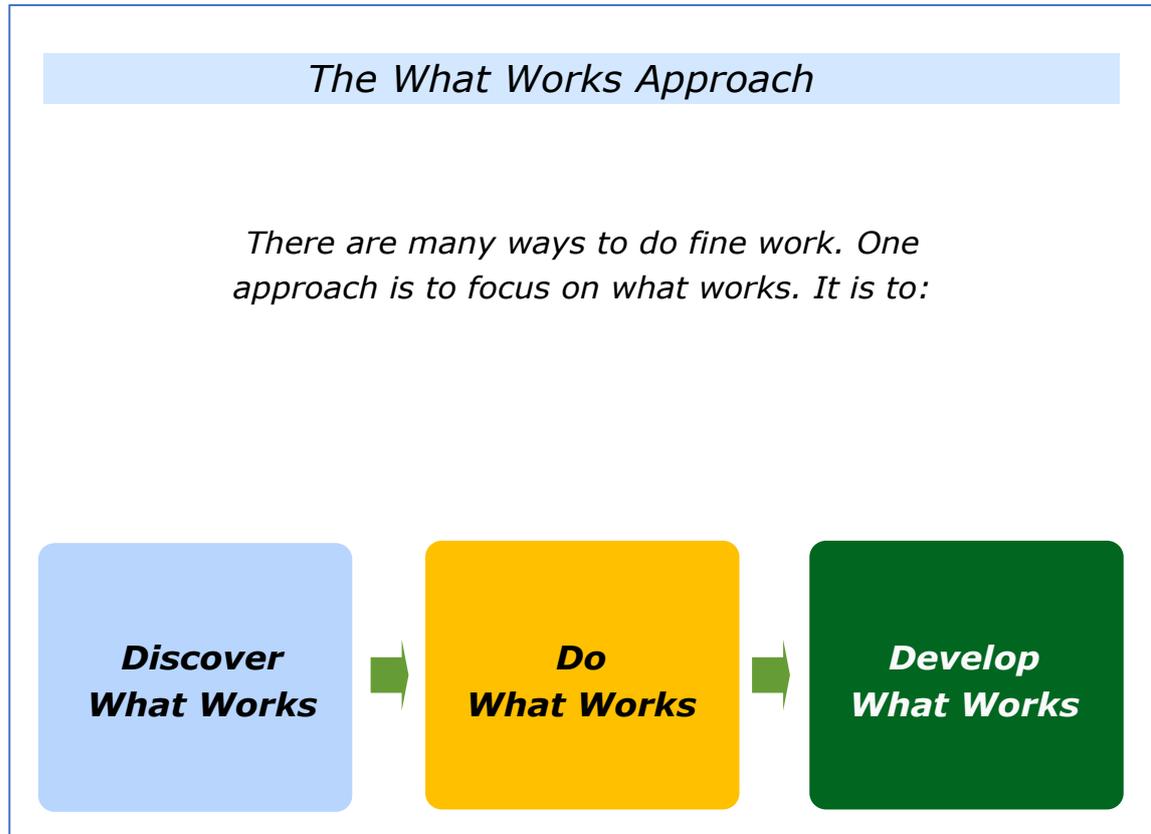
*The specific things we can do to build  
on our strengths and increase the  
chances of shaping a successful future are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The What Works Approach*



Imagine that you are embarking on a particular project. You may want to pursue a new career, tackle a specific challenge, specialise in a profession or do another activity.

How can you pursue your chosen route? How can you clarify the real results to achieve? How can you do your best to deliver success?

One approach is to discover what works. It is then to do what works and develop what works. If appropriate, it is to pass on the knowledge so that other people can achieve success.

This is the route I was encouraged to take when I began working with troubled young people. My mentors advised me to study success. Here is a summary of the messages they gave me.

*"Study success. Learn from therapy programmes that work and help young people succeed.*

*"Watch people who do what works and do wonderful work. Study what they do well and what they can do even better in the future.*

*"Many people know what fails, but that doesn't help. Discover what works and then follow these principles in your own way to deliver success."*

This approach seems obvious but at the time many people focused on failure. They became experts on how families, schools, leaders and organisations failed. Studying success proved more fruitful. It was encouraging to explore the principles that people followed:

*To build on their strengths and set specific goals;*

*To follow successful strategies and get support;*

*To do superb work, find solutions to challenges and achieve success.*

The next step was to pass on these principles in ways that people could use in their own lives and work.

## *Discovering What Works*

Imagine that you aim to do a particular project. You may want to encourage children who experience problems at school, help former prisoners, build your own business, turnaround a toxic culture or do another activity.

How can you study best practice in this area? How can you find the principles that people follow to achieve success? What do people actually *do* to translate these principles into action?

Imagine that you have done this research and have clarified the successful principles. You may then wish to complete the following framework.

## *Discovering What Works*

*The Project. The specific topic I want to focus on is:*

\* *How to ...*

*The Principles. The specific things that work – the principles people follow to succeed – when doing this kind of project are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The Practise. The specific things people do to translate these principles into action when doing this kind of project are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Doing What Works*

Imagine that you have clarified the principles that work in your chosen activity. It can be useful to build on the principles you believe in and then pursue these in your own way. This approach builds on the well-known factors about motivation.

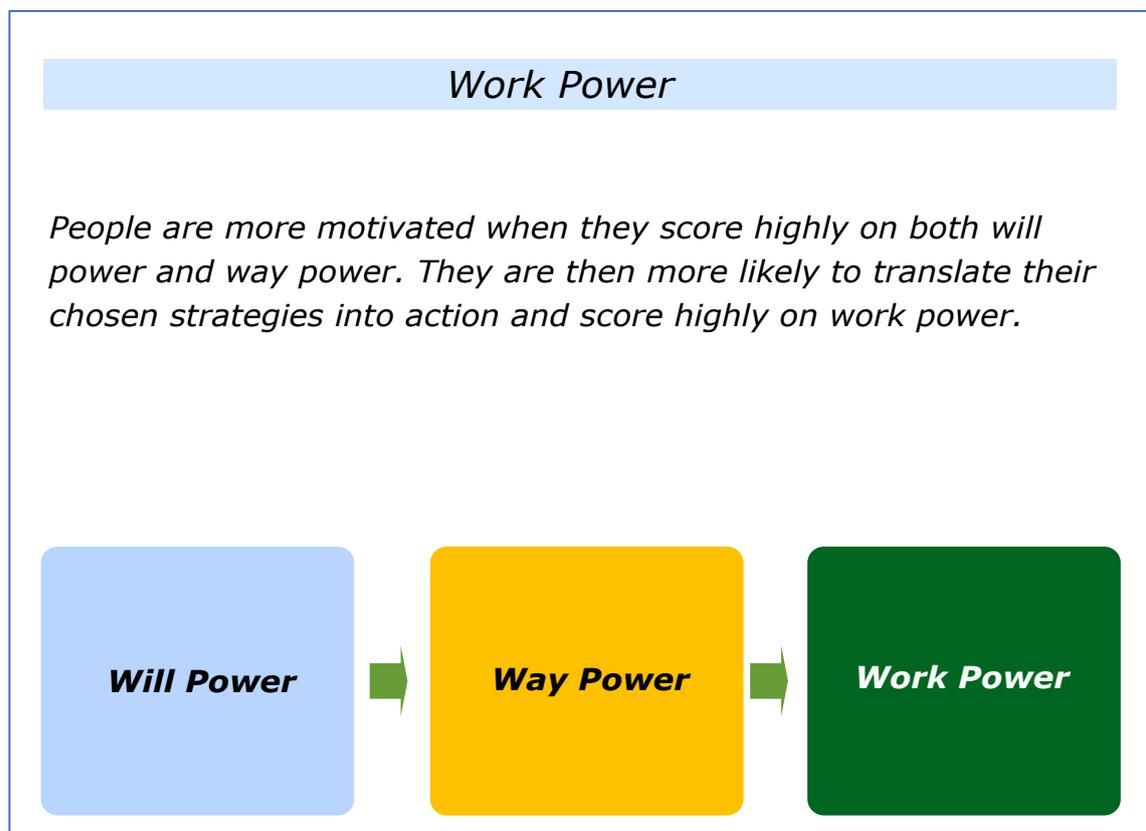
*People are more likely to be motivated when:*

*They build on their strengths;*

*They follow principles they believe in and shape their strategic plan;*

*They see the benefits of achieving the picture of success.*

Ricky Snyder's work on hope says people are more motivated when they score highly on will power and way power. Those who shape their strategy are also more likely to score highly on work power.



Bearing these factors in mind, you can explore the usual planning questions before moving into action. These include the following.

*Looking at the project, what are the real results I want to achieve? What will be the benefits of achieving these results? What is the picture of success?*

*What are the principles I want to follow when doing the project? How can I build on my strengths and follow these principles in my own way?*

*How can I translate these principles into action? How can I get some quick successes? How can I do superb work? How can I do my best to achieve the picture of success?*

Different people choose different ways to do what works. Let's look at one organisation that takes this route.

### *The Solutions Journalism Network*

This organisation describes stories that provide practical hope. Here is their explanation of the difference between good stories and solutions journalism.

*Good news stories focus on the vision, kindness or courage of someone doing something positive.*

*A common approach is to profile a person who had a personal awakening (often preceded by a personal crisis) which prompted him or her to quit a stable job to launch a charitable effort in a village in, say, Namibia.*

*The person finds new meaning and, though living on a shoestring, usually talks about being happier and more fulfilled. This kind of story can be heart-warming and authentic, but is usually delivered without much critical analysis.*

*Good news stories also rarely get people to think about systemic change. By contrast, solutions stories are driven by the problem solving - and rely on independent evidence to solve it.*

*Like any good story, they have interesting characters, action and tension, but they are constructed more like puzzles or mysteries than profiles or descriptive pieces.*

*The tension is not grounded in an argument, but in the inherent difficulty of changing a system or making an idea come to life. If told well, what gets revealed is often a little treasure of understanding - an insight about how the world works.*

## **Solutions Journalism**

*A knock-out solutions journalism story does some of the following things.*

- *It explains the importance and deeper causes of the social problem.*
- *It describes the response to the problem.*
- *It analyses and explains why the response seems to be working or not working and uses external evidence wherever possible.*
- *It explains the 'How' in addition to the traditional 'Who, What, When, Where and Why' of journalism*

- *It puts the response in a broader context. Is this a break from the past? What is different in this approach compared to the standard approach to a problem?*
- *It provides a critical approach response about the strengths and limitations of the approach.*
- *It generates curiosity and tension within the narrative, especially with the 'How to ...' details and the issues at hand.*
- *It draws on experts who have ground-level understanding of implementation, not just 30,000-foot critiques.*
- *It focuses more on the value of the idea more than the charisma or talent of the people behind it.*

*The Solutions Journalism Network practises what it preaches. It produces journalism that provides people with practical hope.*

*Imagine that you have clarified how you want you to pursue your chosen project. You can then translate these principles into action in your own way.*

*If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.*

## *Doing What Works*

*The Picture Of Success. The specific results I want to achieve when doing the project are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The Principles. The specific things I can do to follow the successful principles are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The Practise. The specific things I can do to translate the principles into action and deliver the desired results are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Developing What Works*

Imagine that you are doing good work on your chosen project. You may be helping troubled children, building a business, leading a successful sports team or doing another activity.

How can you continue to improve the work? How can you keep raising the standards? How can you clarify the lessons learned and, if appropriate, pass on this knowledge to other people?

Great workers sometimes go further. They aim to do work that moves from being effective to being excellent to being extraordinary.

This approach is explored in greater depth elsewhere in the book. It is a concept that is worth bearing in mind, however, when aiming to improve your own work.

Let's return to your chosen project. What has gone well? How can you do more of these things in the future? What can be done better in the future and how? How can you share the knowledge about what has worked?

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe what you can do to keep developing the work.

## *Developing What Works*

*Done Well. The specific things that have worked well or are working well now are:*

\*

\*

\*

*Can Do Better. The specific things that can be improved in the future – and how – are:*

\*

\*

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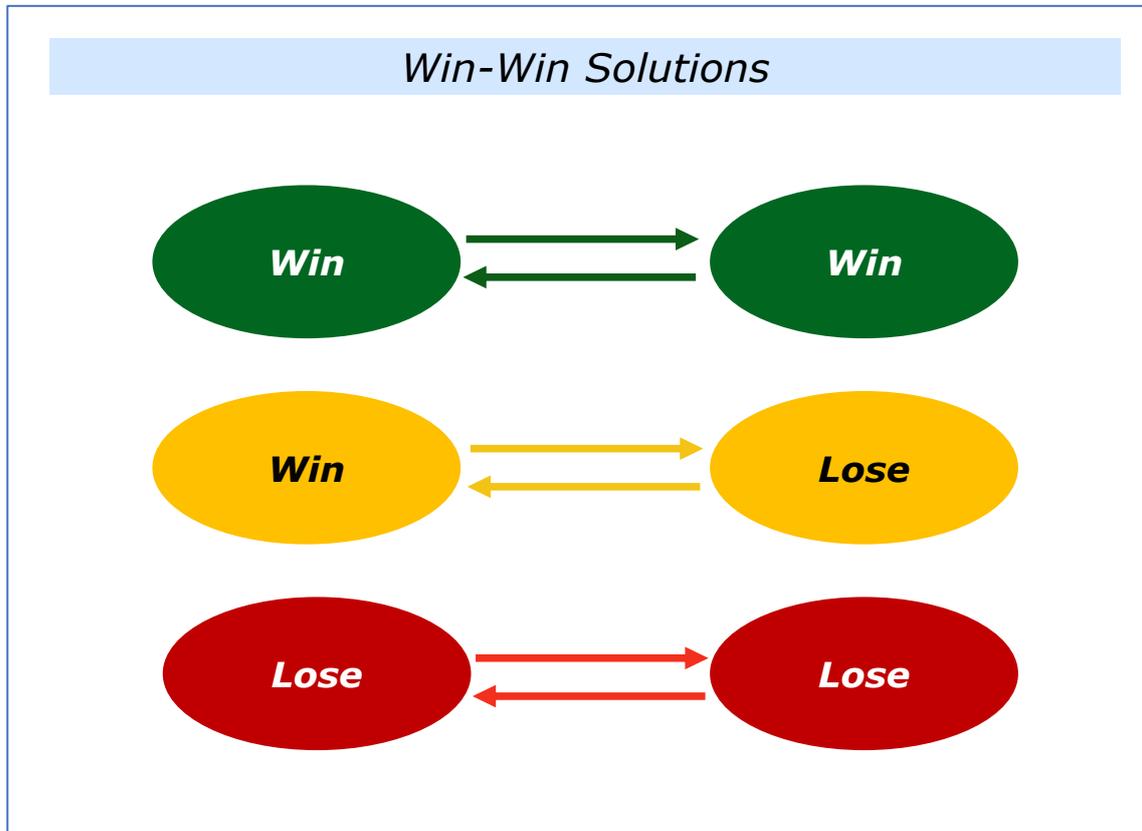
*Development. The specific things I can do to build on what works and also tackle the areas for improvement are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Win-Win Approach*



There are many ways to try to solve differences. One approach is for people to aim to – as far as possible – get win-win solutions. These are more likely to achieve long term success rather than those that are based on win-lose or lose-lose.

Good mediators use their individual strengths to help people find solutions. Many of them, however, focus on the following themes.

### *Good Mediators*

*They aim to create a positive atmosphere and help people to find solutions to challenges. Some of the steps they may take are:*

- *To make sure that people want to solve the problem and are prepared to find win-win solutions;*
- *To find out what each party wants, build on the common ground and get some quick successes to build confidence;*
- *To then focus on one of the potential differences and clarify what each party wants;*
- *To clarify the real results to achieve – plus the benefits of achieving those results - and explore the possible solutions by keep asking: "How can we get a win-win?";*
- *To – as far as possible - find potential win-wins, set specific goals and work together to achieve success.*

This approach may sound idealistic but, providing people are prepared to work together, it is often possible to make it work. It calls for finding and building on common ground, however, and then finding creative solutions to challenges.

This is a positive way forwards. Human beings need to find win-win solutions in order to live and work together. Win-Lose will just lead to more conflict in the future. Win-win is vital for both people and the planet.

Good mediators recognise that most people want similar things in life. They want to be loved, happy and live in peace. They want to feel free, valued and respected. They want to be able to shape their futures and achieve success.

Mediators aim to build on what people have in common and find positive solutions. This can be quite challenging, but the alternative produces lots of losers. Let's explore how this approach can work in different situations.

## *The Win-Win Approach*

Imagine that you have been asked to help people to resolve differences between them. This could be a married couple that are experiencing difficulties, departments that are blaming each other or some other kinds of warring parties.

The following pages explore some of the steps you can take to help people tackle such challenges.

### *Making Sure The Conditions Are In Place For Finding Win-Win Solutions*

As mentioned earlier, several conditions must be in place before it is possible to solve deep differences.

*People must want to solve the conflict;*

*People must be prepared to work hard to find, as far as possible, win-wins.*

Timing is everything. Many conflicts only get resolved when the parties are exhausted. Couples feel weary from fighting a divorce, terrorists became too old or too tired to fight, employers and strikers are exhausted after an industrial dispute.

People get tired of the negative energy. They are then more willing to sit down and find positive solutions. Before getting involved in any conflict resolution, it is important to ask the following questions.

*Are people ready to work together?*

Do they really want to solve the problem? Remember, some people are addicted to conflict so they may not want to solve the problem.

*Are people prepared to co-operate to find, as far as possible, a win-win solution?*

How high is their motivation to do this on a scale 0 - 10? People need to score at least a 7+ to have a chance of producing success.

*Are people ready to focus on how things can be better in the future?*

This is crucial. Some people want to simply argue about the past and allocate blame. Whilst it may be vital to admit mistakes, the key is to focus on how to create a positive future. Providing people want to solve the problem, it is then possible to move onto the next step.

### *Clarifying What Each Party Wants and Building On Common Ground*

Start by clarifying what each person or each party wants. One key point:

*This includes what people want on a feeling level as well as a factual level.*

People may want, for example, to feel valued, respected and able to shape their futures. Later it will be possible to explore to what extent it is possible for people to get the things they want.

Focus on what people have in common rather than the differences. Some people may try to draw you into arguing about the differences, but return to the similarities.

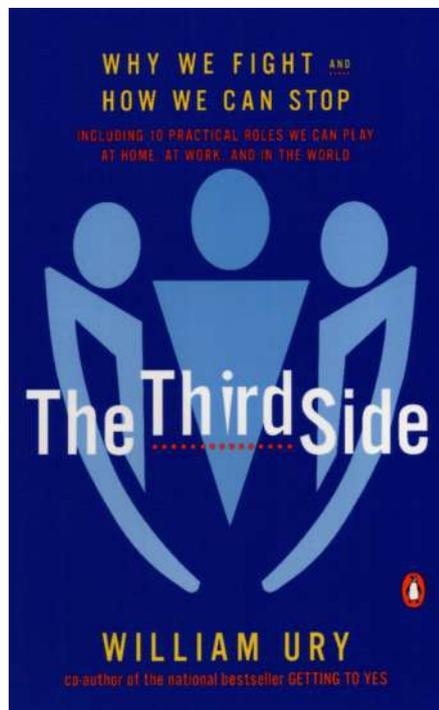
When working with divorcing parents, for example, you will start by focusing on the shared aims they have in common. They may get into arguments, but both will probably say they want the best for their children.

You can then build on this shared aim. There will be lots of time later to explore the differences.

There are many models for helping people to build on common ground. One approach is to encourage people to focus on the Third Side. Here is a short introduction to this approach.

## *The Third Side*

The following section is based on work done by William Ury, who has helped many people to find solutions to conflicts. One approach he uses is to encourage people to focus on what he calls the Third Side.



*William Ury says we do not have to get into fighting by taking the first or second sides.*

*He says we have a powerful alternative - The Third Side.*

*This can transform our daily battles into creative conflict and cooperation at home, at work, and in the world.*

People can get into difficulties because they sit opposite each other and fight for their own agendas. Each party says the equivalent of: "I am right," or "Our side is right." "You are wrong." These are the First and Second Sides.

### *The First and Second Sides*

*People can get into difficulties if they sit opposite each other and fight for their own agendas.*

*Each party may say the equivalent of: "I am right," or "Our side is right." "You are wrong."*

*These are the First and Second Sides.*



People are more likely to achieve a positive outcome if they can sit side-by-side and look together towards a Third Side. This is the greater What and Why.

People often get into arguments about the How, but it is important to focus on the higher purpose. This purpose may be, for example, the children's welfare after a divorce, the team's goals or the kind of world we want to pass on to future generations.

When working with divorcing parents, for example, you will start by focusing on the shared aims they have in common. They may get into arguments and say that:

*"We have nothing in common."*

They blame each other and say that things would be better if the other person changed. At a certain point, however, you may say something like the following.

*"You say you have little in common, but do you both want the best for your children?"*

They will probably agree that they do, but may disagree on how to achieve those aims. You may then say something like:

*"Looking ahead, let's explore the actual words you would like your children to be saying in 10 years about the way you managed the divorce.*

*"For example, you may want them to be saying things like:*

*'Mum and Dad behaved in a good way when they went apart. They never used us as pawns or blamed us.*

*'They continued to encourage us and helped us to develop. We now have two homes where we can go and feel at ease.*

*'Mum and Dad managed the difficult situation in a positive way.'*

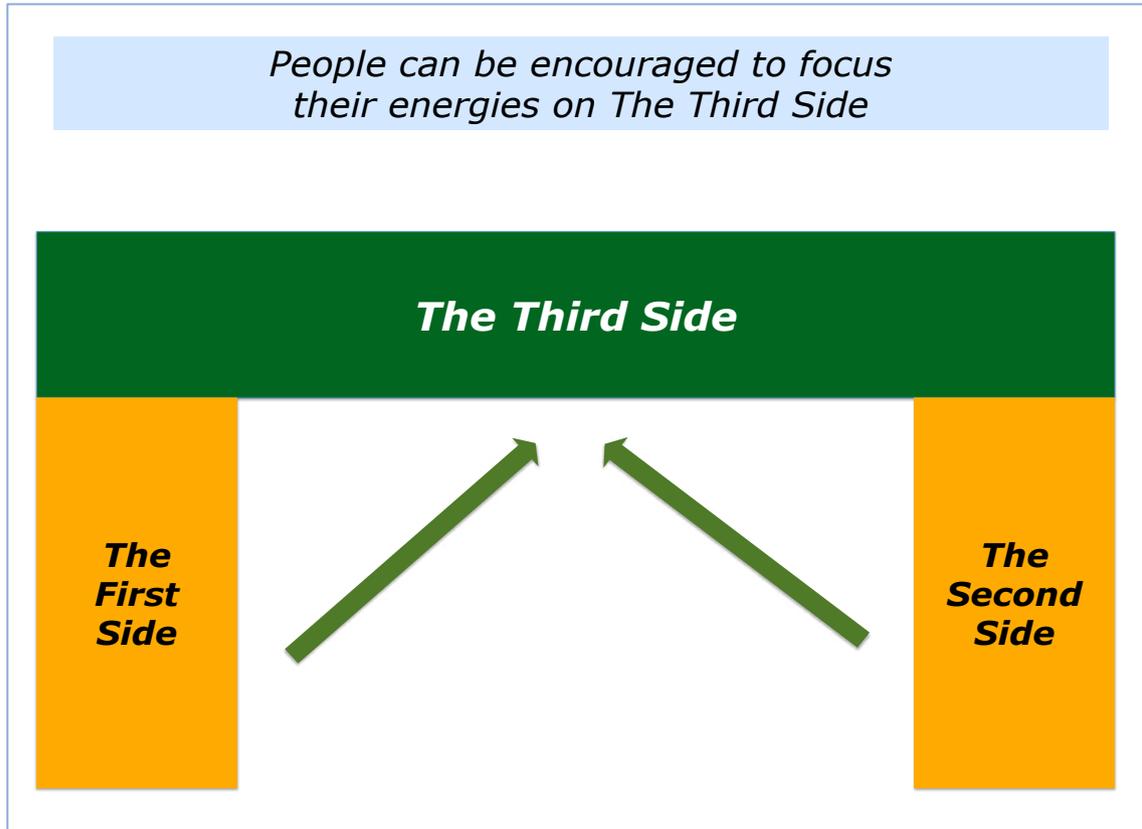
Sometimes it is possible to build on what people have in common and agree on a set of goals, a mission or a company's picture of success. This becomes the Third Side.

Providing people are clear on the agreed overall goals, you can then say things like:

*"As far as I understand it, these are the goals to achieve. This is the picture of success.*

*"These are the benefits – for the various parties- of achieving the goals.*

*"Is this something you want to work towards achieving?"*



Mediators recognise that it can take time to get to this point. Bearing this in mind, let's explore this approach in more depth.

### *Clarifying The Common Goals – The Third Side*

Imagine that you have been asked to facilitate a discussion about enabling people to work together towards a common goal. The first step is to clarify the potential Third Side.

This is what I was asked to do when invited to work with two departmental heads in a company. The Chief Executive was losing patience with the two teams that were supposed to work together to achieve the company's goals.

The challenge was that each team focused only on their own targets. When asked about cross-functional work, they blamed each other for failures. This downward spiral affected the service given to customers and the whole company performance.

Bearing this in mind, I met the Chief Executive to clarify the real results to achieve. He was crystal clear on what he wanted them to contribute towards achieving the company's picture of success.

This called for the respective departments to implement certain strategies to work together, deliver high levels of customer satisfaction and, in the process, contribute to achieving the company's goals.

The key would be to encourage the departmental heads to focus on these outcomes. They had forgotten to focus on the real What – the things they must deliver to achieve the company's picture of success. Instead they had fallen into arguments about the How.

This sounds relatively straight-forward. But what happens when you don't have an authority – such as a CEO - who can let people know about the desired Third Side?

### *Clarifying What Each Party Wants and Building On Common Ground*

One approach is to meet with each party and clarify what each of them wants. The keys will be:

*To clarify their respective aims;*

*To then build on common ground.*

Each party may want to begin by expressing their feelings about the situation. When appropriate, however, you can invite them to focus on the future.

Good mediators show that they recognise people's feelings. They then encourage people to channel their energy towards finding solutions. One approach is to invite them to look to the future. It is to ask questions around the following themes.

*"Looking ahead, what would you like to happen? What are the real results you want to achieve? What is your picture of success?"*

Mediators listen without judgement and play back what they are hearing. If appropriate, however, they sometimes invite people to express their ideas in a positive way.

If one party says that they want others to stop doing something, for example, the mediator invites them to say what they would like the others to do instead.

Towards the end of the conversation the mediator will summarise what they believe to be a party's goals. They may say something along the following lines.

*"As far as I understand it, the goals you would like to achieve are:*

*To ...*

*To ...*

*To ...*

*"Is that right? Are there any other things that you would like to happen in the future?"*

Imagine that you have taken this approach. You will have met with each party and clarified their aims.

The next step is to bring people together and focus on some of the common goals. Some people may try to draw you into arguing about the differences, but it can be useful to keep returning to the similarities.

Keep bringing people back to the What – the real results they want to achieve. This can be challenging because people often want to get into arguing about the How. When helping people, it can be useful to bear in mind some of the following guidelines.

### *Good Mediators*

*They aim to create a positive atmosphere and help people to find solutions to challenges. Some of the steps they may take are:*

- *To make sure that people want to solve the problem and are prepared to find win-win solutions;*
- *To find out what each party wants, build on the common ground and get some quick successes to build confidence;*
- *To then focus on one of the potential differences and clarify what each party wants;*
- *To clarify the real results to achieve – plus the benefits of achieving those results - and explore the possible solutions by keep asking: "How can we get a win-win?";*
- *To – as far as possible - find potential win-wins, set specific goals and work together to achieve success.*

### *Building On The Common Ground*

The next step is to make sure the parties are prepared to build on the common ground. Sometimes this calls for again explaining it is important to get some quick successes rather than rushing into trying to solve deep differences.

Looking at the work with the two departmental heads, both had worked with me before so they knew the session would be positive. During the meeting it was important to take the following steps.

*To create an encouraging environment and explain that I was sure we could pool our resources to find a win-win;*

*To explain that, if they were open to it, we would explore how they could be supported to combine their talents to achieve the company's goals;*

*To put these goals in front of us so that we were literally all on the same side and looking together at the company's picture of success.*

Going deeper, I explained we had been tasked with working together to find solutions. Were they willing to work towards satisfying the customers and achieving the company's goals?

"Yes, of course we are willing," was the joint reply, followed by a few caveats.

### *Taking Steps To Achieve The Common Goals*

Success builds confidence. So it is vital to focus on specific things that people can do to deliver some early wins. This is what happened with the two departmental heads in the company. They made specific action plans that involved them co-operating:

*To deliver superb service to the customer;*

*To produce success stories that enhanced the reputation of the customer and company;*

*To proactively keep the Chief Executive informed about their contribution towards achieving the company's picture of success.*

The two people worked together to get some quick wins. They then developed a pattern of building on what they had in common rather than only focusing on differences. This laid the groundwork for helping them to achieve ongoing success.

Imagine that you want to take this approach in a specific situation. This could be in the family, work or an organisation. As mentioned earlier, however, people must want to find win-win solutions.

Bearing this in mind, you can use the following framework. This involves mapping out: a) the specific things each party wants; b) the common ground; c) the specific thing people can do to build on common ground and get some quick successes.

## *Building On Common Ground*

*The different parties – the different people  
and groups – and what each wants.*

*Party A. The things they want are:*

\*

\*

\*

*Party B. The things they want are:*

\*

\*

\*

*Party C. The things they want are:*

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\*

\*

## *The Common Ground*

*The specific things that everybody wants are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things we can do to build on the common ground and get some quick successes are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Managing Differences*

You can now move onto the differences. This can be an emotionally loaded area, so you can do your best to maintain a positive atmosphere.

Bearing this in mind, sometimes it can be useful to make clear working contracts. These can be based on the guidelines that mediators know work well in such situations.

Such agreements often cover the following themes. a) the goals to achieve – such as to find a win-win solution; b) the mediator's role and the other parties' roles in working to achieve the goals; c) the suggested guidelines people can follow to work to achieve the goals.

### *Making Clear Contracts*

Clear contracting helps to provide a structure that people can follow to channel their energies in a positive way. There are many ways to take this step. One approach to making clear contracts is:

*To show respect to people and explain that you will do your best to help them to find solutions;*

*To outline some guidelines for working together to find solutions;*

*To ask if they are willing to follow the guidelines and work together to find solutions.*

Mediators sometimes suggest the following guidelines. To have one person speak at a time; to respect each person's views; to seek to understand what the person is saying before responding; to build on areas of agreement; to solve any conflicts by asking: "How can we, as far as possible, get a win-win?"

Sometimes the situation may get heated. If appropriate, you can call a time out and give people chance to calm down. Returning to

the agreed contract, you can invite people to decide if they want to continue working to find solutions.

Imagine that people have agreed to the working guidelines. You can focus on each difference – each topic – in turn. Maintaining a respectful atmosphere you can aim:

*To focus on the first challenge and, whenever possible, phrase this in positive terms;*

*For example, encourage people to focus on: "How can we live in peace?" rather than: "Why do we keep fighting?"*

*To clarify what each person or party wants or would like to happen in the future – this to be on both a feeling and factual level;*

*To build a picture of the things people want and clarify the real results to achieve – the picture of success;*

*To clarify the benefits – for all the various stakeholders – of achieving this picture of success;*

*To move on to doing some creative problem solving and aim to find – as far as possible – win-win solutions.*

There are many models for finding solutions to challenges. One approach is to use the Three C model. It encourages people to focus on Clarity, Creativity and Concrete Results.

We will explore this approach in greater depth later in the book during the section on *Mentoring*. It involves finding solutions to challenges by exploring the following themes.

### *Clarity*

*This involves clarifying the real results to achieve – the picture of success.*

## *Creativity*

*This involves exploring the possible options for going forwards – the possible choices and consequences – together with the pluses and minuses of each option.*

*The next step is to do some creative thinking. Bearing in mind the results to achieve, you can invite people to explore any other possible creative solutions.*

*If appropriate, at a certain point you may ask if it is okay for you to share some possible ideas. If so, you may say something like the following.*

*"One possibility is ...*

*"Another possibility is ...*

*"Another possibility is ...*

*These ideas are offered in the spirit of being other possibilities rather than telling people what to do. The people will eventually need to commit to an idea that they want to pursue.*

## *Concrete Results*

*This involves inviting people to choose the specific route – or combination of routes – they want to pursue. It also involves agreeing on an action plan and getting some quick successes.*

Good mediators stay calm during the process. They recognise that some of the differences may be deep-seated. Some may also involve feelings of pain, mistrust or fear.

Mediators encourage people to focus on one topic at a time and get some quick successes. They recognise, however, that many topics are interlinked, but jumping from topic to topic will not work.

A more fruitful approach can be to tackle one topic, get a success and build confidence. It is then possible to explore the links to other topics and again get successes.

Another key point is worth bearing in mind. People may want similar things and agree on the picture of success. But they may have differences about the style that others follow to achieve the goals.

A strong-willed person, for example, may have the ability to inspire or intimidate other people. If they pursue the intimidation strategy, then this can create collateral damage. Such a person can learn to channel their personality, however, rather than change their personality.

If appropriate, it can be useful to ask a person something like the following.

*"Would you be open to adding another option to your repertoire to help you and others to achieve success?"*

*"Would you be open to adding to another option to your repertoire to help you and others to achieve success?"*

If the person says they would, it may be possible to help them to add to their strategies. They are more likely to be open to such additions, however, if they feel these will help both themselves and others to achieve success.

Bearing all these factors in mind, mediators often focus on the following themes during the sessions.

*They encourage people to keep following guidelines that we know work for finding solutions;*

*They encourage people to keep focusing on the future, the real results to achieve and the benefits of achieving this picture of success;*

*They encourage people to explore the potential choices, the consequences and the options that are most likely to achieve the desired consequences.*

*They encourage people to avoid using moral judgements - such as them saying that things are good or bad, right or wrong. Such moral judgements do not help. The future is about choices and consequences. Which set of consequences do they want?*

*They encourage people to focus on the results to achieve – plus the benefits – and keep saying things like:*

*"As far as I understand, the results you want to achieve are: 1) to ...; 2) to ... ; 3) to ... How can we do our best to get these results? How can we, as far as possible, get win-wins?"*

Good mediators stay patient. They believe that people can, when they wish, be incredibly creative and find solutions. They also, when appropriate, offer suggestions that can help people to achieve their picture of success.

How do painful problems get solved? Some don't - people go on fighting. Some get solved because people lose interest - they get tired, accept the differences or move-on with their lives.

There are many ways to tackle challenges. The win-win approach is more likely to achieve lasting success rather than those that are based on win-lose or lose-lose.

Imagine that you have helped people to build on what they have in common. This could be in the family, work or an organisation. You will have also helped them to get some successes.

You may then want to explore how to help people to manage the differences. One approach is to use the following framework. You will, of course, adapt this in your own way to help people to get win-win solutions.

## *Managing Potential Differences*

*The first topic – the first difference – to explore is:*

*\**

*Looking to the future, the various things that people want are these.*

*Party A wants: ...*

*Party B wants: ...*

*The real results that people want are:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*The possible win-win solutions could be:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

## *The Facilitation Approach*



Imagine you have been asked to facilitate a team workshop. Your aim will be to help people to channel their energies towards achieving their chosen goals. This may involve taking the following steps.

### *Focusing*

*Clarifying the aims for the session and setting it up to succeed in achieving these aims.*

### *Facilitating*

*Facilitating the actual session and helping people to work towards achieving the aims.*

## *Finishing*

*Doing your best to ensure the session finishes properly and, if appropriate, following up to help people achieve their aims.*

Before looking at your own facilitation style it can be good to learn from good practice. Martin Gilbraith is a specialist in this field.

Here are excerpts from his website in which he describes the role of facilitation. This is followed by the Six Core Facilitation Competencies described by the International Association Of Facilitators.

### *Facilitation*

*The word facilitation is derived from the Latin 'facile' which, simply translated, means 'to make easy'.*

*A facilitator is therefore someone who makes something easy for others. A classic if lengthy definition is that of Roger Schwarz:*

*"Group facilitation is a process in which a person, whose selection is acceptable to all members of the group, is substantively neutral, and has no decision-making authority.*

*"The facilitator diagnoses and intervenes to help a group improve how it identifies and solves problems and makes decisions, to increase the group's effectiveness."*

*The outcome remains the responsibility of the group, thus helping to ensure the group's ownership and commitment to it.*

## *The Six Core Facilitation Competencies*

*A Competent Facilitator Will Aim:*

- *To create collaborative client relationships;*
- *To plan appropriate group processes;*
- *To create and sustain a participatory environment;*
- *To guide the group to appropriate and useful outcomes;*
- *To build and maintain professional knowledge;*
- *To model a positive professional attitude.*

You will have your own approach to facilitating the session. Like many facilitators you will prepare properly. Let's consider this step.

### *Focusing*

You may start by gathering information about the situation, the people involved and the goals to achieve. You will also aim to set up the session to succeed.

It will be important to meet with the key stakeholders. These may include the team leader and, if appropriate, their manager. It may also include meeting other people in the team.

The following section describes some key themes it can be useful to explore with these people. After gathering information it will be important to make clear contracts with the key stakeholders about:

*The specific goals for the session – the picture of success;*

*The specific guidelines to follow – the Dos and Don'ts – during the session;*

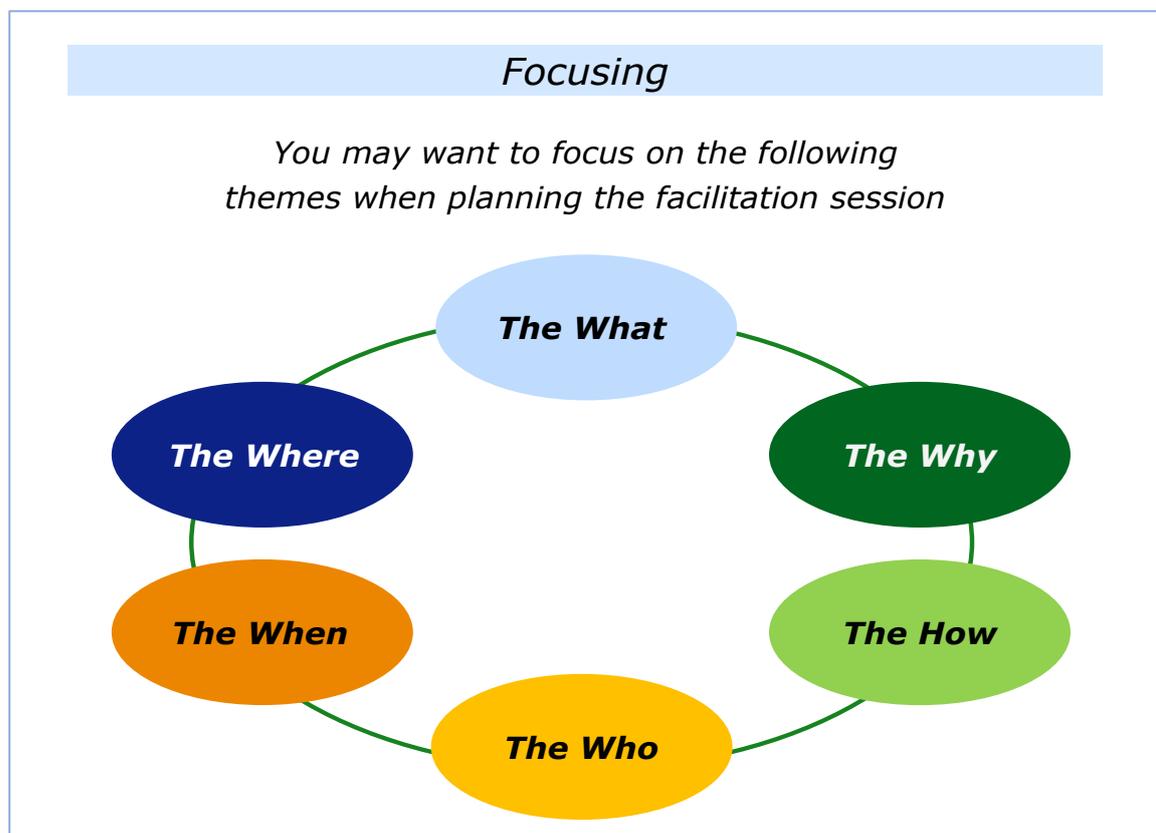
*The specific roles of various people in the session;*

*The specific things that can be done to increase the chances of success in the session;*

*The specific things that can be done to follow up the session and achieve the picture of success.*

One approach to gathering information is to explore the What, Why, How, Who, When and Where. The following section provides a framework you can use to explore these questions, but there is one key point to bear in mind. This is a framework rather than a list.

Depending on the situation, you may want to begin by asking about the Who – who will be attending – rather than the What or Why. Like all frameworks, you can adapt it in your own way.



The first step will be to meet with the team leader and, if appropriate, their manager. You can then meet with other people.

Here are some themes you can explore with the individuals. As mentioned earlier, you can pick and mix from the various sections.

### *The What*

*Here are some of the headline questions it can be useful to explore on this theme with the key stakeholders. These are explained in more detail in the following section.*

- *What are the goals for the session? What are the real results you want to achieve?*
- *What are the specific things you want people to be feeling, thinking, saying and doing after the session? What is the picture of success?*
- *What do you want to happen as a result of the session? What do you believe the team can achieve in the future?*

*What are the goals for the session? What are the real results you want to achieve? What for you will make it a successful session? What are the specific things you want people to be feeling, thinking, saying and doing after the session?*

*What is the session expected to produce? For example, does it aim to create a sense of ownership, a clear strategy, an increased sense of motivation, a specific action plan or something else?*

*What do you want to happen as a result of the session? What may be potential actions you want to implement? What do you believe the team can achieve in the future? What is the longer-term picture of success?*

*Bearing these things in mind, let me check the goals for the session. As far as I understand it, the results you want to achieve from the session are:*

1) To ...

2) To ...

3) To ...

*Is that the case? Are there any other things you would like to add?*

### The Why

*Here are headline questions to explore. One key point: these are sometimes phrased as What questions. This is to make it easier for people to describe the reasons Why they do things.*

- *What are the reasons you want to hold the session at the moment? What other information can you give that might help with understanding the big picture?*
- *What will be the pluses of running a successful session - for the team, colleagues, customers and other stakeholders? What could be the potential minuses?*
- *What are the challenges the team faces? Who are the key stakeholders that the team must satisfy? How can the team keep these people happy?*

*Sometimes it is easier to explore a person's reasons for doing things by asking them What questions rather than Why questions. This is something I learned when running therapy sessions. There are several reasons for taking this approach.*

*First, a person may find it easier to answer an open What question rather than a closed Why question. This can help them to loosen up and explore the possible reasons.*

*Second, some people experience Why questions as a criticism or accusations. They may tighten up or think there is only one right answer.*

*For example, if a person has asked for your help in changing their negative behaviour, it is difficult for them to answer the question:*

*"Why do you behave in that way?"*

*It can sometimes be easier for them to answer if you ask:*

*"Looking ahead, what do you want to do in the future? How do you want to behave? Would it be okay to explore some ways that you can achieve those results?"*

*Bearing this in mind, here are some of the questions it can be useful to ask the stakeholders on this theme.*

*What are the reasons for wanting to have the session? What is happening in the team at the moment? What other information can you give that might help to understand the big picture?*

*Let's imagine that the session is successful. Looking ahead, what will be the benefits of achieving the agreed results? What will be potential pluses – for the team, colleagues, customers and other stakeholders? What could be the potential minuses?*

*Looking at the team, I would like to know a bit more about its history, successes and challenges. Can you tell me about the history of the team?*

*What are the factors that have brought it to this point of wanting to have a session? What are the challenges facing the team? What have people tried before to tackle these challenges? What were the results of these efforts?*

*Let's have a look at the team's strengths. Looking back, when have people in the team worked well together? What did they do right then? How do you think they can follow these principles – plus maybe add other elements – to work well together in the future?*

*Looking at the team at the moment, what does the team do well? How can it do more of these things in the future? What can the team do better in the future and how?*

*Who are the key stakeholders that the team must satisfy? What do each of these stakeholders want? What do your backers, bosses and customers want? How can people in the team do their best to keep these people happy?*

*Are there any other factors I need to know regarding the team's future? How long do you think some of the people will be around? What do you think your organisation sees as the future of the team? Is there anything else it would be helpful to know?*

## The How

*Here are some of the headline questions to explore.*

*The aim will be to follow the usual principles for facilitating a session. Building on these, are there any other guidelines – Dos or Don'ts - you would like me to bear in mind when running the session?*

*What are the areas people agree on? How do you think people can build on these and work towards common goals?*

*Are there areas where people may have differences? How do you think it may be possible to find some solutions – even some win-wins?*

*Let's move on to some of the guidelines it would be useful to follow during the session. It will also be important to agree on the responsibilities of various people during the session. For example:*

*My Responsibilities Will Be:*

*To create a positive environment; to make clear contracts about the goals for the session; to explain what I see as my responsibilities and the team member's responsibilities in working towards achieving the goals;*

*To explain it will be important to encourage each other, listen and, when appropriate, work together to find positive solutions; to help people to achieve the agreed goals. To do my best to ensure they go away saying things like:*

*"That was a good session. We used our individual and team strengths to find solutions to challenges. We now have an action plan that we believe in and will do our best to achieve the goals."*

*The Team Members' Responsibilities Will Be:*

*To maintain a positive environment; to agree on the goals; to encourage each other; to work together to find solutions to challenges; to conclude the session by making clear plans; to have mission holders who will take responsibility for ensuring the plans are carried out; to then get some quick successes.*

*Are there any other guidelines – Dos and Don'ts - it would be useful to follow to improve the chances of having a successful session?*

*My approach is often to build on what people have in common and, when appropriate, find solutions to any differences. Bearing this in mind, it would be good to know about the following things.*

*What do people already agree on? What are the areas where people want to work towards common goals? How do you think people can build on these in the future?*

*What are the areas where people may have differences? If so, what are the different views, feelings or approaches they have?*

*If appropriate, I may be able to help people to find some solutions. This is something we can explore. Are there any particular areas where this might be helpful?*

*Decision making is vital and at times somebody simply needs to make a decision. Bearing this in mind, let me ask a couple of questions.*

*What may be the specific areas where - despite attempts to find agreement - you or other key people may simply need to make a decision? What may be the pluses and minuses of taking this route?*

*Is there anything else you want to say or ask me about regarding how we conduct the session?*

## The Who

*Here are some of the headline questions to explore.*

- *Who are the individual people in the team? What are each person's strengths? What do you think would be their best contribution to the team or the organisation in the future?*
- *What is each person's style? How do they behave, communicate and relate to other people? What are the pluses and possible minuses to their style?*
- *How do you think each person will behave during the session? How will they encourage people? Are there any triggers that might lead to them behaving in ways that may not be helpful?*

*Who are the individual people in the team? What are their specific roles? What are the results they are accountable for delivering in each of their roles?*

*What are each individual's strengths? When do they do good work? What do they do right then? What are the principles they follow? What do you think would be their best contribution to the team or the organisation in the future?*

*What is the person's style? How do they behave, communicate and relate to other people? What are the pluses of their style? Are there any potential minuses to their style? What are the consequences?*

*Looking at each person, how do you think they will behave during the session? How will they encourage and support people? Are there any triggers that might lead to them behaving in ways that may not be helpful?*

*Let's revisit the various roles in the session. My role is to do my best to guide the team to success.*

*Looking at your role – as a leader or manager – what role do you want to play in the session?*

*You will, of course, be a participant. During some parts of the session, however, you may want to introduce a topic, give some background or play another role. At that point it will be important to let the group know that you are taking that role for a certain time.*

*Decision making is important. Bearing this in mind, who will ultimately make the key decisions regarding various topics? Who will then be following up the work that is done during the session?*

## The When

*Here are some of the headline questions to explore.*

- *What do you want to happen after the session? What will be the road map – including the specific milestones – for achieving the goals?*
- *Who will be the mission holder in charge of coordinating the road map? Who may be the potential mission holders for various aspects of the work?*
- *What can people do to get some early successes? What will they do to keep reporting their progress towards achieving the goals?*

*Looking ahead, let's imagine the session goes well. What do you want to happen afterwards? What would like to see delivered and by when?*

*What do you think could be the kind of action plan and timetable? What will be the road map – including the specific milestones – on the road to achieving the goals?*

*Who will be the mission holder in charge of coordinating the road map? Who may be the potential mission holders for various aspect of the work? What will be their brief? What support will they need to deliver the road map successfully?*

*Looking ahead, what can you do to maintain the momentum? What can you do to get some early successes? What can people do to produce some quick wins?*

*What can people do to proactively report their progress towards achieving the goals? What else needs to happen – and when – to ensure the team has a good chance of achieving its goals?*

## The Where

*Here are some of the headline questions to explore.*

- *Where will the session be held? What is the location like?  
How can we make the environment as positive and encouraging as possible?*
- *When do you want to start and finish? How can we provide all the materials required for the session? Is there anything else we should do regarding the arrangements?*
- *Looking ahead, what else can we do to ensure the session has a good chance of achieving success? Is there anything else you would like me to do before, during or even after the session?*

*Where will the session be held? What is the location like? How can we make the environment as positive and encouraging as possible? How can we make sure the physical and emotional things are right?*

*What will be the timings for the session? When do you want to start and finish? I will organise the session so that people can do the work but also have regular breaks.*

*How can we provide all the materials required for the session? Is there anything else we should do regarding the arrangements? Who will be in charge of making those happen?*

*When will people be informed about the session? What do you want to tell them about the agenda and goals? What do you want to say about the attitude that will be required for us to achieve success?*

*Looking ahead, what else can we do to ensure the session has a good chance of achieving success? Is there anything else you would like me to do before, during or even after the session?*

You may then want to summarise the discussion by saying something like the following to the stakeholders.

*"Looking at what you want to achieve, here is a potential framework for the day.*

*The Goals For The Session Are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The Schedule For The Session – Including  
The Topics We Will Cover – Will Be:*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

*"Is there anything you would like to add or change? Bearing this in mind, I will send an email confirming the goals and timetable.*

*"Let me know if you have any further thoughts or want more information. Otherwise I will see you on the day. Is that okay?"*

## *Preparing For The Session*

Imagine that you have gathered all the information. You may then take time to reflect and rehearse the session. Bearing in mind the controllables – the things you can control – you may aim:

*To focus on the goals for the session;*

*To settle on your plans for running the session;*

*To rehearse running the session.*

Different people rehearse in different ways. You may, for example, look ahead and rehearse going through the following steps.

*Travelling to the location ... Getting there at least an hour before the start ... Setting up the room ... Preparing any flip charts and making sure all the equipment works.*

*Completing the preparation and giving yourself time to think ... Again rehearsing the day in your head ... Greeting each person as they arrive ... Making them feel welcome.*

*Starting the session ... Inviting the leader to give an introduction to the day and what they would like the team to achieve ... Confirming the agreed goals ... Explaining the format and schedule for the day.*

*Making clear contracts about your role and the participants' roles ... Explaining the key principles to follow during the day – such as encouraging each other and working to find solutions ... Asking if people have anything to add to the agenda.*

*Moving onto the first topic on the agenda ... Introducing the topic by explaining the concept and giving concrete examples ... Giving exercises or other ways of helping people to explore the topic.*

*Being encouraging ... Enabling people to produce ideas or solutions for tackling challenges ... Building on areas of agreement ... Making action plans ... Making the transition to the next topic.*

*Moving on to any areas where people may have differences ... Helping people to clarify what they each want ... Using creative problem solving methods to help people to find, as far as possible, win-win solutions.*

*Anticipating any possible difficulties during the day ... Clarifying how you can prevent these difficulties happening ... Clarifying how you can manage them if, despite everything, they do happen.*

*Continuing to work through the agenda ... Reaching the final part ... Handing over to the leader to explain the next steps ... Making sure the team has mission holders who will take responsibility for delivering aspects of the action plan.*

*Giving a short exercise before finishing ... Inviting people to share what they have learned or relearned during the day ... Thanking people ... Handing over to the leader to conclude the day.*

You may wish to complete your preparation by clarifying the Dos and Don'ts for running the session. For example:

*Do encourage people; Do focus on the results to achieve; Do focus on areas of agreement; Do encourage people to find solutions; Do keep connecting with the key stakeholders to ensure they are happy with the process.*

*Do stay calm; Do buy time to think if the group hit trouble; Do think of the possible ways forward; Do rehearse taking the next steps; Do everything possible to help the team to reach its goals.*

There may be other guidelines you wish to follow. The Don'ts may probably be the inverse of the Dos. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Facilitating The Session*

*The Dos to bear in mind when  
facilitating the session are:*

\* *Do ...*

\* *Do ...*

\* *Do ...*

*The Don'ts to bear in mind when  
facilitating the session are:*

\* *Don't ...*

\* *Don't ...*

\* *Don't ...*

## *Facilitating The Actual Session*

Before setting out for the day, you may rehearse again the overall plan for running the session. Getting to the venue early, you will make sure everything is in place.

You will welcome people and then invite the team leader – or other key stakeholder – to set the scene for the day. They will hand-over to you to run the session.

One approach is to simply start by giving people an overview of the schedule for the day. You will then run the session in your own way. Here is an introduction to some of the steps you may want to take, however, on the way towards helping people to achieve their goals.

### *Confirm the goals for the session*

People will already have been sent an introduction to the goals for the session. Bearing these in mind, you can describe these again. You may say something along the following lines.

#### *The Goals*

*As far as I understand it, the goals for the session are:*

● *To ...*

● *To ...*

● *To ...*

*Is that okay? Are there any other topics you would like to add to the agenda?*

## *Make clear contracts about people's roles*

Explain your own and the participants' roles in working towards achieving the goals. Done in a positive way, this can help to set the tone for the session.

### *Contracting*

#### *My Role Is:*

- *To be a good encourager, keep things on track and help you to work towards achieving the agreed goals;*
- *To act as a good facilitator and enable you to use your strengths and skills to achieve the agreed goals;*
- *To, if appropriate, share positive models and practical tools that you can use to achieve the agreed goals.*

#### *Your Role Is:*

- *To encourage each other and keep working toward achieving the agreed goals;*
- *To use your strengths and skills to achieve the agreed goals;*
- *To, if appropriate, find creative solutions to challenges and do what you can to achieve the agreed goals.*

If appropriate, you may also want to outline some of the guidelines for the session. These may only be necessary if there is a likelihood of people behaving in ways that may cause difficulties for others. These kinds of guidelines may include the following.

*One person to speak at a time; Respect each person's views; Seek to understand what the person is saying before responding; Build on the areas of agreement; Solve any conflicts by asking: "How can we, as far as possible, get a win-win?"*

*Be a good model by being positive and encouraging people*

Good facilitators are often calm, clear and create an environment in which people can achieve concrete results. Your own behaviour can set the tone for the group. It can therefore be useful to try to act as a good model.

*Focus on the first topic to explore*

Introduce the first topic to explore. People need context so, if appropriate, show how tackling this topic will help towards achieving the overall goals. You can also describe any models or tools they can use to focus on the particular topic.

*Follow your chosen approach for helping people to reach their goals*

You will have your own approach to facilitating the discussions. When appropriate, you may also introduce exercises and breakout sessions that enable people to work on the themes. The important things to bear in mind are:

*To use an approach that is likely to work;*

*To customise the approach to make it work in the situation;*

*To do your best to help people to achieve the goals.*

Many models apply versions of the What, How, When approach. Here is an introduction to some questions that it can be useful to invite people to explore when using this approach.

## *What, How, When*

*You can keep focusing on:*



- **What**

*What are the real results we want to achieve? What is the picture of success? What will be the benefits?*

- **How**

*How can we do our best to achieve these results? What are the possible choices for working towards achieving these results? What are the pluses and minuses each option?*

*What is the route - or combination of routes - we want to follow? What are the key strategies we can follow to give ourselves the greatest chance of success?*

- **When**

*When do we want to take this route? Who will be the mission holders? What do we want to achieve and by when?*

## *Encourage people to build on their areas of agreement*

Good teams build on areas of agreement. Bearing this in mind, you may occasionally say things like:

*"Let's clarify what we have agreed on so far. As far as I understand, the things we have agreed on are:*

1) ...

2) ...

3) ...

*"We can translate these into action and get some early successes. We can then, when you are ready, focus on how we can find solutions to any topics where there may be differences."*

## *On occasions it may be okay to move into other roles*

Your role is to act as a facilitator and help people to achieve the goals. Depending on your approach, this can also involve providing stimulating input, such as summaries, models and tools.

There may be some rare occasions, however, when it may be helpful for you to move into another role. This is more likely to be the case if you are working with the team in other roles, such as a mentor.

If you want to step out of the facilitator role in the session, it will be important to position this by saying something like:

*"With your permission, I will step out of the role as a facilitator for a moment and take the role of ... then I will go back into the role."*

This should only be done if it is appropriate and will help people in the session. Then, after giving a piece of input, you can move back into the role of facilitator.

### *Conclude work on the first topic and move on to the next topic*

Ensure that people have got as far as they can with the first topic. You may then want to say something like the following.

*"As far as I understand it, you have agreed upon the following things:*

1) ...

2) ...

3) ...

*"Bearing these in mind, it can be a good time to take a break. Before we do that, however, let's agree on the next topic you want to explore.*

*"Here are the other topics on the agenda. We can, of course, add other points. Looking at these topics, which one would you like to focus on after the break?"*

### *Keep connecting with the key stakeholders*

Choose your own way to keep in touch with the key stakeholders during the session. It can be useful to catch up with them occasionally and say something like the following.

*"Are you okay with how things are going?"*

*"Looking ahead, the next topics we will be focusing on will be ..."*

*"Are there any other things you would like me to bear in mind or are there any other topics you want us to explore?"*

Keep connecting with them. Ensure they are happy with how things are going and, where necessary, make alterations to ensure the session achieves its goals.

### *Buy time to think when necessary*

There could be challenging moments during the session. People could get stuck, fall into arguments or hit other difficulties. If these happen, it can be useful to buy time to think.

Stay calm and use your own approach to finding solutions to challenges. As mentioned earlier, one way is to keep asking yourself:

*"Looking ahead, what are the real results we want to achieve? What is the picture of success? What will be happening that will show we have achieved the picture of success?"*

*"How can we do our best to achieve those results? What are the key things we can do to give ourselves the greatest chance of success? If appropriate, what can we do to – as far as possible - get win-wins?"*

*"How can I help people to take these steps? How can I share the possible ways forwards? How can I help people to take their chosen route towards achieving the desired results?"*

If appropriate, consider using some of the tools described elsewhere in this book. These include helping people to find win-win solutions or work towards a compelling Third Side.

Clarify the specific things you can do to help people. Rehearse what you are going to do next. You can then do your best to help people to achieve the desired results.

## *Finishing*

Continue until people have completed the agenda and or feel they have done what they can during the session. If appropriate, you can finish by asking each person to write down the following things.

*The specific things that I have learned or relearned in the session are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I believe we need to do to maintain the momentum and do our best to achieve the goals are:*

\*

\*

\*

If it is a relatively small group of up to 12 people, you can then invite each person to each describe what they have written. This can help to reinforce a feeling of success in the group.

If it is a larger group, you can invite people to share their ideas in pairs or trios. After they have done this, ask if any would like to share some things they have written. This can again help to finish the session on a positive note.

*Finish your part of the session and hand over to the key stakeholders*

Find a way to catch up with the key stakeholders. Say that you will be handing over to them at the end of the session. Explain that it

may be good for them to conclude the session by outlining the next steps.

They will, of course, do this in their own way. One approach is for them to cover the following areas.

*To thank people for their contributions and to summarise what has been agreed;*

*To explain the next steps regarding the actions to implement and the mission holders who will take responsibility for ensuring these are delivered;*

*To describe some quick successes they as leaders are going to deliver to maintain the momentum on the way towards achieving the team's goals.*

If the key stakeholders are happy to do this, you can conclude your part of the session and hand over to them. They can then aim to finish the session in a positive way.

### *Following Up*

The session will probably result in some kind of outcome. This could be project work, an agreed action plan or other activities.

If requested by the key stakeholders, you could help them with the follow up. Depending on your skill set, these may include opportunities:

*To facilitate further sessions with the team;*

*To hold individual mentoring sessions with the team members;*

*To use your strengths to help the team to achieve its picture of success.*

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe how you can do your best to finish the session in a positive way.

## *Finishing The Session*

*The specific things I can do to finish the session in a positive way are:*

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*The specific things I can do to follow up after the session are:*

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## The Achievement Approach



Imagine that a person has asked for your help in working towards achieving their goals. You can start by creating an encouraging environment. It can then be helpful:

*To invite the person to explore their aspirations;*

*To, if appropriate, share ideas about what you believe it may be possible for them to achieve;*

*To invite them to set specific goals and clarify the real results they want to achieve.*

Let's consider some of the steps you can take to follow this approach.

## *Achievement*

Imagine that a person has said they want to shape their future career. Before settling on their goals, it can be useful to invite them to explore the following questions.

*"What are the things you want to do in your career? What are kinds of work you find most satisfying? What are the specific things you find satisfying when doing these kinds of work?"*

*"Imagine you had a blank piece of paper and could create your ideal job. Describe three things you would love to have in such a role."*

*My Ideal Job Would Be One Where:*

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*"Let's move into the future. Imagine you are looking back at the end of your career. What do you want to have achieved by then? What for you will mean that you have had a satisfying career?"*

You can start by exploring what the person wants to do. If appropriate, you can also think about what you believe they can achieve. How to clarify their possibilities?

One approach is to ask yourself some of the following questions when looking at a person or an example of their work.

*What is the person's positive spirit? When do they show positive energy? When do they come alive?*

*What are the person's strengths? When do they do satisfying work? What are the vocational themes they are pursuing? How can they follow these principles in the future?*

*Bearing in mind what I have seen, what do I believe it may be possible for the person to achieve? What are the reasons why I believe they can achieve these things?*

Good coaches often focus on what they believe a person can achieve. They then check whether such aims resonate with the person. They may say something like the following.

*"As far as I understand it, you want to ... Is that right? Let me ask you a question. Would you also like:*

*1) To ...*

*2) To ...*

*3) To ...*

*"The reason I ask is because, from what you have said and the things I seen, I believe you could do those things.*

*"This would involve you choosing to set certain goals and do the necessary work. But I believe that you could achieve those goals. What do you think?"*

Imagine that you have shared some of these ideas with the person. It will then be time to settle on the goals they want to achieve. Bearing this in mind, you may say something along the follow lines.

*"Looking at the various possibilities, which of these themes would you like to focus on? What are the specific goals you would like to work towards?"*

*"Let's focus on your chosen goal. Looking at this, what are the real results you want to achieve? What is the picture of success? What will be the benefits of achieving these aims?"*

Imagine that you are working with a person who has asked for your help. How can you clarify their aspirations? How can you then help them to settle on the specific goals they want to achieve?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Achievement*

*The person who may ask for help in working towards achieving their goals is:*

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*The specific goals I believe they may want to achieve – though I will need to check these with them - are:*

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## *Attitude*

Imagine that a person wants to achieve a specific goal. They may want to do this when working as a writer, actor, business leader, footballer or in another professional role.

What attitude must they demonstrate to succeed? Depending on their chosen activity, they may need:

*To be positive ... To be kind ... To want to learn ... To be proactive ...  
To think ahead ... To be resilient ... To have a sense of perspective ...  
To be patient ... To be committed to continuous improvement.*

Some people may already have the required attitude. Some people may need to choose if they wish to demonstrate these qualities. A person can choose:

*To be positive or negative ... To be a creator or a complainer ... To take responsibility or avoid responsibility ... To help people or hurt people ... To do their best or not to do their best.*

Will the person be working alone or with other people? If the latter, then it is important to ask the following questions.

*What is the person's style of interacting with other people? How do they communicate with and relate to people? What are the consequences of the person's style? How do people feel after interacting with them? What will be the effect they have on their colleagues, customers and other stakeholders?*

Imagine that you are helping somebody to work towards achieving their aims. Looking at their behaviour, ask yourself:

*What is the attitude the person must demonstrate to achieve their goals? On a scale 0-10, to what extent do they demonstrate this attitude?*

*When have they demonstrated these qualities in the past? How can they demonstrate these qualities in the future? How can I help them to maintain or develop the required attitude?*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Attitude*

*The rating I would give the person regarding them having the attitude required to achieve the desired results is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ /10

*The specific things they can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

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*The specific things I can do to help them to maintain or improve the rating are:*

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## *Ability*

Imagine the person wants to work as a counsellor, singer, football manager, scientist, lawyer, developer, salesperson, business owner or in another role. What are the abilities they must demonstrate?

Depending on their chosen activity, they may need to score highly in the following areas:

*To encourage people ... To have certain professional skills ... To think strategically ... To be able to see patterns ... To be a problem solver ... To enable other people to perform at their best ... To build superb teams.*

How to clarify whether the person has such abilities? One approach is to explore their positive history and invite them to do the following things:

*To describe two satisfying and successful projects they have done in their life;*

*To describe what made each of these satisfying;*

*To describe the actual things they did – in behaviour terms - to deliver success.*

Look for any recurring patterns. These can give clues to a person's successful style of working. Imagine you have clarified some of the person's abilities. It can be useful to ask yourself the following questions.

*What are the specific abilities they need to demonstrate to reach their goals? On a scale 0-10, to what extent do they have these abilities? What can they do to maintain or improve the rating?*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Ability*

*The rating I would give the person regarding them having the ability required to achieve the desired results is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ /10

*The specific things they can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

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*The specific things I can do to help them to maintain or improve the rating are:*

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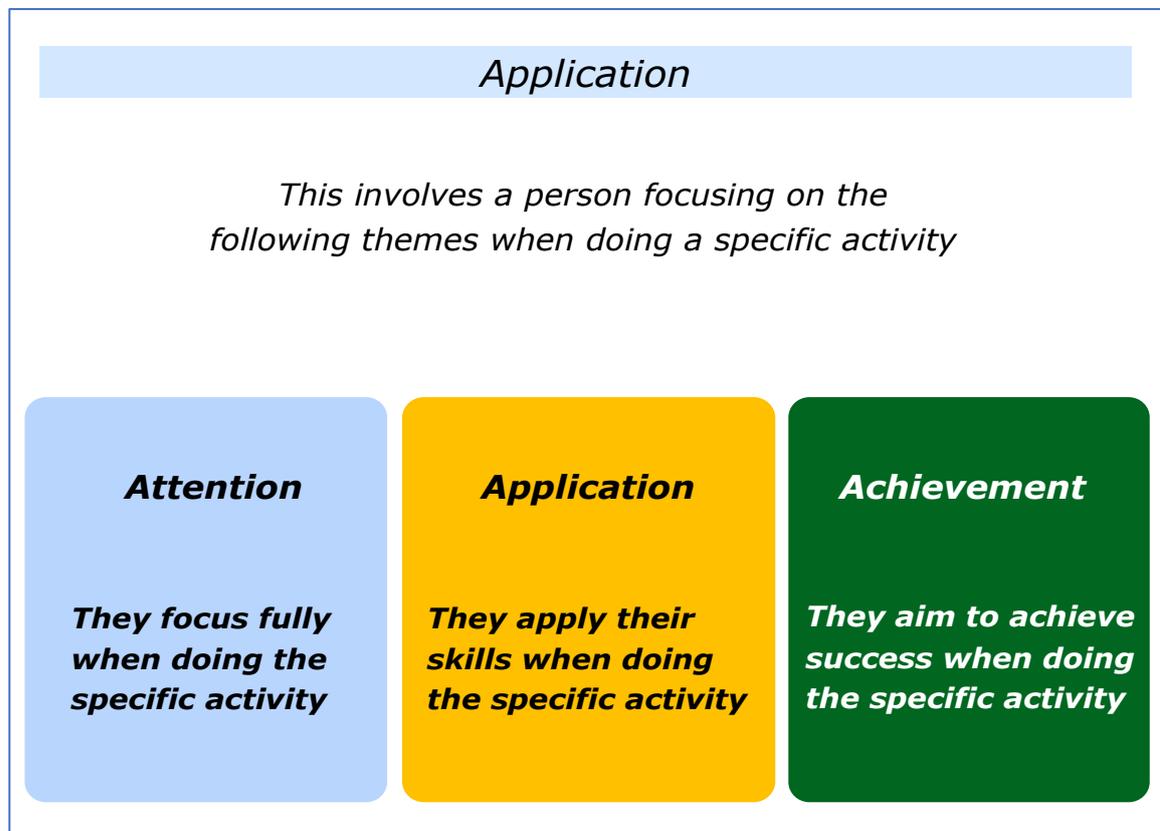
## *Application*

A person's attitude and ability provide a good foundation for them working to achieving success. It will then be important for them to apply themselves fully to the task.

How can they apply themselves properly? Depending on their chosen activity, they may need to score highly in the following areas:

*To have the necessary drive ... To be self-disciplined and self-managing ... To follow their chosen strategies ... To keep doing the right things in the right way every day ... To do superb work ... To find solutions to challenges ... To help their customers and colleagues to succeed.*

There are many models for clarifying how a person can apply themselves. Here is one approach.



## *Attention*

The person gives their full attention to the activity. They may be encouraging a person, playing an instrument, practicing a skill or doing another task. They feel alive, aware and use their antennae to clarify on what is happening.

## *Application*

The person pursues their chosen strategies and applies their skills when doing the activity. They keep focusing on: a) what is working; b) what they can do better and how.

## *Achievement*

The person does their best to achieve their aims. They may then choose to rest, reflect and repeat the cycle again. They are committed to constant improve and achieving ongoing success.

Let's return to the person you may be helping. Bearing in mind the person's chosen activity, it can be useful to ask yourself the following questions.

*Does the person apply themselves when tackling their chosen activity? Do they prepare properly? Do they rehearse when they are going to do? Do they clarify their chosen strategies? Do they anticipate the potential challenges?*

*Does the person follow rituals before embarking on the activity? Do they then immerse themselves fully? Do they keep following the right strategies in the right way?*

*Do they build on their strengths and manage the consequences of any weaknesses? Do they apply their skills in the right way? Do they keep reading reality? Do they keep improving?*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Application*

*The rating I would give the person regarding them being likely to apply themselves properly to achieve the desired results is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ /10

*The specific things they can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

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*The specific things I can do to help them to maintain or improve the rating are:*

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## *Adventure*

Application will get a person so far and that may be enough to reach the goals. On some occasions, however, they may need to dare to adventure.

Great workers always do the basics and then add the brilliance. Bearing this in mind, the kinds of adventure a person needs to demonstrate will depend on the activity they are doing.

Sometimes it may involve being consistent and then being creative. Sometimes it may involve being disciplined and then choosing to be daring to deliver the goods. Sometimes it may involve finding solutions to challenges.

How to find clarify whether a person can demonstrate this sense of adventure? You can ask yourself the following questions.

*What are the real results the person are aiming to achieve when doing their chosen activity? When may they need to be creative or find solutions to challenges? When may they need to be daring and demonstrate a sense of adventure to achieve their goals?*

*What are the kinds of qualities they may need to demonstrate when taking this step? When have they shown these qualities in the past? What were the principles they followed then? How can they follow similar principles – plus add other skills – in the future?*

*What may be the specific situations where they need to demonstrate this ability? What can they then do to make good decisions and, when appropriate, show this sense of adventure? How can I help them to take these steps?*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe the following things.

## *Adventure*

*The rating I would give the person regarding them, when appropriate, demonstrating the adventure to achieve the desired results is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ /10

*The specific things they can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

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*The specific things I can do to help them to maintain or improve the rating are:*

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## *Achievement*

Imagine that the person has demonstrated the right attitude, built on their abilities and applied themselves properly. They can now do everything possible to achieve their picture of success.

Here are some of the many models for helping individuals to move from potential to peak performances. Some have been described earlier in the book, so here we will refer to them briefly.

### *The Positive History Approach*

This approach invites the person to recall times when they have managed a similar situation successfully. It is to clarify the principles they followed and how they translated these into action.

Looking ahead, they can explore how they can follow these principles – plus maybe add other skills – in the future. They can then rehearse this approach and, when appropriate, translate it into action to achieve peak performance.

### *The Channelling Your Champ Approach*

This is similar to the positive history approach. Peak performers often aim to channel their inner champ rather than their inner chimp. What does this mean?

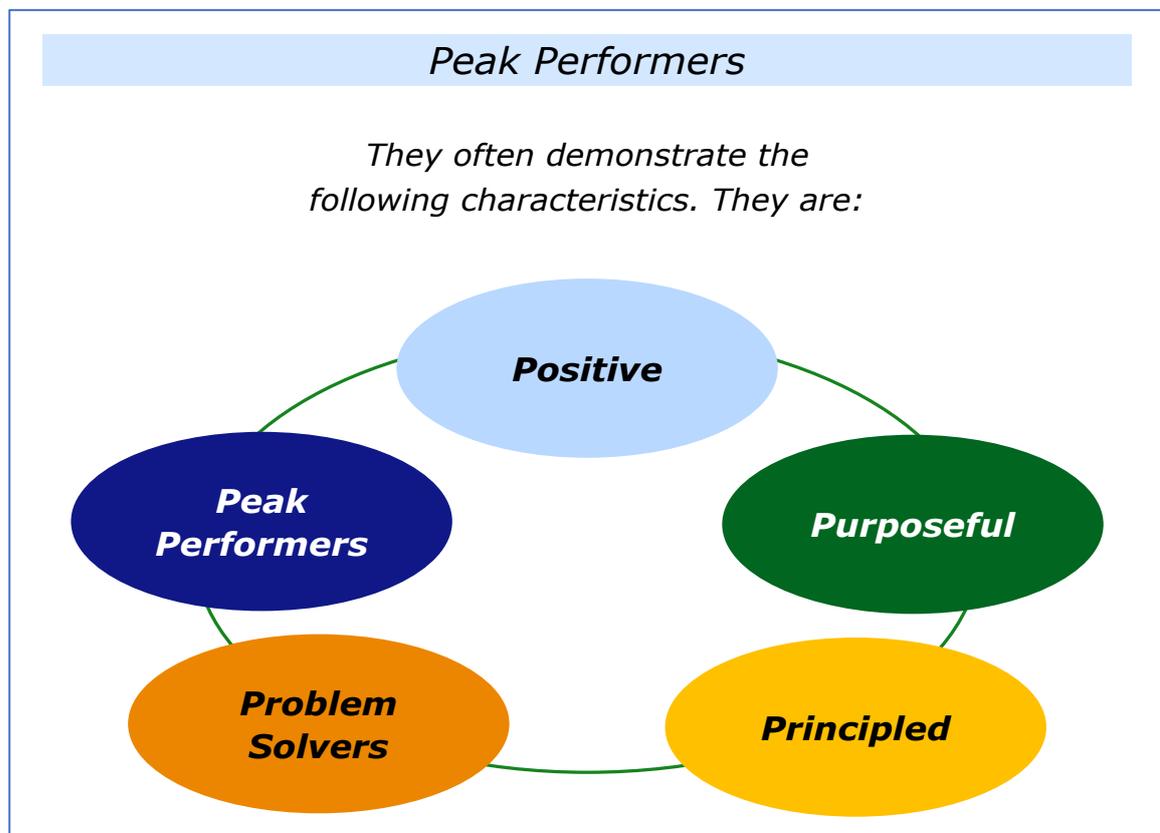
During the last decade Steve Peters has helped many athletes to manage their chimp. Their chimp can take many forms. It can be self-doubt, irrational emotion and negative self-talk.

Steve helps them to manage these impulses. He also encourages athletes to make specific plans for performing at their best. He uses his own terms to describe this pursuit of excellence and become the best they can be.

Great workers often channel their inner champ rather than their inner chimp. They recall when they have delivered their equivalent of championship performances.

They follow similar principles to do the basics and reach 8+/10. They then add the brilliance to achieve 10/10. Great workers build on their champ rather than get distracted by their chimp.

### *The Peak Performance Approach*



There are many models for doing great work. Some people demonstrate the following characteristics on the way towards achieving peak performance.

#### *They Are Positive*

Great workers have a positive attitude and build on their positive attributes. They often focus on something they feel passionately about where they have the ability to achieve peak performance.

They may feel passionately about encouraging people, designing gardens, finding a medical cure, fighting for justice, caring for animals or doing another activity.

It can also be useful for a person to spend lots of time exploring a particular theme before settling on pursuing a specific activity.

### *They Are Purposeful*

Great workers translate their passion into a clear purpose. They may aim to write an article, climb a mountain, finish a marathon, teach an inspiring course, lead a team to success or achieve another goal.

People love to have a sense of purpose and work towards achieving a compelling goal. This can provide meaning and structure to their days.

### *They Are Principled*

Great workers follow the principles they believe in. They build on their strengths, follow their successful style of working and find ways to compensate for any weaknesses.

Such people translate their principles into action and perform superb work. They keep building on what is working and find ways to improve in the other areas.

### *They Are Problem Solvers*

Great workers anticipate and prevent potential difficulties. They are also good at finding solutions to challenges that may happen on the way towards achieving their goal.

Such people buy time to think when faced by difficulties. They explore their options and settle on their chosen strategy. They then do their best to achieve success.

### *They Are Peak Performers*

Great workers deliver the goods. They continue to perform superb work and add that touch of class. Sometimes they go into their equivalent of the zone and deliver peak performances.

Some people go beyond doing fine work. They pass on their knowledge to other people and help them to achieve success. Sometimes they give everything and experience a sense of peace.

### *The Calmness Approach*

Many sports psychologists help athletes to focus on the following themes when managing pressure. They encourage them:

*To stay calm, buy time to think and clarify the real results they want to achieve;*

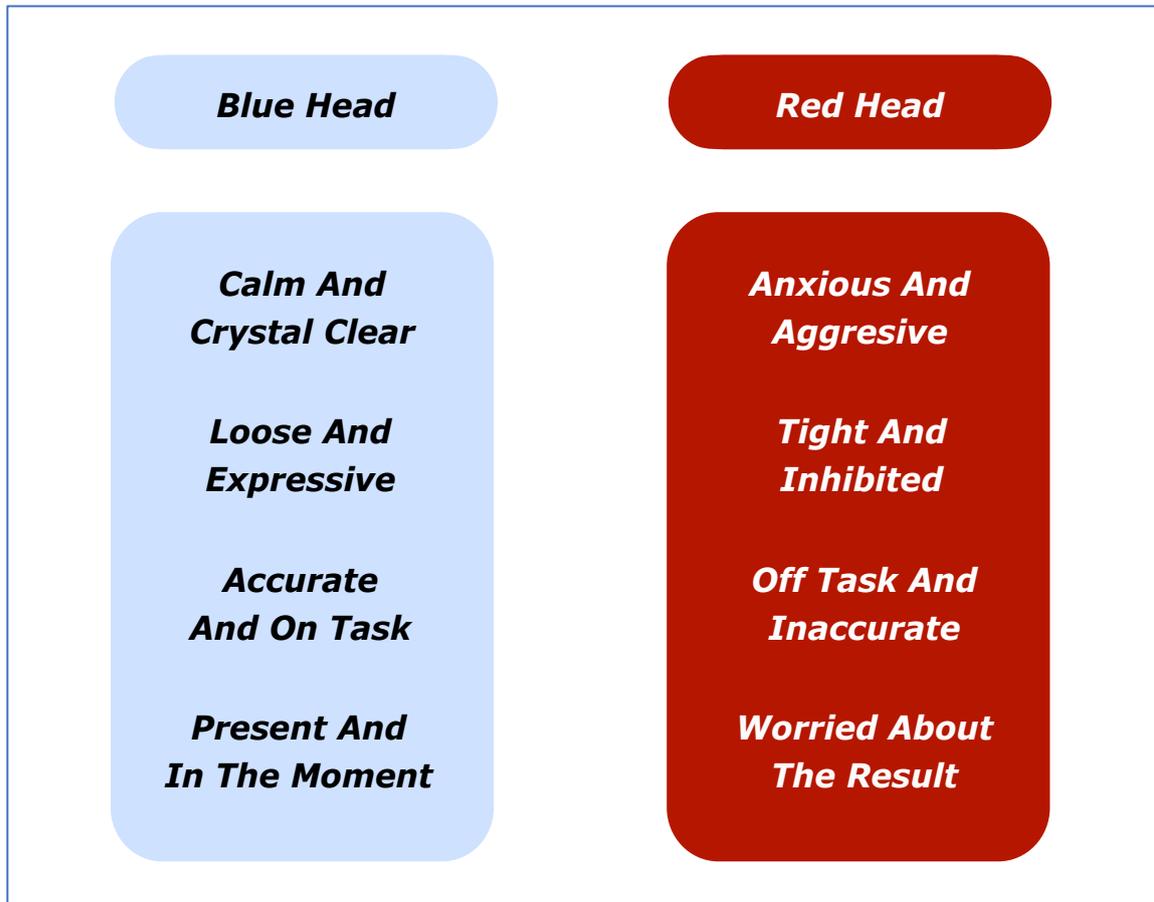
*To clarify the possible options for going forward together with the pluses and minuses of each option;*

*To settle on their chosen strategy and do whatever is required to achieve the desired concrete results.*

James Kerr describes one model in his book *Legacy*, which is about the New Zealand All Blacks rugby team. The players were expected to inspire the nation and win every match.

Looking at the team's history, however, this has sometimes led to the players having negative emotions and failing to deliver the goods. This was sometimes because they had difficulty making good decisions at critical moments.

James describes how the players learned to feel calm rather than frantic. They switched to a state they called Blue Head rather than Red Head. Here is an overview of the two states.



Daniel Coyle, author of *The Talent Code*, summarised this approach in one of his blogs. Below are excerpts from the piece.

*Quick background: a few years ago, the team was going through a period of uncharacteristic struggle. Some players were having trouble controlling their emotions in matches.*

*So, with the help of a former Rhodes Scholar named Ceri Evans, they devised a tool to fix that, built on a simple two-part frame that describes the mental state you want to avoid, and the one you want to be in. They call it Red Head/Blue Head.*

*Red Head is the negative state, when you are heated, overwhelmed, and tense (H.O.T., in the parlance). Your emotional engine is smoking, your perceptions are slow, the game feels too fast, and your decision making is rushed.*

*Blue Head, on the other hand, is the precise opposite: the cool, controlled, pattern-seeing state, when you retain your awareness*

*and your decision-making power, when you stay flexible and deliver top performance. The key is doing three things:*

- 1) Seek to stay in Blue Head as your default setting;*
- 2) Sense cues when you are entering Red Head mode;*
- 3) Use a physical or mental trigger to get yourself back into Blue Head.*

*On the All Blacks, each player is encouraged to devise personal triggers to make the transition.*

*One player stamps his feet into the grass, to ground himself.*

*Another uses mental imagery, picturing himself from the highest seat in the stadium, to help put the moment in perspective.*

*Whatever tool you use doesn't matter - what matters is realizing you're in the wrong emotional zone, and finding ways to cool yourself off and get back in a high-performing head space.*

Imagine that you have helped a person to take some of these steps. How to tell when a person is performing at their best? Some people display the following characteristics:

*They make complicated things look simple and achieve success;*

*They keep developing, add extra dimensions to their approach and achieve ongoing success;*

*They do, in some cases, help other people to achieve success.*

## *The Flowing Approach*

This approach helps a person to go into their version of the zone. They can then aim to flow, focus and finish.

Michael Murphy and Rhea White described such experiences in their book *In The Zone: Transcendent experiences in sports*. They quote Margherita Duncan writing about Isadora Duncan in the following way.

*When she danced the Blue Danube, her simple waltzing forward and back, like the oncoming and receding waves on the shore, had such ecstasy of rhythm that the audience became frenzied with the contagion of it.*

*They could not contain themselves, but rose from their seats, cheering, applauding, laughing and crying.*

You can discover more about this topic in the section of the book called *The Flow Approach*.

Let's return to the person you are helping. On a scale 0-10, how high would you rate the likelihood of them achieving their chosen aims? What can they do to maintain or improve the rating?

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Achievement*

*The rating I would give the person regarding them being likely to achieve the desired results is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ /10

*The specific things they can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

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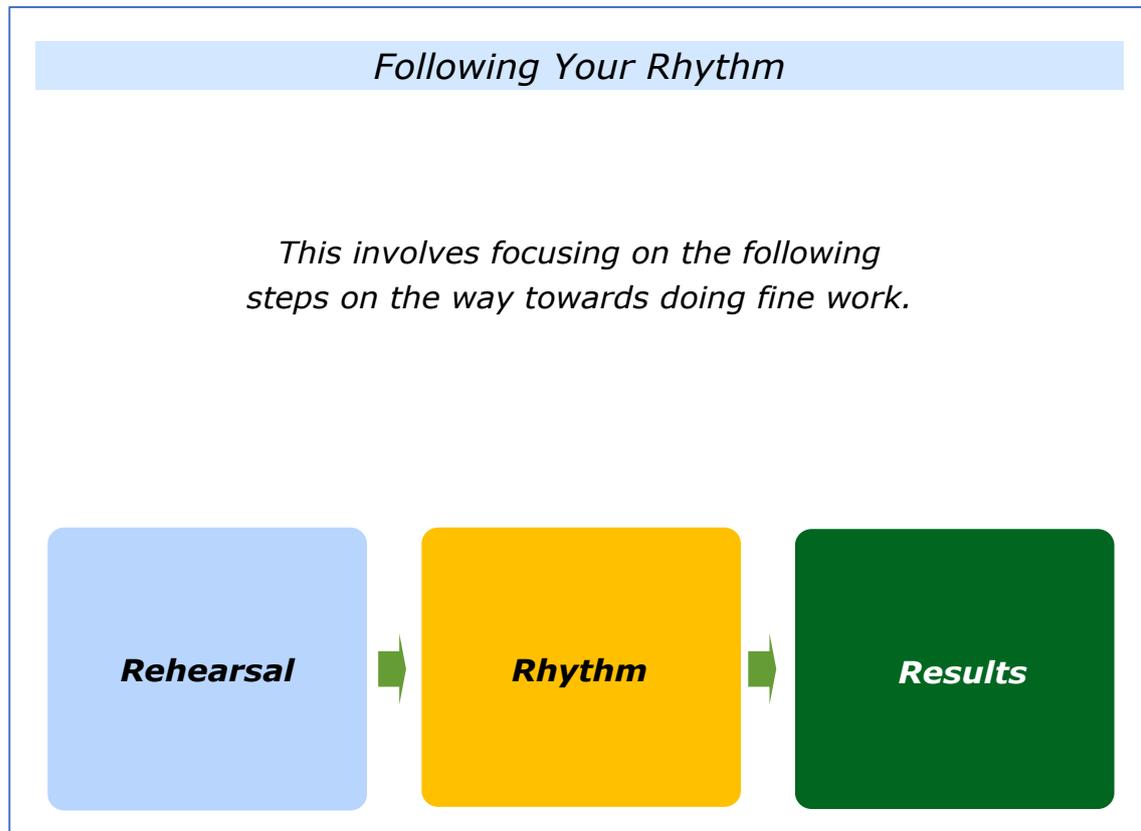
*The specific things I can do to help them to maintain or improve the rating are:*

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## *The Following Your Rhythm Approach*



Every person has their own rhythm for living, working and resting. Some people learn to find and follow their chosen rhythm. They are then able to channel their energy in a positive way.

This can work well if they are working alone. If they are working with others – such as individuals, teams and organisations - they may need to recognise and manage other people's styles.

Some people do this successfully but others sometimes lose their own rhythm. This can lead to them feeling strangers to themselves.

Imagine that you want to pursue your preferred way of working whilst recognising and, when appropriate, managing other people's rhythm. Here are some steps to consider.

## *Finding and following your own rhythm*

You will have different rhythms for different activities. So start by selecting a specific activity where you want to find and follow your preferred pattern.

Different people do this in different ways. One person began looking at their preferred way of working in the following way. They said:

*"I chose to focus on my working week. Some of my work was satisfying, but sometimes I felt disjointed. It seemed like I was fitting into other people's patterns, rather than my own.*

*"Some give-and-take is obviously necessary when you work for a company. After all, the business won't change to fit your rules, but things felt out of sync. So I sat down and planned the best way to follow my natural rhythm during the working week.*

*"My first step was to identify when and where I worked best. My most productive times in the office are in the morning – between 7.30 and 11.30. So I organised my diary to, as far as possible, be in charge of my own agenda during those times.*

*"My most creative work is done in a quiet place away from interruptions. So I found a quiet corner to work on my laptop away from the open plan office.*

*"I felt quite energetic working in the office on Monday and Tuesday, but then wanted to be on the road, visiting clients. So that is how I arranged my diary. Meeting customers on Wednesday and Thursday, with Friday spent working from home.*

*"Internal meetings remained a challenge. I preferred meeting where I knew the purpose and agenda, rather than those that drifted. Bearing this in mind, I did two things.*

*"First, I emailed my boss the day before our regular catch ups to outline what I wanted to discuss. I did this diplomatically, of course, underlining we would be following his agenda.*

*"Second, when asked to attend other internal meetings, I requested the agenda before I accepted the request.*

*"Taking these steps helped me to be much more productive. I now feel more in sync with my preferred working pattern."*

Different people choose different ways to set up and follow their rhythm. Here are some steps they take. You will, of course, adapt these in your own way.

Great workers often organise their time into blocks. They follow this pattern whether they are planning a day, a week, a month or a longer period of time.

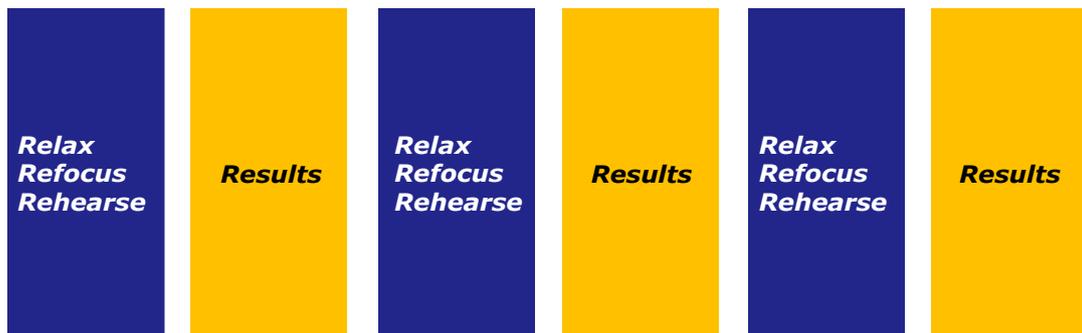
A person may prepare by following their chosen ritual. They relax, refocus and rehearse what they are going to do next. They click into action and go into their version of the arena.

Fully present, they aim to flow, focus and finish. They do their best to deliver the desired results. Such a person may then take time to reflect. They relax, refocus and rehearse. They then repeat the process on the way to doing good work.

## *Great Workers Follow Their Rhythm*

*They often organise their time into blocks. They start by creating time to relax, refocus and rehearse.*

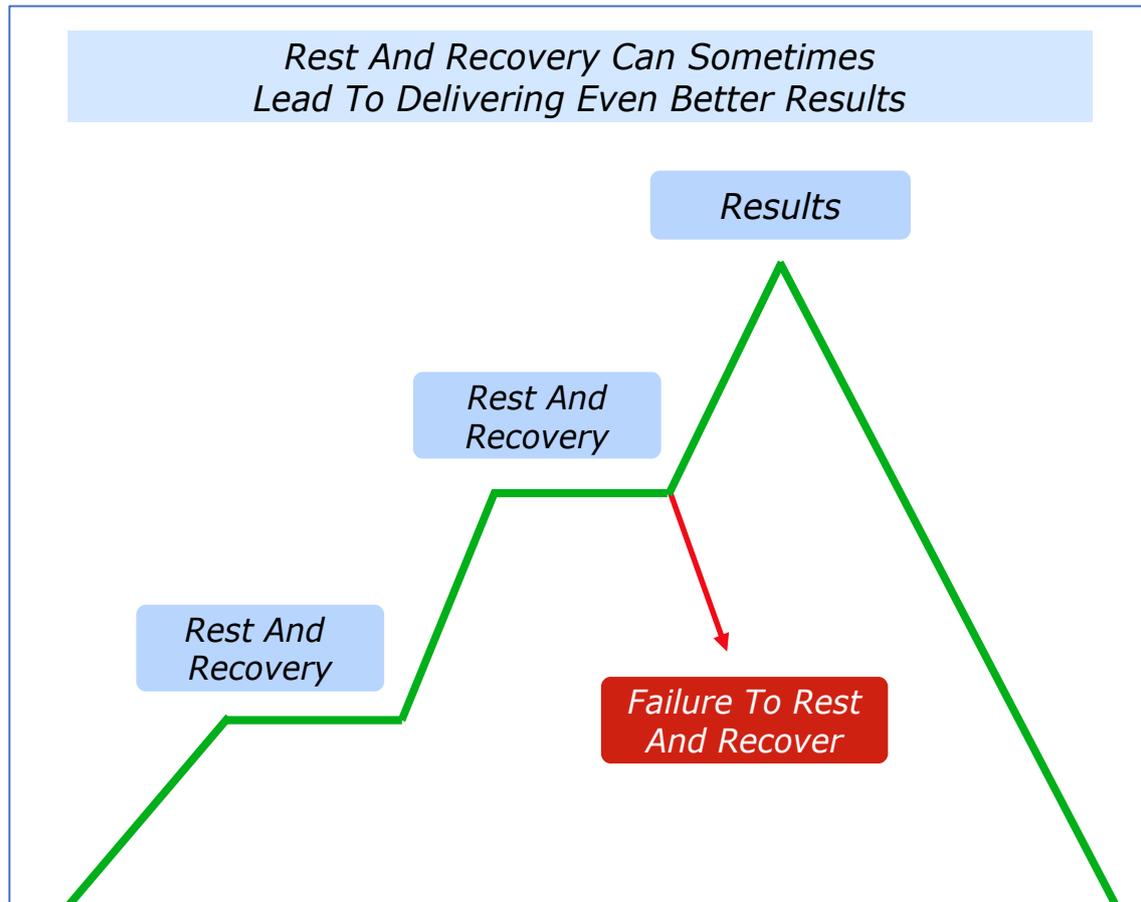
*They click into action when going into their version of the arena. They then aim to flow, focus, finish and deliver the desired results.*



Imagine that you have found the rhythm you want to follow. You can then be positively engaged and pursue it in your own way. This can be rewarding, but it is also important to take care of yourself.

Peak performers focus on getting results, but they recognise this calls for building in times for rest and recovery. Failing to do so can mean they crash and burn.

Different people have different ways of regaining energy. You may choose to sleep, walk, listen to music, play sports or whatever. It can be useful to find and follow your own way to rest and recover. This can help you to deliver even better results.



*Following your rhythm whilst managing other people's rhythm*

It can be helpful to follow your rhythm. You may also wish to find ways to deal with situations where the people, team or organisation has a different working pattern.

Organisations have the right to set their own working style, so it is important to recognise their rhythm. This does not necessarily mean, of course, that the approach they choose is effective.

It can be useful to take the following steps when working in an organisation.

*Step One:*

*To, whenever possible, follow your rhythm for delivering results.*

*Step Two:*

*To recognise the organisation's rhythm – such as the way it schedules meetings, the business cycle and any other events;*

*To prepare properly to make your best contribution to these events;*

*To make a positive contribution to the events and help the organisation to deliver its desired results.*

*Step Three:*

*To then take time to relax, regain your own rhythm and continue to deliver results.*

Sometimes you may also encounter individuals whose style creates challenges. Let's explore this theme.

*Following your own rhythm whilst learning  
how to manage other people's rhythm*

You will have a preferred way of working, listening and communicating with people. But there will be many occasions when you meet people who have different styles.

Imagine that you like to reflect before speaking. Sometimes you will work with people who talk quickly and demand a response. How to deal with such a situation?

It can be useful to pause, buy time to think and then give a professional response. One person explained how they took this approach in the following way.

*"I used to have difficulty with managers who spoke quickly and aimed to spur others into action.*

*"My own style is more reflective. But, for a while, I tried to match the quick talkers and respond.*

*"Later I learned to be calm. I did this by learning to breathe properly, listen fully and try to summarise what a manager had said.*

*"Then I spoke in my own speed, reassuring them that I would fix things. If necessary, I checked information to make sure I was clear on what they wanted and by when.*

*"Whilst I absorbed information in my own way, the key was to then quickly produce results. This helped me to retain my sanity and also satisfy the manager."*

This approach can work when you plan ahead and prepare properly. Sometimes you may be interrupted unexpectedly, however, when deep into a piece of work. Let's explore this theme.

### *Managing transitions between activities*

Great workers often immerse themselves deeply in their chosen activity. This has huge benefits, but there can also be challenges. They may be deeply engaged in an activity but then be interrupted.

This can throw them off-course. When does this happen for you? You may need to stop what you are doing and aim:

*To give full attention to a loved one - your child, partner or another person ... To manage your manager who wants to talk with you urgently ... To deal with an unexpected event or crisis.*

There are many ways to make such transitions. One approach is to go through the following steps.

## *Managing Transitions Between Activities*

*This often involves going through the following stages. a) Being totally engaged in one activity; b) Buying time to manage the transition properly; c) Being totally engaged in the next activity.*



You enjoy doing deep work, but then there is an interruption. Seeing things in perspective, you believe it is important to make a good transition to the next activity. One approach is to take the following steps.

### *Relax*

*Relax your mind and body. Breathe deeply and buy time to think, even if only for a few seconds.*

### *Rehearse*

*Clarify the real results you want to achieve in the next situation. You can then rehearse how to achieve these aims.*

### *Refocus*

*Focus fully on the new situation and move into action. Be totally aware of what is happening and do your best to achieve the desired results.*

Tom Weede wrote an article on this theme called *Learning From Biathletes*. Writing in *Men's Fitness*, he described how athletes competing in the biathlon must switch from high intensity skiing to the calmness required to shoot at a target.

This calls for stopping, concentrating fully when shooting and then regaining their former rhythm. Here is an excerpt from the article where he describes the skills that biathletes employ.

### *De-stress In Seconds*

*As a result of the alternating demands of furious cardio and calm precision, these biathletes have to know how to relax and focus in highly stressful situations.*

### *Remain Calm*

*On days when you'll be called upon to do something stressful, practise staying relaxed throughout the day — as opposed to hastily trying to compose yourself when you're about to give a presentation or line up a one-metre putt.*

### *Breathe Deeply*

*In addition to being in good condition, biathletes increase their ability to relax and lower their heart rates by breathing correctly, deeply inhaling and exhaling as they approach the shooting range during a race.*

### *Make It Mechanical*

*One way to reduce stress is by practising something over and over until it becomes automatic.*

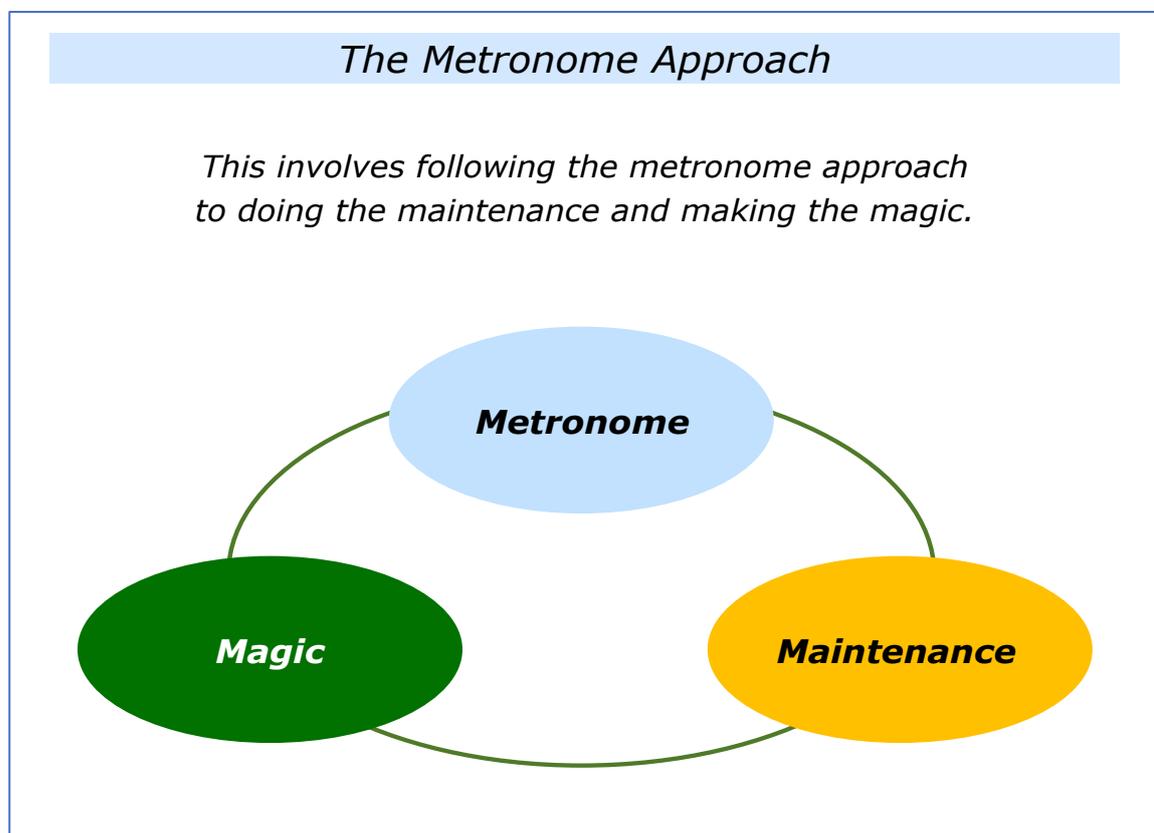
*But biathletes can miss their targets, just as the rest of us miss free throws or lose our train of thought. So what happens if you fall out of the automatic mode and mess up?*

*"You definitely have to stop," says team member Jeremy Teela, who deals with such times by taking two breaths, closing his eyes for a second and then starting over.*

*"I jump back into it, just like I would if it was a new shooting," he says.*

*"And then I shoot the next shots just as fast as normal ... so I totally clear what I just did (from my mind) and then start over."*

## *The Metronome Approach*



Great workers follow their chosen rhythm. They coordinate their resources to deliver great results. They seem to follow a metronome to doing the maintenance and then making magic.

Great teams also follow their rhythm. They aim to coordinate their strengths, follow certain strategies and do superb work. They seem

to follow the metronome approach to doing the maintenance and then making magic.

Looking back, can you think of a time when you followed some elements of this approach? This could have been in your personal or professional life.

What did you do then to follow your chosen rhythm? How did you manage your energy? How did you deal with any breaks and then regain your rhythm? What happened as a result of taking these steps?

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to use elements of this approach? How can you do this in your own way?

You may want to do this when writing an article, doing a creative project or embarking on a long series of events. You may want to do it when tackling a challenge, leading a team or doing another activity.

How can you set up and follow your chosen rhythm? How can you manage your energy? How can you, when appropriate, rest, regain your rhythm and then rise to the occasion? What will be the benefits of taking this approach?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Metronome Approach In The Future*

*The specific situation when I may want  
to use elements of this approach to  
follow my chosen rhythm may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to  
set up and follow my rhythm are:*

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\*

\*

*The specific benefits of  
taking this approach will be:*

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\*

There are many aspects to following your rhythm. This section concludes by considering the following theme.

### *Pacing Yourself To Get Positive Results*

*You may sometimes want to do things at different speeds. You may want to do some things at a slow pace, some at a medium pace, some at a fast pace.*

*This approach can help to manage your energy. It can also help you to make good decisions, be fully present and do your best to achieve positive results.*



Great workers do things at the right pace to get positive results. Some things need to be done slowly. Some things need to be done quickly.

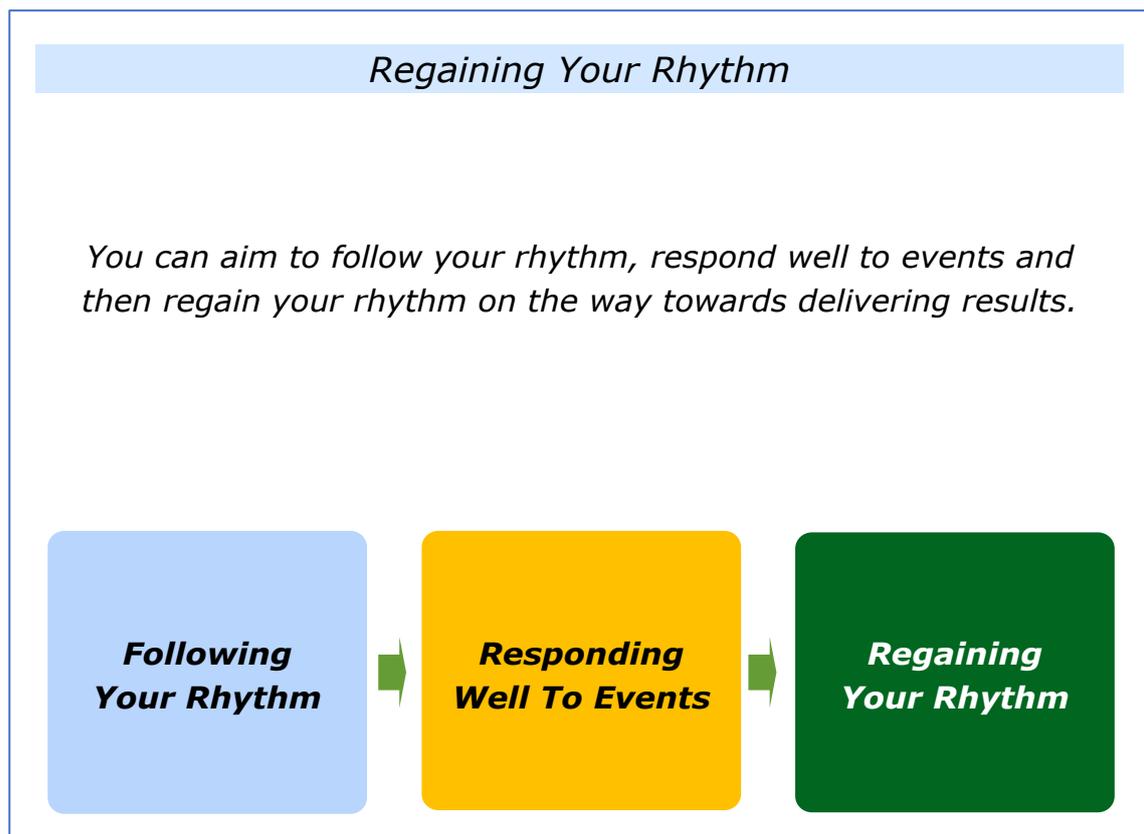
Sometimes it can be hard to answer the question: "What is the right pace for doing things?" One possible answer is: "The right pace is the one that gets the right results."

Peak performers sometimes spend a lot of time clarifying the real results they want to achieve before moving into action. They may then do some tasks extremely quickly, whilst others they may do slowly and deliberately.

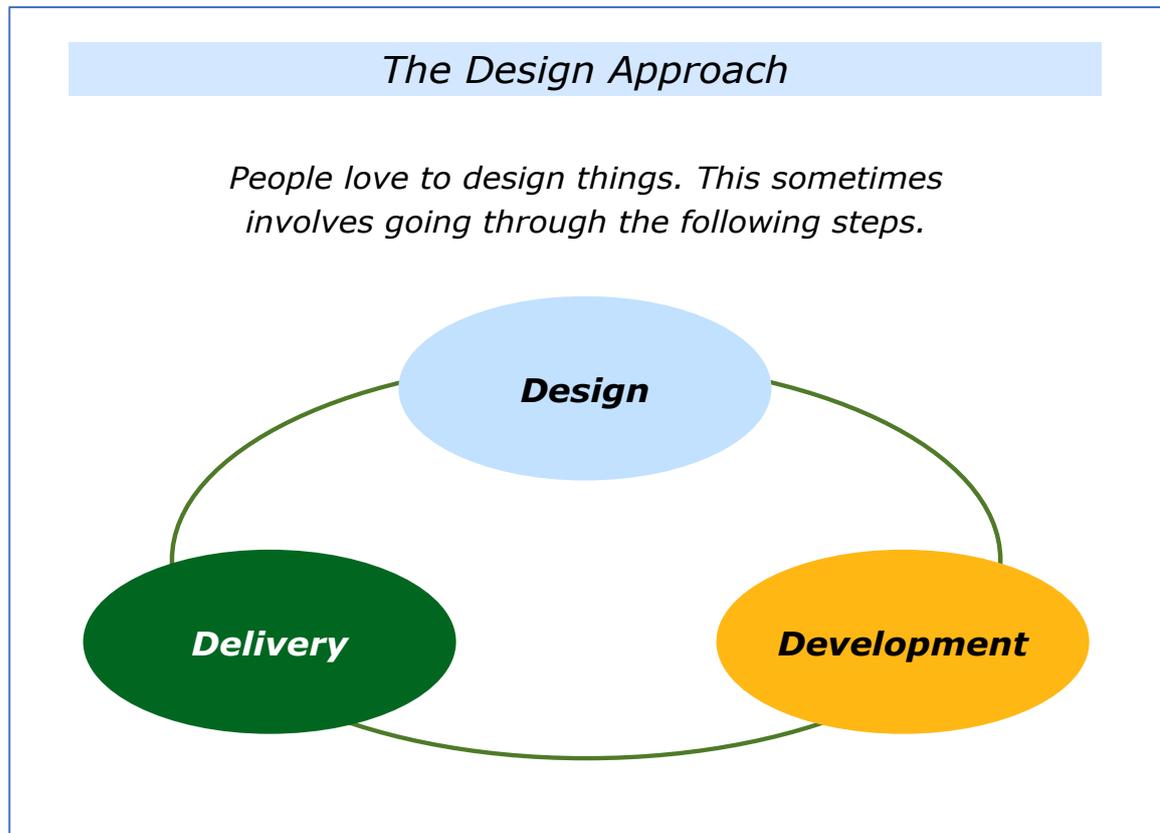
Such workers also learn to manage their energy as they get older. They aim: a) to manage their physical energy; b) to manage their

psychological energy. They learn to rest, recover and then be fully present in order to deliver positive results.

There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to follow your rhythm and build in times for rest and recovery. It is also to respond well to events, regain your rhythm and then do your best to deliver the desired results.



## *The Design Approach*



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach involves going through the following steps.

### *Design*

You decide on something you want to design. You may want to write an article, do a mentoring session, run a workshop, revitalise a room, lead a team, build a culture or do another activity. You clarify the real results you want to achieve with the piece of work.

### *Development*

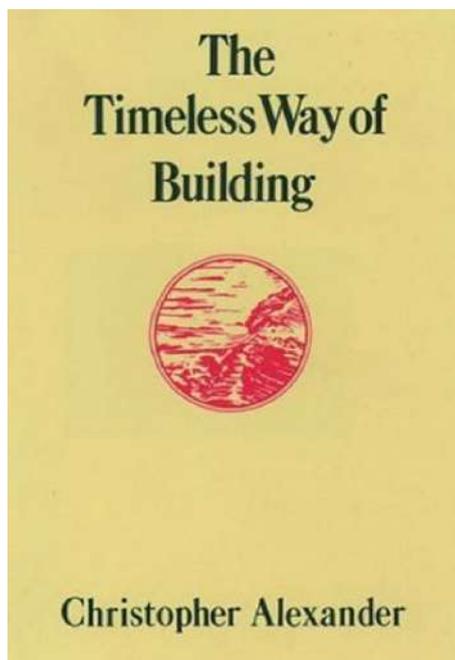
You develop the strategies you can follow to deliver success. You do your research and clarify: a) the strategies that are most likely to work; b) the challenges and solutions. You then rehearse and develop these strategies until you feel ready to do the piece of work.

## *Delivery*

You go into your version of the arena. You are fully present, follow your chosen strategies and keep reading reality. You build on what is working and find solutions to challenges. You do your best to achieve the desired results and deliver the piece of work.

Human beings are natural designers. They love to make things work, find solutions to challenges or create their version of paradise. Some love to design experiences that enrich people's lives or take them into another dimension.

Christopher Alexander, the architect, said that all human beings have a strong drive to create. Writing in *The Timeless Way of Building*, he described this in the following way.



*Each one of us has, somewhere in their heart, the dream to make a living world, a universe.*

*If you have a feeling-vision of the things – a painting, a building, a garden, a piece of a neighbourhood – as long as you're very firmly anchored in your knowledge of that thing, and you can see it with your eyes closed, you can keep correcting your actions.*

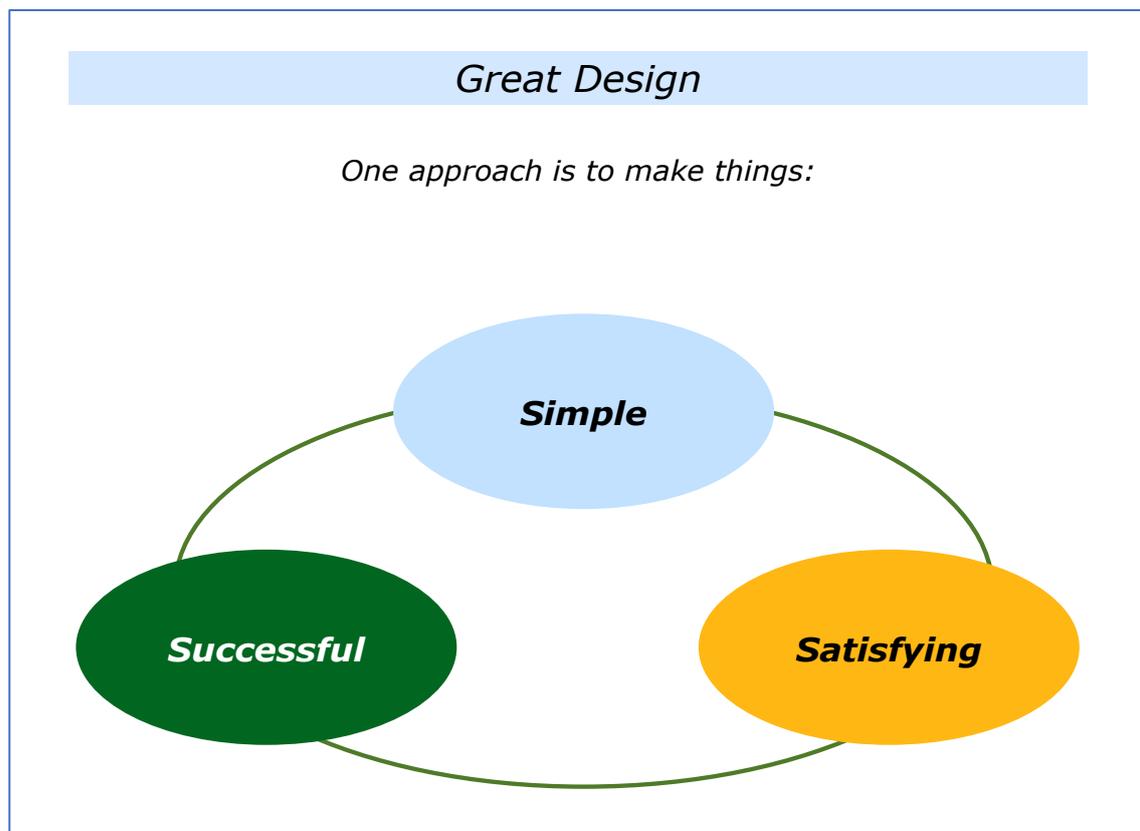
*There is one timeless way of building. It is a thousand years old, and the same today as it has ever been.*

*The great traditional buildings of the past, the villages and tents and temples in which man feels at home, have always been made by people who were very close to the centre of this way.*

Architects nurse this desire at the centre of their lives, says Christopher. One day, somewhere, somehow, they want to create a building that is wonderful, a place where people can walk and dream for centuries.

Every person has some version of this dream, says Christopher. Some wish to create a house, a garden or a fountain. Others wish to create a relationship, a painting or a book. The following sections explore some of the different ways to design, develop and deliver great work.

### *The Simple, Satisfying And Successful Approach*



Some designers make things that are simple – in a profound way – satisfying and successful. They make beautiful things that work.

They follow these principles whether they are providing a service, designing a product, building an organisational culture or doing another activity. Let's explore these themes.

### *Making It Simple*

Simplicity is genius, we are told. Art Fry's invention of Post-it Notes demonstrated simplicity in action. So did the Sony Walkman and the Apple Macintosh. Here are some views on simplicity.

*Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication. Leonardo da Vinci*

*Everything should be as simple as possible – but no simpler.  
Albert Einstein*

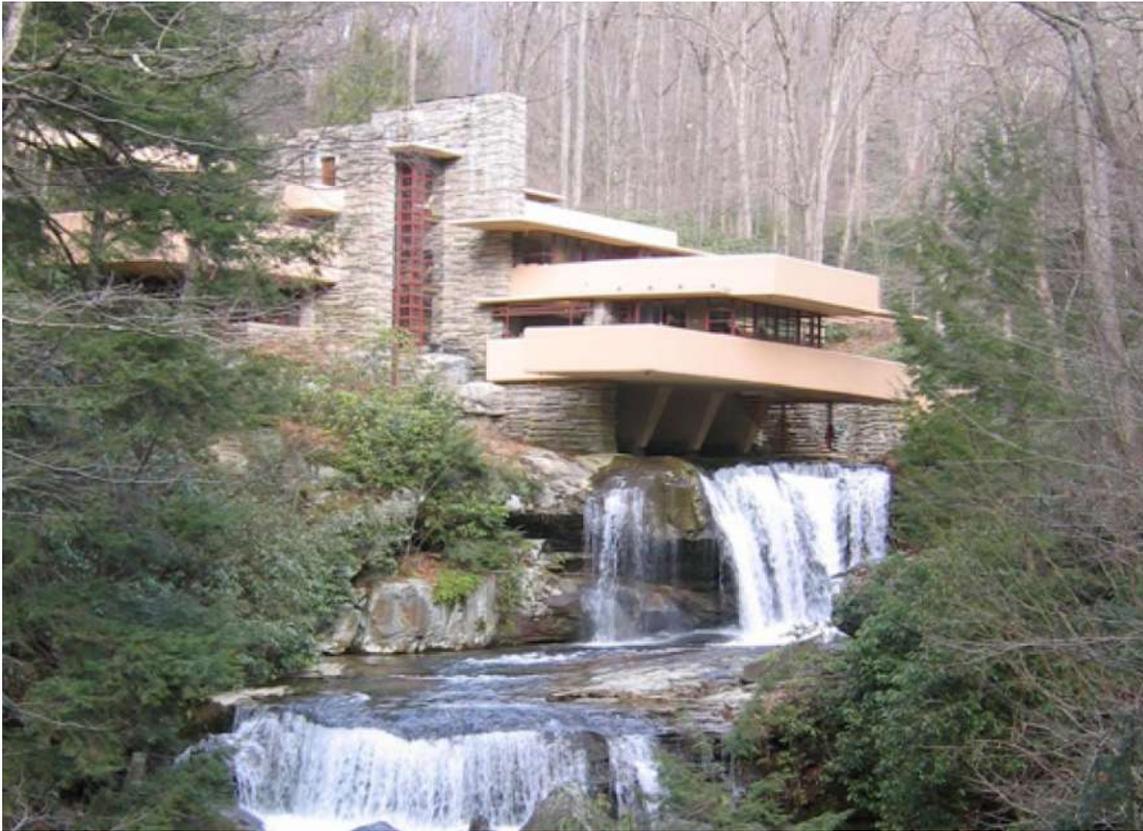
*Perfection is achieved not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing more to take away. Antoine de Saint Exupéry*

### *Making It Satisfying*

Superb design is satisfying on a number of levels. Physically it looks and feels good. Practically it works and is user-friendly. There is an old Shaker dictum that says:

*Don't make something unless it is both necessary and useful;  
but if it is both necessary and useful,  
don't hesitate to make it beautiful.*

Frank Lloyd Wright's famous house *Falling Water* shows how something can be simple, satisfying and successful.



### *Making It Successful*

Great design works. It is sometimes simple, beautiful and effective. It does the job. Here are some quotes on this theme.

*Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works. Steve Jobs.*

*Good design is probably 98% common sense. Above all, an object must function well and efficiently - and getting that part right requires a good deal of time and attention. Terence Conran.*

Pioneers often build prototypes that show a better way. They do not spend their time trying to change the old way of doing things. They may aim to build sustainable systems that deliver ongoing success.

Different people do this in different ways. Let's look at how some educators are helping their students to develop these skills.

## *The Feel, Imagine, Do And Share Approach*

Kiran Bir Sethi has done superb work that helps people and the planet. She founded the Riverside School in Ahmedabad and the global movement called *Design For Change*.

This encourages thousands of children to implement their ideas for building a better world. Here is an excerpt from its website.

*Children and adults can shape their futures by moving from saying "Can I?" to "I Can." They can find something that bothers them, do something about it and make change happen. They can do this by following the design process of Feel, Imagine, Do and Share.*

*Children are dreaming up and leading brilliant ideas all over the world. They are implementing ideas from challenging age-old superstitions in rural communities, to earning their own money to financing school computers to solving the problem of heavy school bags.*

### *Kiran Bir Sethi and Design For Change*



*The 'I Can' mindset equips every child to be aware of the world around them. It enables them to take action and empowers them to design a more desirable and sustainable future – today.*

*This year, Design for Change reached 34 countries and over 300,000 schools. It inspired hundreds of thousands of children, their teachers and parents.*

*It enabled them to celebrate the fact change is possible and that they can lead that change.*

Children focus on challenges on their own doorstep. They may aim to clean local rivers, convert garbage dumps into playgrounds, ensure school friends can get home safely, care for the elderly or do other activities.

Kiran has a background in design. She and her colleagues therefore invite children to tackle challenges by going through the design process of *Feel, Imagine, Do* and *Share*.



## *Feel*

Focus on something you feel strongly about. This could be something that bothers you or something you want to improve. Start to explore your desired picture of success.

## *Imagine*

Imagine a way to make it better. Explore what good looks like and search the world for examples of best practice. Focus on what you can control and clarify your picture of success.

## *Do*

Do the necessary work. This can be an eye-opener for some young people, because it calls for sweat and overcoming setbacks on the road to achieving success. One student described this in the following way.

*"This part taught us to develop persistence. Our generation is used to having a short attention span and, if we get bored, moving on to the next idea. But we realised that you have to be persistent to make change happen. That taught us a lot."*

## *Share*

Share your story with the world. The students make videos of their work and also take part in the annual *Design For Change School Challenge*. These stories provide inspiration for others who want to achieve their pictures of success.

Kiran explains how this approach is helping young people to develop the skills necessary for shaping the future. She describes this in the following way.

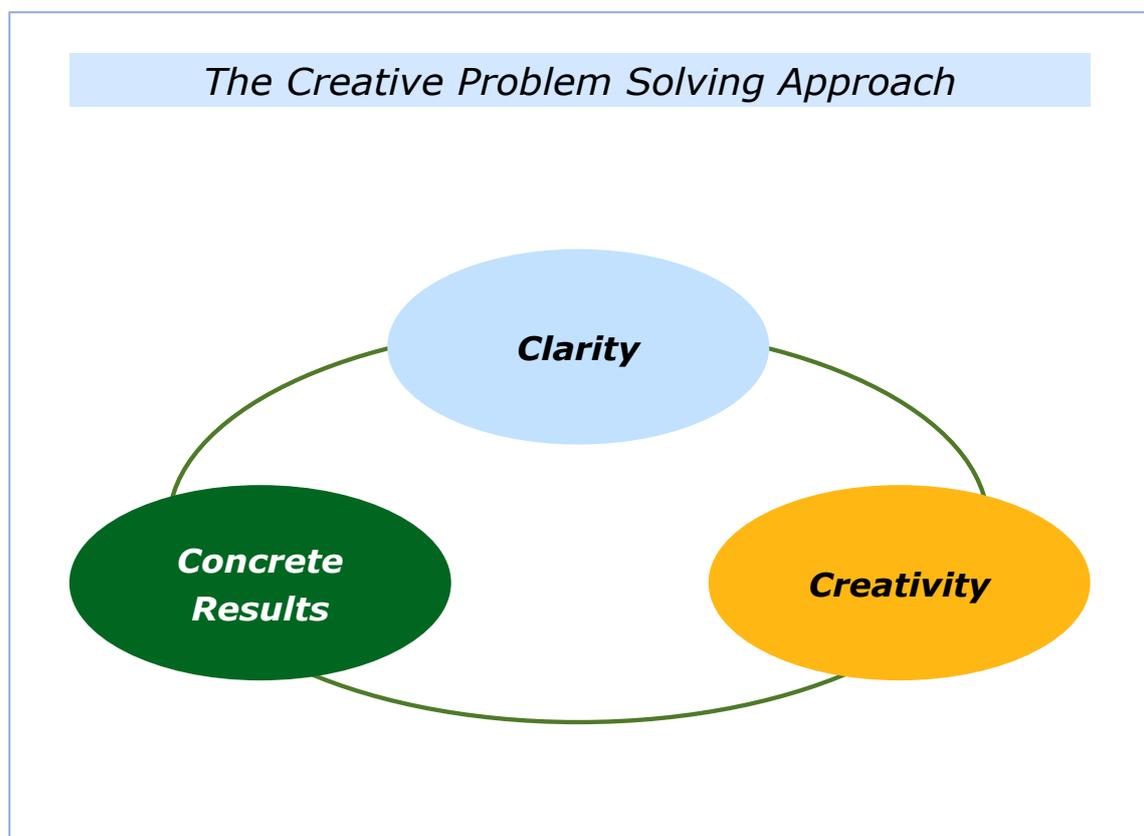
*The Feel, Imagine, Do, Share framework helps to develop the much required 21st Century Skills in children. It builds their social and emotional competencies and promotes employability skills.*

*The power of Design Thinking allows both children and adults to transform the world into how they envision it - the power to create a more compassionate, empathetic world.*

## *The Creative Problem Solving Approach*

People love to design, develop and deliver solutions to challenges. There are many models for creative problem solving.

This section provides an introduction to Three C approach. It describes how people can find solutions by focusing on Clarity, Creativity and Concrete Results.



This model can be used in many situations. Later in the book we will focus on how it can be used when running mentoring sessions. It can also be used for helping teams, organisations and communities to find solutions.

There are virtually always solutions to challenges. Some solutions may work superbly; some may cost money; some may cost very little. Some may please everybody; some may please fewer people.

Some may simply be a case of doing the best you can in the circumstances.

Imagine that you are helping a group that wants to find solutions to a particular challenge. It can be useful to guide people through the following stages.

These are similar to when mentoring an individual. When working with a group, however, you will need more time to give people chance to share their views and then settle on their chosen way forwards.

### *Clarity*

Clarity is crucial. It is vital to clarify the real What – the *real results* to achieve - before moving on to the How. Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to invite people to work through the following questions.

*What is the challenge we want to tackle? For example: 'How to ...?'  
What are the things we can control in the situation? How can we build on what we can control and manage what we can't?*

*What are the real results we want to achieve? What is the picture success? What will be the benefits of achieving the goals? What will be happening that will show us we have achieved the picture of success?*

It important to frame the challenge in a positive way. For example, to say:

*"How can we improve people's wellbeing?"* rather than: *"How can we help people to feel less stressed?"*

*"How can we, as far as possible, get win-wins?"* rather than: *"How can we stop behaving in ways that mean many people lose?"*

*"How can we use our strengths and work together towards achieving a common goal?" rather than: "How can we stop having conflicts?"*

People may also be more motivated to achieve a goal if they see the benefits. It can therefore be good to describe the benefits for all the potential stakeholders.

As mentioned in the earlier section on mentoring, people may want to achieve many goals. If so, it can be useful to list these in order of priority. People can then translate these into a clear picture of success. For example:

### *The Picture Of Success*

*The challenge we want to tackle is: 'How to ...'*

*The real results we want to achieve – in order of priority - are:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*The benefits of achieving the picture of success will be:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

## *Creativity*

Imagine that you have helped a group to establish clarity. You can then invite them to work through the following questions.

*What are the possible options for going forwards? What are the pluses and minuses of each option? What is the attractiveness of each option?*

*Are there any other potential creative solutions? What are the key strategies we can follow to give ourselves the greatest chance of success?*

It can be useful to invite people to start by brainstorming all the potential options, even those that they may initially dismiss. They can then see that they have many choices in the situation. Looking at each option in turn, people can list: a) the pluses and minuses of each option; b) the attractiveness of each option on a scale 0/10. People can then produce something like the following chart.

*Option A is: To ...*

*The pluses are ...*

*The potential minuses are ...*

*The attractiveness rating is ... / 10*

*Option B is: To ...*

*The pluses are ...*

*The potential minuses are ...*

*The attractiveness rating is ... / 10*

*Option C is: To ...*

*The pluses are ...*

*The potential minuses are ...*

*The attractiveness rating is ... / 10*

Imagine that people have described what they see as the options going forwards. If appropriate, invite people to take a short break and return refreshed.

You can then take more of a steer and, if okay with the group, also offer some other options for achieving the aims. One approach is to restart the session by saying something along the following line.

*As far as I understand, the goals we want to achieve are:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*Bearing these in mind, let's consider all the possible ways forward. We will then settle on our strategy for achieving the picture of success.*

*Looking ahead, are there any other potential options? Is it possible, for example, to combine the best parts of the most attractive options? If so, what might be a potential way forwards?*

*Let's learn from your positive history. Looking back, when have you tackled a similar challenge successfully? What did you do right then? What were the principles you followed? How could you follow these principles – plus add other skills – to tackle this challenge successfully?*

*Let's learn from other people's positive history. Looking back, have another other people or groups tackled a similar challenge successfully? What did they do right then? How can we follow these principles in our own way to tackle the challenge successfully?*

*If appropriate, let's consider how to find solutions to any potential conflicts. What does each person or each party want? How can we build on what people have in common? How can we, as far as possible, find win-win solutions?*

*Let's try to look at the situation in a dispassionate way. Imagine that we were outside consultants who had been invited to provide impartial advice.*

*Looking at the situation from above, what would we advise this group to do? Which option – or combination of options - would we advise people to pursue?*

*Is it okay for me to share some more ideas? Looking at the results you want to achieve, here are some options it may be worth considering.*

*Option D could be to...*

*Option E could be to...*

*Looking at all the options, which are the ones that make sense? Which of these would we like to explore further?*

*Looking at this chosen option, how these might this look in practise? What would be the pluses and minuses of pursuing this option? How could we build on the pluses and minimise the minuses?*

*Let's return to the real results we want to achieve? What are the key strategies we can follow to give ourselves the greatest chance of success?*

## *Concrete Results*

Imagine you have helped the group to work through the previous stages. It is then time to settle on the way forwards. If appropriate, you can guide them through exploring the following themes.

*Let's return to the picture of success. What is the option – or the combination of options - we want to pursue? How can we translate this into a clear action plan?*

*What are the clear working contracts that we need to make about who does what and when? Who would like to be the Mission Holder who takes responsibility for guiding the plan?*

*Who else would like to contribute towards achieving the goals? What would you each like to do and by when? What are the other practical tasks that need to be done? How can we make sure these get completed?*

*How will each of us proactively keep people informed about our progress towards achieving the goals? What support do people need? How can we encourage ourselves on the journey? What can we do to get some quick successes?*

*Let's do a success rating. Bearing in mind what we can control, how would we each rate the chances of us reaching the goals. Do this on a scale 0-10. What can we do to increase the chances of success?*

People are ingenious and are capable of finding solutions to challenges. When working with groups of people, however, there are several key issues to focus on. These are:

*To create a positive atmosphere in which people feel at ease and take time to clarify the real results to achieve – the picture of success;*

*To use the Three C Model for helping people to clarify their options and their chosen strategy for achieving the picture of success;*

*To encourage people to commit themselves to their chosen strategy, make clear contracts and do their best to achieve the picture of success.*

Good decision makers recognise there are pluses and minuses to each option. Whatever their chosen way forwards, they build on the pluses, minimise the minuses and do their best to achieve success.

Let's return to your life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of something you would like to design? If so, it can be useful to work through the following themes.

### *Design*

*What would you like to design? You may want to design an educational session, a website, a service you can offer customers, a product or something else. What are the real results you want to achieve by doing this project? What will be the benefits – both for yourself and other people?*

### *Development*

*How can you research and gather information about this potential project? How can you study what has worked in this past? How can you explore what could work in the future? How can you develop the prototype? How can you test it to see if it will deliver the required results?*

### *Delivery*

*How can you set things up to succeed when delivering the design in a real live situation? How can you do superb work? How can you keep doing reality checks about: a) what is working) what can be improved? How can you do your best to deliver success? How can you keep improving the design and delivery?*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Design*

*The specific thing I would like to design, develop and deliver in the future is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to design, develop and deliver this are:*

\*

\*

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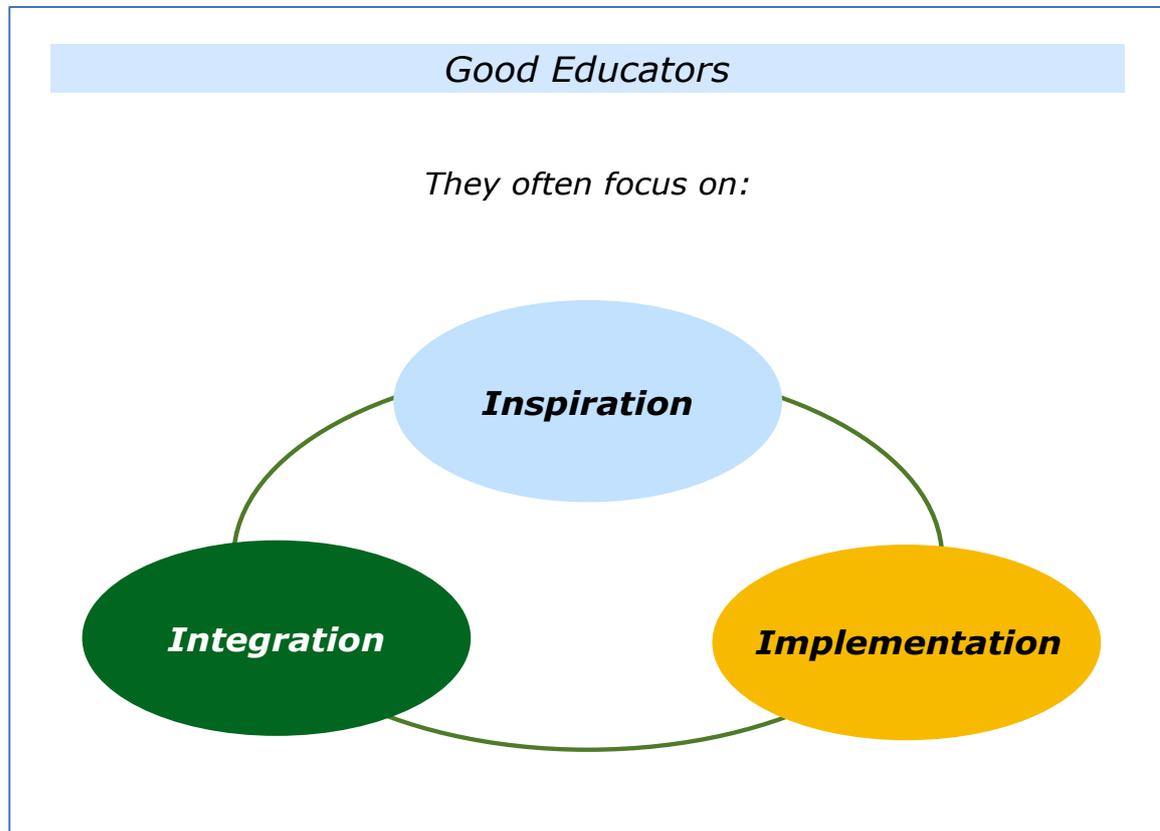
*The specific benefits – for myself and for myself – of doing this may be:*

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## *The Inspiration, Implementation And Integration Approach*



There are many ways to help people. One model is to apply elements of the Three I approach which is used by many educators.

Good educators often focus on inspiration, implementation and integration. They create an inspiring environment and provide implementation tools that work. They then help people to integrate the learning in their own ways.

Let's explore how educators take these steps. You can adapt this approach in your own way to help people to achieve their goals.

### *Setting the scene*

Good educators start by creating an inspiring environment in which motivated people can learn. Whenever possible, they make the

sessions enjoyable and effective. They then encourage, educate and enable people to achieve ongoing success.

Before running the actual educational session, however, they aim to set it up to succeed. You will have your own approach to making this happen, but here are some things it can be useful to do before running a session.

### *Clarifying the goals for the session*

Imagine that you are going to run an educational session for motivated people. This could be, for example, a workshop for an organisation. It will obviously be important to clarify the specific things that people want to take away from the session.

Clear contracting is crucial in any relationship, especially if you are supplying a service to other people. So it can be useful to talk with the key stakeholders beforehand and ask them some of the following questions.

*"What are the goals for the session? What are the key themes it would be useful to focus on? What are the concrete things that you and other people would like to take away from the session?"*

*"Who are the people who will be involved? What is happening in their world? What are some of the challenges they face? What are the specific results they want to deliver – or must deliver – in their work?"*

*"What are their strengths? What are the specific areas in which people deliver As rather than Bs or Cs? How can they build on these strengths? What are the things they need to learn to manage the consequences of any weaknesses?"*

*"What for you would make it a successful session? What are the specific things you would like people to be saying, thinking, feeling and doing after the session? What are the steps they could take towards achieving their picture of success?"*

Bearing these answers in mind, play back your understanding regarding the goals for the session. Make sure everybody is agreed on the desired outcomes.

### *Clarifying the roles for the session*

Good educators aim to be both encouraging and ethical. This often involves explaining what they can and can't offer to help people to reach their goals.

Some of my own work, for example, has involved mentoring performing artists. I can't help them with the technical aspects of singing, acting or other areas of expertise. But I can provide them with practical tools they can use:

*To clarify their picture of success;*

*To build on their strengths whilst managing the consequences of any weaknesses;*

*To pursue practical strategies and perform superb work;*

*To find solutions to challenges;*

*To do their best to achieve their picture of success.*

Good educators make clear contracts at the start of the session about: a) the goals to achieve; b) their own responsibilities and other people's responsibilities in working towards achieving the goals.

Sharing these at the start of the session, they then ask people:

*"Is there anything else you would like to add to the goals?"*

## *Clear Contracting*

*You can make clear contracts about: a) the goals to achieve; b) your role and the participant's roles in working to achieve the goals. You can, if necessary, keep revisiting these during the session.*

## *The Goals*

*As far as I understand it, the goals for the session are:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*Are there any other topics that you would like to add?*

*My Role In Working Towards  
Achieving The Goals Is:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*Your Role In Working Towards  
Achieving The Goals Is:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

## *Inspiration*

Good educators create an inspiring environment. They make sure all the physical and psychological things are in place to enable people to learn. They then launch into the first topic to explore.

Such educators often start by giving people the context and explaining the big picture. They then move between the concepts and the concrete. Bearing this in mind, they may say something like the following.

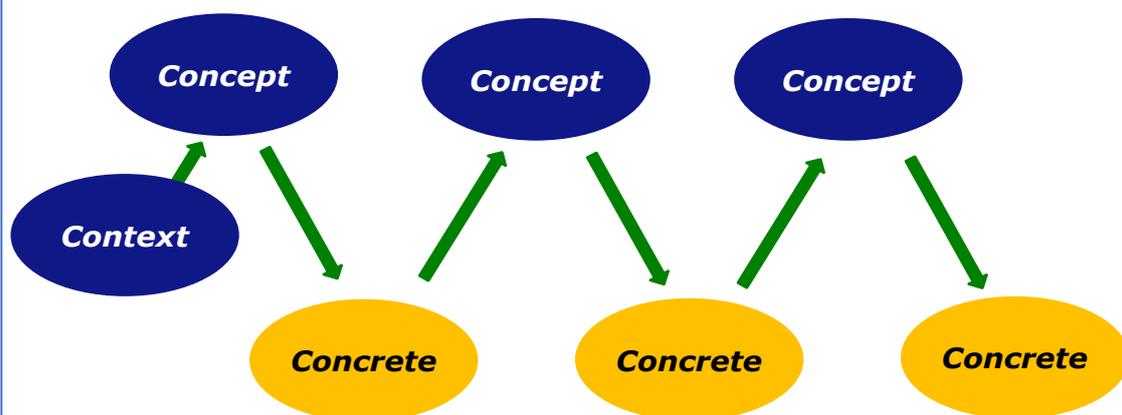
*"The first topic we are going to focus on is ..."*

*"The way this fits into the big picture regarding what we are aiming to do is ..."*

*"The specific things we are going to cover are ..."*

*Good educators move from  
the concept to the concrete*

*They often start by giving the context and explaining the big picture. They then move between giving the concepts and bringing these to life with concrete examples.*



Different people move from the concept to the concrete in different ways. Some follow each idea they introduce by saying:

*"For example: ...*

This forces them to give a specific example to bring the idea to life. They aim to communicate this in a way that resonates with people.

Good educators demonstrate their enthusiasm. I worked with the head coach of a football club who loved his job. He invited me to watch him lead a training session.

There were only six players taking part – because many were away on international duty – but he made the 90-minute session enjoyable and effective. He was positive, encouraging and continually introduced fresh ideas to keep the players on their toes.

After the session I asked him how he motivated himself with so few players. He said:

*"I think about what I want them feeling and saying afterwards. I want them to say: 'That was a good session. It was enjoyable and I learned things that helped me to be a better player.'"*

*"I am the coach and set the tone. If I am not enthusiastic, nobody will be, so I have to lead by example."*

Good educators also tap into the inspiration within people. They encourage people to focus on the activities that give them positive energy. Then, when appropriate, they help them to set personal or professional goals.

## *Implementation*

Good educators provide implementation tools that work. They are able to go from the philosophical to the practical. They provide knowledge, models and tools that people can use in their daily lives and work.

How do they gather this information? They study what works, simplify what works – but in a profound way - and share what works.

As mentioned earlier, such educators study success. They watch people, teams and organisations in action - or study examples of their work – and see what they do to succeed. They take the following steps when studying what works in a particular field.

*They focus on what people do right - the principles they follow - to succeed;*

*They translate these principles into positive models that people can follow to succeed;*

*They provide practical tools that people can use to follow these principles in their own ways to succeed.*

Good sports coaches, for example, share this information in a way that the person can use to reach their goals. They start by watching the person in action or studying examples of their work. Before sharing any knowledge, they ask themselves:

*"What are the person's goals? What are the real results they want to achieve? What is their picture of success?"*

*"What are they doing well? How can they do more of these things in the future? What can they do better in the future and how? What are the specific things they can do to reach their goals?"*

*"What are the key messages I want to give the person? What are the positive models and practical tools I can share? How can I pass on this knowledge in a way the person can accept and use to achieve their goals?"*

The next stage is to invite people to test the tools in reality to make sure they work. If so, the tools are added to the repertoire of options that people can use to reach their goals.

## *Integration*

Good educators help people to integrate the learning in their own ways. They encourage, educate and enable them to achieve ongoing success.

A person needs to own the knowledge. They need to make it part of their own way of working towards achieving success.

Imagine that you want to help somebody to integrate a piece of learning. How can you take this step? One approach is to go through the following stages.

### *Invite the person to focus on applying a particular strategy or skill in a specific situation*

Invite them to focus on a specific situation in which they want to succeed. Looking at the situation, invite them:

*To be crystal clear on the real results they want to achieve;*

*To clarify the key strategies they can follow to do their best to achieve these results;*

*To mentally rehearse going into the situation and pursuing the strategies – plus dealing with any specific challenges – on the way to achieving the desired results.*

The person goes into the situation, applies the strategy and aims to achieve the desired results. Then comes the next step.

### *Invite the person to evaluate their own performance*

Give the person time to reflect on how they performed in the situation. When they are ready, invite them to work through the following framework.

## *My Self-Evaluation*

*The specific things I did well were:*

\*

*The specific things can do to follow these principles more in the future are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do better in the future and how are:*

\*

\*

\*

Encourage the person to share their self-evaluation. Explore how they can continue build on their strengths and, where appropriate, manage the consequences of any weaknesses. If appropriate, you can ask them.

*"Is it okay for me to share some ideas you can use in your own way?"*

The person will say that is okay, but it is important to make this psychological contract. You can then share knowledge the person can use to achieve success. Again, you can do this in a way the person can accept and use to achieve their goals.

*Invite the person to clarify their learning and also plan ahead*

When appropriate, give the person time to both reflect and look ahead. Invite them to make an action plan.

## *My Action Plan*

*The specific things I can do to build on my strengths and tackle the areas for improvement are:*

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How do you know when somebody has integrated an idea? They use their own language and methods to explain what they are doing to make things happen.

Good educators often take people through the stages of inspiration, implementation and integration. This is also a path sometimes taken by therapists, coaches, mentors and trusted advisors.

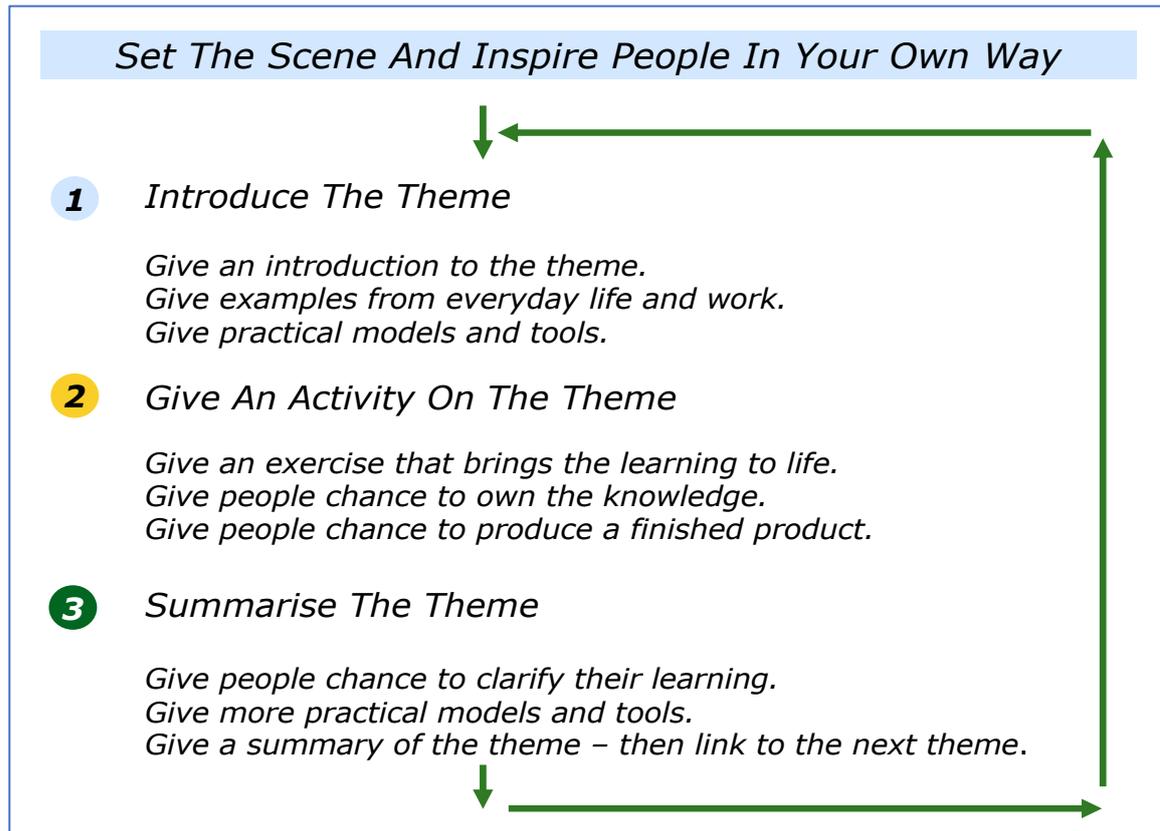
Different educators adapt this model when, for example, running workshops. Some follow the classic 1-2-3 model for running an enjoy and effective session. This involves going through the following steps.

### *The Educational Approach*

*There are many ways to run an enjoyable and effective educational session.*

*One approach is to follow the 1-2-3 model when running workshops or other types of sessions.*

*This involves going through the following steps.*



Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to use some elements of the Three I approach in your own way?

Looking ahead, how can you prepare properly for the session? How can you make a person or a group of people feel welcome? How can you make clear contracts about the goals for the session?

How can you create an inspiring environment? How can you focus on the first topic to explore? How can you move from the concepts to the concrete?

How can you pass on implementation tools that work? How can you help the person or a group of people to integrate the learning? How can you encourage, educate and enable them to achieve success?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Inspiration, Implementation And Integration*

*The specific situation where I may want  
to use elements of this approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to  
use elements of this approach are:*

\*

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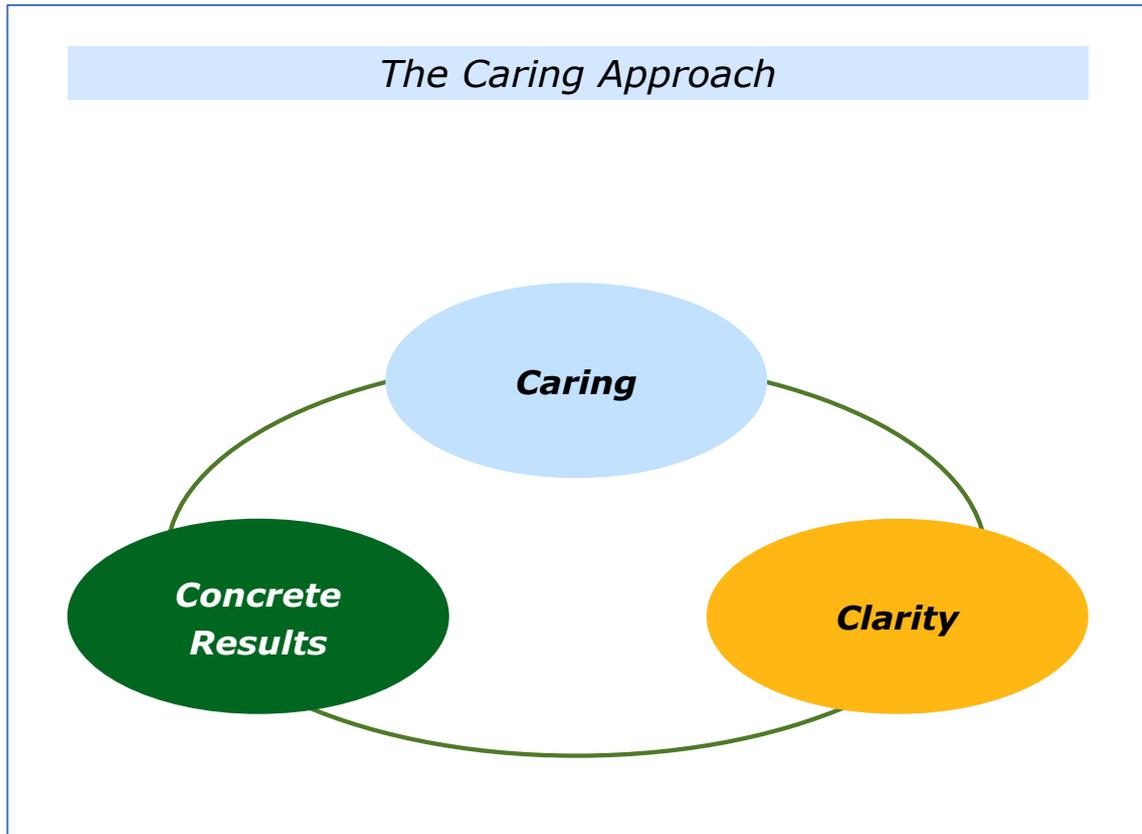
*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## The Caring Approach



People can choose the approach they take in life. They can choose to pursue the caring approach or the callous approach. This section focuses on how you can continue to take the caring route. This often involves aiming:

*To do something you really care about;*

*To clarify the real results you want to achieve;*

*To be creative and deliver the desired concrete results.*

Many people follow this route when encouraging their loved ones. They also follow it when doing things they love – such as caring for their garden, pursuing a hobby or doing another activity.

The caring approach mirrors some of the themes described in the craft approach, but it focuses more on your life principles. Let's explore some of these themes.

## *Caring*

What are the things you really care about? Here are some of the answers that people give when considering this theme.

### *The Things I Really Care About In Life Are:*

*Helping our children to be happy ... Looking after my partner as we get older ... Creating beautiful gardens ... Helping people to find or create satisfying work ... Working for justice ... Helping people to learn how to manage pain ... Passing on knowledge to future generations.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Caring*

*The specific things I really care about in life are:*

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Looking at the things you care about, you may wish to explore one that you want to translate into action. Different people choose different approaches to making this happen.

Dame Cicely Saunders, for example, cared about helping people as they reached the end of their lives. This led to her helping to create the modern hospice movement in Britain.

Cicely trained as a nurse but suffered a back injury that halted that career path. Overcoming the setback, she became a medical social worker and got a job at St. Thomas' Hospital in London.

There she met a dying patient called David Tasma, whose plight revealed the lack of care for the terminally ill. A 40-year-old refugee from Poland, he was dying of incurable cancer.

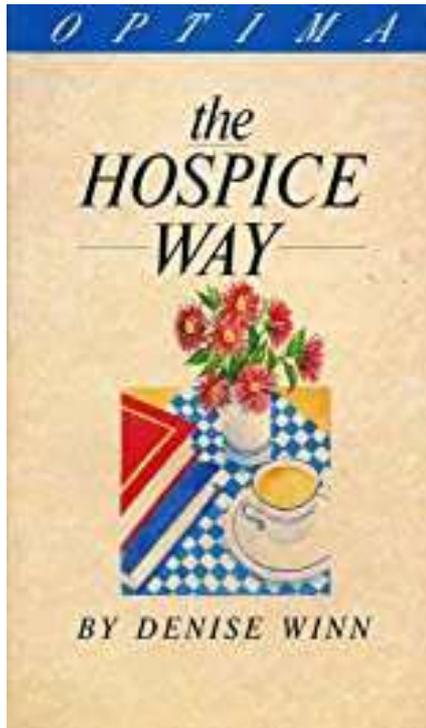
David had no relatives so Cicely devoted many hours to talking with him about his life. Apart from exploring his feelings, they discussed the need to create special facilities for people who were dying. Denise Winn takes up the story in her book *The Hospice Way*.

*Although the hospital did its best, David suffered much pain and discomfort, both physical and mental. It was then that Cicely first mooted the idea of building a special hospital herself, to cater specifically for the very different needs of the terminally ill.*

*David was thrilled to be the inspiration for such an idea and when he died he left her all his money (£500), saying 'I'll be a window in your home.'*

Cicely embarked on her mission. She studied to become a doctor and served in several posts. She then began raising the £500,000 necessary to build a specially designed hospital with highly qualified staff.

Ten years later she achieved her vision with the opening of St. Christopher's Hospice in South London. Denise Winn wrote describing it in the following way.



*A beautiful yet homely building, with a wealth of windows overlooking peaceful colourful gardens as well as a road that hums with life, St. Christopher's is still the inspiration and model for the modern hospice movement.*

*It is a remarkable testimony to a remarkable woman, now Dame Cicely Saunders. And, by the large sunny window in the reception, is a plaque for David Tasma.*

Let's return to your own life. Looking at the things you care about, choose one of these that you would like to translate into action.

What are the reasons why you would like pursue this theme? What will be the benefits – both for yourself and other people? If you wish, try completing the following sentences.

## *Caring*

*The specific thing I care about that I would like to translate into action is:*

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*The specific reasons why I would like to focus on these theme and translate it into action are:*

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## *Clarity*

The next step is to establish clarity. Looking at the things you care about, you may have focused on one of these themes. You can then aim:

*To translate this into doing a project, doing a piece of work or doing another activity;*

*To clarify the real results you want to achieve and translate this into a clear picture of success;*

*To clarify the strategies you can follow to do your best to the picture of success.*

Before going further, however, it is vital to underline one key point. People often invest enormous amounts of emotional energy into doing what they care about.

Staying sane therefore calls for remembering one key rule. It is important to focus on what you can control rather than what you can't control. Let's look at one person who took this approach

Jürgen Griesbeck is somebody who developed a clear vision. Spurred on by a tragedy, he developed Fútbol por la Paz (Football for Peace) in 1996. This was a project using football to combat violence and drugs on the streets of Medellín, Colombia.

Based on this experience, he created Straßenfußball für Toleranz (Street Football for Tolerance) in Brandenburg, Germany. His next step was to create streetfootballworld in 2002.

This harnesses the power of football to create environments that empower people to shape their future lives. Every year it reaches more than 2 million people in over 90 countries.

Running tournaments in local communities across the world, it uses football to bring people together. People make connections and combine their talents to tackle other challenges they face. Here is an introduction from their website.

## *We Want To Change The World Through Football*

*streetfootballworld believes in the unique power of football to change lives and bring people together behind a common goal.*

*Our mission is to strengthen our worldwide network of local organisations that use football to help young people overcome challenges like poverty, discrimination and lack of education.*



## *A Beautiful Game, A Perfect Tool*

*No sport in the world generates as much passion as football. Football brings young people into social development programmes—and keeps them there.*

*Football also gets people from all walks of life speaking the same universal language. Establishing common ground is streetfootballworld's first step toward uniting the global community around a shared goal.*



Jürgen went on to work with Juan Mata, the Spanish footballer, and in 2017 they founded Common Goal. This invites those involved in football to pledge 1% of their salaries to support disadvantaged young people.

Many players, managers and other people have pledged to support the venture. Here is an excerpt from the Common Goal website.

*We're uniting the world of footballers behind a shared commitment to give back.*

*The idea is simple. Players pledge a minimum of 1% of their wages to a collective fund. And we allocate this fund to football charities that create the greatest impact worldwide.*

*Imagine uniting the world of football behind a shared social vision. Imagine the impact we could create and the lives we could change.*

*1% may seem like a small figure, yet it stands to make a big difference.*

*If the entire football community pledged just 1% of its collective income to a movement like Common Goal, we would generate a colossal 400% increase in funding for high-impact football NGOs the world over.*

*This translates to an additional eight million disadvantaged young people gaining access to football-based development projects each year. Through Common Goal, this is what we are trying to achieve. And we want you to join us.*

## *COMMON GOAL - OUR PURPOSE*

*UNITING THE GLOBAL FOOTBALL COMMUNITY IN TACKLING THE  
GREATEST SOCIAL CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME*



Imagine that you have decided to focus on one of the things you really care about. How to translate this into action? You may want to do a specific project, do a piece of work or do another activity.

What are the real results you want to achieve? What are the key strategies you can follow to give yourself the greatest chance of success?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Clarity*

*The specific thing I care about that I want to translate into action – such as by doing a project, a piece of work or an activity – is:*

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*The real results I want to achieve by doing this project, piece of work or activity are:*

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*The strategies I can follow to give myself the greatest chance of success when doing this project, piece of work or activity are:*

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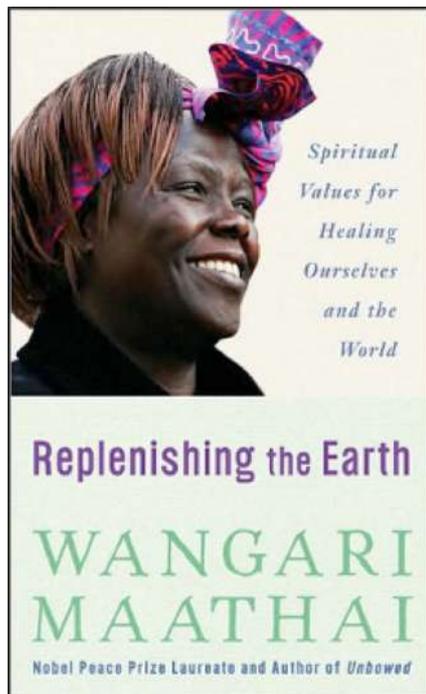
## Concrete Results

Imagine that you have focused on something you care about and set a specific goal. The next step will be work towards achieving your aims.

Sometimes the route you take may be conventional by following tried and trusted techniques. Sometimes you may look for creative ways to deliver success.

Wangari Maathai was somebody who used her creativity to deliver concrete results. Best known for her work with the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, she recruited hundreds of thousands of people who planted more than 40 million trees.

She was born in 1940, the third of six children, in a traditional mud hut with no electricity or running water. Wangari said that she was fortunate because her family sent her to a primary school run by Italian nuns.



*Wangari Maathai translated her caring into action. She explained this in the following way.*

*"Finally I was able to see that if I had a contribution I wanted to make, I must do it, despite what others said. That it was all right to be strong."*

*"My little thing is planting trees."*

*"When we plant trees, we plant the seeds of peace and seeds of hope. We also secure the future for our children."*

Showing great academic aptitude, she won a scholarship to the United States, being part of what was called The Kennedy Airlift. This involved some 300 Kenyans being chosen to study at American Universities.

After further study in Germany, she returned to Kenya. After working as a vet in some of the poorest areas, Wangari led academic departments in the University of Nairobi.

Extremely practical and logical (she was the first Kenyan woman to gain a Ph.D.), her work sprang from a philosophical base. She believed it was vital to live in harmony with nature and described this in the following way.

*"We must repent our sins (i.e. rectify our wrongdoings) by dressing our motherland in her original beautiful and full green dress.*

*"In planting trees, we are adorning our motherland with belts. When we have done this our motherland will be healed and we shall reap a bounteous harvest."*

Wangari was often asked if the idea for the Green Belt Movement came to her because she was a woman. Acknowledging that women bear life and respect nature, she said it was simply searching to solve a specific problem.

This involved helping people to climb out of poverty, replenish the earth and enjoy the fruits of their labours. She described this in the following way.

*Inspirations come to all of us but many of us may not have the right mental peace and tranquillity at the critical time to allow the inspiration to grow beyond the stage when it appears like a dream.*

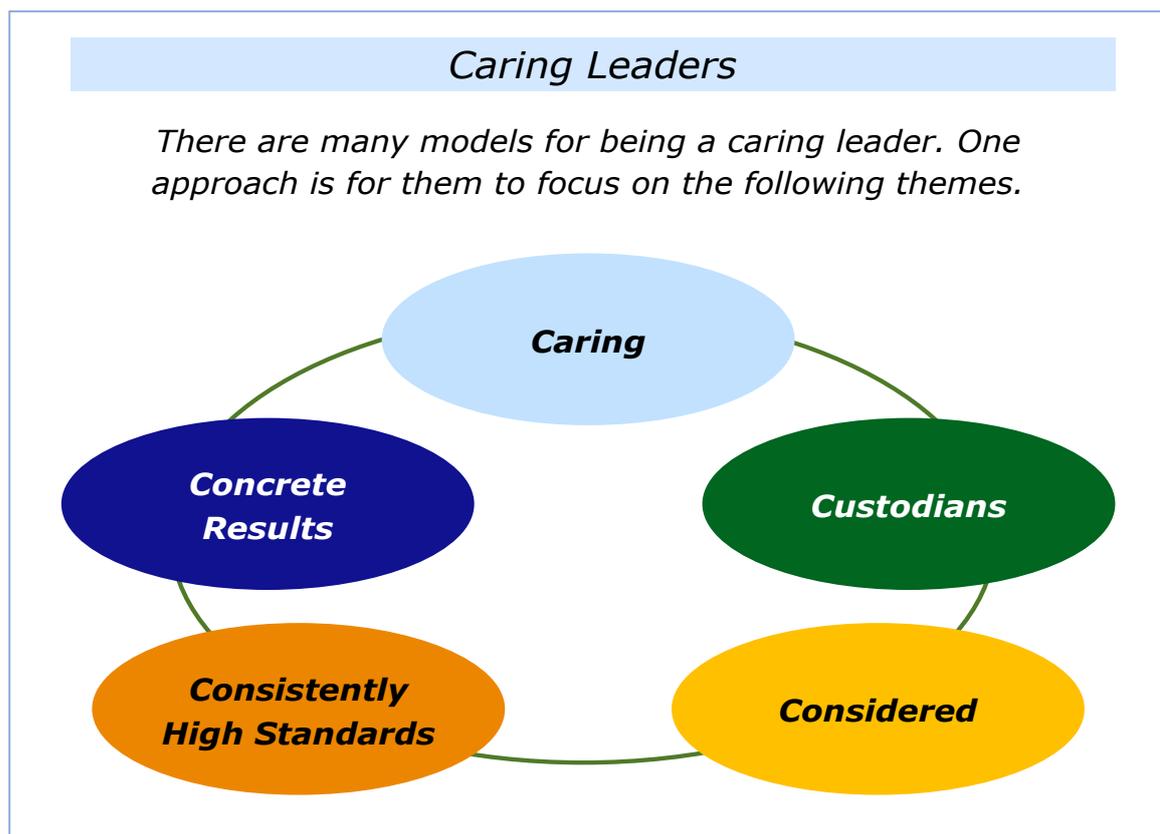
*I think I was just lucky. I do not know why I nursed the inspiration until it became an idea and finally an activity.*

*I think that women in the NCWK (National Council of Women in Kenya) were quite good at pursuing an idea which for a long time bore little fruit. But patience is not the prerogative of women.*

Tree planting became an honourable activity in Kenya, said Wangari. This led to creating thousands of greenbelts in the country and soon spread to other countries in Africa.

The act of planting trees enabled the earth to breathe and the crops to grow. Showing it was possible to make a difference encouraged people to take more charge of shaping their futures.

Wangari achieved much in her life before her death in 2011. By then she was acknowledged as a pioneer and honoured in many countries. She also won the Nobel Peace Prize.



There are many approaches to being a caring leader. These include models such as Jim Collins' Level 5 Leadership and Robert

Greenleaf's Servant Leadership. One approach is for them to focus on the following themes.

### *Caring*

Such leaders care for the team's purpose. They see their role as serving the purpose, following the agreed principles and achieving the picture of success.

They also care for the team's people. They aim to encourage and enable them to grow and people and professionals. Sometimes they face decisions where it can be best for somebody to move on. They then aim to find win-win solutions for the team and the person.

### *Custodians*

Such leaders act as custodians for the culture. They aim to be positive models and embody the principles the team can follow to fulfil its purpose.

They may sometimes need to take tough decisions. This can be the case when taking steps to ensure the team continues to have people who aim to support and enrich the culture.

### *Considered*

Such leaders often act in a considered way. They aim to be calm, clear and make good decisions – especially in critical situations.

They often buy time to gather information, see the big picture and consider the various options for going forwards. They may then, when appropriate, explain to their people the reasons for choosing a particular strategy.

### *Consistently High Standards*

Such leaders encourage their people to deliver consistently high standards. They continually show what good looks like by sharing

success stories that highlight the specific things that people have done to deliver good work.

They have the motto: "Never walk past a quality problem." They make sure that things are fixed straight way – otherwise they have said it is okay to have lower standards. This encourages people to be proactive and continue to deliver high quality.

### *Concrete Results*

Such leaders realise it is their people who will do the daily work. They therefore employ the right people in the right places. They then do everything possible to enable these people to deliver the desired concrete results.

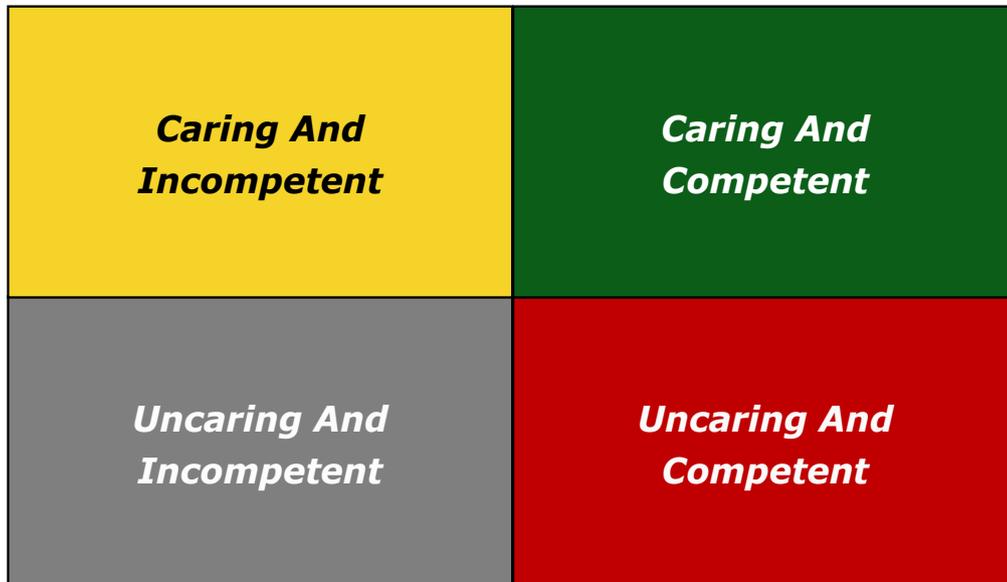
Such leaders recognise it is vital to be committed to guiding teams to success. Bearing this in mind, they may at times assess their careers.

They may continue to lead teams in their present organisation but, at some point, they may choose to pursue another project. The key for them is to do things they care about.

There are many ways to do deliver concrete results. Let's consider another model.

## *The Caring And Competent Approach*

*People can be:*



Imagine that you want to do something you care about. It can be useful to focus on an activity where you also have the competence required to deliver concrete results.

Imagine that you want to play a leadership role. Let's explore how the model applies to people in such positions.

### *Caring And Competent*

Some leaders are both caring and competent. When talking about such a leader, people may say some of the following things.

*"They show they care about people and the project ... They make people feel welcome and valued ... They show an interest in people and their ideas ... They are good at making others feel important rather than trying to make themselves feel important."*

*"They create a positive environment in which motivated people can achieve peak performance ... They have the strategic thinking and other skills required to do the job ... They keep communicating the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success.*

*"They enable people to perform superb work ... They are good at making the tough decisions required to achieve the goals ... They have a track record of delivering ongoing success."*

### *Caring And Incompetent*

Some people in leadership positions may be caring but incompetent. They may care about people and the project, but they do not demonstrate the required strategic thinking or skills.

Some leaders are successful in some situations, however, but not in others. They may be good at running a start-up company, for example, or an organisation that is facing certain challenges. But they may not have the competence to succeed in other situations.

Some leaders are honest about their capabilities and may try to develop the required skills. Some may continue behaving in an incompetent way, however, and this can cause collateral damage.

People who work for such a leader sometimes feel split. Whilst still liking the person, they see that employees may be confused and concerned. The incompetent leader's actions can lead to the team or organisation ending up on the rocks.

### *Uncaring And Incompetent*

Some leaders may not seem to care about people or the project. They may only care about pursuing their own agenda. They may also not demonstrate the competence required to deliver the goods.

People often switch off from such leaders. They put their heads down and get on with their own jobs. Losing belief, they try to get satisfaction from their daily tasks or outside the workplace.

## *Uncaring And Competent*

Leaders who demonstrate these characteristics can be cruel and dangerous. The only things they care about are their own agenda and power. They may be extremely competent at using techniques to pursue their aims, however, whatever the costs to other people.

People who behave like authoritarians, dictators and psychopaths can demonstrate these characteristics. Such people are never satisfied, no matter how much power they gain. They must always win and, at the same time, make sure that other people lose.

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that you have focused on something you care about and set clear goals. How can you be competent and creative? How can you do best to deliver the desired results?

If you wish, you try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Concrete Results*

*The specific thing I care about that I want to translate into action – such as by doing a project, a piece of work or an activity – is:*

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*The specific things I can do to set clear goals and do my best to deliver the desired concrete results are:*

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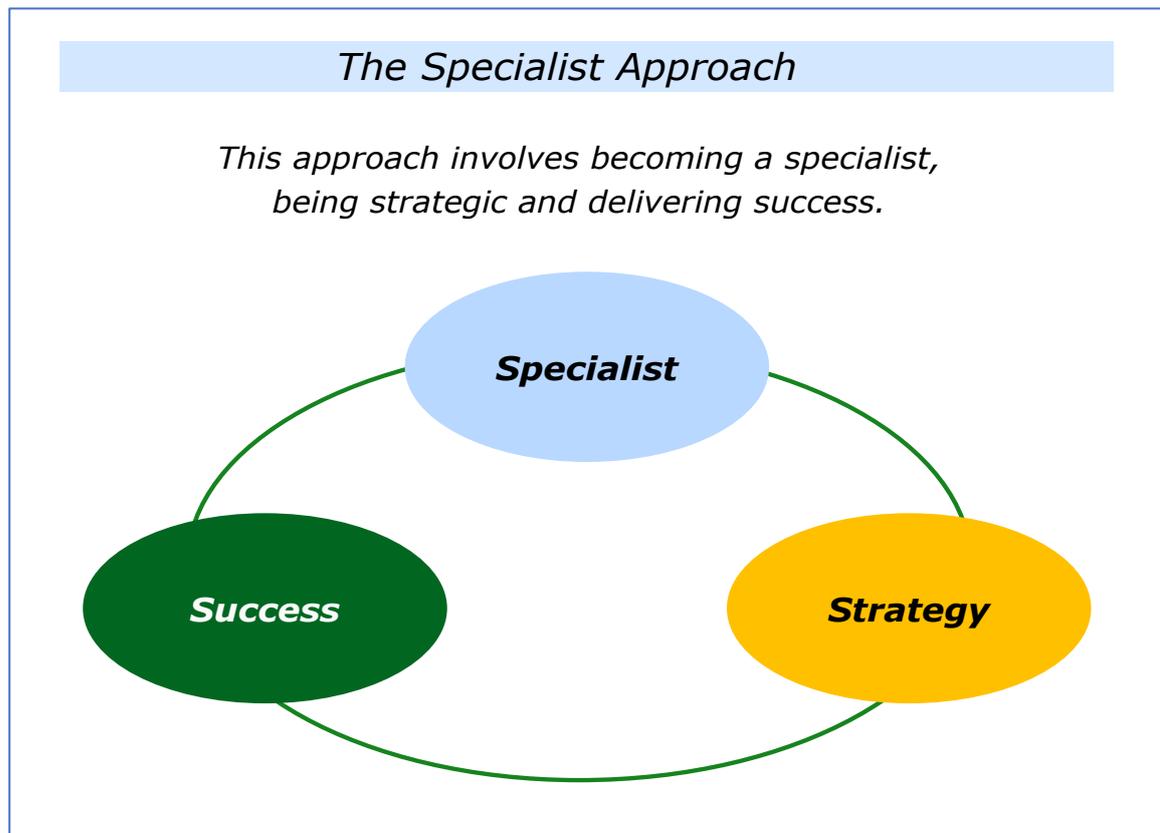
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Specialist Approach*



Imagine that you want to specialise in a certain kind of work that you find fascinating. You love developing your expertise in this specialism.

You may want to earn a living doing such work. This may also call for developing your strategic thinking, giving good service and helping your key stakeholders to achieve success.

Some people consider themselves to be generalists rather than specialists. They say things like:

*"It is hard to find the right job title for what I do. I seem to do quite a lot of things and do not fit into a specific category. This can make it hard when applying for roles."*

After exploring their successful style of work, however, we often find that such people are actually specialists in a particular activity. The keys are:

*To clarify their successful style of working;*

*To put a name to what they do;*

*To define what they can actually deliver for an employer.*

Let's consider how you may want to take some of these steps in your own way.

### *Becoming A Specialist*

People who develop a specialism often start by doing things that give them positive energy. They may be exploring, playing with ideas or doing things where they feel creative.

Such people may then pursue one of the following paths. They focus on either:

*The specific activities they feel passionately about where they may have the ability to deliver peak performances;*

*The specific activities they find fascinating, have a feeling for and have a track record of finishing;*

*The specific activities where they can build on their strengths, do satisfying work and deliver success.*

Looking at your own life, when do you experience some of these feelings? What are the specific activities where you do satisfying work, develop and deliver the goods?

You may pursue this route when helping people, writing, drawing or performing songs. You may do it studying medicine, leading teams, tackling certain kinds of challenges or doing another activity.

People who develop a specialism often start by following their interests and exploring many areas on their chosen theme. These can eventually lead to them settling a specific activity. Here is one person who took this approach.

### *Steve - Becoming The Chief Storyteller For A Big Company*

Steve grew up being fascinated by computers, stories and music. He went to university, studied IT and joined a small company. Enjoying being a techie, he wanted to bridge the gap between the technical world and the customers.

Believing that technology could enrich people's lives, Steve moved to a big company. He was passionate about the company's products and ran customised seminars for customers. Returning to his love of writing, he began publishing a weekly blog.

Steve explained how the company's technology could help people. The blog became well-known and built a big audience. One day he received a call from the head office. They asked him to become the company's Chief Storyteller.

The route that Steve took highlights a key theme that has emerged regarding such people.

### *Specialists Sometimes Develop A New Specialism*

During the 1970s I ran sessions for many people who considered themselves to be specialists. They focused on becoming experts in therapy, medicine, sports, business or another activity.

The path they took was relatively straight-forward. They studied a specific topic, gained qualifications and joined a department in an organisation. Climbing the ladder, they became respected by their peers and developed a niche within an accepted profession.

During the early 1980s another trend began to emerge, though it had probably been there for centuries. People began exploring new kinds of work and developing new roles.

Some people began inventing titles for what they did. Some titles were specific; some were woolly. The work they did was valuable, but sometimes it was hard to capture in a job title. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"The existing job titles are a start, but I seem to combine elements of different roles. It is hard to find a name for what I do."*

How to make a start? One approach is to explore the satisfying projects that a person has done in the past and look for recurring patterns. These give a clue to their successful style of working.

The next step is to find a name for it. Let's look at one person who took this approach.

### *Sue – A Superb Orchestrator*

Sue had always been an organiser. Captain of the school netball team, at university she led the social committee. She still organised the annual ski trips taken by her friends from university.

She followed the classic route taken by people with these skills. She loved making lists and getting things done. This produced a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment.

Sue joined a company, did her day job and also volunteered to manage projects. These included running events, building new technology and leading a mentoring programme for young entrepreneurs in the community.

She gained promotion and became a manager. Sue enjoyed aspects of the role and worked best with the motivated people. Although a good listener, she found it difficult to understand people who did not deliver the desired professional standards.

She spent the next ten years taking various roles. These included being a Project Manager, Project Leader, Coordinator and Customer Service Lead. She then became a Chief Operating Officer.

Sue and I met after she had spent three months in Africa leading a project for a social enterprise. Several COO jobs were on offer, but she did not want to pursue the traditional version of such a role.

The COO's role in a modern organisation is to be a good orchestrator. This is especially the case when aiming to coordinate teams and individuals to achieve a compelling goal.

The older type of COO was often an expert who got promoted to that role. Good in their specialism, they were an expert who was promoted to leader. Today's COO needs to be a leader of experts.

Sue could take a COO role but was not sure it would be satisfying. Bearing this in mind, we clarified what she could deliver to an organisation. This produced the following list.

## *Delivery*

*The specific things I can deliver to an organisation are:*

*To lead and orchestrate teams that deliver pioneering work which enables the organisation to achieve future success.*

*This could include, for example:*

*Delivering technology, products or services that will enable the organisation to stay ahead of the game;*

*Delivering programmes that recruit and retain people who embody the values and make their best contributions to helping the organisation achieve success;*

*Delivering coordinated work across many teams and cultures in a way that helps the organisation to achieve both present and future success.*

Sue eventually chose to lead a worldwide project on improving technology for video conferencing. This played to her strengths as an orchestrator and was working with motivated people who wanted to achieve a compelling goal.

The project had a tight deadline, but this was fine. Sue believed in the work. She also believed that, when it was completed, she would find or create the next stimulating project.

### *The Specialist As Practitioner*

Some specialists focus on the specific activity where they are good practitioners. They translate their principles into practise and deliver positive results.

Such people often see the big picture but then love to dive deeply into the detail. They enjoy the hands-on aspect of shaping the work. They may do this when working as a counsellor, chef, vet, film maker, technical specialist or in another practitioner role.

## *The Practitioner's Approach*

*Good practitioners focus on the specific activity where they translate their principles into practise and deliver positive results.*



Let's return to your own life and work. At this point don't be concerned about putting a title to the work you do. It may be more useful to describe the specific things you can deliver to a potential employer.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Specialism*

*The specific activity I would like to pursue where I can build on my strengths, do satisfying work and deliver success is:*

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*The specific things I can do to pursue this activity are:*

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*The specific things I can deliver to customers, employers or other stakeholders when doing this work are:*

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## *Being Strategic*

People sometimes need to think strategically beyond their particular specialism. Whether working in an organisation or running their own business, it is important:

*To build on their strengths, do superb work and deliver success to their various stakeholders.*

Some knowledge workers love to do satisfying work but sometimes neglect to manage their stakeholders. They may then be seen as just doing their own thing. This can lead to difficulties.

Such workers can follow certain principles to thrive. The way they express these may differ depending on whether they are working in an organisation or running their own business. Let's explore these approaches.

### *Specialists Working in Organisations*

Specialists often need to combine being true to their calling with satisfying their key stakeholders. This calls for doing their due diligence before taking a role. They need:

*To be aware of the pluses and minuses of working in the organisation;*

*To be clear on what they can and can't expect from working in the culture of the organisation;*

*To then make a decision whether they want to take the role and work in the organisation.*

Bearing in mind these factors, do they want to take the role? If so, how can they build on the pluses and manage the minuses? How can they do good work and deliver success to the stakeholders?

Great workers go into a role with their eyes open. They then take the following steps to get wins for the organisation, wins for their customers and wins for themselves. They aim:

*To make clear contracts with the key stakeholders about the real results to achieve - the picture of success;*

*To be positive, professional and proactively keep their stakeholders informed about the progress being made towards the picture of success;*

*To get some quick wins, do superb work, continue to keep in touch with their stakeholders and deliver the agreed picture of success.*

Taking these steps can help them to thrive rather than just survive. They can do good work and maybe get a good salary working in the organisation.

This can provide them with the platform: a) to develop their craft within the role; b) to develop by doing stimulating projects in their free time; c) to, when appropriate, move on to the next role that will help them to develop.

### *Specialists Helping Teams To Achieve Success*

Many specialists are loyal to the values of their craft. This ensures that they continue to do good work in their field of expertise.

This approach is valuable, but it can create challenges if they cannot find the right place to make their contribution. They may find themselves in conflict with people or in certain kinds of workplaces.

Specialists want to make a living working in teams often need to understand the culture of the workplace. They can then position what they offer in a way that helps the team to achieve success.

## *Superb Teams*

*They employ the following types of people who embody the spirit of the team and want to help to achieve its goals.*

*Specialists need to bear this in mind when clarifying their best contribution to helping the team achieve success.*



There are many models for building superb teams. One approach is where they employ the following kinds of people who embody the team's spirit and want to help it achieve success.

### *Shapers*

*They employ shapers who have strong personalities. Such people shape the team's spirit, strategy and the way it aims to achieve success.*

### *Superb Workers*

*They employ people who embody the team's spirit, build on their strengths and do superb work that helps the team to achieve success.*

## *Specialists*

*They employ specialists – sometimes as full-time employees, sometimes as suppliers – who help the team to achieve success.*

Specialists who want to contribute to a team need to do their research. They may need to clarify:

*What is the spirit of the team? Will I feel comfortable contributing to the culture? If so, what would be my best contribution? How can I position this in a way that helps the team to achieve success?*

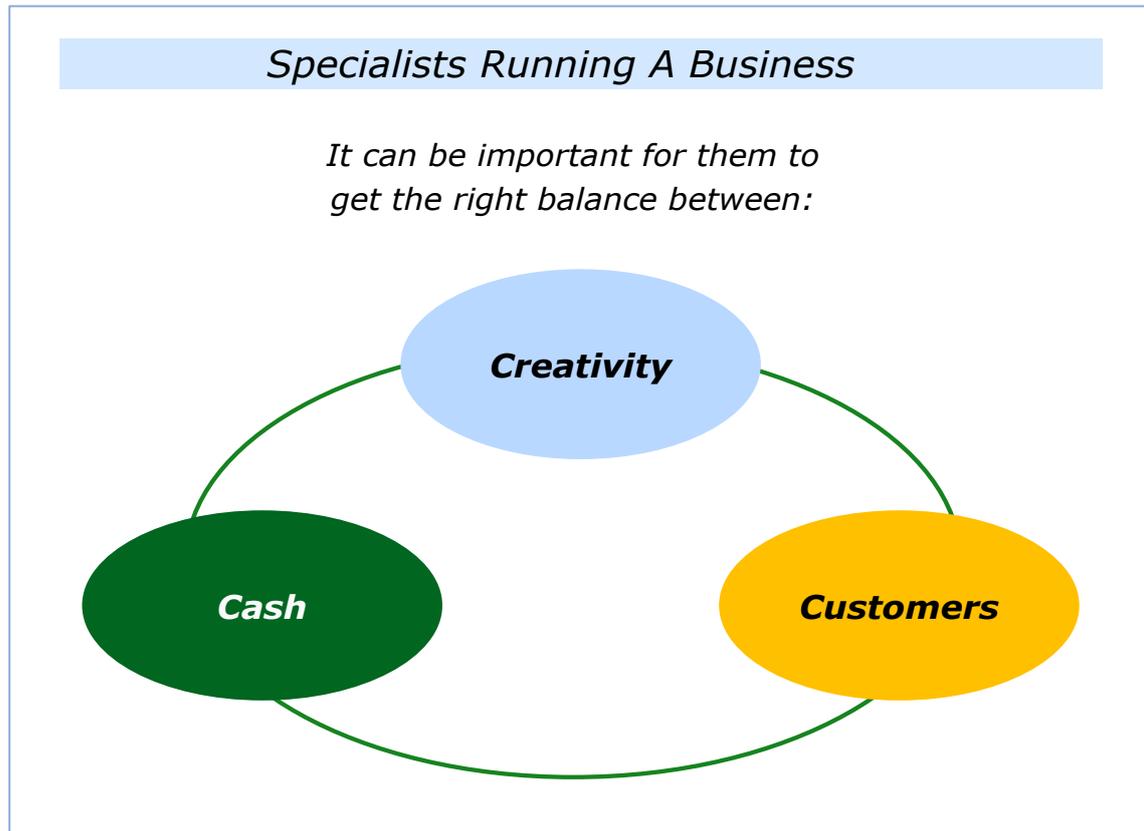
People who take this approach are more likely to be able to make a living by contributing to teams.

## *Specialists Running Their Own Business*

Many specialists follow their calling and enjoy being creative. Some want to translate this into setting up and running their own business. Some take this step and thrive; others find they are more suited to working in an organisation.

Imagine that you have many creative ideas that you want to translate into services or products. This could lead to setting-up a business that helps people to succeed.

You may want to work in consultancy, education, training, the arts, technology or in another field. It is important to get the right balance between creativity, customers and cash.



## *Creativity*

There are many views on creativity. Some people argue that it is hard to be truly original because many ideas have been thought of before.

Others say that creativity often emerges when applying the idea. This often calls for going through the stages of imagination, implementation and achieving impact.

What do you have ideas about? Frequently these will focus on the topics you find fascinating. These may include ideas about people, technology, business, art, sport or whatever.

Different people give different answers to this question. Over the years I have worked with people who have said the following things.

*I have ideas about:*

*How people can take more care of their health ... How people can build on their strengths ... How people can use technology to improve education ... How to design gardens that give people pleasure ... How to create more environmentally friendly houses.*

*How to improve their recruitment and retention programmes ... How to create effective wellbeing programmes in organisations ... How companies can create more effective supply chains ... How companies can enable their people to deliver peak performances.*

Many people have ideas. Sometimes these remain ideas, but other times they are taken onto another stage. Let's imagine you want to take the next step.

### *Translating the creative idea into a service or product that will help people to succeed*

How to make this happen? Looking at the creative idea that could have an impact, you can ask the classic questions.

*Who are the target group – the potential customers? What are their needs? What are the challenges they face? What is their picture of success?*

*What are the specific things that the service or product could do? What would be the benefits to the customers? What could it deliver to help them to achieve success?*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Creativity*

*The specific creative idea I have is:*

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*The specific things I can do to  
translate this idea into a service  
or product that helps people are:*

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## *Customers*

Creativity is fun. If a person wants to turn this into a business, however, the advice is:

*"Go out and get your first three customers."*

This can feel counter-intuitive to some specialists. They want to get things absolutely perfect before going out to market. Certainly this is vital when developing a service or product that must work properly first time.

Specialists who provide other kinds of services, however, can make sure that what they offer will be of high quality. They can then go out to work with customers and continue to improve the quality.

Taking this step can be difficult for some specialists, especially knowledge workers. They may say:

*"But I don't like to sell. It feels like I am imposing on people."*

Sometimes they can reframe this in another way. Such people don't like to sell, but they do like to share their knowledge in a way that helps potential customers to succeed. They can then say:

*"I want to help people to succeed."*

Before taking this step, it is important to know how to position a service or product to potential buyers. If you aim to offer something to an organisation, for example, you can clarify how it will help them to improve their profits, product quality or people.

The key is to focus on the customers rather than yourself. As ever, it is about them, not about you. Trusted advisors, for example, show they understand people's goals. They then provide advice that enables them to achieve success.

Specialists sometimes need to create a shop window for their work. They may keep updating a website where they share knowledge. This can increase their credibility and show the value of their work.

There is another approach that it is possible to use to start working with customers. This is the Trojan Horse approach. The following pages explore how this can lead to doing superb work.

## *The Trojan Horse Approach*

*This approach involves using a positive Trojan Horse to do transformational work and deliver top class results.*



Let's look at some examples of using a positive Trojan Horse. The first example is one that applies to people who work in the mentoring and coaching field.

Such people sometimes need to have a Trojan Horse that gives them the chance to begin doing such work. In the past some may have found a way in by inviting individuals to do psychometric tests.

The results of the test then provided a framework for having a conversation with a person. The test was just an opener. The quality of the mentoring or coaching depending on the quality of the conversation in the session.

During the 2008 recession I worked with some coaches who said they wanted to do transformational work with individuals. Some found that the market dried up, however, or that such one-to-one work was seen as a luxury.

We therefore explored how they could use a positive Trojan Horse. One approach was to do project work that could help organisations during the tough times.

Some took this approach with their existing customers and they helped to deliver top class results. It also led to them doing one-to-one work.

Specialists need to choose a Trojan Horse they believe in. Looking at my own work, I often started working with organisations by providing workshops that helped people to build super teams. These then led to people having one-to-one sessions.

The Trojan Horse approach also applies to shifting a culture. This is explained in greater depth in the piece on *The Three Waves Approach*. People can aim:

*To build a successful prototype that shows the principles that an organisation can follow to achieve future success;*

*To then help other parts of the organisation to follow these principles in their own ways to achieve success.*

The successful prototype is the Trojan Horse. With the backing of the organisation's leaders, the principles can be spread to transform other parts of the organisation. Eventually these principles may become the norm and enable the organisation to achieve future success.

Let's return to the topic of reaching customers. It is vital to follow your natural style and, if possible, help people in your network.

Bearing in mind the service or product you want to offer, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Customers*

*The specific service or product that I want to offer to potential customers is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to reach potential customers and help them to succeed are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Cash*

Specialists can gain satisfaction from pursuing their calling, but it can also be good to get a salary. This can put food on the table and also provide the platform for their future development.

Freelancers often remember the satisfaction of sending their first invoice and getting money in the bank. If you want to follow the fulfilling road and get funding, it is good to develop commercial awareness.

Different people do this in different ways. My own approach may be seen as being uncommercial. It has been to visit potential customers and spend a couple of hours with them once or twice.

The aim is to pass on practical tools they can use to succeed. If they would like a third visit – or want to take things forward in other ways - we explore the possibility of funding.

Because I am not good at talking about money, I have tended to use the phrase:

*"Would there be any possibility of any funding?"*

Specialists may not want to make lots of money, but they need to get cash in the bank. They can then keep following the old advice:

*"You have to earn more money than you spend."*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Cash*

*The specific things I can do to perform superb work and get cash in the bank are:*

\*

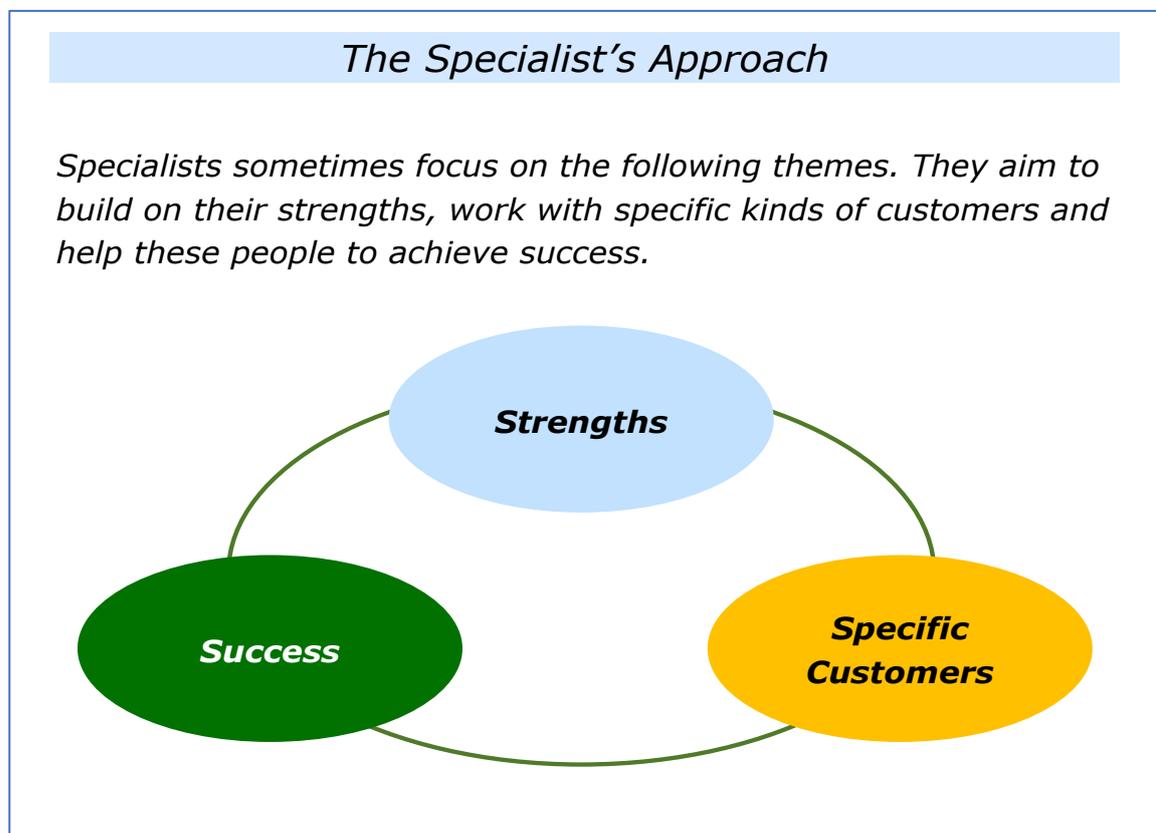
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## *The Specialist's Approach To Helping Specific Customers To Achieve Success*

Let's focus on these principles in another way. Imagine that you are a specialist who wants to do satisfying work but also earn a reasonable salary.

One approach is to follow the principles that we have explored in other parts of the book. Here are some exercises on these themes. You will, of course, follow these in your own way.



## *The Specialist's Approach*

*The specialist's approach to helping specific customers to achieve success*

### *Introduction*

*Imagine that you want to use your specialism to do satisfying work and help people to achieve success.*

*The following pages provide exercises you can use in your own way. These focus on the eternal themes that some knowledge workers follow to do satisfying work and earn a salary.*

- *Strengths*

*Describe the specific activities in which you can deliver As rather than Bs or Cs.*

*Try to give examples of the specific things you can deliver for potential customers.*

● *Specific Customers*

*Describe the specific kinds of people with whom you work best or those you want to reach.*

*These may also be certain kinds of managers, employers, specific target audience or other stakeholders.*

*Describe the characteristics of these people.*

*Describe the specific challenges these kinds of people face and the goals they may want to achieve.*

● *Success*

*Describe the specific ways you can use your strengths to help these customers achieve success.*

*Strengths*

*The specific activities in which I can deliver As rather than Bs or Cs are:*

*\* I can ...*

*For example ...*

*\* I can ...*

*For example ...*

*\* I can ...*

*For example: ...*

*Specific Customers*

*The specific kinds of customers or employers with whom I work best – or those that I want to reach – are those who demonstrate the following characteristics:*

\* *They ...*

*For example ...*

\* *They ...*

*For example ...*

\* *They ...*

*For example: ...*

*The specific challenges these people may face and the goals they may want to achieve may be:*

\* *They may ...*

*For example ...*

\* *They may ...*

*For example ...*

\* *They may ...*

*For example: ...*

*Success*

*The specific ways I can use my strengths to help these people to achieve success are:*

*\* I can ...*

*For example ...*

*\* I can ...*

*For example ...*

*\* I can ...*

*For example ...*

## *Success*

Specialists sometimes have a multi-track approach to success. These may include the following elements.

### *Specialists want to keep doing satisfying work*

They love to immerse themselves in doing their chosen work. Some enjoy the journey as much as reaching certain goals. They want to dive deeply, discover new things and keep developing.

Some immerse themselves in such a way that they appear to have self-chosen autism. They focus completely on pursuing their craft and cut out noise that could distract them from this task. This can mean that sometimes they have to remind themselves to connect with the world.

### *Specialist often want to pass on knowledge to other people*

Such workers want to share knowledge about what they have learned. They may do this through writing articles, producing blogs, publishing books, making media appearances or using other media.

Some believe they may belong to a tradition. Many people have pursued this route in the past and many will pursue in the future. They want to follow their tradition and pass on knowledge that will help future generations.

### *Specialists want to work towards achieving their definition of success*

Specialists have different definitions of success. Some want to keep doing superb work in their chosen field. Some want to be recognised as experts by their peers.

Some want to deliver tangible successes for their stakeholders. Whilst aiming to pursue their calling, they also believe it is vital to fulfil their moral obligations. They therefore do their best to deliver great work and help others to succeed.

Some want to feel they have done their best and made the most of their talent. Some want to earn lots of money. Some want to achieve status or win prizes. Some want to pass on a positive legacy.

Let's return to your own life and work. How can you continue to pursue your specialism? How can you continue to do satisfying work? How can you work towards your definition of success?

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Success*

*The specific activity I want to pursue where I can build on my strengths, do satisfying work and deliver success is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to continue to do satisfying work when pursuing this activity are:*

\*

\*

\*

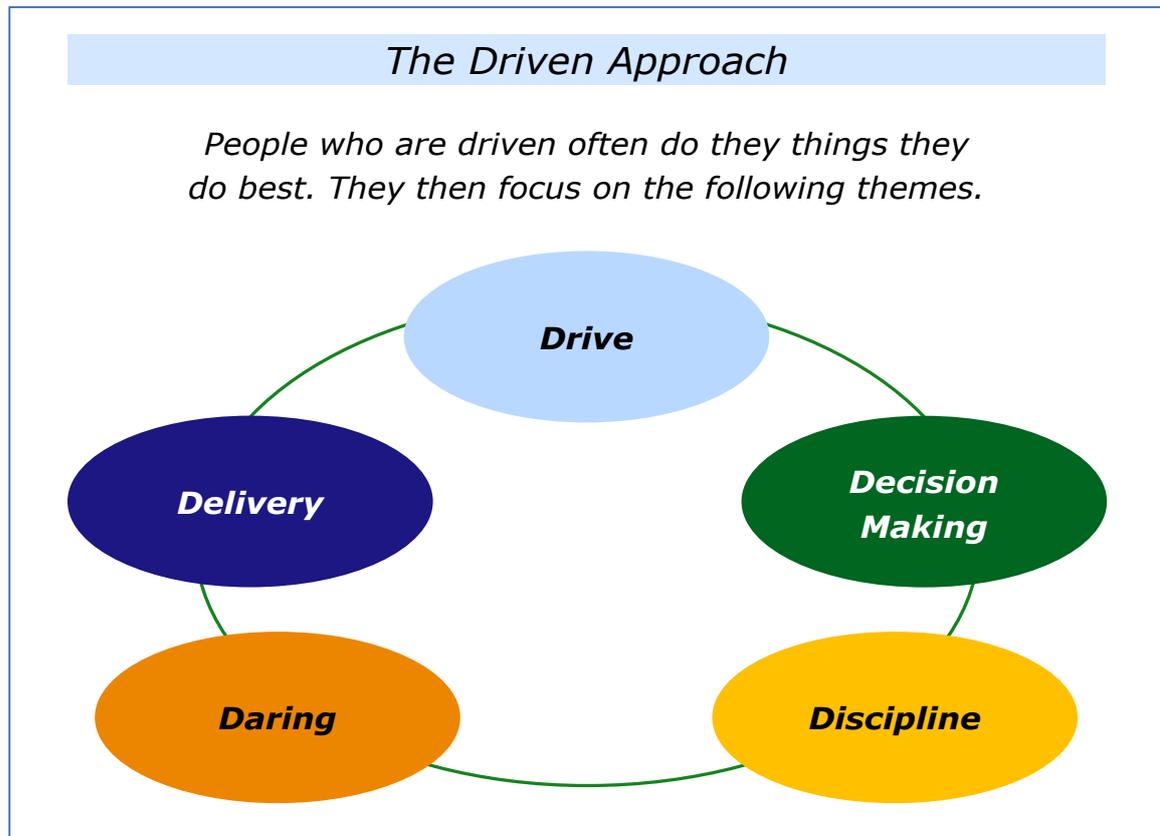
*The specific things I can do to do my best to achieve my definition of success are:*

\*

\*

\*

## The Driven Approach



Great workers often feel driven to pursue a particular activity. This involves going through the following steps.

They focus on something they do best and decide to follow a certain path. They keep following their chosen disciplines and when appropriate, choose to be daring – but in a calculated way. Sometimes they deal with dramas along the way. They then do their best to deliver the goods.

Looking back, can you think of a time when you went through some of these steps? You may have taken this route when following your life philosophy, pursuing a project, writing a book, playing a sport or doing another activity.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Driven Approach In The Past*

*The specific situation in the  
past when I followed elements  
of the driven approach was:*

\*

*The specific things I did then to  
follow some of these steps were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that happened as  
results of taking these steps were:*

\*

\*

\*

Imagine that you want to follow some of these principles in the future. Let's explore how it may be possible to take this route.

## *Drive*

Some people follow their drive after having an epiphany. Some act after consulting their inner compass. Some move forwards after a period of research and reflection.

Some people take the following approach. After exploring many of their drives, they go through a process of decision making. They then dedicate themselves to pursuing a certain path.

### *Different People Are Driven By Different Things*

- *They may aim to pursue a particular philosophy.*

*They may pursue a spiritual faith, their inner compass, a sense of vocation, a mission or another cause.*

- *They may aim to follow certain principles.*

*They may believe in following certain principles in their personal life, their professional life or their time on the planet.*

- *They may aim to achieve a picture of success.*

*They may do their best to achieve a specific goal, their life goals or their definition of success.*

Let's consider how a person may dedicate themselves to following a particular route. This may begin by exploring their drives, making a decision and then committing themselves.

A person will aim to satisfy their basic drives for food, shelter and other necessities. They may also feel driven to do other things. Here are some answers that people give when exploring this theme.

*I feel driven:*

*To provide for my family ... To help people to manage pain ... To help young footballers to graduate from the academy to the first team ... To design care homes that enrich the lives of people experiencing dementia ... To pass on knowledge that helps people to succeed.*

How can a person choose the theme they want to focus on? One approach is for them to ask:

*What is the theme I keep returning to? What are the principles I believe in following? What is the drive I want to pursue? Will this bring delight to myself or other people?*

Imagine you have provisionally settled on this theme. You may then move on to the next stage.

## *Decision Making*

Great workers take time to think before deciding to commit themselves to a chosen path. They explore a potential way forwards and do their due diligence. They then commit to the path they want to follow.

There are many models for decision making. Some people explore their possible choices, the consequences and the attractiveness of each option. They then decide on their chosen route.

Some people work through these themes logically and deliberately. Some do it quickly and use strategic intuition.

Gary Klein studied people who took this latter approach. His books on the topic include *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions* and *The Power of Intuition*.

He studied firefighters and other professionals who made decisions in pressure situations. The following section draws on an interview he gave to Bill Breen for *The Fast Company* magazine. He explained what he had learned in the following way.

*"I noticed that when the most experienced commanders confronted a fire, the biggest question they had to deal with wasn't 'What do I do?' It was 'What's going on?'*

*"That's what their experience was buying them - the ability to size up a situation and to recognise the best course of action."*

Gary explained that firefighters saw the big picture and looked for patterns. They then began exploring potential strategies.

*They reached into their experience – their hyperdrive - to scan previous scenarios and see what lessons might apply to the present situation.*

*They chose a potential course of action and played scenarios – like running a film in their heads – to see this might work in practice.*

*They ran the film to see if the strategy would work and, if so, they began pursuing it.*

Gary said that firefighters kept exploring various strategies until they found one that worked. He explained this in the following way.

*"Once they make a decision, firefighters evaluate it by rapidly running a mental simulation. They might run through several choices, but they never compare one option with another.*

*"They rapidly evaluate each choice on its own merits, even if they cycle through several possibilities. They imagine how a course of action may unfold and how it may ultimately play out.*

*"They don't need the best solution. They just need the one that works."*

There are many models for decision making. Sean Kim wrote an excellent summary of several models for an article on The Muse website. Here are two of the best known tools.

## *Decision Making Tools*

*Sean Kim wrote an excellent summary of decision making tools in an article for The Muse website. Here is his description of two of the best known tools.*

### *The 10/10/10 Rule*

*After reaching the top pinnacle of the publishing industry, Suzy Welch often used this strategy to help her navigate through tough personal and professional times.*

*This rule can be used to reflect on the future by asking yourself:*

*How will we feel about it 10 minutes from now?*

*How about 10 months from now?*

*How about 10 years from now?*

*The 10/10/10 Rule to think not only about how you'll feel about it later today but also years from today.*

### *The Regret Minimization Framework*

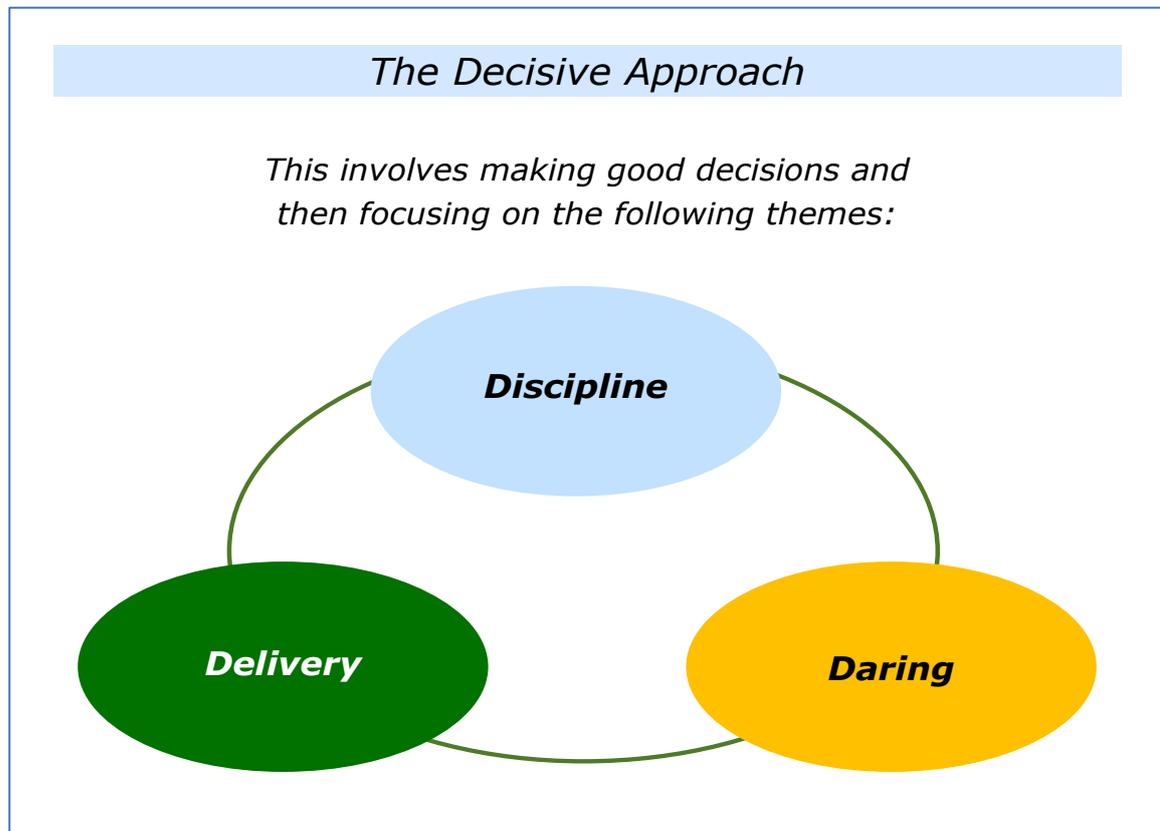
*When Jeff Bezos was facing the dilemma of leaving his steady job at a hedge fund to start Amazon, he applied what he calls the "Regret Minimization Framework. Here's his explanation:*

*"If you can project yourself out to age 80 and sort of think, 'What will I think at that time?' it gets you away from some of the daily pieces of confusion.*

*"That's the kind of thing that in the short-term can confuse you, but if you think about the long-term then you can really make good life decisions that you won't regret later."*

*This approach is applicable for anyone making big jumps in his or her personal and professional life.*

Great workers are decisive and aim to make good decisions. They translate this into following certain disciplines and, when being daring. They then and do their best to deliver the desired results.



Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that you have settled on a drive you want to pursue.

You may then want to translate this into following certain principles, doing a piece of work or achieving specific goals. As ever with decision making, it can be useful:

*To clarify the real results you want to achieve and translate this into a clear picture of success;*

*To clarify the key strategies you can follow to achieve the picture of success;*

*To clarify the pluses and minuses involved in working to achieve the picture of success.*

Imagine that you have explored these themes. It is then time to move to the next part of this stage.

Great workers embark on their journey with their eyes open. They embody the qualities described by T.E. Lawrence. He said the those who dream by night may or may not follow up. A summary his view was that:

*Dreamers of the day are dangerous ... for they may act their dreams with open eyes, to make it possible*

Imagine that you have clarified the thing you want to do, the strategies you want to follow and the desired picture of success. You have also considered the pluses and minuses involved in working towards achieving the goals.

Great workers often take one more step before dedicating themselves to achieving a specific goal. They check their motivation. This involves them working through the following steps described in the framework below.

Looking at your own rating, make sure it is at least 8/10. You can also focus on how to maintain or improve the rating. This can include finding ways: a) to build on the pluses; b) to manage or minimise any minuses.

*My Chosen Route*

*The specific thing  
I want to do is:*

\*

*Motivation Rating*

*Pluses. The potential pluses  
involved in doing this may be:*

\*

\*

*Minuses. The potential minuses  
involved in doing this may be:*

\*

\*

*Bearing these in mind, the extent to which I  
feel motivated to pursuing my chosen route is:*

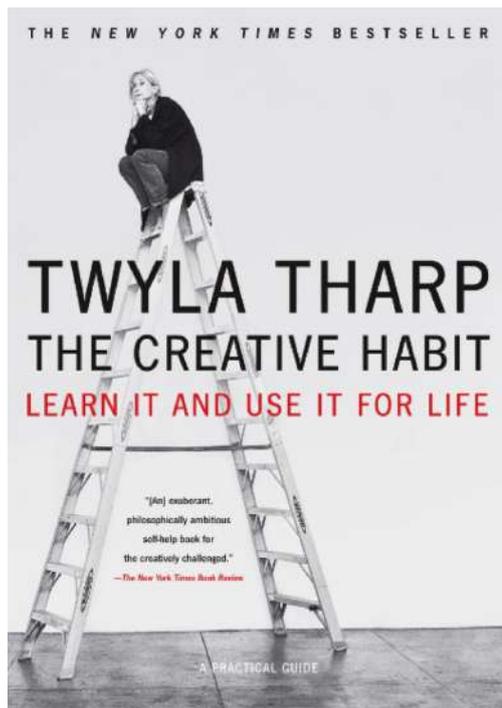
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## *Discipline*

Great workers often take a delight in following certain disciplines. They follow their chosen rhythm and aim to do the right things in the right way every day.

Twyla Tharp, the American choreographer, believed in this approach. Even into her sixties Twyla started the day at 5.30 am and walked out of her flat onto the Manhattan Street. She then hailed a cab that took her to the gym for a two-hour workout.

Writing in her book *The Creative Habit*, she explained how she followed certain rituals to develop good habits.



*Being creative is an everyday thing, a job with its own routines.*

*The routine is as much part of the creative process as the lightning bolt of inspiration (perhaps more).*

*And it is available to everyone.*

*If creativity is a habit, then the best creativity is a result of good work habits.*

Great workers aim to do things properly when following their chosen route. Some do this by taking the following steps.

*They explore the real results they want to achieve and clarify their destination.*

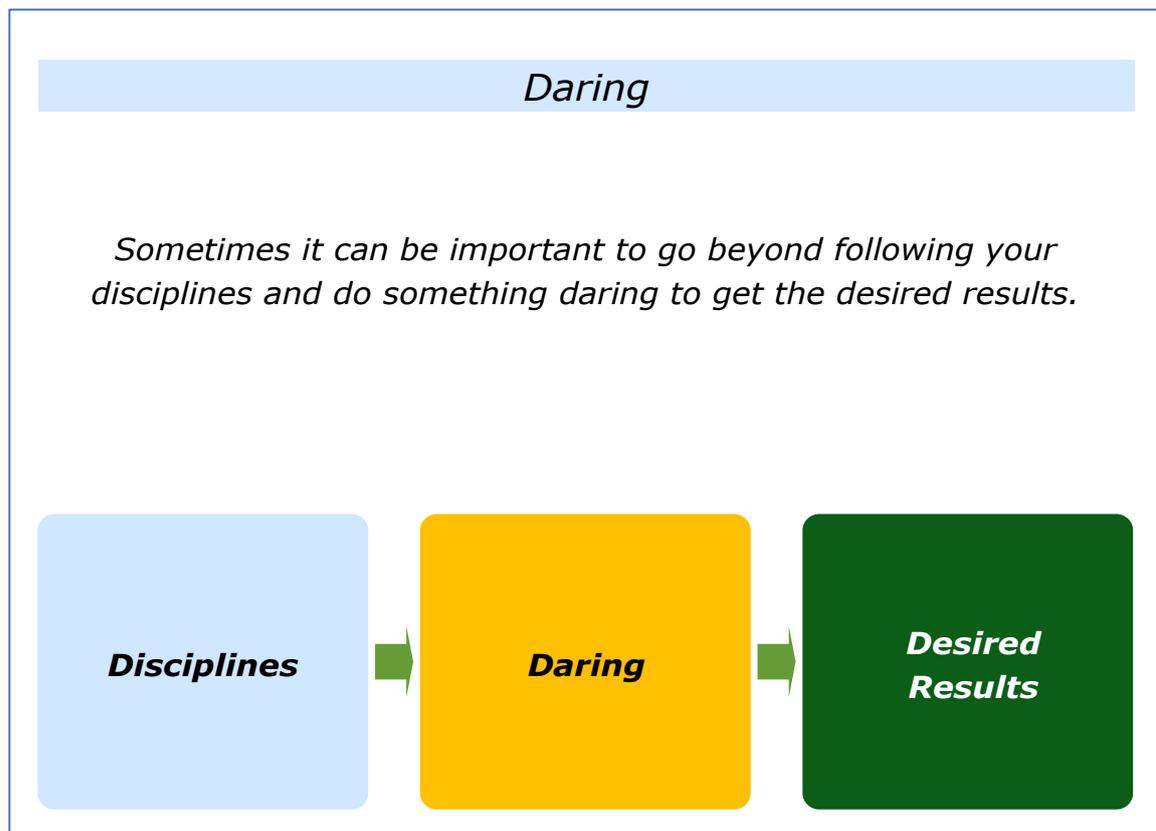
*They clarify the steps they can take – the principles to follow and the practical tasks to be done – to reach their destination.*

*They focus on doing each of these things properly on the way towards reaching their destination.*

Such workers aim to get the right balance between consistency and creativity. They may do this by asking themselves the following questions.

*How can I keep developing? How can I add to my repertoire? How can I build on what I am doing well and also tackle areas for improvement? How can I apply this knowledge to deliver great results?*

## *Daring*



Great workers follow their chosen disciplines are then prepared to be daring. They take this step in a calculated way, however, rather than by being careless.

They recognise they may have more to win and less to lose by being daring. Great sports teams sometimes take this approach. They then put their energies into trying to win rather than trying not to lose.

Such worker realise that being daring can involve dealing with delights, disappointments and dramas along the way. This is part of the process of working to achieve their aims.

They use their preferred decision making process to clarify the options. They then dare to commit themselves fully to pursuing their chosen strategy.

### *Deciding To Be Daring*

*Great workers choose to be decisive rather than let things drift. Sometimes this calls for them choosing:*

- *To decide on the route most likely to deliver the desired results*
- *To be daring – but in a calculated way – and rehearse what they are going to do*
- *To translate their plan into action and do their best to deliver the desired results*

## *Delights And Disappointments*

Great workers recognise there will be both delights and disappointments on the way towards achieving their aims. One counsellor described this in the following way:

*"There are both highs and lows in the work we do. Sometimes you go home at night feeling great, sometimes you feel down. People who do this work know the whole package and accept both the pluses and minuses. The key is to learn from all experiences."*

Different people choose different ways to deal with their emotions. Some keep a log of the delights and disappointments. They then focus on how they can use the lessons to keep improving.

*My Daily Log*

*My delights, disappointments and  
what I can do better in the future*

## *Delights*

*The specific delights or other things  
I have enjoyed today have been:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Disappointments*

*The specific disappointments or  
setbacks I have had today have been:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Doing My Best In The Future*

*The specific things I can do in the future to build on the delights and learn from any disappointments are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Dealing With Dramas*

Great workers channel their feelings into working towards achieving the goals. They do not get distracted by dramas or their own emotional ups or downs.

They do not, when working in organisations, get caught up in turf wars or game playing. They do not get side-tracked by individuals who choose to be dramatic or have serial problems.

Such workers anticipate the potential dramas they may encounter on the journey. They then explore the follow themes.

*How can I prevent these dramas happening? How can I deal with any dramas if, despite my best efforts, they do happen?*

*How can I buy time to think? How can I focus on the real results to achieve in the short-term and long-term? How can I do my best to*

*find possible solutions to the dramas? How can I implement these solutions?*

*How can I return to following the required disciplines? How can I get a quick success? How can I continue doing good work on the way towards the destination?*

Great workers regain their rhythm and continue to do good work. They do this because they have rehearsed how to prevent and manage dramas.

Let's return to the route you may want to follow. Looking ahead, what are the possible dramas you may encounter? How can you prevent or manage these successfully?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Dealing With Dramas*

*The potential dramas I may encounter when pursuing my chosen route may be:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to prevent some of these dramas happening are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do if, despite my best efforts, some dramas do happen are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Delivery*

How can you do your best to deliver the goods? Great workers sometimes separate the phases of being relaxed and relentless.

Sometimes they combine both elements, however, and go into a state of relaxed relentlessness. They are then more likely to flow on the way towards delivering the desired results. Let's look at one person who applied elements of this approach

### *Chris Hoy – Riding The Perfect Race*

Chris Hoy, the Olympic cyclist, made a habit of setting big goals. Breaking these down into smaller targets, he focused on the step-by-step process of working to achieve these aims. This included visualising and riding the perfect race.

Chris gave an interview to Michael Johnson, who himself won four Olympic gold medals, for the video series *Chasing Perfection*.

In it he explained what he learned from working with Steve Peters, the psychiatrist who helps people to perform at their best. Here is a precis of what Chris said.

*"I sought Steve's help because I wanted to improve. One trigger was what happened at the World Championships in 2003. Then I changed my strategy based on watching a rival's race and them doing an incredibly fast time.*

*"Instead of thinking that he was quick because of the track conditions - and therefore maybe we would all be quick - I changed the gears on my bike. I also attacked too hard at the start. This led to me dying off at the end and giving a really poor performance.*



*"Steve explained how he could and could not help.*

*"He said that it was not possible to suddenly become super human and conjure magical performances out of thin air.*

*"What it was possible to do, however, was to help me to do what I was fully capable of doing.*

*"It was also possible to help me to do this under the most extreme pressures."*

*"This would be particularly relevant in front of Olympic crowds where there might also be many distractions. For me it would be about focusing on my performance. Anything that was irrelevant and out of my control, forget it.*

*"The key would be hone in on the A-B-C process that I knew worked rather than worry about the outcome. If you perform at your best and focus on the process, the result will take care of itself."*

He also describes how Steve prepared him to deal with potential challenges. Before one competition, for example, Steve asked him what he would do if one of his rivals went just before him and set a new world record.

Chris said that he did not want to think about such an issue. Steve explained that it was important to clarify how to respond to such challenges rather than ignore them.

Otherwise it is like somebody saying: *"Don't think of a pink elephant."* You immediately think of a pink elephant.

Steve urged him to practice how to take positive steps to deal with such potential issues. Chris explained this in the following way.

*"Steve said that, from now on whenever you get a negative thought between now and the Games – there are only two weeks to go - I want you to visualise your race.*

*"It is only a minute long. Do it in real time, from the moment you are at the start gate. The count down, the deep breaths, the snap out of the gate, the first half lap. Visualise the whole race."*

*"I got to the race on the night itself and it seemed like Steve had some sort of crystal ball. I was to ride last. With four riders to go, including myself, the guy broke the world record.*

*"Three riders to go another guy broke the world record. The guy before me broke the world record again.*

*"Instead of panicking and changing my strategy, I was so focused on myself and getting my ride out.*

Chris went on to ride his perfect race. He focused on the process, performed at his personal best and won the prize.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, imagine that you want to do work that may bring delight.

How can you follow your drive and decide on your chosen route? How can you follow the required disciplines? How can you, when appropriate, be daring? How can you deal with any dramas? How can you do your best to deliver the desired results?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Driven Approach In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future  
when I may want to follow some  
elements of the driven approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then  
to follow some of these steps are:*

\*

\*

\*

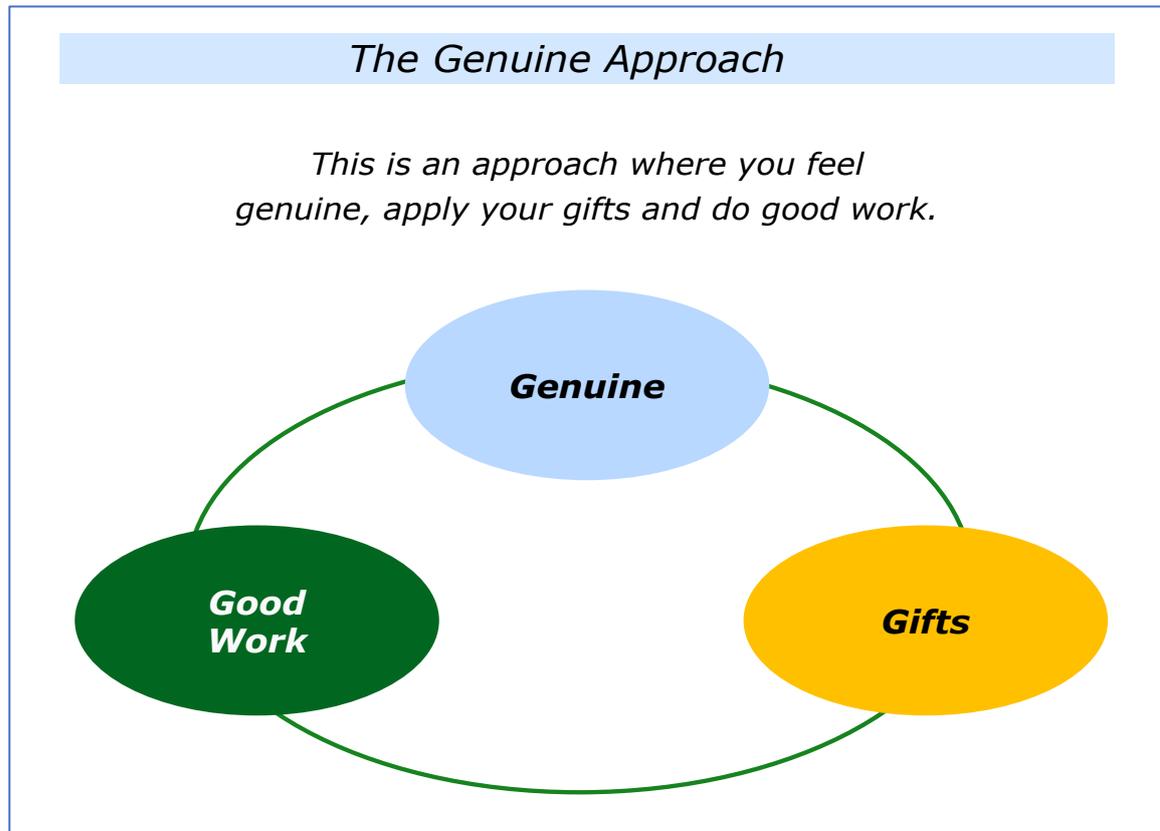
*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of following these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## The Genuine Approach



There are many ways to follow your rhythm and get results. One approach is to focus on when you feel genuine. You may then apply your gifts and do your best to do good work.

The genuine approach can take many forms. It can happen for you when, for example:

*You feel in your element and do good work;*

*You feel you can use your gifts and do good work;*

*You feel you can go into a certain role and do good work.*

Looking at your own work, when do you follow some of these principles? Different people give different answers to this question. Here are some of the things they say.

*I feel genuine when I am  
doing the following kinds of work:*

*Helping a troubled person in my work as a counsellor ... Caring for people in my role as a nurse ... Doing interior design for houses ... Singing certain kinds of songs as a performer.*

*Orchestrating teams to achieve a compelling goal ... Solving technical problems when helping clients ... Writing positive articles that may inspire people.*

*Helping young footballers to move from the Academy to the First Team ... Passing on knowledge that helps people to succeed ... Making films that help audiences appreciate the wonders of nature.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentence.

## *The Genuine Approach*

*The specific situations where I feel genuine  
when doing certain kinds of work are:*

\*

\*

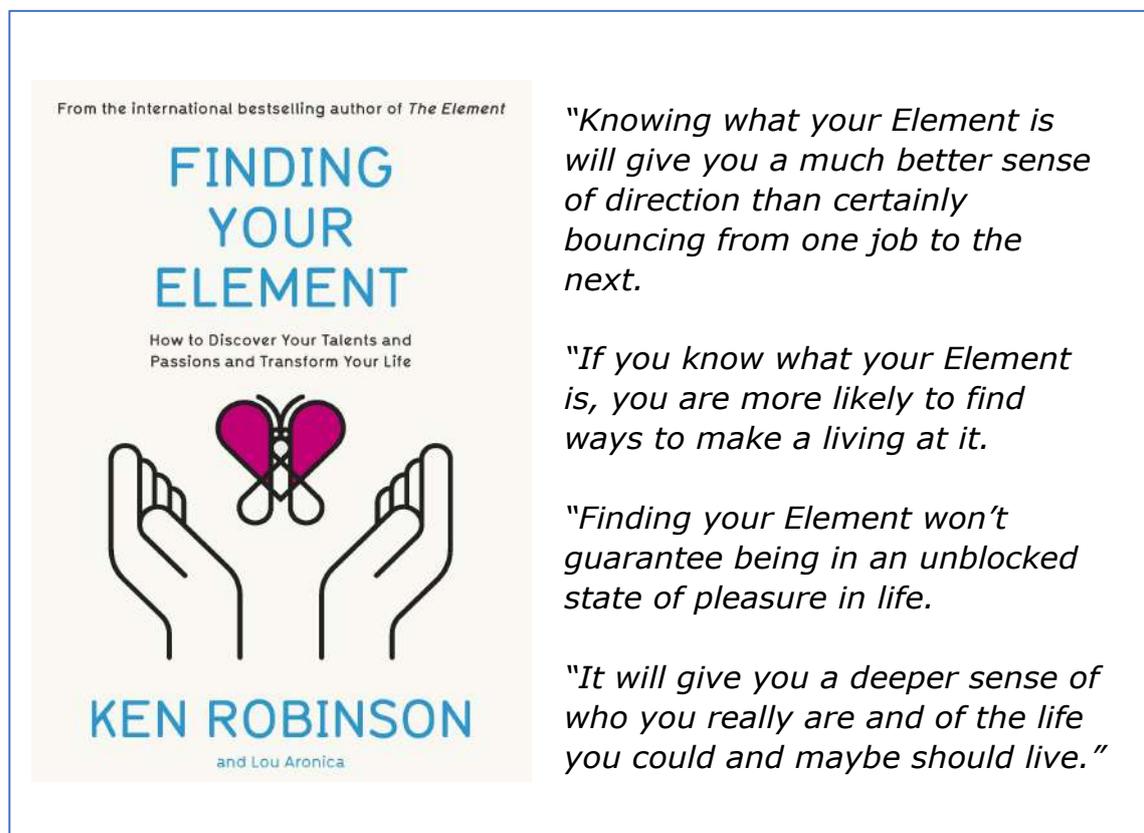
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How can you put yourself into more situations where you feel genuine? Let's look at some ways you can do such work.

## *Being In Your Element*

When are you in your element - at ease and yet able to excel? Sir Ken Robinson's TED talk on creativity encouraged many people to focus on this theme. He went on to write books such as *The Element* and *Finding Your Element*. Ken explained:

*"Being in your Element is doing something for which you have a natural feel. It is more than doing things you are good at. You have to love it, too."*



People who follow this principle are more likely to feel alive and fulfilled, says Ken. They may then follow an organic path - rather than a linear path - in their work.

They may feel in their element when following certain themes - such as encouraging people, creating things, solving certain problems or doing another activity. They may then express these themes in many different roles or projects during their career.

Being in your element can bring great satisfaction. If you want to earn a living taking this approach, however, it may be important to add savvy. You can then aim to earn a salary by doing excellent work that helps other people to succeed.

If you wish, try tackling the following exercise. This invites you to describe the specific times you feel genuine when being in your element.

## *Being In My Element*

*The specific times I feel genuine  
when being in my element are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Using Your Gifts*

Everybody has strengths. Everybody has talents in certain activities. The gifts they have been given can be used to do good work that helps people or the planet.

Many people feel humble and alive when applying their gifts. They enjoy the opportunity to use these in their daily lives and work. As the musician Marcus Miller said:

*"It's a great thing about being a musician: you don't stop until the day you die, you can improve. So it's a wonderful thing to do."*

Many people love to follow the spirit of their strengths and do superb work. Sometimes this comes easily, sometimes they need to follow rituals to channel this flow. They love to channel this spirit, however, and get a sense of satisfaction.

Such people may also feel grateful for the gifts they have been given. They echo similar sentiments to those expressed by the author Elizabeth Gilbert in one of her TED talks.

She described how our gifts do not belong to us – they are on loan to us. We cannot take credit for our gifts, but it is up to us how we use them. Some find this to be a remarkably freeing approach. Here are some of the relevant passages from her talk.

*In ancient Greece and ancient Rome people did not happen to believe that creativity came from human beings back then.*

*People believed that creativity was this divine attendant spirit that came to human beings from some distant and unknowable source for distant and unknowable reasons.*

*The Greeks famously called these divine attendant spirits of creativity 'Daemons'. Socrates famously believed that he had a Daemon who spoke to him from afar.*

*The Romans had the same idea but they called that sort of disembodied spirit a 'Genius' ... which was great because the Romans did not actually think that a genius was a particularly clever individual.*

*They believed that a genius was this sort of magical divine entity who was believed to literally live in the walls of an artist's studio ... and who would come out and invisibly assist the artist with their work and who would shape the outcome of that work.*

*Maybe artistry doesn't have to be quite so full of anguish if you never happened to believe, in the first place, that the most extraordinary aspects of your being came from you.*

*But maybe if you just believed that they were on loan to you from some unimaginable source for some exquisite portion of your life to be passed along when you're finished. (This) starts to change everything.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe the specific times you feel genuine when you are using some of the gifts you have been given.

## ***Being Able To Use My Gifts***

*The specific times I feel genuine when using some of the gifts I have been given are:*

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## *Going Into Role*

Some people do good work by going into role. At first sight this may not seem to be genuine, but it actually is. They may feel at ease when working as a counsellor, educator, crisis manager or in another role.

Some introverts take this step. Whilst happy in their own company, they sometimes feel comfortable moving into their chosen professional role. They then follow certain rules to do good work.

Such people genuinely enjoy using their strengths to serve others or serve something greater than themselves. They then feel a sense of purpose and do their best to achieve specific goals.

A singer may be an introvert but be transformed when stepping onto stage. They take control of the situation with the power of their voice, movement and charisma. Coming off stage, they may then move back into being an introvert.

A nurse may enjoy the solitude of working in her garden. Moving into her role in Accident and Emergency, however, she enjoys taking charge and managing crises. Whilst enjoying the camaraderie at work, she like to recentre at home.

One leader described how she clicked into role when arriving at work. She explained this in the following way.

*"My job as a leader is to encourage people to do good work and achieve the organisation's goals.*

*"After driving into the car park I move into role. My aim is to be a positive model and support people. It is also to encourage them to follow the professional guidelines to achieve success.*

*"Some of these things come naturally, but sometimes I need to remind myself to keep connecting with people. When doing this, I often take the following steps, but I do this in a sincere way.*

*"I aim to greet the person and treat them as an individual. If appropriate, I ask them about what is happening in their world. Looking at their work, I clarify what they are working towards and if they need any help.*

*"I always finish the conversation by ensuring we are clear on the next steps. Sometimes this involves myself or others following up by supporting them to achieve their goals.*

*"This sounds rather rote, but I am really interested in helping people to do good work and shape their future careers. My role as a leader is to help our people and organisation to achieve success."*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentence.

## *Being Able To Go Into Role*

*The specific times I feel genuine when going into a certain role are:*

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## *The Solid Ground Approach*

*People often work best when they are on solid ground rather than dangerous ground*

***Solid Ground***

***Dangerous Ground***

People often do their best work when they build on what for them is solid ground. They work less well when they are on dangerous ground. Let's explore these themes.

### ***Solid Ground***

Looking at your own work, when do you feel on solid ground? You may be running a mentoring session, dealing with a certain kind of crisis, leading a team, playing a sport or doing another activity.

Different people feel comfortable in different situations. One person may feel comfortable dealing with complex technical problems, one when treating patients in an intensive care unit, one when performing on stage.

Different people also feel more at ease in certain kinds of cultures. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"I have always felt at ease working with entrepreneurs and pioneers. I am less good working with people in old style institutions.*

*"During my youth I travelled around the world, beginning by doing voluntary work. After a while I got used to living off my wits. This helped when I stumbled upon some of the first dot.com businesses.*

*"Although I knew little about the field, I had learned a lot about decision making and the consequences. Soon I found myself acting as a listening ear to people who were running these businesses. After a while this turned into a full-time role.*

*"Over the next decade I tried to learn everything I could about decision making. I did not have the money to study at business schools, but I did manage to meet many leaders in the field.*

*"Now I make my living helping people to make decisions. That might sound scary. But I am actually quite comfortable going into situations where the decision making has wide implications."*

Let's to return to where you feel on solid ground. You may feel at ease because you know your subject area, know your audience and know their specific goals. Certainly you will be happy to stretch yourself, but you feel confident of being able to succeed.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to do the following things.

First, describe the specific situations where you feel on solid ground. Second, describe the specific reasons why you feel on solid ground in these situations.

## *Solid Ground*

*The specific situations where  
I feel on solid ground are:*

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*The specific reasons why I feel on  
solid ground in these situations are:*

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## *Dangerous Ground*

When do you feel on dangerous ground? You may feel uncomfortable working with certain kinds of people or where your values may not fit the culture.

People can develop by stretching themselves, of course, but one point is worth underlining. They need to be in a situation where they stand a chance of achieving success.

Great workers often focus on certain specialist areas where they can become experts. They also work with the kinds of people with whom they work best.

Trying to change their offering to reach a different audience can become dangerous ground. It can be important to reach different kinds of people, but not at the expense of diluting their top talent.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Bearing in mind your chosen activity, describe the following things.

## *Dangerous Ground*

*The specific situations where I feel on dangerous ground are:*

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*The specific reasons why I feel on dangerous ground in these situations are:*

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## *Solid Ground And Dangerous Ground*

Looking to the future, how can you keep building on your solid ground? How can you avoid putting yourself on dangerous ground?

If you must go there, how can you prepare properly? How can you be professional and manage potentially difficult moments?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

### *Solid Ground And Dangerous Ground*

*The specific things I can do build on solid ground are:*

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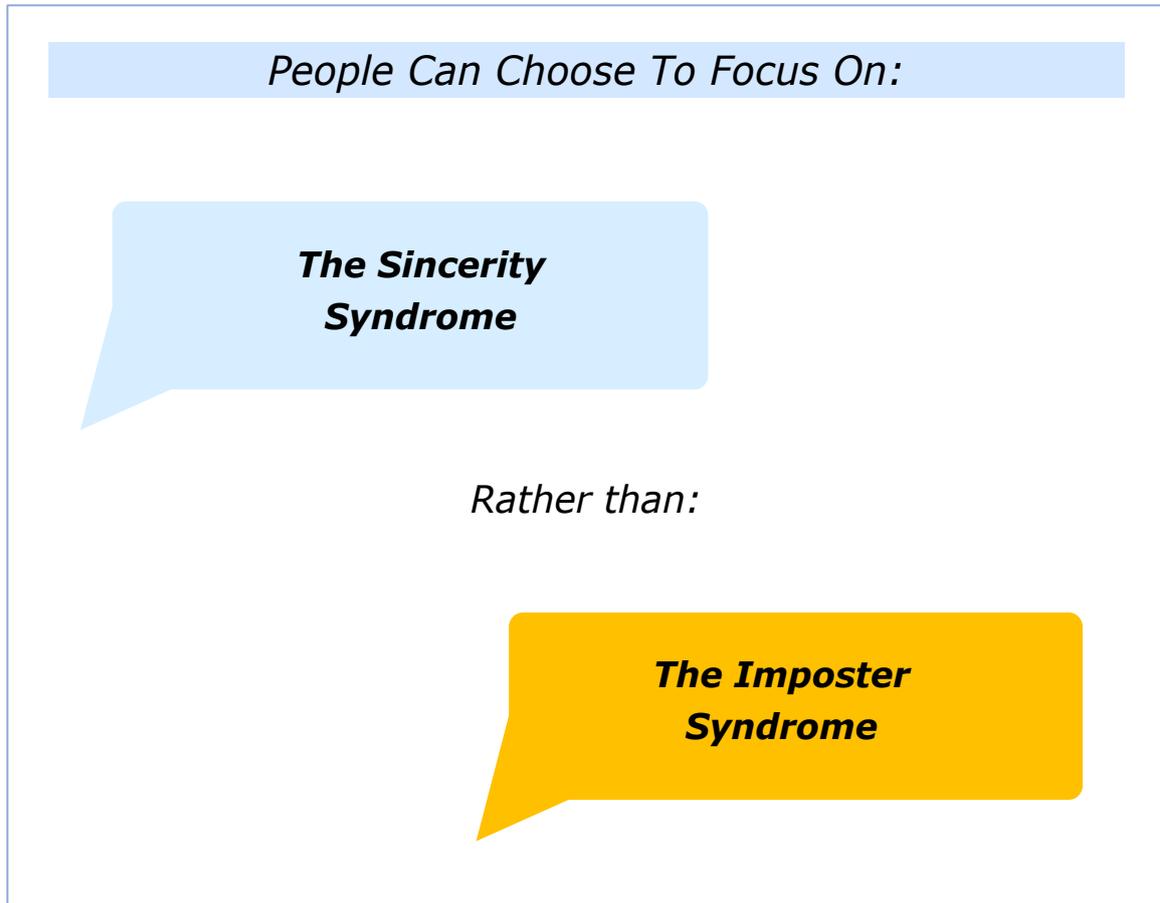
*The specific things I can do to deal with any dangerous ground are:*

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## *The Sincerity Syndrome Rather Than The Imposter Syndrome*



The term imposter syndrome was coined in the late 1970s. Since then it has become more prevalent for people to say they have it. A person may say something like the following:

*"At times I feel like an imposter. What can I do about it?"*

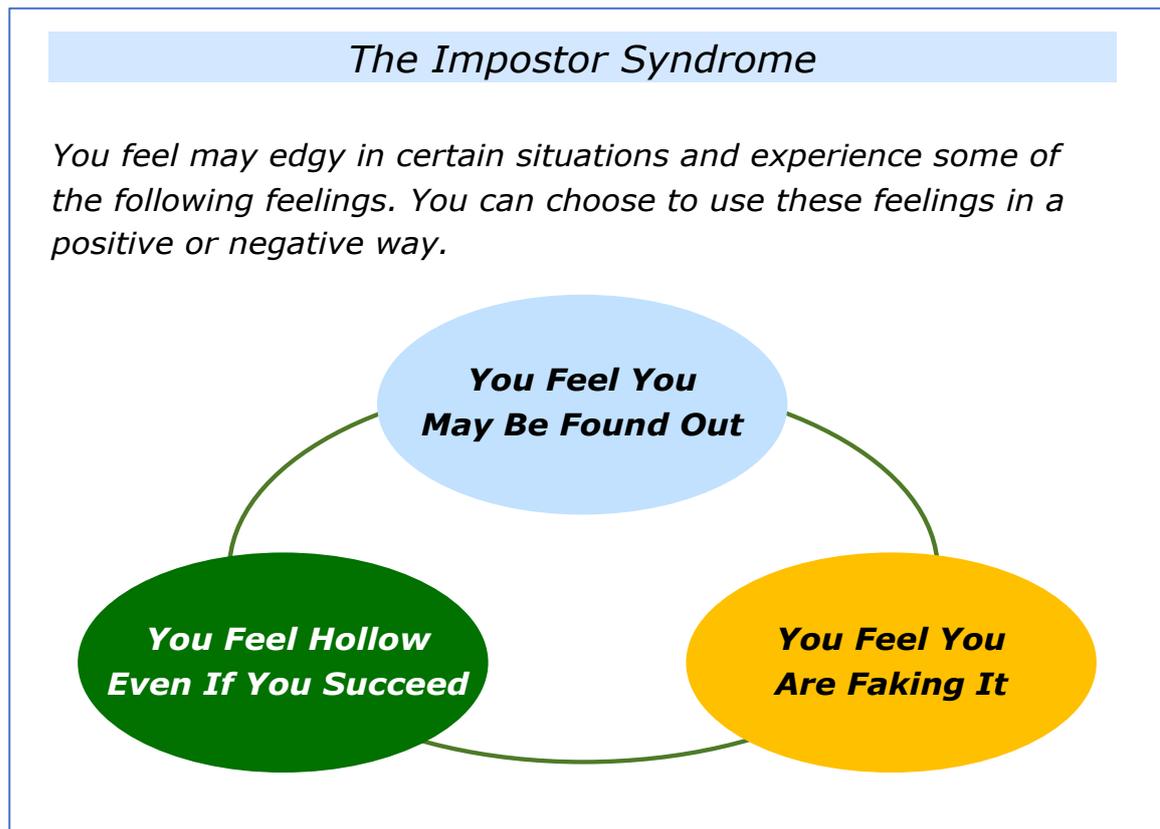
The response I give is to say that we can explore that theme. Before then, however, I ask them the following questions.

*"When do you have sincerity syndrome? When do you do behave in a sincere way, build on your strengths and deliver success?"*

The term syndrome has several meanings. The one that most people know about is that which refers to illness. Another dictionary definition is:

*A set of concurrent things (such as emotions or actions) that usually form an identifiable pattern*

If people believe in the imposter syndrome, then it certainly exists for them. Imagine that you may sometimes have this experience in certain situations. You may have the following feelings.



Like all feelings, a person can use these in a positive or negative way. They can choose to use the feeling to keep improving or to be neurotic.

Another option is for them to focus on where they experience sincerity syndrome. They focus on doing things where they feel genuine and sincere. This also leads them to developing their confidence.

Imagine that a person has asked for you to help them to develop their self-confidence. One approach is to help a person to pursue the following principle.

It is to recognise that self-confidence is not something that happens to you. It is often an outcome of achieving success.

### *Self-Confidence Is An Outcome Of Achieving Success*

*There are many views about how to develop self-confidence. One approach is for a person to take the following steps.*

*They can put themselves into a situation where: a) they are playing to their strengths; b) they are following successful patterns that work; c) they are doing their best to achieve success.*



This is an approach that helps a person to develop and sometimes even expand their repertoire. Let's look at one example.

Sue was a superb operator whose strength lay in implementing technology programmes for her company's customers. She felt like an imposter, however, when told to make sales pitches.

Looking back, she had taken part in many successful pitches. But these were often when accompanying a lead salesperson who aimed to wow the potential client. Sue would then explain to the client how the programme could work in practise.

Bearing this in mind, Sue refocused on how she could play a sincere role in sales pitches. She chose to partner with somebody who could do the wow whilst she showed how things would work.

This approach proved successful. Potential clients appreciated Sue showing how she would act as partner and ensure the programme delivered success. She continued to develop and add to her professional repertoire.

There are many ways to feel genuine. You may do this by being in your element, using your gifts or going into role. Sometimes you may combine all of these aspects on the road towards doing good work.

Imagine that you want to take approach the future. What is the activity you want to pursue? How can you do your best to do good work?

You may aim to do this when encouraging people, practising your chosen craft, finding solutions to challenges or doing another activity. You may aim to do so when working as an educator, trusted advisor, leader or in another role.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Genuine Approach In The Future*

*The specific activity where I  
want to pursue the genuine  
approach and do good work is:*

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*The specific things I can do to do  
my best when doing this activity are:*

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*The specific benefits – for myself and other  
people – of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Establishing Credibility Approach*

### *Credibility*

*Different people establish credibility in different ways. Here are some themes they can consider when exploring how to do this in their own way.*

- *Showing high professional standards and a pattern of achieving success.*
- *Showing specialist knowledge in the area in which people want to achieve success.*
- *Showing they understand people's aims and then using their strengths to help people to achieve success.*

Different people focus on different challenges in their work. Some individuals want to explore the following themes.

*"How can I establish credibility? How can I do this in my own way rather than try to be something I am not?"*

The second point is vital. It is important for individuals: a) to be true to themselves; b) to build on their strengths; c) to help others to achieve success.

Some people aim to gain credibility by taking initiatives. They may volunteer their services and perform superb work. This helps them to build trust with potential customers or employers.

Some people aim to get credibility by gaining qualifications. Some aim to get it through self-promotion and bragging. Some aim to get it by trying to win arguments and proving they are Number One.

Looking back, when have you established credibility? You may have done this as a counsellor, teacher, nurse, engineer, leader, business owner, knowledge worker or expert in a specific field. What did you do then to establish credibility?

Imagine that you want to maintain credibility in the future. The following section explores some themes it may be useful to consider.

One key point is worth bearing in mind, however, when considering these themes. It is important to apply the approach that is most appropriate to the situation.

Many people workers, for example, actually start by focusing on the third theme that is described below. They aim to provide practical help that enables the client to get an early success. Getting a quick win helps to build confidence and lay the foundation for their future work together.

Bearing this in mind, here are the themes that it can be useful to consider.

### *Showing high professional standards and a pattern of success*

Great workers realise they are always on stage. They recognise that other people are watching and will make judgements about what they do and deliver. They therefore maintain high professional standards.

Professionalism is a good starting point, but potential customers also want reassurance. They want to feel confident that the person offering the service has a track record of delivering the goods.

Potential clients want to know what a supplier will *deliver* – not just what they will do. They want more than a list of experiences and skills. So it can be useful to show a pattern of delivering success.

Different people do this in different ways. Some knowledge workers, for example, prefer to share what has worked - rather than try to sell - and also put people in touch with previous clients.

### *Showing specialist knowledge in the area in which people want to succeed*

Great workers gain credibility by showing their expertise. They share their knowledge in ways that are informative rather than intimidating.

A good consultant, for example, may clarify a potential client's agenda and then share the possible options for going forwards. They may say something like the following.

*"As far as I understand it, the goals you want to achieve are:*

*"To ...*

*"To ...*

*"To ...*

*"Some of the potential options for going forwards – together with the pluses and minuses of each approach – include the following.*

*"Option A is ... The pluses and minuses are ...*

*"Option B is ... The pluses and minuses are ...*

*"Option C is ... The pluses and minuses are ...*

*"Would you like to know more about each of these approaches? If so, I can give you more background and details."*

Such workers demonstrate they know their subject in depth. They often bring the themes to life by moving from the concept to the concrete. They often say:

*"Let me give you an example ..."*

They give specific examples that the listener can relate to and can apply in their life or work. This builds confidence and shows that the worker knows their subject.

*Showing you understand people's  
aims and using your strengths  
to help them to achieve success*

Great workers recognise that people buy success rather than the theory of success. Bearing this in mind, they aim:

*To clarify the real results the person – or a group of people – want to achieve;*

*To use their strengths do superb work, provide great service and find solutions to challenges;*

*To help the person – or the group of people - to achieve the desired results and, if appropriate, to achieve ongoing success.*

Different people apply this approach in different ways, but the key is to deliver the goods. This helps to build a positive reputation.

Let's return to your own work. Looking to the future, what is the specific activity in which you may wish to develop or maintain credibility? How can you do this in a way that feels comfortable for you?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites to complete the following sentences.

## *Credibility*

*The specific activity in which I want to develop or maintain credibility is:*

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*The specific things I can do to do this in a way that feels comfortable for me are:*

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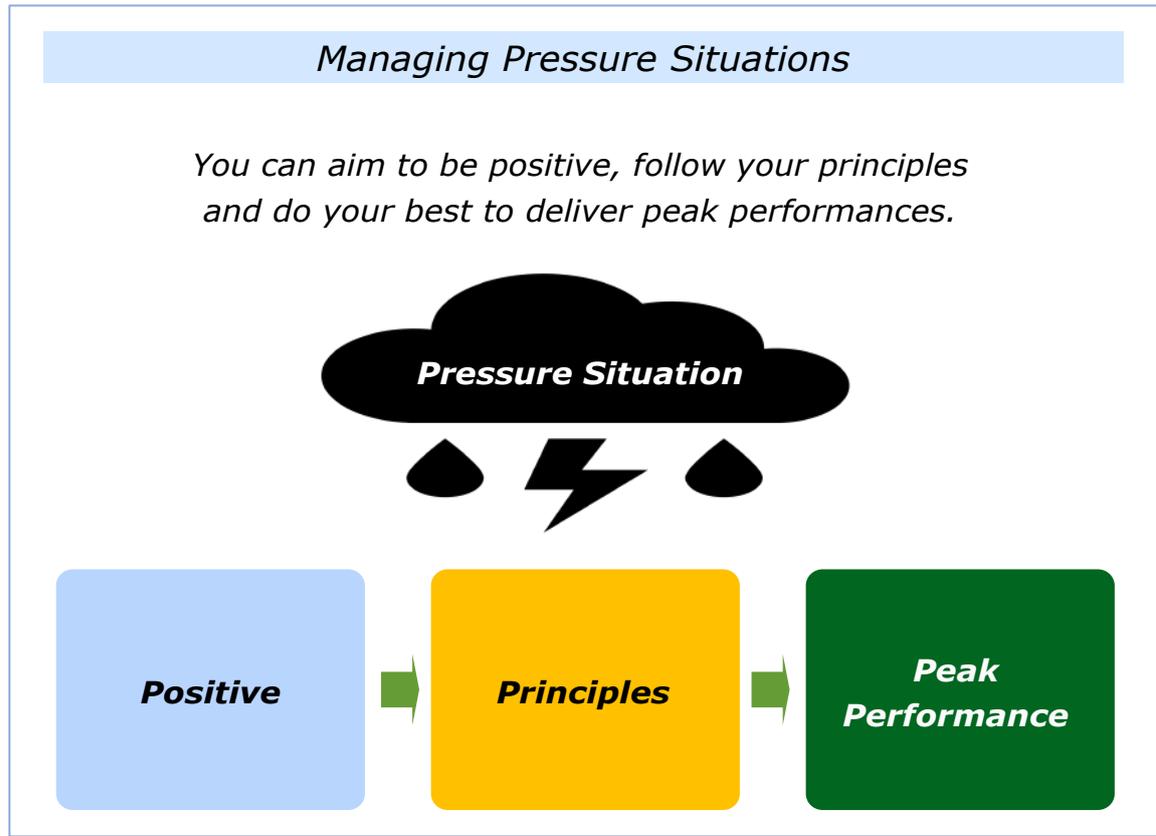
*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Managing Pressure Approach*



Great workers choose to be positive and follow their principles in what other people may see as pressure situations. They focus on what they can control and do their best to deliver peak performances.

They may take this approach when following their vocation, tackling a challenge or doing another activity. They may do so when working as a medic, athlete, problem solver, crisis manager, leader or in another role.

Such workers may see the situation as an opportunity to follow their principles. They then aim to perform superb work, find solutions to challenges and do their best to achieve the desired picture of success.

People who take this approach often have a sense of purpose and want to serve something greater than themselves. They also have a

sense of perspective. They want to do their personal best in life and aim to pass on a positive legacy.

Looking back, when have you followed your principles in a pressure situation? You may have done this when applying for job, playing a sport, managing a crisis, leading a team or doing another activity.

What did you do then to follow your principles? How did you translate these into practise? What happened as a result of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Managing Pressure Situations In The Past*

*The specific time when I did my best to manage a pressure situation was:*

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*The specific things I did then to do my best to manage the pressure situation was:*

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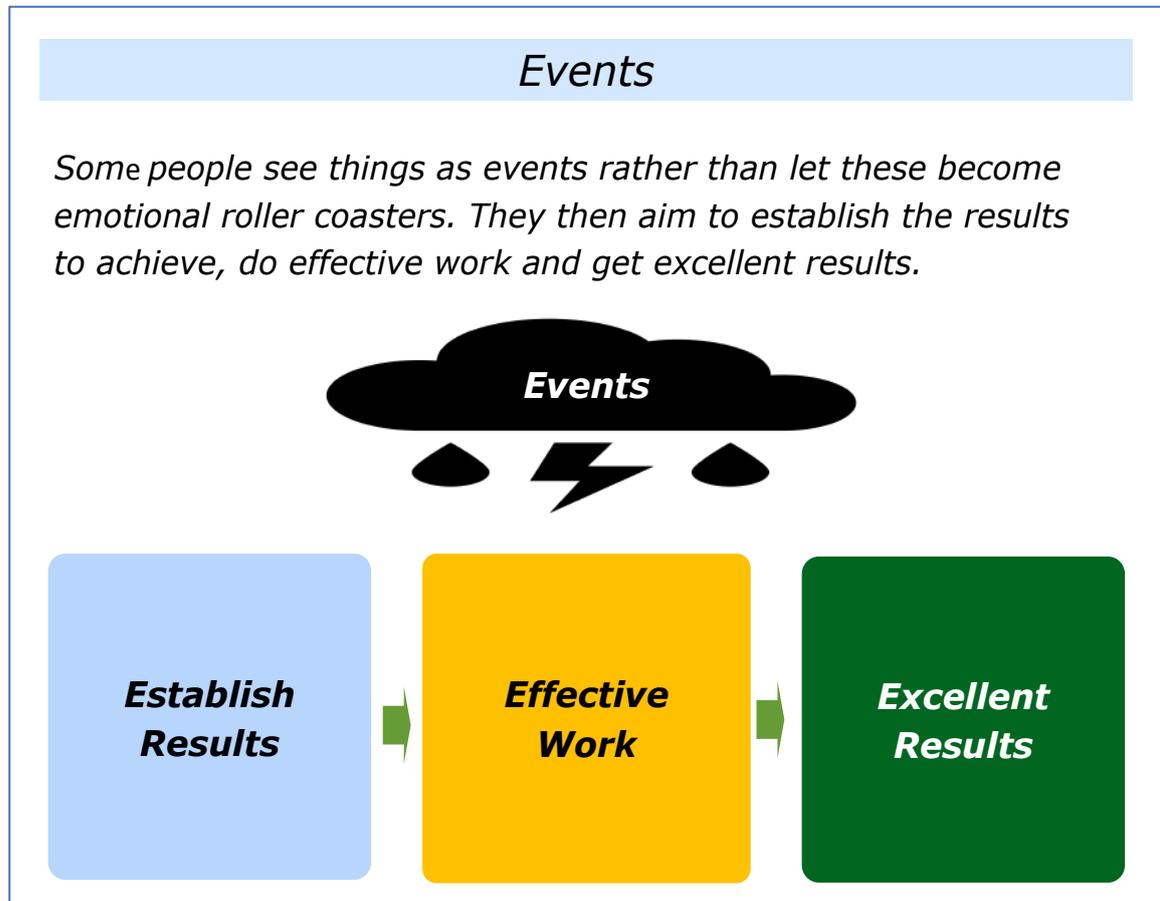
*The specific things that happened as a result were:*

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## *Seeing Things As Events Rather Than Emotional Roller Coasters*



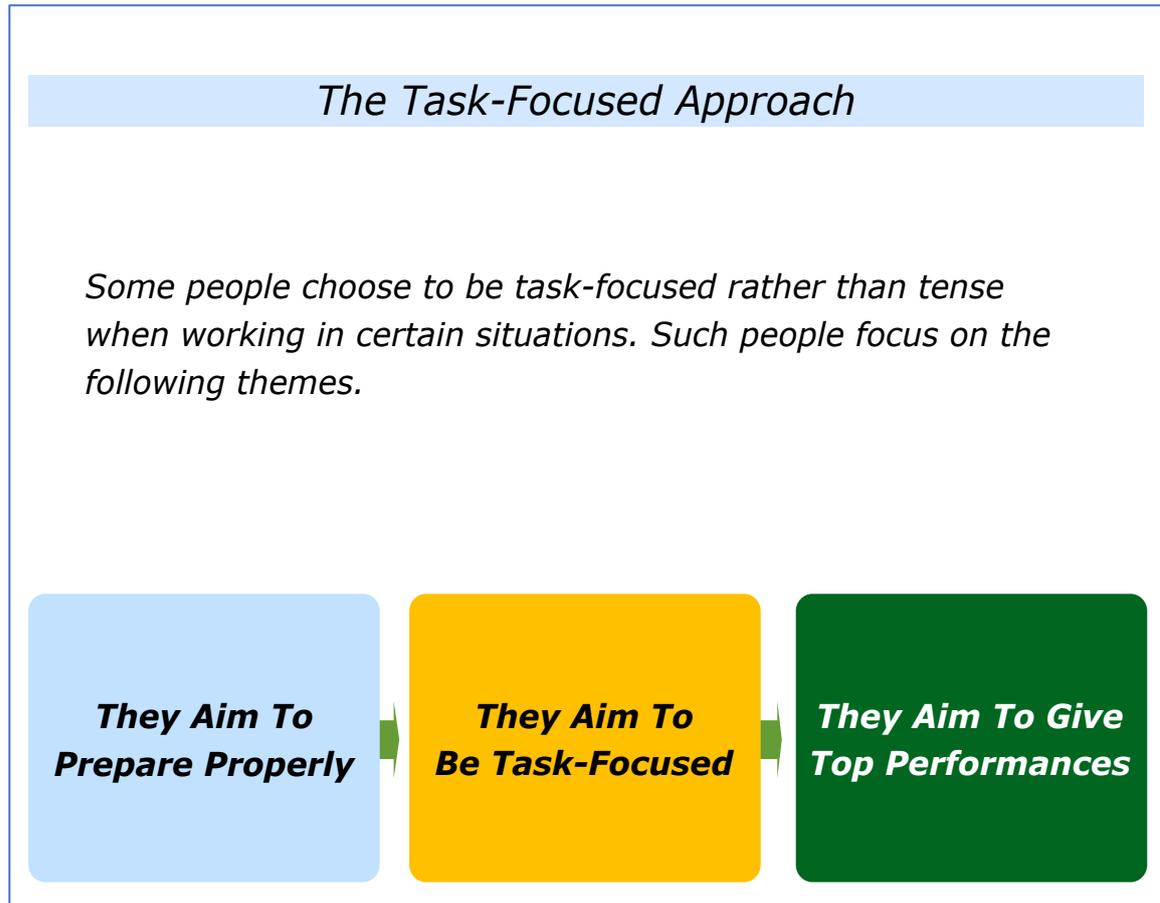
Some people aim to distance themselves from situations when making key decisions. They do this by reframing things as events rather than letting these become emotional roller coasters.

Such people buy time to gather information and see the big picture. They then establish the short, medium and long-term results to achieve in the situation.

They explore their options for going forward and the consequences of each option. They pursue their chosen option and aim to do effective work.

They do their best to achieve the short and medium-term aims. They also, when appropriate, do what is required to deliver long-term excellent results.

## *The Task-Focused Rather Than Tense Approach*



Some people choose to be task-focused rather than tense. They focus on the specific things that need to be done to rescue a person, perform an operation, run in an Olympic Final or do another activity.

Such people aim to prepare properly. They clarify the strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success. They then rehearse what they will do.

They keep going until they are satisfied they know how: a) to translate the strategies into action; b) to manage any potential challenges; c) to do their best to tackle the task successfully.

Going into their version of the arena, they click into action. Managing their emotion, they see themselves as having a job to do.

Such people aim to be task-focused and do their best to deliver top performances.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you followed elements of this approach? What did you do to prepare properly? What did you do to focus on the job in hand?

How did you manage any unexpected events? How did you do your best to deliver a top performance? What happened as result of taking these steps?

### *Positive Reframing*

Great workers sometimes reframe challenges in a positive way. Building on what they can control, they may say:

*"It is a pressure situation,"* rather than, *"It is a situation where I feel pressure."*

This may seem a subtle difference, but it is actually a 180 degree difference in the way to look at a situation.

*They are choosing how they feel when tackling the situation.*

*They are not allowing the situation to define how they feel.*

Some workers take another approach. They drain themselves of emotion and define the situation as a challenge. This approach is sometimes referred to as cold courage rather hot courage.

Hot courage involves spur of the moment acts of bravery. These can include confronting an armed attacker, pulling somebody from a burning car or laying one's life on the line to save another person.

The adrenaline kicks in and the person throws themselves into action. Looking back after the experience, they may say:

*"It was the obvious thing to do."*

Cold courage is more calculated. Sometimes it can mean seeing the challenge as a privilege. It is an opportunity to use their strengths and perform superb work. It can mean saying:

*"I am going give everything. If not me, then who? I am going to do my best rather than not do anything."*

Different people choose different ways to follow their principles in pressure situations. Let's look at some examples.

### *Defusing Bombs*

Many professionals feel passionately about their work. They can sometimes perform better, however, by staying calm and pursuing their principles.

Bomb disposal experts need to drain themselves of emotion and focus on the job in hand. This is especially so when advancing towards the device on what is known as 'the longest walk'.

Ed Chipperfield and James Day describe the qualities demonstrated by such workers in their article called *What does it take to survive as a bomb disposal expert?* Below are excerpts from the piece.

*In a situation where the only outcomes are success or failure, psychologists say these soldiers require a certain mindset.*

*"We want people who minimise the unknowns," says Eugene Burke, a military psychologist.*

*"They're not impulsive but are able to make fast decisions, thanks to training. It's almost as though they're flicking through reference cards in their head to find a match to the problem in front of them.*

*"They're organised, focused on detail and think ahead to possible outcomes. Allowing stress to build up is not an option as the operative can become withdrawn and lose their temper."*

First responders in many professions learn how to stay calm and reframe situations. Virginia Duffy has helped many professionals to deal with difficult situations.

Below is an excerpt from her article *Managing Emotions During Stressful Events*. This piece describes how rescuers – such as firefighters, paramedics and others – can also care for themselves.

*Remember emergency workers must deal with their own feelings first in order to best care for patients. Often we work on automatic and don't experience much emotion until the situation is over; then the emotions may flood us.*

*There are times however when the situation may feel overwhelming to us especially when it "hits close to home."*

*The emotions felt by rescuers may include fear, anger, disgust, helplessness or the desire to leave.*

### *Some strategies for dealing With your own emotions*

*Take a few seconds to think and calm yourself. Talk to yourself: "I can do this. I have done this before, just focus on the job."*

*Take a deep breath. Behaving as if you are calm will help to calm you. Force yourself to talk slow, move slow, be deliberate.*

*Direct your attention to the patient's most immediate concern. Once you are past your initial emotional response, you are usually home free. But also ask for help if you need it.*

### *Doing Your Best In Sports*

Great athletes care deeply about doing their best. Sometimes they can become anxious and perform badly, however, by caring too much about winning the prize.

Matthew Syed, the author of *Bounce*, gives an example of how to overcome this feeling. Sarah Lindsay, the speed skater, took this step by maintaining perspective and following certain principles.

She spent years focusing on reaching the final of her event in the Winter Olympics. This called for beating her previous best performance. Sarah was seen preparing in the locker room before the final qualifying race saying the following things to herself.

*"It's only speed skating. It's only speed skating. It's only bloody speed skating."*

Sarah kept repeating the mantra. She then went out and performed beyond her previous best to reach the final.

Matthew goes on to describe how an athlete can overcome choking – continually failing to perform when it really matters.

*As Mark Bawden, the sports psychologist who worked with Lindsay, put it:*

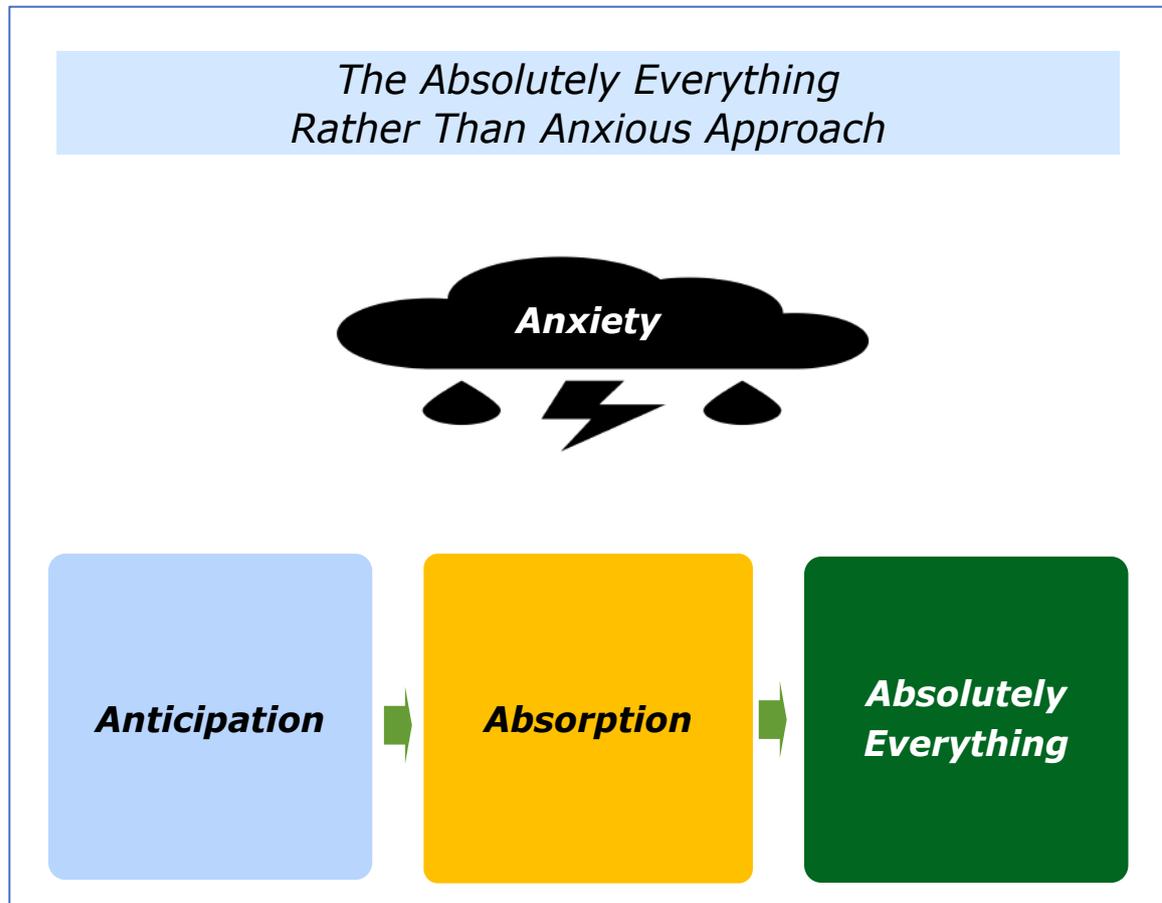
*"In order to make all the sacrifices necessary to reach world-class levels of performance, an athlete has to believe that performing well means everything."*

*"They have got to cleave to the belief that winning an Olympic gold is of life-changing significance. But that is precisely the belief that is most likely to trigger a choking response."*

*"So, the key psychological skill for someone with a tendency to choke is to ditch that belief in the minutes before competition and to replace it with the belief that the race does not really matter."*

*"It is a form of psychological manipulation, and it takes a lot of work to master."*

## *The Absolutely Everything Rather Than Anxious Approach*



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to keep focusing on giving absolutely everything rather than worrying about anxiety.

Different people follow this approach in different ways. One person said they actually used the anxiety in a positive way. They described this in the following way.

*"I reframe such feelings a positive anxiety. I use it as a spur to do my best in a situation."*

Great workers sometimes take the following steps. They start by anticipating what they are going to do. They then absorb themselves in the situation and give absolutely everything when doing the piece of work. Let's explore these themes.

## *Anticipation*

Great workers prepare properly. Bearing in mind what they can control, they anticipate how they can do their best to achieve their picture of success.

Imagine that you want to apply this approach in your own way. You may explore the following themes. (These are described in depth elsewhere in the book.)

*What is the piece of work I want to do? What will be the pluses of doing the piece of work? What may be the potential minuses? How can I build on the pluses and minimise the minuses?*

*When do I want to do the work? How can I organise my time to do it properly? How can I make a plan for doing all the work? How can I break this down into short, medium and long-term goals?*

*What are the real results I want to achieve? What are the specific things that will be happening that will show I have achieved the picture of success?*

*What are my strengths? How can I use these to do superb work? What skills may I need to add? What are the strategies I can follow to give myself the greatest chance of success?*

*How can I translate these strategies into action? What are the potential difficulties I may face? How can I prevent some of these happening? How can I manage these successfully if they do happen?*

## *Absorption*

Imagine that you have planned properly. It may then be important to relax before embarking on the piece of work.

The next step will be to click into action and absorb yourself fully. Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to explore the following themes.

*How can I relax before doing the work? How can I then follow my rituals for clicking into action? How can I be fully alert and use my antennae when doing the work? How can I be positively engaged? How can I follow my successful pattern for working?*

## *Absolutely Everything*

Great workers give absolutely everything when doing work they believe in. Some use personal mantras to apply this approach. They may say, for example:

*"Be brave ... Dare to do your best ... Leave everything on the field, stage or wherever you are performing."*

Imagine you want to give everything in your own way. You may want to focus on the following themes.

*How can I pursue my chosen strategies? How can I get some early successes? How can I keep encouraging myself? How can I keep reading reality? How can I build on what is working? How can I improve the other things?*

*How can I, when appropriate, be daring and add something special? How can I give everything to do my best and work towards achieving the picture of success?*

Looking ahead, can you think of a piece of work you want to do? How can you anticipate and plan what you aim to do? How can you absorb yourself fully? How can you give absolutely everything when doing the piece of work?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Absolutely Everything Approach*

*The specific situation where I want to focus on giving absolutely everything when doing a piece of work is:*

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*The specific things I can do then to focus on giving absolutely everything are:*

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\*

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*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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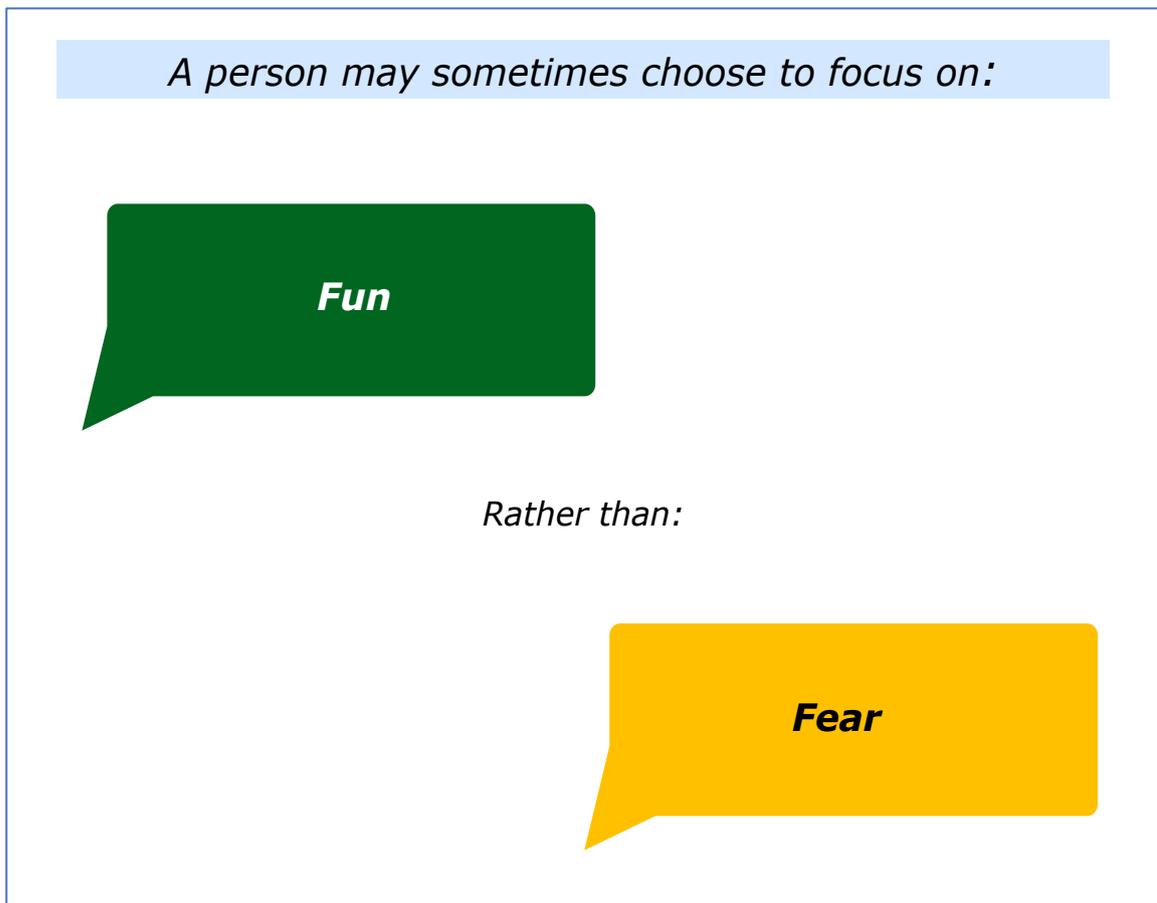
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## *The Focusing On Fun Rather Than Fear Approach*

Great workers sometimes take this approach. They may do so to recapture their zest for life or free themselves up so that they can do their best.

Looking back, can you recall a situation when you took this approach? You may have been playing a sport, making a presentation or doing another activity. What did you do then to focus on enjoying rather than enduring the experience?



This is obviously a complex subject and goes beyond clichés about removing fear. It can involve concerns about being judged by others or doing one's best and not achieving success.

One approach involves being positive about doing an activity, however, rather than feeling paralysed. Let's explore these themes.

## *Fun*

A person can choose to focus on fun in their life and work. There are many definitions of fun. The one we are using here is:

*To do something that brings enjoyment or pleasure.*

Sometimes this means a person returning to the things that motivated them in the past. They can then look forward and aim to flow, focus and finish.

## *Fear*

Sometimes it is important to remove the fear. One approach is for a person to ask themselves the following time-honoured questions:

*"What is the worst that can happen? What would I then do if the worst did happen?"*

The answers the person gives often reveal they would survive and maybe even go on to thrive. This can sometimes help the person to feel freer and do their best to do fulfilling things in their life or work.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to focus on fun – in the broadest sense of the word – rather than fear?

You may want to do this when following your vocation, tackling a challenge or doing a piece of work. You may want to do it when aiming to revitalise your life, reboot your career or do another activity.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Fun Rather Than Fear In The Future*

*The specific situation when I may want  
to focus on fun – in the broadest  
sense – rather than fear may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do  
then to take this approach are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may  
happen as a result may be:*

\*

\*

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## *Pursuing Your Principles In Challenging Situations*

Great workers, teams and organisations believe in following their principles. This can be relatively easy when things are calm. The hard part is following them in stormy weather. It can therefore be useful to test how to follow the principles in challenging situations.

One company I worked with took this approach. The senior team began by involving key people across the business in agreeing on the principles to follow in the future. These included the following:

*Take Responsibility ... Be Professional ... Help People Succeed ...  
Deliver Great Results*

The company held employee workshops where people explored how to translate these principles into action. It included this exercise.

### *The Principles Challenge*

*Choose a situation where it may be challenging to follow the principles.*

*Clarify the possible options for tackling the challenge together with the pluses and minuses of each option.*

*Clarify which of these possible options is the one where we can – as far as possible – follow our principles and translate these into action.*

The employees threw themselves into the exercise and produced plans for tackling most scenarios. They did not consider one scenario, however, that soon presented the leader with a dilemma.

## *The Actual Challenge*

One month after the workshop two senior staff members behaved in a way that violated the professional guidelines that had been communicated to staff.

The story about their behaviour spread across the company. People began to wonder if the company was serious about following the stated principles. The CEO had several options in the situation. Each option had pluses and minuses.

*They could ignore the errant behaviour;*

*They could give the senior staff members a warning and hope it was a one-off;*

*They could show they were serious about following the principles and replace the senior staff members.*

The CEO chose the third option. This surprised many people and created some short-term shocks, but it was beneficial in the medium to long-term. It showed they were serious about building and maintaining a positive and professional company.

This highlights a key point. Good organisations keep going back to their principles – which act as a guiding compass - especially during times of crises.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a potential pressure situation you may face in the future? This could be in your personal or professional life.

How can you try to frame it in a positive way? How can you follow your principles? How can you do your best to deliver peak performances.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Managing Pressure Situations In The Future*

*The specific time in the future when I may want to manage a pressure situation successfully may be:*

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*The specific things I can do then to aim to manage the situation successfully are:*

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*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Performing To Your Potential Approach*



There are many views about how people can work towards fulfilling their potential. This section looks at one model.

This approach starts by inviting a person to play to their strengths and follow their principles. It then invites them to follow their chosen way to performing to their potential.

Different people take this final step in different ways. They may follow the peak performance, pushing or partnering approach. They then work towards fulfilling their potential.

Imagine that you want to perform at your best. Let's explore how you can do this in your own way.

## *Playing To Your Strengths*

Great workers play to their strengths. They often aim to do what they do best, to put themselves into situations where they work best and to keep doing their best.

There are many ways to clarify your strengths. Let's explore some of these approaches.



This is the classic approach to doing superb work. It is focus on the specific activities where you build on your strengths, do satisfying work and achieve success.

The next step is to keep putting yourself into situations where you can do superb work. You can then keep improving on the way to fulfilling your potential. Here is an exercise on this theme.

## *Playing To My Strengths*

*The specific activity where I build on my strengths, do satisfying work and achieve success is:*

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*The specific things I can do to do more of these activities in the future are:*

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*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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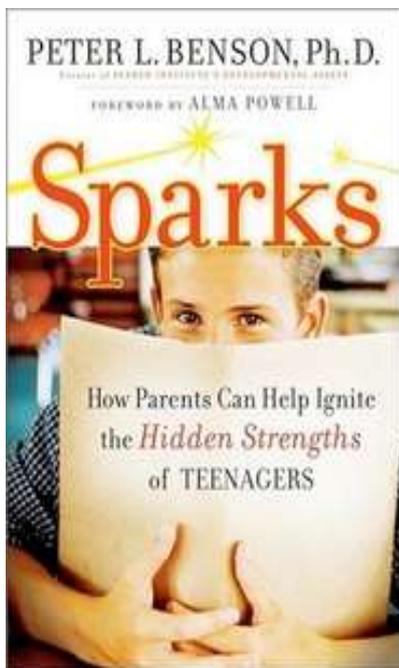
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## *The Sparks Approach*

Peter Benson was a pioneer in this approach. Much of his work focused on helping children and teenagers but the principles he outlined can be applied to people of all ages.

He and his colleagues at the Search Institute focused on the times when young people came alive. Much of this work was around the theme of sparks. Peter described these in the following way.



*"Children want to be known for their sparks."*

*"When you see these sparks in them, affirm them."*

*"A spark is something that gives your life meaning and purpose."*

*"It's an interest, a passion, or a gift."*

*"You shall know them by their sparks."*

Peter looked for the good in everybody and everything. Whilst being a rigorous researcher, he conveyed his findings about people in a compassionate and inspiring way.

Joining the Search Institute in 1985, he played a key part in pioneering Positive Youth Development programmes across the world. Here is an extract from the Institute's web site.

*Sparks are the hidden flames in kids that excite them and tap into their true passions. Sparks come from the gut. They motivate and*

*inspire. They're authentic passions, talents, assets, skills, and dreams.*

*Sparks can be musical, athletic, intellectual, academic, or relational; from playing the violin to working with kids or senior citizens. Sparks can ignite a lifelong vocation or career, or balance other activities to create an emotionally satisfying, enriched life.*

*Sparks get kids going on a positive path, away from the conflicts and negative issues - violence, promiscuity, drugs, and alcohol - that give teens a bad name and attract so much negative energy.*

Peter defined thriving as feeling fully alive, happy and, hopefully, giving to others. He described this approach in the article *Thriving Starts On The Inside*. Here are some excerpts.

*The idea of spark is very much like the idea of spirit. The word spirit comes from Latin and means 'my breath, put into the world with vigour and courage.' Your breath, your essence, your spark.*

*Most of us, however, discover our spark between the ages of 10 and 20. You know it when you feel it. That is, you know it when you are doing something that makes you feel whole, when time stands still, when just doing it or being it is its own reward.*

*Being great at it or impressing people with it is not the point. Just knowing it, affirming it and putting it into play is the point.*

*Youth, when talking about their spark, almost always use romantic language in describing it. They say things like, "I love it when I'm playing the piano," or "I cherish the moments each day when I can help someone."*

*Thriving starts on the inside, with the knowledge and affirmation of your spark and the courage to put it into play. That's how we fall in love with life. The spark is a seed waiting to find fertile soil and a chance to flower. Name it. Love it. Use it to light up our world.*

Peter died at the age of 65 in 2011. The Search Institute described him in the following way.

*An inspiring leader who devoted his own life to making the world a better place for families, schools and communities.*

Neal Starkman also provided a view of Peter's work. Writing on his blog, he paid the following tribute.

### *Peter Benson*



*What Peter Benson did that was so significant was to shift the way educators think about young people.*

*Rather than focusing on what's wrong with kids and trying to 'fix' them, he zeroed in on what was right with kids and tried to support them.*

*This is Peter Benson's important legacy: a way of looking at our nation's future in terms of strengths, not deficits; a way of treating young people not as problems but as resources.*

People demonstrate sparks throughout their lives. During a workshop for 40 people, for example, I asked each of them to make a flip chart of the following exercise.

They put these around the walls, filling the whole room with their sparks. This provided lots of information for them to build on during the session and afterwards with their families. Here is the exercise.

## *Sparks*

*The specific times when I feel sparks – when I feel alive, creative or fulfilled – are:*

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*The specific steps I can take to do more of these things in the future are:*

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*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Sweet Spot Approach*

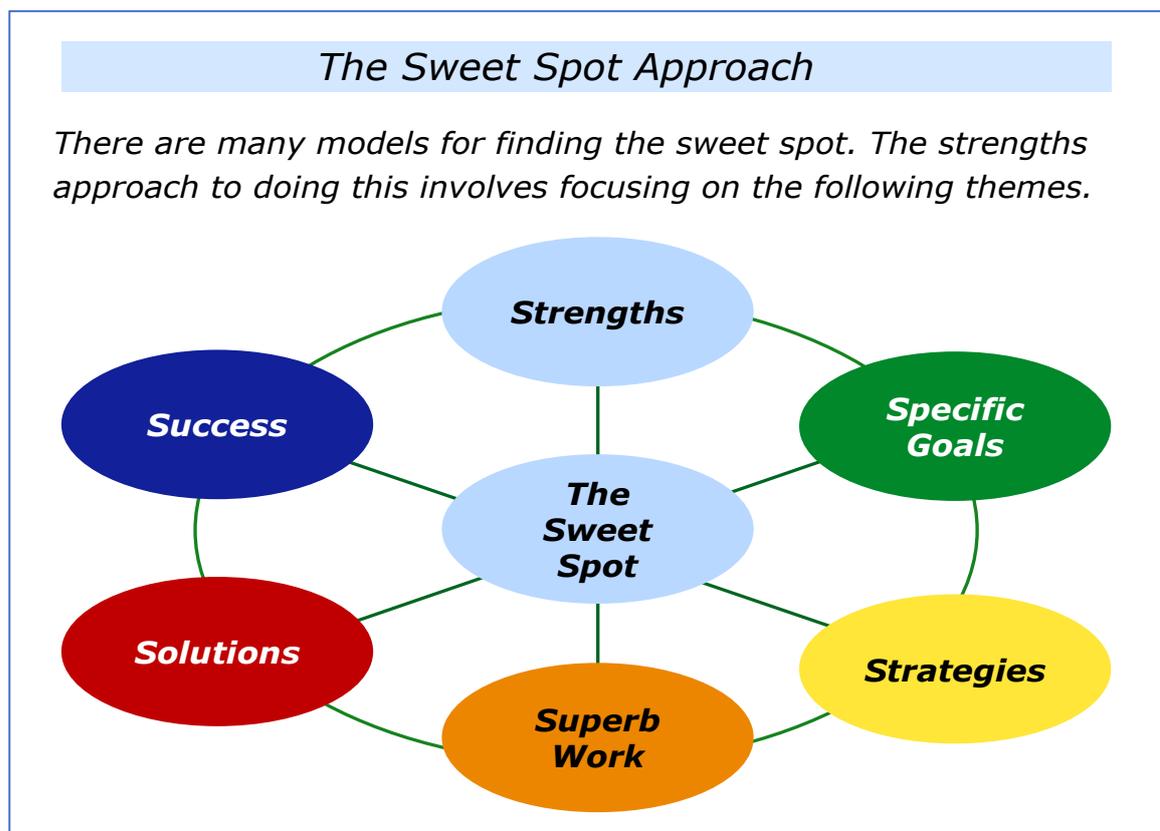
This is a concept originally used in sport. Since then it has been applied to many other areas of life. Here are some definitions.

*The point or area on a bat, club, or racket where it makes most effective contact with the ball.*

*The particular situation or combination of things that is the best and most effective possible.*

*The spot where you do something that may appear effortless but sometimes produces the most effective results.*

There are many models for finding the sweet spot. One approach is to focus on the following themes mentioned throughout this book.



Some people focus on their sweet spot in both stimulating and potentially stressful situations. Tim Gallwey's work on the inner

game encouraged people to follow a similar this approach. Getting their inner game right helped them to play well in their outer game.

What is the sweet spot for you? You may experience it when encouraging certain kinds of people, doing certain creative activities or playing a certain role. You may find it when employing certain skills, solving certain problems or tackling certain challenges.

What are the situations where you experience the sweet spot? You may prefer writing, meeting people face-to-face, using virtual media or employing other vehicles. You may find it comes more easily when working by yourself, leading a team or in another situation.

How to find your sweet spot? One approach is to trying completing the following sentence.

*The sweet spot for me is when I am  
building on my strengths and I am:*

\*

Everybody will have different times when they experience this feeling. Looking at my own work, for example, the sweet spot for me is when I am building on my strengths and I am:

*Sharing knowledge that helps people to succeed.*

Sometimes this involves making models, sometimes one-to-one sessions, sometimes writing to share the ideas with people.

You will have your own sweet spot or perhaps several of them. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Sweet Spot Approach*

*The sweet spot for me is when I am building on my strengths and I am:*

\*

*The specific situations where I experience the sweet spot are:*

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*The specific things I can do to do more of these things – and put myself into more of these situations - are:*

\*

\*

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## The Seeing Patterns Approach

### Pattern Recognition

*Pattern recognition is one of the keys to peak performance. Great workers have the ability:*

- *To recognise both the successful and unsuccessful patterns;*
- *To recognise the consequences of the successful and unsuccessful patterns;*
- *To build on the successful patterns and manage the consequences of the other patterns.*

Great workers are good at seeing patterns in the areas in which they excel. Going into a situation, they clarify the results to achieve. They then scan the situation and take the following steps.

*They look for how people are behaving or what is actually happening;*

*They look for both successful and unsuccessful patterns;*

*They look for how it is possible to build on the successful patterns and manage the unsuccessful patterns.*

Great workers sometimes use this framework. They may look for different things, however, depending on whether they aim to see patterns followed by people or patterns in other situations. Here are some of the themes they may explore.

## Seeing Patterns In People

*Great workers may ask some of the following questions when looking for patterns followed by people.*

- *What is their picture of success? What are the real results the person or the group of people want to achieve in the situation? How are they actually behaving in the situation?*
- *What are their successful patterns? What are they doing that will help them to achieve their goals? What are their unsuccessful patterns? What are they doing that will not help them to achieve their goals? What are the consequences of their patterns?*
- *How can they build on their successful patterns? How can they manage their unsuccessful patterns? What else can they do to achieve their picture of success?*

## Seeing Patterns In Situations

*Great workers may ask some of the following questions when looking for patterns in situations.*

- *What is the picture of success? What are the real results to achieve in the situation? What is actually happening? What are the patterns? What are the things that are happening again and again?*
- *What are the successful patterns and unsuccessful patterns? What are the things that are working and not working? What are the consequences? What will happen if these patterns continue?*
- *How can I build on the successful patterns? How can I manage the unsuccessful patterns? What else can I do to achieve the picture of success?*

Such workers actually look at what is happening rather than rush into interpreting what is happening. They then use their skills to deliver success.

Different people apply these skills in different situations. One mentor explained their approach in the following way.

*"I used to do lots of team workshops. Whilst these often helped people to deliver results, I realised that I was better doing individual mentoring sessions."*

*"During the one-to-one meetings I found it relatively easy to find people's successful and unsuccessful patterns. I was then able to provide them with tools they could use to achieve their goals."*

Some people are good at recognising patterns in counselling situations; some in technical situations; some in sporting situations. Some people are good at seeing patterns in financial and investments situations. They then aim to use their skills to deliver success.

Let's return to your own life and work. What are the situations in which you are good at seeing patterns? These could be when you are working with people or entering another kind of situation.

How can you put yourself into more of these in the future? How can you continue to build on your skills and deliver success in these situations? What will be the benefits of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences. We will then move on to the next step involved in performing to your potential.

## *Seeing Patterns*

*The specific situation in which I am good at recognising patterns is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do build on these skills and deliver success are:*

\*

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*The specific benefits of doing these things will be:*

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## *Pursuing Your Principles*

Great workers often follow their chosen principles to perform superb work. Charles Garfield inspired people to pursue these themes. Writing in his books *Peak Performers* and *Second to None*, he encouraged people to become the best they could be. He wrote:

*"Do not compete with anyone except yourself."*

He said it is vital for people to work towards a compelling purpose. He saw this when working as a computer analyst and leading engineers, scientists and staff on the *Apollo 11* project.

Charles also founded the Shanti Project. This is a volunteer organisation that focuses on delivering service excellence for patients and families facing life-threatening illness.

Alongside this he worked as a clinical professor at the University of California Medical School in San Francisco. Charles said he first heard the phrase peak performance from a cancer patient who said:

*"Staying alive these days is my peak performance."*

He remembered the phrase and went on to study great workers in many fields. These included people in medicine, sports, business and the NASA work in which he was participating.

Charles said that towards the end of the 1970s he discovered a common trigger for peak performance. People were often motivated to follow certain principles. They then translated this into pursuing a mission that gave them a sense of purpose.

The key factor, said Charles, was for them to make an internal decision to perform at their best. He wrote:

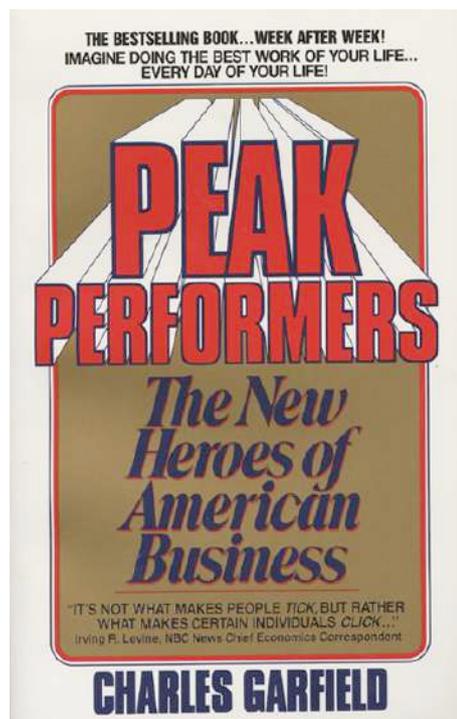
*Now I began to understand what I was hearing and seeing, as one peak performer after another spoke of self-training, learning by experience, organizing that experience around a single theme,*

*speaking and finding a purpose, a personal mission that represents something important.*

*They were talking about what management theorist Warren Bennis calls 'working near the heart of things.'*

*They want to feel proud of themselves, to achieve something, to leave a mark and a contribution, and they follow their plans for doing all that purposefully and tenaciously. That is what I – and many others I knew – wanted.*

*So peak performers are not merely exceptions. They represent a kind of person any of us can be – once we find the capacity in ourselves."*

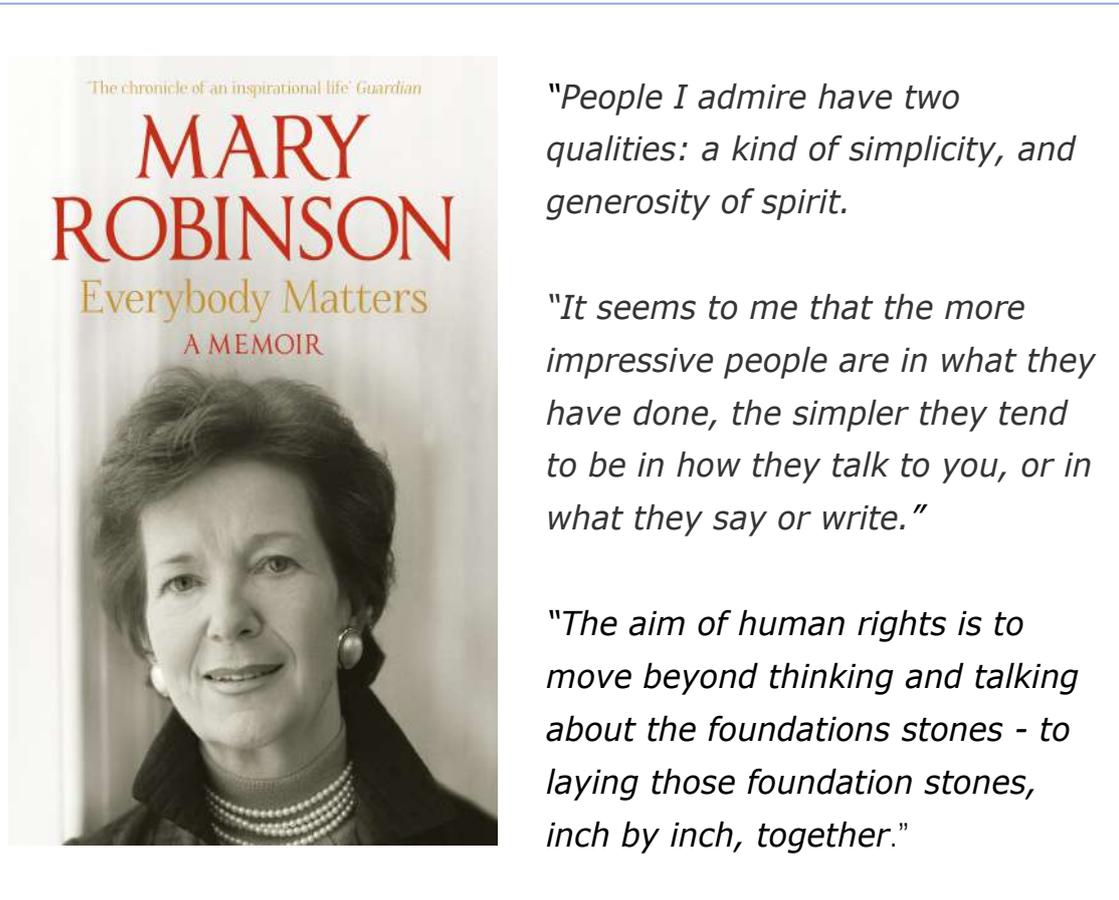


*"The mission of the individual needs to align with the mission of the team, which needs to align with the mission of the organization.*

*"In fact, I would take it further - the mission of the organization needs to align with the mission of the society in which it is embedded and the mission of the planet to which we are all indebted."*

Different people follow their principles in different ways. Mary Robinson, the former President of Ireland, is somebody who believes in following the principles of kindness.

Whether the person is poor or a President, she shows warmth and tries to make the person feel the centre of her world. Mary explained this approach in her book *Everybody Matters*. This is followed by the official description of the book.



*The first woman President of Ireland, who became UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson has spent her life in pursuit of a fairer world.*

*Now, for the first time, she reveals what lies behind the vision, strength and determination that has helped her to achieve so much for human rights around the globe.*

*She describes the upbringing which gave her a strong sense of values and how she came into painful conflict with her parents - marrying against their wishes and, later, helping to legalise contraception in a deeply Catholic Ireland.*

*As a barrister she won landmark cases advancing the causes of women and the marginalised against the prejudices of the day. When - to the surprise of many - she became the first woman President of Ireland in 1990, she put Ireland firmly on the international stage.*

*Accepting the position of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 1997 was her biggest challenge and here she describes the huge political difficulties she encountered among the many triumphs.*

*Subsequently, based in New York, she led Realizing Rights for eight years, pioneering how to implement in practice economic and social rights: working in African countries on health, decent work, corporate responsibility and women's empowerment in peace and security.*

*Mary now heads her Climate Justice foundation and works on behalf of the millions of poor people most affected by climate change.*

*Told with the same calm conviction and modest pride that has guided her life, **Everybody Matters** will inspire everyone who reads it with the belief that each of us can, in our own way, help to change the world for the better.*

Great workers follow their principles and aim to get positive results. Sometimes these can be tangible. They may write an article, solve a problem, create something beautiful or reach a goal.

Sometimes the results may be less immediate but just as valuable. They may help a person, pass on knowledge or create experiences that give people positive memories for life.

What are the principles you want to follow in your work? How can you translate these into action? What may happen as a result? If you wish, try completing the following sentences.

## *Pursuing My Principles*

*The specific principles I  
want to follow in my work are:*

\*

*The specific things I can to  
follow these principles are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

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## *Performing To Your Potential*

Different people choose different ways to perform to their potential. They may follow the performance approach, the pushing approach or the partnering approach.

One thing that such people have in common, however, is that they want to feel they are progressing. Let's explore this concept.

### *The Progress Principle*

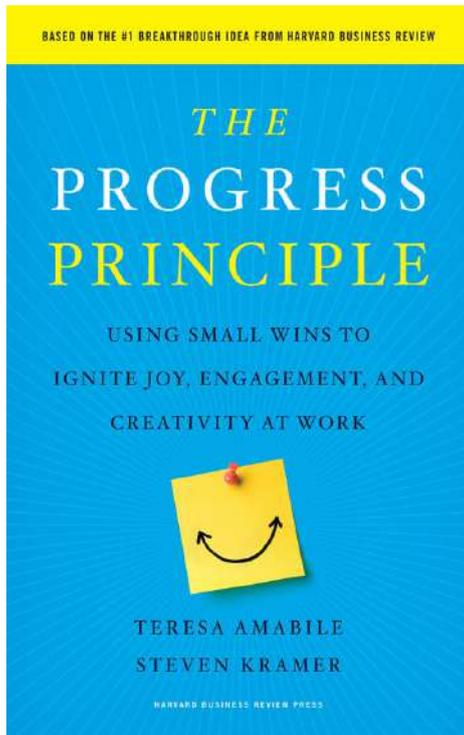
Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer focused on this theme in their book *The Progress Principle*. They researched over 12,000 people to explore what individuals found motivating in their daily work. Below is an excerpt from a piece they wrote for the Harvard Business Review.

*Early on, we realized that a central driver of creative, productive performance was the quality of a person's inner work life - the mix of emotions, motivations, and perceptions over the course of a workday.*

*How happy workers feel; how motivated they are by an intrinsic interest in the work; how positively they view their organization, their management, their team, their work, and themselves - all these combine either to push them to higher levels of achievement or to drag them down.*

*Through exhaustive analysis of diaries kept by knowledge workers, we discovered the progress principle.*

*Of all the things that can boost emotions, motivation, and perceptions during a workday, the single most important is making progress in meaningful work. And the more frequently people experience that sense of progress, the more likely they are to be creatively productive in the long run.*



*People want to feel they are making progress. They are more likely to feel this when:*

*They are working towards meaningful goals;*

*They work in an environment that is based on encouragement, practical support and respect;*

*They have a sense of autonomy and can use their talents to achieve daily wins on the way towards achieving the meaningful goals.*

*Whether they are trying to solve a major scientific mystery or simply produce a high-quality product or service, everyday progress - even a small win - can make= the difference in how they feel and perform.*

*A person's inner work life on a given day fuels his or her performance for the day and can even affect performance the next day.*

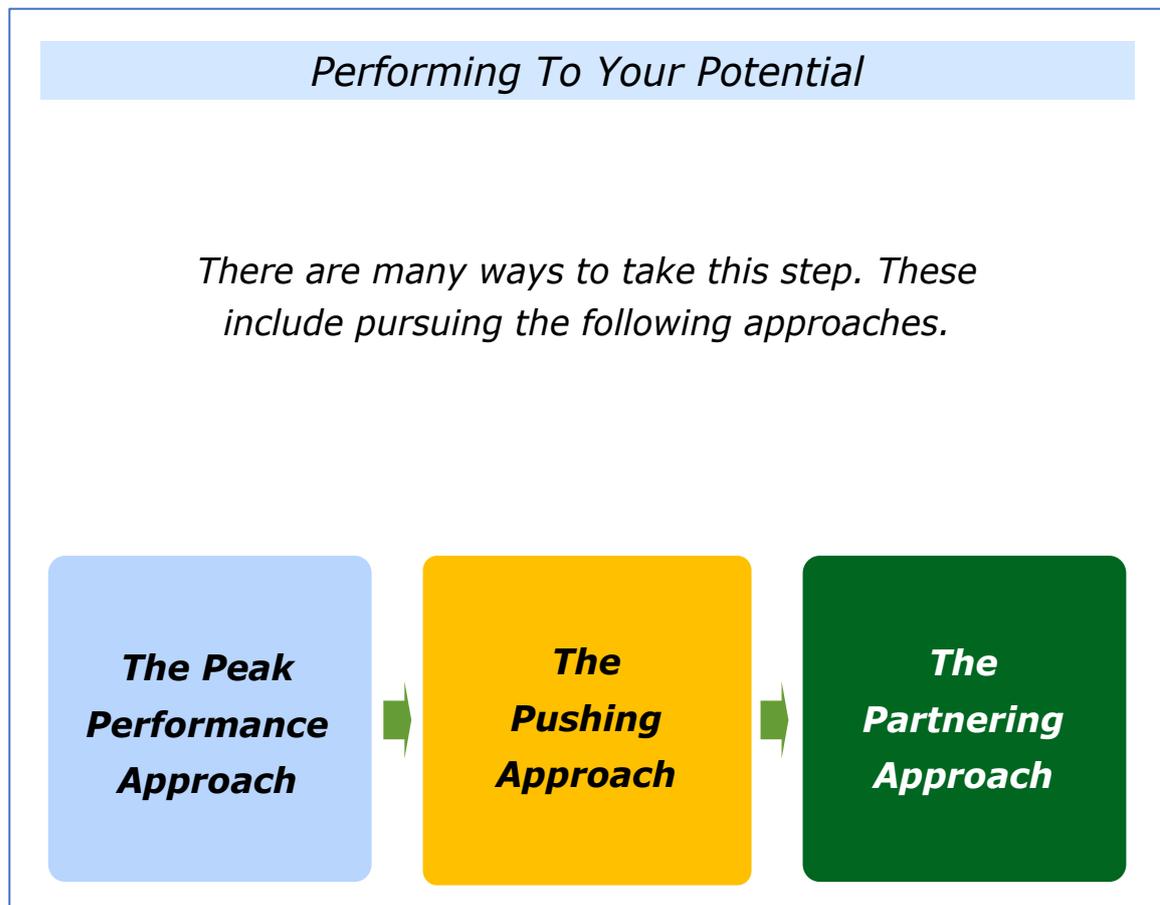
Different people have different views about progress.

*Some people will aim to achieve a certain level of money, get promotion or win prizes.*

*Some people will aim to keep following their principles, translate these into action and achieve certain goals.*

*Some people will aim to follow their principles and perform to their potential. They may also, as a by-product, achieve certain prizes.*

As mentioned earlier, different people choose different ways to perform to their potential. Let's explore these approaches.



### *The Peak Performance Approach*

Each person will follow this approach in their own way. Some follow the most common method. This involves them aiming:

*To clarify when they have performed brilliantly in a similar situation in the past;*

*To clarify the principles they followed then – and how they translated these into action - to perform brilliantly;*

*To clarify the specific things they can do to follow similar principles – plus add other skills – to perform brilliantly in the future.*

The person will rehearse what they are going to do. They will then click into action and do their best to deliver a peak performance.

### *The Continuing To Expand Your Comfort Zone Approach*

Some people aim to develop by continuing to expand their comfort zone. Many people urge others to develop by saying to them:

*"You need to get out of your comfort zone."*

This sounds okay, but it depends on what is meant by comfort zone. Let's consider the following examples.

*Person A feels comfortable when they are doing their best. Should they try to develop by not doing their best and in this way feeling uncomfortable?*

*Person B is comfortable when running inspiring seminars for positive people who want to learn. Should they aim to be uncomfortable by working with unmotivated people who don't want to learn?*

*Person C feels comfortable when acting as a First Responder and managing crises that other people would find difficult. Should they try to develop by being uncomfortable when sitting at a desk and doing boring jobs?*

What does somebody actually mean when they say that an individual needs to get out of their comfort zone? Maybe the message they want to get across is something like the following.

*"The person needs to show more urgency. They need to stretch themselves and work harder if they want to fulfil their potential."*

Another approach is for a person to expand their comfort zone. They can do this by setting a stimulating goal, stretching themselves and working to achieve success.

## Comfort Zones

*You feel comfortable when:*

*You don't feel comfortable when:*

*You are doing your best*

*You are not doing your best*

*You are following  
your principles*

*You are not following  
your principles*

*You are playing to your  
strengths and following your  
successful style of working*

*You are not playing to your  
strengths and following your  
successful style of working*

*You are doing superb work*

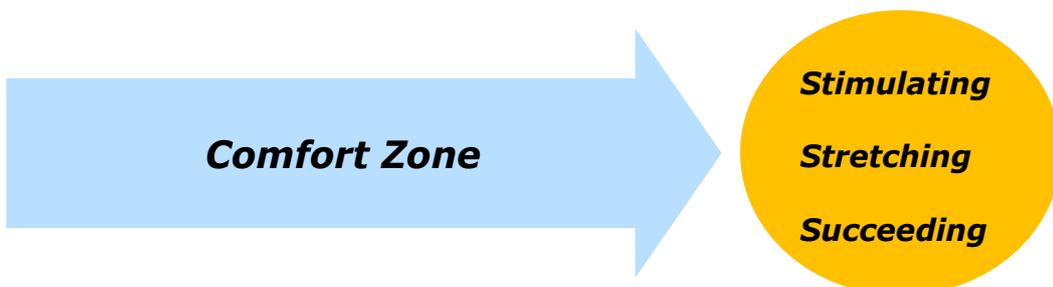
*You are not doing superb work*

*You are continuing to develop  
and expand your comfort zone*

*You are not continuing to develop  
and expand your comfort zone*

## Continuing To Expand Your Comfort Zone

*A person can sometimes develop by expanding their comfort zone. One approach is to work towards a stimulating goal, stretching themselves and working to achieve success.*



Imagine that a person has decided to improve their wellbeing by taking up running. They will start by walking and jogging for short distance.

The person will increase their running distances in a sustainable way. They may enter half marathons followed by full marathons. Eventually they may run several marathons in succession. They will build up slowly and expand their comfort zone.

The person will not suddenly leap from their sedentary lifestyle into trying to run a marathon. Certainly that will involve going out of their comfort zone, but there may also be lots of collateral damage.

Imagine that you want to develop by expanding your comfort zone. Looking ahead, you can focus on working towards a specific goal. You can choose one where you are able:

*To build on your strengths and tackle a stimulating challenge;*

*To stretch yourself, develop your skills and achieve success;*

*To, as a by-product, expand the kinds of situations in which you feel comfortable and can deliver success.*

During the past decade many people have talked about the idea of getting used to what they call positive discomfort. This can involve doing new things, changing your routine or putting yourself into challenging situations.

Sports coaches sometimes use their technique with athletes. They believe that some athletes need to be able to deal with surprise and new experiences.

They therefore aim throw the occasional curve balls. The athletes can learn to adapt, make decisions and perform at their best.

Let's explore another approach for performing to your potential. This is one that some people find wonderful but also hard to explain.

### *The Partnering Approach*

This is an approach used by many creative people. It resembles going into a state of flow. A person may do this when writing, painting, composing a song or doing another creative activity.

Such a person may see themselves as a partner - almost like a midwife - in the process. Tapping into a creative force they respect, they try to guide to fruition. Some songwriters, for example, use the phrase:

*"I was almost as if the song wrote itself."*

Each person will follow this approach in their own way. Recalling it later, they may describe it in almost mystical terms.

Such a person may then try to follow similar principles in the future. Sometimes they manage and this can become the wellspring for doing wonderful work.

Let's return to your own work. Imagine that you want to focus on a specific activity and perform superb work.

How can you play to your strengths? How can you follow your principles? How can you translate these into action? How can you do your best to perform to your potential?

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Performing To My Potential*

*The specific activity in which I would like to perform to my potential is:*

\*

*The specific things I can play to my strengths, follow my principles and perform to my potential are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Decisive Moments Approach*



Great workers do superb work at decisive moments. Commentators often describe peak performers as having the following qualities:

*"They are good at managing crises ... They deliver the goods when it matters ... They do great work on great occasions."*

Great workers see such moments as simply part of the journey. They may be doing their daily work, supporting other people or tackling specific challenges. They have the following mantra:

*"Every situation can be seen as decisive moment. It is an opportunity to do your best to deliver success."*

Such workers may be encouraging a person, leading a team, presenting to a large audience, appearing on television or doing

another activity. They aim to do their best by focusing on the following themes:

*They do superb work as the daily standard ... They do superb work at decisive moments ... They do superb work that delivers success.*

The following pages explore some of the ways they translate this approach into action.

## *Doing Your Best As The Daily Standard*

Great workers make a habit of delivering high standards. Many start by clarifying their strengths. They then focus on a specific activity where they have the self-discipline and ability to do superb work.

Great teams encourage their people to develop the habit of delivering excellence. Many do this by recruiting people who are positive, professional and have the ability to be peak performers.

Some teams must start from scratch, however, when helping their people to deliver the required standards. They encourage people:

*To focus on the team's goals;*

*To focus on the key strategies they can follow to achieve the team's goals;*

*To focus on the professional standards they must deliver to achieve the team's goals.*

This is an approach I saw in action when running the kick-off workshop for a yacht crew competing in round-the-world BT Global Challenge.

Each crew was made up of people from all walks of life, many with little experience of sailing. The team I worked with had their first meeting in North Wales.

After some introductions, the skipper asked people to brainstorm the team's goals. The crew members got excited, saying things like:

*"We are going to win."*

Listening to the presentations, the skipper showed respect for each of the suggestions. After summarising their ideas, he outlined his approach in the following way.

*"Looking at the brainstormed ideas and adding to these, I would suggest the following goals. The top one is my guiding principle as a skipper. I would suggest the following aims:*



### *The Goals*

*To get everybody around the world and home safely*

*To get the boat to go as fast as possible every day*

*To give people a positive experience they remember for a lifetime.*

The crew members accepted the salutary lesson. After some discussion and refinement, they agreed on the real results to achieve. People then did a session where they focused on the following themes.

## *The Team's Specific Goals*

*The team's specific goals, strategies  
and the pluses and minuses involved  
in working towards achieving the goals*

## *Specific Goals*

*The specific goals we want to achieve are:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

### *Specific Strategies*

*The key strategies we want to follow to do our best to achieve the specific goals are:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

### *Specific Pluses And Minuses*

*The potential pluses involved in working towards and achieving the goals may be:*

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*The potential minuses involved in working towards and achieving the goals may be:*

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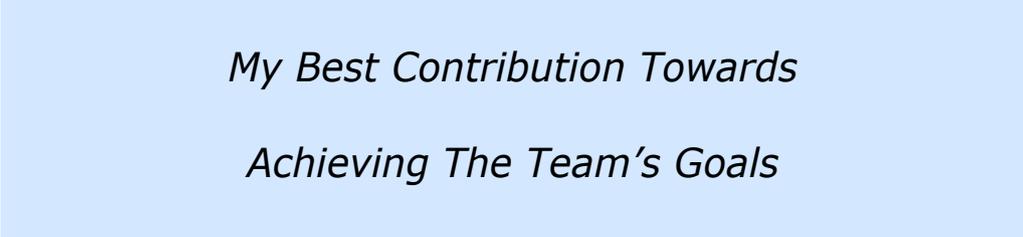
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The crew members explored these themes. Bearing in mind the tough conditions – such as storms in the Southern Ocean – it was important to explore the potential pluses and minuses involved.

The next step was to clarify each person's best contribution. Bearing in mind the standards of work required – which sometimes involved life or death situations - it was important to encourage people to play to their strengths.

This posed a unique challenge. A few people had sailed before, but most were novices. They all brought different skills, however, which they could use to help to achieve the goals. They were cooks, counsellors, teachers, salespeople, technicians and had other skills.

Bearing this in mind, each person was invited to make a flip chart describing their strengths and best contributions. They put these around the walls of the room and explored each person's strengths.



*My Best Contribution Towards  
Achieving The Team's Goals*

*Bearing in mind my strengths and skills, I believe my best contribution towards achieving the goals would be:*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

Bearing in mind their strengths, people made clear contracts about the specific things they would deliver towards achieving the goals. This approach made it more likely they would be able to do superb work at critical moments during the race.

Great teams often encourage their people to pursue certain principles they can follow to deliver high standards each day. Bearing this in mind, the crew did a version of the following exercise.

*Doing Our Best  
Delivering High  
Standards Every Day*

*The specific principles - the Dos and Don'ts - we can follow to pursue the strategies and do superb work each day*

*The Dos*

\* *Do ...*

*For example ...*

\* *Do ...*

*For example ...*

\* *Do ...*

*For example ...*

## *The Don'ts*

\* *Don't ...*

*For example ...*

\* *Don't ...*

*For example ...*

\* *Don't ...*

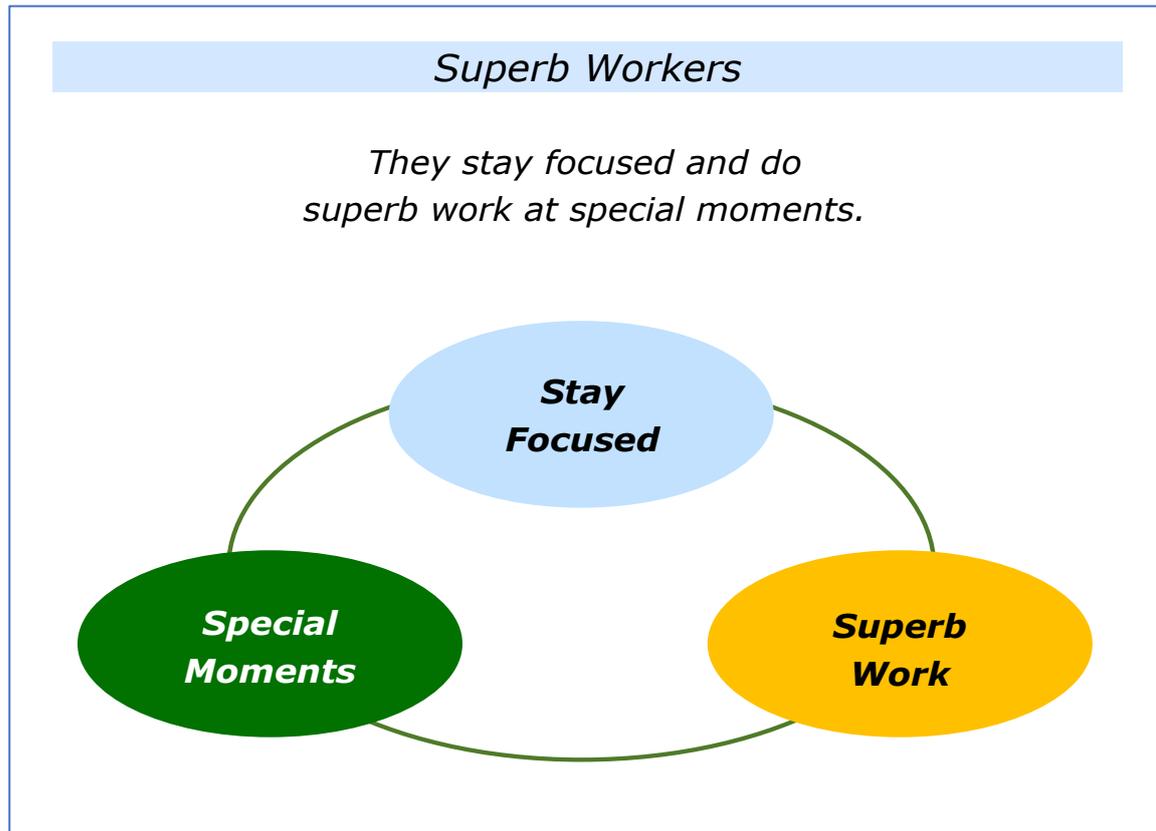
*For example ...*

Peak performers make a habit of doing superb work. This stands them in good stead when managing challenging situations. Let's explore this next step.

### *Doing Your Best At Decisive Moments*

Superb workers have the strengths and savvy to perform well at special moments. They are good at making the most of successes and also dealing with potentially stressful situations.

Such people are often strong characters and have the ability to shape things. They often demonstrate the following characteristics.



Superb workers stay focused in challenging situations. Staying calm, they concentrate on both the process and the overall picture of success. They focus on:

*The specific things that are happening;*

*The specific things they can do to influence what is happening;*

*The specific things they can do to work towards achieving the picture success.*

Such workers continue deliver consistently high standards. They sometimes step up to go into another gear at special moments. They find solutions to challenges and do their best to achieve the picture of success.

Great teams put people in the places where they are most likely to do superb work at decisive moments. They encourage people to focus on the specific activities – and do the specific roles - where they demonstrate the following qualities:

*They have good professional radar – they see patterns quickly and seem to know what will happen before it happens – and they clarify the desired results;*

*They have a wide repertoire of tools they can use to work towards achieving the desired results;*

*They have the ability to reach into their repertoire and apply the right tools in the right way to get the desired results.*

Great teams do more than put the right people in the right places. They also encourage, educate and enable them to manage decisive moments.

The yachting team I worked with took this approach. They looked ahead to potentially difficult situations. Such moments could include, for example:

*Crew members falling overboard ... Medical emergencies ... Falling a long way behind other competitors in the race ... Dealing with storms.*

*People having little sleep but needing to help each other ... Missing loved ones ... Being stationary and without any wind when in the Doldrums.*

Great teams encourage their people to anticipate and, if possible, prevent such situations. They also educate them to focus on what they can do if, despite their best efforts, they encounter such challenges.

The yacht crew I worked with did many exercises on this theme. This gave them the opportunity to develop their skills for doing superb work at decisive moments.

*Doing Scenario Planning  
For Decisive Moments*

*The Decisive Moment May Be:*

\*

*The specific things I/we can do to do  
superb work on this decisive moment are:*

\*

\*

\*

Great teams have people who take control and act as calming influencers at such times.

They buy time to think, clarify the possible options for going forwards and settle on their chosen strategy. They communicate a clear plan, coordinate people's strengths and enable people to do superb work.

## *Doing Your Best To Deliver The Goods*

Different people have different definitions of success. A person may aim to build a happy family, to encourage other people, to make money, to gain status, to win medals, to leave a positive legacy or to achieve other things in their life.

Cath Bishop, an Olympic Medal Winner in rowing, encourages people to explore their definitions of success. Below is an excerpt from an article she wrote on this theme. She expanded on this topic in her book *The Long Win*.

### *What Does Winning Really Mean?*

*Of course, in sport it seems so temptingly obvious and simple – it's about crossing the line first, being on the top step of the podium, holding that trophy.*

*Yet those are all split-second moments. Those need to be translated into meaning beyond that split-second if they are to be long-lasting positive experiences.*

*When they aren't translated, that allows a world to exist where it's possible for an Olympic gold medallist to walk back into the village feeling 'empty' and 'hollow', or where 'winning sport stars' can actually be suffering depression and worse.*

*The best sports coaches are those who are not afraid to ask their athletes what they want to do after sport, and strong enough to ask*

*and listen to the deeper motivations that have driven their athletes to be in this unnatural high performance environment striving to be the best in the world.*

*That's the beginning of building a wider perspective and deeper meaning about the extreme and often short-lived experience of elite sport.*

*Many organisations confidently define their raison d'être to be 'no 1 in the marketplace.'*

*But is that helpful to performance? Wouldn't it be better to define success in terms of the company's own vision of what it wants to achieve and contribute?*

*Isn't success about changing the world for the better in some way, whether through providing a better world-class service to its customers, creating a new and better product or having an impact that improves the environment and society around it?*

*Purpose starts a conversation about success that goes beyond winning.*

*It's about a longer-term timeframe, never just a split-second.*

*It's about a wider perspective, not a narrow view.*

*And it's about people's whole lives, as individuals and communities, not measured in short-term results, but longer-term experiences.*

*'Powerful and profound'*  
MATTHEW SYED



*The*  
**LONG  
WIN**

*The search for a better way to succeed*  
.....  
CATH BISHOP

*I propose a new way of redefining success. The Long Win is based on:*

*Clarity of what matters: developing a sense of purpose and meaning beyond simply coming first or hitting short-term targets*

*Constant learning: recognizing and focusing on learning, progress and personal growth rather than outcomes and extrinsic rewards*

*Connection: prioritizing cooperation and collaboration over competition, creating authentic relationships and understanding each other*

Let's return to the yacht crew sailing in the round-the-world race. As mentioned earlier, they had the following goals:

*To get everybody around the world and home safely;*

*To get the boat to go as fast as possible every day;*

*To give people a positive experience they remember for a lifetime.*

The crew did get around the world safely. They kept improving their performance and finished in the middle of the pack. This also involved doing superb work at decisive moments, particularly during storms in the Southern Ocean.

The crew members experienced the joy of teamwork plus many dramas. People also learned lessons they could apply in their future lives. Many looked back on it as an experience that gave them positive memories for life.

Great workers rise to the occasion. Some do this because they have developed the daily habit of delivering high standards. Some also believe that every moment is an opportunity to do superb work.

Imagine that you want to take some of these steps in your own way. How can you continue to do superb work? How can you manage the potential decisive moments? How can you keep working towards your view of success?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Doing My Best At Decisive Moments*

*The specific things I can do to keep  
doing superb work – including  
at the decisive moments – are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of taking this  
approach to doing superb work will be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Organic Development Approach*

### *The Organic Development Approach*

*This is an organic approach to development. It believes that:*

- *People already have the seeds of development within them.*
- *People already have strengths and successful patterns that they can develop.*
- *People can develop by being helped to build on their strengths and successful patterns - plus add other skills - on the way towards achieving success.*

The following pages explore the organic approach to development. This is different from models that urge people to change. Paradoxically, however, the organic approach may result in people demonstrating changes.

The change approach can sometimes work if a person or a group feels they are in a critical situation. They may then feel motivated to achieve a different outcome, but this can still be challenging.

People who are told they must change may feel resentful or resist such calls. They may feel they are being told that they are failures or are bad people. This does not help.

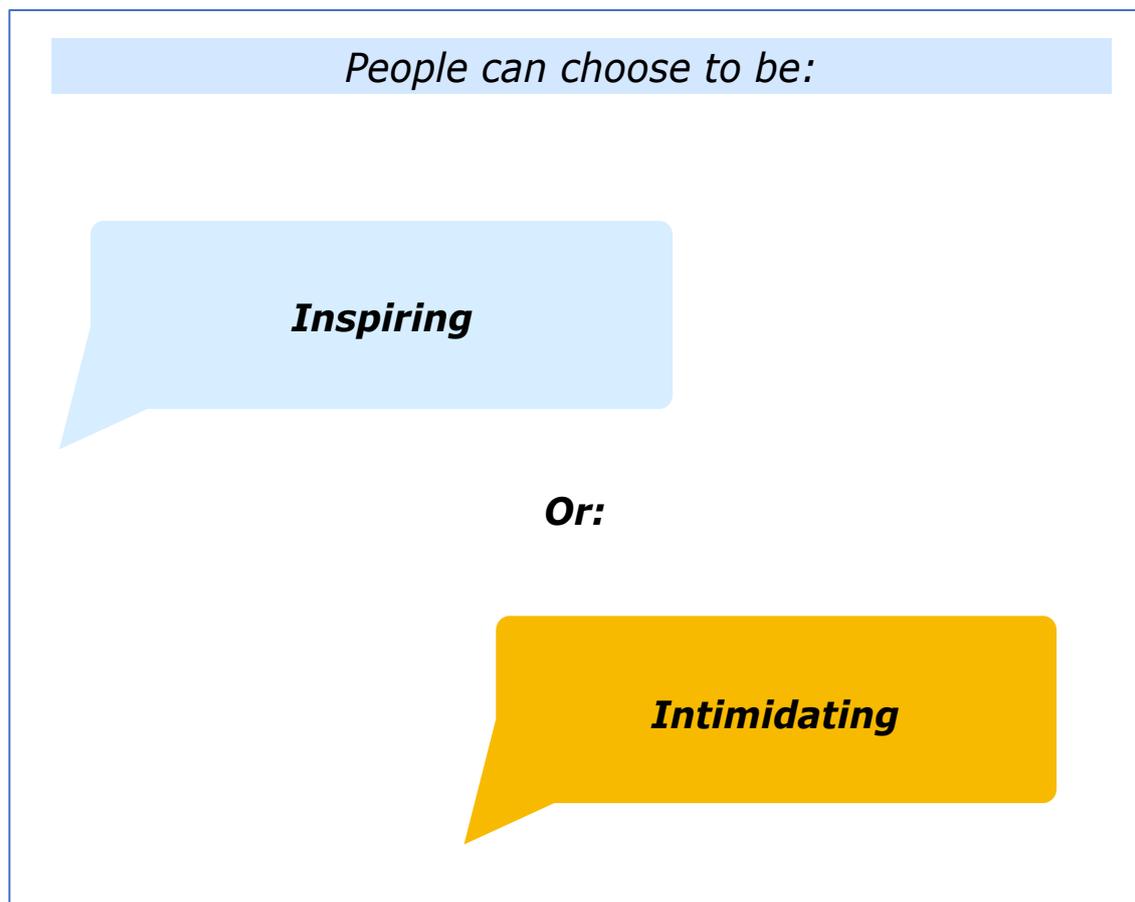
The organic approach believes that many people already have inner strengths and successful patterns. They can build on these – plus add other skills – to achieve their picture of success.

People are emotional beings. They need to believe in their guts that following a certain strategy will achieve success. This is easier to do if they have followed some of these approaches successfully in the past.

Individuals can obviously learn things from outside, such as knowledge, models and tools. But the belief must come from within. People are more likely to sustain their motivation when following successful principles they believe will work in a situation.

People are often more open if they are offered specific things they can add to their repertoires. They then have more practical tools they can use to achieve their goals.

Let's look at how this works in action. Here is an example from when I was doing mentoring work in a company. This focuses on the following theme.



People who have strong personalities can choose to be inspiring or intimidating. This was the case with Tom, a top salesperson who wanted to become a Sales Director.

He was great with customers and always exceeded his targets. But in some interactions with colleagues he came across as dismissive. During meetings he talked across others and did his emails whilst they were talking.

Tom had a dynamic personality and could energise people, especially when talking about future possibilities for the company. On the other hand, he could also be destructive. Such swings in behaviour raised question marks about whether he could achieve his ambition to be Sales Director.

He had recently been turned down for such a role. The reasons given were that his behaviour sometimes upset peers and other colleagues in the company. He was told:

*"There is no point in applying for such a role until you change this behaviour."*

Tom asked for help in tackling this challenge. After ten minutes or so, I gave him the following messages. This sounds rather blunt, but it seemed to resonate.

*"You have a strong personality and can be very inspiring. On some occasions, however, you may also be intimidating. Bearing this in mind, you may face a choice about the possible roads you want to travel in your career."*

*"You are superb with customers. As far as I understand, you prepare properly for those meetings and make the customer feel the centre of your world."*

*"You listen to the customer, clarify their goals and then share ideas to help them achieve success. These are skills that, if you wish, you can also use to help your colleagues."*

*"Looking ahead in your career, you will always get a job in sales and make lots of money. If you want to be considered for a Sales Director role, however, you may need to explore how you can build a good reputation with colleagues."*

*"You already have the skills to make this happen, because you use these with customers. It is up to you to decide if you also want to use these with colleagues."*

*"Let me know if you want take this route. If so, we can work together and focus on how you can achieve success."*

Tom already had the required skills and used these constantly with customers. Choosing to encourage others in his company would involve him focusing on the following themes.

*"Do I want to apply these same skills with colleagues? If so, how can I translate these into action? What will be the benefits – for myself and for my colleagues?"*

*"Sometimes I get bored in internal meetings, so what can I do to manage my impatience? How can I recognise the triggers that lead to me behaving in ways that cause trouble? How can I manage these triggers?"*

*"What are the actual words I want my colleagues to be saying about the way I behave towards them? What do I want my bosses to be saying? How can I do my best to ensure that people are saying these things?"*

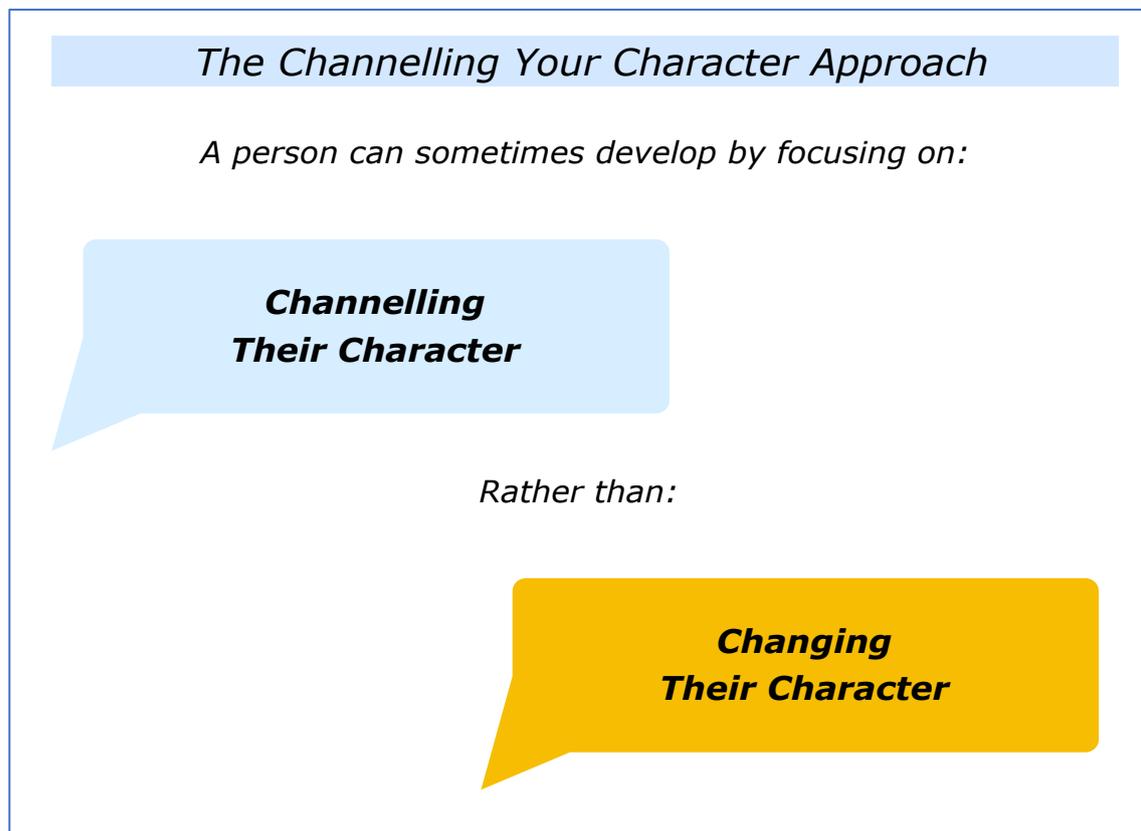
Tom chose to build on the skills he used with customers and apply these with colleagues. He developed these and, as a result, people said he had changed.

The key, however, was that Tom was channelling his personality in a way that created wins for his colleagues and company. He also learned how to manage the triggers that previously led to him flying off the handle.

Tom eventually moved into a Sales Director role. Bearing in mind his strengths, he focused on being the person who led the way and carried the banner. He complemented his style by hiring a superb orchestrator who could ensure the team delivered the goods.

He still set aside time to talk with individuals, however, and treated them like his internal customers. Tom gave them his full attention, focused on their aims and helped them to achieve their goals. This helped the individuals and the company to deliver success.

The work with Tom was based on a certain approach. As mentioned earlier, this helps people to channel their character rather than change their character.



This is an approach I have found useful when working with people who may demonstrate certain characteristics. Here are some examples.

*A person may be highly driven. They are energetic and achievement oriented but this can lead to them being impatient with others.*

*A person may be extremely caring. They are good at encouraging people but they may get exhausted by trying to help people who are takers.*

*A person may have OCD – Obsessive Compulsion Discipline. They may need to channel this into pursuing certain key strategies, however, rather than become mired in details.*

*A person may be highly sensitive and have mood swings. They may need to learn how to channel this sensitivity in ways that helps themselves and others.*

*A person may be a worrier. They may need to use the positive aspects of worrying – such as the part that aims to do superb work - and also develop the warrior side of their personality.*

Looking at yourself, what are some of your character traits? What do you see as the potentially positive parts of your character? What are the parts that may sometimes be less positive?

Looking to the future, how can you build on the positive parts of your character? How can you channel these in a way that helps yourself and other people? How can you manage the other parts of your character?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Channelling My Character*

*The phrases I would use to describe some aspects of my character are that I am:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to channel my character in a positive way are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits – for myself and other people – of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Building On The Best and Developing In The Future*

The evolutionary approach is one that you can use with people, teams and organisations. Looking ahead, it invites people to focus on the following themes.

### *Building On The Best From The Past*

*The specific things they want to take forward  
from the past and keep doing in the future are:*

*To ...*

*To ...*

*To ...*

### *Developing In The Future*

*The specific things they want to add,  
develop or do differently in the future are:*

*To ...*

*To ...*

*To ...*

This is an approach you can use when working with individuals. You can help them to build on the best from the past and add other ideas to shape their future. They can then translate their ideas into action and work to achieve their goals.

You can also use this approach when working with teams. They may be planning the next year's activities, moving office or making a transition. Let's explore one way to take this step.

People like to feel in control, especially when facing challenges. Sometimes they want to cling to the past. Whilst it is good for them to respect their heritage, they may also need to focus on shaping the future.

Imagine that you lead a team that wants to keep developing in order to stay ahead of the game. Here are some steps you can take to make this happen.

### *Setting The Scene*

Gather people together and explain that you want to focus on how the team can continue to develop. One leader explained this in the following way.

*"The purpose of this session is to look at how we can continue to shape a successful future.*

*"I want you to come up with ideas about: a) the specific things we can do to build on the best things we have done in the past; b) the specific things we want to add, develop or do differently in the future.*

*"Looking back, we have done outstanding work when acting as trusted advisors to clients. We have also worked well together when tackling certain crises.*

*"Looking ahead, we must continue to do what we do best. We also need to keep our internal stakeholders happy. The profit targets are mandatory, so we need to find ways to hit these targets.*

*"We also need to be proactive in keeping our stakeholders informed about our progress towards achieving the goals. This will stop them worrying.*

*"Many of our competitors are producing new applications that could put us out of business. We need to build on our strengths and develop ways to help our customers to achieve success.*

*"Bearing these things in mind, I am going to invite you to share how we can continue to do superb work in the future."*

Imagine that you have set the scene in your own way. You can then invite people to do the following exercise. Give each person a pile of Post-it Notes.

They are to each write ideas on the following themes. Here are some of the things that people come up with when doing these exercises.

### *Building On The Best From The Past*

*The specific things we want to take forward from the past and keep doing in the future are:*

*To have the regular monthly breakfast meetings with the leadership team ... To maintain the ethic of giving great customer service ... To give input into how we can achieve the team's goals.*

*To work remotely providing we deliver what is required ... To do mentoring work with young people in schools ... To have the profit share ... To manage by outcomes rather than by tasks.*

### *Developing In The Future*

*The specific things we want to add, develop or do differently in the future are:*

*To play more to our strengths as individuals ... To produce success stories about our work as trusted advisors ... To design the office so that people can work in small groups and also have individual spaces where they can work alone.*

*To bring in inspiring speakers from different fields ... To separate the performance management and career development sessions ... To have regular sessions where we can contribute ideas to shaping a successful future.*

Imagine you are doing this exercise with your team. Give people 15 minutes to write their ideas on Post-it Notes. They can then each go up in turn and put their ideas on the following flip charts.

You can then discuss the ideas. Clarify the ones that you and the team want to implement and translate these into a clear action plan.

Invite people to volunteer to be mission holders for the various projects. You can then provide them with the required support to deliver the goods and help the team to keep developing.



*Building  
On The Best*

### *Building On The Best From The Past*

*The specific things we want to take forward from the past and keep doing in the future are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Developing In The Future*

*The specific things we want to add, develop or do differently in the future are:*

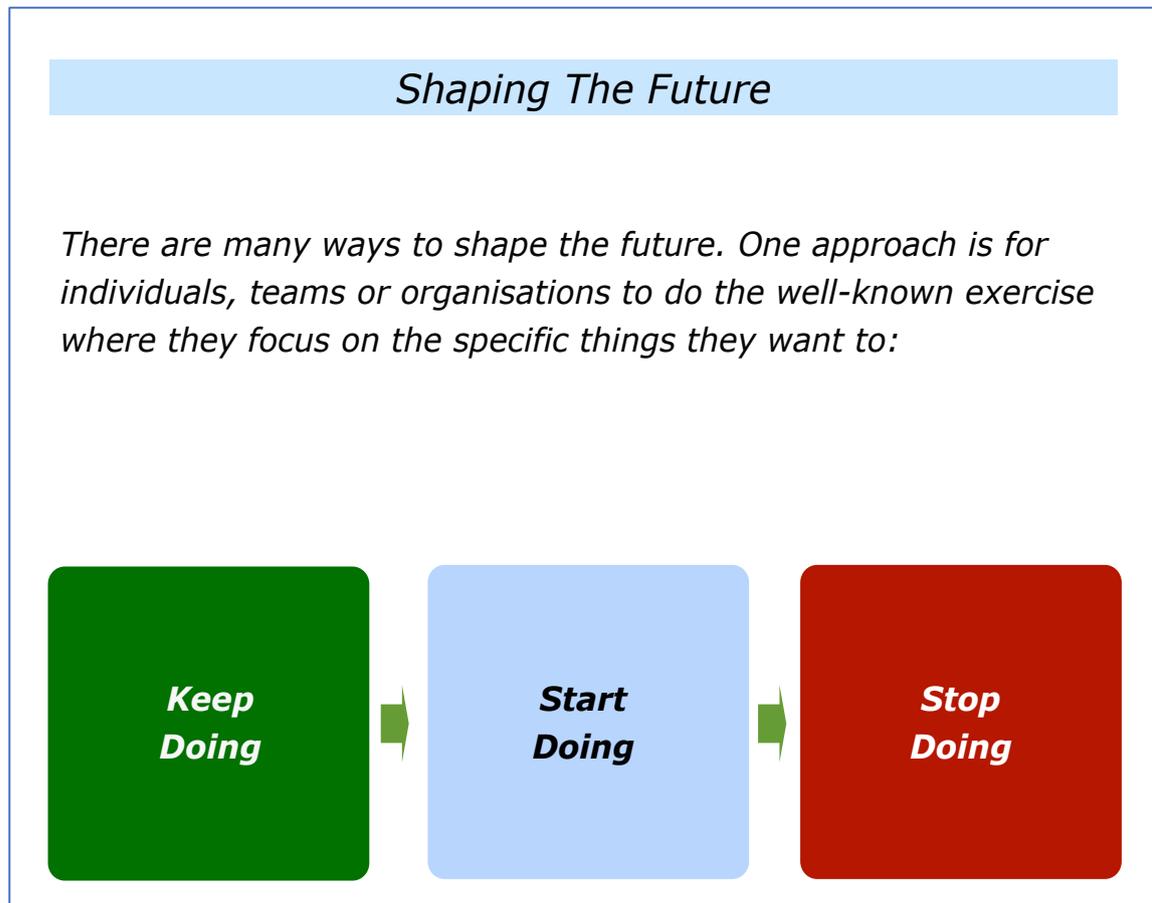
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## *Keep Doing, Start Doing and Stop Doing*

There are many applications of the evolutionary approach to development. One is the old exercise that invites a person or a team to focus on the following steps.



This is an interesting exercise to do with individuals. One thing that emerges is a person realising what they want to keep doing to maintain the quality of their life. For example, they may say something like the following.

### *Keep Doing*

*The specific things I want to keep doing are:*

*To keep encouraging my partner and children ... To keep myself healthy ... To keep exercising ... To keep doing things that give me*

*positive energy ... To keep building on my strengths ... To keep doing work that helps other people ... etc.*

This exercise highlights the often-overlooked things that people want to keep doing. The same rule applies to teams, organisations and societies.

The coronavirus crisis, for example, highlighted the key things that a society needs to keep doing in order to thrive. These included the need to maintain the infrastructure and health of a nation.

Such factors often get overlooked until they fall apart. One reason for this is that people can become attracted to what they want to start doing or stop doing. But failing to do the basics can result in disaster.

Good workers continually focus on the principles they want to keep following to get the basics right. These provide the platform for them being able deliver peak performances.

Great teams also focus on what they want to keep doing, start doing and stop doing. Below is an exercise that teams often use to take these steps. They then translate these ideas into action and work towards achieving their goals.

This section has explored several approaches to encouraging people. Whatever approach is used, the aim is to help people to shape their futures. It is then to encourage and enable them to achieve their picture of success.

## *Shaping The Future*

*The specific things we want to  
keep doing, start doing and stop doing*

### *Keep Doing*

*The specific things we want to keep doing are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Start Doing*

*The specific things we want to start doing are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Stop Doing*

*The specific things we want to stop doing - and how we will manage the implications of stopping doing these things - are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Action Plan*

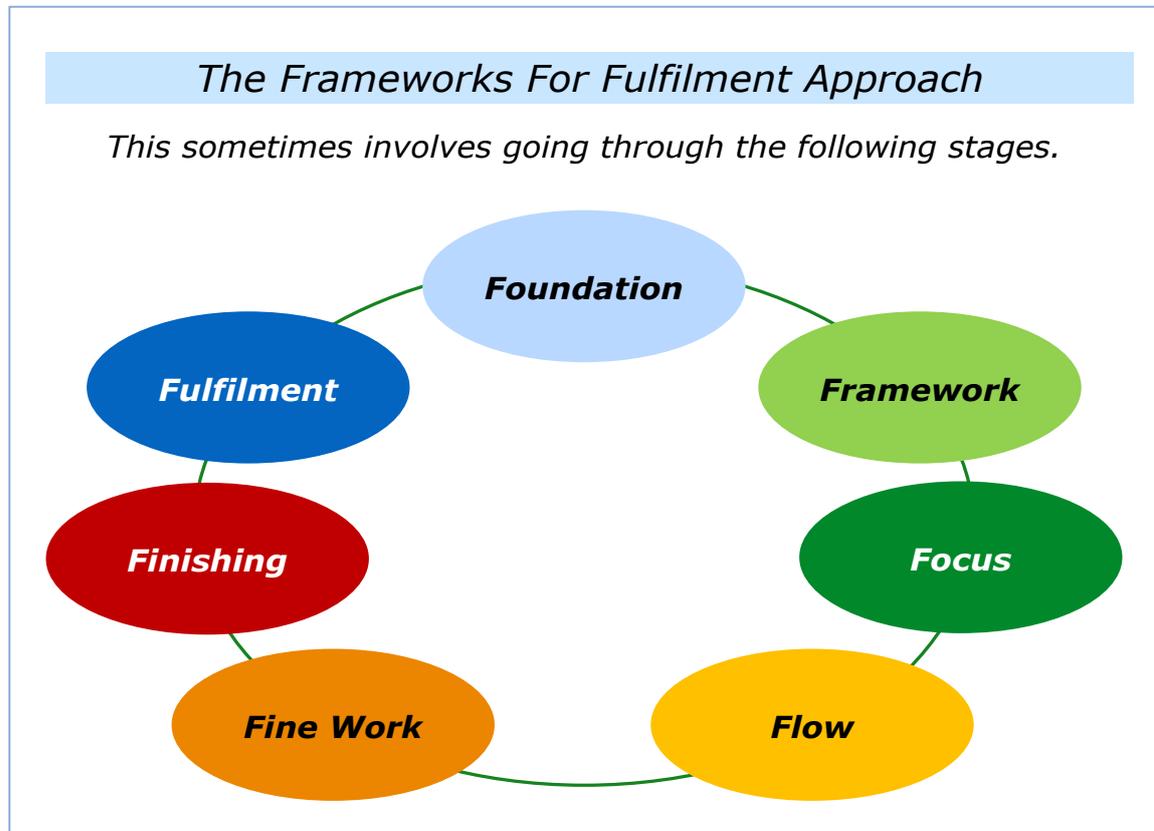
*The specific action plan for focusing on the things we want to keep doing, start doing and stop doing is:*

\*

\*

\*

## The Frameworks For Fulfilment Approach



There are many frameworks for helping people, teams and organisations to do fulfilling work. The following section explores how to apply one approach with a team, but the ideas can also be used with individuals and organisations.

Imagine that you lead a team. The goals you aim to achieve will be different depending on the specific team. You may run a counselling centre, a sports team, a company or another kind of team.

Start by clarifying the team's strengths. You can then clarify the specific things the team wants to achieve that will increase the chances of people feeling they have done fulfilling work.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Fulfilment*

*The specific team I lead is:*

\*

*The specific things we want to achieve that will increase the chances of people feeling they have done fulfilling work are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of achieving these aims will be:*

\*

\*

\*

Imagine that you have clarified the team's aims. You can then go through the following steps to encourage and enable people to do fulfilling work.

## *Foundation*

Great teams start by getting the foundations right. Getting the basics in place can provide the platform for people then adding the brilliance. This often calls for implementing the right strategy with the right people in the right way.

Good leaders create an encouraging environment in which people feel safe. They also give people the support they need to do fine work. People are then more likely to flow rather than be in fear.

Good schools, for example, sometimes find that getting the foundations right calls mirroring Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. They start by making sure students have a good breakfast. They then create a learning environment that inspires them to want to develop.

## *Framework*

Getting the basics right creates the platform for moving on to the next step. This involves providing a framework that enables people to do superb work.

Good leaders are positive, predictable and enable self-motivated people to achieve peak performance. They sometimes do this providing the following framework.

*They give people the big picture and explain the team's purpose, principles and picture of success.*

*They explain the professional guidelines that people can follow to achieve the picture of success.*

*They give people the chance to reflect and decide if they want to contribute towards achieving the picture of success.*

## *Focus*

Good leaders encourage people to focus on achieving the specific goals. Imagine that the people in your team say they want to contribute. It can then be useful:

*To again describe the purpose, principles and picture of success;*

*To make clear contracts with each person about their best contributions towards achieving the picture of success;*

*To manage by outcomes and give people the support they need to do superb work on the way towards achieving the picture of success.*

Good leaders recognise that clear contracting is vital to enable people to achieve the goals. Everybody needs to know the team's goals, the strategy and their parts in working to achieve the picture of success.

Imagine that you have taken this step. It will then be time to move on to the next stage.

## *Flow*

Imagine you have created an environment where people know the team's goals. You can then encourage them to build on their strengths and perform superb work.

There are many models for taking this step. Let's look at one approach that increases the chances of them being able to flow, do fine work and finish.

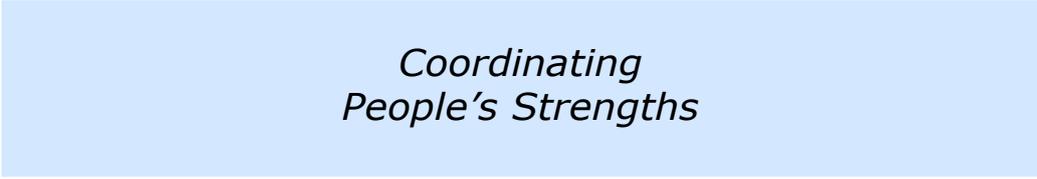
Good leaders recognise their own strengths and limits in terms of enabling people to do fine work. Some visionary leaders therefore

employ a coordinator who can orchestrate people's efforts towards achieving the goals.

Bearing in mind the team's picture of success, they start by clarifying each person's strengths. They then work through the following steps to enable people to do good work.

*Please note. The following example relates to a small team, but I have seen this approach work successfully across large organisations and multiple teams.*

*It then calls for having a good coordination team at the centre plus coordinators within each team. They can work together to make sure things get done.*



### *Coordinating People's Strengths*

*Bearing in mind the team's picture of success,  
it can be useful to ask the following questions.*

● *What are people's strengths? What are the specific activities in which they each deliver As rather than Bs or Cs? What might be their best contributions towards achieving the picture of success?*

● *How can we coordinate people's strengths to achieve the goal? How can we make sure all the other practical tasks get done? How can we make clear contracts with people about their best contributions?*

● *How can we enable people to do superb work? How can we encourage people to embody the ethic of constant improvement? How can we do everything possible to encourage people to achieve the picture of success?*

## *People's Strengths*

*The people in the team and the specific activities in which they deliver As, Bs and Cs*

<i>People</i>	<b>As.</b> <i>The specific activities in which they deliver As are:</i>	<b>Bs.</b> <i>The specific activities in which they deliver Bs are:</i>	<b>Cs.</b> <i>The specific activities in which they deliver Cs are:</i>
<i>Person A</i>	* * *	* * *	* * *
<i>Person B</i>	* * *	* * *	* * *
<i>Person C</i>	* * *	* * *	* * *

<i>People</i>	<b>As.</b> <i>The specific activities in which they deliver As are:</i>	<b>Bs.</b> <i>The specific activities in which they deliver Bs are:</i>	<b>Cs.</b> <i>The specific activities in which they deliver Cs are:</i>
<i>Person D</i>	* * *	* * *	* * *
<i>Person E</i>	* * *	* * *	* * *
<i>Person F</i>	* * *	* * *	* * *

<i>People</i>	<b>As.</b> <i>The specific activities in which they deliver As are:</i>	<b>Bs.</b> <i>The specific activities in which they deliver Bs are:</i>	<b>Cs.</b> <i>The specific activities in which they deliver Cs are:</i>
<i>Person G</i>	* * *	* * *	* * *
<i>Person H</i>	* * *	* * *	* * *
<i>Person I</i>	* * *	* * *	* * *

### *Fine Work*

Imagine that you are ensuring the team coordinates its strengths to work towards achieving the goals. You can then encourage them to perform fine work.

There are many ways to take this step. One approach is to keep communicating the team's purpose, principles and picture of success. It is then to enable people:

*To build on their strengths, manage the consequences of any weaknesses and make their best contributions;*

*To keep following the team's principles and perform superb work;*

*To find solutions to challenges and keep working towards the picture of success.*

Good leaders keep reminding people of the team's principles. They also keep people informed about the team's progress towards achieving the goals. They encourage people to keep focusing on:

*The specific things they are doing well and how they can do more of these in the future;*

*The specific things they can do better in the future and how;*

*The specific things they can focus on in the next week – or other period – to work towards the picture of success.*

## *Finishing*

Great teams do their best to achieve their goals. Sometimes this involves them aiming to flow, do fine work and finish.

Imagine that you want to help people to take this step. There are many models you can follow to encourage them to finish successfully. These include the following approaches.

*You can encourage the team to follow its successful pattern for finishing*

As mentioned earlier in the book, everybody has a successful pattern for finishing. The same rule applies to teams. If appropriate, you can encourage people to focus on the following things:

*The specific times they have finished successfully in the past;*

*The specific principles they followed then to finish successfully;*

*The specific things they can do to follow these principles – plus add other skills – to finish successfully in the future.*

*You can encourage the team to keep following their principles and deliver high professional standards*

Bill Walsh took this route with his San Francisco team that won three Super Bowls. The 49ers became known for winning games in the last few minutes. Why? Bill explained this to Steve Jamison and Craig Walsh in the following way.

*Keep following the standards of performance  
and then the score takes care of itself*

*Have you noticed that great players and great companies don't suddenly start hunching up, grimacing, and trying to 'hit the ball harder' at a critical point?*

*Rather, they are in a mode, a zone in which they're performing and depending on their 'game,' which they've mastered over many months and years of intelligently directed hard work.*

*By focusing strictly on my Standard of Performance, the 49ers were able to play the bigger games very well because it was basically business as usual – no 'try harder' mentality was used.*

*In fact, I believed it was counter-productive. Consequently, the San Francisco 49ers could function under tremendous stress and the forces that work on individuals in competitive situations.*

*You can encourage people to, when appropriate,  
dare to do what may be required to deliver the goods*

Good leaders encourage people to keep following the team's disciplines. There may be times, however, when people need to do something extra to reach the goals.

Such leaders therefore involve their team in practicing how to behave in such situations. It is an approach I have used when working with teams in different fields. Here is one exercise we have used.

### *Managing Challenging Situations*

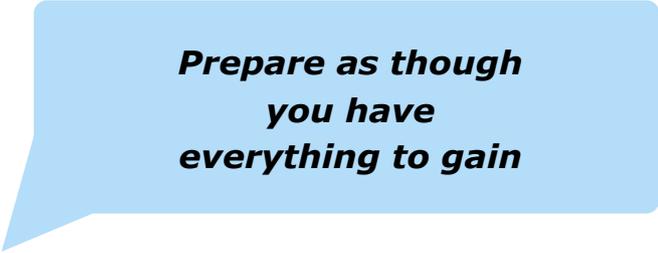
Start by brainstorming the possible challenge situations they may face in the future. These may include being able to finish successfully. It then involves guiding the team through the following steps.

*They can focus on one specific example and clarify the real results they want to achieve in the challenging situation.*

*They can clarify the principles they want to follow to achieve these results in the challenging situation.*

*They can practice following these principles and doing their best to achieve these results in the challenging situation.*

Great teams encourage people to flow rather than freeze on big occasions. They sometimes do this by reminding people of the following saying.



***Prepare as though  
you have  
everything to gain***



***Perform as though  
you have  
nothing to lose***

## *Fulfilment*

Imagine that your team has done its best and reached its goals. Sometimes, as a by-product, people may gain a sense of fulfilment.

Different people have different philosophies about fulfilment. Some find fulfilment by doing their personal best. They may aim to become the best kind of person, artist, athlete, scientist or whatever they want to be.

Some people gain fulfilment by performing superb work and achieving certain personal or professional goals. They may also, on some occasions, gain recognition or even win prizes.

Some people want to serve something greater than themselves during their time on the planet. They aim to follow their principles, do their personal best and leave a positive legacy. This is more likely to produce a sense of peace.

Imagine you lead a team. You can provide a framework that enables people to reach the desired goals and gain a sense of fulfilment.

This section has described one approach to making this happen. It starts by clarifying the team's aims. It then involves going through the stages of concentrating on the foundations, framework and getting people to focus.

You can then do your best to help them to flow, do fine work and finish. As a by-product, they may gain a sense of fulfilment.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Fulfilling Work*

*The specific team I lead is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do  
to encourage and enable  
people to do fulfilling work are:*

\*

\*

\*

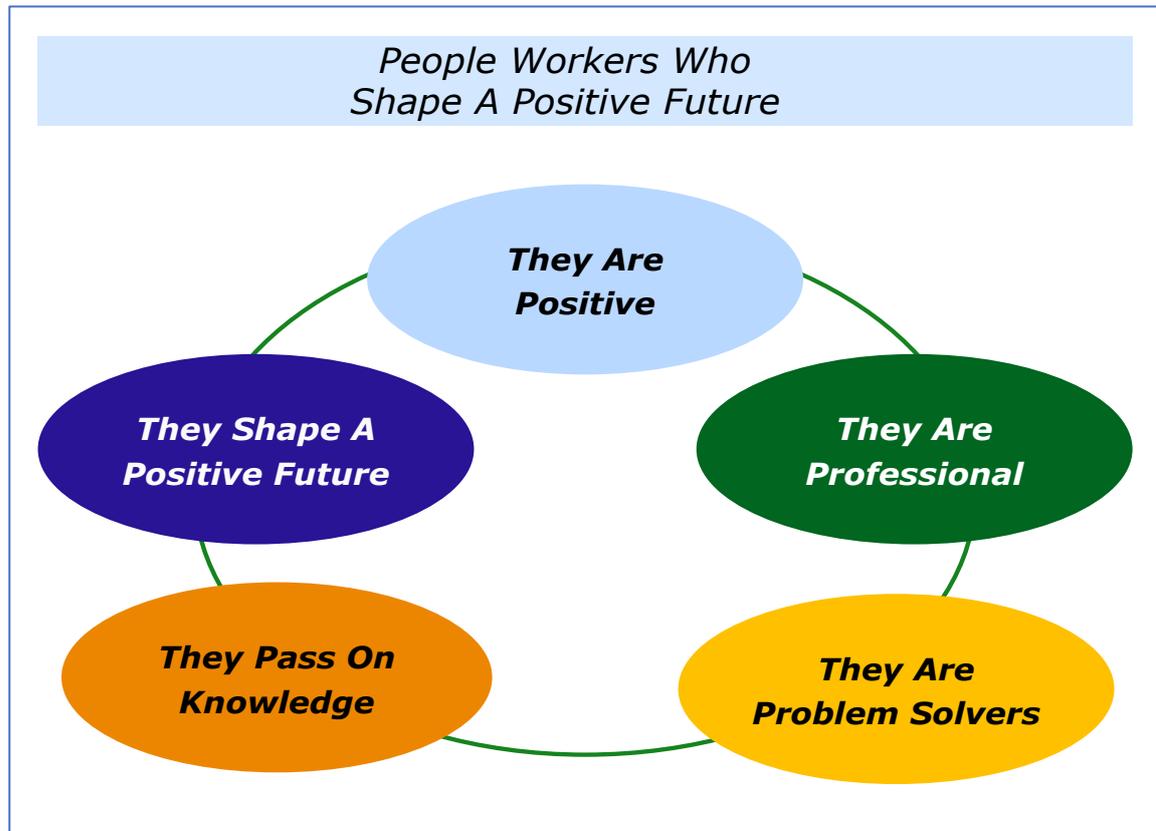
*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The People Worker Approach*

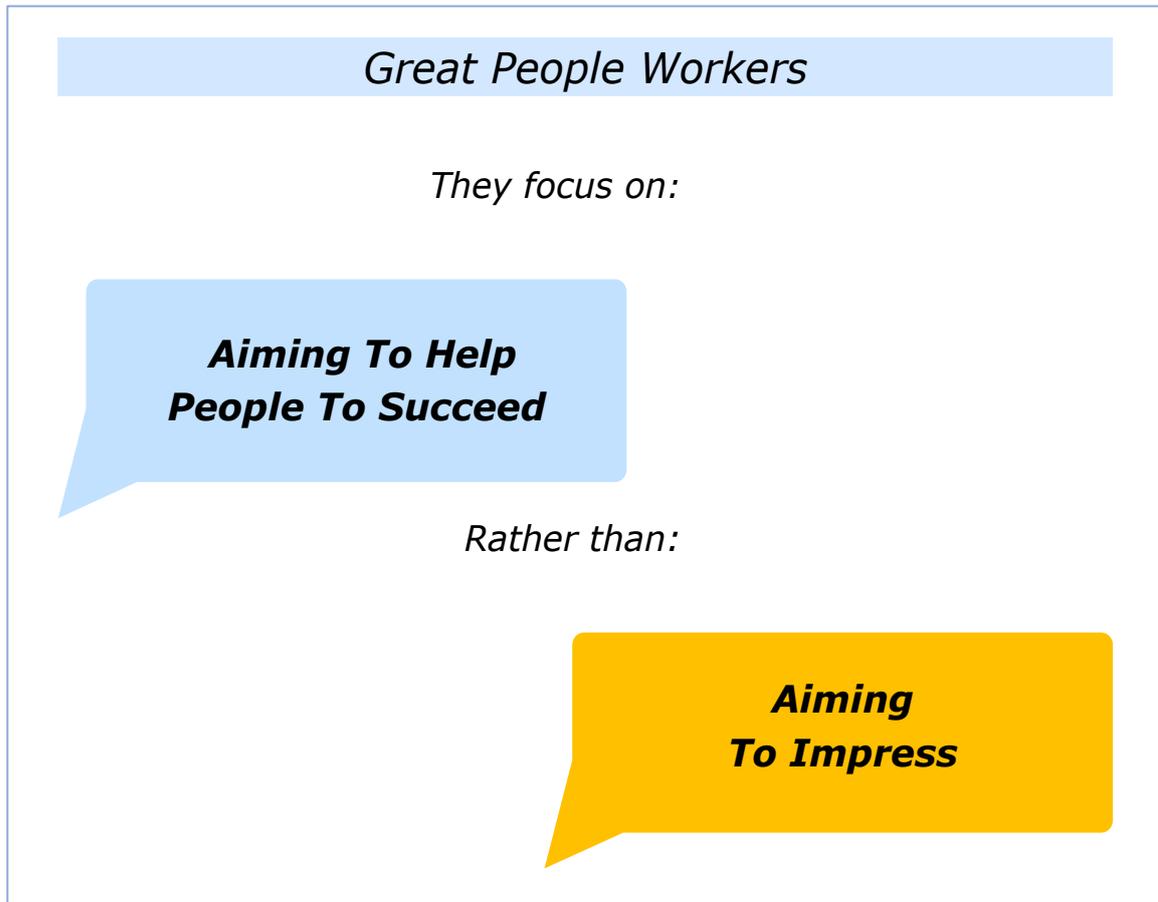


People workers may work in different fields but they often have a similar calling. They focus on helping people to shape a positive future. They may do this when working in education, sport, business or in other fields.

Such people may do this in different ways, but they have one thing in common. They put their energy into aiming to help other people to succeed rather than aiming to impress.

Many great leaders, for example, aim serve something greater than themselves. They aim to help others to succeed rather than 'promote their personal brand'.

There can, however, be an interesting side-effect. Aiming to help people to succeed – rather than trying to impress – can sometimes also be impressive.

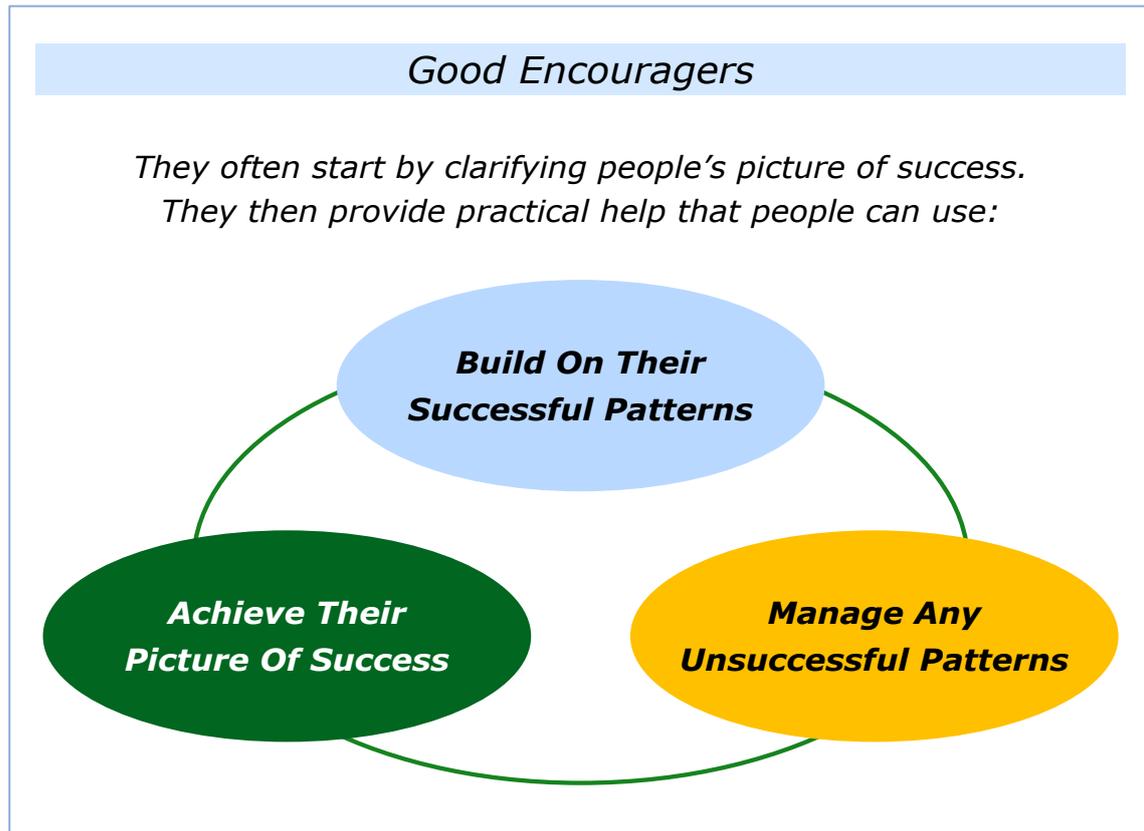


The following pages describe some of the principles followed by people workers. These includes examples of people I have known. It also invites you to explore your own approach to translating these principles into action.

## *Positive*

Many people workers have a positive attitude. They also build on the positive things in other people. They are realists, however, rather than starry-eyed optimists.

Good encouragers often start by making people feel welcome and clarifying their picture of success. When appropriate, they then help people: a) to build on their successful patterns; b) to manage any unsuccessful patterns; c) to achieve their picture of success.



Carl Rogers, the humanistic psychologist, was somebody who took a positive approach towards helping people to grow. He also believed, however, that it was vital for people to focus on the facts.

Today it is hard to realise how revolutionary his ideas were in the 1930s and 40s. In those days the medical profession treated people with psychiatric difficulties as sick patients.

The doctor saw the patient, looked for an illness and made their diagnosis. They then prescribed a treatment that could involve medication, ECT or behaviour therapy.

At that time psychotherapy was often limited to richer people who could afford private sessions. Few doctors sat down with a troubled person to encourage them to clarify their feelings, set goals and take responsibility for shaping their future.

Carl changed all that. He made the person feel welcome and invited them to talk about their feelings and ambitions. This ground-

breaking approach led to one book calling him 'the quiet revolutionary'.

His philosophy was that all living things had a drive toward actualisation. Many of his beliefs were formed from watching the processes in nature and seeing how organisms stretched to fulfil their potential.

Carl's books contain examples of how plants, trees and other living things related to their environment. The organisms that succeeded were those that channelled their natural strength and yet also embraced complexity.

This enabled them to develop the resources to deal with challenges. Those that remained narrow did not have the variety to overcome adversity.

Carl applied many of these lessons to conducting therapy. He believed it was vital to create an encouraging environment in which a person felt able to explore. He believed that:

*The client – like every person – has a drive towards self-actualisation.*

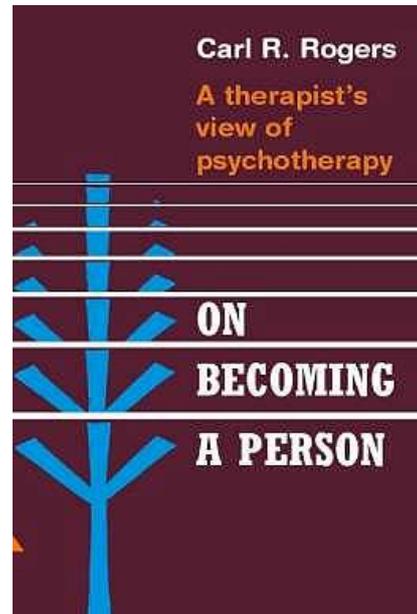
*This drive will press towards fulfilment and, when expressed properly, will increase the person's chances of becoming healthy. If the drive is frustrated, the person may experience difficulties - some of which might be displayed in various symptoms.*

His books such as *On Becoming A Person* outlined the following approaches for helping people to develop.

*The client – like every person - has a natural drive towards self-actualisation.*

*The helper's role is to create an encouraging environment that facilitates the person's growth.*

*The person will then be more likely to be their real self, set goals and work towards fulfilling their potential.*



Carl believed that to be fully human a person must be true to themselves yet also be willing to learn from experience. This led him to him coining the phrase 'The facts are friendly'. He explained this in the following way.

*The facts are always friendly, every bit of evidence one can acquire, in any area, leads one that much closer to what is true.*

We should welcome information, he said, even if the new evidence shows that our previous views were mistaken. Such learning can be painful, but it provides a more accurate way of seeing life.

Carl's work emphasised the importance of encouraging a person to be authentic. This involved build on what a person could do – such as their strengths – rather than continually criticising them for what they couldn't do.

He applied this approach to himself and alighted on an interesting paradox. Carl expressed this in the following way.

*The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change.*

### *Many Teachers Are Positive*

Many teachers aim to create a positive environment in which students can grow. They often have a profound effect on people's lives. As the old saying goes:

*You never forget a good teacher.*

Henry Pluckrose was such a person. He was a remarkable teacher who inspired thousands around the world. I met him during the early 1970s when I was running courses for teachers.

Between 1968 and 1984 he was the head teacher of Prior Weston, a state primary school in London's Barbican. The school encouraged children to be creative and built a superb reputation.

I first heard about Prior Weston on the BBC radio programme *The World At One*. It was introduced as a school which 'everybody liked'. Students and parents were so enthusiastic that the presenter pleaded:

*"Please tell me one thing that is wrong with the school."*

Prior Weston enabled children to master social and educational skills. It also encouraged them to express their individuality through the arts – such as poetry, music and acting.

The school's approach to education proved successful with students, parents and even governments. Visitors to Prior Weston had to be limited to 4,000 a year and, on one occasion, included the Queen of Denmark.

Henry wrote many books for children and towards the end of his career wrote a memoir called *The Travels of a Journey-Man*

*Teacher.* Here is a summary of his views about schools and learning.

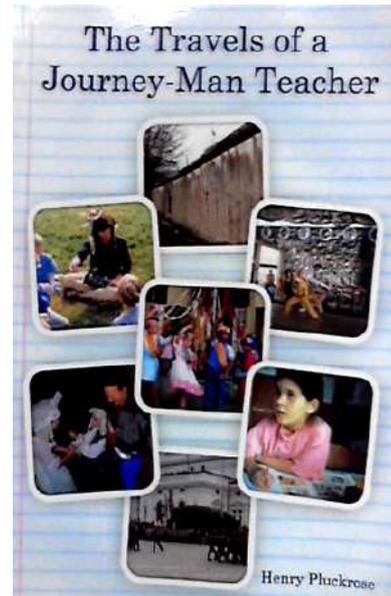
### *Henry Pluckrose Writing About Schools*

*Schools should be designed to build on how children learn and develop.*

*Learning should be relevant and relate to the child's needs.*

*Learning should be whole - rather than fragmented - and help children to see connections.*

*Learning is lifelong and should help children to shape their futures.*



Roger Tingle, who knew Henry well, wrote the following words about this book.

*"The only argument I have is with the title of this book. Having had the rare privilege of working alongside Henry for so many years, I believe that this teacher will be remembered not as a journeyman but as a genius.*

*"I first met him in the spring of 1965, Henry was teaching on the very top floor of the John Ruskin School (in South London) and I joined him there as a student, a humble apprentice to a Master Sorcerer.*

*"His classroom was quite unlike anything I had ever visited before and his teaching methods unlike anything I had previously experienced.*

*"The teaching space itself resembled an artist's studio and was buzzing with a level of activity that only 42 lively ten and eleven year olds can generate.*

*"Whilst practical art and craft work was most clearly in evidence, it was the Arts in the broadest sense that formed the basis of the curriculum: drama, music, poetry and dance.*

*"Particular importance was given to direct, personal experience. In practice, this meant that much of the children's learning took place in a variety of settings outside the school: in museums, art galleries, churches and other historic buildings as well as the natural environment."*

Prior Weston worked because it took an educational rather than engineering approach to helping children develop. Making learning relevant and rewarding, it encouraged children:

*To be curious, gather knowledge and learn how to learn; To build on their strengths, set specific goals and work to achieve success; To develop skills they could use to shape their futures.*

The school embodied what employers now call the Four Cs of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration and Communication. Prior Weston helped students to develop these in the 1970s.

### *The Cultivation Approach*

Great educators often aim to cultivate people's talents rather than concrete over people's talents. encourage people to be creative life-long learners rather than simply becoming economic units.

## Great Educators

*They often aim:*

- *To cultivate people's talents rather than concrete over people's talents;*
- *To follow the fulfilling model of education rather than the factory model of schooling;*
- *To encourage people to become creative life-long learners rather than compress them into simply being economic units.*

Encouragers are often good talent spotters and, when appropriate, help people to achieve their aims. This sometimes also calls making clear contracts about:

*The person's role in working to achieve their goals;*

*The role they can play in helping the person to achieve their goals.*

How do you rate yourself in terms of having a positive attitude and also building on the positive things in people – their strengths and successful patterns?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Positive*

*The ratings I would give myself in the following areas are:*

*Being positive* \_\_\_\_\_ /10

*Building on the positive things in people* \_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the ratings are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Professional*

Many people workers are professional. They prepare properly for events, click into action and are fully present. Pursuing their chosen principles, they then do their best to produce positive results.

Bernard Haldane was somebody who took this approach during the 1940s. He is recognised as one of the giants of the strengths philosophy. His legacy lives on through his thought leadership, his protégés and the continuing work with Dependable Strengths.

The following pages give a brief overview of Bernard's approach, which was enriched and supported by his wife, Jean. This is followed by an example of positive principles in action. Before then, here is some background.

Bernard was born in 1911, grew up in England and trained to be a doctor. He moved to New York in 1946 but found that his medical qualifications did not meet US standards. Choosing to go another route, he became an editor at the New York Journal of Commerce.

While the job market was being flooded by veterans returning from the war, it became apparent that organisations did not know how to employ people's talents. Veterans were used to 'war jobs', many of which did not exist in the labour market.

Fascinated by the field, Bernard did three things to help veterans:

*He asked them to recall their best achievements and, in the process, clarified what they enjoyed doing and what they did well;*

*He clarified their individual strengths and transferable skills that would be useful to an organisation;*

*He helped people to market and present their offering in a way that showed the benefits to a potential employer.*

Bernard's inside-out approach was radical for the time. Richard Knowdell, a highly respected figure in career development and a friend of Haldane, explained this approach in the following way.

*"Bernard believed that he could reveal 'the excellence in each person' by analysing the skills that individuals had used in performing past accomplishments."*

He published *Career Satisfaction and Success* in 1974, which was then followed by other books. Eight years earlier he had married Jean, who added her skills to enriching the strengths approach.

Bernard's books encouraged people to do more than build on their strengths. It described practical ways they could find their perfect role and do what would now be called networking.

Jerald Forster described this in an article titled *Bernard Haldane Was Ahead Of His Time*.

*"In his 1960 book, **How to Make a Habit of Success** Bernard described a series of activities wherein the person 'mines the gold' in his key achievements, searching for success factors.*

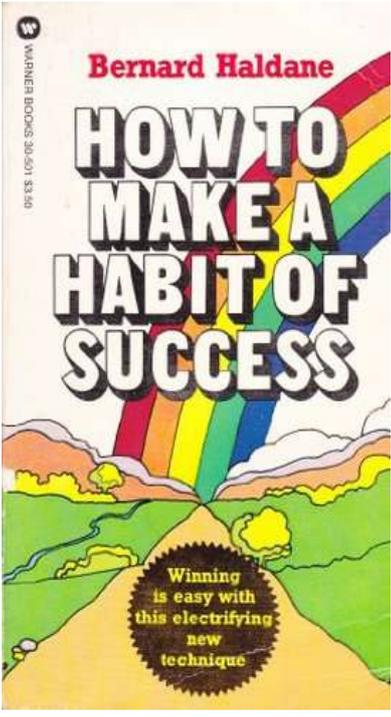
*"As early as 1962, Bernard wrote: 'Seventy percent of all beginning jobs today are obtained through personal contacts with an employer or through friends.'*

Bernard suggested ways to connect with people and create what was initially called a Job Magnet. This approach is quite common today, but then it was revolutionary.

The person wrote letters outlining how their strengths might benefit a potential employer. They then sent the letters to specific business leaders.

Contrary to the prevailing approach, they did not ask for a job. The person asked leaders to consider where such talents might benefit an organisation.

If appropriate, leaders were asked if they might consider sending on the letter to other contacts. The letters acted like magnets and attracted potential employers.



### IDENTIFY YOUR STRENGTHS

**Strengths Reality Test**

To identify your significant strengths, perform the following reality test (try to test 6-12 strengths):

Write the strengths you wish to test in the boxes below. For each strength, identify three distinct examples of experiences in which you strongly applied that strength. First, review the Good Experiences used to complete the Exploration Chart on this previous page for ideas. Next, think of other experiences that are good examples of using that strength. It should be relatively easy to come up with three examples, if the strength you are testing is truly a significant strength.

<p>Strength: _____</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>	<p>Strength: _____</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>
<p>Strength: _____</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>	<p>Strength: _____</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>
<p>Strength: _____</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>	<p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on how your strengths shape your academic and career path</li> <li>• Include your strengths in your resume, LinkedIn profile summary or other online media</li> <li>• Practice integrating strengths into your elevator pitch and interviews</li> <li>• Talk about your strengths with a career counselor, advisor, or mentor</li> <li>• Explore the online WDIS strengths activity for additional career implications at <a href="http://wdis.org">wdis.org</a></li> </ul>

Implications: When seeking employment the best opportunities will be those where there is a match between the skills needed to do the job and your significant strengths.

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16 The Career Center | [careers.usd.edu](http://careers.usd.edu)

BHA, the company that Bernard and Jean developed, grew in size and spread across America. They sold the company in the 70s together with the rights to use the name and methodology when working in the commercial sector.

The company continued to use the BHA name, but Bernard and Jean had no connection to it. They focused on the not-for-profit sector and continued to do superb work into the 21st Century.

Caroline Moore is another person who embodies the professional approach. Professor of Urology at University College London, she does pioneering work in the treatment of prostate cancer.

At this point, I need to declare an interest. Caroline has conducted several operations on me using HIFU – High Intensity Focused Ultrasound. This is a non-invasive form of treating prostate cancer and has proved successful.

Caroline is kind, positive and brilliant. She has juggled her career whilst also bringing up four children. Her view is that it is vital to manage your priorities.



*Caroline is often asked for advice by people who want to pursue a career. She says:*

*"Find out what you love and stick with it even through the hard times.*

*"Parts of my training were less enjoyable than others.*

*"But it's about finding a path through that and taking time to enjoy it along the way."*

Professor Mark Emberton, another pioneer in the field of prostate treatment, wrote the following about Caroline.

*It is this dedication, drive, and vision for the end objective - benefiting patients - that I admire so much. I also admire Caroline's ability to corral teams through her infectious determination, balanced with a touch of humour.*

*Importantly, Caroline is not just a role model to her colleagues in urology, but, working with her, I can see that she is a trail blazer for women in science.*

*As the first female professor of urology in the UK, she is a role model for all women considering careers in medicine and all women at UCL.*

Let's return to your own work. What are the professional guidelines you aim to follow? How well do you think you follow these? How would you rate yourself on a scale 0-10? If you wish, try completing the following sentences.

## *Professional*

*The rating I would give myself  
in terms of being professional is:*

*\_\_\_ /10*

*The specific things I can do to  
maintain or improve the rating are:*

*\**

*\**

*\**

## *Problem Solvers*

Many people workers are good at solving problems in their areas of expertise. Some go further and help others to develop their skills in problem solving.

There are many ways to find solutions to challenges. One model is to use the outcomes approach. It is to help people to channel their spirit and strengths towards achieving the desired outcomes.

Some therapists I worked with during my early career took this approach. They believed in:

*Building on the positive parts of people;*

*Expanding people's options for tackling problems;*

*Helping people to work towards achieving their personal goals.*

These therapists adopted an outcomes approach. Whilst acknowledging that people had been through tough times, they encouraged them to focus on shaping their futures.

This was an approach I used running therapeutic communities. When working with troubled teenagers, for example, we invited them to focus on their life goals. This involved asking them the following questions.

*"What do you want out of life? How can you get what you want out of life? How can you stop yourself getting what you want? When do you want to work towards getting what you want out of life?"*

This approach sounds basic, but many young people chose to work towards achieving their desired outcomes. We then focused on how they could also help both themselves and others on the way towards achieving their life goals.

One key point to remember regarding the outcomes approach. It is important to clarify the specific things that people want to achieve on:

*A factual level – such as the tangible results they and others want to achieve in the future;*

*A feelings level – such as the feelings they want themselves and others to experience in the future.*

Some people workers also help others to learn how to apply problem solving techniques. This enables people to add to their way power – their ability to see ways to find solutions and achieve their goals.

Good people workers are also good at recognising other people's worlds. This enables them to help people to tackle challenges and achieve success.

### *The Recognising Others People's Worlds Approach*

*Every person's world is different. Every person has their own feelings, challenges and goals.*

*This approach involves having the ability and imagination to recognise, understand and improve people's worlds.*

**Recognising**



**Understanding**



**Improving**

Every person is different. Every person has their own feelings, challenges and goals. The things that are happening in each person's world will differ widely. This will be the case if, for example, you are helping either:

*A person who is addicted to substances;*

*A person who wants to achieve peak performance;*

*A leader who is dealing with challenges and wants to help their organisation to achieve success.*

Good mentors, coaches and other people workers often develop the ability and the imagination:

*To recognise, understand and, if appropriate, improve people's worlds.*

They are able to use both the first and second empathy. Whilst recognising a person's situation, they also focus on the person's aspirations. They then help the person to achieve their picture of success.

Let's return to your area of expertise. How would you rate yourself as being a problem solver and also helping others to develop their problem solving skills?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Problem Solving*

*The ratings I would give myself in the following areas are:*

*Being good at problem solving* \_\_\_\_\_ /10

*Being good at helping people to develop problem solving skills* \_\_\_\_\_ /10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the ratings are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Passing On Knowledge*

Many people workers pass on knowledge that helps others to achieve their goals. They do this in different ways and sometimes in different roles.

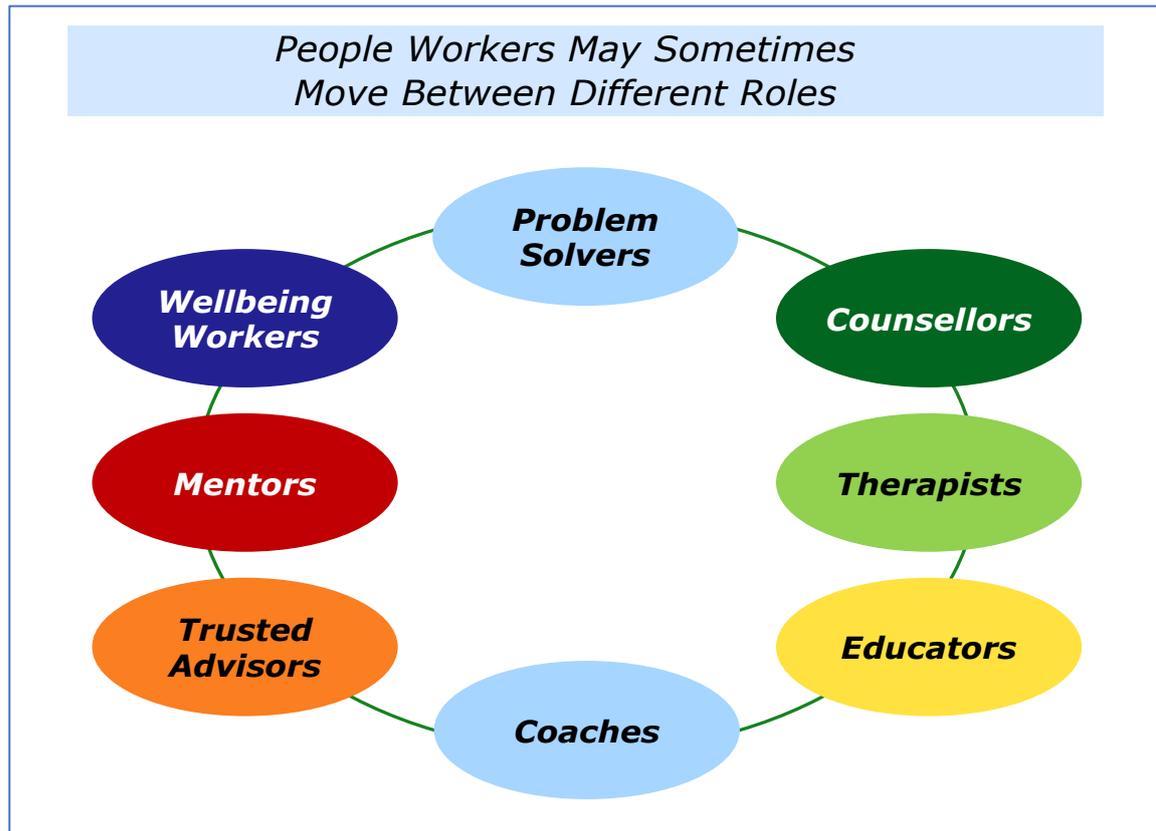
Some simply act as good models and show how to behave in positive ways. Some pass on knowledge in their professional role. They may act as a counsellor, educator, coach, mentor, trusted advisor or in another role.

Sometimes they share ideas during their sessions. Before taking this step, however, they make a psychological contract with the client to make sure this is okay. They may say something along the following lines.

*"Looking at the results you want to achieve, is it okay for me to share some ideas?"*

The psychological contracting part is crucial. It is vital to ensure the person is open to ideas that they can use to achieve their goals. The people worker then shares knowledge, models and practical tools the person can use in their own way.

Here are some of the roles that such a worker may take. They may also move between these roles when passing on knowledge.



### *Problem Solvers*

People workers sometimes act as practical problem solvers. They may take this role when helping a person to get access to the basic materials for life – such as food, housing or funding.

Social workers sometimes take this role at the beginning of a professional relationship. They may then move into other roles on the road towards helping a person to shape their future.

### *Counsellors*

Counsellors help people who want to solve a problem they are experiencing in their lives. The classic method is to create a safe environment, use listening skills and be non-directive.

Sometimes the counsellor may use facilitation skills to help the client to find their own answers. Sometimes they may move into a more active role and use other methods to help the person to achieve their aims.

## *Therapists*

Therapists use their abilities to help a person to take more control of their life and work towards their personal goals. Different therapists use different approaches when taking this role.

Before choosing a therapist, it can therefore be useful for a person to research: a) the therapist's approach and reputation; b) the pluses and any potential minuses of the therapeutic approach.

This research can take time but it is worthwhile. The person then knows what they can and can't expect from the therapy sessions.

## *Educators*

Educators are often experts in their chosen field. They clarify what the learner wants to learn. They then aim to encourage, educate and enable the person to achieve success.

Many see education as the ultimate democratic activity. This involves offering people more knowledge and tools they can use in their lives and work. People then have more choices and hence more freedom to shape their futures.

## *Coaches*

Good coaches help people to improve in a specific activity. They help a person to build on their strengths, tackle areas for improvement and achieve ongoing success.

Coaches like to watch a person in action or see a piece of their work. They then ask themselves the following questions before giving any feedback.

*What is the person's goal? What are the real results they want to achieve? What is their picture of success?*

*What are the specific things the person is doing well? How can they do more of these things in the future to help them to reach their goal? What are the specific things they can do better in the future and how?*

*What are the key messages I therefore want to give the person? How can I put these messages in a way that the person can accept and use? Are there any other things I can do to help the person to achieve their picture of success?*

### *Trusted Advisors*

Trusted advisors pass on specialist knowledge that can help their clients. David Maister, Charles Green and Robert Galford outlined this approach in their book *The Trusted Advisor*. They said that it is important for advisors to earn trust, build relationships and give advice effectively.

Bearing in mind the client's agenda, advisors use their expertise to outline the possible ways forwards. At a certain point, however, they may say something along the following lines.

*"I can explain more about the possible options. If you wish, I can also share some ideas and a potential way forward. But it will, of course, be up to you to decide."*

Trusted advisors then share their expertise. The client can decide whether they want to use this to help them to reach their goals.

### *Mentors*

Mentors also act as wise and trusted advisors. They create a stimulating sanctuary in which a person can feel safe and at ease. They then pass on knowledge that helps the person to tackle challenges and achieve their picture of success.

There are many models for running a mentoring session. Later in the book we will be exploring one approach. This provides many

practical tools that you can use to help a person to shape their future.

## *Wellbeing Workers*

Many people do work that is related to helping people to take care of their wellbeing. This can range from working in the traditional areas of health care to advocating certain kinds of lifestyles. Let's explore some of these themes.

### *Physical Wellbeing*

This involves helping people to take care of physical health. They may work as nurses, doctors, paramedics, physiotherapists, osteopaths and other roles in the healing professions.

Some people may work as fitness trainers, nutritionists or other fields. They may work as sports trainers or dance instructors, for example, and employ such activities to encourage people to stay healthy.

### *Psychological Wellbeing*

This involves helping people to take care of psychological health. As mentioned earlier, such people may work as counsellors, therapists, coaches or other roles in the helping professions.

Many people go into this field because they respect people and want to help them to live healthy and happy lives. Unfortunately some go into it because they want to sell their particular type of cure or product.

### *Philosophical Wellbeing*

This involves helping people to take care of philosophical health. People like to have a sense of meaning in their lives. They like to focus on their purpose, follow their principles and work towards their picture of success.

Some people help others to explore these areas, but they do so in a humble way. They often learn from spiritual and other fields that provide wisdom that people can use to shape their lives.

Such individuals recognise that, whilst they can offer guidance, it is up to each person to clarify and follow their inner compass. People who take this step are more likely to enjoy philosophical health.

The topic of wellbeing is one that we will explore in greater depth elsewhere in the book. This is in the chapter called *The Wholistic Approach*.

Some people workers help individuals to develop their skills or reach certain goals. There are many approaches to making this happen. The follow section looks at two well-established methods.

### *The Classical And Customised Approaches To Developing A Skill*

#### *Helping A Person To Develop A Skill*

*There are many ways to help a person to develop a skill. These include the following approaches.*

- *The Classical Approach*
- *The Customised Approach*
- *Combining The Customised And Classical Approach*

There are many ways to help a person to develop a skill. This section looks at the classical and customised approaches.

Many people start learning by following the classical approach. This involves seeing, copying and achieving what is considered to be the correct practice.

Some people find this approach to be challenging. If so, they can be helped by following the customised approach. This involves helping them to build on their strengths and achieve success.

There are also situations where it is possible to combine elements of both approaches. Let's explore each of these methods.

### *The Classical Approach*

#### *Seeing The Correct Practise*

*The educator describes or demonstrates what is considered to be the correct practise.*

#### *Copying The Correct Practise*

*The student copies this approach and aims to emulate what is considered to be the correct practise.*

#### *Achieving The Correct Practise*

*The student continues to work until the educator considers that they have demonstrated the correct practise.*

This approach is sometimes used by classically trained teachers in a particular field. Like any method, it has both pluses and minuses.

The approach may seem rather formal, but the aim is to provide the learners with an established framework that works. Then, after mastering the skill, they can add their own variations.

There are obviously some geniuses that make their own rules and achieve success. But even they may incorporate some of the classical methods in their chosen field. Let's explore this approach.

### *Seeing The Correct Practise*

Students need to see what good looks like. As the saying goes:

*"If they can see it, they are more likely to be it."*

Educators who use the classical approach therefore often start by focusing on correct practise. They may describe or demonstrate the skill to show what good looks like. This gives the student a positive model that they can aim to emulate.

John Wooden, the legendary basketball coach, took this route. Writing in *The Talent Code*, Daniel Coyle explained how two researchers described Wooden's methods.

*One of Wooden's most frequent forms of teaching was a three-part instruction.*

*He modelled the right way to do something, showed the incorrect way, and then remodelled the right way.*

*Wooden's demonstrations rarely took longer than three seconds. But they created great clarity for the players.*

### *Copying The Correct Practise*

This stage involves the student aiming to emulate what is considered to be the correct practise. This approach suits some people but others find it challenging.

Some students enjoy replicating and repeating the desired actions. They also like the educator to give them reality checks about what they are doing right and what they can do better.

Some students find this more difficult. They may find it difficult to copy what has been demonstrated or feel constricted by the approach.

The educator's way of giving feedback also plays a vital in the process. Some educators focus on what they student is doing well and will also offer suggestions for improvement. Some focus only on what the student is failing to do properly.

### *Achieving The Correct Practise*

The student continues to work until they have achieved what the educator considers to be correct practise. This can bring a sense of satisfaction and success.

Some students reach this stage relatively quickly and focus on the next skill they want to develop. Some find the process more challenging but eventually practise the skill.

Some students may find that their learning style is not suited to this approach. This can result in them feeling depressed or, in some cases, feeling defiant. The latter group may prefer to go their own way to develop a skill.

The classical approach has pluses and minuses. The pluses include learning from good practise and these actions becoming part of the muscle memory.

The approach does suit everybody. Some individuals can feel it to be constricting. It can also be the case that the skills that are passed on no longer effective in the modern world.

Some people find it easier to learn by using the customised approach. Let's consider this method.

## *The Customised Approach*

### *Clarity*

*This involves the person focusing on the results they want to achieve and clarifying the picture of success.*

### *Customisation*

*This involves building on the person's strengths and clarifying the strategies they can follow to achieve the picture of success.*

### *Concrete Results*

*This involves the person translating the strategies into action, continually developing and delivering the picture of success.*

This approach stems from the organic tradition. It starts by focusing on what the person wants to learn and clarifying their goals.

The next step involves helping the person to build on their strengths and follow certain strategies. They are then encouraged to focus on continuous improvement and work to achieve success.

Educators who apply this approach often have a wide variety of tools they can use. Many follow a certain structure, however, to help the person to achieve success. This often involves focusing on the following themes.

### *Clarity*

The first step is to create an encouraging environment in which the person feels at ease. Bearing in mind what the person wants to explore, it can then be useful to go through the following steps:

*To clarify what they want to learn and their reasons for wanting to develop this skill or reach a particular goal;*

*To clarify the real results they want to achieve and translate this into a clear picture of success;*

*To clarify the benefits of achieving this goal and also what will be happening that will show they have achieved their picture of success.*

Imagine that a person has clarified the desired outcomes. It is then time to move on to the next stage.

### *Customisation*

Educators who take this approach customise the learning experience in a way that encourage and enables the person to achieve success.

Different educators do this in different ways, but many follow the organic approach to development. As mentioned elsewhere in the book, this approach believes that:

*People already have the seeds of development within them;*

*People already have strengths and successful patterns they can develop;*

*People can be helped to build on their strengths and follow their successful patterns – plus be offered other skills – that they can use to achieve their goals.*

Bearing in mind what the person wants to achieve, such an educator may explore some of the following themes with the person.

*What are their strengths? What are their successful patterns? When have they tackled a similar challenge successfully in the past?*

*What did they do right then? What were the principles they followed? How can they follow similar principles – plus maybe add other skills – to achieve their goals?*

*What works for them? What can they learn from other people who have tackled similar challenges successfully? How can they follow these principles in their own way?*

*What are the key strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success? How can they translate these into action? What else can they do to increase the chances of success?*

Educators who take this approach may then invite the person to take the following steps:

*To clarify the strategies they want to follow and translate these into an action plan for learning the skill or reaching the goal;*

*To plan ahead and rehearse the strategies they intend to follow plus also how they can manage any potential challenges;*

*To prepare properly both physically and psychologically for the task they are going to do.*

Educators who take this approach may then invite the person to translate their plan into action. This calls for moving on the next stage.

### *Concrete Results*

This involves the person translating the strategies into action, continually developing and working to achieve the picture of success.

Great coaches, for example, want to see the person in action. The golf coach wants to see the player hit golf balls. The musical coach wants to hear the performer sing or play their instruments. The writing coach wants to see an example of the person's writing.

Why? This provides a reality check. It is the only way to judge a person's performance. The same rule applies to any form of education. Some people talk a great game but seeing them in action can be an eye-opener.

Imagine that you are helping a person to develop a skill. Looking at their performance, it can be useful to explore the questions that coaches ask themselves when watch a person in action. These were described earlier in this chapter.

Imagine that you have seen a person in action. Certainly you have information to pass on but, as Keith Antoine an Olympics athletics coach, says:

*"After a performance, the performer speaks first."*

The person must be given the chance to reflect. They need to do some self-evaluation and clarify what they have learned from the experience. So you may say something like the following to them.

*"Take a few minutes to reflect. I have some ideas about how you can build on your strengths and focus on areas for improvement."*

*"But it is vital that you keep developing the habit of self-improvement. Looking back at your performance, I would like to write down the following things:*

*The specific things I did well and how  
I can do more of these in the future:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do better in the future and how:*

\*

\*

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*The other things I would like to discuss or explore about my performance are:*

\*

\*

\*

*"Try to be as specific as possible. After doing this, I will ask you to share your ideas. Then, if you wish, I will add some ideas of my own."*

Building on what the person says, you can help them to develop their strengths and tackle areas for improvement. You can also share your knowledge by providing positive models and practical tools they can use to add to their repertoire.

Imagine you have gone through these steps. The next stage will be to give the person time to reflect. They can focus on:

*The specific things they have learned or relearned;*

*The specific next steps they want to take to develop the skill or reach the goal;*

*The specific things they can do to give themselves the greatest chance of success when translating their plan into action.*

Imagine the person has made their action plan. You can encourage and enable the person to keep working until they achieve the picture of success.

The customised approach has pluses and minuses. The pluses include it being organic, building on the person's strengths and adding skills to their repertoire. It also is more likely to help them to do what they believe in and achieve success.

The minuses include the following. The approach relies on the person being motivated and the educator being able to pass on knowledge in a way they person can use to achieve their goals.

### *Combining The Customised And Classical Approach*

Sometimes it is possible to combine both approaches. This is more likely to work, however, when:

*The person has previously used the customised approach;*

*The person has clarified a particular skill they want to learn;*

*The person wants to learn from good practice, study what works and then apply this skill in their own way to reach the goal.*

There are many ways to help a person to develop. As ever, the key is to use whichever method is most likely to work and help the person to achieve ongoing success.

Let's return to your own work. How would you rate yourself at passing on knowledge to people? What can you do to maintain or improve the rating?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Passing On Knowledge*

*The rating I would give myself in terms of passing on knowledge is:*

\_\_\_\_ /10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Positive Future*

Many people workers help people to shape a positive future. Here are some reasons they give regarding choosing their work.

*The reasons I went into this kind of work were because I wanted:*

*To help people ... To give people a better start in life ... To give people more opportunities ... To give people a good education ... To help people to take care of their health ... To enable people to have more options and freedom to shape their futures.*

*To help children from difficult backgrounds ... To help children with learning difficulties ... To help former addicts to stay healthy ... To help former prisoners ... To help military veterans to use their skills to make a contribution to society.*

*To help people to build on their strengths ... To help people to do satisfying work ... To help people to overcome problems ... To play a part in helping to build a better society ... To give people hope ... To help people to achieve success.*

Many people workers believe that the work is about helping the other person – the client, customer or group of people. It is never about them. It is not about them trying to impress, impose their views or be seen as a saviour or guru.

## People Workers

*They believe:*

***It is always about  
helping the other person***

***It is never  
about them***

The people who follow this approach have often got their act together. They know who they are and who they are not. They are then more able to make the work about others rather than about themselves.

*Good people workers sometimes  
demonstrate the following characteristics*

*They know their philosophy about helping people – they know what they can do and what they can't do to help people;*

*They know their strengths – such as specific things they can and can't offer to people – and how to help people to achieve success;*

*They know the kinds of people they can help – and the characteristics these people demonstrate - and those they probably can't help.*

People workers love to give to others but they can sometimes feel overwhelmed with challenges. During the Covid-19 outbreak, for example, many were working long hours helping those affected by the events.

Some gained strength by recalling why they went into doing social work, nursing, education or the helping professions. Some saw it has a chance to pursue their calling. They saw it has a privilege – rather than a pressure – to help others during the crisis.

Different people workers supported others in different ways. Some tried to help people to feel more in control of shaping the future. This involved taking the following steps.

*They helped people to manage any pressing issues at the base of Maslow's hierarchy of human needs - such as taking care of their health, housing and finding ways to extend their financial runway.*

*They encouraged people to establish a routine they wanted to follow – this included doing work related activities, doing things that gave them positive energy and, when appropriate, helping other people.*

*They invited people to recall when they had overcome crises in the past and explore how they could follow some of these principles – plus add other skills – to tackle the present challenge.*

*They helped people to focus on their strengths and how they may be able to do satisfying work in the future – either in their present role or finding a role in industries that would thrive beyond the crisis.*

*They took the time to focus on each individual's personal situation and aimed to provide practical tools the person could use to increase their way power and shape the future.*

Looking back at your own life, can you think of a situation when you helped people to shape their future? This could have been in your personal or professional life?

You may have done this when acting as a parent, educator, counsellor, coach, leader or in another role. What did you do to help the person or group of people? What were the principles you followed? How can you follow these principles in the future?

Many people workers are positive, professional, problem solvers and pass on knowledge. They also aim to help people shape a positive future. How would you rate yourself in terms of taking this final step?

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences. You can then continue to help people to shape a positive future.

## *Positive Future*

*The rating I would give myself in terms of helping people to shape a positive future is:*

\_\_\_ /10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Professional Freelancer Approach*

### *The Professional Freelancer Approach*

*This approach applies as much to full-time employees as it does to external suppliers. It calls for having a professional freelancer approach, seeing things as projects and delivering positive results.*



Great workers often choose to behave like professional freelancers. They believe it is vital to do superb work, give great service and deliver success. They behave in this way even if they are full-time employees.

Looking ahead, they rehearse each day and then click into action. Recognising they are always on stage, they behave in a positive and professional way towards all people.

They recognise that their role is to support others, however, rather than be the star. They therefore use their strengths to help all their stakeholders to succeed.

Great workers recognise that the world of work has changed. There are few predictable career paths anymore, but there will always be projects. Customers and employers will always have challenges and needs to be fulfilled.

Such workers therefore look for projects where they can play to their strengths. They then do superb work and help the various stakeholders to achieve success. This can lead to them getting more projects in the future.

They aim do their best each day. Some imagine that they are on a rolling contract that is to be reviewed every three months. They therefore aim:

*To make clear contracts with the key stakeholders about the specific results to deliver – the picture of success;*

*To get some quick wins, do superb work and keep people informed about the progress being made towards achieving the picture of success;*

*To keep encouraging people, find solutions to challenges and do whatever is required to achieve the picture of success.*

Professional freelancers have a strong service ethic and help their stakeholders to succeed. This can lead to building long-term relationships with individuals, customers and employers.

They are also aware, however, that things can change quickly. Companies can be taken over, crises can happen and unexpected events can shake the market.

Great workers continue to deliver high professional standards but also recognise that their present project – even if it is a full-time role - may end at some point. They therefore often develop a back-up plan.

They then continue to give 100% in their present role. This is because they are choosing to be there each day rather than feeling resentful or trapped because they have to be there.

Such workers always show respect to people – whether they are the cleaner or the chief executive. They see each person as a human

being and want to help them to shape a positive future. This helps them to build a good reputation and sometimes results in them getting more work as a professional freelancer.

### *Professional Freelancers*

- *They play to their strengths, have a strong service ethic and want to help other people to succeed.*
- *They aim to find or create satisfying projects and, when they do, they make clear working contracts with the stakeholders.*
- *They get some quick wins, perform superb work and keep people informed about their progress towards the agreed goals.*
- *They behave in a positive way towards all people because they recognise they are always on stage and on a rolling contract.*
- *They keep delivering great service, find solutions to challenges and do their best to help all the stakeholders to achieve success.*

The following sections explore some of the steps taken by people who follow these principles. Several have already been covered in previous parts of the book. Bearing this in mind, some will be described in more depth than others.

## *Defining Your Professional Offering*

Professional freelancers play to their strengths. They also recognise the kinds of work they find satisfying. This becomes more important as a person develops during their career.

Imagine, for example, that you have been offered a role. Looking at the job spec, it is something you can deliver but it is not stimulating. The role may be something you did five years ago.

Certainly you can take it and do a superb job. This will put bread on the table. It may also be possible to expand it by adding other satisfying projects. You can then deliver the required scorecard and also get stimulation from the other activities.

Imagine another scenario where you have the time to think about your perfect role. Bearing in mind your strengths, you may want to clarify the qualities you would like in your ideal role.

This was the approach taken by the customer service director. She did the following exercise when looking for a new role.

### *My Ideal Role Would Have The Following Qualities*

*It would be one where:*

*I am playing to my strengths – which are orchestrating multiple teams and people to achieve a compelling goal – and I have the autonomy required to deliver success;*

*I am working with a product, service or company that I believe in and we are doing pioneering work that helps customers to achieve both present and future success;*

*I am able to, if appropriate, act as an ambassador for the product, service or company by producing success stories and videos that show how it can help people to achieve success.*

*I am able to play a mentoring or coaching role where I can help people to develop their professional skills and shape their careers in ways that help both them and their stakeholders to achieve success;*

*I am able to maintain my own and my family's wellbeing by being in control of my diary and by doing satisfying work that also pays a reasonable salary.*

She did the internal work and moved on to the external work. This involved translating what she wanted to do into an offering that would be attractive to a company.

Bearing in mind the kind of employer with whom she worked best, she researched the challenges facing such companies. She then translated her offering into three headlines that described the specific things she could deliver to such a company.

### *My Professional Offering*

*Bearing in mind the company's goals, the specific things I would like to deliver to help the company to achieve success are:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

She began having informal conversations with people in her network. This involved saying something along the following lines.

*"I am happy where I am at the moment, but at some point I will be looking to move on. Looking ahead, I would like to deliver the following things to a company.*

*1) To ...*

*For example, to ...*

*2) To ...*

*For example, to ...*

*3) To ...*

*For example, to ...*

*"Let me know if you ever hear of a company that would like these things delivered."*

Two months after the first conversations, one employer said:

*"Those are things we would definitely be interested in. Can we discuss these a bit more?"*

She met the company several times. They agreed on the specific outcomes she would deliver and this led to a job offer. She took the role, stayed there for three years and delivered the goods.

Being a professional freelancer, she then moved on to her next project – which was another full-time role. She continues to be a well-known and well-liked figure in her industry.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *My Professional Offering*

*Bearing in mind my strengths, here are the specific things I can deliver to a customer or employer to help them achieve success*

\*

\*

\*

## *Performing Superb Work*

Professional freelancers rehearse before meeting their potential stakeholders. These may be the managers, leaders, customers or other people.

Imagine that you want to take this step. When meeting with such people it will be important:

*To show the stakeholders you understand the world their point of view, the challenges they face and their picture of success;*

*To describe how you want to help them to achieve their goals and, if appropriate, to then make clear contracts about the results to achieve – the picture of success;*

*To describe the potential early wins, the ways you will proactively keep them informed and anything else you will do to deliver the picture of success.*

Great workers then move into action, get some quick successes and do superb work. When doing so, they behave in a positive way to all people. They do this because they want to help people and also because they remember the old saying:

*"You Are Always On Stage."*

They recognise that people will watch them and make judgements about their professionalism, their behaviour and how others feel after interacting with them. This highlights a paradoxical point.

Professional freelancers believe that – whilst they are on stage - their role is to support others. It is not to be the star. Their work is about helping other people to succeed. It is not about them.

People sometimes need a setback before they realise that others are making judgements about their professionalism. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"My turning point came 10 years ago when I was rejected for a senior role. The positive feedback was that I was superb with clients. But my colleagues weren't impressed with my behaviour in office.*

*"They did not like me showing my frustrations or arguing in meetings. My view was that I was just being honest, but I hadn't realised how it affected people.*

*"My bosses wanted me to retain my passion but to channel it in more constructive ways towards colleagues. So I had a decision to make. I could ignore or listen to the feedback.*

*"I chose the latter route and got the senior role within 12 months. The tough messages were the turning point. They taught me to think about how I behaved in front of colleagues."*

Imagine that you work in an office. What are the situations where you are on stage during the day?

People may look at how you behave when you arrive, work at your desk, participate in team meetings, meet customers, deal with crises and do other activities.

What are the key messages they are getting from your behaviour? Bearing in mind you are always on stage, how can you continue to behave in a positive and professional way?

## ***Delivering Positive Results***

Great workers keep their stakeholders informed about their progress towards achieving the goals. They then do their best to deliver the desired positive results.

Such workers retain their hunger to improve. Sometimes they refresh their approach by using the rolling contract approach. They ask themselves the following questions.

## The Rolling Contract Questions

*Imagine that I am on a rolling contract and that, in order to be extended, has to be signed off by the key stakeholders every three months. If this was the case:*

- *How would I behave towards my colleagues, customers and the key stakeholders? Looking at my present work, what would I continue to do? What would I add or do differently?*
- *How would I aim to give great service? How would I encourage people? How would I deliver successes? How would I proactively keep the stakeholders informed about the progress towards achieving the agreed goals?*
- *How can I do these things? How can I encourage people and deliver successes? How can I do whatever is required to increase the chances of the stakeholders extending the rolling contract?*

Good leaders sometimes take this approach with their team. This can be particularly useful if people become complacent. Adapting the questions, they invite the team members to produce ideas on the following theme.

## The Rolling Contract For Our Team

*Imagine that our team is on a rolling contract with our company. What would we do to encourage the key stakeholders to keep extending our contract?*

*Please share your ideas here:*

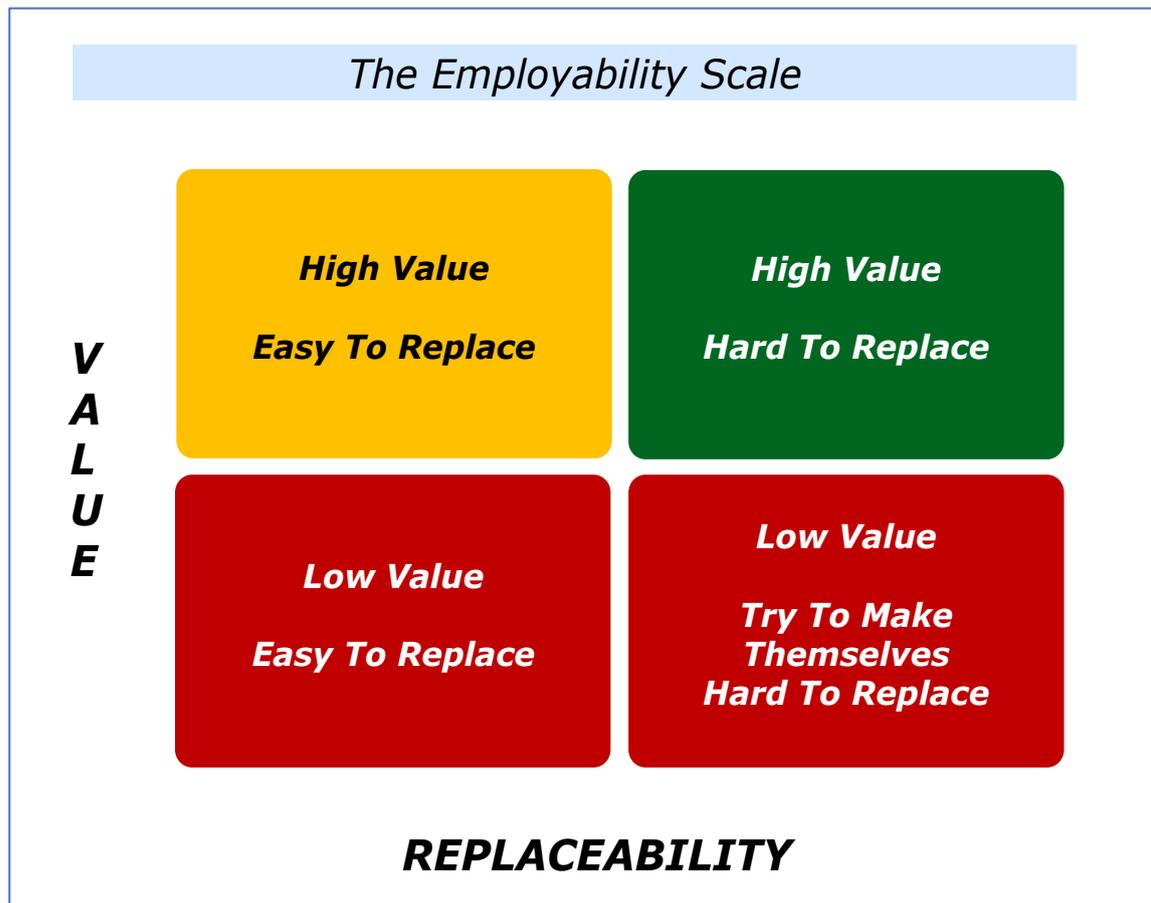
- \* *We would ...*
- \* *We would ...*
- \* *We would ...*

*We will then build on these ideas and make an action plan. The aim will be to continue to give great service to all our stakeholders.*

Superb workers keep developing as people and professionals. Let's look at some ways it is possible to take these steps.

### *The High Value And Hard To Replace Approach*

Professional freelancers continue to develop their offering. One approach they take is to measure themselves on the employability scale.



The world of work is constantly changing. So how can you continue to make yourself employable?

Take a look at the employability model. This plots your value to an employer against your replaceability. (Few people are irreplaceable, but some are more replaceable than others.)

*Looking through the eyes of a potential employer, ask the following questions.*

*Where do I fit in the model? Which is the quadrant where I would like to be in the future? How can I continue to be of high value to an employer?*

### *High Value - Hard To Replace*

People in this quadrant are often brilliant niche providers. They perform outstanding work and yet are also willing to pass on their wisdom.

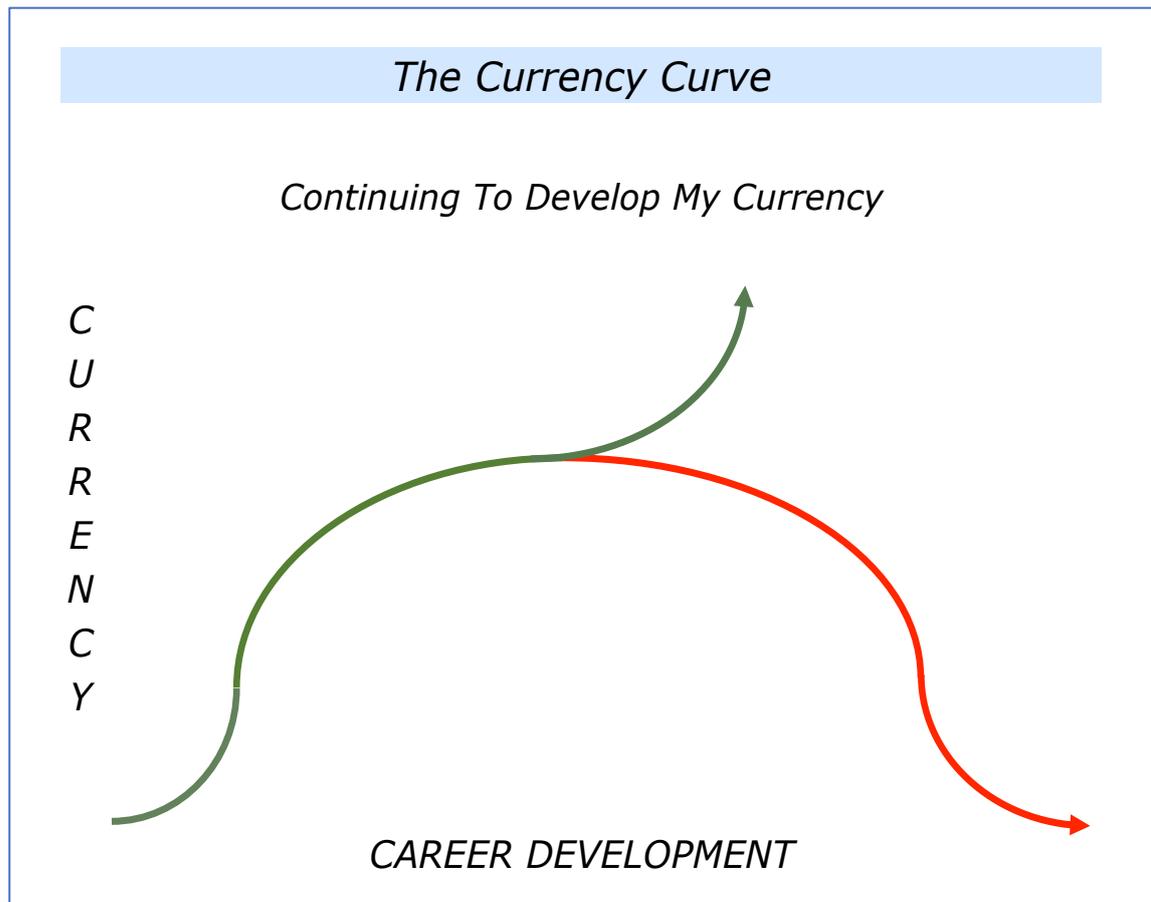
The second part highlights something that seems counter-intuitive. Great workers often make themselves valuable by giving away their knowledge rather than by hoarding trade secrets.

Different people do this in different ways. One approach is to coach others and enable them to perform superb work.

This is in contrast to, for example, older style experts. Some of those aimed to make themselves hard to replace by obscuring their work in the black arts.

Professional freelancers build on their strengths, provide great service and help people to achieve success. They also focus on the following theme.

## The Currency Curve



Take a look at the currency curve. This plots your currency - the way you earn your living now - with your career development.

How do you earn your living now? How did you earn your living five years ago? How do you want to earn your living in the future?

People can be at the top of a curve but may need to keep developing. Otherwise they may be doing the same things in the future but with less satisfaction. They may also be facing challenges in the workplace.

Certainly you may pursue similar themes in your work, but it may be important to improve your offering to customers. Here are some questions you may want to consider.

*Looking at my work:*

*What is my present currency? How do I earn my living now? Where am I on the curve? Am I still climbing the curve? Have I reached a plateau?? Am I going down the other side of the curve?*

How can you shape your future career? One approach is to continue to develop your currency – the way you earn a living. It is to ask yourself some of the following questions.

*Looking at my chosen field:*

*What are the changes that may take place in the next year, three years and in the future? What may be the challenges that my customers face? What can they do to achieve sustainable success?*

*How can I keep developing my currency? How can I continue to build on my strengths, add to my repertoire and deliver consistently high standards? How can I do my best to help my customers to achieve success?*

Great workers keep developing their currency. This helps them to continue to help other people to achieve success.

Let's explore one approach to taking this step. This involves following some of the principles described in the section of the book called *The Brilliant Team Approach*.

The following pages describe how a people can apply this approach to do great work as an individual. You will, of course, follow these steps in your own way.

## *The Brilliant Work Approach*

*This approach starts by a person focusing on a specific activity in which they may have the ability to do brilliant work.*

*It then involves them doing what they believe in, doing the basics and then adding the brilliance.*



Great workers aim to do what they do best and then do their best. They aim to do what they believe in, do the basics and add the brilliance. This starts by them taking the following steps.

*They clarify the specific activity in which they may have the ability to do brilliant work. One approach is to think of examples of when they have shown this ability in the past, even if only for a short time.*

*They clarify the specific piece of brilliant work they want to do in the future. This could be a task, project or other activity.*

*They clarify the specific outcomes they want to achieve by doing the piece of brilliant work.*

Imagine that you want to follow some of these principles in your own way. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on the following page.

## *Brilliant Work*

*The specific activity in which I may have the ability to do brilliant work is:*

\*

*The specific piece of work – the task, project or other activity – in which I would like to do brilliant work is:*

\*

*The specific outcomes I want to achieve by doing the piece of brilliant work are:*

\*

\*

\*

Imagine that you have clarified the specific piece of work you want to do. You can then aim to do what you believe in, do the basics and then add the brilliance. Let's explore these themes.

## *Beliefs*

Great workers do what they believe in. They do this in several ways. These include the following.

*They do a piece of work – such as a project, task or other activity – that they believe in;*

*They follow the principles they believe in when doing the piece of work;*

*They focus on the specific outcomes they want to achieve by doing the piece of work.*

Such workers continually follow the principles they believe in when doing the piece of work. This can be vital, especially when things get tough. The core principles provide a framework they can follow to decide how to tackle certain challenges.

## *Basics*

Great workers clarify the real results they want to achieve. They also clarify the principles – such as the key strategies – they want to follow to achieve their picture of success. They translate these into a clear action plan.

Such workers then keep doing the basics required to deliver consistently high standards. The basics they do will be different, of course, depending on their chosen activity.

A counsellor will help a person to feel at ease, explore what they want to achieve and then enable them to shape their future. An athlete will prepare properly - both physically and psychologically – and then do their best to achieve peak performance.

Such workers are often positive, professional and perform superb work. They follow good habits and consistently deliver high standards. This creates the platform for sometimes moving on to the next step.

## *Brilliance*

Great workers keep doing the basics and, when appropriate, add the brilliance. Different people do this in different ways.

A footballer may use their skills to produce a great save, a defence splitting pass or a great goal. A surgeon may use their gifts to perform a life-saving operation in difficult circumstances. A mediator may find a breakthrough that helps conflicting parties to agree on a solution.

You will have your own way of doing such work when it matters. One approach is to employ your strengths to do something special that contributes towards achieving the picture of success.

Imagine that you have clarified the specific activity in which you may have the ability to do brilliant work. How can you translate this into doing a specific piece of work that you believe in? This could be a task, project or another activity.

What are the principles you want to follow when doing this piece of work? How can you keep following these principles – especially when it may get tough? How can you translate these into action?

How can you keep doing the basics? How can you keep delivering high standards? How can you, when appropriate, add the brilliance? What will be the benefits – both for yourself and other people – of doing this piece of work?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Brilliant Work*

*The specific piece of work – the task, project or other activity – in which I would like to do brilliant work is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to do what I believe in, do the basics and then, when appropriate, add the brilliance are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits – for myself and other people – of doing this piece of work may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Communicating With Architects, Builders And Craftsmen*

*Architects*

*Builders*

*Craftsmen*



Professional freelancers sometimes need to present their ideas to different kinds of people. Let's explore one approach that can be useful in such situations.

Imagine you are due to make a presentation to a leadership team. The group will be made up of people who process information in different ways. There will be architects, builders and craftsmen.

You may prefer presenting to certain kinds of people, but this may not always be in your gift. Here is an introduction to how it may be possible to connect with the different people.

## *Architects*

Architects are often decision makers and see the big picture. They like headlines. They immediately want to know the relevance of the presentation and, where appropriate, the improved results it will help them or their organisation to achieve.

Such people often leap to the destination quickly. They go 'A, B ... and leap to ... Z'. Visionary by nature, they tend not to get into details. But they may also ask the odd curve ball question to check if you have done your homework.

Architects sometimes have a short attention span. So double-check they are still interested, otherwise they may get bored and cause difficulties. Once onside, however, they can be great advocates.

## *Builders*

Builders may pursue a logical thought process. They may go: 'A, B, C, D, E ...'. They often focus on the processes to be followed to get the job done.

Such people may be project managers who concentrate on the implementation plans. It is important to have your facts ready to answer their questions. They will be the people who make sure things happen.

## *Craftsmen*

They are specialists who know the details in their field. Such people they are likely to discuss the intricacies of engraving each brick.

Sometimes they can throw presentations off-track by interrupting in mid-sentence, saying:

*"Do you realise the problems involved in point C?"*

Craftsmen care deeply about their work and may ask questions about certain details. Some presenters manage such issues by producing a detailed compendium that addresses the key questions.

They refer people to this material and explain that the issues are covered in the back-up material. They then continue with the flow of their presentation.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may need to communicate with a group of people? How can you communicate with the different kinds of people?

Before the session try to have one-to-one meetings with people. Start by getting the architects onside and, if possible, then meeting the builders and craftsmen. During these meetings you can aim:

*To show you understand the world from each individual's point of view;*

*To show how the ideas you are going present can help the team to achieve success;*

*To answer any concerns or questions.*

There may be many times when it is not possible to meet the individuals. You may then meet the group in a relatively cold situation. It is then important to remember some of the key rules regarding presentations.

*The session is about them it is not about you. It is about sharing ideas that can help them to achieve success.*

These points can be hard to remember, especially if your future depends on the presentation. But this approach can enable you to relax and rise to the occasion.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Architects, Builders And Craftsmen*

*The specific situation when I may want to communicate with a group may be:*

\*

*Architects. The specific things I can do to communicate with the architects are:*

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*Builders. The specific things I can do to communicate with the builders are:*

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*Craftsmen. The specific things I can do to communicate with the craftsmen are:*

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## *Shaping A Positive Future*

Professional freelancers continue to do superb work on their present project, but they recognise that all projects come to an end. They therefore have back-up plans.

Some people take the following approach to shaping their futures. They do this in a professional way, however, rather than in ways that would cause conflicts of interest.

### *People Shaping Their Futures – They Sometimes Focus On The Following Themes*

#### *The Present Professional Role*

*They behave in a super-professional way in their present role and continue to deliver success.*

#### *The Possible Professional Opportunities*

*They encourage people in their network and are also open to exploring possible opportunities.*

#### *The Personal Or Professional Projects*

*They pursue projects they find fascinating and also produce a website or other vehicle that showcases what they can offer.*

Security is to have an alternative. People who have options will choose to be in their present role rather than feel they have to be there. Such workers will then give 100% to their present project.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, how can you apply elements of the professional freelancer approach in your own way?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Being A Professional Freelancer*

*The specific things I can do to apply elements of this approach are:*

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*The specific things I can do to perform superb work are:*

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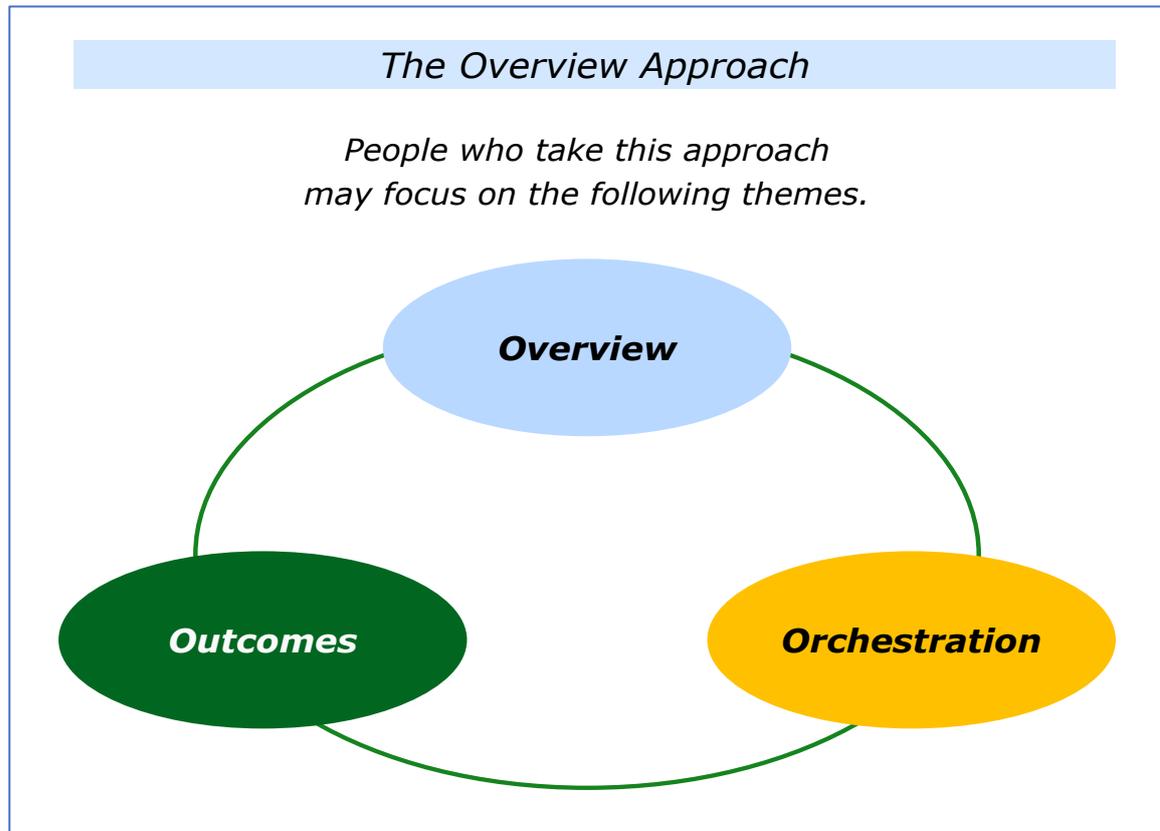
*The specific things I can do to find or create potential future work opportunities are:*

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## The Overview Approach



This section focuses on people who good at getting an overview of events in their area of expertise. They seem to look at things from above, see the big picture and see how things are connected.

Such people sometimes want to translate this awareness into action. If so, they clarify the outcomes achieve. They then aim to orchestrate the available resources to achieve these aims.

Great workers sometimes do this themselves. Sometimes they play to their strengths and take a leadership role. They may then enable the coordinators and experts to do superb work and deliver the desired outcomes.

Let's consider some of the steps that such people take to pursue these themes.

## Overview

Great workers quickly get an overview of situations in the activities where they excel. Such workers seem to be both helicoptering and hands-on in certain situations.

They see what is happening from above to get an overview and see patterns. At the same time, they are fully engaged in the moment. This enables them to give their full attention to events.

(The term 'helicoptering' sometimes has another interpretation in the United States. It describes a parent who is keeping tabs on their son or daughter in an over-protective way. Here we are using the term in another way.)

### *People Who See The Big Picture*

*They become extremely alert and helicopter above the situation. They sometimes focus on the following themes.*

- *Picture*

*They aim to see the big picture. They gather information, see things in perspective and begin to see connections.*

- *Patterns*

*They look for patterns - both the successful and unsuccessful patterns. They also see the potential consequences.*

- *Positive Results*

*They clarify the real results to achieve. They settle on their chosen strategy for achieving positive results.*

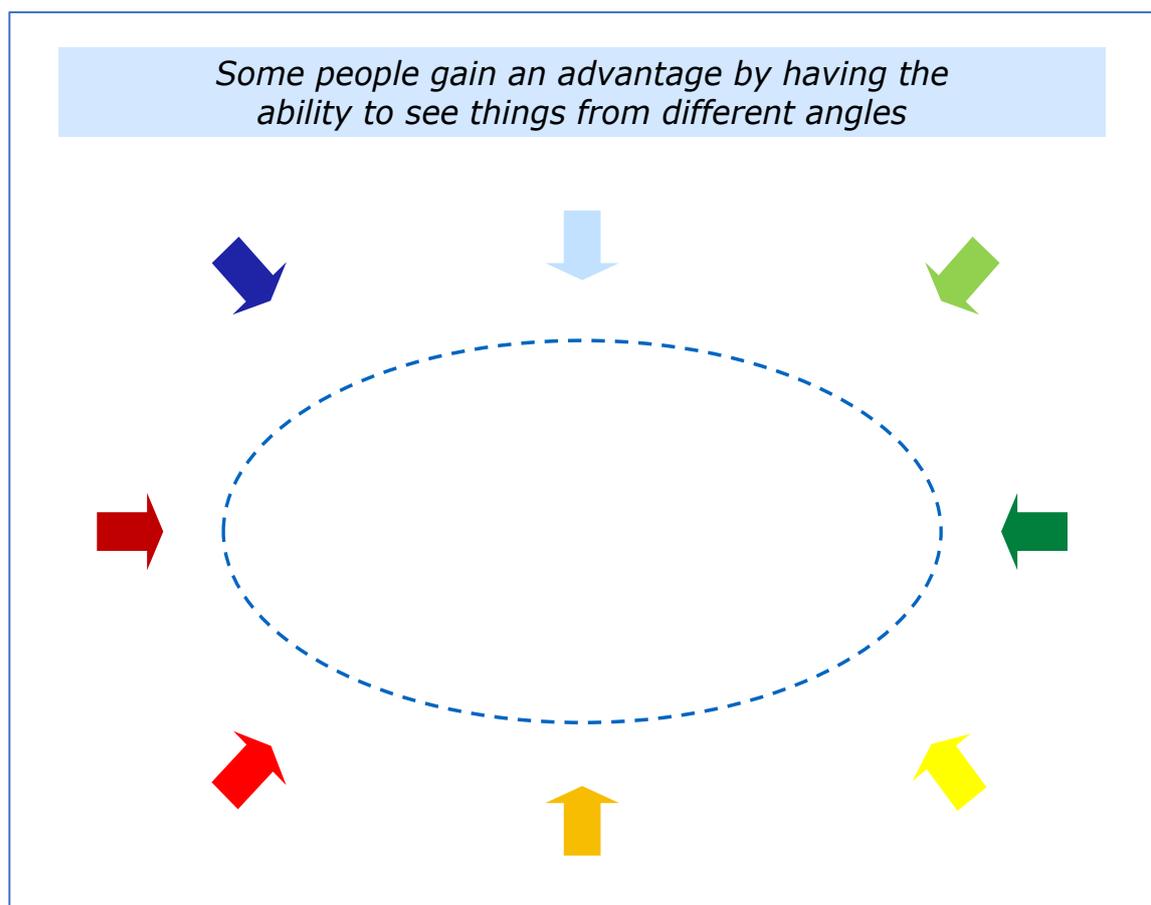
Different people explain this approach in different ways. Here is how one therapist described what happened for them.

*"The first time I experienced this sensation was when I was running a family therapy session. This sounds odd: but suddenly it felt as if I was hovering above people in the room.*

*"Looking from above, I could clearly see the family communication patterns. At the same time I was still completely involved in the face-to-face communication with each person.*

*"Now I have a similar experience when teaching large groups. Whilst speaking from the front, I see the smallest movement made by each person. This helps me to see patterns and, if necessary, change strategy to get results."*

Some people do more than get an overview. They are also able to see things from different angles. This can give them an advantage when it comes to finding creative solutions.



Some people add this ability to their repertoires. Some who are labelled as different may demonstrate this quality from an early age. They may be considered to be introverted, highly sensitive, dyslexic, having synaesthesia or being slow learners at school.

Such people develop certain strategies to survive. These strategies may be different from those needed to succeed by going a conventional route. On the other hand, learning such skills can enable them to thrive in other fields.

Creative people do not subscribe to the cliché of 'thinking outside the box' – this is because they do not actually see a box. They see the total picture, the patterns and the possibilities. Clarifying the real results to achieve, they then find creative ways to achieve the picture of success.

Different people get an overview in different ways. Here are stages that some go through when taking this approach.

### *The Overview Approach*

*Some people go through the following steps.*

*Observation. They observe what is happening and make sure they have got – as far as possible – a good overview.*

*Organisation. They organise their thoughts to make sense of the information they have gathered.*

*Opinion. They then, if appropriate, form an opinion about how to achieve certain outcomes. (Some people simply rush to this stage.)*



What are the situations where you quickly get an overview? You may do this when counselling a person, teaching a class, fixing a technical problem or doing another activity. You may do it when working as a paramedic, sports coach, leader or in another role.

How do you clarify what is happening? You may gather information, search for patterns and see connections. You may also envisage the potential future scenarios.

Imagine that you choose to take action. How do you clarify the real results to achieve? How do you explore the possible options – together with the pluses and minuses of each option? How do you settle on your chosen way forwards?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to choose a specific situation where you are good at getting an overview and then taking action. Try completing the following sentences.

## Overview

*The specific situation where I am good at getting an overview and, if appropriate, working towards certain outcomes is:*

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*The specific things I do to get an overview and do my best to fully understand the situation are:*

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*The specific things I do to clarify the outcomes to achieve, explore the options and settle on the chosen strategy are:*

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## Orchestration

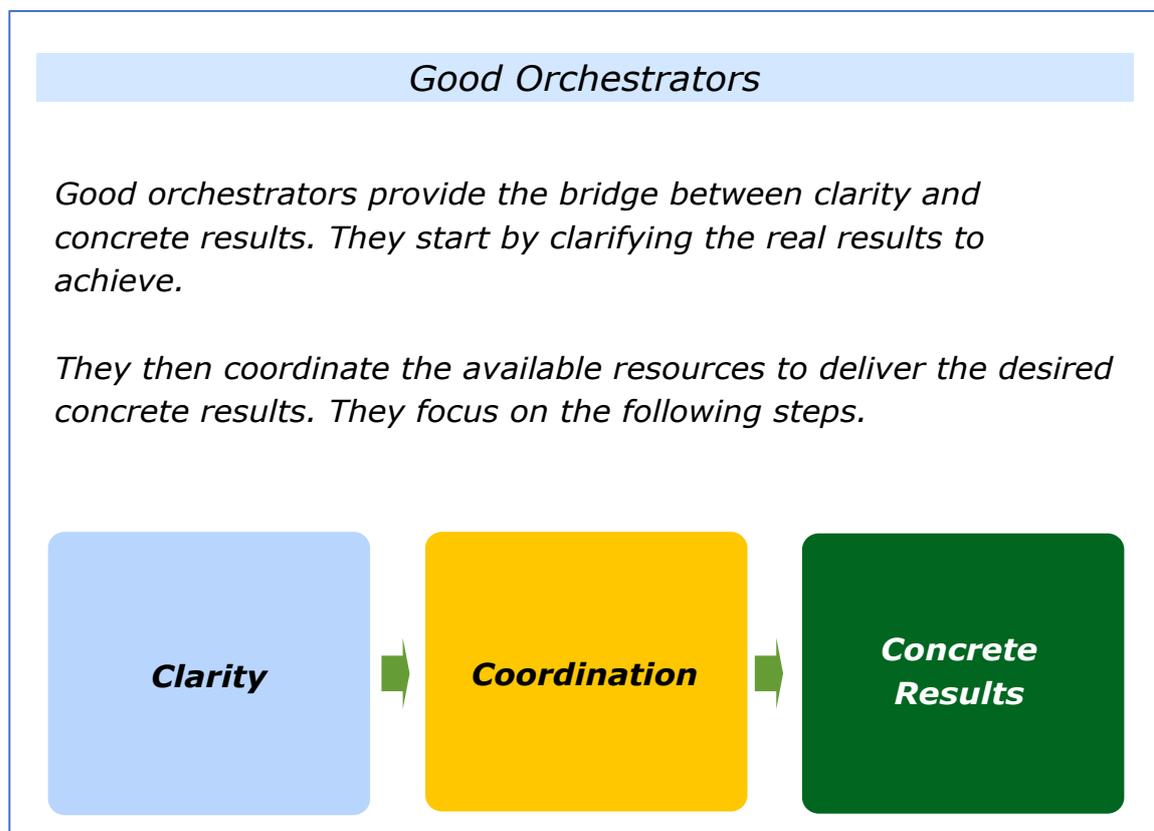
Great workers sometimes want to go beyond getting an overview of a situation. They want to translate this awareness into achieving results.

Different people do this in different ways. One common factor, however, is that they often orchestrate the available resources to achieve the goals.

*They may orchestrate their own resources – their spirit, strengths and strategic thinking – to achieve success;*

*They may orchestrate the resources of their team or organisation to achieve success;*

*They may orchestrate certain resources in society to achieve success.*



Good orchestrators follow the guidelines described earlier in the section on *The Coordination Approach*. Bearing this in mind, here is a brief overview. Such people often ask the following questions.

*What are the real results we want to achieve? What are the actual words we would like to hear the various stakeholders saying about what we deliver? What is the picture of success?*

*What are the various resources we have available? How can we coordinate people's strengths and the other resources to deliver the results? How can we give people the required support?*

*How can we enable people to do superb work? How can we anticipate and find solutions to challenges? How can we keep improving and do our best to deliver the picture of success?*

You may or may not be good at coordinating things. Bearing this in mind, you may sometimes need to get help in this area.

Good leaders, for example, build on their strengths. They may be good at communicating the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success. They may also be good at working with customers and managing their backers.

Such leaders may then work with people who have complementary strengths. These often include coordinators who make sure that things get done.

Let's return to your own work. What is the kind of situation where you are good at getting the overview and orchestrating the resources to deliver the desired outcomes?

Sometimes you may do these tasks yourself. Sometimes you may complement your strengths by working with people who have other skills. What do you do then to make sure the goods are delivered?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Orchestration*

*The specific situation where I am good at orchestrating the resources to achieve the desired outcomes is:*

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*The specific things I do then to orchestrate the resources are:*

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*The specific kinds of help I sometimes need to orchestrate the resources are:*

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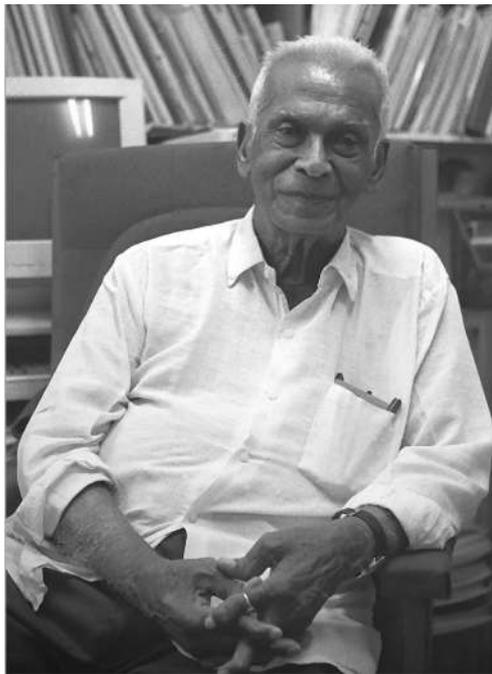
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## Outcomes

Great workers deliver the desired outcomes. They may do this in their work as an educator, carer, social entrepreneur, sports coach, scientist, leader or in another role.

Dr Govindappa Venkataswamy was somebody who took this route. Known as Dr V., he dedicated his life to providing people with the gift of sight. His individual work and the founding of the Aravind Eye Hospitals has led to helping millions of people to see.

He believed in the following philosophy. Here is an introduction to Dr V's work. This is based on an article by David Kemer in which he cites the doctor as his hero.



*We aim to give sight to all and to see all as one.*

*"Intelligence and capability are not enough. There must be the joy of doing something beautiful.*

*"When we grow in spiritual consciousness, we identify with all that is in the world there is no exploitation.*

*"It is ourselves we're helping, ourselves we're healing."*

Dr V. was born in 1918 to a farming family in South India. He gained a medical degree, planned to practice obstetrics but then experienced a setback. Contracting rheumatoid arthritis which

affected his hands, he decided to change field. David Kemer describes what Dr V. did next.

*He began studying ophthalmology and had instruments specially designed for his arthritic hands - each one custom-made to fill a specific need. These instruments enabled him to perform as many as 100 cataract surgeries a day. He quickly became the most admired cataract surgeon in India.*

Dr V. performed eye surgeries at this rate for 25 years before exploring how to scale his approach. Inspired by the McDonald's approach to selling burgers, he aimed to provide millions of sight-restoring operations.

This led to setting up the Aravind Eye Hospital. This had 11 beds in a rented house in Madurai, India. David Kemer describes what has happened since.

*Today, there are some 3600 beds in five Aravind Eye Hospitals that perform more than 200,000 operations each year. And 70% of the patients pay little or nothing.*

*Hundreds of thousands of India's poor have been granted the gift of sight. Dr V. lowered the cost of cataract operations to nearly \$10 per surgery compared to almost \$1650 in the U.S.*

*He reorganized how cataract surgeries are done. By training a team of paramedics to do 70% of the work required in each surgery, doctors are freed up to do a great many more of them.*

*All of the treatments performed at Aravind Eye Hospitals are financed by those patients who are most able to afford them - roughly 30% - who seek out Aravind's world-renowned quality and happily pay competitive prices.*

*As such, Aravind Hospitals have become a business model for health care systems the world over.*

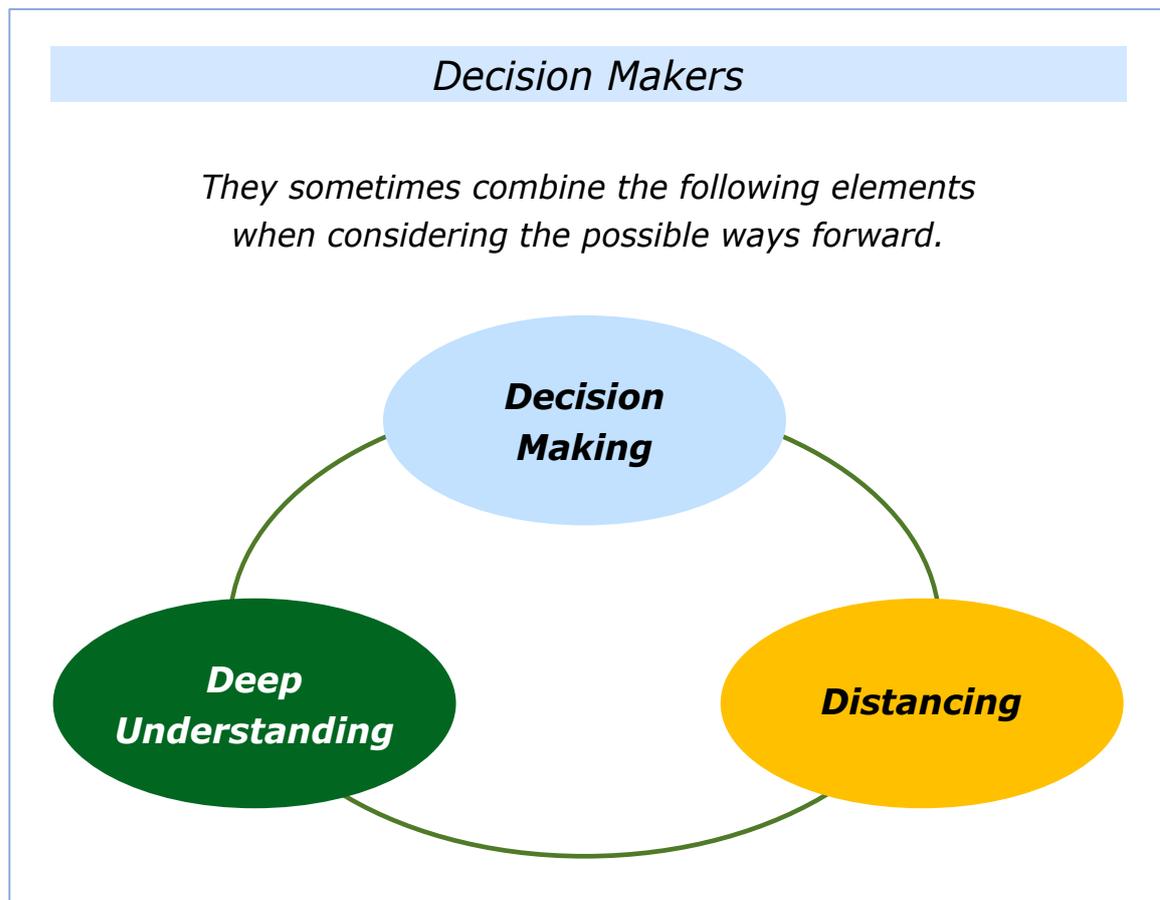
Dr V. created a wonderful legacy. The Aravind Hospital's philosophy has been described in the following way.

*Each year they bring light to millions of lives. If people can't pay, they don't have to. If people can't go to the hospitals, the medical care goes to them.*

*Aravind's vision is to eliminate needless blindness. Their services are world-class, but the spirit that drives them is one of a kind. It is to provide compassionate and quality eye care affordable to all.*

Different people use the overview approach in different situations. Let's explore how it is adapted by some decision makers.

## *The Distancing Yourself To Make Good Decisions Approach*



Good decision makers sometimes combine what may appear to be opposites. When done properly, however, taking this approach can help them to make considered decisions.

They distance themselves from the situation to see the big picture and get an overview. At the same time, they also aim to get a deep understanding of the situation, the options and the implications. Let's explore these themes.

## *Decision Making*

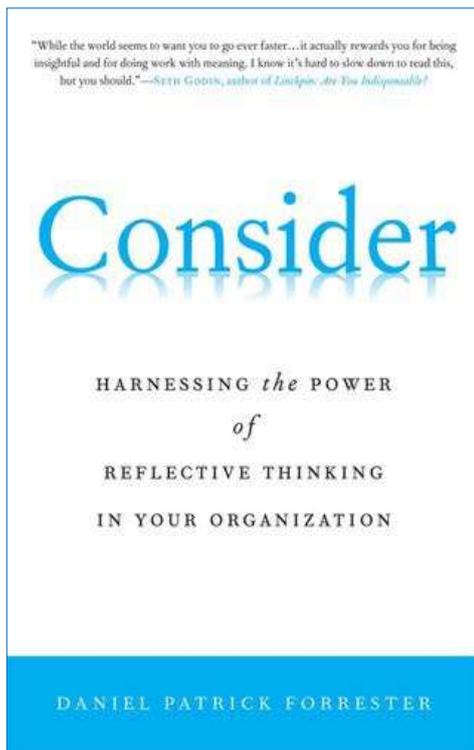
Good decision makers often buy time to think and gather information in situations. They see what is actually happening, clarify the real results to achieve and consider the possible options for going forwards.

Daniel Forrester encourages people to take this approach before making decisions. He explains this approach in his book *Consider: Harnessing the power of reflective thinking in your organization*.

Some decisions need to be made quickly. But in many situations there is often time to consider the options and improving the chances of success. Here is some background from Daniel's website.

## *About The Book*

*This original work distilled the lessons in leadership and habits of reflective thinking that made the difference within the recent financial crisis, war in Iraq and in recovering from the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.*



*The stories and examples within **Consider** demonstrate that the best decisions, insights, ideas and outcomes result when we take sufficient time to think and reflect.*

*While technology allows us to act and react more quickly than ever before, we are taking increasingly less time to consider our decisions before we make them.*

**"STOP, THINK, AND DON'T DO SOMETHING STUPID!"**

*This is the warning Dr. Robert Bea drills into his Civil and Environmental Engineering students at the University of California in Berkeley.*

*Bea wants to dramatize what he terms the inevitable "oh shit" moments that present themselves-before an actual engineering calamity like the Deepwater Horizon/BP disaster happens.*

*Reflection supplies an arsenal of ideas and solutions to the right problems.*

*Forrester shows us that taking time and giving ourselves the mental space for reflection can mean the difference between total success and total failure.*

## *Distancing*

Good decision makers combine what may seem opposing qualities. This may be the case in relation to feelings. Some individuals are extremely sensitive to both their own and other people's feelings.

Bearing this in mind, they aim to manage their own emotions. They may be a leader who is tackling a crisis, a paramedic who arrives on the scene of an accident or a person who aims to deal with a difficult challenge.

Different people use different ways to distance themselves from their emotions. One approach is to almost helicopter above the situation. They then aim to get an overview and see the possible options for going forwards.

Another approach is to drain themselves of emotion. Some people become calm, clear and consider their options. They may then demonstrate what is called cold courage when moving into action.

Distancing can be crucial to make considered decisions, but then we come to the paradox. It is also important to demonstrate the following quality.

## *Deep Understanding*

Good decision makers aim to have a deep understanding of challenging situations. They want to understand:

*The specific things that are actually happening and, in some cases, the actual details and the emotional issues;*

*The potential options for going forwards together with the pluses and minuses of these on many levels;*

*The option most likely to achieve the desired results and how they can deal with the potential scenarios on the way towards achieving success.*

Such decision makers combine their helicoptering with using their brain to swoop down into being hands on. They aim to understand what things are like on the ground.

Some people have this ability to move between the two modes. They can see things from above but they also have the awareness:

*To clarify what is actually happening and how people are feeling;*

*To clarify the most helpful way forward and how people will feel when they implement this approach;*

*To clarify how they can build on the pluses and manage the minuses when aiming to achieve the desired results.*

Good decision makers sometimes aim to distance themselves yet also have a deep understanding of challenges. When combined properly, these qualities can lead to taking considered decisions that produce positive solutions.

Let's return to your own work. What is the specific situation where you are good at getting an overview, orchestrating resources and delivering the desired outcomes? You may do this either:

*When working by yourself on a creative project;*

*When leading a team that achieves its picture of success.*

How can you put yourself into more of these situations and do good work in the future? What may happen as a result of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Outcomes*

*The specific situation where I get an overview, orchestrate the resources and deliver the desired outcomes is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to put myself into these situations and do good work in the future are:*

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\*

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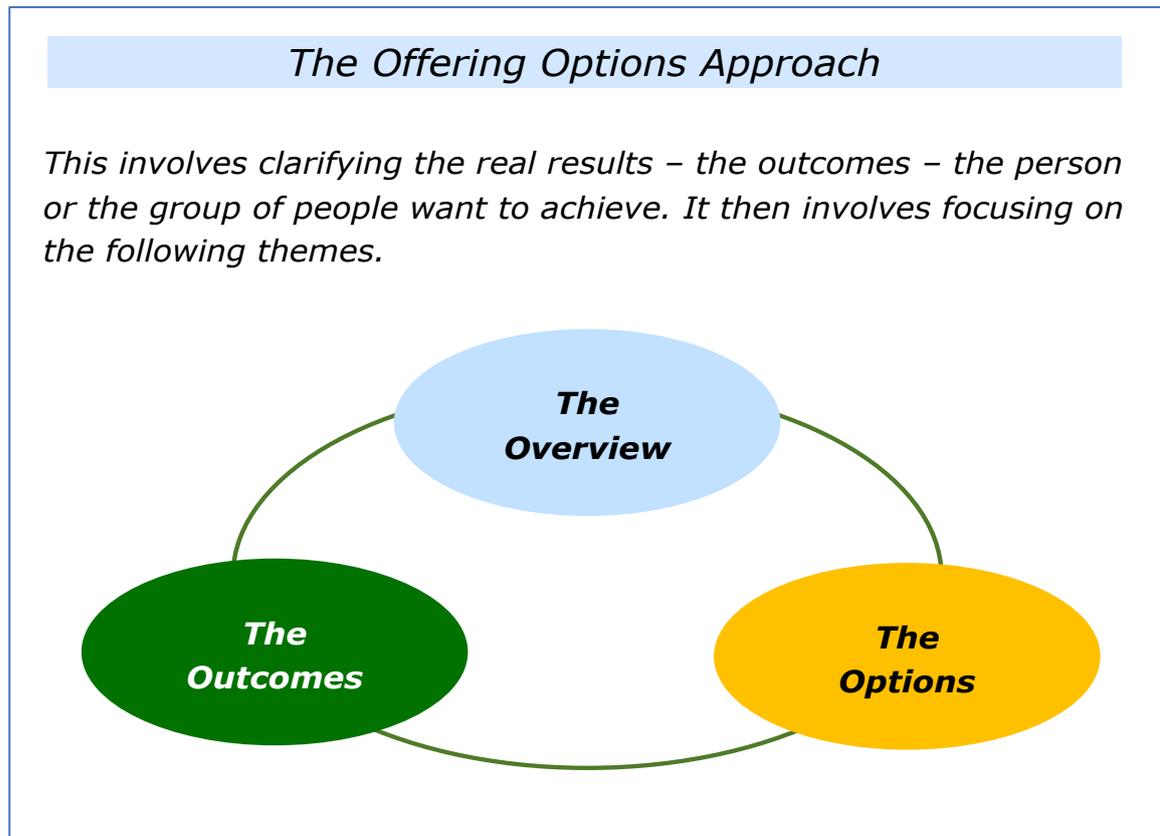
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps are:*

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## *The Offering Options Approach*



This approach can be used in situations where people feel passionately about an issue. It can help them to see things in perspective. They can then settle on their chosen way forwards.

Different people use this approach in different situations. It often involves making people – a person or a group of people – feel welcome and then going through the following steps.

### *Outcomes*

This involves beginning to clarify the real results – the outcomes – they want to achieve.

## *Overview*

This involves getting an overview and seeing how what they want to achieve fits into their total situation. This can involve reaffirming or adjusting their goals.

## *Options*

This step starts by making sure that people are open to ideas. It then involves offering them various options they may wish to pursue to achieve their goals. This must be done in an appropriate way that respects them and their situation.

## *Outcomes*

This involves clarifying the option they want to pursue and helping them to achieve their desired results.

The following pages describe some ways this approach can be translated into action. It starts with a relatively simple example before looking at more complex situations.

## *Offering Options To A Young Person*

This is a method I was taught early in my career when working with young people. It can be used to quickly clarify the route a person wants to pursue in the future. Here is one example that took place a few years ago.

Gary was 16 years old when I met him. At the time I was actually mentoring his father, the VP of a company. During one session he asked the following question about Gary.

*"Do you ever work with young people? Our son is talented but is getting into difficulties at school. Sometimes he upsets the teachers."*

*"Gary is smart but he gets impatient with authority figures, especially when they tell him to do something without explaining the reason. This has led to several incidents where his mother and I have been called into the school.*

*"Would you be interested in seeing him? He might listen to somebody other than his parents."*

Agreeing to see Gary, I explained that it was important: a) to ensure that he would be interested in having a session; b) to position the work I did as helping people to achieve peak performance rather than being a therapy session.

Gary and I met an hour after he had played in a rugby match where he was the team captain. Welcoming him, I said something along the following lines.

*"Good to meet you. I know that you are bright, quick and decisive. I also know that your parents want the best for you. Actually, this session is about how to manage your parents."*

Gary laughed and we explored his goals. He wanted to get through school, play rugby but also go on to explore sports coaching.

Bearing this in mind, I used an approach that can work with young people. This is almost like giving them a forced choice exercise.

Taking a piece of paper, I drew three routes that Gary could follow. Describing each of these options, I said something along the following lines.

*"Going forwards, it seems to me that you have at least three options. Let me draw these, then you may want to add more possibilities.*

*"Option A is to carry on as you are doing. It is to continue with your rugby but sometimes also upset the teachers.*

*"There are pluses and minuses to this route. The pluses are that you can enjoy the rugby, be popular with some people and eventually get through school.*

*"The minuses are that sometimes you will be impatient with teachers, get into trouble and create a few problems.*

*"You are a pragmatist. This means that you want to see the point of what you are being asked to do. So sometimes you may get upset if this is not explained fully."*

*"Option B is to try to be a perfect student who always follows the rules and does not cause difficulties. This sounds great, but it may not fit your personality.*

*"Option C is to continue with your rugby and show leadership qualities on and off the field. It is also to develop a mechanism for buying time when you feel angry with a teacher.*

*"This is a bit like controlling your emotions to not get sent off for arguing with the referee. It may take some time to learn this, but I am sure you could do it. Taking this route would mean making sure you get the best from school, manage your emotions and also help your parents.*

*"In addition, we could look at ways you can develop your leadership skills by learning from great leaders in different fields. We could also explore the possible ways forwards for you to explore more about the work possibilities in sports and sports coaching.*

*"There may be other options you would like to add. Looking at these three, however, here is a pen. Tick which option you feel is the one nearest to that which you want to follow."*

Gary immediately put a tick against Option C. We then explored how to take this route.

This approach may sound contrived – it is very much a forced choice exercise – but I have seen work many times with young people. It helps them to see the obvious choices they can pursue – together with the consequences of the various options.

The handing over of the pen is symbolic. It involves them volunteering to pursue a particular route. We can then focus on how pursue this and achieve success.

Gary became better at managing his emotions. He went on to play semi-professional rugby, coach young people and, at the age of nineteen, embark on his coaching badges.

This approach is one that I have seen work with young people in many situations – such as with troubled teenagers, addicts and others facing challenges.

It involved the simple act of drawing their options on a paper or a flip chart. Then handing over the pen for them to tick the route they wanted to follow. The next step was to start on the real work, set specific goals and get some quick successes.

During critical times we would return to their options. They could then choose whether or not they wanted to keep working towards their picture of success.

If a person chose to be an addict, for example, it meant I would not work with them. That was their choice, however, and it was up to them to accept the consequences.

### *Offering Options To A Patient*

This is the classic situation where a medical consultant helps a patient to see the potential options going forwards. They will start by welcoming the patient, who may sometimes be accompanied by their partner.

The medical consultant will respect the patient by giving them an overview of the situation. They may then say something along the following lines.

*"Looking ahead, there are various options we can follow. There are benefits and possible side effects to each option.*

*"Option A is to ...*

*"Option B is to ...*

*"Option C is to ...*

*"It is up to you, of course, which option you want to follow.*

*"If you want my recommendation, then I will share this with you. But again it will be your decision.*

*"We can then look at how to move ahead with what you decide."*

The medical consultant approach is one I invite professionals to consider when they are developing their skills as trusted advisors. When appropriate, they can ask the client if it is okay to share their ideas.

They can help the client to see the possible routes going forwards – together with the pluses and minuses of each option. They can then help the client to pursue their chosen route.

## *Offering Options To People Through Creative Matchmaking*

### *The Creative Matchmaking Approach*

*This involves focusing on the following themes.*

*You can create a portfolio of people with specific skills*

*You can create a portfolio of people with specific skills*

*You can, when appropriate, connect people in a way that enables them to get potential win-wins*

There are many ways to help people to succeed. One approach is to enable people to get professional win-wins by being a creative matchmaker.

Looking at my own work, during the past fifty years I have met many superb people. One of the most rewarding aspects has been giving some of these people the chance to meet. Many have then gone on to work together and succeed.

There are certain elements to creative matchmaking. These go beyond saying to people:

*"I think you ought to meet."*

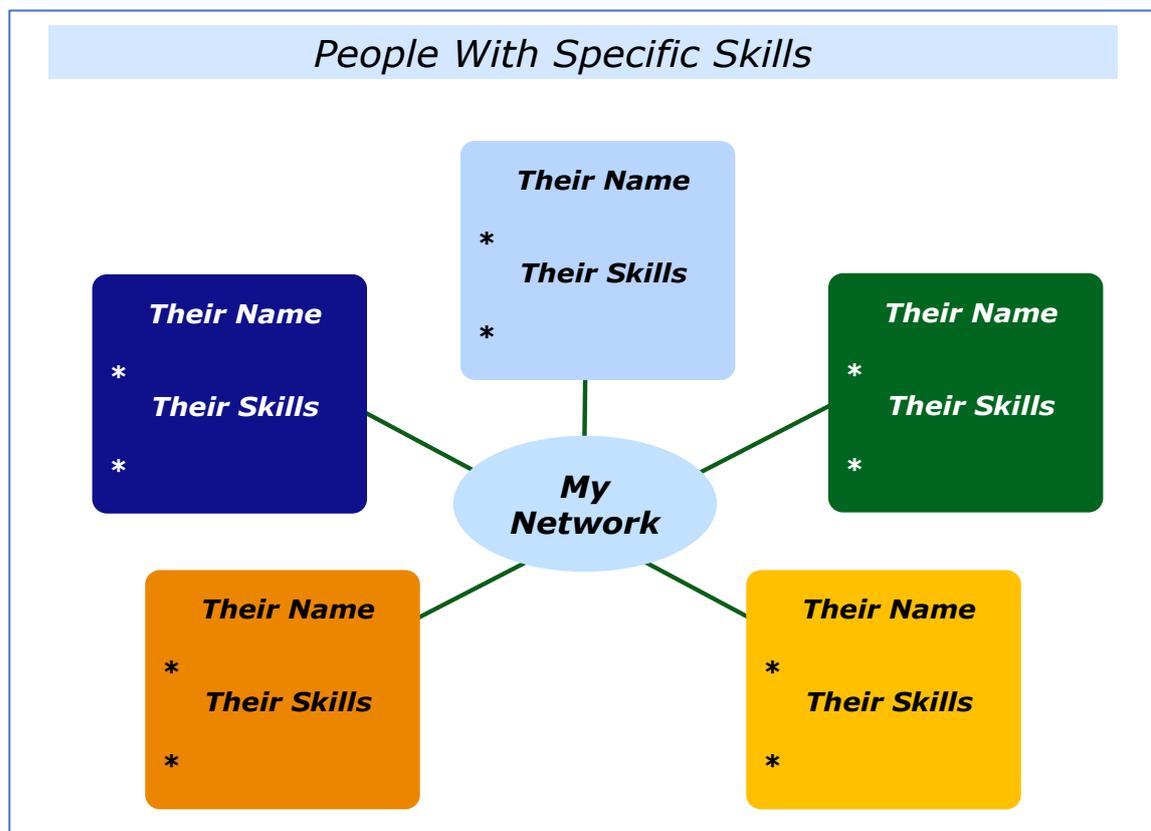
Imagine that you want to give people the opportunity to work together and succeed. Let's explore some of the potential steps towards making it happen.

### *You can create a portfolio of people with specific skills*

One approach is to start by thinking about the various people in your network. It is then to ask yourself the following questions.

*Which of these people would I recommend? What are each person's strengths? What are the specific skills or services they offer? Who are the kinds of people with whom they work best? How can they use their skills to help people to achieve success?*

If you wish, draw a map of the people you would recommend and the specific skills they offer. You can move on to the next stage.

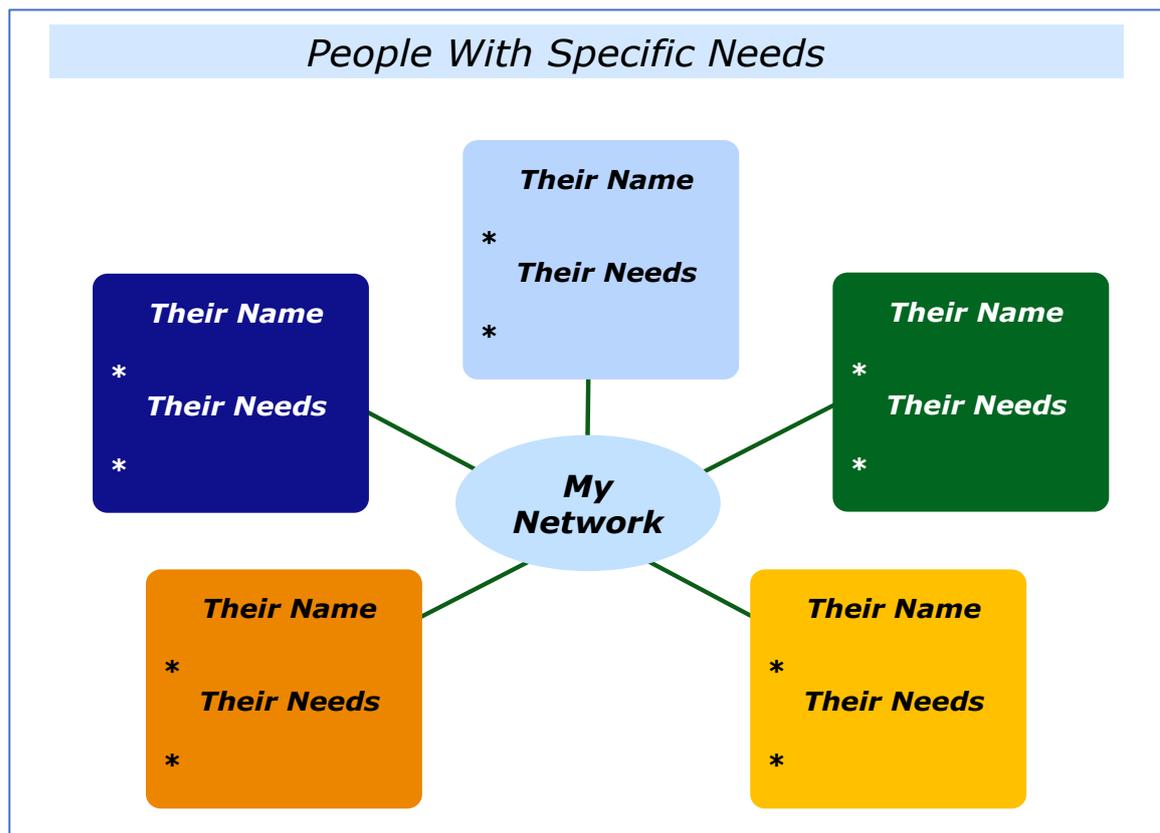


## *You can create a portfolio of people who have specific needs*

If appropriate, think of the people in your network who may have specific needs. It is important, of course, to ensure they really do want these things.

A person may have said they are looking for help in a particular area. Alternatively you may think that, if explored in an appropriate way, they may be interested in getting specific kinds of help.

Again, it is important they would like help, rather you foisting it upon them. If you wish, draw a map of these people who may have specific needs.



*You can, when appropriate, connect people in a way that enables them to get potential win-wins*

Creative matchmakers are often generous people. They want to give people opportunities and help them succeed.

Sometimes this generosity stretches to actually giving work to others rather than doing it themselves. Such people want the best for their colleagues and customers, however, and help them to get win-wins.

You will have your own approach to creative matchmaking. One approach is to ask the following questions.

*Who in my network has a specific need? What are the challenges they face? What are the results they want to achieve? What is their picture of success?*

*Who do I know who may be able to help this person to succeed? What are their specific skills? How can they use these skills to help the person to succeed?*

*How could I connect these people in a way that is most likely to succeed? How can I enable them to get potential win-wins?*

Different people take this step in different ways. One approach I have used has been after having a conversation with a person in which they expressed having a certain need.

Reflecting on the conversation, I consider if there may be a possible win-win. If so, I may then write an email to a person that goes along something like the following lines.

*Dear ...*

*It was good to catch up with you the other day.*

*During the conversation you mentioned that you were interested in pursuing ideas about ...*

*You will no doubt have lots of ideas in this area. If you are interested, however, I know a person who has specific skills in this area.*

*Their name is ... They have a track record of helping people to achieve their goals in the kinds of area you were mentioning.*

*If you are ever interested, I could connect you. I am sure the person would be happy to have an informal chat to share ideas.*

*It would then be up to you to see if you wanted to take it any further.*

*Let me know what you think.*

There are many times when the person gets back and says they would be interested in having an informal chat. I then write to the person who has the specific skill. This goes something along the following lines.

*Dear ...*

*The other day I was talking with ...*

*During the conversation they mentioned that they were interested in pursuing ideas about ...*

*I hope it was okay, but I mentioned to them that you had specific expertise in this area.*

*They have since got back to me and said they would be interested in having an informal chat with you.*

*This would just be an introductory discussion - nothing formal or guaranteed - but they would like to know more about the specific skills you offer.*

*If you are interested, then I could tell you more about:*

*a) the person; b) the challenges they face and the results they want to achieve; c) the specific ways you may be able to help them to achieve their goals.*

*Let me know if this is something you may be interested in.*

When appropriate, the next step is for me to write an email connecting the people. It then up to them how they want to take things further.

Different matchmakers have different ways of doing such groundwork. My own approach has been to let people know as much as possible about:

*a) the other person or parties involved; b) the goals to achieve; c) the guidelines for potentially working well together.*

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to use some elements of this approach? How can you do this in your own way? How can you offer people the opportunity of getting a win-win?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Creative Matchmaking In The Future*

*The specific situation where I may  
have the opportunity to do some  
creative matchmaking may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to create  
potential win-wins for the people are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things may happen as a  
result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Offering Options To A Senior Leadership Team*

People often get hired because of their passion and promoted for their professionalism. When working with a senior team, however, they sometimes need to show they have perspective.

This was the challenge facing Stella, who was due to make a presentation to the senior team about continuing funding for a specific project. The project was to design a new model of customer service that was crucial to shaping the future business.

She believed passionately in the project but was worried that the leaders might pull the plug. The company had been making noises about cutting costs, focusing on priorities and even making redundancies. This did not augur well for the project being given further backing.

Stella's usual approach was to try to convince people, but sometimes her passion was a double-edged sword. She could get into arguments, which did not aid her case.

Looking ahead, she and I explored how she could increase the chances of the project being given further funding. One approach was to try to reconvince the leaders, but that could be dicey. Bearing this in mind, Stella adopted the following approach.

### *The Overview*

She began her presentation by returning to the original brief. In a positive way, she reminded them about:

- a) the specific goals for the project;*
- b) the specific benefits to the company.*

Stella did this to revisit the picture of success. It was up to them where they still wanted to achieve these goals.

## *The Options*

She outlined the potential options going forwards. Whilst she had a preferred option, she described the various routes in a neutral way. Stella also said that she would ask them if they could suggest any other possible options.

*Option A would be to continue funding the full-scale project in its present form.*

*The pluses were it would produce profits plus lead to improving customer service and retention. The minuses were it would continue to cost investment in terms of time and money.*

*Option B would be to scale-down the project.*

*The pluses were it would produce some profits but on a lower scale. The minuses were it would not have the full impact and could lead to disillusion within the staff.*

*Option C would be shift the project's approach from doing lots of in-house design to developing the model with three existing customers and producing quick wins.*

*The pluses were it would test the approach in real situations and get some successes. The minuses were it would mean not involving every department in the company, which could lead to some people feeling a lack of ownership.*

*Option D would be to outsource project.*

*The pluses were that Stella and the team were released to do other things. The minuses were the project may stand a lesser chance of success.*

*Option E would be to stop the project.*

*The pluses were it would save money. The minuses were it would mean stopping a project that could shape tomorrow's business.*

Stella asked the senior team for their views and any other suggestions regarding the ways forward. Some contributed ideas, but were happy she had covered most of the possibilities.

Bearing this in mind, Stella asked them to reflect and decide which option they wanted to pursue. She would then do her best to make this work successfully.

Stella wanted to go for Option C. She was prepared to reflect, however, if the senior team wanted to pursue another route. It would be up to her to decide if she still wanted to lead the project.

The senior team chose to go for Option C but with a reduced budget. Stella lost a couple of team members but was able to pilot the customer service approach with two companies.

Stella's passion was a great asset, but sometimes it had a downside. She chose to demonstrate perspective by describing the possible options for going forward. This was a method she continued to apply when presenting ideas to senior teams.

Every situation is different, but the offering options approach can help people to get an overview. It is then up to them which route they want to follow.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to use elements of this approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

How can you clarify the outcomes the person or group want to achieve? How can you explore the possible options for going forwards?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Offering Options Approach*

*The specific situation where I may  
want to use elements of the  
offering options approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to use elements  
of this approach in my own way are:*

\*

\*

\*

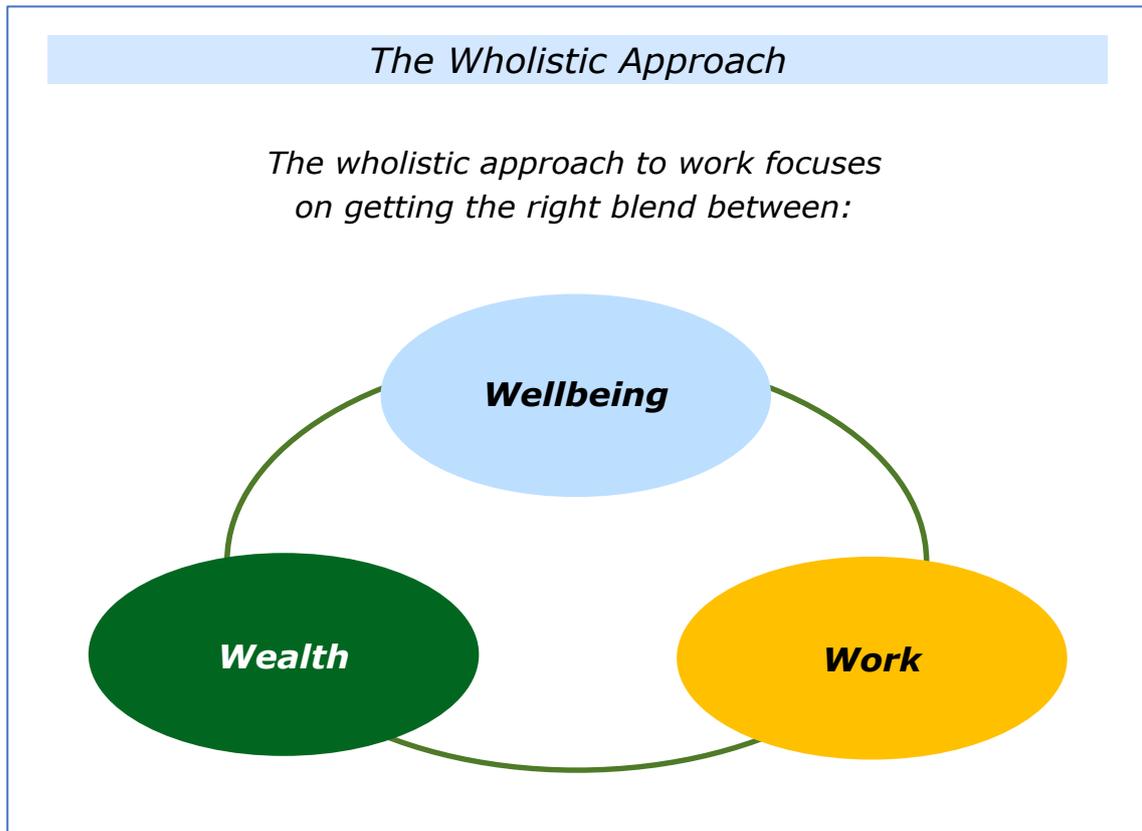
*The specific things that may  
happen as a result may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Wholistic Approach*



There are many ways to look at work. One approach is to take a wholistic view. It is to focus on getting the right blend between wellbeing, work and wealth. Different people may face different challenges to get the right blend.

Some people may do stimulating work in pioneering companies but, at the same time, neglect their health. They may work long hours in the hope that one day they will sell the business and get a pot of gold. This wealth will then give them the chance to take care of their wellbeing.

Some people may work in organisations that put pressure on them to work long hours in relatively boring jobs. They may also be heavily supervised in ways that stifle their autonomy or do not allow them to play to their strengths. This can affect their health.

Each person will find their own way to manage these challenges. One key point to remember, however, is that it is often about

finding the right blend. This is different from the old idea of life-work balance.

Great workers, for example, may absorb themselves deeply in their work for long periods of time. They do not necessarily do a 9-5 shift. They love to do rewarding work, but also recognise the need to recharge.

Such people may aim to enjoy both quality of life and quality of work. This calls for finding ways to blend their wellbeing, work and wealth. Let's explore how it may be possible to make this happen.

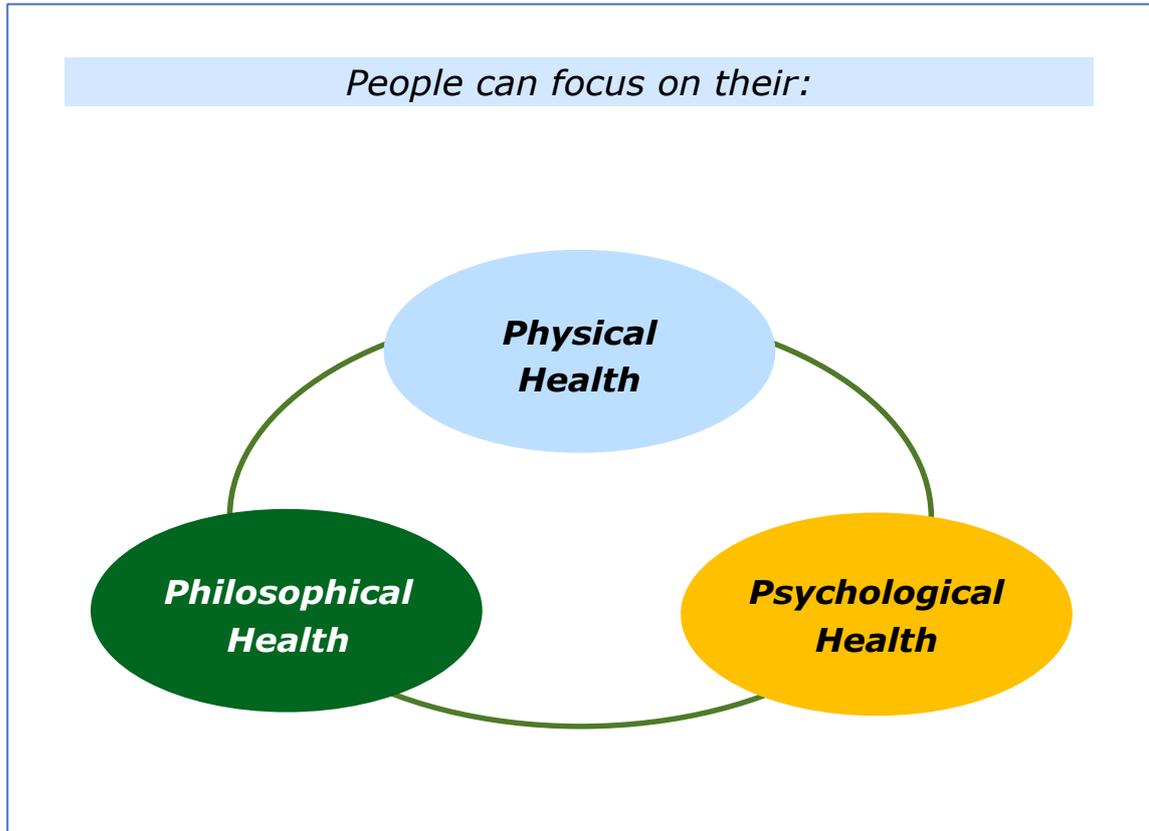
## *Wellbeing*

The most obvious approach to wellbeing is to make sure that everybody has the basic materials for life. They will then be able to shape their own health, hope and happiness.

People who have these basic materials are then more likely to explore other aspects of their wellbeing. Imagine that you want to do this in your own way.

How do you rate your present state of health? There are several aspects to consider. These include your physical, psychological and philosophical health. We all want to care for our wellbeing, but sometimes we get wake-up calls.

We may carry a cold for months, feel emotionally exhausted, lose a sense of purpose or experience a crisis. It may then be time to reassess our lives and work. Let's explore how to maintain the various aspects of your health.



### *Physical Health*

On a scale 0–10, how do you rate your physical health? How do you maintain your health? Do you ever get warning signs? One person explained this in the following way.

*"My wake-up call came three years ago when climbing several flights of stairs.*

*"After the second flight I suddenly felt out of breath. This was something I had not been aware of before, probably because I normally took lifts.*

*"My professional life consisted of flying twice a week, eating unhealthy snacks and doing little exercise. There were two options.*

*"I could carry on with the same schedule, which would mean getting fatter. Or I could take care of my body. I chose the latter.*

*"This called for developing a sustainable lifestyle rather than doing a crash programme. So I began running on weekends and slowly increased the exercise.*

*"During the day I grazed on regular healthy snack. These replaced eating heavy meals at lunch and the evening.*

*"Finally, I changed job. The flying had become a chore, with trips to the airport increasingly exhausting. Now I feel much better and have more energy."*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Physical Health*

*The rating I would give myself regarding my physical health is:*

*\_\_\_ / 10*

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Psychological Health*

On a scale 0–10, how do you rate your psychological health? Do you have a positive attitude? Do you have encouraging people around you? Do you have fulfilling work?

The key for many people is feeling in control. Being able to shape their future plays a key part in determining their psychological health. One person explained this in the following way.

*"A great breakthrough for me came when learning about the concept of controlling the controllables.*

*"Whatever is happening around me, I need to focus on what I can control, even if it is simply choosing my attitude'*

*"This has given me a different perspective on life."*

As mentioned earlier in the book, there has been lots of research on the characteristics of people who are happy. The following pages again provide a summary of these findings.

## *People Who Are Happy*

*They often follow certain eternal principles and, as a by-product, they sometimes experience happiness.*

### *They Have A Positive Attitude*

*They are grateful, generous and encourage other people to succeed. They are positive realists and focus on what they can control. They do things that give them positive energy and spend time with positive people.*

### *They Follow Positive Principles*

*They develop a sense of purpose, follow their life principles and sometimes serve something greater than themselves. They aim to be the best they can be rather than compare themselves with others. They develop skills for finding solutions to challenges.*

### *They Make A Positive Contribution*

*They build on their strengths, do satisfying work and help people to succeed. They pass on knowledge that encourages both present and future generations. They give positive things to people during their time on the planet and sometimes enjoy a sense of peace.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to rate your psychological health on a scale 0-10. It then invites you to describe the specific things you can do to maintain or improve the rating.

## *Psychological Health*

*The rating I would give myself regarding my psychological health is:*

*\_\_\_ / 10*

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Philosophical Health*

On a scale 0–10, how do you rate your philosophical health? Do you find ways to develop a sense of purpose? Do you feel true to yourself? Do you have clear life goals? Do you do something each day to work towards your picture of success?

Everybody wants to enjoy a sense of meaning. Sometimes this comes encouraging their children, doing satisfying work or making a positive contribution each day. Sometimes it comes from serving

something greater than themselves - be it following a faith, a calling, a tradition or whatever.

People like to see a connection between the actions they take each day and pursuing their overall life goals. Looking at your own life, how can you continue to make this link?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to rate your philosophical health on a scale 0-10. It then invites you to describe the specific things you can do to maintain or improve the rating.

## *Philosophical Health*

*The rating I would give myself  
regarding my philosophical health is:*

*\_\_\_ / 10*

*The specific things I can do to  
maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

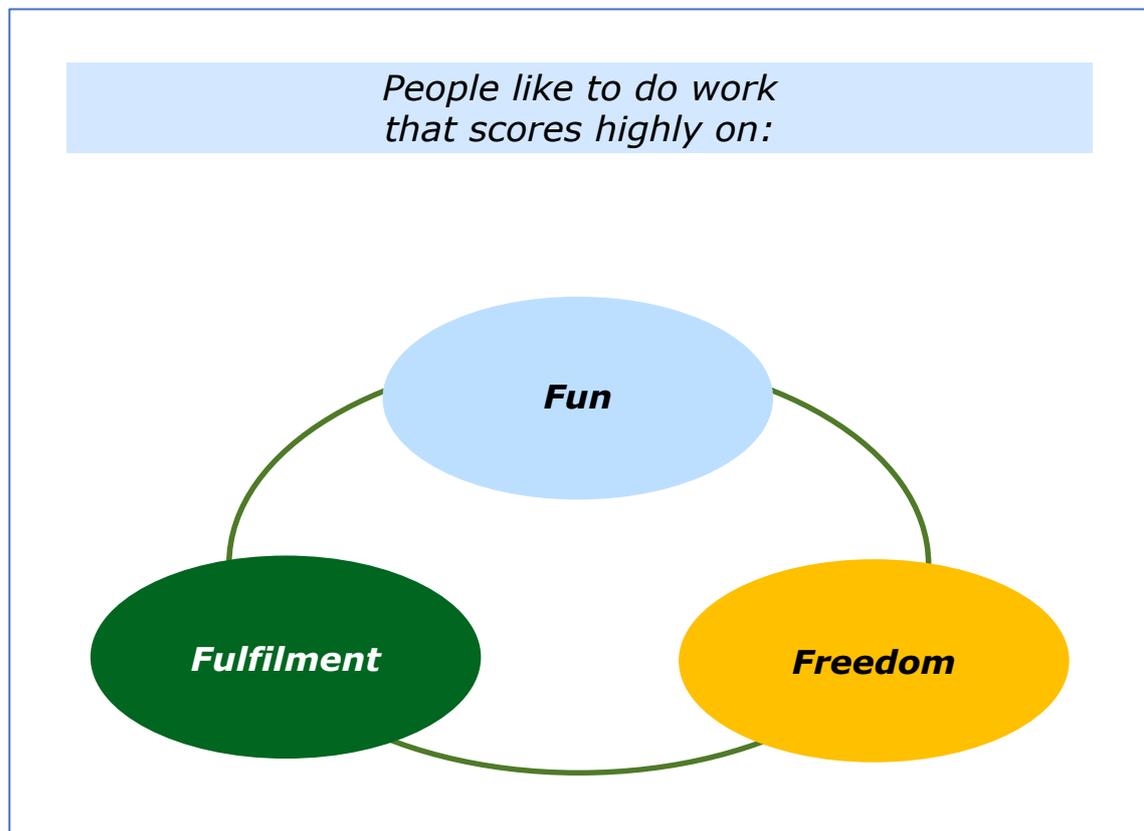
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There are many things that people can do to maintain their physical, psychological and philosophical health. Their sense of wellbeing is often affected by what they do at work, however, so let's explore this theme.

## *Work*

There are many views on how to do work that maintains your wellbeing. People who do satisfying work sometimes focus on fun, freedom and fulfilment. Those who hate their jobs feel imprisoned and frustrated. Let's explore these themes in your work.



### *Fun*

Looking back on your life, can you think of a time when you did work that was fun? Certainly there may have been some tough times, but overall you really enjoyed the work. What made it fun?

You may have been following your vocation, doing things you loved, spending time with positive people or whatever. You may have been doing work that involved your heart, head and hands.

Sometimes it can be challenging to find or create such work. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"I'd like to do work I enjoy, but it is so difficult."*

Perhaps so, but try doing work you hate. That is more difficult. What the person may mean is:

*"I would like to do work I enjoy, but it is hard to find somebody to pay me for doing it."*

Great workers often begin their professional journey by doing work they love. Later they develop the savvy to get paid for using their strengths to help customers or employers to achieve success.

Some people feel stuck in roles they do not enjoy but then decide to move on. They make a serious plan to find more satisfying work and earn a salary. One person explained this in the following way.

*"I decided to go back to my specialism rather than do general management. It took six months to make the shift."*

*"I began by leading more specialist projects within the business. Eventually this led to me giving up my director title and but leading projects in different countries across EMEA."*

*"I feel happy focusing on what I do best. General management was just an endurance test. Now I have much more fun in my work."*

Let's assume that, for the time being, you want to focus on your present work. If you wish, try tackling the following exercise. This invites you to do the following things.

*Describe the extent to which you have a sense of fun in your work. Rate this on a scale 0–10. Bear in mind that anything below 7/10 is a danger signal. Describe the specific things you can do to maintain or improve the rating.*

## *Fun*

*The extent to which I have  
a sense of fun in my work is:*

*\_\_\_ / 10*

*The specific things I can do to  
maintain or improve the rating are:*

*\**

*\**

*\**

## *Freedom*

People want to feel in control of shaping their destiny. Daniel Pink highlighted this theme in his book *Drive*. Here is an introduction to his findings regarding what motivates people to do good work.

*Autonomy - this is the desire to direct our own lives;*

*Mastery – this is the urge to get better and better at something that matters;*

*Purpose – this is the yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves.*

Let's explore another aspect that is related to feeling in charge of shaping one's professional life.

## The Shaping Approach

*People like to feel in control, so it can be useful to help them find what they love to shape. They can then translate this into setting a specific goal and follow certain strategies to achieve success.*



This is an approach that can be used to help a person to feel more in control of their personal or professional life. Looking at the career aspect, it can be particularly useful in the following situations.

*A person likes to be involved in clarifying the specific goal but is simply told to implement an already determined action plan.*

*A person likes to do specific kinds of projects but is instead asked to act in a general management role.*

*A person is prepared to take accountability for doing a piece of work but is given little authority or autonomy.*

Imagine that you want to take more control of shaping your future. What are the kinds of activities where you like to shape things in your personal or professional life? Here are some answers that people give to this question.

*I like shaping things when I am:*

*Living my daily life ... Organising my schedule ... Managing my finances ... Caring for my garden ... Writing an article ... Running a specific kind of project.*

*Playing in my favourite position as a professional footballer ... Directing plays ... Running music festivals ... Launching a marketing campaign ... Leading a team.*

Looking ahead, how can you feel more in control of shaping things in your work? There will always be parameters. But it is important to feel that you can follow your own principles providing you deliver the picture of success.

Start by describing an activity where you like to shape things. This could be a specific kind of project, a piece of work or tackling a certain kind of challenge.

Bearing in mind your chosen activity, how can you translate this into a specific goal? What are the real results you want to achieve? What are the key strategies you can follow to achieve success?

You can certainly do such an activity in your personal life. Different rules apply, however, if you want to get paid for doing such a project in your professional life. You may then need:

*To find or create such a project;*

*To show the potential benefits to your employer, customers or other stakeholders.*

Imagine you have taken these steps. How can you follow your chosen strategies and deliver success? How can you deliver tangible benefits for the various stakeholders?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Shaping Approach*

*The specific kind of activity where I would like to shape things in the future is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to translate this into a specific goal, follow certain strategies and deliver success are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits to the stakeholders of delivering this success will be:*

\*

\*

\*

Great organisations recognise that people like to feel in charge of shaping things. At the same time, however, it is vital that people fulfil their part of the professional contract and contribute to achieving the employer's goals.

Such organisations therefore focus on managing by outcomes rather than by tasks. They expect people to be self-managing, however, and deliver high professional standards.

Daniel Pink's work provides many pointers to how we can enable people to take charge of their working lives and deliver the goods. Here are some quotes from the book.

*"Human beings have an innate inner drive to be autonomous, self-determined, and connected to one another. And when that drive is liberated, people achieve more and live richer lives."*

*"The science shows that the secret to high performance isn't our biological drive or our reward-and-punishment drive, but our third drive - our deep-seated desire to direct our own lives, to extend and expand our abilities, and to live a life of purpose."*

Many fulfilled people have a freelance mentality. They may or may not be freelancers, but they feel in charge of shaping their futures. The specialist mentioned earlier expressed this in the following way.

*"I now feel more in control of my professional life. I still work for the same company. But I now feel more in control of my diary and contribution to the business."*

If you wish, try tackling the following exercise. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Freedom*

*The extent to which I have a sense of freedom in my work is:*

*\_\_\_ / 10*

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Fulfilment*

Looking at your present work, imagine that you would like to shape it into something fulfilling. Bear in mind, however, that it can take time to craft your perfect role.

As mentioned earlier, there may come a point where you want to move on to find another role. Before doing that, however, you may want to explore some of the following themes regarding your work.

### *The Fulfilling Parts*

*What are the fulfilling parts of my work? What are the specific projects, tasks and other activities that I find satisfying?*

*Who are the kinds of customers and colleagues with whom I enjoy working? How can I use my strengths to help these people to achieve success?*

*How can I craft a role around my strengths? How can I get my first three customers – internal or external – and help them to succeed?*

*How can I produce some tangible successes – financial or otherwise – that show my employers the benefits of doing this work? How can I keep producing successes and develop my perfect role?*

### *The Frustrating Parts*

*What are the frustrating parts of my work? How can I manage these parts more successfully? What percentage of my time do I spend on: a) the fulfilling parts; b) the frustrating parts?*

*What percentage of my time am I prepared to spend on the frustrating parts? At what point will I decide it is vital for me to focus on the fulfilling aspects of my work? What may be the trigger that gets me to look elsewhere to find another role?*

*How can I be proactive? How can I explore the potential future roles rather than be reactive? How can I do my best to find or create a fulfilling role in the future?*

Creative people recognise that stimulating opportunities are not always advertised. They often create such roles by being savvy and showing the tangible benefits. This calls for developing win-wins for both for themselves and their employers.

People who take this step are more likely to enjoy a sense of fun, freedom and fulfilment in their work. This can make a positive contribution to their wellbeing.

If you wish, try tackling the following exercise. This invites you to complete the following sentence.

## *Fulfilment*

*The extent to which I have a sense of fulfilment in my work is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Wealth*

There are many views about what constitutes wealth. As mentioned earlier, it is vital to ensure people have the basic materials for life.

Some people may be driven to make lots of money. They may want to feel secure, provide for their children and achieve a particular view of success. Some people find this approach works; others find that there is a heavy price to pay when aiming for a pot of gold.

Some people have a wider view of wealth. Paul Hwoschinsky explored this approach in his 1990 book *True Wealth*. He invited people to focus on non-financial forms of wealth.

These could include their health, life-experiences, relationships, enjoyable activities, strengths and resilience. They could also

include their imagination, creativity, vision, connection with nature, knowledge, perspective and other assets.

Different people describe different things regarding what they believe to be real wealth. Here are some things they say.

*Real Wealth For Me Is:*

*Being with our children ... Sharing memories with my partner ... Walking with our dogs ... Working in the garden ... Listening to music ... Enjoying the food we cook ... Appreciating beauty.*

*Doing work I love ... Encouraging people ... Seeing people develop ... Being creative ... Finding solutions to challenges ... Feeling contented ... Being alive after a serious illness ... Seeing every day as a bonus.*

Looking at your own life, what do you consider to be your wealth? You may have certain financial assets such as some money, a house and material possessions.

What other kinds of wealth do you enjoy? How can you appreciate and build on these things? What kinds of wealth would you like to have in the future?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Real Wealth*

*The specific kinds of wealth that  
I have in my life and work are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to appreciate  
and build on these kinds of wealth are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific kinds of wealth I might  
like to add in the future without  
hurting my wellbeing or work are:*

\*

\*

\*

People who appreciate their wealth are often generous. They have an abundance philosophy and want to help others to grow. They also believe in finding win-win solutions.

People who don't appreciate their wealth may be grumpy. They sometimes have a scarcity philosophy and want to stop others developing. They may start fights that result in collateral damage.

Tom Rath is a generous person who has made an enormous contribution to helping people to improve their wellbeing. He led the Gallup Organization's work on strengths and employee engagement. Whilst there he wrote books such as *StrengthsFinder 2.0*, *Strengths Based Leadership* and *Wellbeing: The Five Essential Elements*.

Moving on, Tom explored how people could take care of their health and make their best contribution. This led to him producing books such as *Eat Move Sleep*, *Are You Fully Charged?* and *Life's Great Question*.

Tom has been interested in wellbeing since discovering he had a genetic cancer condition that posed huge health challenges. Learning from his own experiences and studies, he turned his attention to health in modern societies.

This led to him writing *Eat Move Sleep* which has enabled many people to improve their lifestyles. Below are excerpts from a Question and Answer session in which Tom described why he wrote the book.

*After writing business books for more than a decade, I realised that improving health is the biggest business challenge of our generation.*

*Nothing breaks household finances, corporate balance sheets, or national economies faster than poor health.*

*But the much larger reason why I decided to focus all of my time and energy on this topic is because I was tired of seeing people that I care about suffer unnecessarily and die early.*

*We are literally killing ourselves, sapping our energy, and destroying our wellbeing as a result of lousy decisions we make about our health each day.*

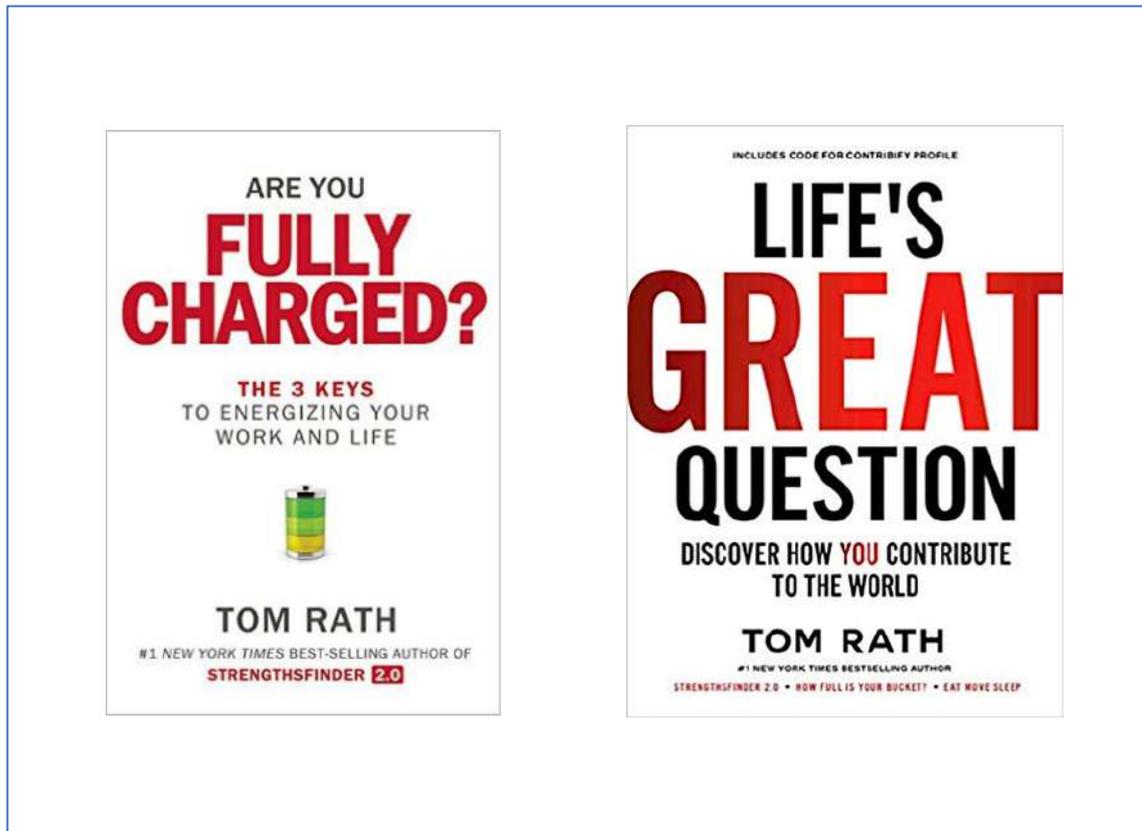
*The vast majority of human disease and illness is preventable. There are hundreds of specific, proven actions we can take to increase our odds of living longer and stronger.*

*What matters most are the small decisions we make each day, ones that give us more energy in the moment and also prevent illness in the future.*

*These three elements – eating, moving, and sleeping – build on one another. Eating right makes it easier to be active. Being active makes it easier to sleep. Sleeping well helps you to avoid bad foods, and so on.*

*Building on these themes, Tom explored how people could manage their energy. He then wrote *Are You Fully Charged?* This provided many practical tips that people could use to improve the quality of their lives and work.*

*Moving on, Tom focused on how people could make their best contributions during their time on the planet. This led to him writing *Life's Great Question*. Here are some excerpts from a description of the book.*



*Life's Great Question: What are the most meaningful contributions you can make?*

*What are the most meaningful contributions we can make? This is Life's Great Question.*

*Life is about what you do that improves the world around you. It is about investing in the development of other people. And it is about efforts that continue to grow when you are gone. In the end, you won't get to stay around forever, but your contributions will.*

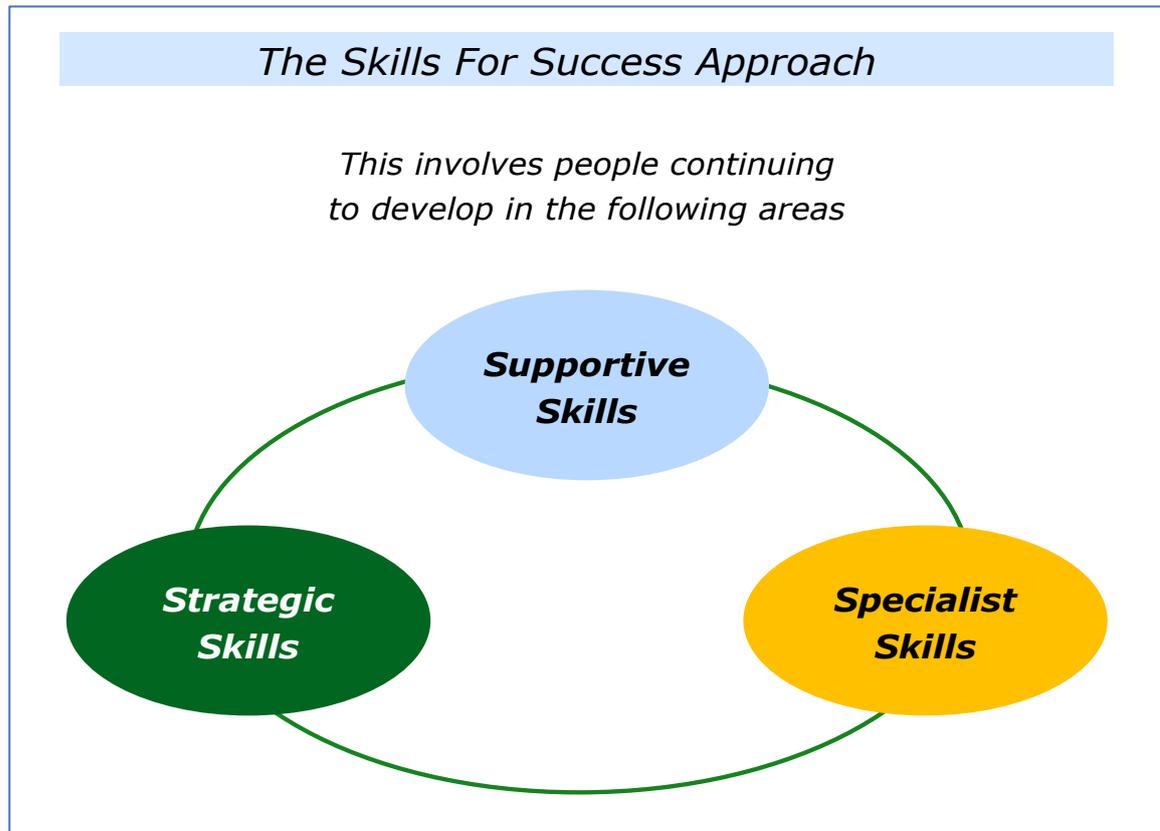
*The key is to invest more time where your talents will yield the greatest return for others. Work is about what you create that improves lives. It is about investing in the development of other people.*

*While your talents are nature's best building blocks, they serve the world best when your efforts are directed outward — not inward. Consider how your talents can make a more meaningful contribution to others over a lifetime.*

*Life has an unknown expiration date. Your efforts and contributions to others do not. The time, energy, and resources you invest in people you care for and your community keep growing forever.*

There are many ways to do rewarding work. One approach is to take a wholistic view. It is to get the right blend between wellbeing, work and wealth. This can provide a platform for encouraging people and making your best contribution to the planet.

## *The Skills For Success Approach*



There are many models for clarifying whether a person has the skills to deliver success. One approach is to clarify whether they have the required supportive, specialist and strategic skills.

Imagine that you are choosing a person for a specific role. Bearing in mind the qualities required to deliver success, it can be useful to go through the following steps:

*To watch the person in action, see examples of their work and clarify whether they may have the skills required to deliver success;*

*To clarify how they rate in terms of demonstrating - or having the potential to demonstrate - the skills required to deliver success;*

*To make decisions and recommendations about whether they will be likely to perform the specific role and deliver success.*

Imagine that you have seen the person in action or examples of their work. It can then be useful to focus on the following themes regarding whether they will be likely to deliver success.

### *The Supportive Skills*

Bearing in mind the role, the person may need to encourage their colleagues and customers. The way they do this may, of course, depend on the specific role. Let's look at some examples.

*A leader may need to create a positive environment in which motivated people can achieve peak performance. They may need to act as a positive model, manage by outcomes and enable people to perform at their best.*

*A manager may need to support their key stakeholders by being good at managing upwards. They may also need to build positive teams in which motivated people deliver success.*

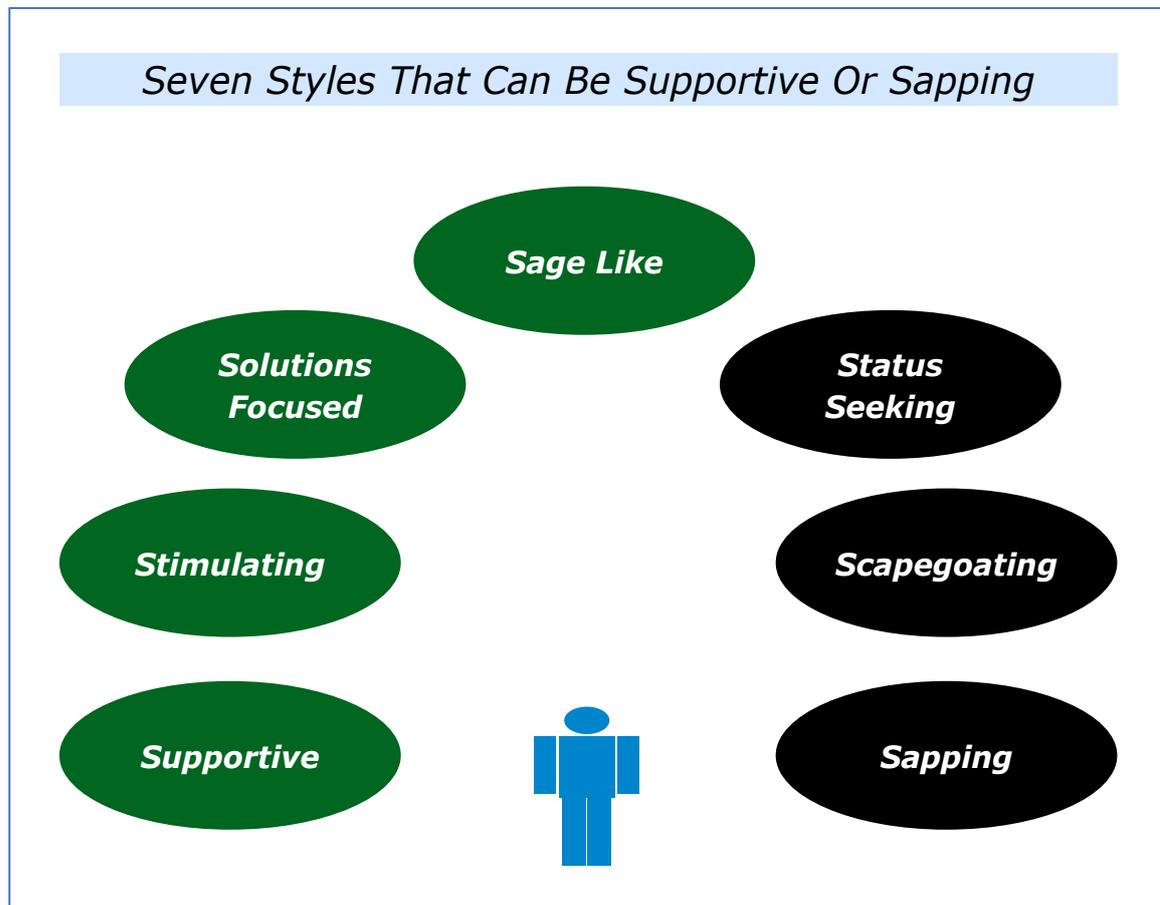
*A specialist team member may need to have a positive attitude and want to help other people. They may need to pass on their knowledge in a way that helps both their colleagues and customers to succeed.*

*A person joining a values driven organisation may need to embody the values and enrich the culture. They may need to use their strengths in ways that support the people and the organisation.*

The final point involves focusing on: a) the person's attitude and whether they want to demonstrate the required skills; b) the person's ability to demonstrate the required skills.

Some people may have great ability but the behavioural style they demonstrate may cause problems. Their specialist contribution could be of value, but it will not be worth the resulting collateral damage.

Here is the piece on considering whether a person's style may have a positive or negative affect on other people.



Every person has strengths and aims to achieve their picture of success. It is their style of operating – the way they interact with others – that may have consequences.

The way they behave may come across to others as supportive or sapping. Some individuals may therefore be asked to leave organisations because their style of operating creates collateral damage.

Here are some of the most common styles that people demonstrate. Some people may also display elements of each style.

### *The Supportive Style*

Such people behave in a way that is caring, supportive and helpful. They help to create an environment in which people feel able to be their real selves.

### *The Stimulating Style*

Such people may be energetic, positive or inspiring. They may behave in a way that other people find stimulating and helps to maintain a creative environment.

### *The Solutions Focused Style*

Such people are good at reading reality and quickly move into solutions mode. They focus on clarity – the real results to achieve – and aim to find positive solutions to challenges.

### *The Sage Like Style*

Such people want to encourage others. They are humble, kind and see themselves as lifetime students. They aim to pass on knowledge and practical tools that help other people to succeed.

### *The Status Seeking Style*

Such people want to be seen as important and successful. They may aim to do this is by seeking status, applause and admiration. They may even praise their own efforts in the expectation of getting adulation.

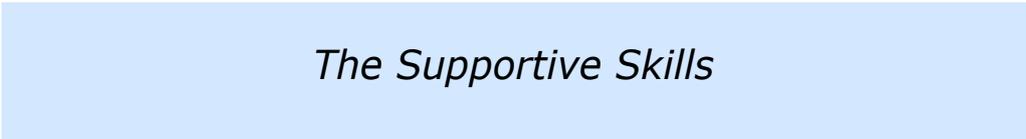
### *The Scapegoating Style*

Such people spread negative energy and look for people to blame. They focus on spreading discord or hate – which can have painful consequences of many people.

## *The Sapping Style*

Such people complain or behave in other ways that sap people's energy. They refuse to take responsibility, believe their feelings are the most important in the world and are not interested in finding solutions.

Imagine that you considering a person for a specific role. Bearing in mind the required supportive skills, you may want to work through the following steps. This can help to clarify the likelihood of them delivering success.



*The Supportive Skills*

*The supportive skills  
required to deliver success*

*The supportive skills the person may need to demonstrate to deliver success in the specific role are:*

\* To ...

\* To ...

\* To ...

*The rating I would give the person regarding them demonstrating these supportive skills is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific reasons for giving this rating - together with some examples - are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things the person can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *The Specialist Skills*

The person may need to demonstrate specialist skills in their area of expertise. They may need to know how to build on their strengths and, when appropriate, work with people who have complementary skills.

Such an approach calls for being honest, knowing their strengths and being aware of potential weaknesses. It then calls for having the savvy to develop or add the abilities required to deliver success.

*A leader may need specialist skills in organisational leadership, people leadership, market leadership or another area. They may also need to know how to build a great leadership team that can ensure the organisation achieves success.*

*A manager may need specialist skills related to their organisation's field of activity. They may also need specific skills for helping their colleagues and customers to achieve success.*

*A team member may need specialist skills that enable them to do good work in their area of expertise. They may also need to demonstrate the desire to keep developing as a person and as a professional.*

*A person who joins a values driven organisation may need to demonstrate their specialist skills to gain credibility. They may need to do this by performing superb work, helping others to succeed and getting respect from others in the organisation.*

Imagine that you are considering a person for a specific role. Bearing in mind the required specialist skills, you may want to work through the following steps. This can help to clarify the likelihood of them delivering success.



### *The Specialist Skills*

*The specialist skills  
required to deliver success*

*The specialist skills the person may need to demonstrate to deliver success in the specific role are:*

\* To ...

\* To ...

\* To ...

*The rating I would give the person regarding them demonstrating these specialist skills is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific reasons for giving this rating - together with some examples - are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things the person can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *The Strategic Skills*

The person may need to be able to see the big picture, clarify the real results to achieve and make good strategic decisions. The strategic ability they need to demonstrate will depend on their specific role.

Some people may need to do this when looking at the wider picture; some may need to do this within their own specialism.

*A leader may need strategic ability when clarifying the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success. They may also need it when making key decisions that can affect whether or not the organisation has a successful future.*

*A manager may need strategic ability when managing upwards and satisfying their key stakeholders. They may also need it to implement the right strategy with the right people in the right way.*

*A team member may need strategic ability to see patterns and make good decisions within their specialist activity. They may also need it to ensure they are using their knowledge in a positive way to help both their colleagues and customers to achieve success.*

*A person may need strategic ability to do their due diligence before joining a values driven organisation. They may then need it ensure they continue to play to strengths and make their best contribution to the organisation.*

Imagine that you considering a person for a specific role. Bearing in mind the required strategic skills, you may want to work through the following steps. This can help to clarify the likelihood of them delivering success.



### *The Strategic Skills*

*The strategic skills  
required to deliver success*

*The strategic skills the person may need to demonstrate to deliver success in the specific role are:*

\* To ...

\* To ...

\* To ...

*The rating I would give the person regarding them demonstrating these strategic skills is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific reasons for giving this rating - together with some examples - are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things the person can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *The Skills For Success Summary*

Imagine that you need to decide whether the person applying for the specific role is likely to deliver success. Looking at the person and their performance, do you believe:

*They demonstrate the required skills?*

*They have the potential – such as having the desired attitude and ability - to demonstrate the required skills?*

*They will be likely to consistently demonstrate the required skills and deliver success?*

If so, you may want to recommend them for the role. You may also include some provisos, however, regarding the specific things they need to develop to deliver success.

If the person does not have the specific skills but has other abilities, you may consider whether they can contribute elsewhere in the organisation. If the person is not the right fit for the organisation, you can pass on this message in a professional way.

If you are going to recommend the person for the role, then it will be important to set up things to succeed. It can be useful to describe the specific things that can be done:

*To make sure the person feels welcome to the organisation;*

*To make sure the person has a good induction, knows how to follow the agreed principles and can get some quick successes in the organisation;*

*To make sure the person knows how they can build on their strengths, encourage other people and make their best contribution to the organisation.*

There are many ways to decide whether or not a person may deliver the goods in a specific role. One approach is to clarify whether they have the skills required to deliver success.

Bearing these things in mind, here is a framework you can use for making your recommendations. You can, of course, adapt this approach to suit the needs of your organisation.

## Skills For Success

*The name of the person is:*

\*

## Summary

*The ratings I have given the person in terms of them demonstrating the skills required to deliver success in the specific role are these:*

*Supportive Skills* \_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*Specialist Skills* \_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*Strategic Skills* \_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*Bearing in mind these ratings, here are  
the recommendations I would give  
regarding the next steps with the person:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Appreciative Inquiry Approach*

### *Appreciative Inquiry*

*AI is an organic approach to development and builds on what works. It invites people to focus on a particular theme they want to explore. It then invites them:*

- *To clarify when they have done superb work in this area in the past;*
- *To clarify the principles they followed then to do superb work;*
- *To clarify how they can follow these principles - plus add other skills - to do superb work in this area in the future.*

There are many models for helping people, teams and organisations to develop. Appreciative Inquiry is one of the most effective. It is based on what works.

AI studies humanity at its best. Bearing in mind the challenge that people want to explore, they are invited to learn from their positive history. This involves them asking some of the following questions.

*When have we done superb work in this area in the past? What did we do right then? What were the principles we followed? How did we translate these into action?*

*How can we follow these principles in the future? How can we translate these into setting a specific goal? How can we then do our best to achieve the picture of success?*

David Cooperrider began developing Appreciative Inquiry in the early 1980s. At that time he was completing his doctorate by doing organisational development work at The Cleveland Clinic.

He began with traditional change management questions, looking at deficits and gaps in performance. Then something happened. Impressed by the co-operation and innovation he found, he focused more on people's strengths and professional high points.

David began helping people, teams and organisations to find and follow their successful patterns. Joined by other pioneers, he and Diana Whitney co-authored the first book on the topic. This was called *Appreciative Inquiry: A positive revolution in change*.

AI can be used with small and big groups. Sometimes it can involve thousands of people. It enables them to tackle challenges in their daily lives, work and communities.

People start by choosing a theme they want to explore. These may include, for example, some of the following.

*How can we improve morale? How can we make good decisions during a crisis? How can we work well together across departments? How can we employ the talents of all the people in our organisation?*

*How can we build on the strengths in our local community? How can we revitalise our High Streets? How can we enable our young people to flourish? How can we help our city to prosper?*

*How can we improve our customer service? How can we develop successful new products? How can we get the right balance between wealth and wellbeing? How can we achieve sustainable success?*

AI has a track record of delivering the goods. Here are some testimonials from people who have used it.

*"I would like to commend you (David Cooperrider) for your methodology of Appreciative Inquiry and to thank you for introducing it to the United Nations.*

*"Without this, it would have been very difficult, perhaps even impossible, to constructively engage so many leaders of business, civil society and government."*

*United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan*

*"Appreciative Inquiry is the way to rediscover and tap into our core strengths and highest potentials.*

*"It helps us to develop our self-talk in a constructive way and encourages us to bring out our best qualities in serving this institution.*

*"Appreciative Inquiry is a method that helps us to develop the goals and dreams that support the future of our Navy."*

*Admiral Vernon Clark, CNO of the US Navy*

*"Appreciative Inquiry has transformed our approach to sustainability – it is now being owned by the whole organisation and the AI summit was instrumental in achieving this."*

*Mike Westcott, Group HR Director, National Grid, London*

Writing in *Psychology Today*, Michelle McQuaid described some AI's achievements. Here is an excerpt from her article.

*Sought out by world leaders, including the Dalai Lama, Kofi Annan and Jimmy Carter, studies have found the positive psychology inspired questions of Professor Cooperrider and his colleagues have helped:*

*Accelerate the growth of the United Nations Global Compact for sustainability from 1,500 firms to 8,000 of the world's largest corporations.*

*Improved energy efficiency across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts resulting in nearly \$9 billion of benefits for residents and businesses.*

*Transformed a mining company once referred to as "dune-rapers" into a country's top corporate citizen while still growing their profits.*

*United the dairy industry to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% in 2 years whilst increasing farm business value by more than \$230 million.*

*Brought together the world's religious leaders to create over 600 collaboration centers around the globe that have touched the lives of more than 7 million people to unite the strengths of all faiths and build a better world.*

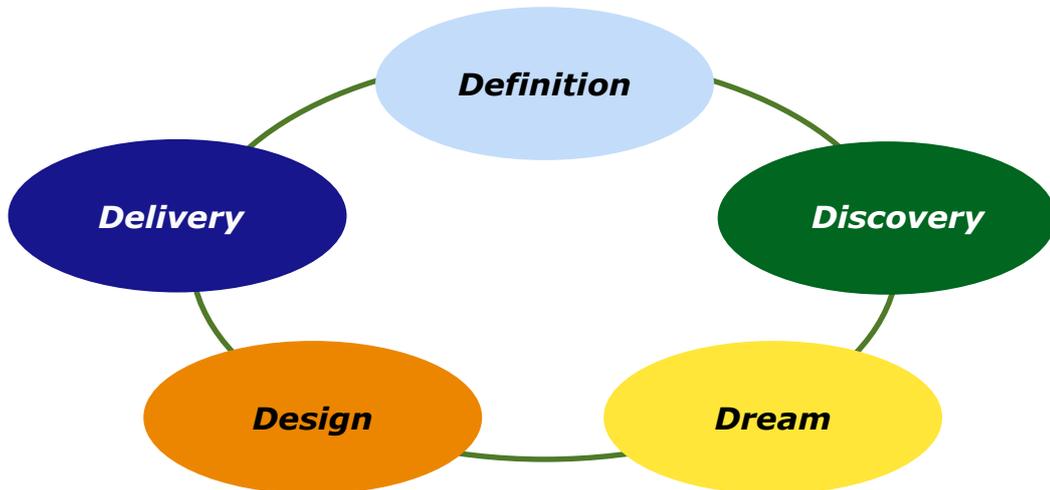
People like Appreciative Inquiry. It builds on what works and, providing people then do the work, it works. People can keep building on their strengths and delivering success.

Here is a short introduction to AI. People start by Defining the theme, challenge or question they want to explore. They then go through the stages of focusing on Discovery, Dream, Design and Delivery.

AI originally used a Four D model, starting with Discovery and the final stage was called Destiny. Some people still use that approach, but we will explore the Five D model.

## *Appreciative Inquiry*

*People define the topic they want to explore and work through the following stages. (In the original model there were four stages and the final stage was called Destiny.)*



### *Definition*

AI starts by inviting people to clarify the topic they want to explore. It can be useful:

*To define the theme, challenge or question they want to explore;*

*To frame this in a positive way - because this determines the way in which people will channel their energy;*

*To frame it as a question, such as 'How can we ...'*

AI mirrors the approach taken by many creative people who frame challenges in a positive way. They move from saying:

*"How can I stop feeling bad?" to: "How can I start feeling good?"*

*"How can we stop arguing?" to: "How can we, as far as possible, find a win-win?"*

"But you can't frame every challenge in a positive way," somebody may say.

Many AI practitioners help people to reframe things by using Flip Questions. If a person is describing what is wrong, they flip the energy by asking:

*"So what do you want to happen? What is your picture of success?"*

Sometimes a person or group may resist this approach. They may want to keep describing what is wrong, but this can be debilitating.

David was confronted by the challenge of formulating a positive question when he received a phone call from a consultant who was helping a company to tackle sexual harassment.

During the previous 2 years staff had attended training designed to eliminate this issue, but the levels of sexual harassment were increasing. The consultant running the diversity training asked David:

*"How would you take an appreciative approach to sexual harassment?"*

David asked about the real results to achieve. The reply was:

*"We want to dramatically cut the incidence of sexual harassment. We want to solve this huge problem."*

David asked what this would look like. The consultant said:

*"What we really want is to see the development of a new century organisation - a model of high quality cross-gender relationship in the workplace."*

Though this wording was somewhat awkward, it clarified a positive picture of success. So eventually the questions posed to people during the later Discovery stage were along the lines of:

*When have women and men worked together successfully in the company? What did they do right then? How can we follow those principles in the future?*

The company held a pilot programme on this theme and it exceeded expectations. Hundreds of people provided stories illustrating men and women working together successfully in the company.

Defining the topic is crucial. It creates the framework within which people can channel their positive energy. People can then embark on the next stage of the AI process.

### *Discovery*

The Discovery phase taps into the positive core – the life-giving forces of a team, organisation or community. It encourages people to build on their inner strengths and successful patterns.

Imagine that you are using this approach with a group of people who have defined the topic they want to explore. They have also defined it in terms of: “How can we ...?”

Invite people to form small groups and each person:

*To describe a specific situation in the past when they - or the team they were part of at that time - did superb work in this area;*

*To describe the specific things they did right then - the various principles that people followed - to do superb work;*

*To describe the specific things they did to translate these principles into action and what happened as a result.*

Invite people to present their findings back to the big group. They can do this by using the following framework.

## *Discovery Presentation*

*The specific examples we focused on were:*

\* *When ...*

\* *When ...*

\* *When ...*

*The principles that people followed - and the things they did to translate these principles into action - to do superb work were:*

\* *They ...*

*For example ...*

\* *They ...*

*For example ...*

\* *They ...*

*For example ...*

*The specific things that happened as a result of following these principles and translated them into action were:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Dream*

Appreciative Inquiry is different from most visioning approaches in a crucial way. It builds on the stories, strengths and successful principles that have already emerged. People are doing several things.

*They are building on the organic principles they know work.*

*They are then more confident about extrapolating these principles into the future.*

*They see how these principles might be expressed in a picture of success.*

People may be dreaming but, because they are following successful principles, they have a belief they can deliver. This is because they have started from within. The dream is organic rather than something grafted on.

AI practitioners find the Dream and Design parts sometimes start to overlap. This is okay, because there is often a moving forwards and backwards between the two elements.

There are, however, a few things to mention in relation to defining the dream. It can be useful:

*To make sure the dream is an expression of the principles that people know have worked already;*

*To make sure the dream is stimulating, stretching and yet within the scope of the controllables – the things they can control in the situation;*

*To, if appropriate, invite people to make a picture - or other representation - of them achieving the dream.*

People can draw a picture to show what will actually be happening when they reach the goal.

They can bring this to life by adding the actual words they want to be hearing from customers, colleagues, the press and other stakeholders. They can then put the picture in a place where they see it each day.

One key point is worth underlining. People who deliver a dream are often positive realists. They have a positive approach, but they are also realistic.

They are mountain climbers. They focus on achieving a particular goal but also do their due diligence. Such people often go through the following stages when exploring the potential project.

*They clarify the benefits - for all the stakeholders – of achieving the goal.*

*They clarify the pluses and minuses involved in working towards achieving the goal.*

*They clarify how to build on the pluses and minimise the minuses.*

*They clarify whether they are prepared to accept the whole package.*

*They check their motivation by asking:*

*"On a scale 0–10, to what extent are we really serious about doing what is required to achieve the goal?"*

*They make sure the rating is at least 8+/10.*

Here is a framework people can follow during the Dream stage. They can then present these findings to the whole group.

### *Dream Presentation*

*The dream we want to achieve  
- the picture of success - is:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*Here is a picture - a visual representation - of the actual things that will be happening when we achieve the dream:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Design*

The Dream is the What – the real results to achieve - and the Why - the benefits of achieving the goal. The Design is the How – the strategies for achieving the goal.

Different people use different approaches to clarify their strategies. You will, of course, have your own method. Here is one approach. Bearing in mind the picture of success, people may ask some of the following questions.

*What are the key strategies we can follow to give ourselves the greatest chance of success? How can we implement these strategies successfully? What support will people need to deliver success?*

*What are people's best contributions towards achieving the goals? What are people's strengths? How can we build on and coordinate these strengths to reach the goal? How can we do any remaining tasks that must be completed?*

*How can we make clear contracts with people about their best contributions? How can we encourage them to do superb work? How can we manage them by outcomes rather than by tasks?*

*What are the potential difficulties people may face along the way? How can we anticipate and prevent these difficulties happening? How can we manage the difficulties if they do happen?*

*What is the road map – the action plan – for achieving the dream? Who will need to deliver what and by when? What will be the actual things that will be happening that will show we have reached the goal?*

This is a standard planning approach, but sometimes there may be the need to find creative solutions. David explains this in the following way.

*"People are encouraged to wander beyond the data with the essential question being this:*

*"What would our organisation look like if it were designed in every way possible to maximise the qualities of the positive core and enable the accelerated realisation of our dreams?"*

*"When inspired by a great dream we have yet to find an organisation that did not feel compelled to design something very new and very necessary."*

Imagine you are helping an organisation to take these steps. You can invite people to clarify the key strategies they will follow to achieve the goals.

If appropriate, people can then form small teams where they focus on their elements of implementing the strategy. They then can present these back to the whole group.

They can start their presentations, however, by completing the following headlines. Then, if appropriate, they can break these down into more detailed action plans.

### *Design Presentation*

*The key strategies we can follow to achieve the dream are:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

### *Delivery*

The Delivery phase translates the dream into reality. People throw themselves into the work and get some early wins.

Maintaining the momentum is crucial, so it is vital to have follow up meetings. One approach is to gather people together at least once a month to report their progress.

If you are running such sessions, keep people's eyes on the big picture. You can start, for example, by reminding people of the Dream. People can then be invited to present the following things.

*The specific things they have delivered in the past month towards achieving the dream.*

*The specific things they plan to deliver in the next month.*

*The specific challenges they face and their plans for tackling these challenges.*

*The specific support they would like to help to deliver the dream.*

*The specific other topics they would like to explore regarding how to deliver the dream.*

You can encourage people to build on their successes and develop the habit of constant improvement. This will increase the chances of achieving the goal.

Appreciative Inquiry builds on the positive core in people, teams, organisations, communities and societies. Here are some quotes from people who have used AI.

*"AI changed the entire culture of our company, from the shop floor to the boardroom.*

*"People's energy and passion are at an all-time high. Innovation now occurs at all levels.*

*"Trust, collaboration and teamwork improved. Employee retention increased and creative new products were developed.*

*"The positive change process works better than any other change methodology we have ever used."*

*Fairmount Minerals*

*"As an academic and advisor to companies on Conscious Capitalism, I have experienced the huge impact that AI can have on companies and all their stakeholders:*

*"Discovering a sense of shared purpose, aligning their interests together, discovering exciting new ways of creating value so that all*

*can not only win, but win more, and creating cultures suffused by caring and passion.*

*"AI is a huge contribution to our collective understanding of how we can bring about greater individual, group, community, organisational, national and planetary flourishing."*

*Rajendra Sisodia, Co-Founder & Co-Chairman of Conscious Capitalism Inc.*

David Cooperrider continues to be optimistic about the future. He is particularly fascinated by how AI can help corporations to develop. Here is his view about how the strengths approach can help them to make a positive contribution to the planet.

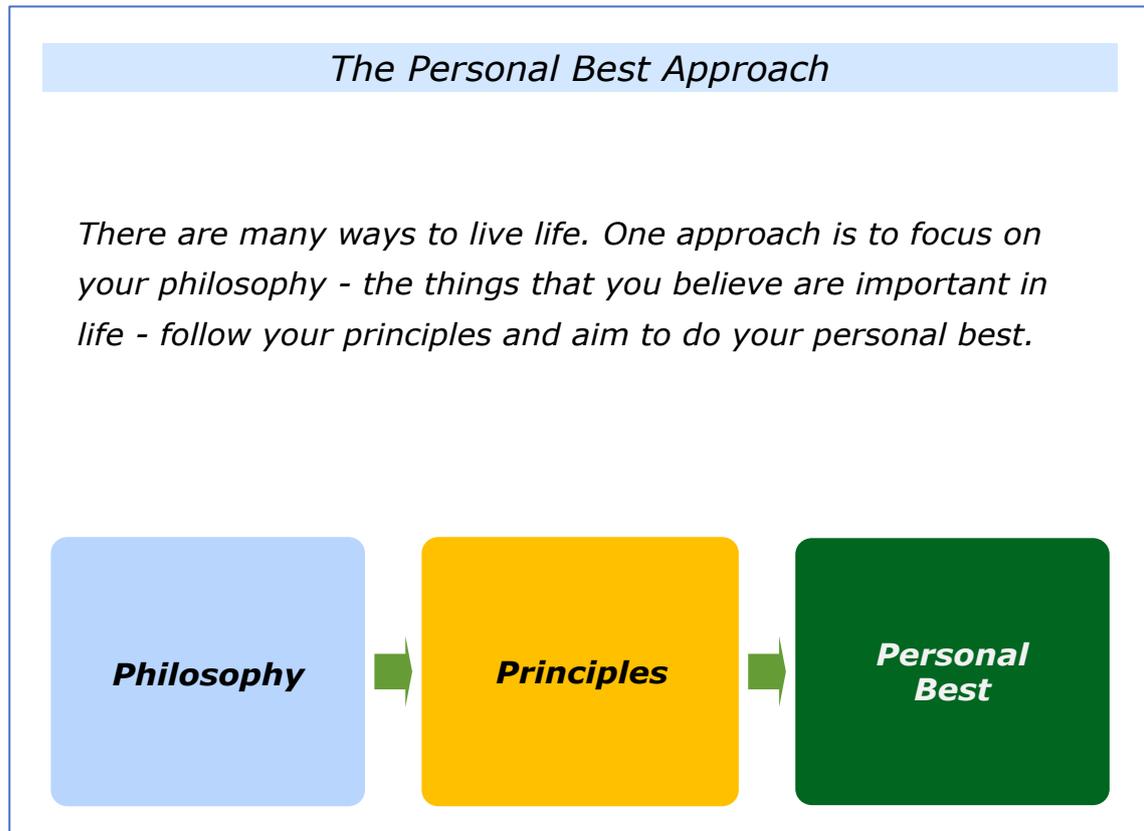


*"The question we're working on now is whether the strengths revolution can lead us to a point where positive institutions can be defined as places that elevate, magnify, and then extend our higher human strengths into the world?"*

*"In other words, can a corporation be a vehicle for bringing more courage or wisdom into the world?"*

*"And what we're seeing is that that's absolutely the case."*

## The Personal Best Approach



There are now many approaches to encouraging people to do their personal best. These are used in programmes for young people, athletes, creative workers and people who want to achieve peak performance.

Imagine that you want to take this route. The approach encourages you:

*To focus on doing your personal best rather than comparing yourself to other people;*

*To aim to be the best you can be rather than worry about always being the best;*

*To follow your philosophy and principles rather than be concerned by outside prizes.*

This is an approach that is often used with athletes. It invites them to do the following things.

*To put their energy into doing their personal best rather than worrying about outside pressures;*

*To focus on what they can control rather than what they can't control;*

*To be committed to continuous development and improving their personal best.*

Olivia Hurley, an assistant professor and sports psychologist, described elements of this approach in her article *What We Can Learn About Resilience From Elite Athletes*. Here is an excerpt from the article.

### *Have The Courage To Be Imperfect*

*Too often in life, we aim for 'perfection'.*

*As sport psychologists we should not recommend athletes use this term.*

*Instead we should work together to help them to produce Personal Bests (PBs), helping them to aim for performance excellence, but not expecting perfection.*

*Such PB targets should not stop anyone from giving one hundred per cent effort to their performances.*

*But, by not feeling the need to be perfect, they are more likely to 'have a go', which often leads to the most effective performances.*

This approach can also be valuable in many walks of life. It can be particularly helpful when it is geared to helping a person:

*To keep focusing on their philosophy – because this provides an inner compass they can keep returning to and from which they can also gain strength;*

*To keep focusing on their principles – because these provide lifetime guidelines they can follow and apply in many different situations;*

*To keep focusing on doing their personal best – because this provides a framework they can use to keep developing as people and as professionals.*

Imagine that you want to take this approach in your life and work. This involves focusing on the following themes.

## *Philosophy*

What is your philosophy? What are the things you believe are important to do in life? Different people give different answers to this question. Here are some of the answers they give.

### *My Philosophy*

*The things I believe are  
important to do in life are:*

*To be kind ... To care for my loved ones ... To give everybody a fair chance in life ... To be grateful ... To be generous... To be respectful ... To help other people.*

*To do your best in life ... To leave a good legacy ... To respect nature ... To protect diversity ... To help both present and future generations ... To take care of the planet.*

Different people translate their philosophy into action in different ways. They often do this by following certain principles. The following section describes one person who took this approach.

## *Sue's Story – Aiming To Be A Good Parent*

Sue Carter chose to shape her life in a positive way. In 1970 she came to the therapeutic community I was running for young people. Abandoned by her mother at the age of 2, she had grown up suffering abuse in institutions.

The community gave young people the chance to shape their futures. Sue recognised she was at a crossroads and began pursuing her chosen route.

In 2005, quite out of the blue, she emailed me to describe her journey over the past three decades. Sue was always feisty, which shines through her story.

Visited later in life by the Essex police who were investigating events at the children's homes, the police asked if she was a victim of abuse. Sue declared:

*"No, I am a survivor of abuse."*

Here is the piece she wrote about her journey.

### *My Aim To Be A Good Parent*

*Sue Carter*

*My mother abandoned me and my two sisters in the park when I was two. During the next 14 years I moved from one children's home to another.*

*Sometimes I was abused but I did not know anything else, so I thought it was normal. One housefather kept hitting me with his belt, so I yelled:*

*"Why are you hitting me?"*

*He said it was because I needed to show him respect. I yelled back:*

*"I'm not going to respect you if you keep hitting me."*

*So he hit me harder.*

*One day I found myself in an institution that was famous for holding a girl who had killed a child. Looking back, I now realise that the only way I had kept my sanity was by rebelling, but it had got me into trouble.*

*Things looked bad, but then I got the chance to go to a community where young people like me had the opportunity to change their lives.*

*Over 30 years later I now have three sons and a wonderful granddaughter, who is the apple of my eye. The 30 years in-between have sometimes been difficult, but never dull.*

*After leaving the community I met a man and travelled around the world. Returning home, I began working in a children's home.*

*Growing-up in institutions myself, I knew what the children needed and tried to help them to feel safe and loved. Even if I say it myself, I found that I was good with children.*

*During my twenties I had several long relationships and eventually got married. Unfortunately my husband tried to control me.*

*Even if I was going to Sainsbury's, he wanted to know what I was doing. I was never one to let anyone control me, so end of marriage.*

*Eventually I realised that I didn't have good relationships with men because I tested them to the limit. So I wasn't shocked when they didn't reach my expectations.*

*And, of course, I also made some bad choices.*

*My greatest fear as a parent was that my kids could end up in care. So I then decided to be the best single parent I could be.*

*This meant relationships with men were out. I stayed on my own with the boys for the next 18 years.*

*Then I met a good man with whom I had a child. Even though the man and I have now parted, we are still good friends and he is a good father.*

*Looking back at my time in the community, I am so happy that I was given the opportunity to meet people who taught me it was okay to talk about things.*

*So much pain was bottled up inside me from the years spent in care and the abuse that I and my sisters suffered. I was one of the lucky ones.*

*I found a way to confront my demons, talk about them and they stopped hurting.*

*About 10 years ago my sisters and I were contacted by the police about the abuse we experienced in children's homes.*

*The police came to my house and met with me and my sisters and asked if we were victims of abuse. I stood up, faced the policeman and said:*

*"NO, I AM A SURVIVOR OF ABUSE."*

*Then I realised I had got rid of my demons. Some people never get the chance to rid themselves of past problems.*

*Looking back, the community showed there were people who could look after kids, value their opinions and not resort to abuse.*

*The community made us feel safe and we never betrayed that trust. Some newcomers tried to bring drugs into the house, but we said:*

*'Don't bring that stuff here. If you want to take drugs, leave the community.'*

*Sometimes we had fantastic talks. There would be eight of us sitting in a bedroom till midnight, just sharing thoughts we had never discussed with anybody before.*

*Every young person in the community had suffered problems. We encouraged each other to talk about the past, but didn't allow each other to use it as an excuse for behaving badly.*

*If I said, 'My mother left me in the park when I was two,' somebody else said: 'I can top that. How can you use that bad experience to help others in the future?'*

*Suddenly I realised that I didn't have to go on the path I was hurtling along, which would probably have led to drugs or prison.*

*The people in the community believed in us and my feelings mattered. Someone listened when I was screaming. What could be more wonderful than that?*

*Nowadays I try to help other people by volunteering to work at the local hospice. But the thing I am most proud of is being a good parent to my children.*

You will have your own view about the things you believe are important to do in life. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentence.

## *My Philosophy*

*The things that I believe are important to do in life are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Principles*

People often translate their philosophy into action by following certain principles. Different people will do this in different ways.

Imagine, for example, that a person wants to encourage people during their life. They may begin to translate their philosophy into action by using the following framework.

The specific actions they take will depend on several things. These will be influenced by their attitude, their abilities and the things they want to achieve in life.

Bearing these in mind, the person may begin formulating their principles by going through the following steps.

## *My Philosophy Is:*

*I want to encourage people in my life.*

### *My Principles*

*The principles I want to follow to translate this into action are these.*

1) *I want to encourage people in my daily life and work.*

*The specific things I can do to translate principle this into action are:*

*I can ...*

*I can ...*

*I can ...*

2) *I want to use my strengths to do work that encourages people.*

*The specific things I can do to translate principle this into action are:*

*I can ...*

*I can ...*

*I can ...*

3) *I want to be generous and pass on knowledge that encourages both present and future generations.*

*The specific things I can do to translate principle this into action are:*

*I can ...*

*I can ...*

*I can ...*

Let's look at one person who takes this approach. Her name is Jacqui Smith. She is kind, generous and uses her talents to create interior design for houses, care homes and retirement living.

The following piece is one that Jacqui wrote many years ago. She and I met on a career development programme I ran for a travel company during the 1990s.

During our meetings we focused on her vocation. This was to create enriching environments. The following section describes how she moved from the marketing role she was doing to co-founding HomeSmiths with her husband David.

They started by doing work for friends and family on the weekends before going full-time. HomeSmiths has now been going for 20 years and moves from strength to strength.

Jacqui is now also a Regional Director for **The Society of British & International Interior Design and Chair of the Haywards Heath Dementia Action Alliance.**

Below is a recommendation from one of Homesmiths' clients. It describes how they helped with the design of a Dementia Unit.

**HOME  
SMITHS**

### Welcome to HomeSmiths Interior Design

At HomeSmiths, we offer a range of interior design services to private residential clients, care home operators, providers of social housing and property developers.

*"We called in HomeSmiths to design our soon to be opened Dementia unit and they provided us with an excellent service.*

*"We gave them a brief stipulation of the kind of environment we wanted to create and they came back to us with a superb bespoke design.*

*"They decided to theme it around famous local people – actors, cooks, and singers – and tied it all into the musical name of the unit."*

*"The result is a unit with a peaceful atmosphere with iconic photos and art that helps to stimulate our residents and aid in their memory recall.*

*"The tactile displays they installed are works of art in themselves: collages that depict different scenes whilst being a mix of vibrant colours and various fabrics.*

*"Furthermore, they were efficient and a pleasure to work with both on and off site.*

*"We are extremely impressed with HomeSmiths and would recommend them to anyone that could make use of their services."*

## *Jacqui Smith - The Birth of 'HomeSmiths'*

*As a child I could spend hours creating room sets for my dolls, fiddling with doll's house furniture, making camps for my brother to play in or rearranging my bedroom.*

*Whilst I followed art and excelled at it through my childhood and teens, my school was fiercely academic. So when it came to 'A' Level choices, Art was dropped in favour of Economics, Maths and German!*

*University followed and I gained a degree in Economics and Maths. Having little clue of what I wanted to do, I found myself in sales and marketing, which is where I stayed for some years.*

*Feeling unfulfilled with my work, job changes ensued but I was never really addressing the root problem. Sales and marketing were not playing to my strengths.*

*This left a whole host of skills and, more importantly, passions untapped. Outside work I was continuing with more creative pursuits, such as designing room schemes for myself as well as friends and family. But I never thought of doing this for a living, telling myself:*

*"I'm not trained in Interior Design – how could I make money from this and why would anyone take me seriously?" Imposter syndrome was real!*

*Despite constant encouragement from friends, I remained unhappy in the corporate world. I then attended a two-day workshop aimed at helping people to make a living doing what they loved.*

*Focusing on my passions, talents, dreams and goals threw up a common theme which simply read as:*

*'Creating enriching environments.'*

*I then met my now husband David, a cabinet maker. He had always wanted to run his own business - yet possessed none of the required sales, marketing or organisational skills.*

*Within months of meeting, we were engaged. We also knew then that we would one day set up on our own.*

*David continued to design and make furniture in the short to medium term. In the longer term, however, he wanted to get more involved in bigger interior design projects.*

*I wanted to help people enrich their living environments with colour and texture - plus take on the challenge of running a business. A brainstorm and a bottle of wine later 'HomeSmiths' was born.*

*The name offers so much flexibility in terms of what we offer our clients. As our business has evolved over the years from residential and show home design to now predominantly care home and retirement living design, the brand works as well now as it did when we started.*

*When we started the business, the response from our immediate network was tremendous. Not only did people believe in the proposition, but truly believed in David and my ability, through our combined talents, to deliver.*

*Starting the business when our first child was four months old, people thought we were mad - but staying in our old roles was so much more frightening! It has been hard work and we are still a young business, but we are building our reputation.*

*We work together incredibly well. Whilst David no longer makes furniture, he designs all the bespoke pieces for our projects and is responsible for managing our projects.*

*I lead on the design side and also the strategy and business planning. I always say that I could not run the business without*

*David nor could he without me. It's a great partnership that really works.*

*One lesson I learned on the workshop all those years ago was to network but, most of all, to give something back to people in your network.*

*So true and such a simple and cost effective way to grow a business! I can cite about ten key networking encounters which have shaped where we are today.*

*I believe that challenges also shape us. In 2012 I permanently lost the sight in my left eye.*

*Determined to combine my personal experience of sight loss with my profession, I have specialised in how the built environment can support people living with sensory and or cognitive decline.*

*I cannot think of a better interpretation of Mike's observation at that workshop over 20 years ago, that my best work would focus around creating enriching environments. That is now exactly what I do.*

*I am evangelical about doing work you love and as a mother will certainly encourage my children to follow their natural paths in life and work.*

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that you have settled on your philosophy. What are the principles you want to follow to translate this into action?

If you wish, try to tackle the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *My Principles*

*The principles I want to follow to translate my philosophy into action are:*

*1) I want to ...*

*The specific things I can do to translate this principle into action are:*

*\**

*2) I want to ...*

*The specific things I can do to translate this principle into action are:*

*\**

*3) I want to ...*

*The specific things I can do to translate this principle into action are:*

*\**

## *Personal Best*

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you want to follow these principles and aim to do your personal best?

You may want to do this when encouraging a person, running a workshop, coaching a sports team, pursuing a project or doing another activity. You may want to do this as a parent, partner, mentor, leader, trusted advisor or in another role.

Looking ahead, how can you prepare properly? How can you move into action and follow your chosen principles? How can you check what is working and what can be improved? How can you do your personal best to achieve the picture of success?

Let's return to the field of sports. Jeremy Snape, a sports psychologist, described how it is important to be fully committed rather than worrying about being perfect. He explained this in the following way.

*"Perfectionism can be good for driving your work ethic and your attention to detail. But it can also cause stress, procrastination and even avoidance – because you're afraid of not achieving it.*

*"The really great sportspeople have the courage to throw themselves into any endeavour with 100% commitment, knowing that it's going to be imperfect."*

John Wooden, the legendary American College basketball coach, was somebody who encouraged his players to always do their best. He never mentioned winning, but his teams won more titles than any other in College basketball history.

During his early career he began developing his famous *Pyramid of Success*. This consisted of guiding principles that athletes could put into practise both on and off the court.

The base of the Pyramid consists of phrases such as:

*Industriousness; Friendship; Loyalty; Cooperation; Enthusiasm.*

Behind each word there is an explanation. *Industriousness*, for example, is explained in detail. This includes the phrases:

*"In plain language, I mean you have to work – and work hard. There is no substitute for hard work. None. Worthwhile things come only from real work."*

There are several levels to the Pyramid of Success. It culminates in the principle of *Competitive Greatness*. This is explained as:

*"Perform at your best when your best is required. Your best is required each day."*

John Wooden reinforced the Pyramid of Success by using certain maxims to remind people of their responsibilities. These included the following.

- *There is a no substitute for hard work and careful planning. Help others. Make friendship a fine art. Make each day your masterpiece.*
- *Never try to be better than someone else. Learn from others, and try to be the best you can be. Success is the by-product of that preparation.*
- *Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best you are capable of becoming.*



Many people were influenced by his work. Here are two quotes about Coach Wooden. The first is from Bill Walton, a former player.

*"(He) has a heart, brain and soul that have enabled him to inspire others to reach levels of success and peace of mind that they might never have dreamed possible on their own."*

The second is from Alan Castel, UCLA assistant professor of psychology, who interviewed Wooden about aging and memory during the summer 2008

*"Wooden was a role model, not just as a coach and a wise man, but also for his modesty and character, and on how to age successfully."*

*"He was a legend in ways that go far beyond basketball. His personality, positivity, wisdom and attitude toward aging played important roles in his cognitive vitality."*

### *Doing Your Personal Best – Some Approaches Used By Educators And Organisations*

The following section describes two approaches that are used to encourage people to do their personal best.

The first describes an example used by a famous conductor with their students. The second describes a performance appraisal system that was used by a company. Here are the examples.

#### *Doing Your Personal Best - 'You Have An A Grade'*

Benjamin Zander, a conductor with the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, describes his approach to encouraging young performers do their best.

He tutors students who travel from around the world to pursue their musical studies in America. They are often financially supported by families who have saved to provide the necessary funding.

The students feel nervous on their first day in college. Anxious not to disappoint their parents, they are worried about passing their final exams. Benjamin greets the assembled students by saying something like the following.

### *You Have An A Grade*

*Let me put your minds at rest. You already have an A grade. But this is dependent on several things.*

*First, write me a letter dated May next year - the end of your time in college - titled *Achieving An A Grade*.*

*Imagine you are writing the letter after completing the course. Start with the words:*

*'The reasons why I may deserve be considered to have achieved an A Grade during the academic year is because I have done the following things ...'*

*Second, you and I will meet to discuss your proposed achievements and whether these deserve an A. If not, we will agree on what you want to you need to do to achieve another grade.*

*Third, it is then up to you to do the things required to reach the agreed grade.*

## *Achieving An A Grade*

*The date is ...*

*The reasons why I may be considered to have achieved an A Grade during the academic year is because I have done the following things:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Performance Appraisal – Agreeing On The Rating At The Start Of The Year*

There are many models for doing what performance appraisal or performance management. Some of these work well for both the individual and the organisation, but some don't.

The following section describes one approach that I have seen work in a company. This involved going through the following steps.

### *Step One – Agreeing On The Rating*

This involved meeting with the person and agreeing on the rating they want to achieve by the end of the year.

The manager outlined that the available ratings were 5.0, 4.5, 4.0, 3.5 and 3.0. Anything below those could lead to other types of discussions.

The manager asked the person what rating they would like to achieve in the year. Naturally, many people said they wanted to get a 5.0. The manager then outlined what would be required to achieve such a rating.

This might mean delivering double their agreed target, producing a ground-breaking innovation, all their team achieving 100% job satisfaction and many other deliverables.

The person might then say something along the following lines.

*"That sounds a tall order. What do I need to do and deliver to get a 4.5?"*

The conversation would continue until the person settled on an agreed rating.

*The company made it clear that:*

*It was certainly okay for a person to aim for a 3.0, 3.5 or another grade.*

There may be times in a person's life that they may prefer to go for such a rating.

The company also made it clear that 3.0 was the lowest acceptable grade – but that included being professional and reaching certain targets.

The person settling on the rating they wanted to achieve. They then translated this into describing the things they needed to do and deliver to achieve that rating.

*Step Two – Meeting Regularly To Clarify If On Course To Deliver The Rating*

The person had regular meetings with their manager to clarify that they were still on course to deliver the agreed rating.

This provided a good reality check and also showed the progress being made towards delivering the agreed outcomes.

Sometimes outside events occurred that meant it was appropriate to review the goals or review the agreed rating.

*Step Three – Meeting At The End Of The Year To Confirm The Agreed Rating*

This session was held at the end of the year and the session was normally predictable.

The person and the manager had made clear contracts at the beginning of the year and agreed on the desired rating. They had then met regularly to keep doing reality checks.

The company found that people normally delivered what had been agreed and achieved their desired rating. This made the sessions predictable with few surprises.

Sometimes there were deviations, but these were managed in a professional way.

The company used this approach to make the performance appraisal sessions beneficial to both the individual and the company.

Here are some of the tools they used to facilitate such sessions.

## *Performance Appraisal*

### *Agreeing On The Rating At The Start Of The Year*

## *Introduction*

*This approach starts by agreeing with you on the rating you want to achieve by the end of the year.*

*The ratings are: 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5 and 5.0. Anything below these may lead to other discussions. We will agree with you on the rating you want to achieve.*

*Many people start by saying they want a 5.0. We will explore what you would actually need to deliver to achieve that rating. We will continue to explore until we agree on the rating you want to achieve.*

*We will then meet regularly to clarify that you are track to achieve your desired rating. If so, then the final rating will be predictable and not a surprise.*

### *Achieving 5.0*

*The specific things a person would need to do and deliver to be considered to have achieved a 5.0 are:*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

### *Achieving 4.5*

*The specific things a person would need to do and deliver to be considered to have achieved a 4.5 are:*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

### *Achieving 4.0*

*The specific things a person would need to do and deliver to be considered to have achieved a 4.0 are:*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

### *Achieving 3.5*

*The specific things a person would need to do and deliver to be considered to have achieved a 3.5 are:*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

## *Achieving 3.0*

*The specific things a person would need to do and deliver to be considered to have achieved a 3.0 are:*

*\* To have ...*

*For example ...*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

## *My Agreed Rating*

*The Rating I Want To Achieve  
By The End Of The Year Is ....*

*The specific things I need to do and deliver to achieve this rating are:*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

*The specific things I will do to keep clarifying that I am on track towards achieving the desired rating are:*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

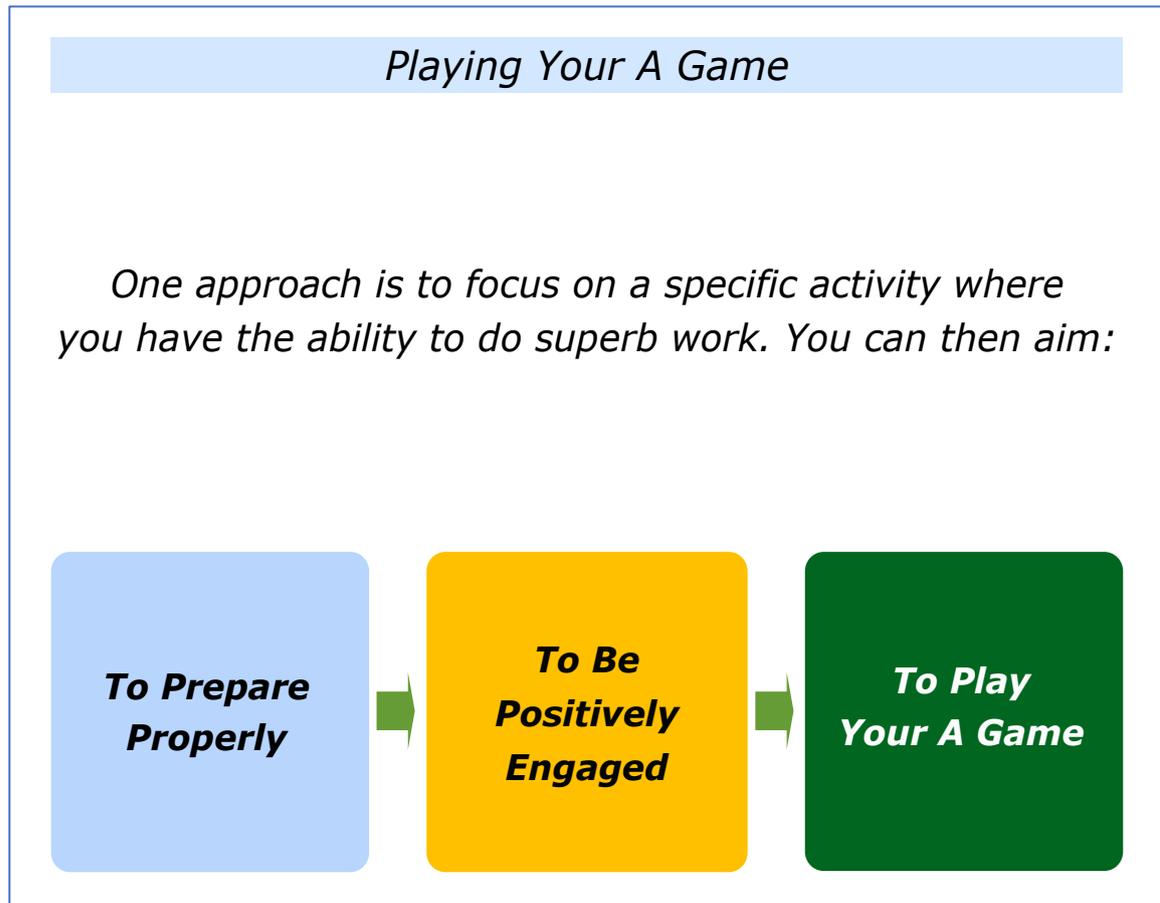
\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

## *The Playing Your A Game Approach*



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to focus on a specific activity where you have the ability to do superb work.

You can then aim to prepare properly. Moving into action, you can be positively engaged rather than partly engaged or pretend engaged. You then aim play your A game on the way towards achieving your picture of success.

Looking back, can you recall a situation when you played your A game rather than your B game or C game? What did you do to perform at your best? What happened as a result of taking these steps?

Imagine that you want to follow similar principles in the future. Let's consider how you can make this happen.

Some of these themes we have explored in depths elsewhere in the book, so we will only touch briefly on those. Others we will consider if greater depth.

### *You Can Focus On Where You Can Do Superb Work And Play Your A Game*

What is the specific activity where you want to do superb work? You may be playing a particular role - such as a carer, educator, leader, mediator, host, trusted advisor, scientist or another role.

You may be doing a particular project. You may be doing a task, playing a sport, performing on stage, building a house, designing a piece of software or doing another project.

You may be working in a pressure situation. You may be tackling a challenge, finding solutions to a problem, performing a surgical operation or working in another pressure situation.

Imagine that you have chosen to focus on a specific activity. You can then move on to the next stage.

### *You Can Prepare Properly*

You will prepare properly in your own way. Sometimes it can be useful, however, to incorporate some of the steps taken by great workers.

Such workers prepare properly and set things up to succeed. They follow this discipline whether they aim to climb a mountain, lead a team or do a particular project.

Bearing in mind what they can control, they clarify the real results to achieve. They also clarify the key strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success.

Great workers rehearse everything before tackling a challenge. Sometimes they do the physical rehearsal, sometimes they do

mental rehearsal. Sometimes they do both. They often do the following things.

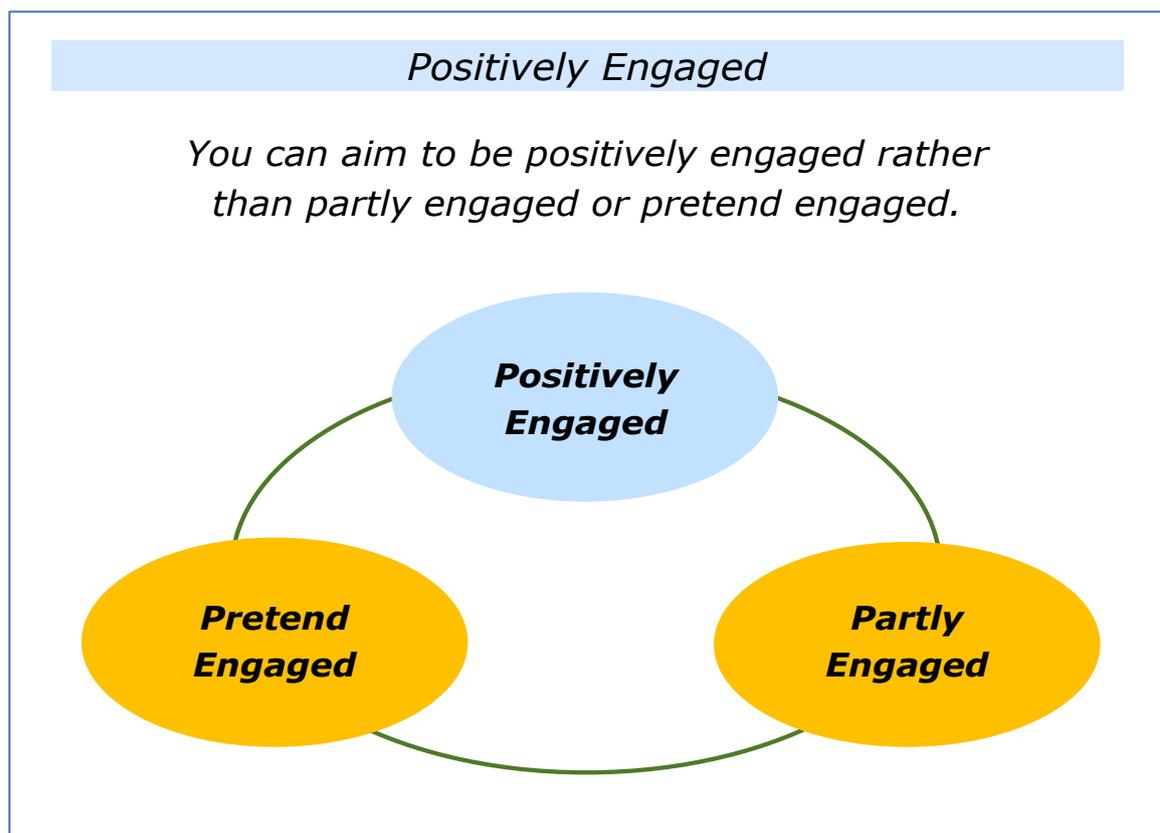
*They rehearse pursuing the key strategies they will follow to achieve the goals;*

*They rehearse managing the challenges they may face on the way towards achieving the goals;*

*They again rehearse pursuing the key strategies they will follow to do their best to achieve the goals.*

You will follow your own routine for preparing properly. It will then be time to move on to the next step.

### *You Can Be Positively Engaged*



People often do their best work when they are positively engaged rather than partly engaged or pretend engaged. Sounds obvious, so

how can you translate this into action? Let's explore these three kinds of engagement.

### *Positively Engaged*

What are the activities in which you feel positively engaged? What are you doing right then? What are the principles you are following? How do you translate these into action?

You may have a positive attitude and prepare properly. Moving into action, you may feel alive and alert. You may use your whole being to focus fully on the situation and work towards the desired picture of success.

### *Partly Engaged And Pretend Engaged*

When do you feel partly engaged? Sometimes you are interested, sometimes you are not. The feeling is:

*"I could be spending my time doing something more worthwhile."*

How do you behave then? What are the consequences – both for you and for other people – when you behave this way? Let's explore some of your options.

You can try to avoid putting yourself into situations where you feel partly engaged, but sometimes this can be difficult. Bearing this in mind, how can you manage the situation?

One approach is to plan ahead and decide how you want to behave in the situation. If appropriate, it is to ask yourself:

*How can I be professional? How can I play a positive role and support other people? How can I make a positive contribution in the situation?*

This can work for a while, but you will need to prepare properly and rehearse how you will behave in the situation. Sometimes you may

need to buy time and not react to triggers that can send you into a negative spiral.

What are the activities in which you feel pretend engaged? You feel uncomfortable, unreal and must make a real effort to appear professional.

Something bugs you. Maybe it is the values of the people or the company. Maybe you don't believe in what they are doing.

Nevertheless, you summon-up energy to do your best, but afterwards you may get headaches or other symptoms. Continually putting yourself in these situations can have consequences for your health.

Looking ahead, how can you put aim to be positively engaged? This can bring benefits for both yourself and other people. One manager described how they tackled this challenge.

*"Looking back at my work pattern, I found that I felt positively engaged only 20% of the time. This was having an effect on both my personal and professional life. Looking to the future, I decided to do three things.*

*First, to list the activities in which I felt positively engaged. These included selling to certain kinds of customers. Second, to spend more time doing these things. Third, to show the business case for doing these things by getting some quick wins.*

*"This approach proved successful. I began to put together the high points like a string of pearls across the week. Within six months I was spending 80% of my week doing stimulating work that brought benefits to the company.*

*"There are still some meetings where I feel partly engaged, but I try to be professional and make a positive contribution. I feel much happier in both my personal and professional life."*

Some athletes, for example, continually aim to be positively engaged. They aim to stay in the moment and be fully present. This often works, but sometimes they hit setbacks.

Some use a personal mantra – something they say to themselves – to recentre. They then aim to regain their rhythm and do their best to deliver the desired results.

Imagine that you have chosen your way to be positively engaged. It will then be time to move on to the next stage.

### *You Can Do Your Best To Play Your A Game*

Different people have different versions of what it means to play their A game. Some sports coaches, for example, encourage their athletes to focus on being the best they can be.

A sprinter may aim to win an Olympic Gold Medal, for example, but recognise that this could be influenced by factors beyond their control. They could suffer injuries, compete against better athletes or experience unexpected setbacks.

Bearing this in mind, they will focus on what they can control. They may describe their goals in the following way.

#### *Playing My A Game*

*The specific things I can do to keep  
playing my A game during the Olympics are:*

*To prepare properly both physically and psychologically;*

*To be fully present, follow my principles and translate these into  
action every day;*

*To be able to look back in the future and say that I did everything  
possible to perform at my personal best during the Olympics.*

The sprinter will translate their aims into daily, weekly and monthly targets. They will then follow daily disciplines on the way towards achieving their long-term goal.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation when you may want to play your A game? This could be in your personal or professional life.

How can prepare properly? How can you be positively engaged? How can you then do your best to play your A game? What may happen as a result of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Playing My A Game In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future  
where I want to play my A game is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to prepare  
properly, be positively engaged and  
do my best to play my A game are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

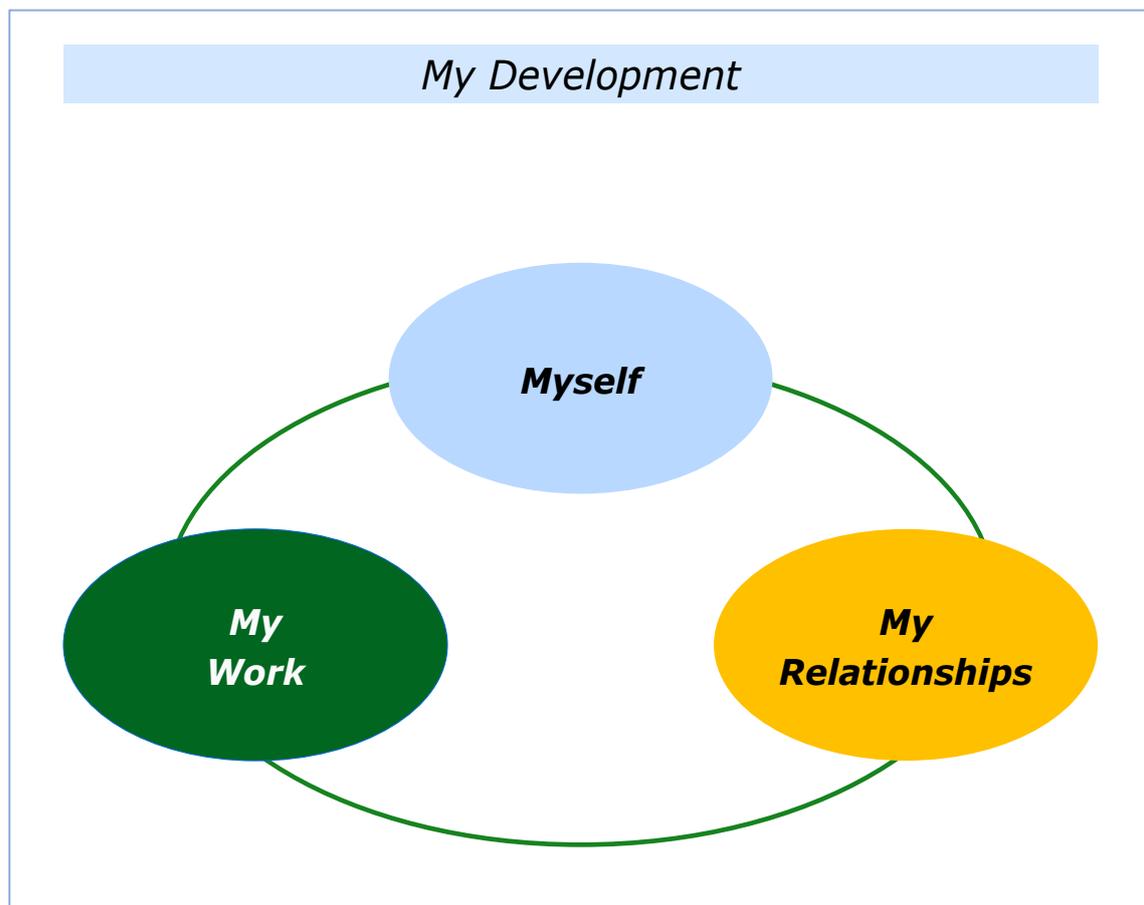
\*

As mentioned earlier, there are many ways to do your personal best. Let's look at another approach.

## *Developing As A Person And As A Professional*

This section explores how you can take charge of your personal and professional development. It focuses on how you can continue to develop yourself, your relationships and your work.

Some people want to change everything in their lives at once but this seldom works. Taking steps in one area, however, can have a positive effect in other areas. Let's explore how this can apply in daily life.



## *Developing Yourself*

On a scale 0-10, how would you rate your health and wellbeing? How would you rate your development? How can you maintain or improve the rating?

Different things can trigger a person to focus on their development. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"During the last few years I have concentrated on doing well in my work. This has been rewarding but I have neglected other parts of my life.*

*"My health is suffering and things are not great at home. I want to get my life back on track. I know it impossible to change everything overnight, but have you any suggestions?"*

Exploring the options, he chose to improve his health. Like many people who develop positive habits, he started with the physical things. He chose:

*To eat healthier food at breakfast and throughout the day ... To walk more than 7,000 steps a day and restart playing five-a-side football ... To relearn how to breathe deeply and feel more relaxed.*

Different people focus on different things to develop themselves. They may choose to become fitter, learn a language, develop a new skill, embark on an adventure or do other activities.

Imagine that you have clarified some of your chosen steps. You can then move on to the next theme.

## *Developing Your Relationships*

On a scale 0-10, how would you rate the health of your key relationships? How can you continue to encourage people? How can you aim to find win-win solutions to differences?

The person mentioned earlier described his challenges in the following way.

*"The most critical area of my life is my relationships. Returning home from work, I sometimes dive straight into my emails rather than take time to talk with the family.*

*"My son is not academic and is suffering problems at school, so I need to give him more encouragement. I would also like to rebuild relationships with some old friends."*

Exploring what he wanted to improve in his relationships, he settled on the following actions:

*To create time each evening to talk with his wife ... To encourage his son to focus on what he did best – sports, music and film making – and learn how to manage the more difficult issues at school ... To think before saying something that could be hurtful to another person.*

You will have your own approach to developing your relationships. Imagine that you have clarified some of those steps. It may then be useful to focus on the next theme.

### *Developing In Your Work – Managing Your Professional World*

On a scale 0-10, how would you rate the satisfaction you are getting in your work? How can you maintain or improve the rating? What will be the benefits of taking these steps?

There are many models for developing in your work. One approach is to start by managing the various aspects of your professional world.



Imagine you lead a team and want to manage the various aspects of the role. One senior manager explained this in the following way.

*"Success calls for getting the right balance between managing your stakeholders, team and customers.*

*"People often think that climbing the corporate ladder will lead to them spending their days directing strategy, but this isn't the case.*

*"Frequently you spend increasing amounts of time managing your key stakeholders, such as your bosses. That is fine, because morally you must satisfy the people who pay you.*

*"Managing upwards is crucial, because many bosses worry. They will also intervene if you don't keep them informed.*

*"At the same time, you will only be able to deliver the required results if you lead a superb team and satisfy your customers. Getting the right balance is the key to achieving success."*

## *Managing Your Key Stakeholders*

Imagine you are a leader. Who are the key stakeholders you need to manage? These may include your manager, other leaders in the organisation and some of your peers. Let's explore how you can manage these stakeholders successfully.

The first step is to ensure that, as far as possible, you are working for a manager with whom you have a values-fit. Later we will explore what to do when this is not the case.

Let's imagine, however, that you and your manager share similar professional values. You are in broad agreement about the picture of success and the principles to follow to achieve these results.

Every team has a scorecard. These are the mandatory things that must be delivered. You may also be able to do stimulating projects on top of this. It is vital to deliver the scorecard, however, otherwise life can get difficult.

Bearing this in mind, it can be good to meet with your manager and agree on the goals. It is useful:

*To make clear contracts about what your team must deliver and by when;*

*To proactively keep your key stakeholders informed about the progress towards achieving the goals;*

*To get some quick wins, produce superb work and deliver the agreed picture of success.*

Aim to get some quick wins. This will buy time, reassure your stakeholders and enable you to get on with other aspects of the work.

Managing your stakeholders is crucial - they are akin to your Venture Capitalists. They are also your key customers. Be proactive and manage the centre - otherwise the centre will manage you.

Getting this right will release time to manage your team and customers. Getting it wrong will mean spending masses of time trying to keep the stakeholders onside.

Clear contracting provides the framework for your work together. How to make this happen?

One approach is to meet with your key stakeholder and agree on the outcomes to be delivered. You will do this in your own way. Here are some themes, however, that you may want to cover when meeting with your manager.

*"Thank you for the meeting.*

*"I would like to make clear contracts about the specific results you want our team to deliver. We will then make sure we deliver these goals.*

*"Looking at the bigger picture, the organisation's goals are:*

*1) To ...*

*2) To ...*

*3) To ...*

*"Bearing this in mind, as far as I understand it the specific results our team needs to deliver are:*

*1) To ...*

*2) To ...*

*3) To ...*

*"This is the scorecard – the mandatory things that we must deliver. Are there any other things you would like us to add to the scorecard? If so, let me add those to the targets.*

*"We will proactively keep you and the other stakeholders informed about our progress towards achieving the goals. We will also aim to get the following quick successes:*

*1) To ...*

*2) To ...*

*3) To ...*

*"Are there any other Dos and Don'ts you would like us to follow on the way towards delivering the goals? Are there any other topics that it would be useful to explore?"*

*"Thanks for the session. I will put together a summary of the results to achieve – together with what must be delivered by when – and then send it to you. Is that okay?"*

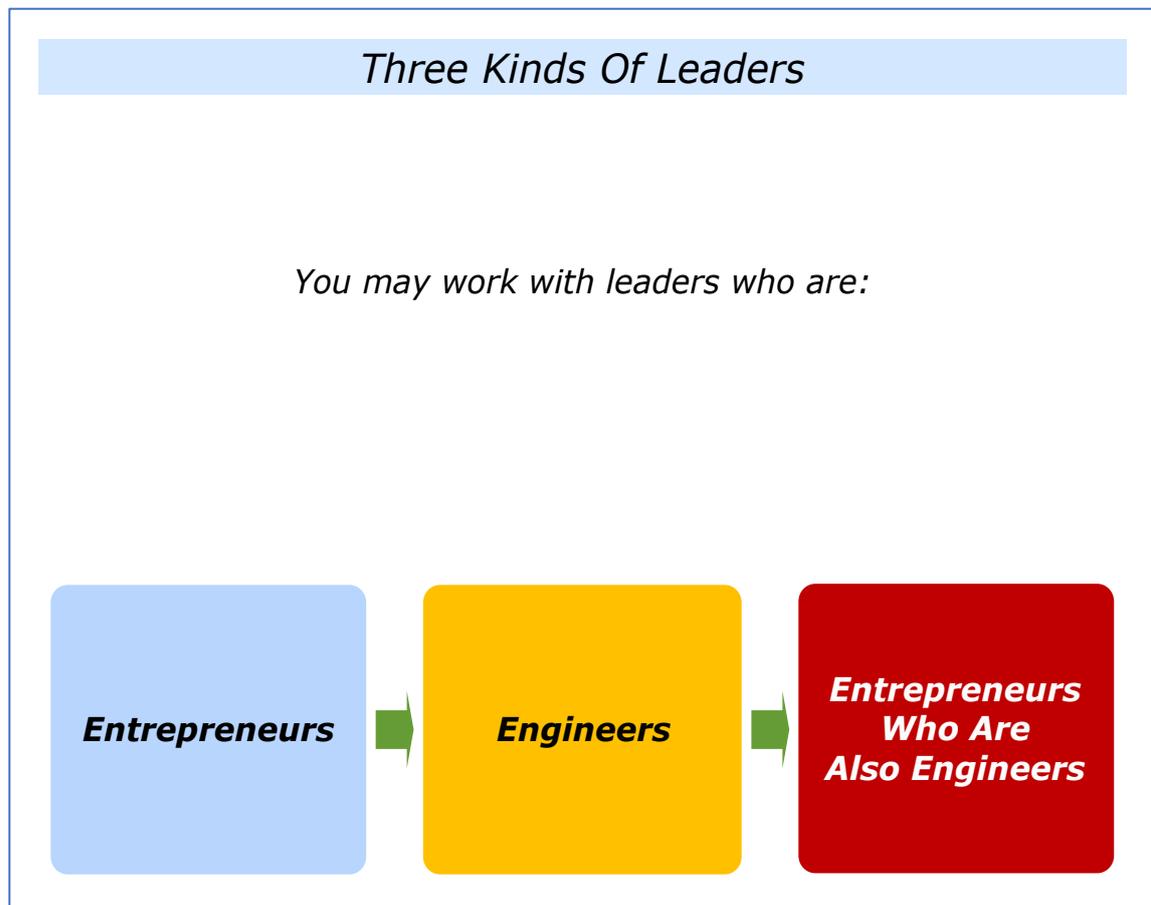
Repeat this process with each of the key stakeholders. You can then get on with delivering the scorecard and also doing stimulating projects.

You may be aiming to satisfy many different stakeholders. Your main stakeholder, however, may be the person that you report to.

Imagine, for example, that you are applying for the role as the Number Two to a leader. You will obviously do a lot of research regarding the person's approach.

You may be working with somebody who has the characteristics of an Entrepreneur or an Engineer. Some leaders combine both sets of characteristics. They act like an Entrepreneur who is also an Engineer.

These are over-simplifications, of course, but they can be useful for guidance. Let's explore how you can work with each type of leader.



### *Entrepreneurs*

Entrepreneurs tend to have high energy. They are brilliant in their own field and think quickly. They go 'A, B ... and then leap to ... Z'.

Visionary by nature, they often see pictures of what good looks like. They do not always communicate these visions to people, however, even though they think they do.

Contrary to most beliefs, such people actually do follow a process, but it is their own process. They follow these principles intuitively, however, and sometimes it is hard to communicate these to other people.

Great entrepreneurs recognise both their strengths and weaknesses. So they often have a coordinator who acts as a channel between them and the rest of the world. The coordinator makes sure the ideas are implemented properly and have the desired impact.

There is seldom a dull moment working with such entrepreneurs. They can be inspirational, but also frustrating. Sometimes they change their minds without telling others. Nevertheless, they attract many people who enjoy the adventure.

The entrepreneurial style is associated with business. But some artists, actors, inventors, scientists, chefs, knowledge workers and people in other professions demonstrate similar behaviour.

## *Engineers*

Engineers want to make things work. They tend to be methodical and follow a structured process.

They go 'A, B, C, D, E ...' and continue in a systematic way until they reach 'Z'. They expect others to adopt a similar approach and be able to explain issues in detail.

Good engineers focus on the end goal. They then apply their expertise to implementing processes and tackling challenges on the road to achieving success. Sometimes they can become fixated on issues, however, an approach that has both pluses and minuses.

On the upside, this approach may be exactly what is required to develop consistency across an organisation. On the downside, this can lead to micro-management.

Some engineers move on to developing a style of managing by outcomes rather than managing by tasks. They develop a culture in which people take responsibility for following the key principles and delivering success.

## *Entrepreneurs Who Are Also Engineers*

Some leaders combine both approaches. The entrepreneurial side is inspiring and focuses on the real results to achieve. The engineering side is systematic and sees details on the road to achieving success.

Entrepreneurs who are also engineers can be demanding. Working with them can be exhilarating but also like a giant switchback ride.

The leader can shift quickly from focusing on the vision to swooping down into the detail. This can be intimidating for some people.

Such leaders often attract team members who follow them from project to project. People are willing to put with both the pluses and minuses involved. They know they will be part of exciting teams that often deliver the goods.

Savvy team members know it can be useful to take the following steps to manage the leader. They aim:

*To clarify the leader's picture of success and then play back their understanding to ensure they have the same picture;*

*To clarify and follow the overall Dos and Don'ts for working well with the leader;*

*To get some early successes and then proactively keep the leader informed about their progress towards achieving the goals – otherwise the leader might start interfering;*

*To recognise the leader might change their mind without telling them – so they keep checking on the evolving picture of success;*

*To do whatever is required to deliver the picture of success.*

This section has looked at managing certain kinds of stakeholders, which is a necessary part of the job. At the same time, however, it is vital to focus on the following theme.

What if you do not get on with your manager? Be professional. Imagine that the person is an external client and – as you would with such a client - do whatever you can to deliver the agreed results.

Bear in mind, however, that such a relationship may not be sustainable. You may find the daily task of working for such a person to be exhausting.

Do not become a victim by allowing them to define who you are or to affect your self-confidence. Continue to be professional, but you may eventually want to find a role working with a leader with whom you have a values-fit.

Let's return to the topic of managing your stakeholders. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Managing My Stakeholders*

*The specific things I can do to make clear contracts with my stakeholders are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to get quick successes and also keep them informed are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to deliver the agreed outcomes for my stakeholders are:*

\*

\*

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## *Managing Your Team's Outcomes*

Good leaders create an encouraging environment in which motivated people can perform superb work. They then aim to manage the team's outcomes.

They aim to be positive, predictable and enable people to achieve peak performance. They recognise that they cannot actually manage people, however, because people manage themselves.

Such leaders provide people with an inspiring framework and the support they need to do the job. They then manage people's contributions towards achieving the team's goals.

Different leaders do this in different ways. One approach is to start by giving people the big picture and context. Some do this in the following way.



*Good Leaders*

*They focus on the outcomes to achieve. They keep communicating the What, Why, How, Who and When.*



Imagine that you have taken this step. It can then be useful:

*To invite people to decide if they want they want to contribute towards achieving the goals;*

*To make clear contracts about their best contributions and to give them the support to do the job;*

*To agree on the specific things they will do to proactively keep you informed about their progress towards achieving the goals.*

## ***Managing By Outcomes***

Good leaders set up people to succeed. They then encourage, educate and enable them to do superb work. This often calls for managing by outcomes rather than by tasks.

One approach is to meet with each person every month. Create an encouraging environment where they can share their successes and challenges.

During the conversation keep returning to the agreed goals. You may want to say something along the following lines.

*"Let's go back to the real results to achieve. How can we do our best to deliver those results? What are the steps we need to take to make this happen?"*

Why take this approach? People can get into a pattern of talking about details, making excuses or whatever. They may also confuse activity with results.

Certainly it is vital to revisit the aims to ensure these are still desirable and possible. But then it is good to go back to the results to achieve. Whether it concerns profits, product quality or people, the mantra is:

*"Let's go back to agreed outcomes. How can we do our best to deliver these results?"*

Many leaders face a challenge as they get older. First, their control needs get stronger. Second, they recognise that they will be judged by their people's performance.

How to square this circle? One approach is to manage by outcomes rather than by tasks. Taking this step can help to build an even more self-managing and successful team.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Managing My Team's Outcomes*

*The specific things I can do to make clear contracts with the team members about the outcomes to achieve are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to give them the support required to achieve the goals are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to manage by outcomes and achieve the goals are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Managing Your Customers*

Good leaders keep focusing on their internal and external customers. One leader explained this in the following way.

*"During the last year I have reconnected with my customers. This has proved vital in reviving the business. It has also been stimulating."*

The person returned to doing what they did best. This was acting as a trusted advisor to certain kinds of customers. They chose:

*To meet with key customers they had worked with in the past - some of them having moved on to new roles;*

*To act as a trusted advisor to these people - this resulted in getting more business for the organisation;*

*To produce success stories that showed how their organisation had helped the customers to achieve success.*

How can you keep in touch with your customers? How can you show you understand the world from their point of view? How can you use your strengths to help them to achieve success?

Great leaders help other people succeed. Sometimes this calls for making sure they manage their key stakeholders, their team's outcomes and their customers.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to clarify how you can manage your customers and help them to achieve their goals.

## *Managing My Customers*

*The specific things I and the team can do to keep connecting with our customers are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I and the team can do to deliver great service and help the customers to achieve their goals are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of doing these things will be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Managing Yourself*

This is vital, of course, if you want: a) to enjoy life and maintain your sanity; b) to keep developing as a person and as a professional.

Bearing this in mind, you may want to continue doing some of the exercises in this book. It can be useful to make sure that you are continuing:

*To do things they give you positive energy;*

*To spend time with positive people;*

*To do things that ensure you enjoy living a positive life.*

Looking ahead, can you think of a specific situation where you want to follow your principles and do your personal best? This could be in your personal or professional life.

You may want to encourage a person, run a mentoring session, do a creative project, play a sport or do another activity. You may want to lead a team, create a culture in an organisation, build a prototype or pass on a positive legacy.

How can you prepare properly? How can you do your personal best in the situation? How can you give everything to make sure that afterwards you may be able to feel a sense of peace?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *My Personal Best*

*The specific situation where I want to follow my principles and do my personal best is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to follow my principles and do my personal best in the situation are:*

\*

\*

\*

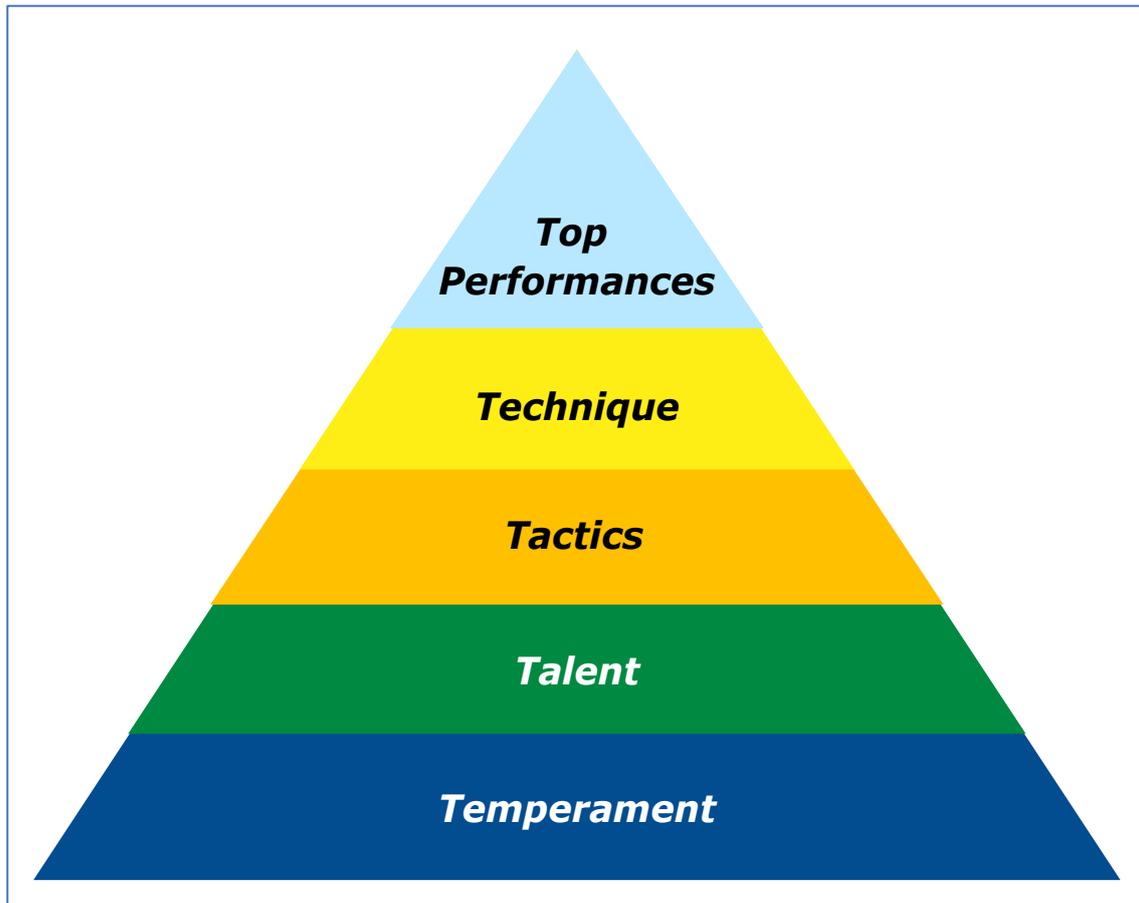
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

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## *The Top Performances Approach*



Imagine that you are helping a person to develop. The following pages describe a model you can use to help them to perform superb work.

You can use this approach when helping a person to develop as a counsellor, athlete, artist, surgeon, crisis manager, leader or doing other kinds of work. It can be used to help them to develop as a person and as a professional.

The first step is to clarify the specific activity in which a person may have the ability to do superb work. They can then keep developing in the areas of temperament, talent, tactics, technique and delivering top performances.

This approach mirrors many of those we have already explored in the book, but there are also some additional themes. Let's explore how the approach can be translated into action.

## *Top Performances*

Imagine that a person has asked you to help them to do superb work. They may be aiming to do this in a specific aspect of therapy, the arts, sports, business or another field.

The first step is to focus on the person's strengths and take a reality check. One approach is to go through the following steps:

*To clarify the specific activity in which they want to deliver top performances;*

*To clarify the person's ability to consistently do good work in this activity and deliver top performances;*

*To clarify your reasons for giving this assessment of their ability to deliver top performances.*

Imagine that you have seen the person in action or seen an example of their work. This has helped you to clarify the likelihood of them being able to deliver superb work.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe the specific activity in which the person wants to do fine work. If possible, describe this in 'How to ...' terms. Here are examples of what a person may want to achieve.

*How to help dyslexic children ... How to help people to recover from trauma ... How to do good work as a paramedic ... How to be a top class surgeon ... How to turnaround a toxic culture in a business ... How succeed as a Premier League footballer.*

Bearing in mind the person's strengths and the activity in which they want to do superb work, try completing the following sentences.

## *Top Performances*

*The specific activity in which the person wants to deliver top performances is:*

\*

*The rating I would give regarding the likelihood of them delivering top performances in this activity is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific reasons for giving this rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Temperament*

Imagine that the person has chosen to focus on a specific activity. Looking at this activity, what do you believe is the temperament required to deliver top performances?

Different kinds of work require different temperaments. A paramedic needs to be calm in distressing situations. A salesperson needs to be motivated and resilient. An athlete needs to manage pressure and rise to the occasion.

If a person wants to lead an organisation, for example, this calls for having a certain kind of personality. It also involves being prepared to accept the pluses and minuses involved in the role. Here are some of the upsides and downsides when running an organisation.

### *The pluses may include being able:*

*To clarify and communicate the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success;*

*To create a positive culture in which motivated people can grow and deliver success;*

*To earn a good salary and grow as a person;*

*To enjoy the adrenaline and excitement involved in leading an organisation;*

*To make sure the organisation keeps delivering today's business whilst also building tomorrow's business in order to achieve ongoing success.*

### *The potential minuses may include:*

*To sometimes feel lonely because nobody else may be privy to the implications of the decisions you are making;*

*To make decisions that have implications for all the stakeholders – the owners, employees, customers and society;*

*To proactively manage the key stakeholders – such as head office – to keep them satisfied and stop them interfering;*

*To perhaps work a minimum of 12 hours a day plus weekends;*

*To get cut off from the reality of what is happening on the ground – particularly what is happening for customers – and therefore make poorer decisions.*

Let's return to the person's chosen activity. What is the temperament they need to demonstrate to deliver top performances?

On a scale 0-10, how would you rate them in terms of demonstrating these qualities? What can they do to maintain or improve the rating?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Temperament*

*The specific activity in which the person wants to deliver top performances is:*

\*

*The rating I would give regarding them demonstrating the temperament required to deliver top performances in this activity is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things they can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## Talent

Talent is a prerequisite to delivering top performances. A therapist needs to combine caring with being able to clarify a person's aims and help them to achieve their goals. A general practitioner needs medical skills, people skills and, in some cases, organisational skills to run a good practice.

A leader needs to make good decisions. They need to implement the right strategy with the right people in the right way. They also need to build a positive culture in which motivated people do superb work.

A footballer needs certain skills to play in a specific position. The Ajax football club, for example, has a great track record for producing young players and uses the Acronym TIPS when looking at a player's development. Many clubs have built on this framework and have added elements of their own.

### *The Ajax TIPS Model For Talent Development*

*This focuses on helping a person to keep developing in the following areas.*

- T***echnique*    *their technical ability in the various aspects of the game;*
- I***nsight*      *their football intelligence and their ability to read the game;*
- P***ersonality*   *their personality and their contribution to the team;*
- S***peed*          *their speed of thought and their physical speed.*



Let's return to the person's chosen activity. On a scale 0-10, how would you rate the person in terms of demonstrating the required talent? What can they do to maintain or improve the rating? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Talent*

*The specific activity in which the person wants to deliver top performances is:*

\*

*The rating I would give regarding them demonstrating the talent required to deliver top performances in this activity is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things they can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Tactics*

Temperament and talent can take a person so far. Sometimes they also need to apply the right tactics to achieve their picture of success.

Great workers often start by clarifying their strategy. These are the key principles they will follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success.

They then clarify their tactics. These are the specific actions they will take to implement the strategy and do their best to achieve success.

Here we are using the term tactics to include both the strategic elements and the specific actions. Depending on their work, different people will adopt this approach in different ways.

Peak performers often make good strategic decisions about the specific activity they will pursue. They put themselves into a place where they can play to their strengths and do superb work. They then do their best to deliver success.

Good sports coaches build on their team's strengths. They educate their players to follow certain strategies and achieve routine perfection. They then translate these into specific tactics which the players can implement to achieve success.

Let's return to the person you may be helping to develop. How would you rate the person in terms of demonstrating the required tactics? What can they do to maintain or improve the rating?

How can you help them to develop their strategic thinking? How can you help them to these strategies into doing superb work? How can you help them to deliver success?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Tactics*

*The specific activity in which the person wants to deliver top performances is:*

\*

*The rating I would give regarding them demonstrating the tactics required to deliver top performances in this activity is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things they can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Technique*

Good workers develop the technique required to do superb work. An artist needs to master the art of putting their vision onto canvas. A surgeon needs to be skilled at performing operations. A triathlete needs to be good at swimming, cycling and running.

Good workers follow the principle that practice makes permanent. They devote themselves to developing a particular technique. They practice, practice and practice. They practice until they can forget.

Wayne Gretzky, the great ice hockey player, described how he took this route. Talking with Michael Murphy for the book *In The Zone*, he explained how he practiced during his childhood.

*"I'd get up in the morning, skate from 7.00 to 8.30, go to school, come home at 3.30, stay on the ice until my mom insisted I come in for dinner, eat in my skates and then go back out until 9.00.*

*"On Saturdays and Sundays, we'd have huge games, but night time became my time. It was sort of an unwritten rule around the neighbourhood that I would be out there by myself or with my dad.*

*"I would just handle the puck in and out of those empty detergent bottles my dad set up as pylons.*

*"Then I'd set up targets in the net and try to hit them with forehands, backhands, whatever. Then I'd do it all again, except this time with a tennis ball, which is much harder to handle.*

*"I was so addicted that my dad had big kids come over to play against me. And when the kids wanted to go home, I'd beg them to stay longer."*

Let's return to the person you are helping. On a scale 1-10, rate the extent to which they demonstrate the technique required to deliver top performances. (It may be worth inviting the person to do this themselves, because you may not be an expert in their field.)

## *Technique*

*The specific activity in which the person wants to deliver top performances is:*

\*

*The rating I would give regarding them demonstrating the technique required to deliver top performances in this activity is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things they can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Top Performances*

Good workers get into the habit of doing superb work. Sometimes they also add that touch of class and deliver top performances. This is the Holy Grail.

Many people are in roles where their actions can mean life or death. They aim to always do work that is effective, excellent and, on some occasions, extraordinary.

A person is more likely to do such work if they are following the principles they believe in. Bearing this in mind, it can be helpful to invite them:

*To clarify when they have delivered top performances;*

*To clarify the principles they followed then to deliver top performances;*

*To clarify how they can follow these principles – plus add other skills – to deliver top performances.*

Good workers see every day as an opportunity to deliver high standards. Maintaining this habit provides the platform for dealing with challenges. They are then more likely to produce great work when it matters.

Different people take different approaches to perform well in such situations. The following pages describe one approach.

## *The Trusting Your Talent And Technique Approach*

*Great workers often follow their tactics to get to a certain point. They then sometimes - when appropriate - trust their talent and technique to deliver top performances.*



Great workers follow their chosen their tactics and are tenacious. At certain times, however, they choose to trust their talent and technique. They are then more able to flow and deliver top performances.

Christian Horner, Principal of the Red Bull Formula 1 Team, described how he wanted one of his drivers to take this approach. Here is a summary of what he said.

*"This driver is extremely talented, but sometimes he crams too much information into his head. He needs to prepare properly but then let his instinct take over.*

*"Great drivers have that edge. They rehearse the race ahead of time and then apply their natural flair to perform superbly at critical moments."*

Great workers spend years building on their strengths and developing skills for managing their weaknesses. Preparing

thoroughly, they clarify their strategies for dealing with many different situations.

Such performers like to feel in control. So they take these steps whether they are playing a sport, acting on stage, climbing a mountain or doing some other activity.

They find that this approach frequently works. Being fully prepared, they are able to apply their skills and achieve success.

On some occasions, however, they may hit a block. They over-think things, try too hard or tighten up in stressful situations. They may then become over-critical and get into a downwards spiral.

Different people have different approaches to dealing with such situations. Some go back to basics, get a few successes and regain their confidence.

Some relax, rehearse the next move and refocus on doing it properly. They pay full attention to what is happening, but also loosen their muscles. Moving forwards, they then use their talent and technique to deliver the goods.

Top performers often have a personal mantra they use to click into this mode. They may say things like:

*Take a deep breath and count to ten ... Relax and follow your rhythm ... Flow, focus and finish.*

It can be useful for them to choose a positive phrase rather than a negative one. For example: "Do be calm," rather than, "Don't panic."

This helps to channel their energy in a positive way. It can also be useful if they choose one that is personal, practical and profitable.

### *Personal*

*It must be in the person's own words. It must come from within and feel right for them. It must one they can recall easily and that can act as a calming mechanism.*

### *Practical*

*It must be based on their own successful experiences and act as a trigger for moving into action. For example: "Do what you know works."*

### *Profitable*

*It must be one that, providing they do things properly, produces success. These can be small wins. The person is then more likely to feel good and continue to use the mantra.*

Top performers may also do something physical to calm themselves. They may take a deep breath, clasp their hands together or do some other action. This then becomes a ritual they use to regain calm in challenging situations.

Matt Lloyd, the climber and writer, explores some of these themes in an article he wrote called *The Mind Game: How To Overcome Fear*. He begins the article by referring to a near-death experience he had when climbing.

Matt recalls how dealing with it called for staying calm, doing the basics and then trusting his technique. He then describes some of the tools he learned for managing fear.

### *Be Prepared*

*When you're prepared and well-practiced, you have no reason to doubt yourself. It's not about closing your eyes and jumping into the unknown.*

*It's about having eyes wide open to the dangers around you but knowing that you're as ready as you can be. Trust in your training and preparedness will give you the required confidence to apply your skills to the task at hand.*

*While performing, the pros work consciously and in the current moment. They focus on the task at hand rather than the outcome, staying present rather than thinking too far into the event or about the finish.*

Matt then builds on some of the ideas he learned from Lisa Lollar, a sports psychologist.

### *Visualization*

*Use this as much as you can before you even get off the ground, while lying in bed at night or driving to the crag.*

*The basic idea is to imagine and clearly see yourself completing each move with ease. Go through each move step by step from bottom to top.*

### *Centering*

*Best done right after coming out of the initial fear flood, it involves paying conscious attention to breathing and bodily sensations.*

*Centering helps the athlete stay in the moment and release past and future thoughts, worries, and plans.*

### *Self-Talk*

*Use this at any time to quiet the amygdala, awaken the prefrontal cortex, and regain your calm. Either out loud or in your head, talk to yourself. Make it simple: "I'm fine" or "I can do this" or "I got it."*

*On a recent 5.11 free solo in Golden, Colorado, I sat at the bottom of the climb thinking about how quickly panic sets in.*

*I then imagined myself handling that experience calmly, breathing deeply, and saying to myself, Relax, you can do this.*

*I still get scared - hell, what climber doesn't? - but now I'm better equipped to keep my cool, and that's made all the difference.*

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation when you want to follow some of these steps?

You will have prepared properly and be following your chosen strategy. But then you begin to feel worried as you tackle the various challenges.

One option is to become tighter. This approach could work. But it could also mean that your mind and body seize up when they should be supple.

Another option is to be fully in the moment. You can be calm, controlled and have a relaxed awareness. You can then move forward by trusting your talent and technique

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Trusting Talent And Technique*

*The specific situation where I may  
get to a point where I may want to  
trust my talent and technique may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to  
trust my talent and technique are:*

\*

\*

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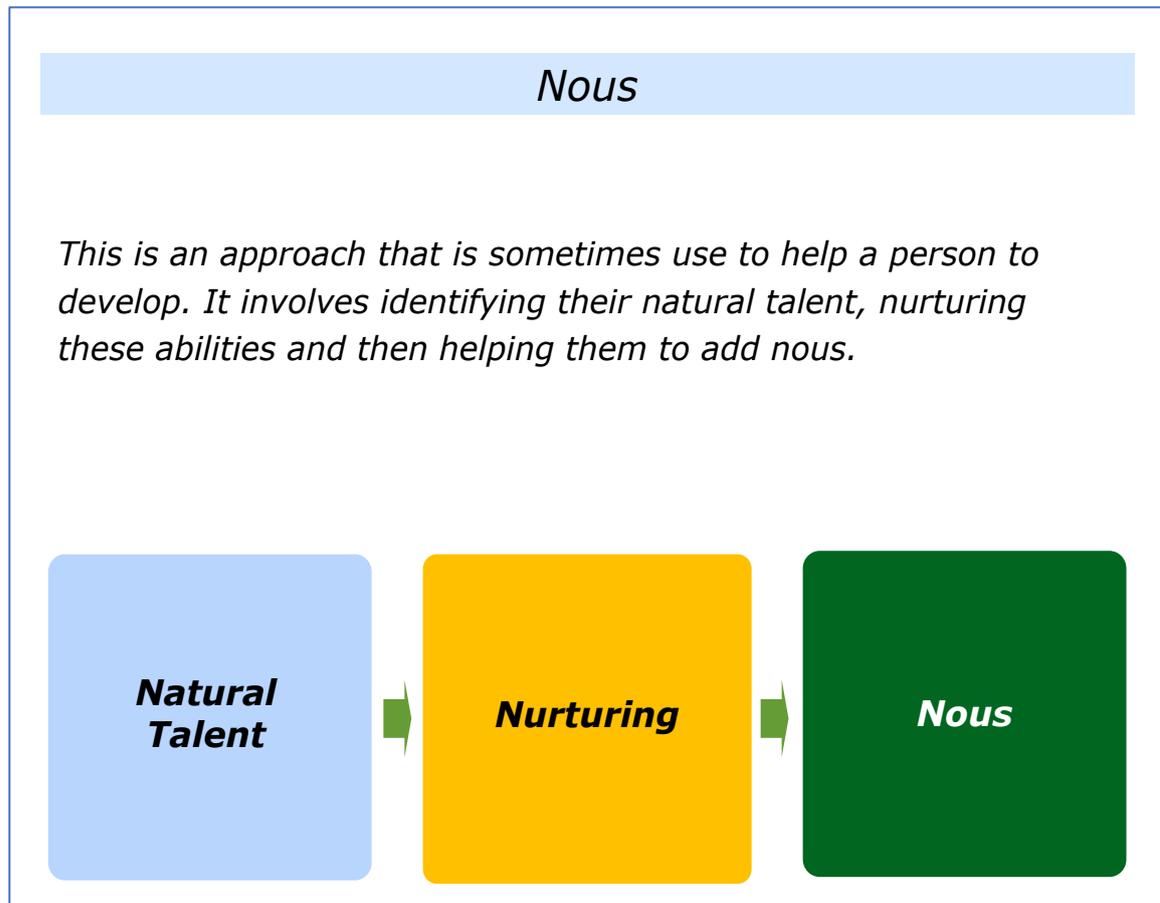
*The specific things that may  
happen as a result may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Natural Talent, Nurturing And Nous Approach*



This is an approach that is sometimes is used in sporting academies or other places that help people to develop. It focuses on the following themes.

### *Natural Talent*

This involves finding a person's natural talent. Sometimes this is relatively easy to find. A person may show outstanding promise as an athlete, artist, technical problem solver or in other activity.

Sometimes it can take longer. Whilst a person may demonstrate ability in a certain area, it can take time and expertise to help them to find their specific niche in this field.

This may call for somebody being a good talent spotter. They can aim to find the specific activity where a person is in their element – at ease and yet able to excel.

### *Nurturing*

This involves several aspects regarding nurturing. It involves creating an encouraging environment and also the person knowing how to encourage themselves on their journey.

The first part is to provide a nurturing environment that is conducive to helping a person to develop their talent. This involves offering an encouraging relationship and helping the person to work towards specific goals.

The second part is for the person to take responsibility for nurturing their talent. Whilst the person can be helped along the way, they will need to develop the attitude and abilities required to work towards their chosen goals.

### *Nous*

This involves the person adding the nous required to make the best use of their talent. There are several definitions of the word nous. These include a person using their experience:

*To demonstrate common sense and practical intelligence.*

A person may show talent during the early part of their career but may not always use this properly. They may learn from experience, however, and use this knowledge to apply their talents more effectively.

The person can also be helped in this quest by educators, coaches or mentors. Such people can help the person:

*To clarify what they are learning from their experiences;*

*To clarify how they can apply this knowledge in the future;  
To clarify the specific steps they can take to apply this nous and get positive results.*

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow some elements of this approach. This could be when helping a person or maybe even in your own development.

How can you follow some of these principles in your own way? How can you go through the stages of focusing on natural talent, nurturing and adding nous? What may happen as a result of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Natural Talent, Nurturing And Nous*

*The specific situation where I  
may want to follow some  
elements of this approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to follow  
this approach in my own way are*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may  
happen as a result may be:*

\*

\*

\*

Let's return to the person you may be helping. When do they demonstrate the ability to deliver top performances? What are they doing right then? What are the principles they are following? How do they translate these into action?

How would you rate their ability to consistently deliver top performances in their chosen activity? What can they do to maintain or improve the rating?

Are there any other activities where they are more likely to perform at their best? If so, how can you help them to find this activity and do superb work?

Bearing in mind what you have discovered about the person, the final exercise invites you to reassess the likelihood of them achieving their aims. If you wish, try completing the following sentences.

## *Top Performances*

*The specific activity in which the person wants to deliver top performances is:*

\*

*The rating I would give regarding the likelihood of them consistently delivering top performances in this activity is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things they can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Warrior Wizard Approach*



Imagine that you want to do superb work. How can you identify where this may be possible? One approach is to focus on a specific activity where you show warrior qualities and also add a touch of wizardry.

There are many ways to describe different kinds of workers. One view is that people may be warriors, warrior wizards or wizards. There are, of course, several other kinds of workers.

Warriors love to work hard. They are duty-driven and want to achieve the desired results. Such people are vital in teams. They deliver high professional standards and provide a platform for others to perform at their best.

Warrior wizards also have a strong work ethic. They sometimes go further, however, and add that touch of magic. They have the

talent, application and imagination to make creative breakthroughs. They also have the ability to deliver peak performances.

Wizards may be brilliant in their specific area of expertise, but they may not always show warrior-like qualities. They can provide insights and perform superb work on occasions, however, and in this way make a positive contribution to organisations.

Different people demonstrate the warrior wizard qualities in different activities. They may be fixing technical problems, playing a sport, performing on stage, finding solutions to specific challenges or doing another activity.

What is the specific activity where you may demonstrate some of these qualities? This may only be for a few moments, but it can highlight where you have this ability. It may be an activity where you prepare properly, put in the hard yards and then produce something special.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Being A Warrior Wizard*

*The specific activity where I have  
warrior qualities and at times  
may add touches of wizardry is:*

\*

*The specific examples that show I  
may have – or maybe can develop –  
this ability in the specific activity are:*

\*

\*

\*

David Beckham showed these qualities during his football career. Whilst being more talented than the majority of players, he was not considered to be as gifted as the world's top players.

Showing a strong work ethic, he developed his abilities and made great contributions to teams. Sometimes he also produced moments of wizardry - such as scoring goals with wonderful free kicks.

Kelly Marks shows these qualities when educating people how to work with horses. She is known as a Horse Whisperer but is actually a specialist in understanding horse psychology and behaviour. She finds solutions that benefit both horses and humans.

Kelly has worked with horses for much of her life. She loves the whole process of caring for them – the feeding, the mucking out and looking after their health.

During her riding career she won on the flat, over hurdles and was in the Ladies British Team. In 1991 she stopped using the whip in races as it 'just felt wrong' whipping a horse whether racing or not.

Kelly then had some of her biggest successes riding in races. These included winning the most valuable ladies handicap race of the year at Newbury. She retired from competitive tournaments in 1995, immediately after winning the Ladies European Championship.

During the 1990s I saw her assisting her mentor Monty Roberts during the process of working with horses. At the time I was working with a leadership team that wanted to explore new ways of learning. Bearing this in mind, I asked Kelly to run a practical day on how to connect with and lead horses.

The leaders learned from watching Kelly do a join-up with a horse. She explained that it was important: a) to be clear on the goals; b) to communicate clearly with the horse; c) to encourage the horse to want to follow them.

Kelly then invited each person to go into the ring and get a horse to follow them. They learned from the experience, which also provided lessons they could apply back in their work.



*Kelly taught each novice to get a horse to nuzzle up to their shoulder and willingly follow them. This took only a few minutes. Her style was:*

*To give the person specific encouragement when they did something right;*

*To give the person positive suggestions when confronted by challenges;*

*To keep supporting the person until they got the horse to willingly follow them.*

Kelly is a warrior wizard when coaching people who want to work with horses. She has strategic intuition in this activity. She has the ability to see to the heart of the matter, try multiple strategies and then do what is required to achieve the picture of success.

Great teams often get the right mixture of warriors and warrior wizards. Some people may use different terminology to describe these individuals. One football manager I worked with expressed this approach in the following way.

*"Every good team I have built has had at least 70% soul players. Such people embody the spirit of the team.*

*"They have a strong work ethic and can always be relied on to deliver high standards. Sometimes that can also develop their talents to become star players in certain areas.*

*Superb Teams Get The Right Blend Of:*

***Star Players  
(Who Are Also Soul Players)***

***Soul Players***

*"My successful teams have also had around 30% star players who are also soul players. They are prepared to sweat and sometimes add that extra touch of magic.*

*"I never employ semi-detached players who are on their own agenda. Such people take energy. I work with people who want to use their strengths to help the team achieve success."*

### ***The Strengths, Systematic And Sparkle Approach***

Let's return to your own life and work? How can you identify the activities where you may sometimes demonstrate both warrior and wizard qualities?. One approach is to focus on the following themes.

## *The Strengths, Systematic And Sparkle Approach*

*People sometimes do superb work by building on their strengths, harnessing these in systematic way and also adding the sparkle.*



Great workers sometimes pursue the following themes to do superb work. You will follow these in your own way.

### *Strengths*

They build on their strengths. They focus on the specific activities where they have the ability to do superb work.

### *Systematic*

They harness their strengths in a systematic way that delivers success. One approach is for them to start by clarifying their picture of success. They then follow strategies that work, do superb work and do their best to achieve success.

### *Sparkle*

Great workers may also, when appropriate, add the sparkle by doing something special. Different people do this in different ways.

They may add that touch of creativity or class. They may add it through their personality or professional skill. They may do something extra that gives people a positive memory of life.

You may do this when cooking, gardening, caring for animals or encouraging people. You may do it when working with computers, designing clothes or doing another activity.

Let's return to your own work. What is the specific activity where you may have the ability to be a warrior wizard?

How can you develop this ability in the future? How can you build on your strengths? How can you follow strategies that work, do superb work and deliver success? How can you, when appropriate, add the sparkle?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Being A Warrior Wizard In The Future*

*The specific activity where I have  
warrior qualities and at times  
may add touches of wizardry is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to  
build on my strengths and  
develop my ability in this activity are:*

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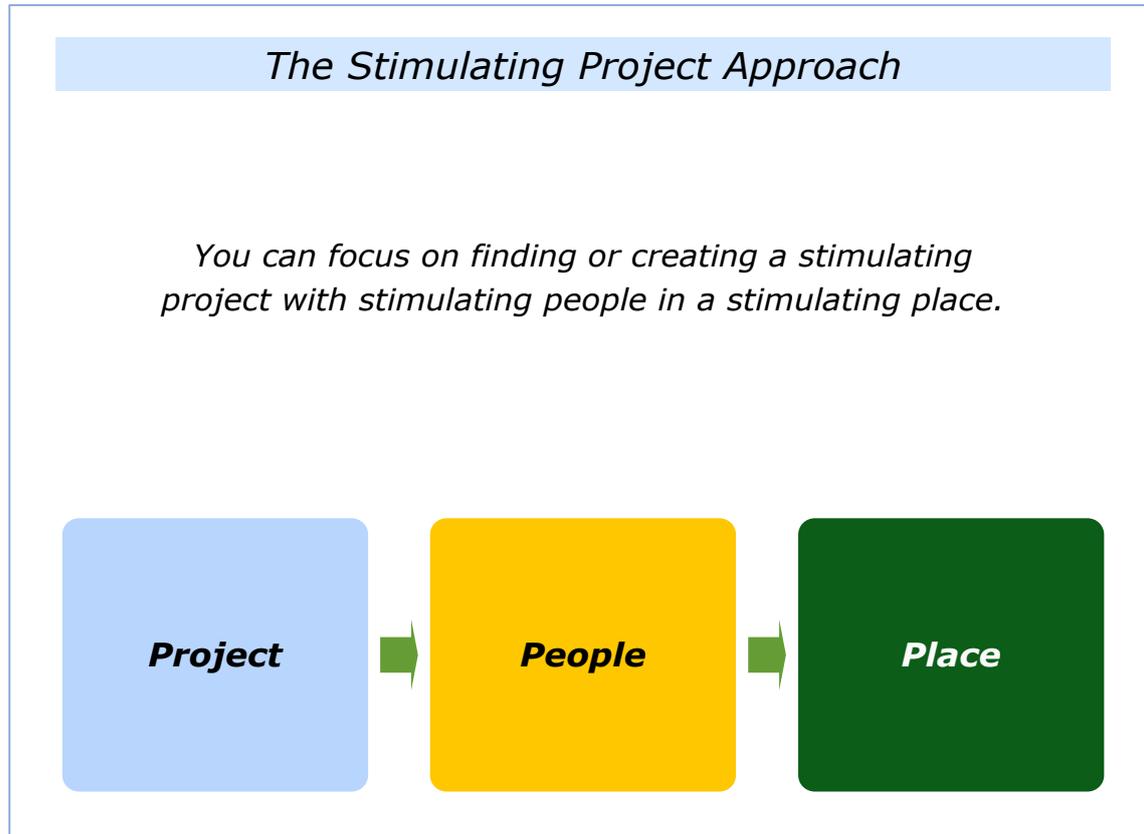
*The specific things I can do to  
perform superb work and add  
the sparkle doing this activity are:*

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## *The Stimulating Project Approach*



We are all self-employed now. There are no jobs anymore, there are only projects. So how can you find or create a positive project and, if appropriate, get paid a salary?

One approach is to start by clarifying the characteristics of the project, people and place you find stimulating. Let's consider some ways to take these steps.

### *Project*

What are the characteristics of the projects you find stimulating?  
One person answered this question in the following way.

*"Looking back at the satisfying projects I have done in the past, I can identify some patterns. They have to do with helping people or improving the quality of their lives."*

*"At university I organised the first ever sponsored Fun Run, raising £10k for charity. Early in my IT career I launched software that enabled students to take charge of their own learning.*

*"In some ways I consider myself a bit lazy, so I prefer projects that have a deadline. This forces me to get my act together. I then rise to the occasion and deliver the goods."*

Other people mention other qualities when answering this question. Here are some of the answers.

*The kinds of projects that I find stimulating are those that involve:*

*Doing work I believe in ... Having lots of autonomy ... Helping other people ... Passing on knowledge ... Caring for animals ... Creating beautiful things ... Doing deep work ... Turning around companies.*

*Launching prototypes ... Selling to certain kinds of customers ... Helping people to heal ... Working with people from different cultures ... Learning new things ... Leading superb teams.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Describe the characteristics of the kinds of projects that you find stimulating.

## *Project*

*The characteristics of the kinds of projects that I find stimulating are:*

\*

\*

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## *People*

Great workers put themselves into situations where they perform superbly. What are the characteristics of the customers and colleagues that you find stimulating? Let's explore these themes.

### *Customers*

Whilst you will always aim to be professional, there may be certain kinds of customers with whom you work best. Here some answers that people give when exploring this theme.

*"I work best with people who aim to be pioneers, pacesetters or peak performers. Such people often aim to make the new rules for the game. I am not so good at working with customers who work in established institutions."*

*"I work best with people who are committed to giving great service to their customers. Many of my customers work in retail, hospitality or the entertainment industries. They want to be commercial but also provide great experiences for their customers."*

*"I work best with leaders who recognise that, whilst they can set the tone, they will be judged by the performance of their people. Such leaders combine being decisive with being open to exploring many ideas. They then implement these in their own ways to build successful organisations."*

### *Colleagues*

The people you work with every day are crucial. If you are a leader, it is important to have the autonomy to hire people who deliver the required professional standards. One person explained this approach in the following way.

*"I am happy to be accountable for the results, but I also try to make sure I have the required autonomy and authority. This is because of some bad experiences in the past."*

*"Many years ago I took on the role of turning around a dysfunctional team. This had several unmotivated team members who had seen off several managers."*

*"I made the mistake of assuming that, if I could find the keys to motivating them, everything would be okay. But this didn't work."*

*"My manager procrastinated when I asked for the authority to replace some of the team members. Eventually it got so bad that I left."*

*"Whilst it is my job to create a positive environment, I work best with people who behave like professionals. I can then do my best to guide the team to success."*

If you are simply a team member, however, it can be more challenging when working with difficult colleagues. You can aim to behave in a positive and professional way, but you will have limited power to pick your colleagues.

Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to do your due diligence before taking a role. You can do research about the people with whom you will be working. If you decide to go ahead, you can focus on:

*How you can build with the people with whom you may work best;*

*How you can manage any other relationships in a professional way.*

### *Managers*

Everybody has key stakeholders whom they need to keep happy. These may include the leaders, the board or the investors. One of the key relationships will be with your manager.

Good managers create a positive environment in which self-motivated people can do superb work and deliver success. Poor managers can make people's lives miserable.

Looking back, can you think of the managers with whom you worked best? What were the characteristics of these managers? Bearing these in mind, what are the qualities you want in your ideal manager?

One person answered this question in the following way. They echoed many of the common themes that people mention when describing their ideal manager.

*"I work best with a manager who is professional and whom I respect. It is helpful if we agree on the What – the outcomes to achieve – and when these must be delivered.*

*"We make clear contracts about: a) the specific things I will deliver by when; b) the specific things I will do to keep them informed*

*about the progress; c) the specific kinds of support that will help to deliver the outcomes.*

*"I then like to have the freedom – within agreed parameters – regarding how I use my strengths to do the work. The key, of course, is that I must deliver the agreed goals."*

Most people do not like to be micro-managed, but they also recognise it is important to manage upwards. They need to get some early wins, proactively keep their manager informed and deliver the agreed picture of success.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Describe the characteristics of the kinds of customers and colleagues that you find stimulating to work with.

## *People*

*The characteristics of the kinds  
of people that I find it  
stimulating to work with are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Place*

What are the characteristics of the place – the culture and environment - you find stimulating? Here are some of the answers that people give to this question.

*"I like working in pioneering businesses. They are also results focused and fast paced, which suits my style. It also feels like we are creating the rules for the future."*

*"I like working in organisations that are established yet innovative. Early in my career I worked in start-up businesses, but now I like places that are professional, informal but also have more infrastructure. At the same time, I want freedom to be creative."*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe the characteristics of the kind of workplace that you find stimulating.

## *Place*

*The characteristics of the kinds of workplace – the culture and environment - that I find it stimulating to work in are:*

\*

\*

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## *A Stimulating Project - Making It Happen*

Imagine that you are clear on the kind of project you would find stimulating. It may be up to you to find or create such a project. How to make this happen? One approach is to take the following steps.

*To get work by going out and helping people to succeed;*

*To translate some of this work into doing specific projects;*

*To build on this work and find or create a stimulating project and then deliver success.*

Imagine that you have an empty diary and want to get work. Let's consider some of the approaches you can take.

### *Getting Work By Going Out and Helping People To Succeed*

***I have just lost my job. So I will go home, polish my CV and put it out to recruitment agencies. Then I will see what happens.***

***That is one approach. Another approach is to go out, give to people and help them to succeed. That could lead to work.***

The old proverb says: "Some people make things happen, some watch while things happen and some wonder 'What happened?'"

Certainly this was true during the recession. Some people who lost their jobs tried to figure out what had happened and looked for somebody to blame.

Others adopted different strategies when pursuing their job search. Here are examples of the different approaches taken by two people.

*Person A said:*

*"I am going to spend time polishing my CV and registering with recruitment agencies. Then I am going to reconnect with people I know. That is something I should have done before, but I am not good at promoting myself."*

*Person B said*

*"There are lots of jobs out there where I can help people. You can't tell me that every project and every piece of work in the country is on time, on budget and on course to reach its goals."*

*"Somewhere there are bound to be unsatisfied customer needs. So I am going to get out there and help other people to succeed."*

Imagine that you face the prospect of an empty calendar and want to find satisfying work. Building on the ideas mentioned earlier in the book, you may want to take the following steps. You can aim:

*To clarify your strengths: to clarify the specific kinds of people with whom you work best; to clarify the specific things you can deliver to help those people to achieve success.*

This is a good start but then comes the real task. How to get work? Some of the following ideas may seem counter-intuitive but I have seen them work many times. Here is one example from a person that found work.

*"The recession taught me a lot. My first reaction was to worry about maintaining an income. My second reaction was more interesting. I reframed the situation as an opportunity to help people.*

*"Over the years I have built a business as a mentor but that suddenly became a luxury purchase. Despite funds being cut, I offered my time to meet clients five days a week.*

*"Mentoring is often about helping people to make good decisions. So my clients and I explored the tough choices they needed to make regarding shaping their future businesses.*

*"On the practical side, the first aim was to cover my weekly costs, which proved possible.*

*"After a month or so several clients asked me to do various project work. This included helping teams to complete internal projects, improve customer service and develop new business.*

*"These projects were funded from the technology and marketing budgets. Previously my work had been paid for by Human Resources.*

*"Nowadays my diary is full. But I am concerned about the next dip in the market. So it is time to go out and give to people again."*

Imagine you want to get work. You will probably start by following one of the first rules:

*You can make getting a job a full time job.*

Successful job seekers follow this path. They cram their days with activities most likely to get them in front of people. They also follow another rule:

*Your next job will most likely come from the people in your network.*

It will come from either: a) people you know or; b) people you know who recommend you to other people. Some people say they are no good at networking because they think it involves self-promotion. It doesn't.

*Real networking is about helping other people to succeed.*

Sounds crazy? Perhaps. But giving to people – such as encouraging them or passing on knowledge – can be extremely rewarding. It can sometimes also lead to future work possibilities.

People buy people. Whilst CVs may look good, most buyers in the market want somebody whom they can trust, somebody who they know can deliver. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"Every job I have had over the past 20 years has come from my network. Twice during that time the companies I was employed by got taken over and my job disappeared. So it was then time to reconnect with people who knew what I could deliver.*

*"The hard part was getting started. I spent masses of time visiting people. Being customer focused, I made sure the conversation was about them and their company challenges. It was not about me.*

*"I followed up every visit with an email framing possible ideas they could use to tackle specific challenges. Several times this led to contract work with somebody saying: 'How can we take this further?'*

*"This is how I have got my last two jobs. I started by doing pieces of project work and then moved into full-time employment."*

This approach raises an important point: How to reach or keep in touch with your potential customers? This highlights another rule:

*Keep in touch with people in a way that fits your values system and natural style.*

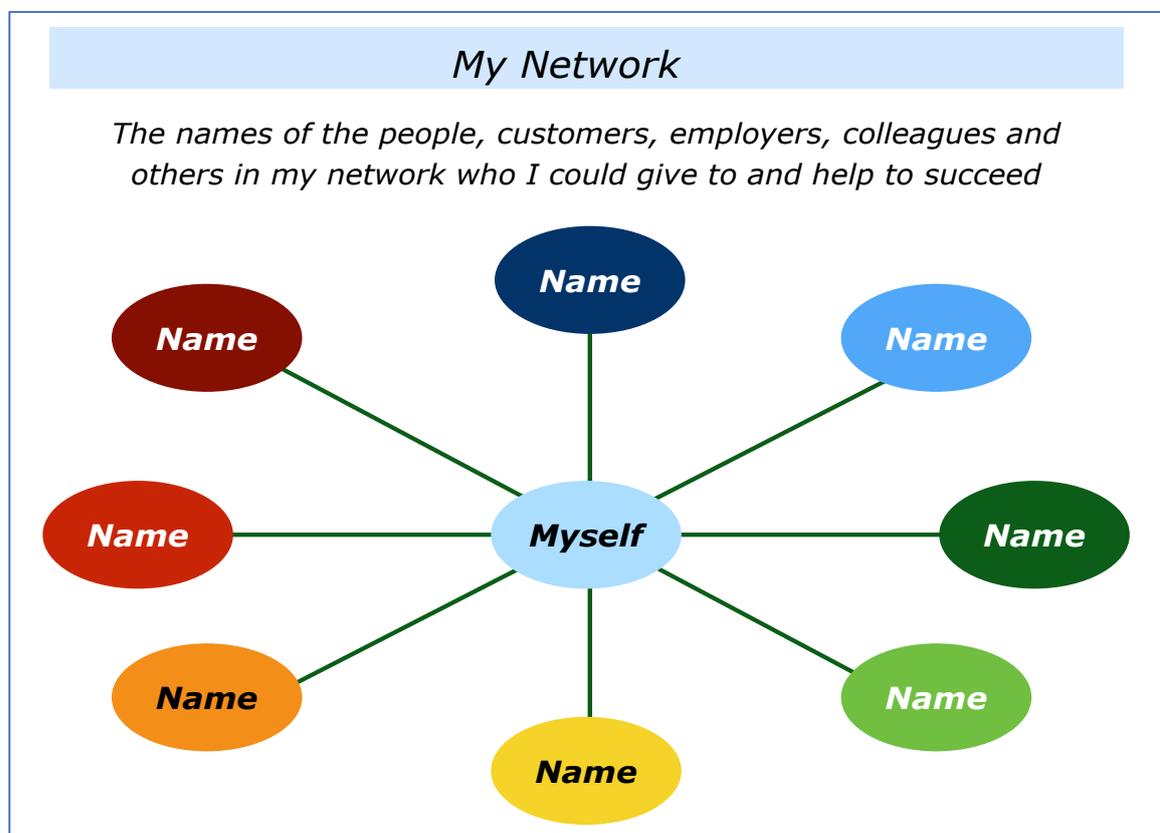
Do things that put a spring in your step. You can share knowledge, recommend books, offer to provide a pair of hands or connect like-minded people by putting them in touch with each other.

You can also create a website that acts as a shop window and make it customer focused. You can produce articles, pass on knowledge and offer practical tools that people can use to achieve success.

Like an actor, it's vital to keep working. Do something every day to reach people in your network but be patient. It can take time before the right opportunity appears.

Try tackling the exercise on this theme. Draw a map of your network. Write the names of people, customers, colleagues, friends and others in your network.

Describe the challenges that each person faces. Describe the specific things you can do to give to each person and help them to succeed.



## *People In My Network*

*Person A - The name of the person is:*

\*

*The specific challenges they may face and the specific goals they may want to achieve are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to give to them and help them to succeed are:*

\*

\*

\*

The best time for a person to network is when they are successful rather than when they want something. They then have even greater strength to give to others. Paradoxically, they may find that even more opportunities come their way.

Imagine that you have been able to do some work on a specific project and delivered success. If appropriate, you may then want:

*To focus on other challenges in the organisation and show how it would be possible to do project work to tackle these successfully;*

*To, if possible, identify a specific project that you would find stimulating and show how delivering certain results will help the organisation to achieve success.*

You may be able to do some of the first set of projects and, in the process, get a salary. If possible, however, you can also aim to do the most stimulating kind of project.

Whilst this would satisfy your soul, it would only get signed off if it benefited the organisation. You would therefore need to show how delivering it would help the organisation to achieve present or future success.

There are many ways to find or create projects. Let's explore another approach.

### *Finding A Need and Filling It*

There are many ways to do satisfying work that earns a salary. One approach is to follow the old advice of 'Find a need and fill it.'

Some people say this approach needs to be extended. They say it is important to focus on what people want, rather than just what they need.

Sometimes even the 'want' approach can be extended. Some new inventions, for example, can also open people's eyes to what they

want. Henry Ford may or may not have uttered the famous phrase, but there is some truth in the view that:

*"If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses."*

Bearing these factors in mind, one approach is to ask the following questions about potential clients' present and future needs. You can then explore how you could use your strengths to fill these needs and help people achieve success?

*Are there any organisational strategies that need to be implemented more successfully? Are there any potential future organisational strategies that need to be piloted successfully?*

*Are there any present customer needs that need to be met more successfully? Are there any potential future customer needs that need to be anticipated and met successfully?*

*Are there any potential people issues that need to be tackled successfully? Are there any professional skills or other qualities that people need to develop to deliver success? Are there any other things that can be done to help people to achieve peak performance?*

*Are there any processes that need to be improved to help the organisation achieve success? Are there any prototypes that need to be built to help the organisation achieve future success? Are there any other challenges to address to help the organisation achieve ongoing success?*

*Looking at these needs, are there any where I could use my strengths to help the organisation to achieve present or future success? If so, how can I position this in a way that makes it attractive to the organisation.*

## *Finding A Need And Filling It*

*Here is one approach to finding and filling both  
the present and future needs of an organisation*

<i>The specific questions to ask about both the present and potential future needs are these:</i>	<i>The specific needs that need filling in this area are:</i>	<i>The specific things I could do to fill these needs are:</i>
<i>Are there any organisational strategies that need to be implemented more successfully?</i>	* * *	* * *
<i>Are there any present customer needs that need to be met more successfully?</i>	* * *	* * *
<i>Are there any potential future customer needs that need to be anticipated and met successfully?</i>	* * *	* * *
<i>Are there any people issues in the organisation that need to be tackled successfully?</i>	* * *	* * *

<i>Are there any professional skills or other qualities that people need to develop to deliver success?</i>	* * *	* * *
<i>Are there any other things that can be done to enable people to deliver peak performances?</i>	* * *	* * *
<i>Are there any processes that need to be improved to help the organisation to achieve success?</i>	* * *	* * *
<i>Are there any prototypes that need to be built to help the organisation to build a successful future?</i>	* * *	* * *
<i>Are there any other challenges to address to help the organisation to achieve ongoing success?</i>	* * *	* * *

As we mentioned earlier, the world of work continues to evolve. There may not be many safe jobs anymore, but there are going to be many projects.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. Bearing in mind the kind of project you would find stimulating, this invites you to do the following things.

*Describe the specific things you can do to find or create such a stimulating project.*

*Describe the specific things you can then do to do your best to deliver success when doing the stimulating project.*

## *My Stimulating Project*

*The specific things I can do to find or create a stimulating project are:*

\*

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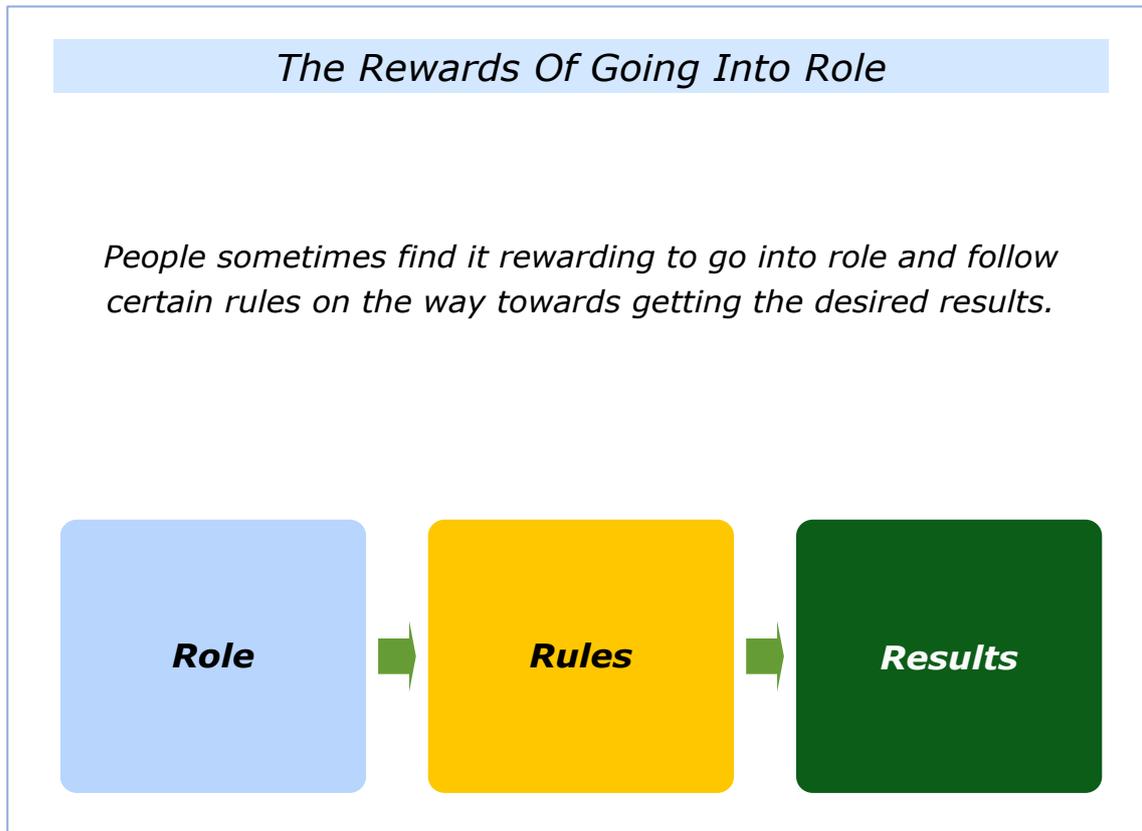
*The specific things I can then do to do my best to deliver success when doing the project are:*

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## *The Rewarding Role Approach*



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is for a person to choose to go into role. They may then follow certain rules – guidelines – that they believe are likely to produce positive results. This can bring rewards for both other people and for themselves.

Different people choose to go into different roles. A person may aim to do their best when acting as a carer, educator, doctor or coach. They may aim to do so when working as a singer, leader, trusted advisor or in another role.

Some individuals find this approach to be liberating. They move into a role where they feel comfortable and can follow certain rules to get certain results.

People who go into role sometimes need to practise self-care. This is because there are both pluses and minuses involved when, for example, helping other people.

*The pluses of going into role  
may provide the opportunity:*

*To have sense of purpose; to follow certain principles; to help other people; to pass on knowledge; to put aside any of their personal troubles; to be rewarding; to get positive results.*

*The potential minuses of  
going into role may be:*

*To find it tiring; to be reactive; to sometimes feel out of control; to put aside their own agenda; to not be appreciated; to sometimes find it unrewarding; to take its toll if a person does not take care of themselves.*

People can thrive, however, if they learn how to build on the pluses and minimise the minuses. They can then find it rewarding to sometimes go into role and deliver certain results.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when found it satisfying to take this step? You may have chosen to go into the role of counsellor, actor, chef, coach, mediator, crisis manager, leader or another role.

What were the results you aimed to achieve by going into the role? You may have aimed to help another person or a group of people. What happened as a result?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Going Into Role In The Past*

*The specific role I went into in the past was:*

\*

*The specific things I did to go into role  
and do my best to get certain results were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that happened  
as a result of going into role were:*

\*

\*

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## *Introverts and extroverts can go into role and do rewarding work*

Each person is a mixture of introvert and extrovert. Everybody has a preferred way of behaving, however, which means they may feel more comfortable when operating as an introvert or extrovert.

Introverts enjoy their own company but sometimes also enjoy going into professional role. They may be quiet at home but then take charge when moving into the role of nurse, doctor, facilitator or another professional role.

Such a person can feel comfortable because they can go into role and follow certain rules to get certain results. They have clear guidelines and maybe a clear script to follow.

People who go into role often forget their own concerns. They focus on the job to be done and channel their energies into achieving the goal. Going into role offers a person the opportunity:

*To pursue a clear sense of purpose;*

*To follow principles that enable them to channel their personality towards achieving the purpose;*

*To follow a script that they can adapt in their own way to achieve the purpose.*

Introverts like to prepare properly. They do the mental rehearsal and then go into a certain mode to do marvellous work. They don't necessarily like surprises or being thrown off-track.

As the years go by, however, they learn how to buy time when faced by unexpected events. They take time to think, consider their options and then pursue the path most likely to achieve success.

Extroverts may choose to channel their personalities by going into certain roles. They may play to their strengths by acting as a host, salesperson, keynote speaker or in another role.

Extroverts sometimes go into other roles when they need to be low key and support people. Some can be excellent counsellors, for example, providing they know the rules to follow. They may do good work for a while, but then may feel more comfortable returning to another role.

Some people consciously move between the roles of being an introvert and extrovert. A singer-songwriter I interviewed, for example, enjoyed spending time alone writing and creating.

Walking on stage, however, he transformed into playing the role of being a great performer. After the show he would love to get back home, reflect and then work on composing his future songs.

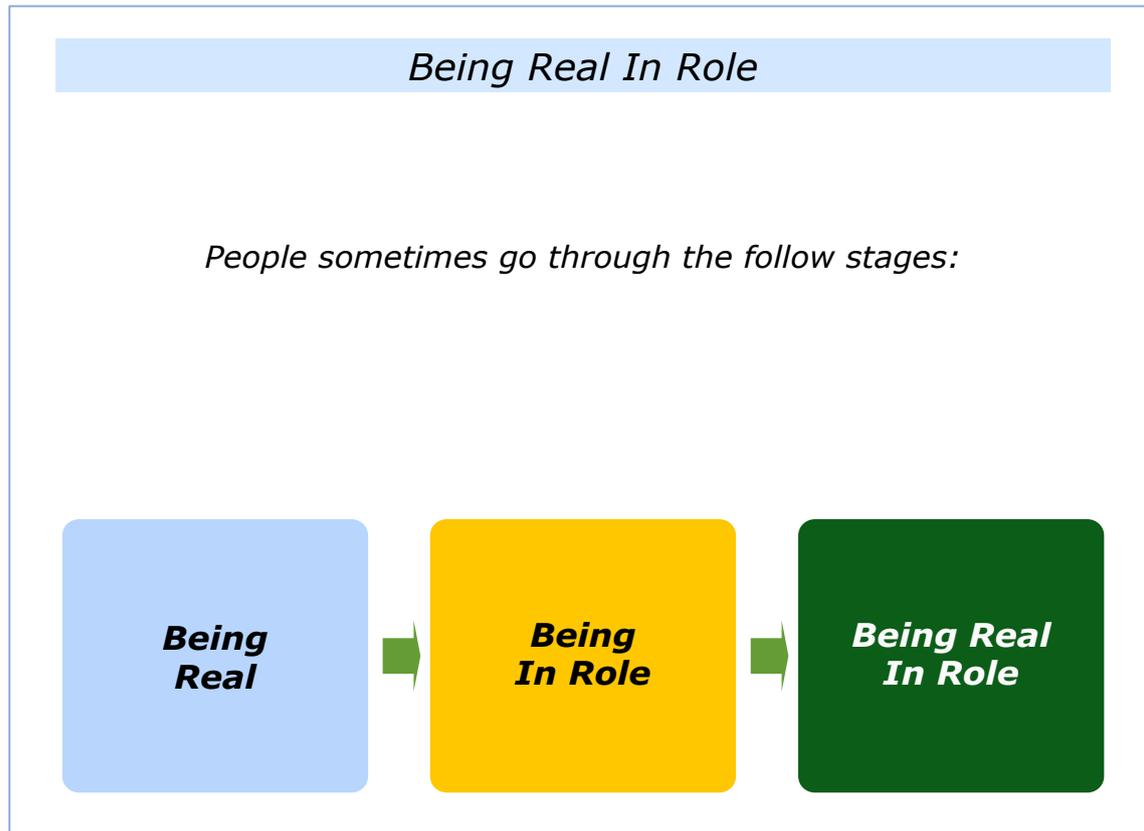
Great leaders sometimes follow a similar pattern. They like to reflect, make decisions and plan the future strategy. They also mentally rehearse how they will act in certain situations and the key messages they want to give people.

Such leaders click into action when meeting colleagues or customers. Recognising they are on stage, they aim to make others feel the centre of the world. They then focus on how to encourage and enable people to achieve success.

### *Being Real In Role*

Some people may think that going into role is not authentic, but individuals can actually be real in role. This is because they may go through certain stages during their professional careers.

A person may begin by being real and passionate. They may then become wrapped up in playing a role. As they get older, they often learn how to be real in their professional role. Let's explore these steps towards being real in role.



### *Being real*

People often show passion when starting out on their chosen road. They are real, raw and may be seen as a rough diamond. Throwing themselves into their work, they sometimes make mistakes but this is part of the adventure. Their spark transmits energy and fire.

Singer-songwriters, for example, sometimes produce great work early in their careers. Belying their youth, they write songs that convey knowledge beyond their years.

The same happens in other fields. Stoked by idealism, people look forward to going to work each day. They are enthusiastic and sometimes express profound insights.

### *Being in role*

People may climb the career ladder and, at a certain point, feel they have to be more conservative to play the role. Certainly they must be professional.

We quite like people to go into professional role as pilots, nurses and others upon whom we rely. It is good if they provide predictability and deliver positive results.

But sometimes people bury their personalities and lose their humanity. This may lose touch with customers, talk in long theoretical terms or make things complicated

### *Being real in role*

Confident in their professional ability, some people are real yet also able to fulfil their role. Great leaders, for example, sometimes show the human touch. They feel able to be themselves and, far from diminishing their authority, this increases their credibility.

People who are real in role are often personable, professional and peak performers. They come across as real human beings. At the same time, they also do everything possible to prepare properly and fulfil their professional obligations.

Such people do work they feel passionately about. They perform superbly, deliver the desired results and add that touch of class. Sometimes they create an enduring legacy by passing on knowledge and also acting as positive models for other people.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to go into role? You may wish to do this when acting as a carer, educator, leader or in another professional role.

What may be the results you want to deliver in that role? How can you do your best to achieve these goals? What may happen as a result of you performing this role superbly? What may be the benefits for you and other people?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Going Into Role In The Future*

*The specific role I may want to go into in the future may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to go into role and do my best to get certain results are:*

\*

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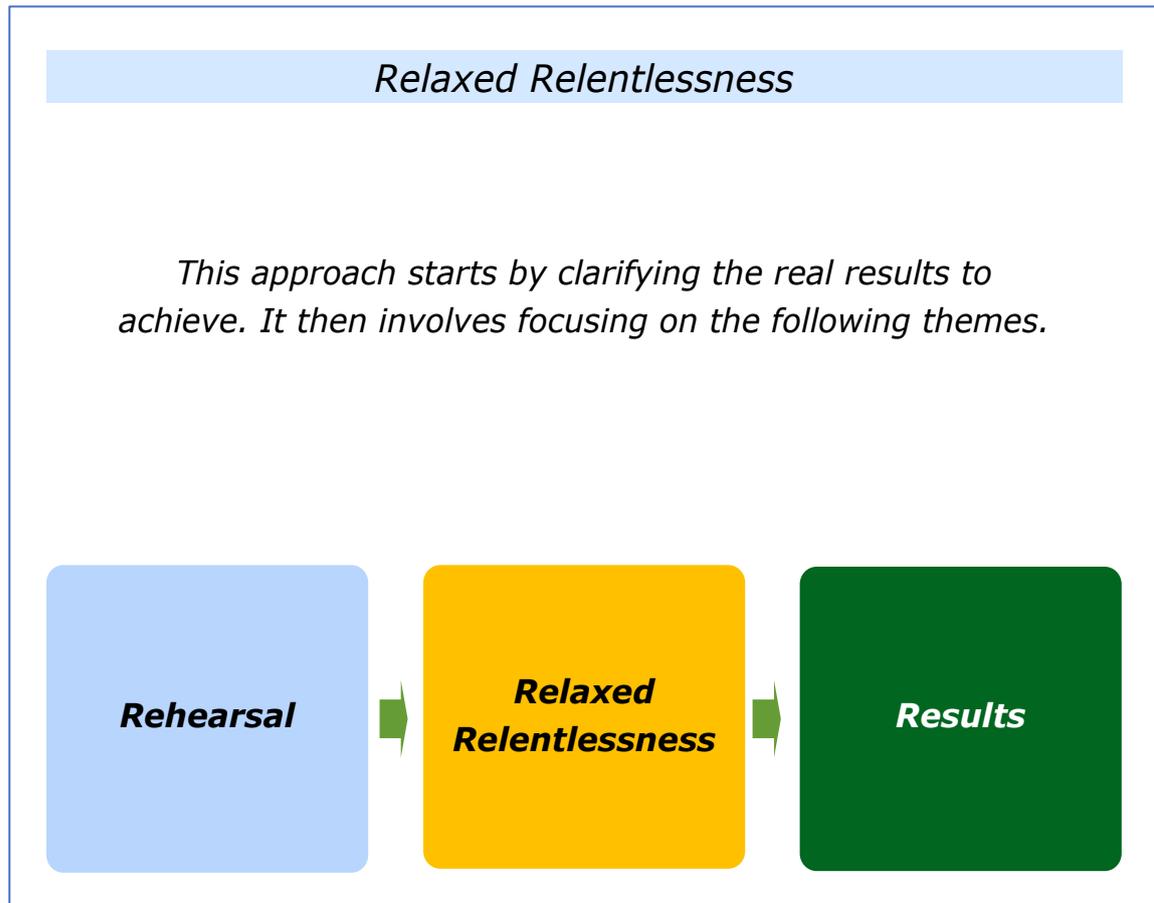
*The specific things that may happen as a result of going into role may be:*

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## *The Relaxed Relentlessness Approach*



Great athletes sometimes follow these steps when performing at their best. The approach can also be adapted by other people who want to deliver peak performances.

Bearing in mind what they can control, a person starts by clarifying the results they want to achieve. They then go through the following steps.

### *Rehearsal*

They rehearse how they can follow their chosen strategies. This includes how they will manage both successes and setbacks on the road to delivering the desired results.

## *Relaxed Relentlessness*

They move into action and follow their chosen rhythm. This sometimes involves being both relaxed and relentless when translating their strategies into action.

### *Results*

They perform superb work and aim to deliver the desired results. They also rise to the occasion when it matters. This sometimes includes delivering peak performances.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you demonstrated relaxed relentlessness? One writer described how they took this approach when doing a long project.

*"I began by sketching the schedule I wanted to follow on the way towards reaching the goal. It was important to pace myself properly.*

*"Bearing this in mind, I scheduled three kinds of time: a) preparation time; b) performing time; c) pottering around time.*

*"The preparation part involved going through certain rituals and planning what I wanted to accomplish in the next block of time.*

*"The performing time involved making the best use of my prime times – the times of the day when I had most energy. During this time I was able to relax and follow a certain rhythm. This enabled me to do my best work.*

*"The pottering around times were also useful. I just let my mind wander. Sometimes these times resulted in making creative breakthroughs."*

You will have your own approach to following relaxed relentlessness approach. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Relaxed Relentlessness In The Past*

*The specific situation in the past  
when I followed some  
elements of this approach was:*

\*

*The specific things I did then to follow  
some elements of this approach were:*

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\*

\*

*The specific things that  
happened as a result were:*

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\*

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How can you follow some of these principles in the future? You may want to do this when pursuing a specific project, leading a team or doing another activity. Let's consider how you can take these steps, starting with what you want to achieve.

## *Results*

Imagine that you lost your job during Covid. Applying for various full-time roles proved unsuccessful and sapped your confidence.

After several months, however, one of your old managers offered you the opportunity to do a project in their organisation. This would initially be for three months but it could lead to further work in the future.

Talking with your partner, you decided to take the role. It meant working from home and managing some aspects of home schooling, but the pluses of taking this route far outweighed the minuses.

Looking ahead at the project, you begin to define the results you want to deliver for the organisation. Bearing in mind the research you have done already, you aim:

*To clarify your key stakeholders – such as both your internal and external customers - and the results they want delivered;*

*To clarify the specific strategies you can follow to deliver these results;*

*To clarify the specific things that will be happening that will show you have delivered the desired results.*

There are many models for clarifying the desired results. Some focus on the three Ps – profits, product quality and people.

Imagine that you have clarified the targets to be achieved under the relevant headings. You may then want to add another dimension to the goal setting.

## *Clarifying the actual words you would like to hear the stakeholders saying*

This is an old but useful exercise. Start by brainstorming all the key stakeholders that it will be important to satisfy. Looking at each of these people in turn, clarify the results they would like delivered.

Describe the actual words you would like them to be saying about the work you do and deliver. For example, you may want one of your external customers to say the following things.

*"They deliver great service ... They proactively keep us informed about the progress being made ... They act as real partners and trusted advisors ... They help us to achieve success."*

When doing this exercise, it is important to focus on certain themes. These are:

*To see the world from the stakeholder's point of view ... To clarify the real results they want delivered ... To clarify how they want to feel about the way you relate to them and how you help them to achieve success.*

Imagine that you have described the actual words you want the stakeholders to be saying. You can then ask yourself:

*"How can I do my best to ensure they are saying these things?"*

Focus on what you can control. You are not in control of the stakeholder's personality, changing priorities or the words they use. But you can do your best and hope this leads to them saying some of these things.

Here is the exercise on this theme. This invites a person to focus on three of their stakeholders. On some occasions, however, there may be many more stakeholders it is important to satisfy.

## *Stakeholder A*

*The name of the stakeholder is:*

\*

*The actual words I would  
like to hear them saying are:*

\*

\*

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*The specific things I do to do my best to  
ensure they are saying these things are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Stakeholder B*

*The name of the stakeholder is:*

\*

*The actual words I would  
like to hear them saying are:*

\*

\*

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*The specific things I do to do my best to  
ensure they are saying these things are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Stakeholder C*

*The name of the stakeholder is:*

\*

*The actual words I would  
like to hear them saying are:*

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\*

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*The specific things I do to do my best to  
ensure they are saying these things are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Rehearsal*

Imagine that you are clear on the results to achieve. Before moving into action, however, it can be useful to prepare properly.

Charles Garfield, the author of *Peak Performers*, described how many great workers rehearse before going into their version of the arena. The National Business Association produced a summary of his views on mental rehearsal in one of their newsletters. Here is an excerpt from that piece.

*Peak performers practice mental rehearsal. They rehearse, in their mind's eye, any incident or event that is important to them.*

*Business executives can benefit by rehearsing specific events in the mind's eye, including all those possible outcomes and possible surprises that can materialise. This mental practice can build familiarity and boost confidence and self-esteem.*

Great workers in many fields take this approach. Wayne Rooney, the footballer, explained what he did before his team had an away fixture and needed to change the colours of their kit. Speaking in an interview with ESPN, he said:

*"Part of my preparation is I go and ask the kit man what colour we're wearing – if it's red top, white shorts, white socks or black socks.*

*"Then I lie in bed the night before the game and visualise myself scoring goals or doing well. You're trying to put yourself in that moment and trying to prepare yourself, to have a 'memory' before the game.*

*"I don't know if you'd call it visualising or dreaming, but I've always done it, my whole life."*

There are many approaches to mental rehearsal. One model involves people relaxing and working through the following steps.

## *Mental Rehearsal*

*People sometimes take the following steps when rehearsing how to achieve their picture of success*

- *Success*

*They start by focusing on the picture of success.*

- *Strategies*

*They rehearse pursuing the key strategies on the road towards achieving success.*

- *Solutions*

*They rehearse anticipating and overcoming potential challenges on the road towards achieving success.*

- *Success*

*They again rehearse pursuing the key strategies for achieving the picture of success.*

## *Relaxed Relentlessness*

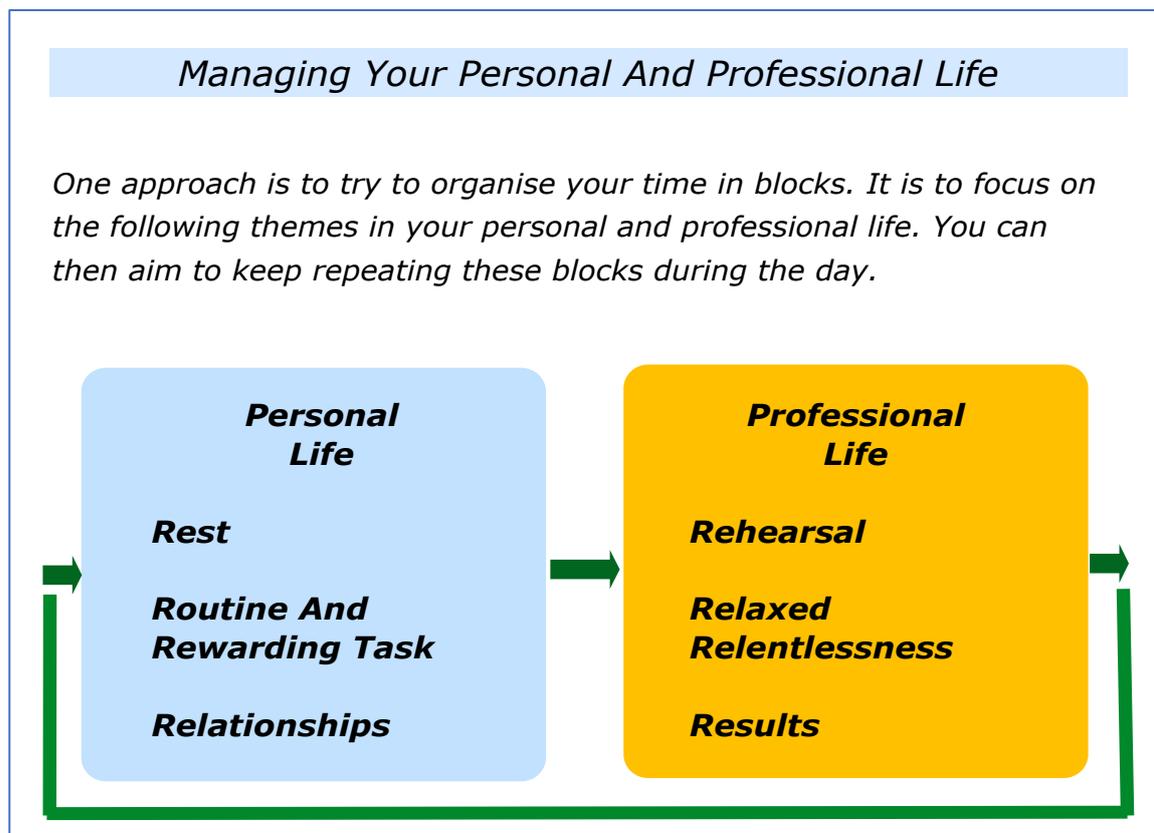
Imagine that you have prepared properly and want to translate your strategies into action. It is useful to create a structure that works for you. One approach is to, as far as possible, organise your time in blocks. This will call for transitioning between the two various of your life.

### *Personal Life*

You may aim to get enough rest, follow a routine to rewarding tasks and other chores plus nurture your relationships.

### *Professional Life*

You can then aim to rehearse, follow the pattern of relaxed relentlessness and do your best to deliver the desired results.



Let's assume that you are following your chosen rhythm in your own way. It will then be time to focus on the final step.

## *Results*

Imagine that you are doing the freelance work in the organisation. Like many people in today's world, it will be vital:

*To keep producing short and medium-term successes on the road towards the longer-term picture of success;*

*To keep connecting with your key stakeholders to keep up to date with their challenges and any changes in the results they want delivered;*

*To keep improving your work and delivering the desired results to the stakeholders.*

Sometimes this may involve dealing with certain challenges – such as working with difficult customers, dealing with dramas and managing crises. Different people choose different ways to deal with such issues. Some people take the follow steps.



Great workers sometimes follow these steps when finishing properly. As one person said:

*"When you have done 80% of the work it can still feel like there is 80% left."*

Such people rehearse properly before going into their version of the arena. They then go through the following steps.

### *Relaxation*

They relax physically and psychologically. They breathe deeply, relax their body and follow their ritual for preparing to do their best.

They also see things in perspective. They recognise that, whilst what they are about to do may be important, there are many more important things in life. Paradoxically, this approach helps them to relax and give their best.

### *Rhythm*

They follow their chosen rhythm. They are also resourceful when dealing with interruptions, setbacks or other events. Buying time, they relax and rehearse their next step. They then follow their chosen ritual for regaining their rhythm.

### *Rising To The Occasion*

They sometimes rise to the occasion by doing something that sounds paradoxical. They keep following their chosen principles rather than see the occasion as something special. They then aim to deliver peak performances.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead can you think of a situation where you may want to follow some elements of the relaxed relentlessness approach?

You may want to do this when doing a creative project, contributing to an organisation or leading a team. You may want to do it when aiming to achieve a good blend between your personal and professional life.

How can you clarify the results to achieve? How can you rehearse what you are going to do? How can you follow some elements of the relaxed relentlessness approach? What may happen as a result of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Relaxed Relentlessness In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future  
when I may want to follow some  
elements of this approach may be:*

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*The specific things I can do then to follow  
some elements of this approach may be:*

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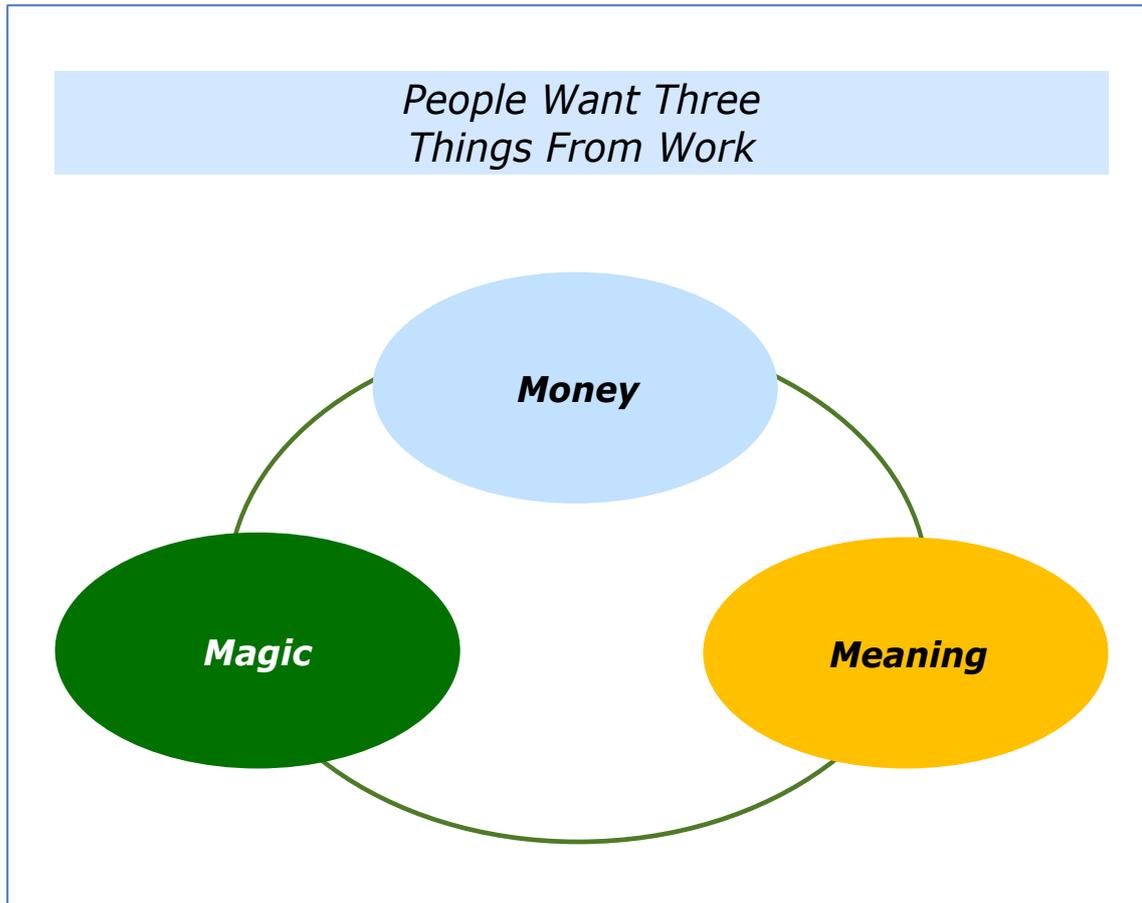
*The specific things that may  
happen as a result may be:*

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## *The Money, Meaning And Magic Approach*



People want three things from work: money, meaning and magic. Money feeds the stomach. But meaning and magic feed the spirit and the soul.

A person needs enough money to get the basic materials for life. They may then need other things to get the right blend between their wellbeing, meaningful work and wealth.

Looking back, can you think of a time when you did work that gave you enough money and had real meaning? Sometimes you may also have experienced a sense of magic.

Here is a *précis* of what three people I have worked with for many years said when exploring this theme.

*"When I worked as a volunteer for six months in a refugee camp. We had little money, but it was enough. The conditions were raw but I felt so alive. Every day was a chance to help refugees to recover from illness, be reunited with their loved ones or find a home in a new country."*

*"When I worked on an IT project for the Commonwealth Games. It was inspiring to work towards a goal that would help the Games to succeed. The team was full of energy and applied their skills to deliver outstanding results."*

*"When I led a team that created a new culture in a growing part of a business. The company allowed us to make the culture fit for the future rather than follow old methods. It was exciting and people learned many lessons they applied in their future careers."*

## *Money*

Different people have different relationships with money. Sometimes their attitudes are shaped by their experiences growing up in the family.

Some individuals decide to change their attitudes about money. One person I worked with took this approach. He described this in the following way.

*"I grew up in a working class family where we lived on the never-never. My parents always made sure we had enough food but they always stretched themselves financially."*

*"After paying off one debt they immediately bought something else from the home catalogue. At one point my father also got into gambling and thought he could pay off everything with one big win."*

*"I have changed my own attitude to money. At one point I thought I would never have enough. I also recognised I would never get a big pot of gold – such as by starting and selling a company."*

*"This was a key turning point – realising that I would need to earn money for much of my life. Building on what I did best, I developed transferable skills that would be required in both the present and future world.*

*"Whilst it is impossible to predict the future, I will always be able to make a contribution that helps my customers to achieve success. This will hopefully continue to provide a good income stream."*

Different people want money for different reasons. As mentioned earlier, these include the following:

*To get the basic materials for life – food, shelter, health care and other necessities – and follow their chosen lifestyle;*

*To build a financial fund that can protect them in tough times, provide health care for their later years and give their children a good start in life;*

*To gain a sense of freedom and feel they can shape their future in the way they want.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Looking at your own work, this invites you to do the following things. Describe the extent to which you feel you have enough money in your work. Rate this on a scale 0 – 10.

Many individuals will say they would like more money. This will certainly be the case if they cannot afford the basic materials for life. Some people may be able to make changes in their lifestyles, however, that mean they can live on less money.

Describe the specific things you can do to maintain or improve the rating. This could include aiming to earn more, adjusting your lifestyle, finding another role, developing another income stream or doing other activities.

# *Money*

*The extent to which I feel I have  
enough money in my work is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to  
maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of  
taking these steps will be:*

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## *Meaning*

Many people want a sense of meaning in their work. They often do their best work when they have the opportunity to do the following things:

*They pursue a compelling purpose and aim to achieve a specific goal;*

*They use their strengths to follow principles they believe in and get the support they need to do the job;*

*They perform superb work, are managed by outcomes – rather than by tasks – and do their best to deliver the desired picture of success.*

Different people choose different ways to focus on these themes. Here are some of the routes they take.

Some people want their employers to provide a compelling vision. This approach can work when there are leaders and employees who continually commit themselves:

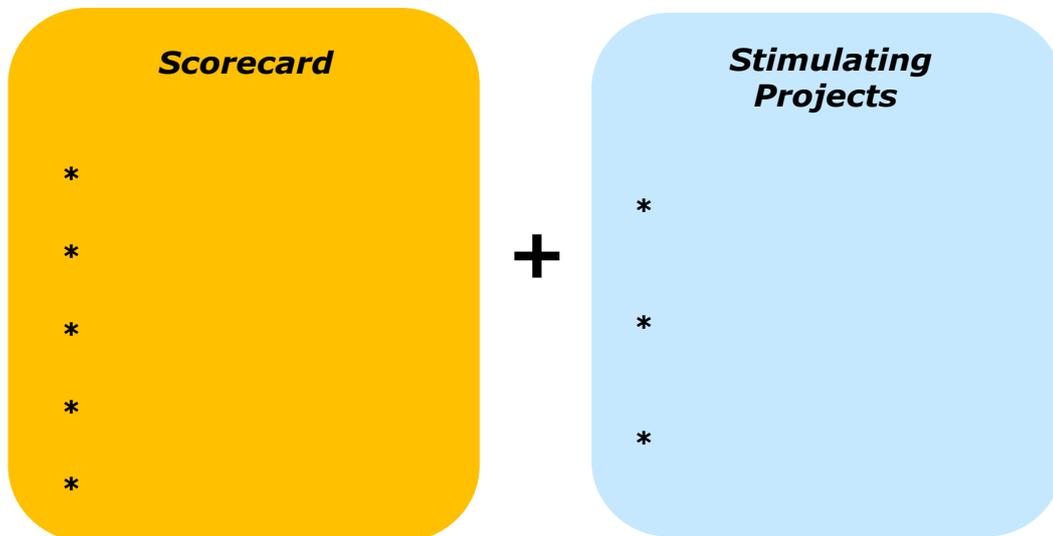
*To get wins for the organisation, wins for the customers and wins for the colleagues.*

In some organisations, however, the leaders may be battling to hit the next month's targets or manage their own backers. This can lead to short-termism. People can find themselves buried in doing grunt work without the chance to do great work.

Some leaders take a different approach to enabling their people to do meaningful work. They encourage them to deliver the scorecard – the mandatory things that must be done – and also doing stimulating projects.

## Doing Satisfying Work In Organisations

*One approach is to deliver the scorecard – the mandatory things that must be done – plus do other stimulating projects.*



Every organisation has its own version of a scorecard. Some scorecards mainly focus on the What and the targets are written in outcome terms. People are given freedom, within parameters, regarding how they deliver these results.

Some scorecards describe not only the What, but also have strict controls on the How' The centre wants to feel more in control – not only of what people deliver, but how they do it in their daily work.

One leader I worked with helped her team to do satisfying work whilst also delivering the team's targets. She explained this approach during an off-site two months before the beginning of the new financial year. Here is how she positioned this approach.

*"The scorecard has changed as our business has got bigger. Ten years ago it contained a few top line targets. These covered the normal Three Ps of Profits, Products and People.*

*"We had lots of freedom in terms of how we worked to hit these targets. But during the past few years the scorecard has contained more and more micro-targets.*

*"Some people get upset about the scorecard. But, as I say to the people who join my team, we have several choices. We can choose:*

*To ignore the scorecard;*

*To fight the centre about the scorecard;*

*To grumble about the scorecard and let it dominate our lives;*

*To move elsewhere;*

*To deliver the scorecard – but in a way that is creative – and also do stimulating projects that provide wins for ourselves and for the business.*

*"I tell the people who join my team that we are going with final option. We can then keep the centre off our backs and create the space to do other good work.*

*"If people don't want to do that - if they just want to do the things they find interesting without delivering their part of the scorecard - they should find another team.*

*"I have earlier had conversations with each of you. Everybody wants to contribute to delivering the scorecard whilst also doing satisfying work. So let's look at how to deliver the results."*

The leader then invited each person to focus on the following themes. Bearing in mind their strengths, they were invited to describe the specific things they would like to do:

*To help to deliver the scorecard and satisfy their key stakeholders;*

*To do stimulating projects that would also benefit the business;*

*To translate these projects into success stories that could be published and deliver benefits for the company.*

The team members made clear contracts about the outcomes they would each deliver in the next financial year. During the following twelve months they fulfilled these contracts and delivered the goods.

The organisation's management style became increasingly oppressive, however, and led to many respected knowledge workers leaving the business. This included the leader who took a prestigious role in another company.

Some individuals take another approach to doing meaningful work. They follow their vocation, find the right vehicle and do valuable work. They may choose to do this by aiming:

*To find or create a role in an organisation where they can do satisfying work that helps people to achieve success;*

*To be a professional freelancer who helps individuals, teams or organisations to achieve success;*

*To build a business that helps its customers to achieve success.*

You can find out more about this approach in the book section on *The Strengths Approach* and *The Vocation Approach*.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Looking at your own work, this invites you to do the following things.

Describe the extent to which you enjoy a sense of meaning in your work. Rate this on a scale 0–10. Describe the specific things you can do to maintain or improve the rating.

## *Meaning*

*The extent to which I enjoy a sense of meaning in my work is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of taking these steps will be:*

\*

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## *Magic*

When do you experience a sense of magic in your work? When do you get creative breakthroughs? When do you feel joy or a deep sense of satisfaction?

Some people feel these when doing work that involves the heart, head and hands. They are immersed in the activity and at one with the work. Things come together and they feel a higher harmony.

Some people get these feelings when managing a crisis. They feel it is a privilege to be able to use their strengths in pressure situations. Pursuing their chosen strategy, they then do their best to achieve success.

Some people get the helper's high by doing work that helps other people to succeed. Bearing in mind Maya Angelou's famous quote, they want to help people and give them a positive memory for life.

### *Maya Angelou*

*"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."*



Different people describe these experiences in different ways. Here are some of the things they say. These are based on people I have listened to or with whom I have worked.

*"I feel happy and relieved when seeing a recovered patient leaving hospital. Sometimes the whole staff line the corridor and applaud them as they go out of the door with a wave. The feeling of exhilaration reminds me of why I came into this work."*

*"My greatest satisfaction comes from seeing a young footballer I have worked with make their debut in the senior team. There is a saying in Academies that: 'Our trophies are the players who become regulars in the first team'. We now have five graduates in the first team and this gives me great pleasure."*

*"I get an enormous kick from seeing the relief on a customer's face after fixing their technical issues. They sometimes greet me as if I am a paramedic who is a saviour. It is great to use my skills to solve their problems and help them to succeed."*

Some people often enjoy a sense of magic in their work. Such people enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal. Some people experience this feeling on less frequent but intense occasions. They feel high after overcoming a challenge or reaching a stimulating goal.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. Looking at your own work, this invites you to do the following things.

Describe the extent to which you experience a sense of magic in your work. Rate this on a scale 0–10. Describe the specific things you can do to maintain or improve the rating.

## *Magic*

*The extent to which I experience  
a sense of magic in my work is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to  
maintain or improve the rating are:*

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*The specific benefits of  
taking these steps will be:*

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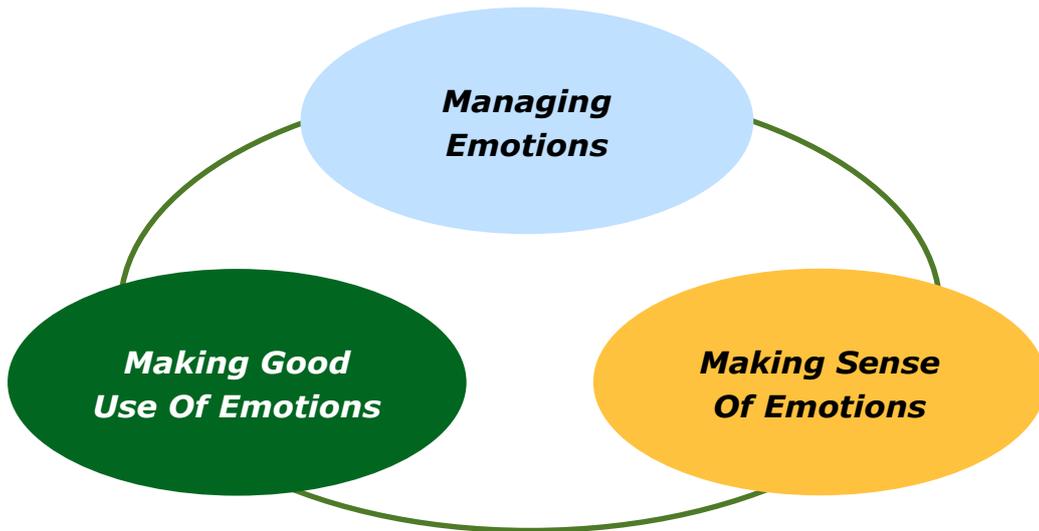
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## *The Managing Emotions Approach*

### *Managing Emotions In A Positive Way*

*This approach often involves focusing on the following themes:*



Emotions are the material of life. The way people use these can affect both themselves and other people. This section looks at how to manage emotions in a positive way rather than a negative way. It focuses on the following themes.

#### *Managing Emotions*

*This involves managing our emotions rather than letting our emotions manage us.*

#### *Making Sense Of Emotions*

*This involves understanding the reasons why we may experience certain emotions.*

## *Making Good Use Of Emotions*

*This involves using emotions in a way that helps ourselves and other people.*

People who care deeply can live on an emotional roller coaster. They can get depressed about climate change, politics or other events. Caring is a great asset when translated into positive action. Some people just worry, however, and fall into helplessness

Creative artists have a choice about how they use their emotions. Such people are often highly sensitive, which has both pluses and minuses. We are told that some people: "See too deep and too much."

They can use their sensitivity in helpful or hurtful ways. One approach is for them to create things that help people or the planet.

Some people are stable on an emotional level. One person gave the following answer when asked how happy they felt on a scale 0-10.

*"I am normally at 8/10 or higher. Sometimes I get upset about things for a bit, but then I do something to change the feeling. I count my blessings, go for a walk or do something to encourage other people.*

*"I have been this way since my early forties. That is when I learned to focus on what I can control. Maybe I am just lucky, but since then I have got happier as I have grown older."*

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you managed emotions in a helpful way? You may have recovered from a setback, managed a difficult challenge, made a tough decision or done another activity.

What did you do to manage the emotions? What happened as a result of taking these steps? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Managing Emotions In The Past*

*The specific situation in the past when I managed emotions in a helpful way was:*

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*The specific things I did then to manage the emotions in a helpful way were:*

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\*

*The specific things that happened as a result of taking these steps were:*

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\*

## *Managing Emotions*

People choose how they manage their feelings. The choices they make, however, are often influenced by personal experiences. They may learn from watching models - such as parents, friends and others they admire.

Sometimes their strategies work, sometimes they provide temporary relief, sometimes they create problems. The strategies that a person applies may fall into one of two categories:

*They help themselves or other people;*

*They hurt themselves or other people.*

The following pages describe how people can manage their emotions in a positive way. The first section focuses on some basic models that work. We then explore some of the more complex challenges.

### *The Choices Approach*

Imagine that a person feels sad. They can choose how they deal with this feeling. For example:

*They can cry ... They can sulk ... They can lash out at others ... They can say the world is against them.*

*They can do an activity that will help them to feel happier – such as going for a walk, gardening, playing music or another activity.*

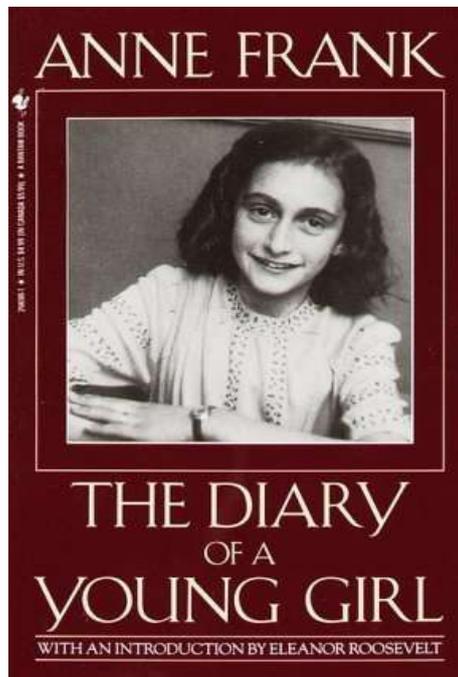
*They can translate their sadness into doing something that helps other people – because giving to others often helps the giver to feel good.*

People choose how they express their feelings. They can do this by asking the following questions.

*"What am I feeling right now? How do I want to manage this feeling? What are the various options? What are the consequences of each option? Which option do I want to follow?"*

Anne Frank was somebody who used her feelings to create a testament to the appreciation of life. People will have their own favourite quotes from her diary. Here are some that are often used.

*"Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!"*



*"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."*

*"I want to be useful or bring enjoyment to all people, even those I've never met ... I want to go on living even after my death!"*

*"Think of all the beauty still left around you and be happy. Whoever is happy will make others happy."*

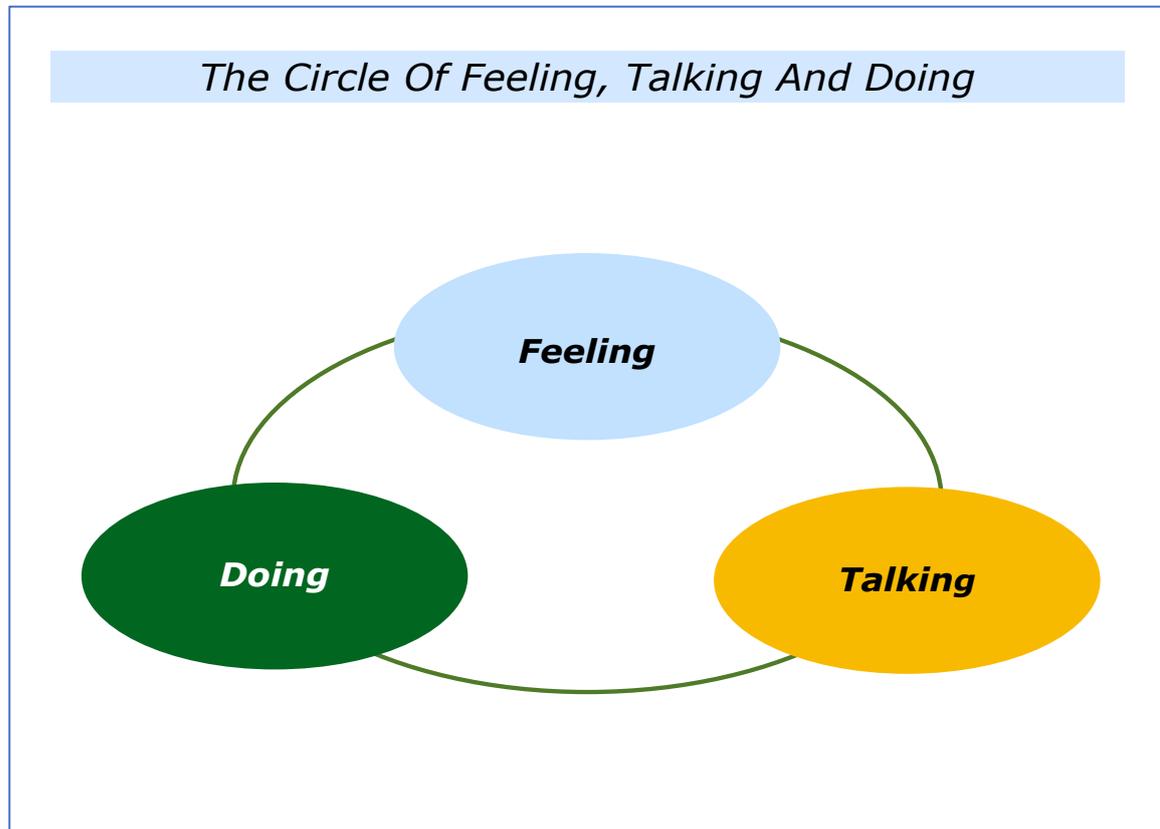
*"Look at how a single candle can both defy and define the darkness."*

### *The Doing Something To Change The Feeling Approach*

There are many views about how it is possible to manage feelings. One approach is to recognise the circle of feeling, talking and doing. Imagine that for some reason you feel bad. It can then be useful:

*To acknowledge that you have a certain feeling – such as sadness, disappointment or another feeling;*

*To do something that will give yourself another feeling.*



Some people love to talk about how bad they feel. This can help for a while, but it can lead to them falling into a negative cycle.

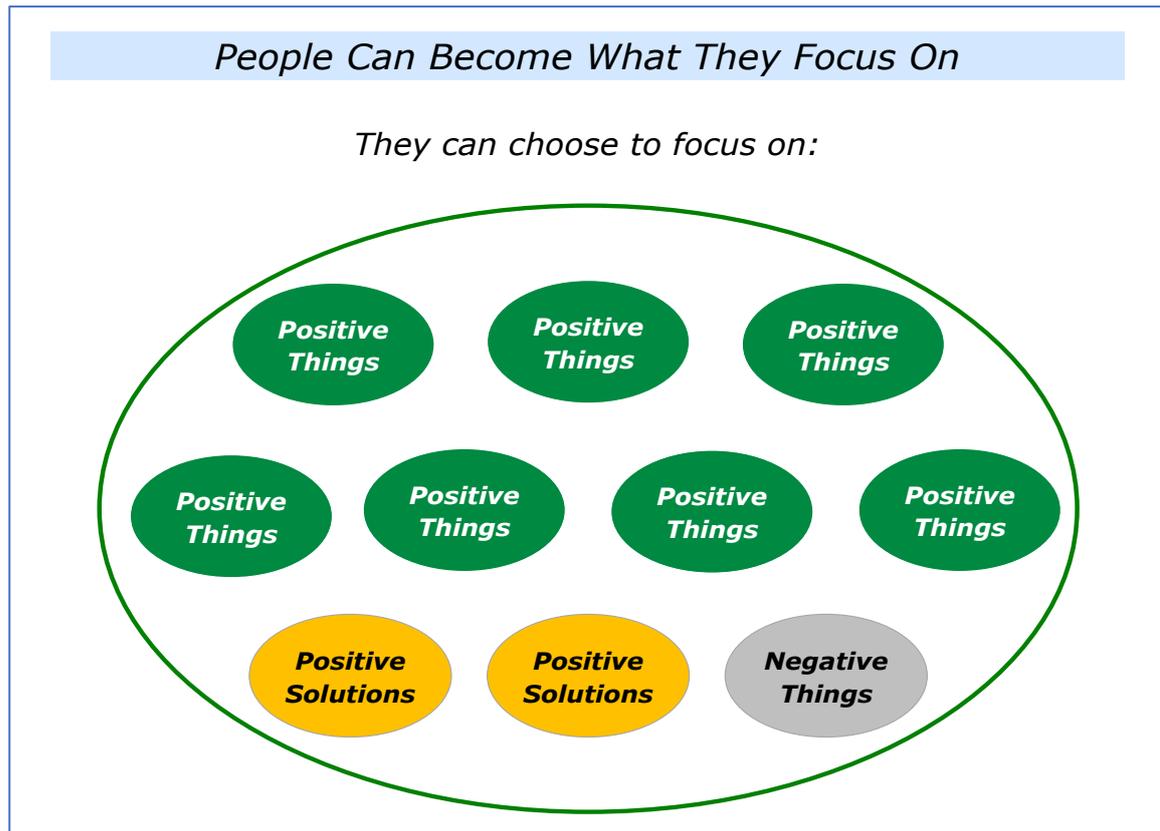
Reflecting is vital, but then comes the crunch. Some people substitute talking for action. They may find that their analysis leads to a downwards spiral. They may say, for example:

*"Why can't I do something? Before I move forward, I must understand the barriers stopping me."*

If they feel overcome by problems, however, there is a quick way to change that feeling. They can do something that will encourage themselves or other people.

Feeling, talking and doing are all important. If somebody wants to feel differently quickly, however, they can do this by behaving differently. People can choose what they do and, in this way, often choose their feelings.

### *The People Can Become What They Focus On Approach*



People can become what they focus on. If they study success, they are more likely to feel optimistic. If they study failure, they are more likely to feel depressed. It is important not ignore reality, of course, but it helps to also study solutions.

What do you focus on in your own life? Do you focus on the positive things, the positive solutions or the negative things?

Some societies assail their people with negative messages. The media reports bad news, whilst the powers-that-be spend their time arguing.

Even the most caring people can become disillusioned. Unfortunately this can also affect people around them. One person described this in the following way.

*"Ten years ago I changed dramatically. Being a parent, I wanted my children to grow up happily. But then one day I got a shock.*

*"My son asked me: 'Is the world going to end?'*

*"My answer was, 'Of course not,' but I wanted to know why he asked the question.*

*"He had been looking at my doom and gloom environmental magazines.*

*"Sometimes I came across at miserable to other people. I cared for the world but was not caring for people by telling them we were going to hell in a handcart.*

*"I wanted to build a happier world, but I was depressing the people around me.*

*"Now I take magazines that show practical ways we can improve the world rather than those that fill people with despair.*

*"It was a tough lesson."*

Everything is food. The things we put into our system – the positive things and the poisonous things – have an effect on how we feel.

One approach is for a person to focus on prevention rather than cure. They can choose to put positive things into their system. They are then more likely to develop the inner strength to deal with the challenges they face.

## *The Focusing On The Facts And The Possible Ways Forwards Approach*

*People Can Sometimes Free Themselves:*

***By Focusing On The Facts And  
The Possible Ways Forward***

*Rather than:*

***By Being Judgemental***

There are many views about how people can feel free and have a clear state of mind. One approach is to focus on the facts and the possible ways forwards. They can then use their energy to shape a positive future rather than feel judgemental.

This does not mean that a person does not have feelings about how others behave. The key is how they channel these feelings.

Judgement is one of the biggest drains of emotion. This can be the case whether we are being judged by others or we are judging them. Let's look at some examples.

Person A said that they wanted to live a healthier life. They chose to put themselves into negative cycles, however, by behaving in ways they later regretted. They would then say something like the following.

*"This is bad, isn't it? I shouldn't do these things, because I know they are wrong."*

We explored how they could do things to achieve their goals and also stop judging themselves. One of the key messages was:

*"What you are choosing to do is neither good nor bad, but it does have consequences. It is up to you to decide if you want a different set of consequences."*

They developed a more neutral scripting towards themselves and began to focus more on the desired consequences. This took time, but eventually it helped both them and their loved ones.

Person B often got into arguments with people. They also told the other party that they were 'wrong', 'manipulative' or 'bad'. It did not help to label the other person in a judgemental way.

Person B often reacted quickly in such trigger situations. Bearing this in mind, we explored how they could aim:

*To buy time and stay calm in such situations;*

*To consider how they would prefer the other party to behave in the future;*

*To, if and when appropriate, offer such a positive suggestion - but to do this in a way that the other party was more likely to accept.*

Person B decided to take this approach with their teenage son and also their partner. It did not work straight away and there were flash points. But eventually it led to calming such situations.

Person B realised it was working when, three years later, their son turned round to them and said:

*"Dad, it is up to you how you behave. As you told me, though, there are choices and consequences."*

People sometimes feel freer if they focus on the facts and possible ways forwards in situations. They can also look at how to create positive solutions for themselves and other people.

### *The Volunteer Language Rather Than Victim Language Approach*

This is an approach that I saw used in treatment programmes for people recovering from addiction or other challenges. As we know, the language we use can help to shape feelings.

Bearing this in mind, people were encouraged to consider whether they chose to use volunteer language or victim language. Here are some of the ways that people might demonstrate these approaches.

<i>People Can Use Volunteer Language Or Victim Language</i>	
<b><i>Volunteer Language</i></b>	<b><i>Victim Language</i></b>
<b><i>They choose to believe: "I can make things happen."</i></b>	<b><i>They choose to believe: "Other people make things happen to me."</i></b>
<b><i>They choose to take responsibility for their feelings.</i></b>	<b><i>They choose to blame other people for their feelings.</i></b>
<b><i>They choose to be grateful and appreciate life.</i></b>	<b><i>They choose to be grumpy and get angry about life.</i></b>
<b><i>They choose to focus on what they can control.</i></b>	<b><i>They choose to focus on others they would like to control.</i></b>
<b><i>They choose to be builders and try to find win-wins.</i></b>	<b><i>They choose to be blamers who try to win and make others lose.</i></b>

People were encouraged to take ownership for choosing the route they wanted to take. Those that chose the volunteer approach were more likely to shape their futures in a way that helped them and other people.

## *The Locus Of Control Approach*

Imagine you are helping a person to manage their emotions. Whatever approach you use, at some point you will probably invite the person to take responsibility for shaping their future.

This calls for them strengthening their internal locus of control, which was a term coined by Julian Rotter in the 1950s. Let's explore what this means.

### *A person with an internal locus of control*

*They believe they can make things happen and help to shape their future;*

*They believe that, whilst external events may bring challenges, they can take an internal decision regarding how they respond to such events;*

*They say things like: "I can take responsibility ... I can make things happen ... I can recover from setbacks."*

### *A person with an external locus of control*

*They believe they have little control over their lives and shaping their future;*

*They believe they are at the mercy of events and these determine their happiness;*

*They say things like: "The world is against me ... Why do things like this always happen to me? ... Everything would be okay if I won the lottery."*

Many individuals reach a point where they develop their internal locus of control. They then aim to shape their future.

Some people prefer to blame outside circumstances. Others may try to help them, but their suggestions fall on unreceptive ground. They are met by the person saying:

*"Yes, but ..."*

Good coaches create an encouraging environment in which a person can feel safe and explore. As mentioned earlier, this often involves helping a person to increase their way power.

Many people respond to this approach. If they don't, however, at some point the coach may refocus on the person's will power. They may say to the person:

*"I am happy to continue to work with you, but it will be important for you to decide if you want to shape your future."*

*"At the moment this may seem difficult. Bearing this in mind, I am going to give you time to reflect."*

*"Get back to me when you want to work towards your goals. We can then work on how you can do your best to achieve your picture of success."*

A person must demonstrate the will before they can learn the skill. Once they have done that, it is possible to help them to add to their repertoire for achieving their goals.

## The Numbers Approach

*Happiness*

*On a scale 0-10, the extent to which I  
feel happy with my life at the moment is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to  
maintain or improve the rating are:*

- \* \_\_\_\_\_
- \* \_\_\_\_\_
- \* \_\_\_\_\_



This approach may sound counter-intuitive, but I have found it can help people to manage their emotions and shape their futures.

Sometimes people talk around an issue or find it hard to put a name to a feeling. One way to get to the heart of the matter is to invite them to rate their feelings or perception around a topic.

Using numbers may sound an unfeeling approach. But it can actually help people to focus on their feelings and specific behaviour. They can then move on to the actions they can take to shape their futures.

Here are some of the topics a person may wish to explore. It is often useful, however, to invite a person to rate themselves in just one of these areas. This can be a good starting point for exploring their reasons for giving the rating.

## My Ratings

*The ratings I would give myself in the following areas*

### *Shaping My Future*

*The extent to which I feel in control of shaping my future is: \_\_\_\_\_ / 10*

### *Health*

*The rating I would give my health at the moment is: \_\_\_\_\_ / 10*

### *Satisfaction In Work*

*The rating I would give regarding satisfaction in my work is: \_\_\_\_\_ / 10*

### *Being Professional*

*The rating I would give regarding me being positive and professional in my work is: \_\_\_\_\_ / 10*

### *Encouraging People*

*The rating I would give regarding me encouraging other people is: \_\_\_\_\_ / 10*

## *Moving Forwards*

The scores are just the start. If appropriate, you can invite the person to describe the reasons for the ratings. The next step is to invite them to focus on shaping the future.

*The aim of the ratings approach  
is to encourage a person:*

*To clarify where they are at the moment – such as the feelings they have or to focus on a particular area in which they want to improve;*

*To clarify the specific things they can do to maintain or improve the rating in this area;*

*To clarify the specific benefits of doing these things – both for themselves and for other people.*

When focusing on the future, it is important to encourage the person to build on what they can control. You can also offer them practical tools they can use to achieve positive results.

Here is the exercise that can be used to help a person to focus on shaping the future. If appropriate, you can then help them to work towards achieving their picture of success.

*Shaping The Future*

*The specific topic I want to focus on is:*

\*

*The rating I gave in this area was: \_\_\_\_ / 10*

*The specific things I can do to maintain  
or improve the rating in this area are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Numbers Approach To Performance Development*

Let's move on to an area that is sometimes loaded with emotion. This is the topic of what organisations may call performance appraisal, performance management or performance development.

There are many models for helping a person to focus on and develop their performance. The following pages describe one approach that can be effective.

One key point. It is vital to have separate sessions on the person's performance, any pay negotiation and the person's wider career development. Some organisations try to cram all three into one session, but that seldom works. Try to have separate sessions on each topic.

The following pages provide a pack that has proved useful when helping people to focus on their performance development. It invites a person to rate their performance on a scale 0-10. The manager can also give their views on the rating and other areas.

As you can guess, some poor performers may rate themselves highly whilst good performers sometimes rate themselves down. In both cases, the manager may wish to say something like the following.

*"Is it okay if I share some ideas? It is, of course, up to you if you want to take the ideas on board. If you do, however, then we can focus on how you can maintain or improve the rating."*

This can help to provide a reality check. It is up to the person to decide if they want to continue to maintain or improve their performance. Each choice does, of course, have consequences.

Here is the pack that can be sent to a team member a couple of weeks before the session. They can then send it to the manager before the actual meeting.

## *My Performance Development*

### *The Team Member's Pack*

#### *Introduction*

*As you know, we are committed to helping people to develop themselves and their performance. This approach works well when people are prepared to be positive, professional and work to keep improving.*

*Bearing this in mind, this pack invites you to do the following things. Try to be as honest as possible when doing the exercises.*

- *Describe the specific goals you have worked towards achieving. Describe the rating you would give yourself in terms of achieving these goals. Do this on a scale 0-10.*

- *Describe – in headlines times - your reasons for giving this rating. You can then go deeper to focus on what you have learned and how you can apply this learning in the future.*

*Describe what has gone well - and what you have done well – and how you can do more of these things in the future. Describe what you can do better in the future and how*

- *Describe the specific goals you want to achieve in the future. Describe the specific benefits of achieving these goals. Describe the specific things you can do to do your best to achieve these goals.*

*If appropriate, I will also share some ideas and work with you to continue to develop.*

## My Goals

*The specific goals I have worked towards delivering over the past ... have been the following:*

1) To ...

*For example ...*

2) To ...

*For example ...*

3) To ...

*For example ...*

### *My Rating*

*On a scale 0-10, the specific rating I would give myself in terms of delivering these results is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific reasons why - in headline terms - I give this rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Done Well*

*The specific things that have gone well or that I have done well - and how I can follow these principles more in the future - are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Can Do Better*

*The specific things I can do  
better in the future – and how - are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *My Specific Goals For The Future*

*The specific goals I want to work  
towards achieving in the next ... are:*

1) To ...

*For example ...*

2) To ...

*For example ...*

3) To ...

*For example ...*

### *The Specific Benefits*

*The specific benefits of achieving these goals will be:*

1) To ...

*For example ...*

2) To ...

*For example ...*

3) To ...

*For example ...*

### *My Performance Development*

*The specific things I can do to do my best when working towards these goals and aiming to achieve 10/10 are:*

1) To ...

*For example ...*

2) To ...

*For example ...*

3) To ...

*For example ...*

## *The Managing Unfairness Approach*

### *Managing Unfairness*

*This may involve going through the following steps. You can aim to:*

***Clarify your philosophy for managing unfairness***

***Clarify how you can stay positive and manage unfairness***

***Clarify the practical steps you can take to manage unfairness***

A person may sometimes find it difficult to deal with unfairness. The unfairness may be real or simply be their perception. Whatever the trigger, the person may respond in a negative way.

This can lead to them feeling angry, resentful or depressed. Sometimes the passion they feel can lead to them lashing out. This may feel good for a moment, but it does not always lead to the result they want to achieve.

Looking back, how have you dealt with unfairness in the past? You may have been treated unfairly at work or in other areas of life. You may have been upset when perceiving what you see as unfairness in the world.

How to manage such feelings? The following section explores some options, but managing unfairness can still be challenging. Let's consider these steps.

*You can clarify your philosophy  
for managing unfairness*

*Clarifying Your Philosophy  
For Managing Fairness*

*This is a big step. It can involve  
doing the following things.*

***You clarifying your philosophy of life***

***You understanding that life does  
not always include unfairness***

***You deciding what you want to do  
after seeing or experiencing unfairness***

Different people take these steps in different ways. Here are some of the themes you may wish to explore when considering these issues.

*What is my philosophy of life? What do I believe is important in life? What can I do to keep focusing on these things? How can I keep following my philosophy? What will be the pluses and minuses of taking this approach?*

*What do I believe regarding fairness in life? How can I try to live in a fair way? What do I believe every person has the right to in life? What do I think can be unfair in life?*

*What can I choose to do when I see or experience unfairness? What can I control in such situations? What can't I control? How do I want to behave when I see or experience unfairness?*

Some individuals may find it relatively simple to clarify their life philosophy. They clarify what they believe is important in life. They then aim to focus on these things in their daily life and work.

A person may find it harder to deal with what they regard as unfairness in life. For example:

*They may believe that everybody has the right to encouragement, justice and the basic materials for life;*

*They may believe that, providing people put in the effort, they should be rewarded with what they deserve;*

*They may believe that they personally should be judged fairly and get what they deserve.*

Such a person may also recognise that such fairness does not always happen in life. Bearing this in mind, they may then ask themselves the following questions.

*How do I want to behave when I see or experience unfairness?  
What can I do when I see unfairness in the world? What can I do in my own life to help to build a better world?*

*What do I want to do when I personally experience unfairness? How can I choose: a) to see what actually happened; b) to choose how I behave? How can I maintain my sanity and manage the unfairness?*

Imagine that you have begun to settle on your philosophy for managing unfairness. The next step will be clarify how to deal with such situations when they happen. Let's consider this approach.

## *You can clarify how to stay positive and manage unfairness*

Different people respond in different ways when faced by unfairness. Some may be so consumed with emotion that they get angry or fall into depression. They may then behave in ways that do not help themselves or other people.

A person may feel it is unfair that they have lost their job, not got a promotion or not been recognised for their efforts. They may feel that life has treated others unfairly by inflicting them with an illness, denying them opportunities or causing them pain.

Sometimes a person may be filled with righteous anger or other emotions. This may be justified, but then comes the next question. How to manage such feelings? Some individuals take the following steps.

*They learn to recognise the triggers regarding unfairness that may affect them in a negative way;*

*They learn to buy time, reflect and consider their possible ways forwards for managing the unfairness;*

*They learn to, whenever possible, build on the positive things in their life whilst also following their chosen way forwards for managing the unfairness.*

Every person will find their own way to manage their emotions, but that is not the end of the story. It can be relatively simple to find a logical way to deal with such situations, but then comes the hard part. How to deal with your emotions in the heat of the moment?

One approach is to have a ritual for staying stable. You may choose to have a mantra, such as saying to yourself: "Stop, pause, think." Or you may use other words.

You may do some deep breathing and regain your composure. Bearing in mind the things you can control, you may consider your options for going forwards.

Sometimes you may also try to see things in perspective. You may consider the positive things you have in life. Building on this base, you may then focus on the actions you want to take to deal with the unfairness.

Some people find it easier to deal with unfairness when it happens to them rather than when it happens to other people. Choosing to focus on what they can control, they take action to try to shape their future.

Such individuals find it harder when innocent people have suffered. Some then focus on what they can do: a) to help the people involved; b) to help to prevent such events happening in the future.

Sometimes this can work, but sometimes a person may feel their efforts are relatively futile. Nevertheless, they aim to do their best to make life better for others in the future.

### *You can clarify the practical steps you can take to manage unfairness*

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a possible situation where you may see or experience unfairness? This could be in your personal or professional life.

You may experience this personally in a workplace. Despite doing your best on a project, for example, you may not necessarily receive credit or the appropriate rewards.

Different people will deal with this in different ways. Some individuals ask themselves the following questions.

*"Do I believe something is worth doing even if the work I do is not recognised? If so, do I still want to do the work? What will be the*

*benefits for both myself and other people? How can I choose to do my best and encourage myself on the journey without feeling like a victim?"*

There are, of course, many other possible situations where you may see or experience unfairness. You may encounter disappointment, rejection or feel helpless when other people experience pain.

How can you deal with such situations? How can you recognise the trigger, buy time and consider your options? How can you build on the positive things in your life? How can you then do your best to manage the unfairness?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Managing Unfairness*

*The possible situation in the future where I may see or experience unfairness may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to stay positive and do my best to manage the unfairness are:*

\*

\*

\*

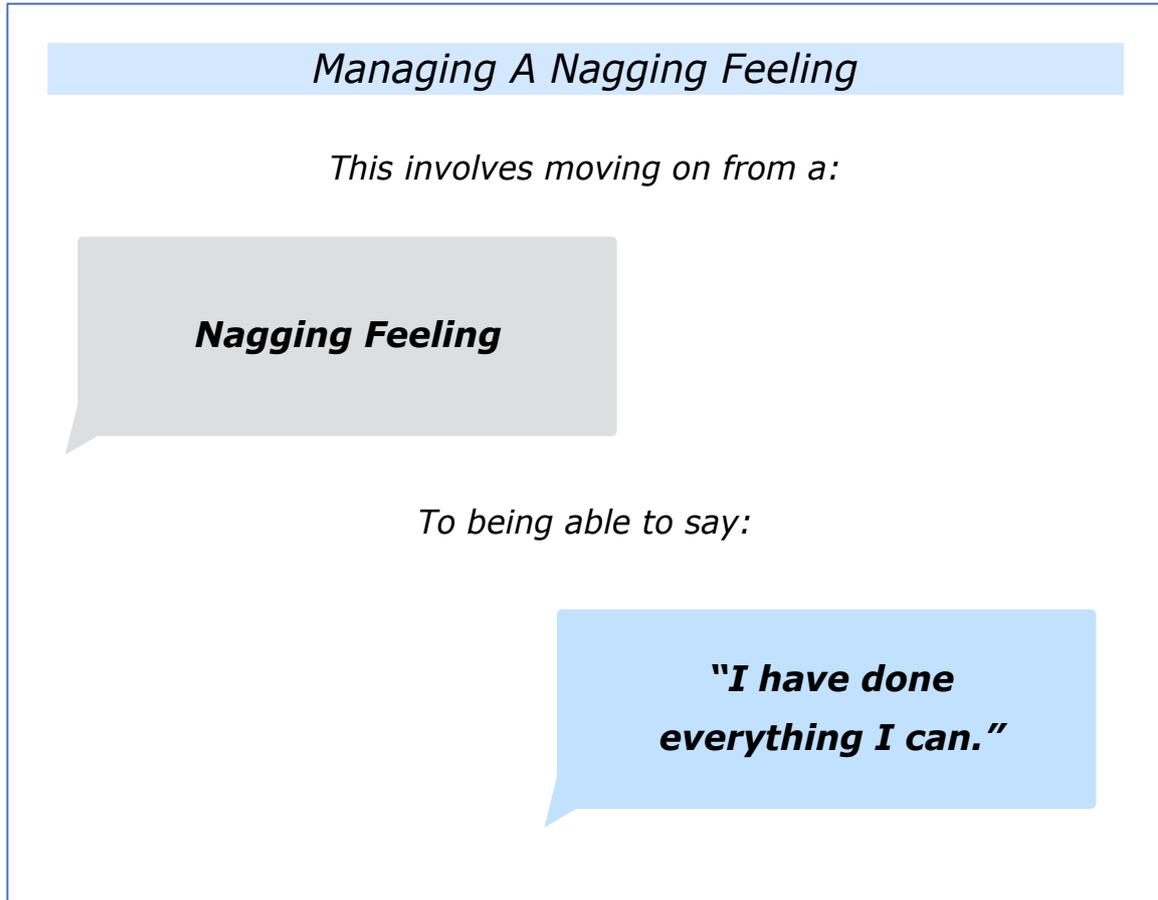
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

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## *The Managing A Nagging Feeling Approach*



Have you ever had a nagging feeling was hard to shift? This could have happened when either:

*You felt a sense of injustice ... You had made a mistake ... You had tried to right a wrong but was not getting the response you wanted.*

Such nagging feelings can take energy. They can trigger a negative cycle that is difficult to arrest. Trying to stop or ignore such feelings can have an opposite effect – they just increase.

How to manage such feelings? The following section describes some steps that can help. But, as ever, the old rule that time is the best healer may also be true. Time can help to put things in perspective.

Bearing this in mind, here are some of the steps it can be useful to explore when aiming to manage a nagging feeling.

### *Moving On From A Nagging Feeling*

*Here are some steps you may wish to consider. You may aim:*

- *To see things in perspective by focusing on the positive things in your life;*
- *To focus on the desired outcomes and do your best to achieve these results;*
- *To get to the point where you can say "I have done everything I can," and do something that gives you positive feelings.*

Imagine that you have a nagging feeling that it is hard to shake off. You may have made a mistake, hurt a person, been misunderstood or had a painful experience. Let's explore some ways to deal with this feeling.

*You can see things in perspective by focusing on the positive things in your life*

This is the old standby, but it is still well worth doing. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"Looking at life, I always try to focus on the positives. I am fortunate to have a lovely family and to do work I enjoy.*

*"Several years ago, I made a mistake that led to problems. These were not catastrophic, but they could have been avoided. The nagging feeling stayed with me for weeks.*

*"Eventually I began to see things in perspective. There were more than 90% good things happening in my life.*

*"Looking back, I could have avoided making the mistake. I tried to build on the positive things in my life, however, and resolved to do better in the future.*

Time can be a healer, but there are some things we never get over. We may learn to manage these feelings over time, however, and be able see them in perspective.

***You can focus on the desired outcomes  
and do your best to achieve these results***

Imagine that you have a nagging feeling. This could be because of something you have done or something that has happened to you. It may be useful to work through the following steps.

*You can clarify the outcomes you  
would like to achieve in the situation*

Looking at the situation, you may want to clarify: a) what actually happened; b) what you would like to happen. If appropriate, try exploring the following themes.

*What actually happened in the situation? Looking to the future, what would I like to happen? What are the outcomes I want to achieve in the situation?*

When doing this, try to avoid judging yourself or other people. Avoid putting labels on people or interpreting their behaviour.

Clarify what actually happened and what you would like to happen. Focus on what you would like yourself and other people to do and feel in the future.

*You can clarify what you  
can control in the situation*

As ever, it is important to clarify what you can control. You can control your attitude, the way you prepare and the way you behave. Whilst you cannot control the way others react, you can control how you respond to what they do.

You can also clarify how to manage any triggers that lead to you behaving in a negative way. Plan how to buy time, consider your options and behave in a way that is more likely to achieve your chosen goals.

*You can then do your best  
to achieve the desired results*

You can then move into action. The steps you take will depend on the specific situation and the results you want to achieve.

You may want to show kindness, encourage another person or make positive suggestions. You may want to follow a certain strategy, aim to get a win-win solution or take other steps.

You can only do your best. Much will depend on how the other person or parties react. But you can keep doing what you believe in and aiming to achieve a positive solution.

*You can eventually get to the point where you  
are able to say: "I have done everything I can."*

Imagine that you have taken some of the steps mentioned previously. Bearing in mind what you want to achieve, it can be useful to explore the following themes.

*What else can I do? What is the likelihood of that working? On a scale 0-10, how would I rate the chances of success?*

If appropriate, you can follow these strategies. You can again do your best to achieve the desired outcomes. There may come a point, however, where you say to yourself:

*"I have done everything that I can do or that I want to do."*

You may then want to do something that you know will help you to feel positive. This will help you to move into a positive cycle rather than a negative cycle.

Some feelings never go away. We learn to manage these feelings, however, rather than let them manage us. Sometimes going through such experience can help us to grow as people and as professionals.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to focus on how to manage a nagging feeling. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Managing A Nagging Feeling*

*The specific situation where I may have nagging feeling may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to see this in perspective and do my best to achieve the desired outcomes in the situation are:*

\*

\*

\*

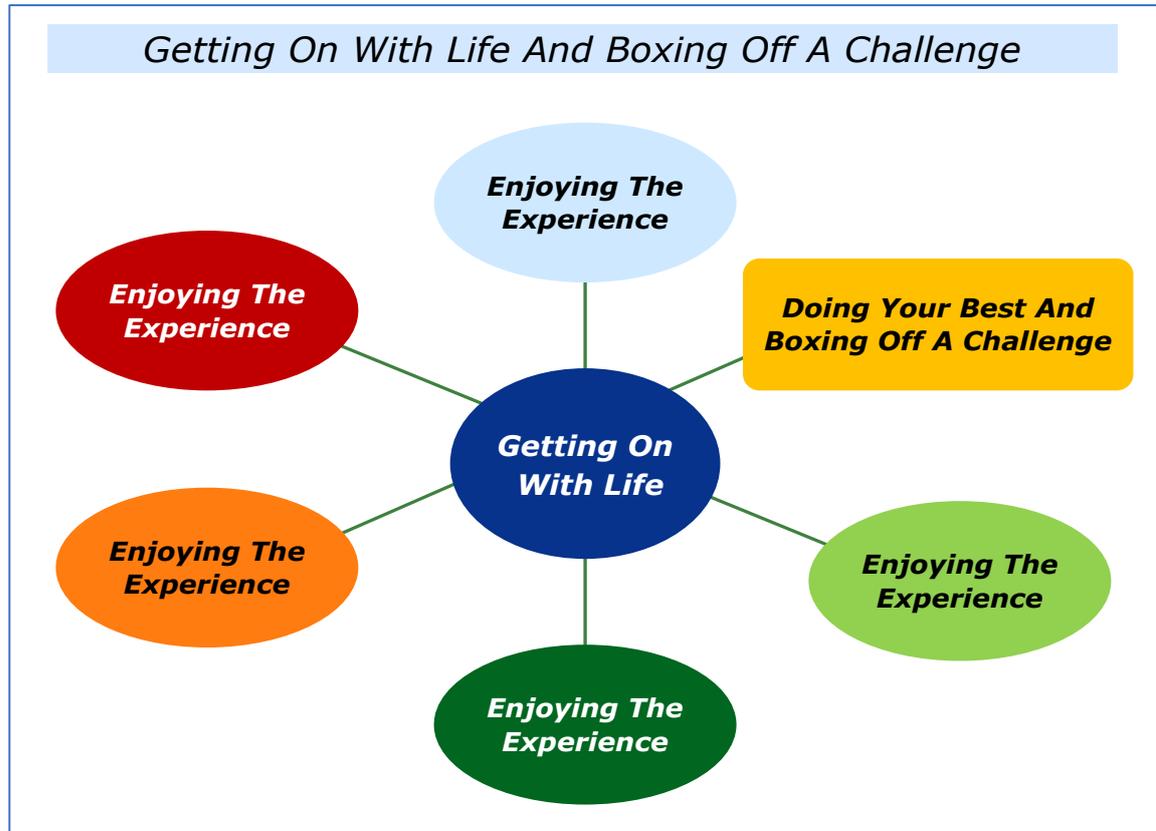
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Boxing Off Approach*



Different people choose different approaches to dealing with difficulties such as illnesses, problems or other challenges.

Some people ignore the issues. Some define the problem as a battle and gear their whole lives around tackling the issue.

Some people aim to manage such challenges as part of life. Such people may work through the following stages.

*They acknowledge their feelings of shock, concern and worry.*

*They begin to focus on what they can control. They gather information about how they may be able to tackle the challenge.*

*They take time to reflect and clarify the strategies they want to follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success.*

*They may also focus on what they believe important in life and continue to pursue some of these activities - this gives them strength to take the next step.*

*They pursue their strategies for tackling the challenge – such as getting treatment, making tough decisions or taking other steps. They keep going until they feel they have done everything possible.*

*They then, when they feel ready, emotionally box off the challenge because there is nothing else they can do at the present time.*

*They get on with their life by focusing on what they believe is important and aiming to enjoy the experiences.*

This approach is the opposite of denial. It calls for a person being proactive and realistic. It calls for doing masses of research, studying what works and then pursuing the strategy that is most likely to achieve success.

This sounds good in theory, but sometimes it can be difficult. A person may ask, for example:

*"What happens when you have multiple challenges? Surely it is harder to focus on what you believe is important in life? Much of your time must be taken up with dealing with the difficulties."*

A person may then feel overloaded with pressing issues. These can include juggling hospital appointments, getting treatment, dealing with family problems, maintaining an income or other issues. One person described how they tried to manage such a situation.

*"I have suffered from several related illnesses over the past five years. At one point my life was filled with anxiety. I just seemed to live from test to test.*

*"My partner and I then made a decision. We were going to get on with enjoying life rather than worrying about the next set of results.*

*"At some point the tests will not be what we want. But in the meantime we are going to do the things we enjoy in life."*

Some people take the following approach to managing multiple challenges.

*They try to keep doing things that give them positive energy.*

*They focus on one challenge, do their best to tackle it and box off that challenge.*

*They then move on to the next challenge – which may be linked to other challenges – and repeat the process.*

There may come a point, however, where the human system is no longer able to manage multiple challenges. This can be the case when a person is suffering from several illnesses.

Such a person may choose to spend the last period of their life at home rather than embark on another series of treatment. They will aim to enjoy as much quality of life as they can during their remaining time.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to continue living your life whilst also boxing off a challenge? You may be managing a transition, dealing with an illness, tackling a specific problem or whatever.

How can you continue to do things that give you positive energy?  
How can you do your best to tackle the challenge? How can you then box off the challenge and get on with your life?

If you wish, try tackling the following exercise. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Boxing Off Challenges In The Future*

*The specific situation where I may aim to do my best to tackle a challenge then box it off and get on with my life may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to do my best to take these steps in the situation are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Making Sense Of Emotions*

People often want to make sense of their feelings. The following section describes several ways it is possible to take this step. This also comes with the following health warning:

*A person can change a feeling without actually understanding what happened to create it. They can do something that will produce another feeling.*

*A person can also find it helpful, however, to recognise what led to creating the feeling. They can learn from the experience and recognise similar situations in the future.*

Bearing these things in mind, here are several things to consider when aiming to make sense of emotions.

### *Making Sense Of Emotions*

*The main emotion you feel – such as joy, happiness, pleasure, peace, feeling out of control, pain, disappointment, hurt, anger, confusion or mixed feelings - can be the result of many things.*

- *It can be because of something you have done;*
- *It can be because of something that has happened;*
- *It is then up to you to choose how you want to manage the emotion.*

*Something the person has done may have contributed towards causing the feeling*

A person may have done something that led to them feeling joyful, happy or towards other people feel valued.

It can be important to recognise what they did right – such as how they behaved – that led to this feeling. They may be able to follow these principles to create similar feelings in the future.

A person may also have done something that led to themselves or other people feeling sad, hurt or upset.

It can be important to recognise what they did that led to the feeling. They can then focus on what they can do instead – such as what they can improve - to create better feelings in the future.

*Something may have happened that contributed towards causing the feeling*

A person may have experienced something that led to them feeling sad, hurt or helpless. They may have been on the receiving end of a personal attack, dirty fighting, injustice or another event that caused harm.

Sometimes it can be important to clarify what actually happened. This can help to explain the emotions they are experiencing.

For example, later in the book we will look at double bind situations. These are situations where, whatever a person does, they feel bound to lose.

Being on the receiving end of a double bind can lead to a person continuing to carry the pain. Recognising that it wasn't their fault can help them. They can also aim to avoid such situations in the future.

Let's consider an even more challenging scenario. It can be hard for people to manage emotions such as grief, sorrow or trauma. Sometimes this process can be facilitated with the help of a skilled counsellor.

Al Siebert, author of *The Survivor Personality*, specialised in helping people who had been in traumatic situations. Many of these people demonstrated resilience but some also benefited from counselling.

He wrote a piece called *Guidelines for Listening to War Veterans*. Here are some of Al's suggestions for listening to returning soldiers. Simply listening can sometimes help people on their healing journey.

*Al Siebert*

*Guidelines For  
Listening To War Veterans*

*People who have survived highly distressing experiences will usually talk with a good listener who will take time to hear the whole story.*

*If you are willing to listen to someone speak truthfully about all their experiences, here are useful guidelines to follow.*

- *Don't ask about a person's experiences unless you can handle honest answers.*

*Don't open someone up and then chicken out when the story gets too rough. Survivors of horrifying experiences will usually talk to a person who has the courage to listen.*

- *Give the person lots of time.*

*Vietnam veterans found the average person could listen for only several minutes. When a veteran is willing to talk, it is important to allow them plenty of time to talk. Plan to listen for hours. Expect to have some follow up sessions.*

- *Be an active listener.*

*Ask for details. Ask about feelings. Ask questions when you feel puzzled about facts or incidents.*

- *Remain quiet if he or she starts crying.*

*Don't tell the person to not feel what he's feeling. Leave their thoughts and feelings alone. Your quiet presence is more useful than anything else you can do.*

- *Listen with empathy, but minimize sympathy.*

*Survivors of horrible experiences talk more easily to a person with calm concern. Don't make the veteran have to handle your emotional reactions as well as his or her own.*

- *Ask if he or she sees anything positive about being in combat.*

*It is not accurate to think of most war veterans as having a post-traumatic stress disorder. Some do. The majority do not. The extreme circumstances that cause emotional trauma for some people cause others to become stronger.*

## *Managing Emotions In Organisations*

People need to manage their own emotions, but organisations can sometimes play a part in helping them to take this step. This approach was highlighted during Covid-19. The following pages describe how one company took these steps.

### *Positive Organisations During Covid*

*They aimed to connect with their people and encourage them:*

-  *To take care of themselves and their loved ones;*
-  *To take care of today's business and tomorrow's business;*
-  *To take care of shaping a positive future.*

The leadership team began by clarifying the organisation's strategy. This focused on taking care of their people, managing the present situation and shaping the future.

Treating people like adults, they communicated the strategy to everybody in the organisation. They did this in a positive but realistic way. They aimed:

*To explain that people would be supported and helped to manage the present situation;*

*To explain the organisation's strategy – including the action steps it would take – to manage the present situation and shape the future;*

*To explain that people would be invited to contribute to shaping the future.*

The leaders then focused on connecting with individuals and, where appropriate, helping them to manage specific challenges. This also enabled people to feel more ready to tackle the business challenges. They focused on the following themes.

*They encouraged people to take care of themselves and their loved ones*

The company offered one-to-one sessions to people across the organisation. The CEO positioned these by giving people the following messages.

*"As you know, we want to involve people in using their strengths to implement the company's strategy.*

*"We also want to offer people practical tools that they can use to shape the future for themselves and other people.*

*"Bearing this in mind, we will be sending you an invitation to a one-to-one session. The sessions are voluntary. They will be confidential and you can explore any themes they wish.*

*"We hope that these will offer practical ideas that you can use to shape a positive future for the company and for yourself."*

Framing the session in this way provided the opportunity: a) to offer individuals some practical tools; b) to give them the chance to explore specific challenges.

Many people took advantage of the sessions. Everybody's situation was different, of course, and individuals faced different challenges. Here are some examples that emerged.

*They may be concerned about their finances ... They may be caring for a parent with dementia ... They may need to take care of their physical or psychological health ... They may find it hard to connect with the people in their team when working remotely.*

*They may have difficulty juggling home schooling and work ... They may have planned on moving to a new job but this disappeared when the lockdown came ... They may be facing other personal or professional challenges.*

People were helped to take more control of shaping their futures. They then felt more able to move on to the next theme the company explored.

*They encouraged people to take care of today's business and tomorrow's business*

The company wanted to involve people in taking this step. The CEO explained this approach to them in the following way.

*"We have clarified our strategies for taking care of today's business and tomorrow's business.*

*"These describe the actions we can take within our own company and also to help our customers.*

*"The strategies we aim to follow to manage today's business are:*

*"To ...*

*"To ...*

*"To ...*

*"The strategies we aim to follow to shape tomorrow's business are:*

*"To ...*

*"To ...*

*"To ...*

*"We have appointed mission holders who will be leading task forces that will focus on specific elements of these strategies.*

*"If you wish, you can choose the topic that interests you and join the task force that is focusing on this issue.*

*"The task forces will then present their ideas for implementing the strategies successfully. People can also add other suggestions for taking care of both today's business and tomorrow's business."*

The leadership team set the overall strategies. They then gave people the chance to contribute within these guidelines and also add other suggestions.

Here are the exercises that the company gave to people. It then involved people in translating the ideas into action. This gave people a sense of ownership – within parameters - of helping to shape the future.

## *Today's Business*

*The strategies we can follow - and the specific things we can do - to manage today's business and build a successful future are:*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

## *Tomorrow's Business*

*The strategies we can follow - and the specific things we can do - to shape tomorrow's business and build a successful future are:*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

*They encouraged people to take care of shaping a positive future*

People are more likely to feel motivated when they are working towards a long-term aim. The company therefore encouraged people to focus on their longer-term personal and professional goals.

People needed to do good work on a day-to-day basis. The company also encouraged them to also lift their heads, however, and focus on their longer-term picture of success.

This was vital as lockdown followed lockdown because some people became dispirited. They found it difficult to know when the situation would change.

Some people enjoyed working from home during the first lockdown. They felt like they were in a 1500 metre race and could see the end in sight. But then things changed. People were told they were actually in a marathon.

Some people reframed the situation quickly, but others found it more difficult. People can do good work by focusing on one day at a time. But they feel much better if they are working towards a long-term goal.

The mentoring sessions therefore provided people with practical tools they could use: a) to manage the present situation; b) to shape a positive future. The aims were to help their people and the company to achieve ongoing success.

Let's move on to another theme regarding emotions. As mentioned earlier, feelings are the materiel of life. It can therefore be useful to learn how to take the following step.

## *Making Good Use Of Emotions*

Don Clifton, the author of *Now, Discover Strengths*, was once asked about a certain person's potential. A positive person, he was also realistic and answered along the following lines.

*"The person has strengths and shows promise, but I do not know how good they can become. I will be able to answer better after I see how they deal with setbacks."*

Some people react to setbacks by choosing to develop. Some choose to blame the world. Some ask the following questions:

*"How can I use this feeling to help other people? How can I use it to encourage people, improve life or build a better world?"*

Jakob von Uexkull chose to translate his concern about the planet into creating The Right Livelihood Awards. These became known as the Alternative Nobel Prizes.

He sold his successful stamp trading business to fund the first five years of the awards. His initial move was to approach the Nobel Foundation. The original categories for the prizes had been set in a different world, said Jakob. Bearing this in mind, he asked:

*"Would it be possible to create awards for people tackling the present challenges facing humankind?"*

The Nobel Foundation were polite, but said that no new categories would be added. He responded by creating the Right Livelihood Awards.

The first ceremony was held in Stockholm in a rented hall in 1980. Now they are given in the Swedish Parliament. The aims are:

*To honour and support those offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges facing us today.*

Jakob explains that he chose the term Right Livelihood to symbolise 'the whole life'. It should focus not only on what people do, but how they live their lives.

These awards are given to individuals and groups who have done practical work to help people and the planet.

### *Right Livelihood*

*Right Livelihood is a Buddhist term. In the context of work it refers to earning a living in a way that does not harm others or the world. It encompasses the following principles.*

- *Right View ... Right Intention*
- *Right Speech ... Right Action*
- *Right Livelihood ... Right Effort*
- *Right Mindfulness ... Right Concentration*

The awards are now globally recognised. Wangari Maathai actually gained the Right Livelihood Award in 1984 and the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004. Here are just two people from the many hundreds that have won Right Livelihood awards over the past 40 years.

*Ela Bhatt, Self-Employed  
Women's Association, India*

*Ela helped poorly paid self-employed women to organise and create SEWA. This led to improving their welfare, opportunities and sense of self-determination. It set up scores of cooperatives – often comprising more than 1,000 people - and trade groups to share skills and expertise.*

*SEWA also established its own bank. This freed thousands of women from money lenders and to recover their possessions from pawnbrokers. Ela explained this in the following way.*

*"From a miserable passive acceptance of all the injustices, SEWA women, by organising themselves, have attained the courage to stand up and fight, the ability to think, act, react, manage and lead.*

*"Self-reliance is what they ultimately want. There is no development without self-reliance. But there is no route to self-reliance except by organisation."*

Ela has continued to work for justice and help people around the world. The Foundation's site explains:

*She is a member of The Elders, founded by Nelson Mandela. In 2010 she was awarded the Niwano Peace Prize and the first ever Global Fairness Award.*

*In 2011, Harvard University awarded her the Radcliffe Institute Medal for her life and work. Also in 2011, Ela Bhatt was appointed to the Board of the Reserve Bank of India. The same year, she was selected for the prestigious Indira Gandhi Prize.*

### *Inge Genefke, The International Rehabilitation Council For Torture Victims, Denmark*

Dr Inge Genefke began working with torture victims during the 1970s and went on to become medical director of The International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT). Its aims included:

*To rehabilitate people who have been tortured and to care for their families;*

*To educate people in the treatment of torture victims;  
To contribute to the prevention of torture.*

Here is an excerpt from the organisation's website that describes some of her work.

*Inge sees the right to rehabilitation as a pivotal step in the life after torture, giving survivors hope and a means to continue their lives and obtain employment.*

*Her compassion for the survivors of torture she has met in her work, knowing their harrowing stories and seeing their faces, has given her sleepless nights but thankfully, and most importantly, a will to see that nothing is impossible.*

*The IRCT continues with its necessary work around the world. It keeps the human spirit alive and has drawn the following response from the Dalai Lama:*

*"Your organisation is actually compassion implemented."*



*Ela Bhatt*



*Inge Genefke*

Different people choose different ways to make good use of their emotions. Sometimes these involve simple acts of kindness.

Sometimes they involve doing practical things they help people to shape a positive future.

Let's return to your own work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to manage your emotions in a helpful way? You may anticipate overcoming a setback, tackling a challenge or dealing with a difficult situation.

What can you do then to choose your way forward? How can you manage your emotions in a way that helps yourself or other people? What may happen as a result of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Managing Emotions In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future  
when I may want to manage  
emotions in a helpful way may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to  
manage the emotions in a helpful way are:*

\*

\*

\*

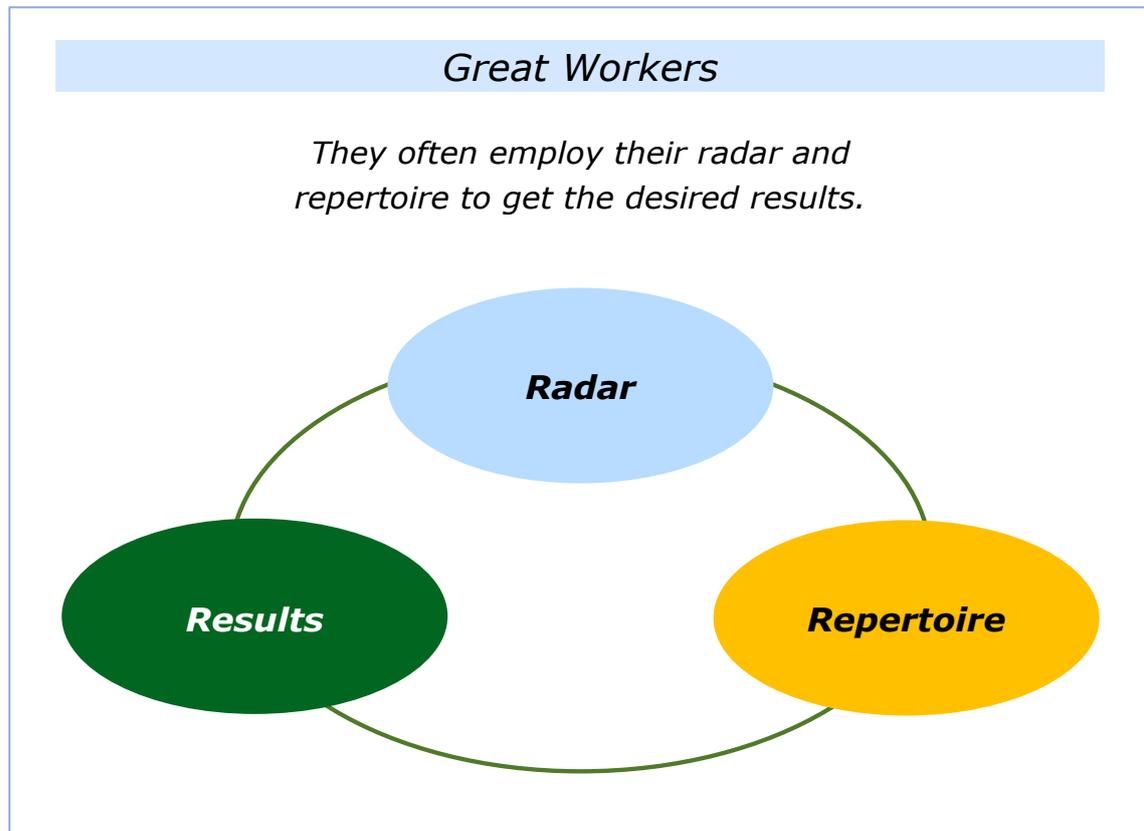
*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Radar, Repertoire And Results Approach*



Great workers have good radar in the activities where they excel. They seem to know what will happen before it happens.

Al Siebert, author of *The Survivor Personality*, called this gift personal radar. He first noticed it when studying paratroopers who had survived challenging experiences.

Many survivors demonstrated a specific characteristic. Al described this in the following way.

*"During our training I noticed that combat survivors have a type of personal radar always on scan. Anything that happens, or any noise draws a quick, brief look. They have a relaxed awareness.*

*"I began to realise it wasn't just luck or fate that these were the few who came back alive. Something about them as people had tipped the scales in their favour."*

AI saw a link between survivors and peak performers in different fields. Such people demonstrate the following qualities.

### *Radar*

*They have good radar in the activity where they excel. They see patterns quickly and seem to know what will happen before it happens. Such radar often springs from a natural talent, but it increases as people develop.*

### *Repertoire*

*They have a wide repertoire of tools – knowledge, strategies and skills – in the activity where they excel. They continue to add to their repertoire as they gather more experience and wisdom.*

### *Results*

*They use their radar to gather information. They then reach into their repertoire and select the appropriate strategy to work towards the desired results.*

Great retailers, for example, often have an intuitive feeling for market trends and selling. Walking into a store, they can immediately point out several things that can be done improve the business.

Ellen MacArthur, the round-the-world yachtswoman, talked about reading the waves to anticipate future sailing conditions. She then worked out the strategy for reaching her destination.

## *Clarifying where you have good radar*

Where do you have good radar? You may demonstrate this when doing specific activities, solving particular problems or operating in certain situations.

What do you do then to do your best to deliver the desired results? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

### *Radar*

*The specific activity where  
I have good radar is:*

\*

*The specific things I do to use my radar  
and do my best to achieve the desired  
results when doing this activity are:*

\*

\*

\*

You may have good radar in some situations but not in others. It is important to know:

*How to build on this ability in the situations where you have good radar;*

*How to manage any situations where you don't have good radar.*

Different people use different names for this ability. Some call it personal radar; some call it scanning; some call it taking pictures; some call it having a sixth sense; some call it strategic intuition.

Arsène Wenger, the former football manager, described how great players were continually scanning to see what is happening on the field. Below are extracts from a talk he gave that was published on the website Training Ground Guru.

### *Top players have radar in their heads*

*Arsène Wenger says a top player has a 'head like a radar' and that more work needs to be done on perception and decision making at young ages.*

*"I came to the conclusion that it is about getting as much information as possible before (getting) the ball. I call that scanning.*

*"I try to see what happens to a player in the ten seconds before he gets the ball, how many times he takes information and the quality of information he takes. It depends on the position.*

*"What is interesting is that very good players scan six to eight times in the ten seconds before getting the ball and normal ones three to four times. That is a major step for improvement."*

Arsène described the ability: a) to see what is happening; b) to anticipate what may happen. Then then comes the next step. This is developing the ability use this knowledge and make things happen.

## *Clarifying where you have a good repertoire*

Radar is a good the starting point and this ability grows with age and experience. But you may need to develop your repertoire of skills to capitalise on such insight. This will enable you to move from awareness to action to achievement.

Arsène Wenger underlined the importance of players learning to make good decisions with the information they got from scanning. He described this in the following way.

### *The quality of perception and decision making*

*"My challenge is to get my players to know which the best choice is and make the optimal decision every time they get the ball.*

*"The player has to scan and decide. When he has decided he has to make the best possible solution. This means a compromise between risk and the progress of the ball."*

Great workers find their radar gives them the time and space to use their talents to deliver great results. Wayne Gretzky, the ice hockey player, is often quoted as saying that he scored so many goals because:

*"I skate to the part of the rink where the puck will appear."*

Wayne had great radar on the rink. He also developed a repertoire of skills to deliver results.

Radar is given – but the greatest area for growth is in expanding your repertoire. There are many components in your repertoire. These include your:

*Strengths - the natural talents you have been given;*

*Strategies - the knowledge, models and wisdom you have gathered;*

*Skills - the tools and techniques you have developed to get results.*

What is the activity where you have good radar and also a wide repertoire? How can you improve your repertoire? How can you keep developing and adding to your strengths, strategies and skills?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Repertoire*

*The specific activity where I have the radar and the repertoire to deliver the desired results is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to keep adding to my repertoire are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Clarifying how you can use your radar and repertoire to deliver results*

Great workers reach into their repertoire and use the right tools to achieve the required results. The route they take will depend on whether they work as a counsellor, educator, engineer, athlete, crisis manager or whatever.

People often start by clarifying the picture of success. They then try different strategies to see what works. Pursuing their chosen route, they employ their skills to work towards achieving success. One counsellor explained what they did in the following way.

*"Every client is different, but I do follow a certain model. Meeting a troubled person, I make them feel welcome and quickly look for behavioural patterns.*

*"I then imagine what I want them to be feeling, thinking and saying when they leave the session. This is the picture of success.*

*"Drawing on my experience, I use different strategies to help the person to tackle their challenges. I keep going until we find practical ways forward that they believe in.*

*"We then settle on the steps they want to take towards achieving their goals. The aim is to keep doing my best to ensure the person feels the session has been successful."*

Great workers keep putting themselves into places where they can use their radar. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to take this step?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites to describe a specific situation where you may want to use your radar. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Radar In The Future*

*The specific situation where I may want to use my radar and repertoire to deliver results may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to use my radar and repertoire to deliver the desired results are:*

\*

\*

\*

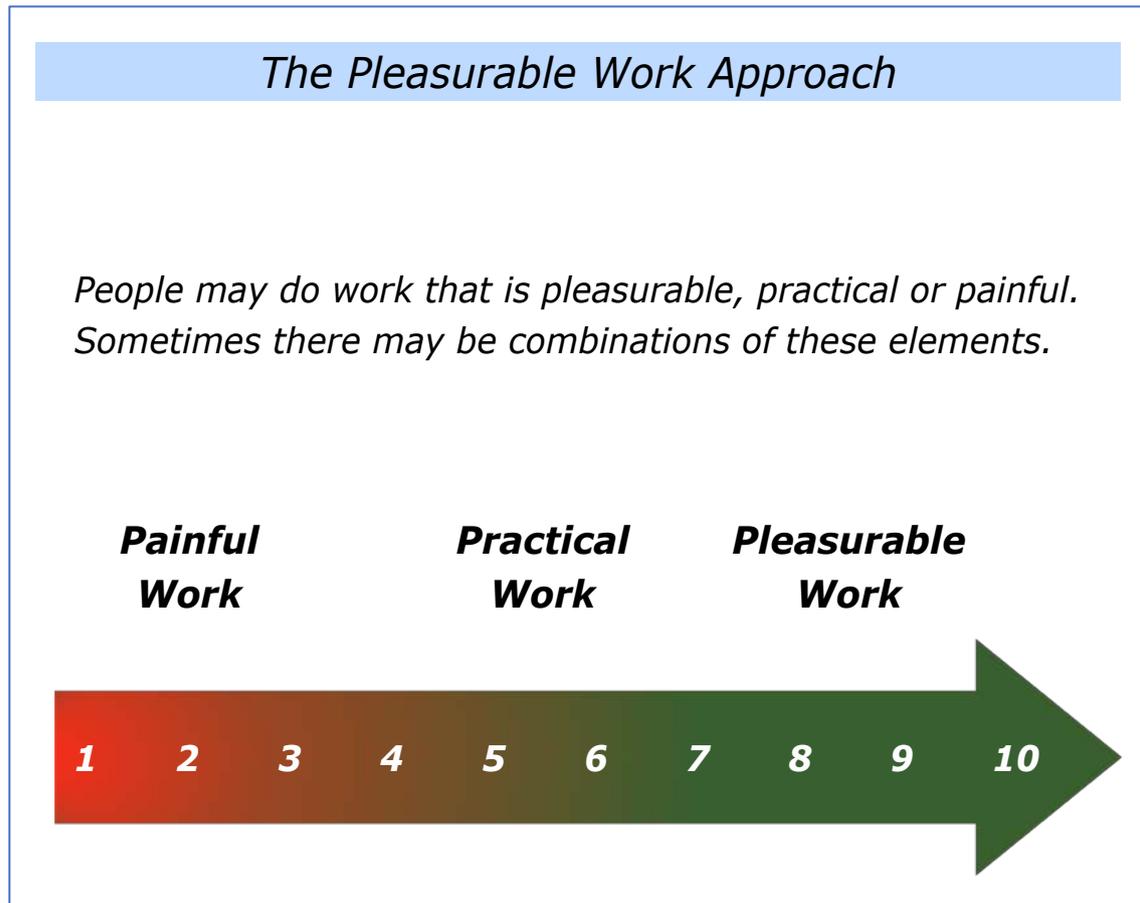
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## The Pleasurable Work Approach



Some kinds of work are pleasurable, some are practical, some are painful. Each person will have different feelings about the various kinds of work. One approach is to take the following steps:

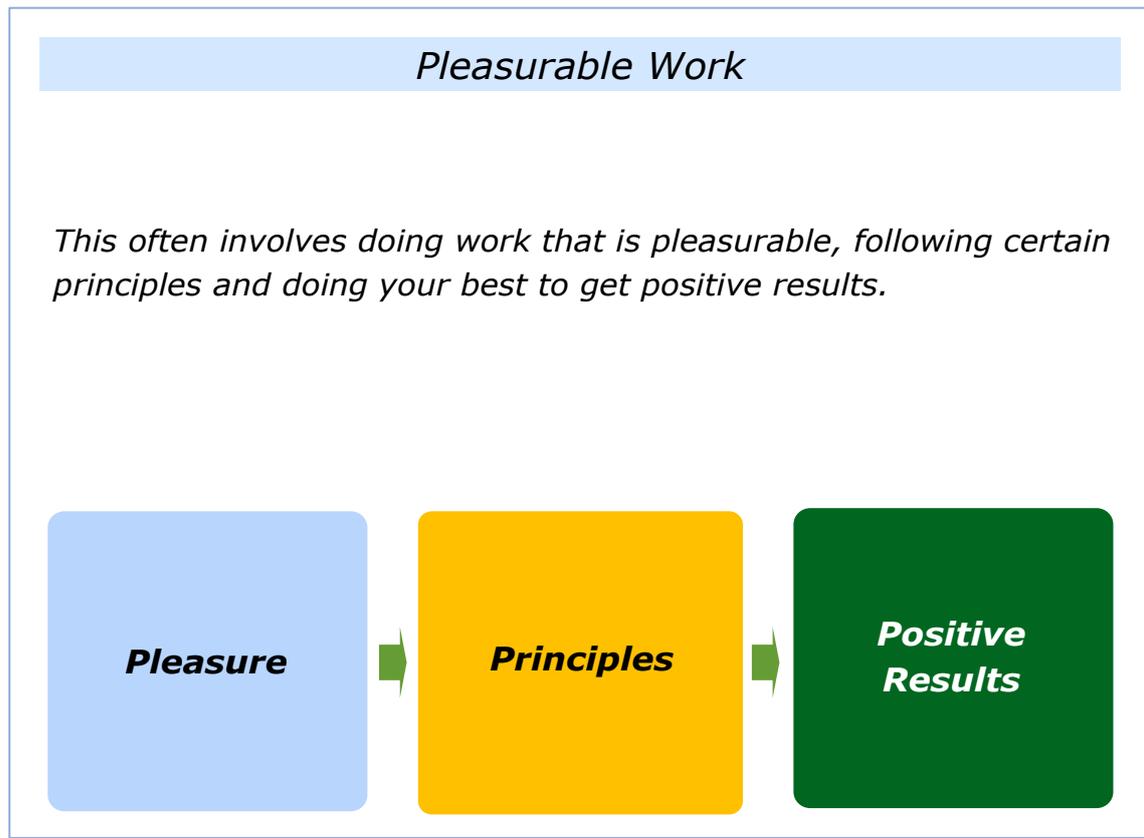
*To do the kinds of work you find pleasurable or that may give pleasure to other people, to follow your principles and aim to get positive results;*

*To manage the kinds of work that are practical and necessary - or to find pleasure in doing some of these;*

*To do less of the work that are painful – some of this work may be necessary but, over the long-term, it can be debilitating.*

Let's explore each of these kinds work and how you can translate these into action.

## *Pleasurable Work*

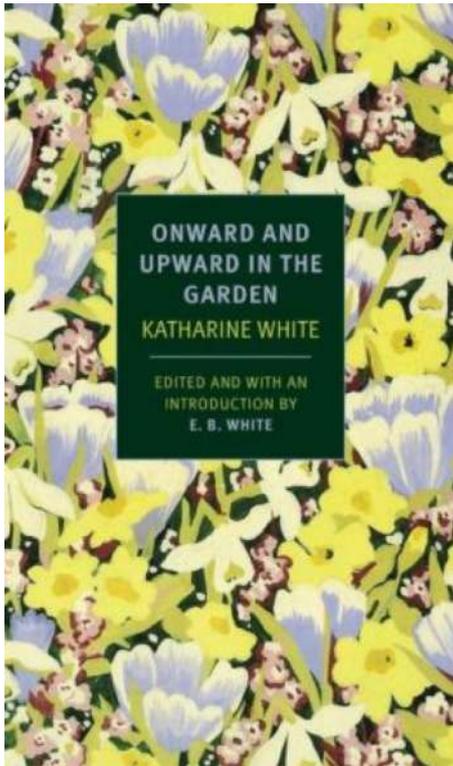


What are the kinds of work that you find pleasurable or that give pleasure to other people? What are the principles you follow then? How do you do your best to get positive results?

You may love helping people, solving specific problems, passing on knowledge or doing other activities. You may do fine work in a role where you help other people to enjoy positive experiences.

E.B. White described how his wife Katherine loved to do such work. In the *Introduction* to her book *Onward and Upward in the Garden*, he explains how every year she spent days planning the future work.

She continued this loving ritual even when nearing the end of her days. Below is a piece that E.B. White wrote about Katherine.



*As the years went by and age overtook her, there was something comical yet touching in her bedraggled appearance on this awesome occasion - the small, hunched-over figure, her studied absorption in the implausible notion that there would be yet another spring, oblivious to the ending of her own days, which she knew perfectly well was near at hand, sitting there with her detailed (garden) chart under those dark skies in the dying October, calmly planning the resurrection.*

Looking ahead, what are the specific kinds of pleasurable work you would like to do in the future? How can you translate this into doing a piece of work or a project?

What are the principles you would like to follow when doing this work? How can you translate these into action? How can you then do your best to get the desired positive results?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Pleasurable Work*

*The specific kinds of pleasurable work that I would like to do in the future – such as a piece of work or a project - is:*

\*

*The specific principles I want to follow when doing this work are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to do my best to get positive results are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Practical Work*

What are the kinds of work you do that are practical and perhaps necessary? How can you manage this practical work? How can you maybe find pleasure in doing some of this work?

Different people choose different ways to tackle these tasks. One approach is to take control by being proactive. It is to get ahead of the game by exploring the following themes.

### *Preparation*

*The specific tasks I need to prepare properly for in my life and work are ... The steps I can take to prepare for these practical tasks are ...*

### *Practical Tasks*

*The specific practical tasks I need to keep doing in my life and work are ... The steps I can take to manage these tasks are ... The specific things I can do to maybe find pleasure in doing some of these tasks are ...*

### *Positive Solutions*

*The specific positive solutions I can find for getting some of these tasks done – such as earning money to pay people to do them or finding other solutions – are ... The specific benefits of taking these steps may be ...*

Great workers aim to be proactive. They prepare properly and make sure all the practical tasks get done. This provides the platform for them to perform at their best.

How can you take some of these steps in your own way? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Practical Work*

*The specific kinds of practical and perhaps necessary work that I may need to do are:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to manage these kinds of work – and maybe even find some of them pleasurable - are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Painful Work*

What are the kinds of work that you find painful? How can you do less of this work? How can you manage this in the future?

People can find it debilitating to do such work. Some accept it as part of the job; some find ways to manage the painful aspects; some develop healthy or unhealthy coping mechanisms.

Many people try to numb themselves to the pain. They find ways to survive a two-hour daily commute, deal with pointless tasks or cope with a negative culture.

Some find the pain accumulates and expresses itself in different symptoms. Feeling out of control, they experience physical or psychological pain. The pain may spur the person to move on.

They may need help to take this step, however, because it can be challenging: a) to retake control of their lives; b) to regain their confidence; c) to take the practical steps to doing pleasurable work.

Regarding the topic of pain, there is one piece of counter-intuitive advice that is sometimes given to people. This is:

*"You may find it helpful to - at some point in your life - take a job that is really painful. Not one that is just boring, because that leaves scope for daydreaming. Take one that scratches your soul."*

This sounds crazy, but there is a logic behind the advice. The painful work can stoke the hunger to find satisfying work. People who do work they love often have a sense of gratitude. Looking back on their life, they may say something like the following.

*"I feel lucky to do my present job. Sometimes I feel somebody is going to tap me on the shoulder and say:*

*'Right, your time is up. It's time for you to go back to the place where you came from. This is a great motivator. It inspires me to keep improving in my work.'*

John McDermott underlined this point in an article called *Why You Should Work A Job You Hate*. Here are excerpts from the piece.

*I got out before it crushed my soul - and have appreciated every job I've had since. The most important lesson I learned, though, was that the key to professional development is - for a short while, at least - to work a job you hate.*

*Anyone who believes a dream job doesn't require a sizable amount of work probably lacks the work ethic to excel at any profession, let alone their dream one.*

*It's best if the job you hate comes early in your career, and even better if your hate-job is the last one you hold before embarking on your passion. Not a job you merely tolerate because it affords you a comfortable living; I mean one so unbearable that not even tripling your salary would assuage your disdain.*

*A job so bad that you lie awake Sunday nights, racked with dread about the workweek that lies ahead. A job that has the capacity to bring you to the verge of tears while you work at it.*

*You should work a job you hate so much that you're willing to suffer through any sort of circumstance for a job you enjoy. And until you experience the former, you'll never really understand the value of the latter.*

Let's return your own work. How can you find ways to manage any painful aspects of your work? At one point may it become too much? What can you do then to take charge of shaping your future?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Painful Work*

*The specific kinds of painful work that I may do are:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to do less of painful work or manage it in a healthy way are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Pleasurable Paradox*

There are many models for doing fine work. One approach is to learn from athletes who aim to perform at their best in sports.

An athlete may spend ten years working towards their big day in the Olympic Games. How can they approach such an event?

One way is to hype themselves up because they really want to win the prize. This can work, but it can also lead to tightening up.

Another approach is for them to do everything possible to prepare for the event. It is then to follow the principles they believe in to perform at their best both physically and psychologically.

This sometimes calls for seeing the event in perspective. They can define themselves by whether or not they do their best rather than by if they win the prize. The event is important, but their life will go on afterwards.

How can they enter this psychological zone? Sometimes we are at our bravest and do our best work when we have nothing to lose. Bearing this in mind, athletes sometimes pursue the following path.

*Prepare as though you have everything to gain.*

*Perform as though you have nothing to lose.*

There is a similar approach to doing pleasurable work. This involves focusing on the following steps.

## *The Pleasurable Paradox*

*This sometimes involves the following steps:*

***To keep giving and  
helping people to gain***

***To find that, in the  
process, you may also gain***

The aim is to give to people and help them to succeed. It is important to be savvy, of course, and not become a victim or resentful. One by-product of giving, however, is that you may also gain.

Let's return to your life and work. Looking ahead, what is the kind of pleasurable work you would like to do that may help other people? This could be to help a person or a group of people.

How can you do this pleasurable work? What are the principles you want to follow? How can you encourage yourself on the journey? What will be the benefits – both for other people and yourself?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Pleasurable Work That Helps Other People*

*The specific kind of pleasurable work I would like to do to help a person or group of people is:*

\*

*The specific steps I can take to do this kind of pleasurable work are:*

\*

\*

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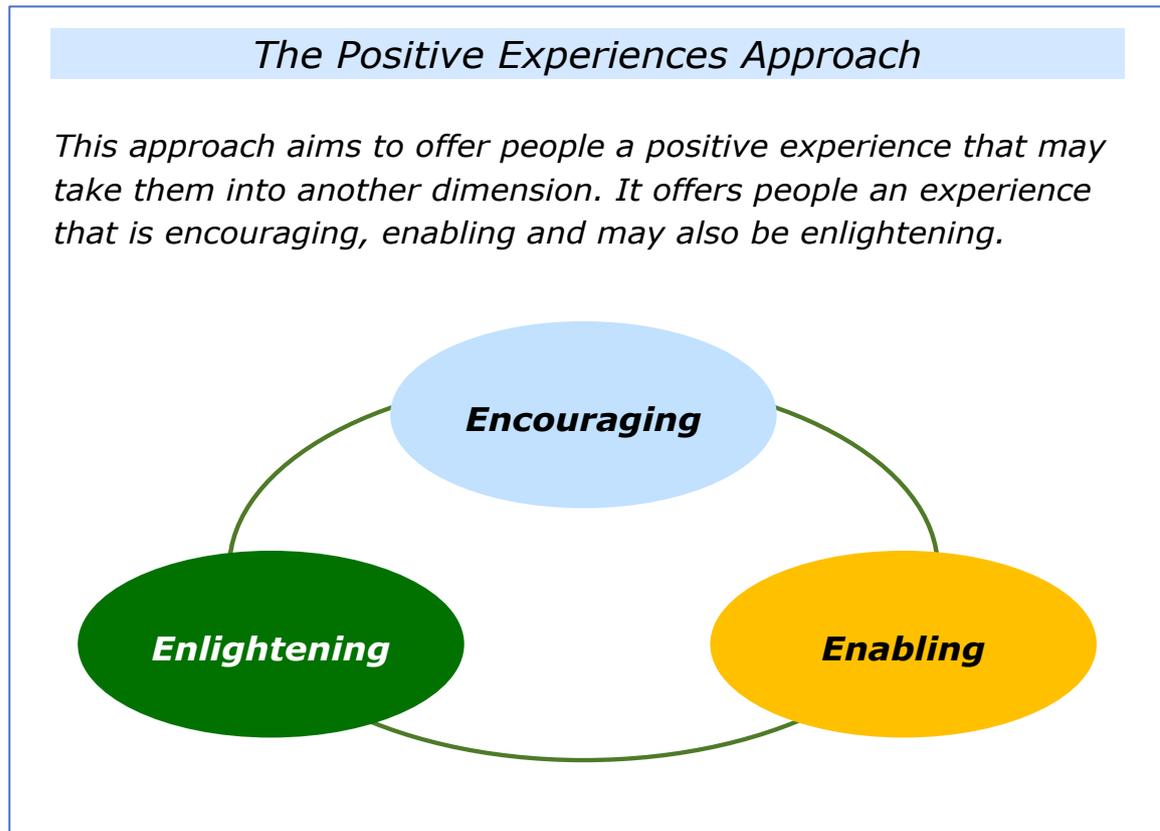
*The specific benefits of doing this kind of pleasurable work may be:*

\*

\*

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## The Positive Experiences Approach



There are many ways to help people. One approach is to offer them positive experiences that may take them into another dimension. These may be encouraging, enabling and even enlightening.

People often develop by going into another dimension. They may be learning, working, listening to music, appreciating beauty, seeing new paradigms or doing another activity. They may then apply the insights they gained from the experience.

When have you aimed to offer people such a positive experience? This could have been in your personal or professional life. What did you do to make it encouraging, enabling and maybe even enlightening?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Positive Experiences Approach In The Past*

*The specific situation when I aimed to  
offer people a positive experience was:*

\*

*The specific things I did to make it  
encouraging and, if appropriate,  
enabling and even enlightening were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that  
happened as a result were:*

\*

\*

\*

The work I do has been influenced by many positive artists. These were educators, writers, singers and people in all walks of life. They were grounded in reality but lifted people's souls. Such people often aimed:

*To study people performing at their best;*

*To share positive knowledge about people performing at their best;*

*To share practical tools that people can use to perform at their best.*

The following pages describe some ways I tried to build on the lessons passed on by such positive artists.

### *The Happiness Approach*

This section describes an exercise I used in the early 1970s when running five-day courses that encouraged people to build on their strengths. These were mainly held in Scandinavia.

The participants came from all walks of life and were paid for by their employers. There were normally between 24 and 30 people on each course. The first days were devoted to inviting people to do exercises around the following themes.

*When do I feel most creative? How can I do more of these things?  
How can I encourage other people – such as my family members, students or colleagues at work - to do more of things where they feel creative?*

*What are my personal and professional goals? How can I work towards achieving these goals? How can I help other people to work towards their personal or professional goals?*

*What gives me encouragement? How can I do more of these things?  
How can I encourage other people – such as my family members, students or colleagues at work?*

*What are the challenges I may face in the future? How can I manage these challenges successfully? How can I help other people to manage their challenges successfully?*

*What can I do to make my best contribution in my work? How can I encourage other people to make their best contributions? What will be the benefits of doing this for them, the workplace and for society?*

We then moved on to exploring the topic of happiness. As many people have said, this is often the by-product of following certain principles in your life or work.

People were invited to do an exercise taken from the work of people such as Abraham Maslow. Today the exercise may sound rather basic, but many people found it to be valuable on a personal level.

Later we will look at an exercise that is more professionally focused. Before then, however, here are the instructions for the personal exercise.

### *Happiness*

*People are to form groups of three. Each person is to reflect and then go through the following steps. The others in the group are to listen, encourage the person and, if appropriate, ask questions.*

*Each person is:*

- *To describe a happy time in their life.*

*This could have been for a fleeting moment – such as being with their children, walking on the beach, reaching a specific goal or having another experience.*

*This could also have been for a longer period of time - such as when doing a creative project, being in a certain culture or following certain principles in their life.*

- *To describe what they did right then - the principles they followed and how they translated these into action - to help to create the happy time.*

*This is based on the idea that, whilst happiness sometimes just happens to us, there are often things we do to create the conditions for such experiences.*

- *To describe how they may want to follow these principles in the future.*

*This gives people the chance to focus on how they can follow similar principles – plus perhaps adding other skills – to maybe experience happiness in the future.*

- *To draw a picture of themselves in the happy time and also to include the principles they followed to be happy.*

People were given one hour in the groups but we found they often wanted longer to do the exercise. Returning to the big group, they put their pictures around the walls and spent time looking at the various posters.

People then moved on to the next stage. This involved individuals clarifying how they could follow their chosen principles in the future.

## *The Extraordinary Work Approach*

Let's move forward thirty years. During the early part of the 2000s I spent five years mentoring for a large software company. This also involved helping people to build superb teams.

The following section describes one occasion when we did this by helping people to go into a positive dimension. The Director of a team contacted me to give the brief. Here is a summary of what he said.

*"Our team is excellent, but we want to go a step further. I believe there are some potential opportunities to do work that is extraordinary.*

*"Bearing this in mind, we have booked a two day workshop at the Training Centre for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. We want to learn from their work and also add other dimensions.*

*"During one session we will do the capsize exercise. This involves us being capsized in a safe environment and rescued by the lifeboat crew.*

*"We would like you to help us to also run sessions on how we can build on our strengths. How can we move from doing work that is excellent to that which is extraordinary?"*

### The RNLi Capsize Training Centre



The Director and I agreed on the outcomes for the workshop. These were to provide them with practical tools that people could use:

*To continue doing excellent work;*

*To choose two projects where they could build on their strengths and do extraordinary work;*

*To deliver these projects in ways that created wins for the customers, wins for the colleagues and wins for the company.*

During the workshop we would help people to learn from positive models and also from their experience at the RNLi. Before the session they were invited to do some homework. They each presented this during the morning session. Here is the exercise.

### *Extraordinary Work*

*We want to continue delivering excellence and also do some extraordinary work. We would therefore like each of you to do the following exercise and present this during the first session.*

- *To describe a team that you believe did extraordinary work.*

*This could be a team you were part of or a team you have learned about. It could be in the arts, medicine, sports, business or any field.*

*It can be useful to give some context regarding the team's background, their work and the results they achieved. This can be presented in a creative way via a flip chart, film or other media.*

- *To describe the principles the team followed - and how they translated these into action - to do extraordinary work.*

*This may require some research. For example: What did they do to clarify their goal, clarify their strategy, coordinate their strengths, find solutions to challenges and achieve the goal?*

- *To describe a specific project where you believe our team can do extraordinary work.*

*This to be based on your view of the team's strengths and potential contribution. It can also be useful to describe the benefits of doing such work.*

*We will explore all these ideas and then settle on the projects where we want to do extraordinary work.*

The first day began with an introduction to doing extraordinary work. The team members then made their presentations. These were engrossing and we only had time for six of the 12 members to present in the morning.

The afternoon involved people being capsized and rescued from the water. This was followed by a talk from the RNLI about how they aimed to translate their purpose into action.

The team continued with the presentations in the evening. Each person then shared what they had learned or relearned during the sessions. We concluded by agreeing on the specific goals to achieve the second day.

The next day began by listing all the potential projects for doing extraordinary work. The Director invited people to vote on these and this resulted in settling on two projects.

A mission holder was appointed for each project – they actually volunteered - and individuals allocated themselves to the projects.

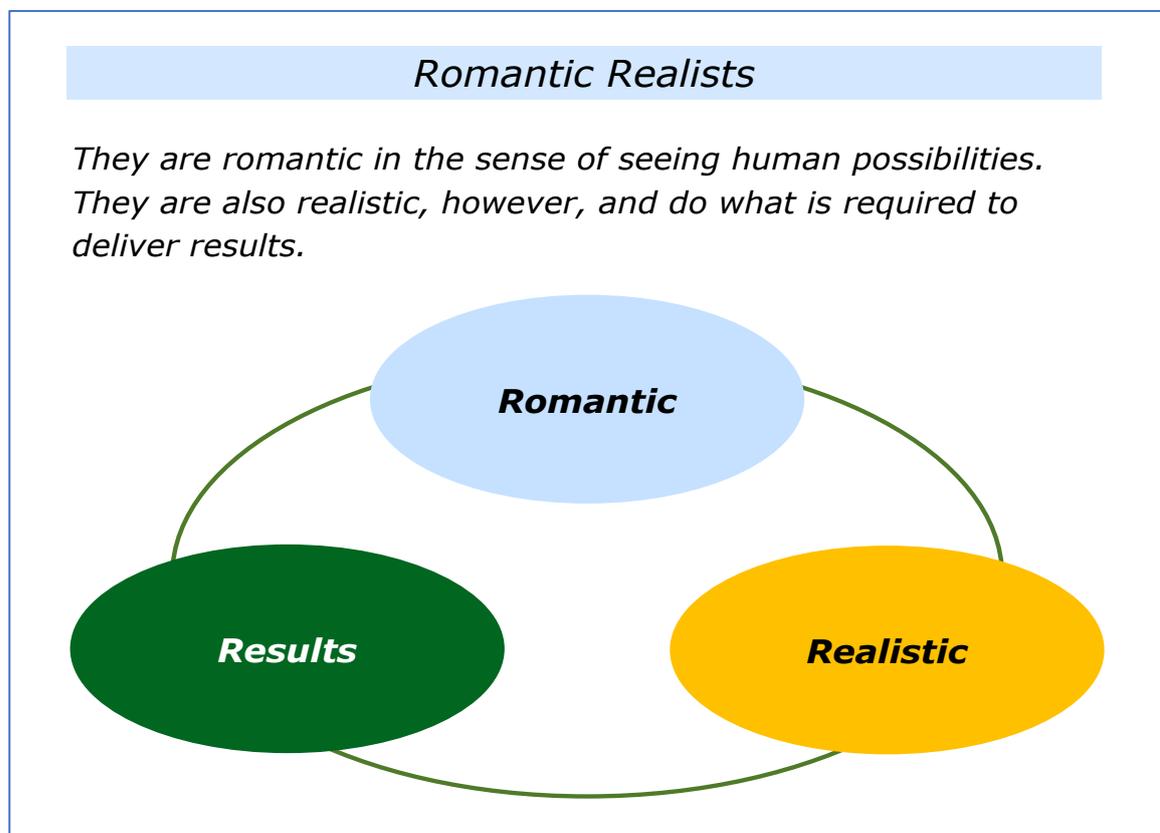
People then went through the normal process of decision making, design and working towards delivery.

The Director was pleased with the planning stage and provided people with the support they needed to do the work. Three months later both projects produced outstanding results and were published as success stories.

Many people in the company rated the work as extraordinary. The team members, however, felt they could have done more. During the next six months several moved on to leadership roles and applied the lessons from their time at the RNLI.

Let's look at another approach that can take people in a positive dimension. This is sometimes followed by what may be called romantic realists. The following pages explore this approach.

## *The Romantic Realist Approach*



Romantic realists aim to build on the positive spirit in people. Whilst believing in humanity's possibilities, they are also practical. They show how people can do superb work during their time on the planet.

Such people have steel. They believe in getting the basics right and then adding the brilliance. They do this by encouraging people to build on solid foundations and then flourish.

Romantic realists recognise that it is vital to deliver results – otherwise they will be accused of being woolly and lacking realism. As we have explored elsewhere in the book, they recognise that:

*If you are going to be a deviant, you have to over-deliver.*

During my early career I met several people who took this path. Alec Dickson took this approach when creating Voluntary Service Overseas and Community Service Volunteers. Henry Pluckrose did it when leading the much-acclaimed Prior Weston Primary School.

There were also many romantic realists who I learned from but never met. These included Maria Montessori, the pioneering educator; Virginia Satir, the family therapist; Paul Hawken, the business leader and environmentalist; and Anita Roddick, the founder of The Body Shop.

Working with sport teams also revealed that some coaches were romantic realists. They built teams based on character, competence, consistency and creativity.

People worked hard to maintain high standards and then, when appropriate, added that touch of class. Such teams sometimes reached the heights and provided positive memories for life.

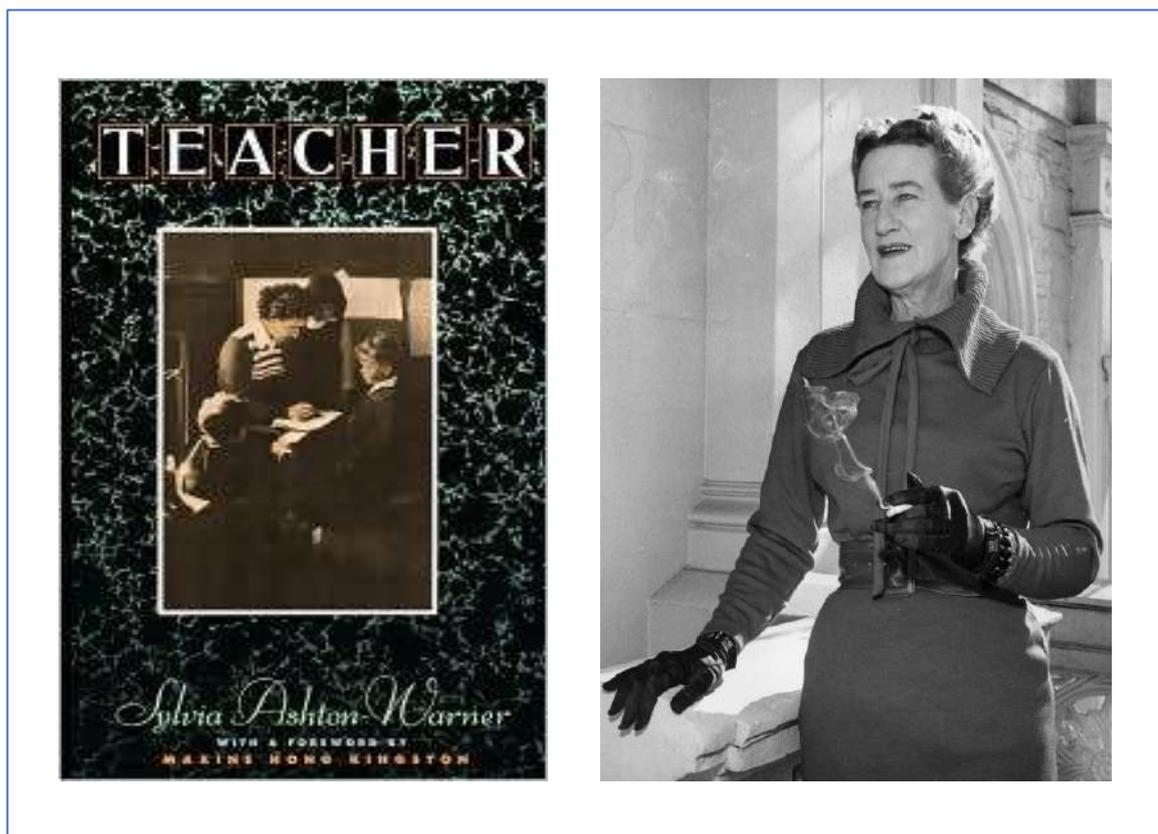
Looking back, can you think of a person who was a romantic realist and delivered results? This could have been somebody you knew or have heard about. The person may have worked in education, therapy, business, art or some other field.

What were the characteristics of this person? What did they do to demonstrate some elements of the romantic realism approach? What happened as a result?

Many of the people I met who took this approach were involved with education. They were encouraging but also expected their students to take responsibility.

The following pages describe one educator who took this approach with children at an early age. She followed elements of the romantic realism path in her own way. The piece is rather long, but it shows how she translated these ideas into action.

### *Sylvia Ashton-Warner – Doing Pioneering Work In Education*



Sylvia was a gifted but complex teacher who worked with Māori children in New Zealand from the 1940s onwards. Experts flocked to study her methods for helping children to learn to read and write.

She produced excellent results, but had the reputation of being somewhat difficult. So what was the secret of her success?

Sylvia believed in organic reading and writing. Learning must be real. It must start from a person's experience and relate to their world.

Children were then able to learn quickly and, in the process, develop their inner strength. Let's explore how this worked in practise, starting with an example that is based on her best-known book *Teacher*.

*Sylvia calls the children to attention each morning by playing the first eight notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.*

*She asks the class to tackle their work, then invites each child to her in turn. Gay is the first child to come to her desk.*

*Sylvia asks: "What word do you want today?"*

*Gay replies: "House."*

*Sylvia writes the word on a piece of cardboard. She then asks Gay to trace the word with her finger and say it out loud. Gay 'owns' the word, it comes from her guts.*

*Sylvia makes sure that Gay says the word, sees the word and feels it in her body. She gives Gay the cardboard and asks her to keep her 'word' for the day.*

*Sylvia repeats the process with each child. When the class finishes, she collects all the words on the separate pieces of cardboard.*

*The next morning Sylvia starts the class by tipping the cardboard words onto the floor. She tells the children:*

*"Find your word."*

*Gay leaps from the chair and rummages in the pile.*

*"House," she shouts, "I have found my word."*

Sylvia believed that children have two visions – these are an inner vision and an outer vision. It is the inner vision which burns brightest. Gay grasps the word which she spoke from her inner vision. She owns the word. It is her word.

Sylvia asks each child to choose a partner, speak their words and hear their partner's words. While the children teach each other, she repeats the process of inviting each child to choose their word for today. They build up what Sylvia calls their Key Vocabulary.

What happens if Gay fails to find her word? Sylvia rips-up the piece of cardboard. The word has failed the 'one look' test and cannot have any great meaning for Gay.

Classrooms often display Jack and Jill illustrations for introducing the reading vocabulary to five-year-olds, said Sylvia, but it is a vocabulary chosen by educationalists in Auckland or London.

Gay owns only those words that come from deep within herself. She is more likely to love these words and want to write them on paper.

Shouldn't these Māori children be learning Oxbridge English? Once they know the joy of creating their own words, says Sylvia, they reach out longingly to learn about other cultures. She believes that:

*"Reaching out for a book must become an organic action."*

Sylvia's recognition that each person has a key vocabulary, a set of words with a special meaning relating to their emotional life, enabled her to develop a reading scheme for children who were otherwise failing at school.

Her methods were controversial at the time – as was some of her behaviour. But her work enabled many people to develop their inner strength and believe in their own experience.

She believed it was vital for children to learn from the wisdom of others. But the best way to stoke a child's hunger to read and write was to focus on the events that made up their daily lives. She wrote:

*Back to these first words; to these first books. They must be made out of the stuff of the child itself.*

*I reach a hand into the mind of the child, bring out a handful of the stuff I find there, and use that as our first working material.*

*And in this dynamic material, within the familiarity and security of it, the Māori finds that words have intense meaning to him, from which cannot help but arise a love of reading.*

*For it is here, right in this first word, that the love of reading is born, and the longer his reading is organic the stronger it becomes, until by the time he arrives at the books of the new culture, he receives them as another joy rather than as a labour.*

Writing in her book *Teacher*, Sylvia explained how she helped children to write by inviting them to draw pictures and add their own captions. They built up their words into sentences and create books about their experiences.

Children wrote one word, then two sentences, then three, until six-year-olds were writing half a page a day and seven-year-olds a page or more a day. Sylvia explained the impact of this method.

### *Children Using Their Key Vocabulary*

Sylvia asked the children to use their key words as the basis for building their own stories. She described in the following way.

*The drama of these writings could never be captured in a bought book. It could never be achieved in the most faithfully prepared teaching books.*

*No one book could ever hold the variety of subjects that appears collectively in the infant room each morning.*

*Moreover, it is written in the language that they use themselves. The books they write are the most dramatic and pathetic and colourful things I've ever seen on pages.*

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation when you may aim to offer people a positive experience? This could be in your personal or professional life.

You may want to do this when encouraging a person, teaching a class, coaching a team, running a workshop or doing another activity. You may do this when acting as a parent, educator, creative artist, trusted advisor, leader or in another role.

How can you do this by building on your strengths? What can you do then to make it an encouraging experience? If appropriate, what can you do to make it enabling and maybe even enlightening?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Positive Experiences Approach In The Future*

*The specific situation when I may aim to offer people a positive experience may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to make it encouraging and, if appropriate, enabling and even enlightening are:*

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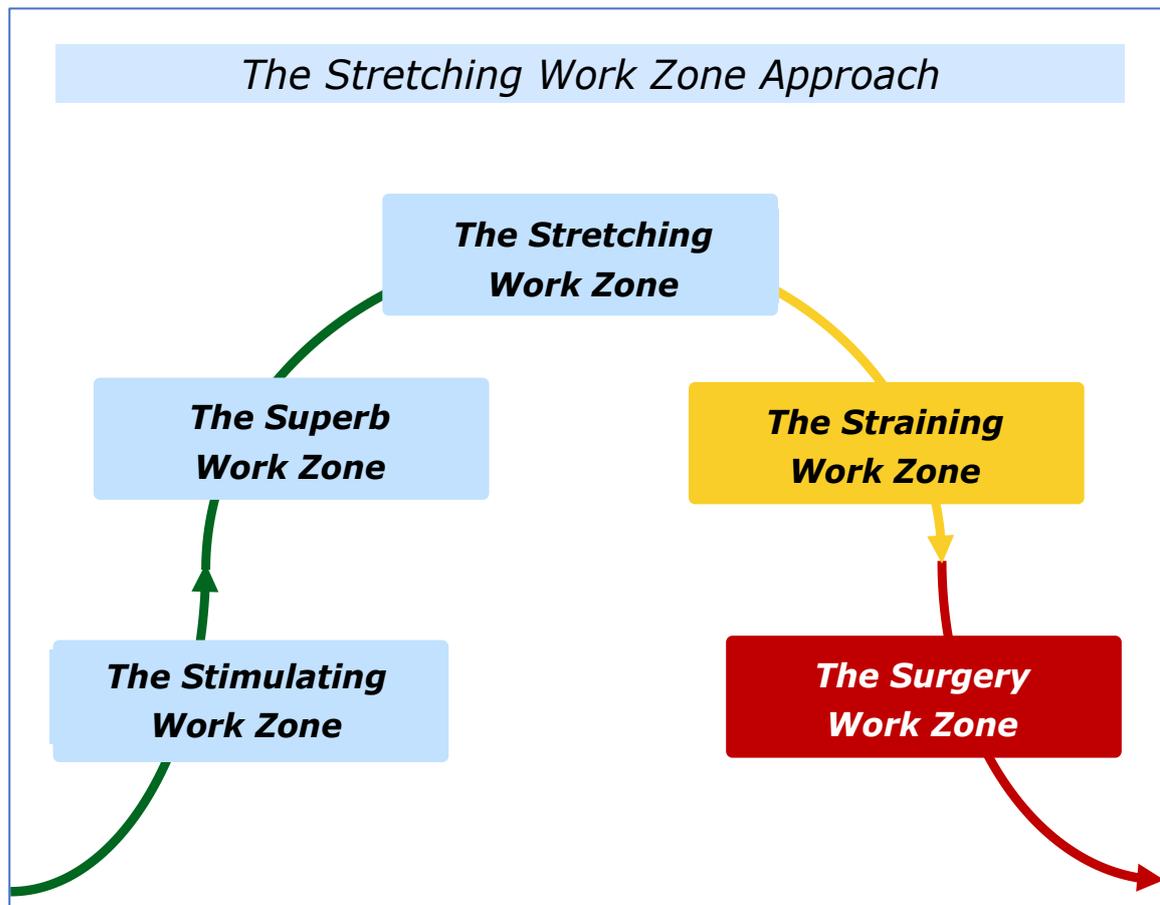
*The specific things that may happen as a result may be:*

\*

\*

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## *The Stretching Work Approach*



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to do work that is stimulating and go on to doing superb work. You may then move onto doing stretching work.

You may stretch yourself to explore new ideas, do deep work and find solutions to challenges. Sometimes this leads to performing even better and applying this knowledge in the future.

You may find it rewarding to stay at the stretching stage for a certain time, but this comes with a health warning. Notice the danger signs if you find yourself straining. Sometimes this can be okay, but you may find yourself going into the surgery zone.

Some companies, for example, go beyond asking people to deliver stretch goals. They ask them to achieve surgery goals. The philosophy seems to be:

*"At the moment people are straining every muscle to keep jumping 2 metres. But let's move the bar up to 4 metres. We will then get a lot of the people to jump 2.5 metres."*

The employees sometimes balk at first, but some get on with trying to reach the new targets. They put in more hours, sleep less and strive to achieve the aims. Sometimes this works for a while, but there are downsides.

People are more likely to deliver ongoing success by aiming for achievable goals and performing superb work. They may also stretch themselves and make breakthroughs. Straining to achieve surgery goals can sometimes lead to breakdowns.

Let's return to your own life and work. When have you followed some elements of the stretching work zone approach? You may have been doing something you really cared about or following a passion.

How did you translate this into doing stimulating work? You may have done a specific project or tackled a particular challenge. What did you see has the benefits of reaching the goals?

How did you then perform superb work? You may have followed certain principles, pursued good habits and managed your energy properly. You may then have delivered consistently high standards and achieved successes.

How did you then stretch yourself? You may have stretched yourself creatively, intellectually or emotionally. You may have taken these steps physically, psychologically or philosophically. What happened as result of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Stretching Work In The Past*

*The specific situation when I went through  
the stages of doing stimulating work,  
superb work and then stretching work was:*

\*

*The specific things I did then  
to do stretching work were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that happened as  
a result of taking these steps were:*

\*

\*

\*

Imagine that you want to do stretching work in the future. Let's look at some of the signs that may indicate that you are doing the different kinds of work.

### *Stimulating Work – The Possible Signs*

You may feel alive, alert and look forward to doing the work. You wake up thinking about what you plan to do that day. You rehearse the strategies you aim to pursue. You follow your ritual for moving into action and then become absorbed in the work.

### *Superb Work – The Possible Signs*

You follow your daily rhythm. You set specific goals and get quick successes. You enjoy the journey. You manage your energy properly, reach your targets and get success. You may also get positive responses about the quality of your work.

### *Stretching Work – The Possible Signs*

You stretch yourself and go into another dimension. You explore, get new ideas and find solutions to challenges. Time goes away and you go into your equivalent of the zone. You sometimes feel tired but learn to rest and refresh yourself. You then go onto the next stage of the journey.

### *Straining Work – The Possible Signs*

You feel negative exhaustion rather than positive exhaustion. You become conscious of strains in your body and soul. You feel tense and grit your teeth. Your brain feels elsewhere. You want to stop what you are doing and take time to heal yourself.

### *Surgery Work – The Possible Signs*

You realise that you have gone too far. You start doing things that hurt you or other people. You get pains in your body, lose concentration or feel down. Sometimes you carry on, but other

times you stop and reflect. You may then decide to refocus on what is important in life.

Looking back at your life, when have you realised that you may have been in the straining zone? What were the warning signs? Were they physical, psychological or a mixture of both?

How did you notice of these signs? How did you begin to take care of yourself? How did you translate your recovery programme into action? What happened as a result?

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation when you may want to do stretching work? You may want to do something your care about, follow a passion or achieve a specific goal.

How can you translate this desire into doing stimulating work? How can you perform superb work? How can you then move into doing stretching work?

How can you manage your energy properly when stretching? How can you keep exploring? How can you stretch yourself creatively, intellectually or in some other way?

How can you be aware of potential warning signs? How can you decide whether you simply need to rest or whether there are real dangers? How can you act on the decision you make?

How can you clarify what you have learned from being in the stretching zone? How can you store this knowledge? How can you, when appropriate, use this knowledge to continue to perform at your best?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Stretching Work In The Future*

*The specific situation when I may want to do stimulating work, superb work and then stretching work may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to go through these stages and do stretching work are:*

\*

\*

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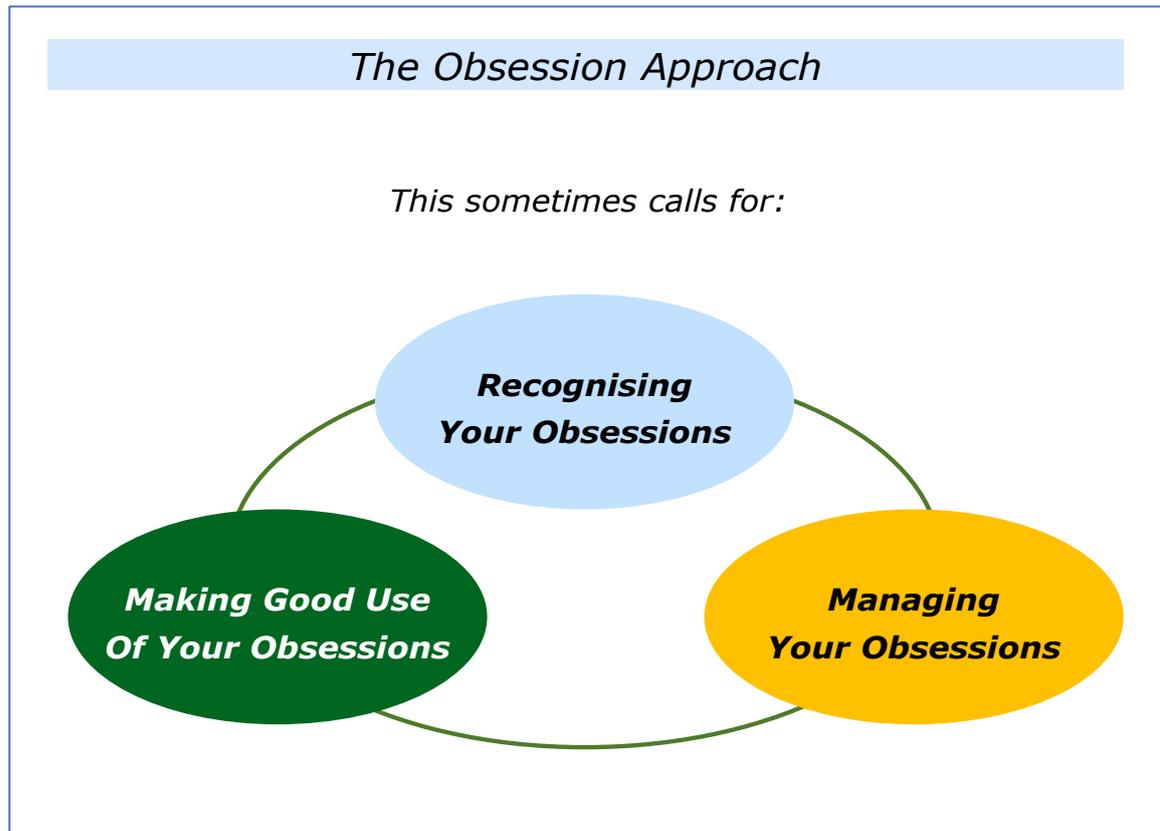
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Obsession Approach*



Great workers are often obsessed by doing certain things. They display elements of OCD – Obsessive Compulsive Discipline. They channel their obsession in a disciplined way to deliver results.

Different people pursue different obsessions. They may feel compelled to encourage people, play the piano, climb mountains, solve certain problems or do other activities.

How can you channel your obsessions? One approach is to recognise, manage and make good use of your obsessions. Let's explore these steps.

### *Recognising Your Obsessions*

What are your obsessions? What does your head keep thinking about? What does your heart keep telling you to do? What do your hands want to fix, create or design?

People like to feel in control. They may develop obsessions in two areas of their lives – consistency and creativity.

The first involves maintaining consistency by following habits in their daily lives. This helps them to feel in charge.

The second involves doing creative activities. A person may be obsessed by designing gardens, solving maths problems, finding medical cures, renovating houses or doing other activities.

### *Managing Your Obsessions*

Imagine that you have recognised some of your obsessions. How can you manage these in a positive way? How can you make good use of your obsessions?

People sometimes need to go through these stages. This involves them being able:

*To manage their obsessions rather than let their obsessions manage them;*

*To make good use of their obsessions in a way that helps themselves and other people.*

A person with a creative drive, for example, may aim to organise their days so that: a) they can give quality time to their loved ones; b) they can spend quality time pursuing their obsession.

The following section describes how one person learned to manage their drive for perfection in a professional situation. They learned to do this in a way that helped people to develop their own skills and deliver success.

Karen was a brilliant leader of a national chain of supermarkets. Always obsessed by retail, she started as a shelf stacker. She loved to make lists, cross off the items and get a sense of satisfaction. This served her well as she rose through the ranks.

At a certain point, however, Karen needed to learn how to manage by outcomes rather than by tasks. She had an eye for detail, however, so this provided to be a challenge. She expressed this in the following way.

*"When working as a store manager, I got into the store two hours before everybody else. After organising my day, I then walked the store to make sure everything looked perfect.*

*"I still have this habit when in other supermarkets. I find myself pulling the tins forward so they are flush with the edge of the shelf."*

Karen was obsessed by maintaining quality standards. At the same time, she wanted to her staff to proactively deliver these standards without her resorting to micromanagement.

How to take this step? Karen and I took her staff through the following exercise.

### *Being Obsessed With Quality*

Great workers see things quickly and deeply in their area of brilliance. They have what is called personal radar. They quickly scan it to see patterns and then extrapolate those patterns.

Each person has good radar in specific areas but bad radar in others. Is it possible to improve their radar? Providing they have some feeling for the activity, the answer is 'Yes'.

Karen and I adapted an old exercise that encouraged the staff to become more customer focused. Here is a description of the steps we took. It is an exercise that can be adapted to many situations.

### *The Post-it Note Exercise*

Karen gathered a group of staff members and met with them several hundred yards away from the supermarket. She then gave people the following instructions.

*We are going to walk towards our store. The customers would be coming in their cars. I want you to see the journey through their eyes.*

*We will go into to the car park and then walk through the store. Here is what I want you to do when going through this journey.*

*You each have three different coloured bundles of Post-it Notes - Green, Red and Blue.*

*As we approach and then walk through the supermarket, I want you to write what you see and your impressions. I want you to describe the following things on the different coloured Post-its.*

### *Green Post-its*

*Write every positive impression you get about the company or the good things you may see if you are a customer.*

*Describe the specific things we can do to keep improving these things.*

### *Red Post-its*

*Write every negative impression you get or a thing that needs to be fixed.*

*Describe the specific thing that can be done to improve these things.*

### *Blue Post-its*

*Write every other idea you have about what could be done to improve the experience.*

-----

*Write one idea per Post-it . But you can write as many Post-it Notes as you wish.*

*We will then meet together, theme the topics and consider the suggestions for improvement.*

*The next steps will be to implement some of the actions, get quick successes and keep improving.*

Karen and the staff started out on the journey. This took approximately an hour and people made stacks of notes. They then met together and agreed on the ways forward.

As could be predicted, Karen saw many more things than some of the staff. She later presented these in a positive way, however, and it helped to open people's eyes to seeing things in a different way.

The exercise was repeated with all the staff and led by other managers rather than Karen. This led to many more people becoming obsessed by quality and improving the stores.

### *Making Good Use Of Your Obsessions*

Great workers are systematic in the areas where they perform brilliantly. Such an approach does, of course, have both pluses and minuses.

*The pluses may be:*

*They stay ahead of the game, are fully prepared, know some areas in great detail, get things done effectively, follow a predictable rhythm, anticipate future scenarios and get a sense of satisfaction.*

*The potential minuses may be:*

*They may appear anti-social when doing their work, sometimes appear odd, may affect others with their behaviour or have other consequences.*

Let's look at one example. Eric had an engineering background and was driven to make things work properly. This had both pluses and minuses. He expressed these in the following way.

*"I strive for perfection. Whilst this is a great driver, it also has a downside. I love to make things work properly, but I also spend a lot of time worrying.*

*"How can I stop worrying? Sometimes I worry so much that I begin to feel negative. This can affect both me and other people."*

Eric and I explored how he could build on the pluses of his approach. His drive for perfection was a great motivator. He focused on things he was passionate about, prepared properly and absorbed himself in his chosen projects.

The people Eric worked with – his company, colleagues and customers – saw him as an expert. They respected his drive and desire to constantly improve.

Eric could build on these qualities, but he also needed to find ways to manage his worrying. Bearing this in mind, we focused on the following theme.

## *Balancing Being A Warrior And A Worrier*

*A person can do good work if they get the right balance between being a warrior and a worrier.*

**Warrior**

**Worrier**

Great workers get the right balance between being warriors and worriers. Sometimes the balance can get out of kilter, however, and this can cause problems.

Such workers use worry as a drive to improve things. Being sensitive to issues, they aim to fix problems or work towards achieving perfection.

As mentioned earlier, however, the key is to get the right balance. If you are a warrior to 90% and a worrier to 10%, you may channel these feelings in a positive way. If you worry to a greater extent, you may seize up and not do anything.

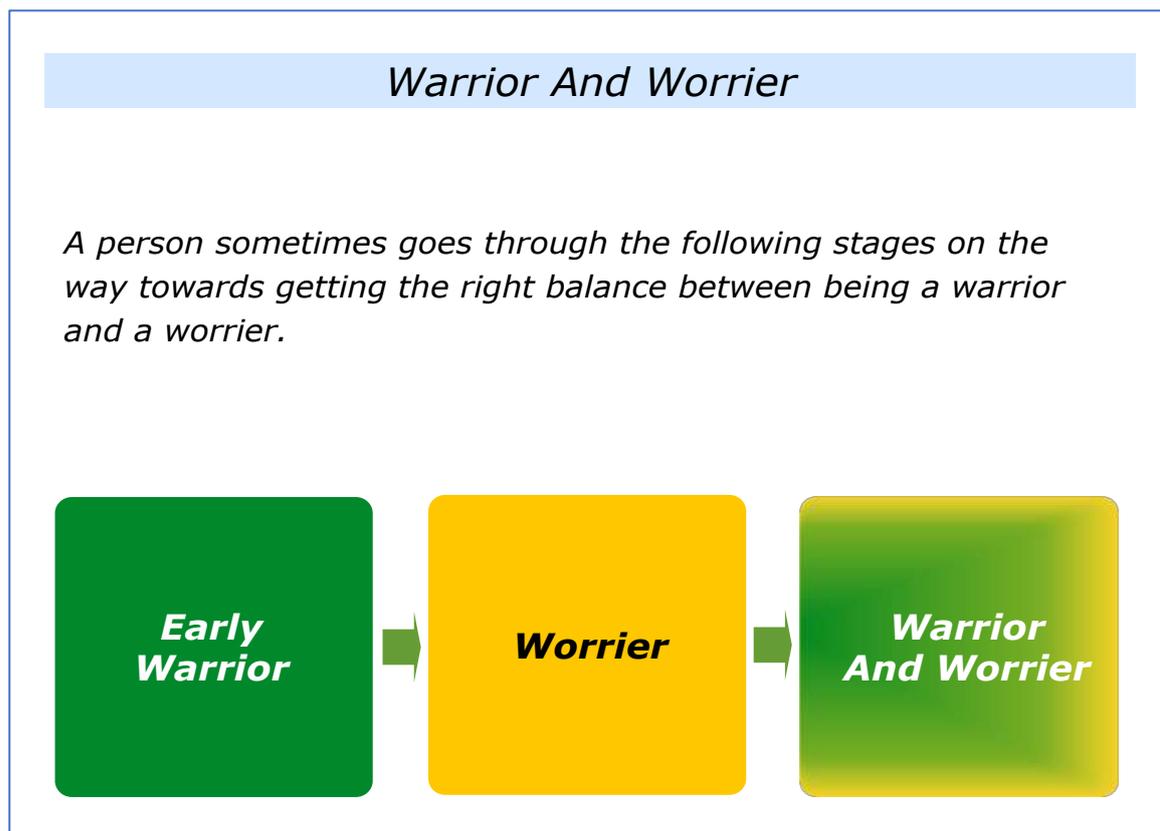
Looking back, can you think of a situation when you got the right balance between being a warrior and a worrier? This could have been in your personal or professional life.

You may have done so when taking care of your health, helping a person or tackling a challenge in your work. You may have done so when acting as an individual, parent, coach, leader or in another role.

What was the issue that caused you to worry? How did you manage the feelings of concern? Did you do so in a healthy way or did you feel troubled?

What did you do to move into warrior mode? How did you find a solution to the challenge? How did you move into action to tackle the issue? What happened as a result?

Different people learn to balance being a warrior and a worrier in different ways. One view is that they may go through the following stages.



## *The Early Warrior Stage*

Some people develop their warrior qualities early in life. A person may choose to follow their passion and throw themselves into exploring a particular field.

Young, energetic and fearless, they follow the learning process of absorption, adventure and achievement. Different people do this in different ways.

Looking back at your life, when did you begin to develop warrior qualities? You may have done so when pursuing a passion, playing a sport or doing some other activities.

What did you learn from pursuing this path? You may have learned to follow your interests, gather information and find solutions to challenges. You may also have learned to develop fighting spirit, overcome obstacles and keep working to reach your goal.

## *The Worrier Stage*

Some people develop warrior qualities but they may then become worried about events in a particular field. They become increasingly sensitive to what is happening in the world and see patterns that can lead to problems. Such worries can take different forms.

A person may believe in the power of educating young people but worry about how schools focus on league tables. A person may work to build a fair society but worry about forces that keep people poor.

Great workers see both successful and unsuccessful patterns, so they spot early warning signs that things may go wrong. They then worry that the issues will not get solved. Such workers want to improve things and strive for perfection.

They may therefore get upset or angry if people act in ways that will continue to cause problems. Sometimes they feel depressed about the pain they see or the opportunities that may be lost.

Great workers begin to utilise their fighting spirit in such situations. They sometimes take the following steps to channel their emotions.

*They develop positive ways to channel their feelings – such as counting their blessings, encouraging people, enjoying life, exercising or doing other activities.*

*They focus on what they can control in the situation rather than what they can't control.*

*They do things they believe in, follow a specific action plan and get positive results.*

### *The Warrior And Worrier Stage*

Great workers build on their fighting spirit and refuse to be intimidated or to freeze. They get the right balance between being warriors and worriers.

Such people focus on something they feel passionately about. They may then translate this into action by taking the following steps.

*They aim to play to their strengths, follow their principles and do their personal best.*

*They focus on doing a specific project where – providing they do their best – they stand a good chance of success.*

*They perform superb work, find solutions to challenges and achieve their picture of success.*

Eric applied some of these ideas in his own way, but he remained concerned about one area of his life. He explained this in the following way.

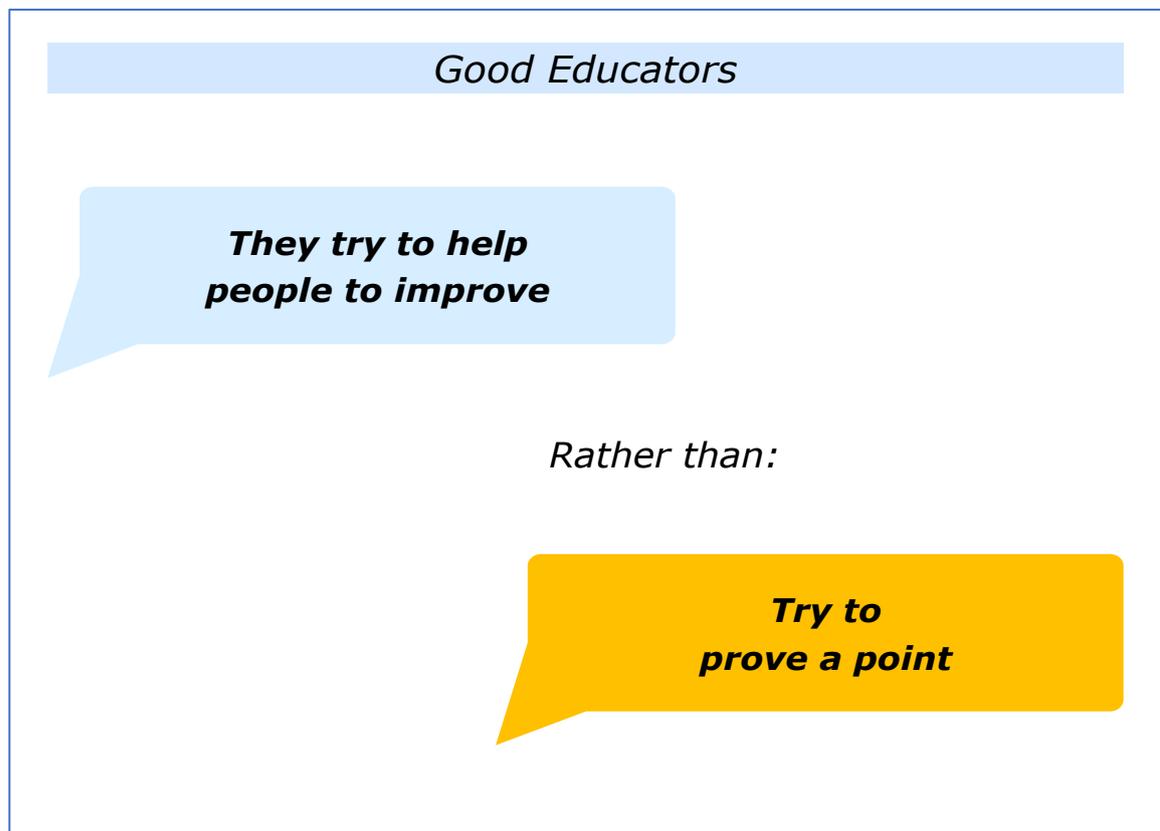
*"I worry about the way I communicate with some of my colleagues. Because of my desire for perfection, I often focus on where they fall short.*

*"This means that sometimes I communicate in a way that comes across as pointing out what they do wrong. I know this can have a negative effect on them and our relationship."*

Eric and I explored how he could encourage his staff. This involved highlighting the specific things they did well and how they could continue to follow these principles.

We then focused on how educators help people to improve. They often follow this well-known principle.

*"Before giving feedback, ask yourself the question: How can I help the person to improve rather than try to prove a point?"*



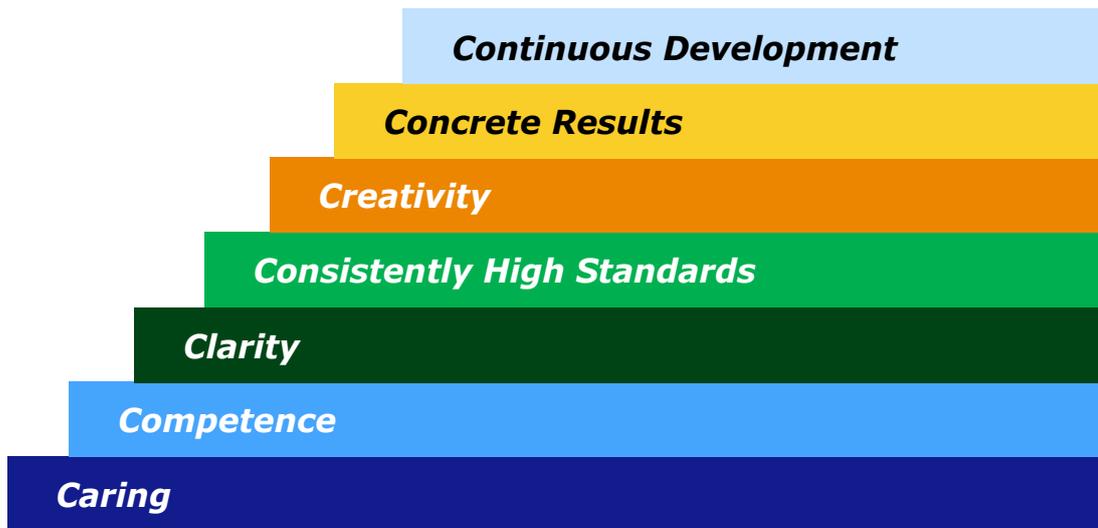
Eric aimed to adopt this approach, but he might need to buy time to think before speaking. He thought he could learn to do this, however, and help people to improve in a positive way.

People who love their work – or who are even obsessive about it – often focus on continuous development. Let's look at one approach.

## *The Continuous Development Approach*

### *Continuous Development - The Seven C Approach*

*There are many models for continuing to develop.  
This approach focuses on the following themes.*



There are many models for continuing to develop as a person or as a professional. The following section describes one approach that individuals can follow in their own way.

Imagine that you want to try using this approach. This involves focusing on the following steps.

### *Caring*

The first step is to choose a specific activity that you care about where you would like to develop. Different people choose different activities when taking this step. Here are some of the topics they mention.

*The specific activity I care about  
where I would like to develop is:*

*Encouraging my daughter ... Developing as a writer ... Counselling  
people who have PTSD ... Leading a team of creative people ...  
Managing my manager ... Presenting to large groups ... Being a  
better sports coach.*

The caring part is crucial. It provides the motivation to keep developing and deliver the desired results. It involves the heart as well as the head.

This can be useful to bear in mind if you are helping another person to develop. They need to put their heart into doing something. It can be useful to ask them some of the following questions.

*"What is the specific activity you care about where you would like to develop? What would be the benefits – both for yourself and for other people? On a scale 0-10, how motivated do you feel to develop in this area?"*

## *Competence*

Imagine that you have clarified the activity where you would like to develop. It can be useful to identify your competence in this activity. One approach is to work through the following themes.

You can aim: a) to describe the activity; b) to describe the specific strengths you have already that you can use to do good work; c) to describe the specific skills you may have the ability to add.

Be honest when describing these things – particularly when considering the skills you may be able to add. If possible, give an example of when you have demonstrated the seeds of such an ability – even if only for a short time.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Competence*

*The specific activity that I care about  
where I would like to develop is:*

\*

*The specific strengths I have already that I  
can use to do good work in this activity are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific skills I may have the ability to  
add to good work in this activity may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## Clarity

Imagine that you have clarified your chosen activity and your competence in this area. You can then aim:

*To clarify the real results you want to achieve – the picture of success;*

*To clarify how you can build on your strengths and maybe add other skills to achieve the picture of success;*

*To clarify the key strategies you can then follow to do your best to achieve the picture of success.*

We have explored these themes in depth elsewhere in the book. Bearing this in mind, let's just consider some examples of the first part - clarifying the picture of success.

Imagine that a person wants to develop their ability to encourage their daughter. One approach is to invite them to do the following exercise. (I have included some possible results the person may want to achieve.)

### *The Picture Of Success*

*The actual words I like my sixteen-year-old daughter to be saying about the way I encourage her are:*

*"My Dad is really supportive. He encourages me to concentrate on what I am good at – such as singing, captaining the volleyball team and helping to organise plays at college.*

*"Both he and my Mother want the best for me. They have said that they will support me in my decisions about the future. The main thing is for me to do something that I will enjoy.*

*"They suggest that I do a lot of research before choosing the route I want to follow. They also know lots of people who have changed direction at some point later in their lives.*

*"My Dad creates the time to listen to me. Sometimes he gives his ideas, but in a non-judgemental way. He and Mum are people that I respect, though obviously we do have some run ins. But they also respect me. That counts for a lot."*

*The specific things I can do to do my best to encourage her and ensure she is saying these things are:*

*\* I can ...*

*\* I can ...*

*\* I can ...*

Let's return to your own life and work. Bearing in mind the area in which you want to develop, clarify the real results you want to achieve.

These will differ depending on your chosen activity. You may want to develop as a writer, a manager, a sports coach, a counsellor or in another role.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you: a) to clarify the real results you want to achieve; b) to clarify the key strategies you can follow to do to do your best to achieve the desired results. Here is the exercise.

## *Clarity*

*The specific activity that I care about  
where I would like to develop is:*

\*

*The real results I want to achieve  
by developing in this activity are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific strategies I can follow to  
do my best to achieve these results are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Consistently High Standards*

Imagine you have clarified the strategies you can follow to do your best to achieve the desired results. The next steps may be these.

*To translate the strategies you want to follow into a clear action plan for achieving the desired results;*

*To rehearse following these strategies – plus anticipate how to manage any challenges – on the way to achieving the desired results;*

*To move into action, deliver consistently high standards and do your best to achieve the desired results.*

People who deliver consistently high standards often take the following steps. They prepare properly, deliver peak performances and get positive results. You will do this in your own way.

### *People Who Deliver Consistently High Standards*

*They often aim to prepare properly, deliver peak performances and do their best to get positive results.*

***Preparing  
Properly***



***Peak  
Performances***



***Positive  
Results***

## *Creativity*

Some people reach a point where: a) they are delivering consistently high standards; b) they may need to do something special to deliver the desired results.

Different people do this in different ways. Here are some of the approaches that we explored in the book.

*Some people have great personal radar – they seem to know what will happen before it happens. They also have a repertoire of tools they can use to get the desired results.*

*Some people have the ability to quickly see patterns in a situation. They then know how to build on the successful patterns – and manage the negative pattern – and do what is required to deliver the desired results.*

*Some people apply their strengths to do superb work. They then seem to go into another dimension – their equivalent of flow or the zone – and produce something magical to achieve the picture of success.*

You will have your own approach to making creative breakthroughs. At some point you may buy time to think, however, and explore the following themes.

*Clarity. What are the real results I want to achieve?*

*Creativity. What are the potential creative solutions? What are the pluses and minuses of each option? Is it possible to combine any of these options? Are there any other things I can do to achieve the goals?*

*Concrete Results. What is the route I want to follow? How can I do my best to achieve the desired concrete results?*

Sometimes you will try several things and look for what works. Spotting a potential successful strategy, you will keep following it. Continuing to read the signs, you will then pursue this track to implement the creative solutions to challenges.

## *Concrete Results*

Great workers aim to achieve the desired results. They also recognise what is and what is not within their gift.

*They can have a positive attitude, prepare properly and follow their chosen principles.*

*They can perform superb work and keep reading reality. They can build on what is working and keep improving in the other areas.*

*They can find positive solutions to challenges and do everything possible to achieve the picture of success.*

You can keep doing your best but you cannot always guarantee the outcomes. You can aim to develop a skill, encourage a person, improve as an athlete, lead a team to success or improve in an activity.

You can also keep developing as a person or as a professional. Sometimes this journey provides its own rewards. At the same time, you can also do your best to deliver the desired results.

## *Continuous Development*

Different people choose different ways to continue to develop. Some keep a journal, diary or other form of log. One approach is to keep a Development Book. This is described on the following pages.

Many people love to develop. They enjoy the process of doing things they care about, setting clear goals and achieving concrete results. You may continue do this in your own way to keep developing.

*My Development Book*

*The specific things I want  
to learn, develop or achieve*

*My Development Plan*

*The specific activity I care about  
where I would like to develop is:*

\*

*The specific results I want to achieve  
by developing in this activity are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to do my best to develop in this activity are:*

- \*  
\*  
\*

*The specific benefits of developing in this activity will be:*

- \*  
\*  
\*

### *My Progress Reports*

*Successes. The specific things I am doing well – or have done well – when doing this activity are:*

- \*  
\*  
\*

*Improvement. The specific things I can do better - and how – are:*

- \*  
\*  
\*

## *The Results*

*The specific results I have been able to achieve in my chosen activity are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to continue to apply what I have learned are:*

\*

\*

\*

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, describe one of your obsessions that you would like to follow in the future. This could be in your personal or professional life.

What may be the pluses – both for you and for other people - of following this obsession? What may be the potential minuses?

How can you make good use of your obsession by building on the pluses and managing the minuses? What may happen as a result of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Making Good Use Of My Obsession*

*The specific obsession  
that I want to follow is:*

\*

*The potential pluses and minuses  
of following this obsession are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to make good  
use of my obsession by building on the  
pluses and managing the minuses are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Intense Person Approach*

### *The Intense Person Approach*

*This is an approach that can be used when working with strong individuals. It focuses on how they can channel their intensity and intelligence to achieve the desired impact.*



Imagine that your work involves helping strong individuals who want to make a positive impact. They may be active in sports, the arts, business or other fields.

Such people are often extremely driven. They may have a short attention span and only be interested in information that can help them to achieve their goals.

Bearing this in mind, here is one approach that can be useful when working with such people. This involves encouraging them to channel their intensity and intelligence to achieve the desired impact.

Sometimes it is important to start from the destination – the person's aims and the real results to achieve. Let's explore these steps.

## *Impact*

Strong individuals often want to get to the point quickly. Being goals driven, they want ideas they can use to achieve their picture of success.

How to connect with such people? One method is to show that you have done your research. It is to connect with their aspirations and how they want to make a positive impact.

The usual way to do this is to make the person feel welcome and the centre of your world. It is then to say something along the following lines.

*"As we know, you have lots of drive and ambition. Bearing this in mind – but only if it may be useful – we can explore how you can continue to work towards your goals."*

*"Are there any particular themes or challenges it would be good to explore? If appropriate, I can then share ideas you can add to your repertoire to help to achieve your goals."*

Sometimes I have taken another approach that may appear risky but have only done this after doing lots of research. After making the person feel welcome, I have then said something along the following lines.

*"Good to meet. I am looking forward to hearing more about your strengths and goals."*

*"If appropriate, we can explore how to keep building on your strengths and also tackle some of the other challenges. The important thing is to focus on your agenda, however, and make it a useful session for you."*

*"Looking at what you have said and done, it looks like some of the goals you want to achieve are these:"*

1) To ...

2) To ...

3) To ...

*"As I said, however, we need to focus on your agenda. Then, if appropriate, we can explore some ideas you can use in your own way to work towards your aims. Is that okay?"*

This approach is relatively simple when working with a business leader, athlete or other achiever. It is quite possible to do research about the specific goals they want to achieve. It can be more difficult if a person faces challenges in their personal or professional life.

The approach sounds risky but can also pay off. Looking back at my own work, I have found that many driven people appreciate the research that has been put in about them and their aims.

This has helped to start the session in an energetic and practical way. We have then been able to quickly focus on the positive impact they want to make in their lives or work.

### *Intensity*

Strong individuals are often intense. It can be important to pick up on this intensity and, where appropriate, help them to channel it in a positive way. There are several ways to take this step.

You can encourage the person to describe the things they feel passionately about. They may feel driven to pursue specific activities, achieve certain goals, fulfil their potential or do other things.

You can encourage the person to channel their intensity in a way that helps them to reach their goals. One way is to help them to

add to the repertoire of strategies they can use to achieve their picture of success.

You can encourage the person to recognise that their intensity is an asset. Sometimes they may need to use it full on. Sometimes they may want to slow down, however, and apply in a calmer way.

Driven people can be inspiring or intimidating. If the person is open to it, however, you can offer ideas for channelling their intensity in ways that help themselves and other people to reach their goals.

## *Intelligence*

Strong individuals often have great intelligence in the areas where they excel. Many also want to expand their knowledge of strategies and skills that can help them to achieve success.

One football manager I worked with always carried a large book for noting ideas to apply in his life and work. During our first meeting he described his desire to keep learning.

*"I go to seminars on many subjects, not just those about football. If I can get just one idea to improve myself or my team, then it is worthwhile."*

There are several definitions of intelligence. These include the following.

*The ability to learn, understand and make judgements that are based on reason ... The ability to learn from experience and apply knowledge to shape your environment and achieve your goals.*

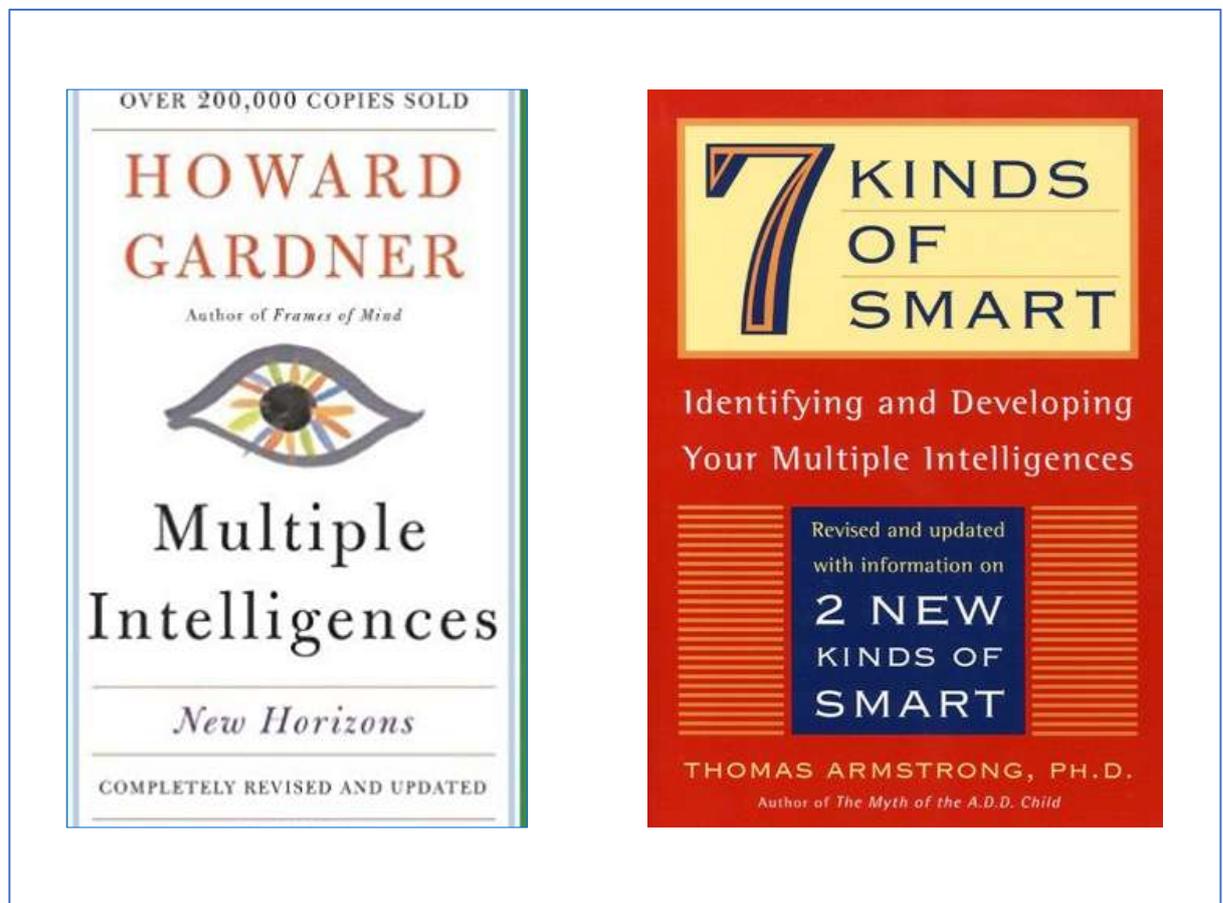
There are also many kinds of intelligence. Howard Gardner popularised the concept of multiple intelligences with his 1983 book *Frames of Mind*.

This challenged the academic establishment by expanding the conventional number of intelligences measured by schools. Such

institutions tended to look for linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences.

They paid little attention to other talents unless, for example, a person was outstanding at athletics or art. Howard showed how people may also have interpersonal, visual, musical or other intelligences.

Thomas Armstrong built on this work with his book *7 Kinds Of Smart* and called the intelligences certain kinds of smarts. The book provided practical ways that parents and educators could enable people to find and build on their intelligences. Since then he and Howard have published more books on the theme.



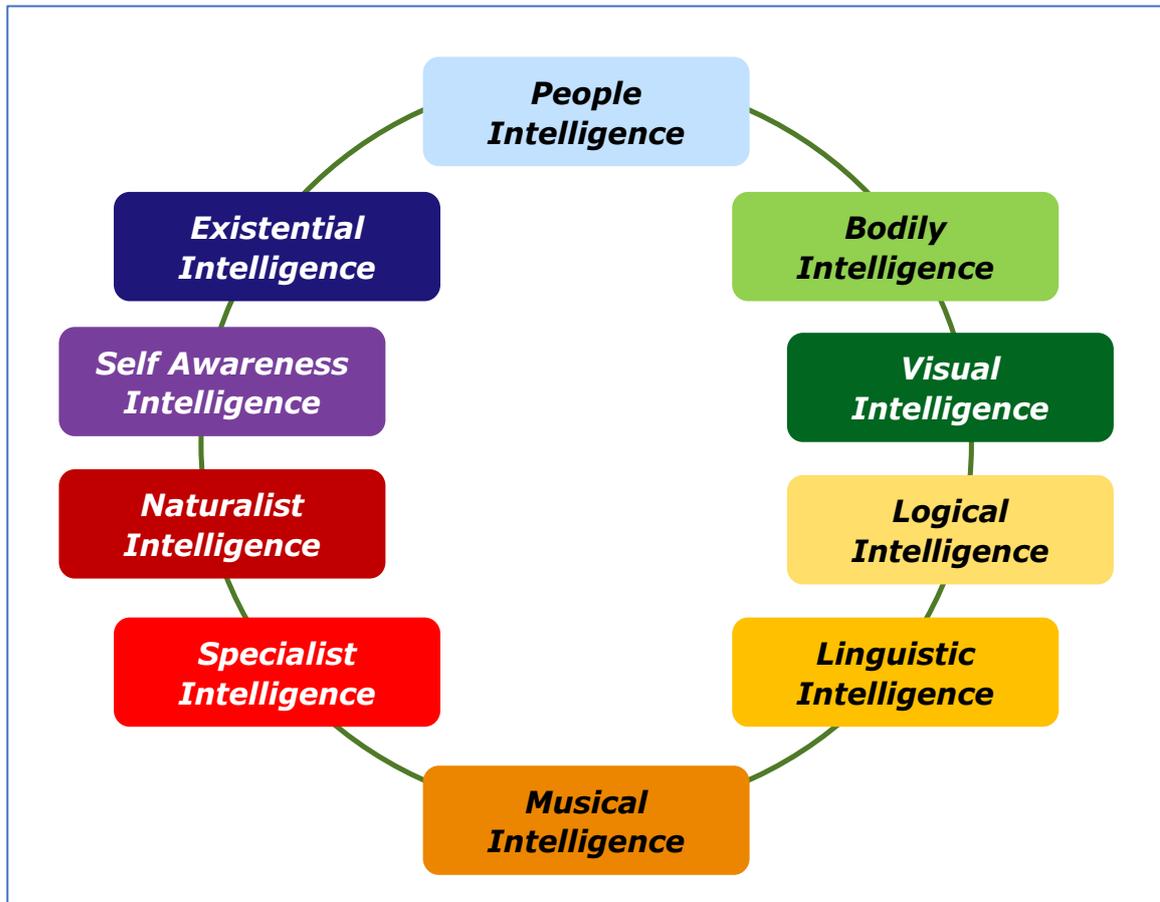
The concept of multiple intelligences has moved into mainstream education. Sometimes this has been used to help individuals to develop. Sometimes it has become a tick box approach to be applied in a mechanical rather than individual way.

Some people have added to the various intelligences. These include specialist intelligence to describe a person being good at a specific craft, skill or other activity. Existential intelligence signifies a person being good at dealing with life experiences or exploring spiritual issues.

Here is a brief overview of the various intelligences. People sometimes combine several of these to perform well in their life or work.

### *Multiple Intelligences*

*There are many kinds of intelligence. A person may combine some of the following qualities.*



Driven people are often extremists. They are experts in some areas but have less skills in other areas. If appropriate, you can help a person to expand their intelligences by adding to the repertoire of skills they can use to achieve their goals.

### *Impact*

Imagine you are helping a strong individual. As mentioned earlier, many of them want to make a positive impact. They may want to raise happy children, deliver successful projects, have a profound influence on society or achieve another goal.

Such people are often passionate about their chosen work. Sometimes this can be expressed in negative ways, especially when they care deeply and feel frustrated.

Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to try to encourage a person to focus on the real results they want to achieve. One leader I

worked with shouted at his staff but this did not achieve the desired effect. Looking ahead, we began by exploring the following theme.

*"What is the positive outcome you want to achieve?"*

The leader said he wanted his people to be more proactive and take responsibility. Unfortunately his people felt scared, retreated into their silos and failed to take responsibility. This acted as a trigger to the leader, who would then launch into a tirade.

He wanted to build a self-managing team where people could manage the daily tasks, manage him and deliver success. This might take some time, but we then explored the following question.

*"What are all the possible options for achieving the positive outcome?"*

He could carry on shouting, but this would only be a short-term fix. Exploring the possible ways forward, he ultimately decided to take the following path:

*To stay calm, buy time to think and behave in a professional way towards people;*

*To hold sessions where he educated the team by communicating the picture of success and the key priorities – then inviting each of them to clarify their personal contributions;*

*To hire a coordinator who could act as a translator between him and the team – then hand over the daily running of the team to this person;*

*To, if appropriate, recruit more self-managing people and support the coordinator in building and running a successful team;*

*To turn his energies to doing what he did best – going out to customers, getting business and securing the future for the team.*

The leader pursued this approach and, despite a few setbacks, began improving the way they managed their intensity. He has since moved on to doing other projects but one lesson has remained.

He has always hired a great coordinator to manage the daily working of the team. The leader has then been able to focus on what he does best and use their ability to make a good impact.

Intense people can sometimes have the potential to be peak performers. Here are some characteristics that such people may demonstrate, but these come with a caveat. Not all people who demonstrate these characteristics will be peak performers.

### *Peak Performers*

- *They may have lopsided personalities – being brilliant in some areas and blank in others.*
- *They may demonstrate paradoxes that don't fit conventional psychometric tests.*
- *They may behave in ways that are considered different, quirky or odd.*
- *They may follow daily habits and only focus on what they believe is important.*

Peak performers may sometimes behave in ways that are different and not necessarily easy to understand.

Such people may have lopsided personalities. They may be brilliant in some areas but blank in others. Warren Buffett described himself in this way. Here is a summary of what he said:

*"I have a lopsided personality. I am brilliant with numbers but I cannot tell you the colour of the wallpaper in my room at home. Even though I have lived in the same house for over fifty years."*

Such people may see things quickly in one area of life. They can tell you exactly what is happening and what is about to happen. In other areas they don't notice a thing.

Peak performers sometimes demonstrate what appear to be paradoxes. They do not fit old style psychometric tests and do not give conventional answers to questions. If a person asks them:

*"Are you somebody who sees the big picture or do you pay attention to detail?"*

They may respond:

*"Sometimes I do both."*

If a person says to them:

*"According to your psychometric test, you are not a risk taker. Is that right?"*

They may respond:

*"Absolutely, I am an entrepreneur, so I don't take risks. It is the people who join big organisations that take risks. They put their hands into the destiny of other decision makers."*

Peak performers often balance contradictions in the areas where they excel. They may demonstrate some of the following qualities that appear to be opposites but are sometimes complementary.

### *Peak Performers Sometimes Demonstrate Paradoxes*

- *They may simultaneously see the big picture and also see the small details.*
- *They may appear to be intellectual but are actually following their intuition.*
- *They may be introvert by sometimes go into role and may appear to be extrovert.*

Peak performers may sometimes appear to be different, quirky or odd. Some of them behave in ways that could attract certain labels.

Such people may be highly focused – but this may come across as being semi-autistic or living in their own world. Some may be highly sensitive – but this may sometimes come across as being bipolar

Some may perceive things in different ways. They may experience dyslexia, synaesthesia or other faculties. Some may develop behaviours that for them seem natural to but others seem odd.

Peak performers often follow daily habits that remove the need to make unnecessary decisions. They may wear the same kinds of clothes and eat the same kinds of food each day. They then use their energy to focus on key decisions.

Such people focus on the things they believe are important. They may do great work in certain areas but neglect other aspects that can be important in life.

## *People Who Operate In Another Dimension And Do Positive Work*

*People Who Operate In Another Dimension And Do Positive Work*

***They develop their own view of the world***

***They develop their own way of operating in the world***

***They develop their own way of contributing to the world***

Some people operate in another dimension. They have a different way of seeing, thinking and behaving. They then use their abilities to do positive work. Let's explore how you can recognise such people.

### *They develop their own view of the world*

Some individuals have a particularly unique view. During the past fifty plus years I have had the opportunity to work with such people. Here are some of the things they said.

#### *A Sales Director*

*"I can literally smell a deal. I also taste numbers. Some people have told me that I have synaesthesia, but I don't know about that.*

*"Ever since I was young I have been able to spot an opportunity to sell and know that what will work. But sometimes it is hard for me to explain the process I go through."*

### *A Family Therapist*

*"Before a session I think of each family member. I put myself in their place and, within my body, feel what is like to be them. I then play a scenario of how each person will feel during each stage of the session I am going to run."*

*"In my body I often feel what other people will feel before they feel it. I then work out how to help them to move towards having the kind of feeling they want in the future."*

### *A Chief Technological Officer*

*"I solve problems using my head. There is no point in my staff giving me a visual presentation, because I don't really understand pictures."*

*"I enjoy complex problems. Sometimes I compete at chess and take part in 50 games at once. I use quadratic equations to work everything out and win the games."*

Many of these people used their ability to solve problems or help others. Their paths had not always been easy, however, and they had often encountered challenges.

Some individuals had been able to pass exams in a specific activity, such as maths, science or another subject. But they had been considered to be poor performers in other areas.

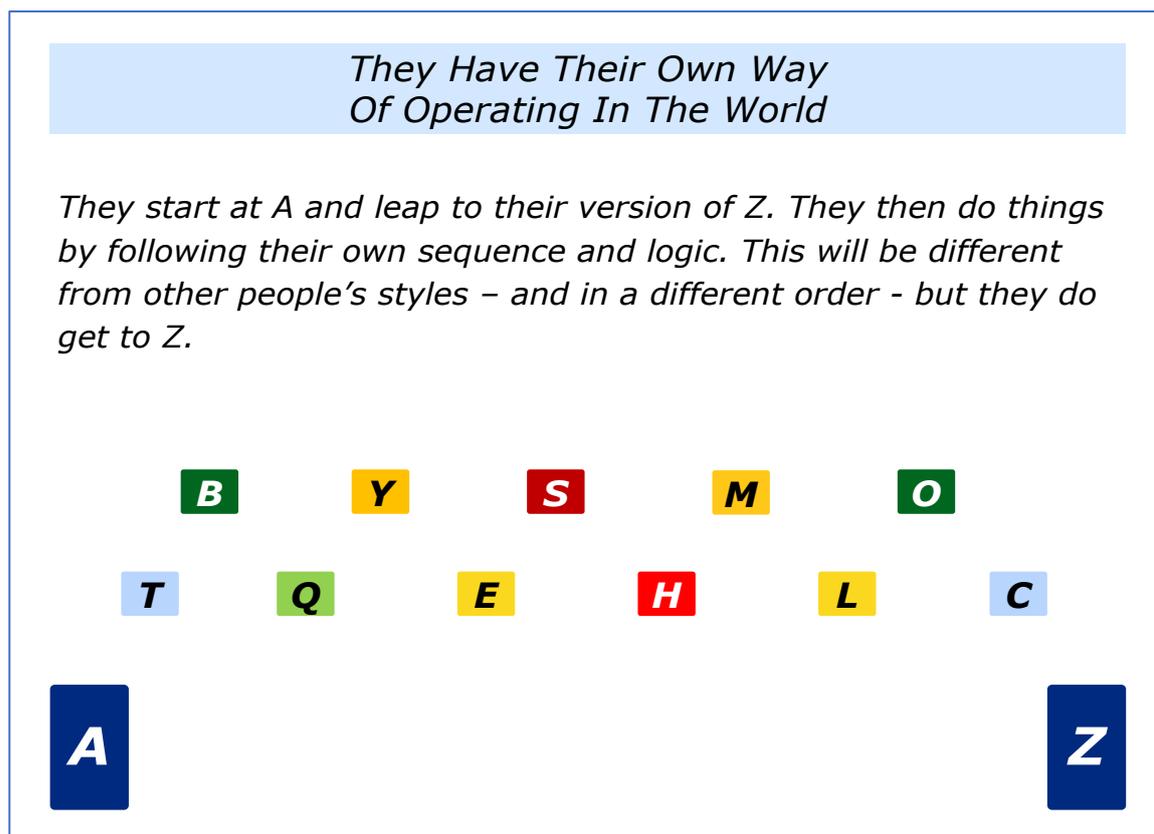
One common factor was that they often had a significant person – a parent, teacher or coach – who had believed in them. This helped them to develop their specialism and find a place where they could thrive.

## *They develop their own way of operating in the world*

Such people often think and behave in ways that others find difficult to understand. This can create challenges for both themselves and other people.

A person may think in ways that may seem incomprehensible to others. When tackling a challenge, for example, they may start at A and then leap to their version of Z. This is the goal or desired solution.

They may then follow their own sequence and logic. Sometimes this means exploring many letters of the metaphorical alphabet – though not in a sequence that others would recognise.



They then implement their plan for getting to Z. It can be hard for them to explain to others how they got to a solution. This can be difficult for others to understand – especially to those who demand a linear process.

A person's thinking style may not affect others, but sometimes the way they behave can cause challenges. Being totally focused on what they do, they may have self-chosen autism.

They may demonstrate elements of OCD or be highly sensitive to certain kinds of noise, images or other stimuli. They may learn how to channel these elements in a positive way, however, and harness these to do fine work.

A person may have great awareness in one area but be totally lacking in other areas. They may learn to build on their strengths and minimise the consequences of their weaknesses – but this may not always be the case.

### *They develop their own way of contributing to the world*

Such people develop their own approach to doing fine work. Sometimes this adds to and enriches the mainstream, but other times it can be different in a positive way.

A person may produce a creative breakthrough that shows a better way of working. They may create a new model, prototype or paradigm that enables people to achieve success.

As mentioned earlier, sometimes it can be hard to understand how such a person thinks. One Chief Executive I worked with said, for example, that he wanted his leadership team to understand how he thought. My response was:

*"I am not sure even you know how you think. You are brilliant at finding solutions but do it in an unconventional way."*

*"It was until your teens that you realised that you were dyslexic, but actually that helped with your creative thinking. I am not sure that your team can ever understand how you think."*

The CEO laughed and accepted that it may not be possible for others to understand his thinking style. They enjoyed working with him, however, and knew how to manage him.

People who operate in another dimension may not always be easy to understand. One approach that I found worked was to invite them to talk about their passions, purpose and the projects they wanted to do.

They enjoyed talking about these things and provided many insights. You will, of course, have your own way of relating to such people.

### *People Who Operate In Another Dimension*

*Sometimes it is possible to learn a lot from them by asking about their passions, purpose and the projects they want to do.*



## The Super Strengths Approach

### The Super Strengths Approach

*This is an approach that is used in sports but it can also be applied to other fields. It involves helping people to focus on the following themes.*



This approach is used in sports but it can also be applied in other fields. It helps a person to go through the following steps:

*To build on their strengths – whilst managing the consequences of any weaknesses – and do solid work;*

*To build on their super strengths – the specific activities where they may have the ability to deliver A Pluses - and do superb work;*

*To sometimes go into another dimension and do special work that delivers success.*

Different people use different definitions for the term super strengths. Here is one that is used in sports:

*A super strength is a special talent that a person can develop to give them a competitive edge in their chosen field. Some people develop this ability to the stage where they can deliver world class performances.*

Andy Goldie, who leads a football club's academy, uses this approach to help players develop. Speaking to the website Training Ground Guru, he described the club's rationale in the following way.

*"We can all identify what someone can or can't do; the difficult part is to develop them, including what they're good at to turn them into super strengths.*

*"In Academy football, there's a risk of trying to improve absolutely everything and ending up with an average player. Instead of that, we want to develop their super strengths.*

*"Rather than using a cookie cutter, we want to develop the game and develop new types of players we haven't seen before."*

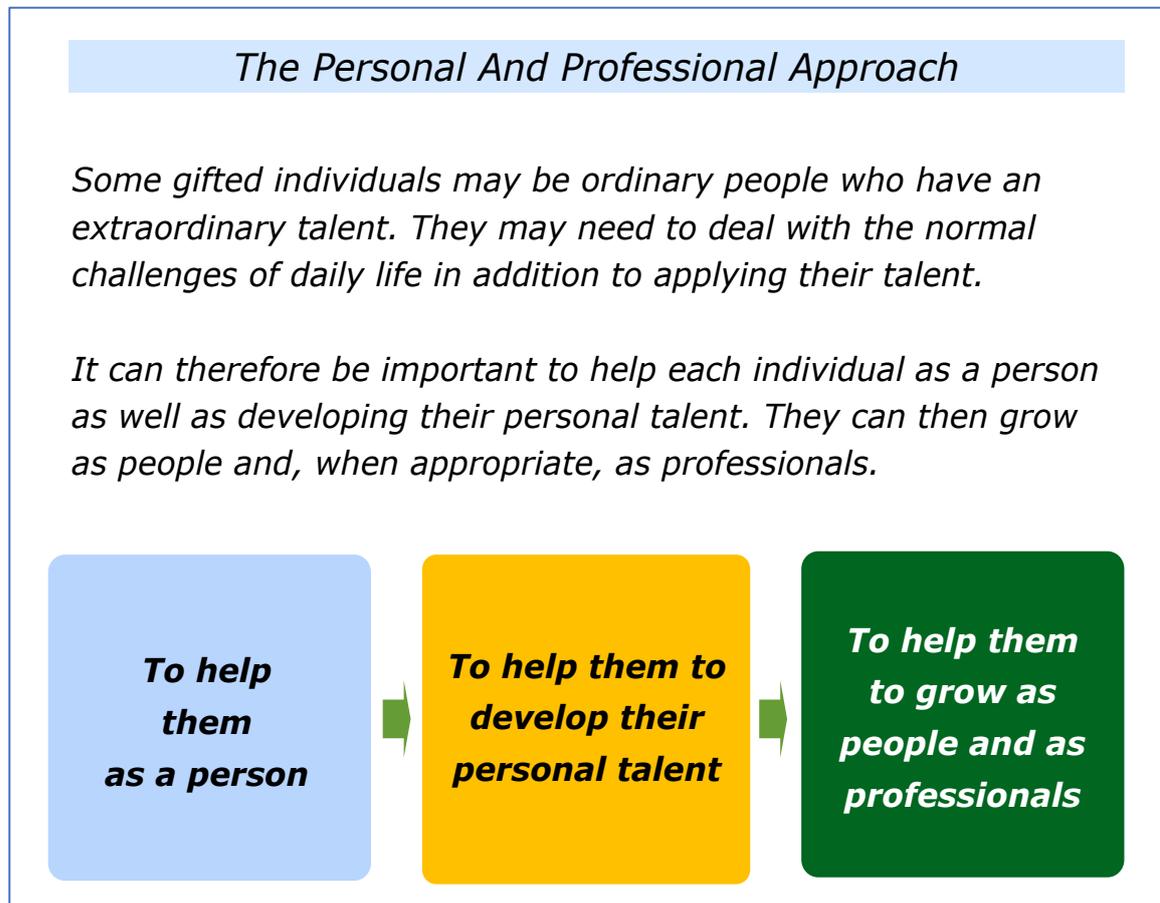
This rule can apply in many fields. A person may have a special talent in a specific activity when doing work as a carpenter, technical specialist, gardener, educator, counsellor or playing another role.

How to spot this ability? One approach is to use some of the questions that we have been explored elsewhere in this book. These include the following.

*What are the specific activities in which a person delivers As rather than Bs or Cs? What are those where they may be able to deliver an A Plus? When are they in their element – at ease and yet able to excel?*

*When do they make complicated things seem simple? When do they go into their equivalent of the zone? When do they flow, focus and do fine work? When do they do something exceptional?*

Sports coaches look for these qualities in athletes. They also recognise the challenges helping such people to develop. When doing this, they apply elements from the following approach.



Some places that nurture talent can be tough environments and many people get released. It is therefore important to care for each individual as a person as well as developing their personal talent.

Sometimes this involves helping them to learn life skills. They can then use these to shape their future in other fields rather than just the one where they may aim to be professionals.

Can you think of a person who may have a potential super strength in a specific activity? If appropriate, how could you help them to develop this ability?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

*The Person's Name Is ...*

*The potential super strength they may have in a specific activity is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to help them to develop this potential super strength are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of helping them to develop this ability may be:*

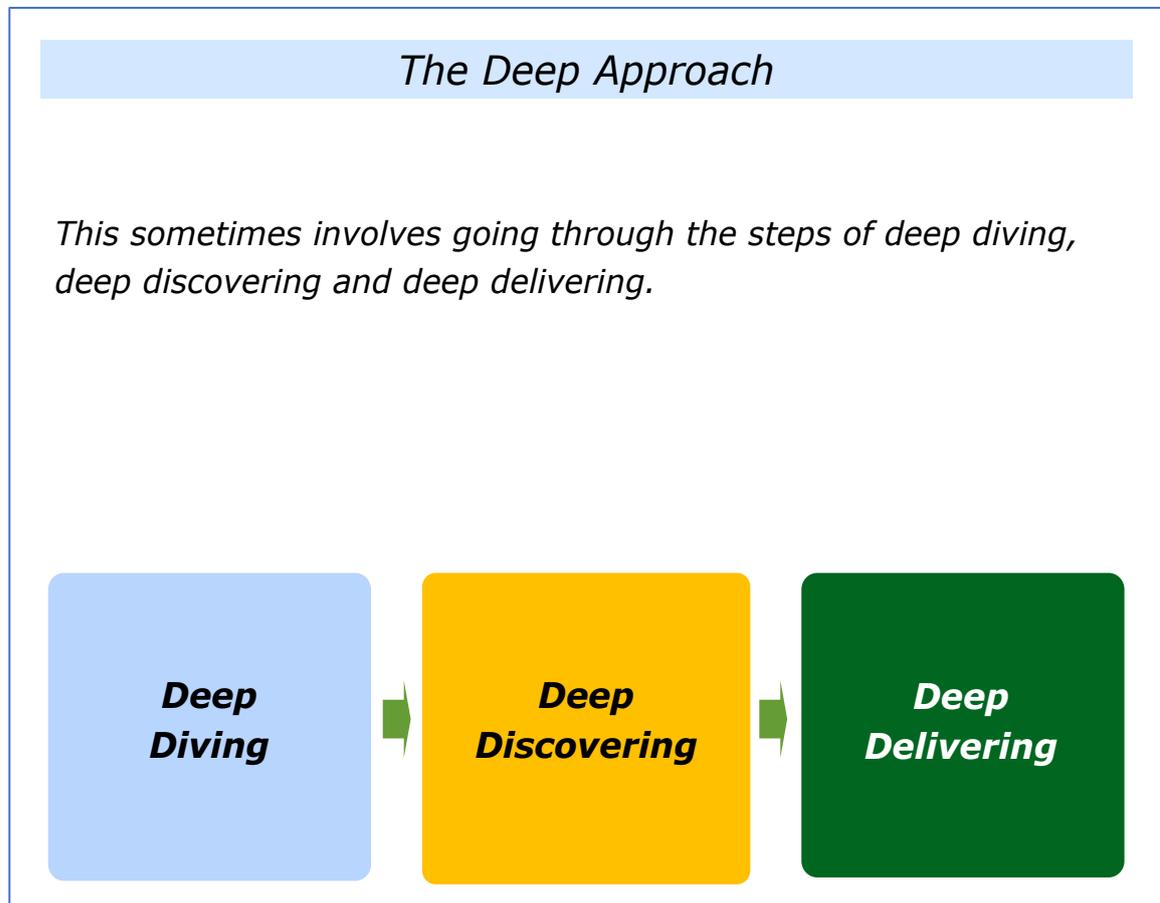
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Intense people often love to dive deeply into projects. Let's explore this approach.

## *The Deep Approach*



Great workers choose to do some things deeply. They may sometimes dip into many things they find interesting. They then dive deeply into a specific activity they find fascinating.

Such people go through the process of absorption, adventure and achievement. They may have learned this approach during their childhood by pursuing hobbies or other topics they found interesting.

Many people now talk about the importance of doing deep work, which is a concept popularised by writers such as Cal Newport. The deep approach has a long tradition, however, and has been followed by great educators.

Maria Montessori, John Dewey and Sylvia Ashton-Warner were some of the educators who focused on the value of deep play and learning. They then encouraged people to translate what they discovered into doing deep work and delivering. Let's explore these themes.

## *Deep Diving*

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you chose to dive deeply into something you found fascinating? This could have been in your personal or professional life.

Many people do this when they are young. They may dive into stamp collecting, train spotting, following a football team, learning about computers, studying insects or doing another activity.

They enjoy gathering information, making sense of things and clarifying what they have learned. They may also apply this knowledge to solve problems or achieve certain goals.

Such a person may also begin to learn transferable skills. They are learning how to learn, learning how to see patterns and, when appropriate, learning how to present this information to people.

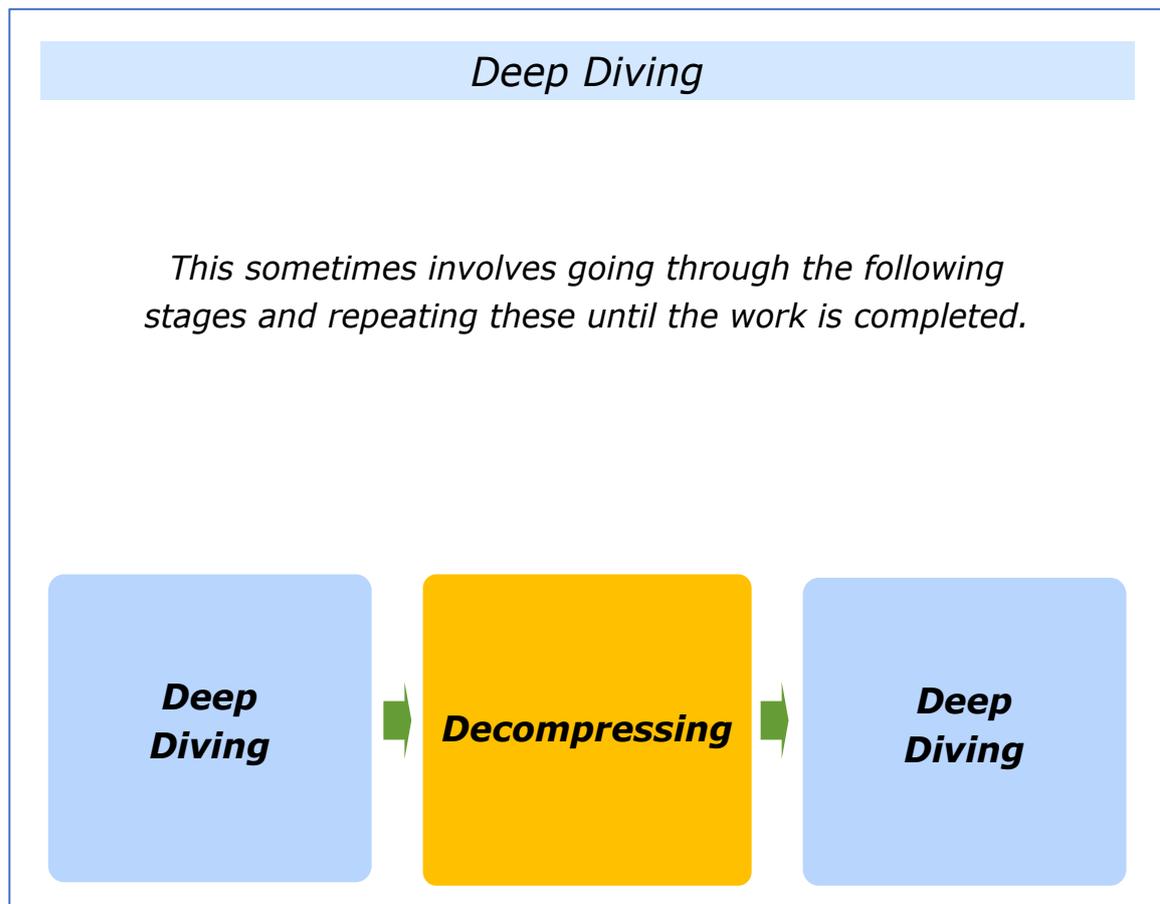
Great workers sometimes dive deep into their specialist area. They find this to be extremely enjoyable and also beneficial for their employer. But sometimes they encounter challenges that provide obstacles to doing their best work.

Such a person may find it difficult to concentrate in a traditional office where there are so many distractions. They may also need to manage their energy properly when working at home.

Imagine, for example, that you want to dive deeply into a particular activity. You may aim to study a subject, write an article, renovate a room, design a seminar or do something else you find fascinating.

How to manage your energy? One approach is to do the activity in your prime times – the times of the day when you have most energy. It is then to set aside a block of time when you can absorb yourself in the work.

Imagine you have set up such a schedule. You can then go through the process of diving deeply, decompressing and then diving deeply again. Let's explore these themes.



Each person has their own ritual for diving deeply. You will have your own approach to absorbing yourself in the topic and focusing on the task in hand.

Taking this step can bring great joy. Sometimes you will go into your equivalent of the zone. Time may go away as you pursue your chosen activity.

Diving deeply is rewarding, but you may also need to come to the surface. Sometimes this can be easy, but other times you may need to go through a process of decompression.

The word decompression has many meanings. Most people associate it with a deep sea diver having to spend time in a decompression chamber to avoid getting what is known as the bends.

Some individuals decompress at certain times when doing a piece of creative work. They need to rest, reflect and refresh themselves. They may slow down, sleep, walk or do other things. They then feel ready to go deep diving again.

### *Deep Discovering*

Great workers love the joy of discovery. They want to dive deeply and gather information about their chosen topic. They aim to see the big picture, make connections and see patterns.

Some love to integrate the knowledge. They want to make models, make sure these work and apply these in real life. They may then want to pass on this knowledge to help people to succeed.

Looking back, can you think of a time when you followed this approach? You may have aimed to learn more about a topic, make sense of events or improve a skill.

What did you do then to discover more about the topic? How do you begin to make sense of the information? How did you use the knowledge? How did you clarify what worked and what could be improved? What happened as a result of taking these steps?

### *Deep Delivering*

Great workers often want to apply what they have discovered. They take pleasure in developing their work and what they offer to other people.

An artist may use it to improve their craft. A nurse may use it to help their patients. An athlete may use it to develop their performance. A scientist may use it to further their research. A leader may use it to improve their decision making.

Some workers deliver things in a deep way that operates on several levels. They may follow elements of great design and do work that is simple, satisfying and successful.

They produce work that has a profound simplicity. They make complicated things easy to use, show a transformational way of working or pass on deep knowledge that people can use to achieve success.

They do work that is satisfying on several. They create services, products or other things that are good to use or give pleasure. This can turn the users into strong advocates of the work.

They produce work that is successful. A product or service can be beautiful and easy to use, but it needs to do the job. This is the vital part. Great workers product things that help people to find solutions or succeed.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the deep approach? You may want to do this to study a topic, improve a skill, pass on knowledge or do another activity.

How can you dive deeply into the topic? How can you pursue your approach to discovery? How can you apply the knowledge and deliver in a deep way? What may happen as a result of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Deep Approach In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future  
when I may want to follow elements  
of the deep approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then  
to follow elements of the deep  
approach in my own way are:*

\*

\*

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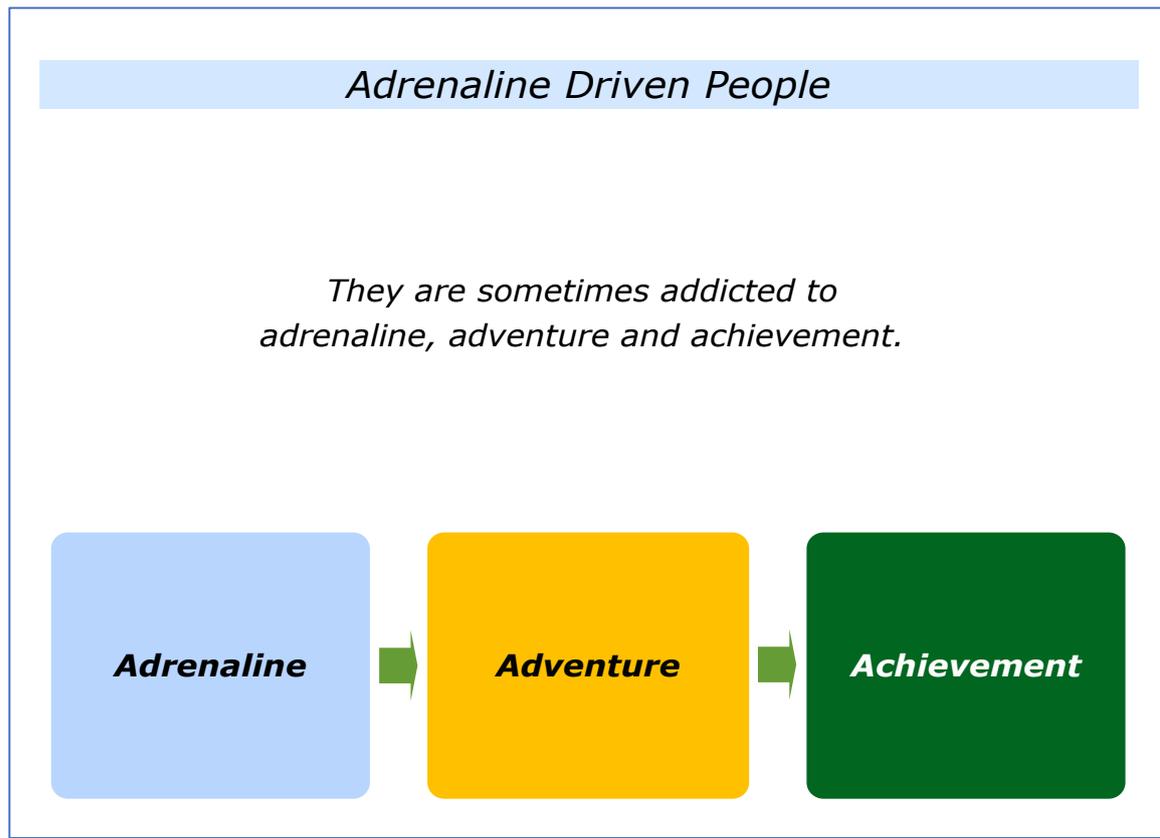
*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Adrenaline Driven People Approach*



Imagine you lead a team that contains some adrenaline driven people. They love doing exciting projects that provide the buzz of adrenaline, adventure and achievement.

Sometimes they do stunning work and deliver peak performances. Sometimes they can be difficult or leave it to the last minute before delivering on deadlines.

That may be okay for them – because they love pulling the rabbit out of the hat - but it causes problems for other team members. Let's explore how to get the best from such people.

### *Recognising adrenaline driven people*

Such people are turned on by the adrenaline, adventure and achievement. Let's consider these themes.

## *Adrenaline*

They love getting their adrenaline juices flowing. They may be attracted to sporting activities, skydiving, stage performances, firefighting, troubleshooting, keynote speaking or whatever.

## *Adventure*

They love doing projects that provide a sense of adventure. Stretching themselves, they enjoy learning and gathering new experiences.

Frequently turned-on by the highs, they may also experience deep lows. Such people want to feel alive and hate being bored.

They like to have drama in their lives. If you don't watch out, they may create a crisis just to feel excited or to get a kick out of solving the problem.

## *Achievement*

Striving hard, they love to reach a goal. They get an enormous kick from reaching a summit, accomplishing the almost impossible or performing superbly in front of an audience. Some like applause and adulation.

Adrenaline driven people bring both pluses and minuses. The upsides are that some can be super positive, deliver peak performances and produce that touch of magic. Some can become icons for others in the team.

The downsides are that they may follow their own agenda, sometimes to the detriment of the team. They can also have mood swings, show impatience or upset other people.

Do you have any such people in your team? If so, try completing the following exercise. This invites you to write the names of the adrenaline driven people you have in your team.

## *Adrenaline Driven People*

*The adrenaline driven  
people I have in my team are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Getting the best from adrenaline driven people*

How to get the best from such people? The first thing is not to be intimidated by them, even if they are powerful personalities.

Remember, it is their job to convince you they want to be in the team, it is not your job to persuade them. You can then make clear contracts about their best contributions to the team.

Good leaders explain the team's purpose and the possible routes it could follow in the future. They explain the reasons why the team will be pursuing its chosen strategy rather than any of the other possible routes. They then explain the team's specific goals.

After doing this, they invite people to reflect and decide if they want to use their strengths to achieve the picture of success. You will have your own way of making this happen, but here are some of the themes you may want to communicate to people.

### *The Picture of Success*

*The team's picture of success – including the specific goals we want to achieve in the next year – is:*

\*

\*

\*

### *The Professional Standards*

*The professional standards we would like people to follow – plus the reasons for these - to achieve the picture of success are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *The Pluses and Minuses*

*The pluses involved in working towards and achieving these goals – including the benefits for all the various stakeholders – will be:*

\*

\*

\*

*The potential minuses involved in working towards and achieving these goals will be:*

\*

\*

\*

### *The Practical Support*

*The specific kinds of practical support we will offer to help people to achieve the goals will be:*

\*

\*

\*

*We are happy to answer any questions about why we are choosing to pursue this strategy rather than the other possible routes.*

*We will then give you time to reflect and decide if you want to contribute towards achieving the goals.*

*If so, get back to us. We can then make clear contracts about how you can make your best contribution towards achieving the picture of success.*

You can present a compelling vision and it up to people whether they choose to opt-in. You can then, if you wish, invite each person to do the following exercise.

This asks them to describe their best contribution to the team. Meet with them and settle on their agreed goals for the year.

*My Contribution Towards  
Achieving  
The Picture Of Success*

*My Specific Contribution*

*Bearing in mind the team's goals and my strengths,  
the specific results I want to deliver by ... are:*

1) *To ...*

*For example ...*

2) *To ...*

*For example ...*

3) *To ...*

*For example ...*

### *The Specific Benefits*

*The specific benefits of making this contribution - for the team, customers, colleagues and other stakeholders - will be:*

1) To ...

*For example ...*

2) To ...

*For example ...*

3) To ...

*For example ...*

### *The Specific Updates*

*The specific things I will do to proactively keep people informed about the progress towards delivering the results will be:*

1) To ...

*For example ...*

2) To ...

*For example ...*

3) To ...

*For example ...*

### *The Specific Support*

*The specific support I would like to help me to achieve the goals, plus the support I will give to other people, is:*

1) *To ...*

*For example ...*

2) *To ...*

*For example ...*

3) *To ...*

*For example ...*

### *The Agreed Goals*

*After discussing these things with my manager, the specific results I will deliver by ... are:*

1) *To ...*

*For example ...*

2) *To ...*

*For example ...*

3) *To ...*

*For example ...*

## *Helping adrenaline driven people to develop and sometimes to move on*

There is another key step in helping your people to develop, whether or not they are adrenaline driven. It can be important to spend quality time with each of them each month.

You aim to build a successful team in which people take responsibility for delivering the goods. So you can invite the person to come to the meeting with their views about the following things.

*The specific results I have delivered in the past month and the specific results I aim to deliver in the next month.*

*The specific things I am doing well and how I can follow these principles more in the future. The specific things I can do even better in the future and how.*

*The specific challenges I face, the potential solutions for tackling these challenges and the support I would like to reach the goals.*

*The specific other things I would like to explore about my work and career.*

Every person in the team can use their strengths to contribute to delivering the team's Scorecard – the mandatory things the team must deliver. They can also do stimulating projects that help the team to achieve ongoing success.

At some point individuals may feel they need to move on, which can be a natural step in development. Adrenaline driven people sometimes want to take this step more frequently than others.

Why? They get impatient and want to go onto new projects that they perceive as more exciting.

Such people frequently strive hard to reach a specific goal – such as hitting a sales target, launching a product, climbing a mountain or

whatever. Reaching the target is great and provides a creative high, but it also leaves a vacuum.

The person then searches for a new sense of purpose. Adrenaline driven people who find a positive purpose can then channel their energy in a healthy way.

Those that don't may channel it in an unhealthy way and become resentful. In more extreme cases, they may fall into addictions - such as gambling, drinking or getting into trouble.

What does this mean for you as a leader? Keep checking with the adrenaline driven person as they approach the end of a project. You can encourage them to do the following things.

*To encourage themselves and do whatever is required to deliver their contribution to the team.*

*To find or create the next stimulating project - this may be within your team or organisation, but sometimes it may mean moving elsewhere.*

*To rest, recover and then manage the transition to next project.*

Let's return to your own team. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to do the following things.

*Describe the specific things you can do to ensure the adrenaline driven people continue to do good work that contributes to the team.*

*Describe the specific things you can do to help them to develop and, if necessary, move on.*

*Describe the specific things you can then do to continue to build a successful team.*

## *Adrenaline Driven People*

*The specific things I can do to ensure they continue to contribute to the team are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to help them to develop and, if necessary move on, are:*

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*The specific things I can do to continue to build a successful team are:*

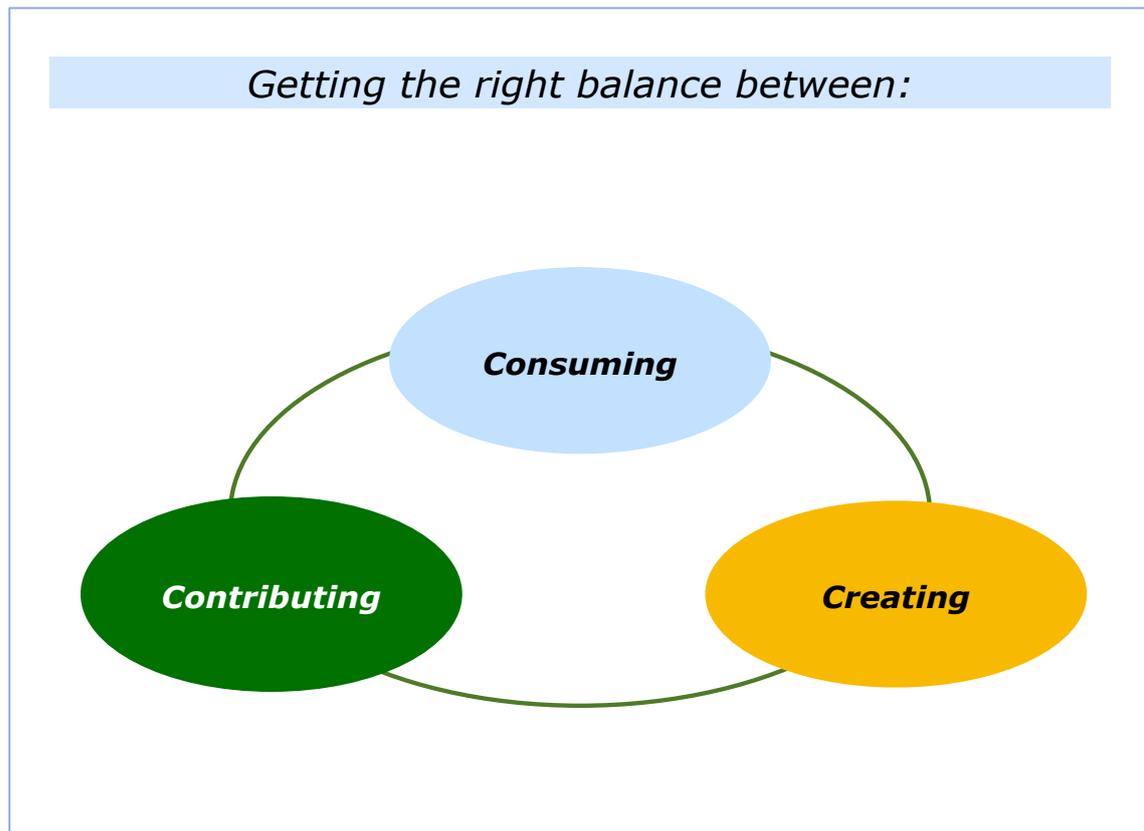
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Intense people often need to get the right blend in their life. Sometimes this calls for them focusing on the following theme.

### *The Consuming, Creating And Contributing Approach*



People are living systems and need to get the right balance between consuming and creating. Sometimes they may also translate this into making a positive contribution to people or the planet.

Consuming can take many forms. It is not just about food. It also includes the environment and the things people experience in their daily lives and work. As the old saying goes:

*"Everything is food."*

A person may consume bad news about the environment and this can overload their system. A person may consume lots of ideas. They can lead to them feeling overloaded and stodgy. They may

feel better if they translate these ideas into action and get some successes.

Creativity can take many forms. It can include writing, playing music, solving problems, designing things, producing something new or doing other creative activities.

Contributing can also take many forms. It can include giving to others, encouraging people, doing good work, passing on knowledge or helping to build a better world.

Imagine you want to get the right balance. One approach is to focus on the following themes.

### *Consuming*

You can start by considering what you want to put into your body and soul. One person described how they took this approach.

*"I began by listing the physical and psychological things I wanted to consume.*

*"On the physical side, I aimed to eat good food, spend time in the fresh air and take care of my health. On the psychological side, I wanted to get stimulating ideas, read uplifting articles, work on energising projects and spend time with encouraging people.*

*"The hard part was doing this in my daily life. Some things were easy to cut out, but others took more effort. I have managed to take many of these steps but it is still a work in progress."*

### *Creating*

How can you make good use of the things you consume? One approach is to ask yourself some of the questions.

*"What am I taking into my body and soul? What am I feeling or thinking? How can I channel these experiences in a creative way?"*

You may choose to translate your experiences into encouraging others, writing, painting or cooking. You may choose to focus on exercising, gardening, finding solutions, working or doing other activities.

People often feel better if they can get the right balance between taking things in and getting things out. The key is often to find healthy ways making this happen.

### *Contributing*

Some people go a step further. They ask themselves the following questions.

*"How can I use these experiences in a positive way? How can I contribute something that helps people or the planet?"*

Many people who have setbacks use these to pass on knowledge that helps other people. They may choose:

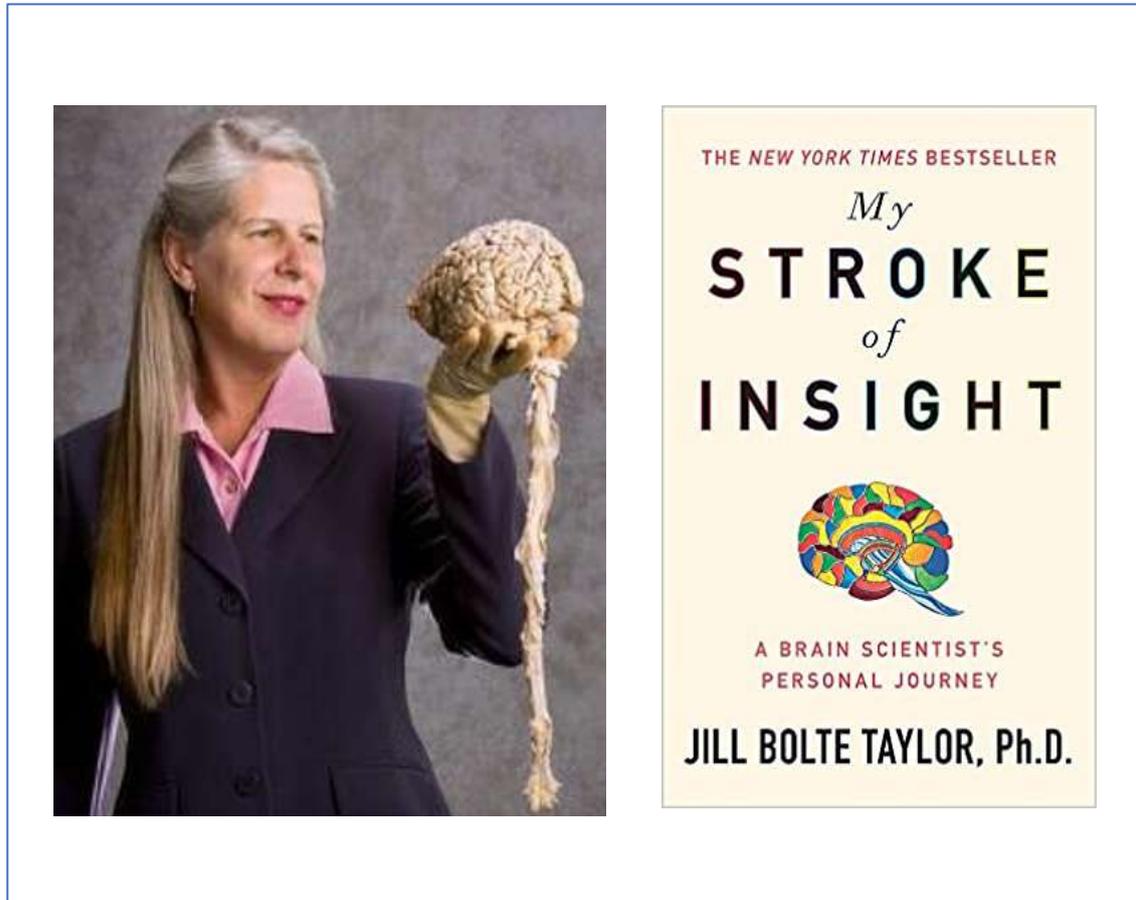
*To create websites for patients ... To help the homeless ... To help prisoners of conscience ... To help athletes whose careers are cut short ... To help people change their careers ... To pass on knowledge that helps people to shape their future lives.*

Jill Bolte Taylor translated adversity into doing brilliant work that helps others. Here is the introduction to her well-known TED Talk.

*Neuroanatomist Jill Bolte Taylor had an opportunity few brain scientists would wish for. One morning she realised she was having a massive stroke.*

*As it happened – as she felt her brain functions slip away one by one, speech, movement, understanding – she studied and remembered every moment.*

She went on to publish *My Stroke of Insight*. Here is an excerpt from her website that explains some themes she explores in the book.



*Jill shares with us her recommendations for recovery and the insight she gained into the unique functions of the right and left hemispheres of her brain.*

*Based upon her academic training and personal experience, Jill helps others not only rebuild their brains from trauma, but helps those of us with normal brains better understand how we can 'tend the garden of our minds' to maximize our quality of life.*

*Jill teaches us through her own example how we might more readily exercise our right hemispheric circuitry with the intention of helping all human beings become more humane.*

People sometimes need to get the right balance between consuming, creating and contributing. This can especially be the case if the person is intense.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where an intense person may ask for your help? This could be in your personal or professional life.

How can show you understand the person's goals? How can you help them to channel their intensity to achieve their desired outcomes? What may happen as a result?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Intense Person Approach*

*The specific situation where an intense person may ask for my help may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to help the person to channel their intensity and achieve their desired outcome are:*

\*

\*

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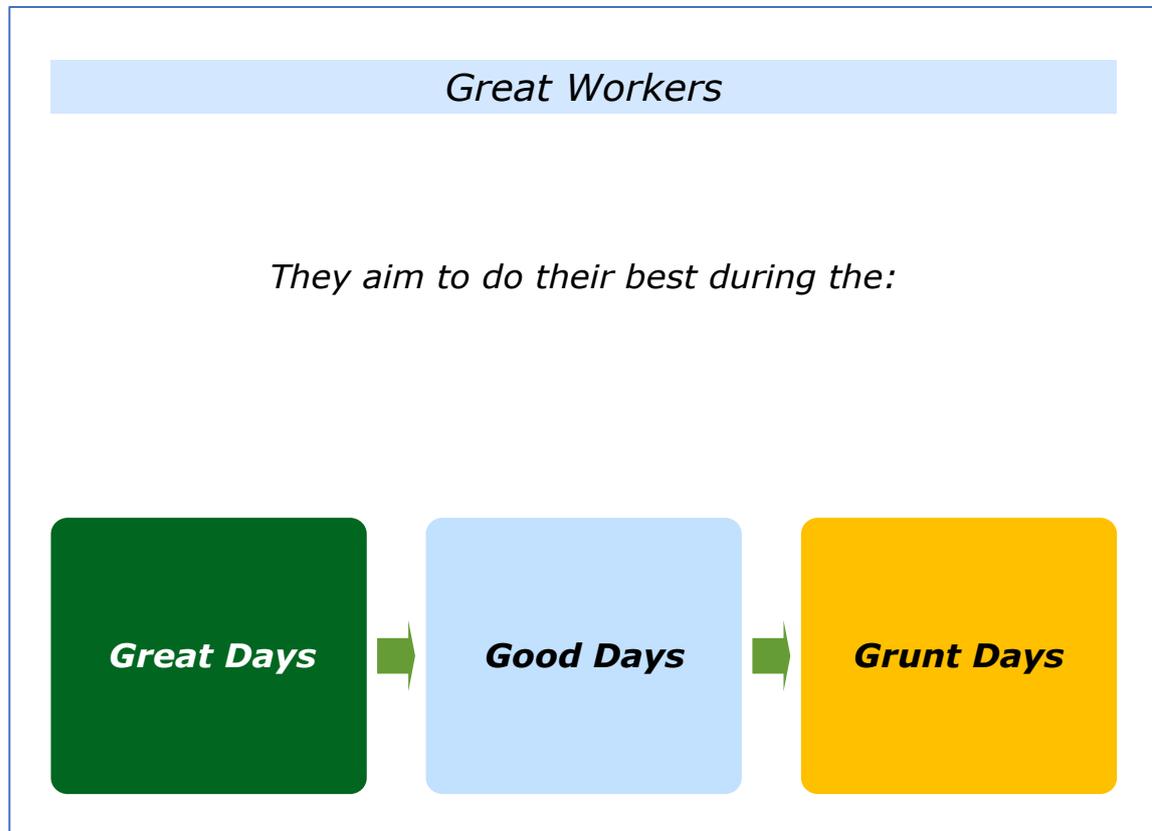
*The specific things that may happen as a result may be:*

\*

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## *The Great Days, Good Days And Grunt Days Approach*



Great days are when you fly and feel exhilarated. Good days are when you do fine work and feel satisfied. Grunt days are when you feel as if you are just doing grunt work.

Great workers keep doing their best during each kind of day. They also ask:

*"How can I turn a grunt day into a good day and a good day into a great day?"*

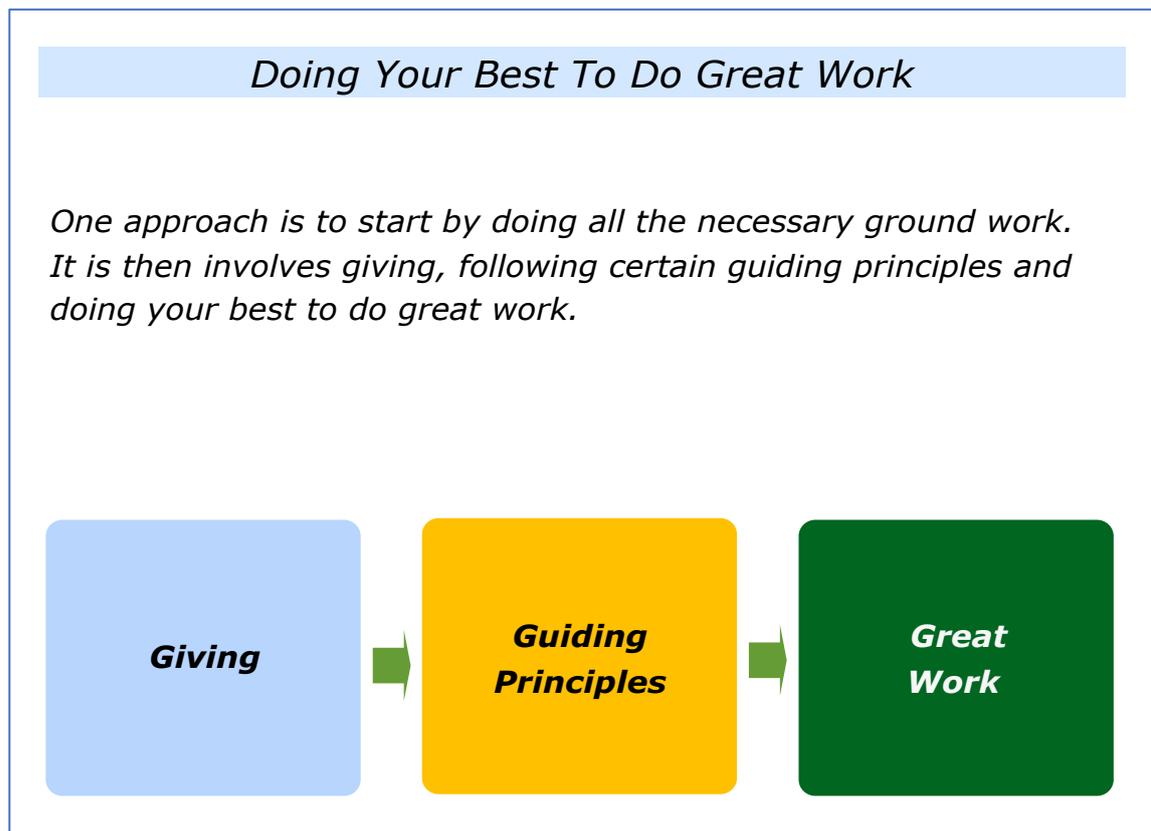
Different people follow different principles to make this happen. Let's explore some of these possibilities.

## Great Days

Can you remember when you enjoyed a great day in your work? Perhaps you were immersed in writing, solving a problem, building a house or doing another activity. You felt alive, alert and able to do fulfilling work.

What did you do right to create such a day? What were the principles you followed? How did you translate these into action? How can you follow similar principles in the future?

There are many models for creating such days. One approach is to go through the following stages.



Imagine that you want to work on a particular day. You may aim to run a mentoring session, facilitate a workshop, do a creative project, renovate a house, mediate between warring parties or do another activity.

## *Groundwork*

The first step will be to do all the groundwork. This will involve preparing properly, doing the necessary research and identifying the results to achieve. It will then involve clarifying and rehearsing the key strategies you can follow to achieve success.

## *Giving*

This will involve clicking into action, being fully present and giving everything to serve the work. It can mean using your strengths to serve a purpose, serve a vocation or serve a person. The aim is to give your best to achieve the desired picture of success.

## *Guiding Principles*

The next step will be to focus on your guiding principles. These may be certain Dos and Don'ts you believe in following. You can keep focusing on these principles to perform superb work, keep improving and working towards the picture of success.

## *Great Work*

You will keep doing good work and sometimes go further. This may mean making a creative breakthrough, adding a touch of class or going into another dimension. You may then add something special and perform great work.

Imagine you want to create a great day in your work. You may aim to encourage people, work on a creative project, perform a series of tasks, help customers or do other activities.

How can you prepare the ground properly? How can you give everything to the work? How can you follow your guiding principles? How can you do your best to perform great work?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Great Days*

*The specific situation where I would like to create a great day in my work is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do my best to create such a great day are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Good Days*

When do you feel you have had a good day in your work? The answers you give will depend on several factors. These may include:

*The specific kind of work you do;*

*The specific things you find rewarding in the work;*

*The satisfaction you get from doing this work on a specific day.*

You will have your own definition of such a day. This may depend on whether you work as a writer, counsellor, teacher, paramedic, bomb disposal expert or in another role. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

## *Good Days*

*I feel I have had a good day in my work when:*

*\* I have ...*

*\* I have ...*

*\* I have ...*

Great workers follow certain rituals to increase their chances of doing good work. They pursue these habits without thinking. They reserve their thinking power for doing creative work, tackling challenges and finding solutions.

Mason Currey described how creative people apply elements of this approach in his books *Daily Rituals: How Artists Work* and *Daily Rituals: Women At Work*.

Here is an excerpt from what Mason says about Maya Angelou. This is followed by other examples from the books.

*For many years, Angelou worked in hotel or motel rooms, the more anonymous the better. In 1983 she told an interviewer:*

*"I keep a hotel room in which I do my work – a tiny, mean room with just a bed, and sometimes, if I can find it, a face basin. I keep a dictionary, a bible, a deck of cards and a bottle of sherry in the room.*

*"I try to get there around 7, and I work until 2 in the afternoon. If the work is going badly, I stay until 12.30. If it's going well, I'll stay as long as it is going well. It's lonely, and it's marvellous."*

*Descartes liked to linger in bed, his mind wandering in sleep through woods, gardens, and enchanted palaces where he experienced 'every pleasure imaginable'.*

*George Gershwin worked for twelve hours a day from late morning to midnight, composing at the piano in pyjamas, bathrobe and slippers. Igor Stravinsky was never able to compose unless he was sure no one could hear him and, when blocked, stood on his head to clear the brain.*

*Barbara Hepworth sculpted outdoors, Janet Frame wore earmuffs as she worked to block out noise. Kate Chopin wrote with her six children 'swarming around her' whereas the artist Rosa Bonheur filled her bedroom with the sixty birds that inspired her work.*

*Louisa May Alcott wrote so vigorously - skipping sleep and meals - that she had to learn to write with her left hand to give her cramped right hand a break.*



Let's return to your own work. Can you think of situation where you would like to create good days when doing certain kinds of work? How can you plan ahead and prepare properly? How can you organise your time in blocks so you can do deep work?

How can follow your chosen rhythm? How can you build in times for rest and recovery? How can you be relaxed but relentless? How can you do your best to perform good work?

If you wish, try the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Good Days*

*The specific situation where I would like to create good days when doing certain kinds of work is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to do my best to create good days when doing this work are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps are:*

\*

\*

\*

## Grunt Days

When do you have grunt days in your work? You may, for example, be working through a list of tasks. This can sometimes seem formidable. Let's explore how you can encourage yourself on the journey.

People want to see a connection between their daily tasks and their life goals. So you may ask:

*What are my life goals? How will today's work contribute to me achieving the picture of success?*

Sometimes you will need to be creative when exploring these questions, but it is important to find a connection. Doing so can bring a sense of meaning to each day. Here are some ideas it may be worth considering when doing the grunt work.

### *Doing The Grunt Work On The Way Towards Doing Great Work*

- *You can start by clarifying the long-term goal – the picture of success.*

*It is important to work towards something worthwhile. Start by clarifying what you want to achieve by a certain date and translate this into a clear picture of success.*

- *You can make a road map for working towards the picture of success.*

*Describe the specific things you want to achieve by certain dates on the journey. Translate this into a clear action plan.*

- *You can do the grunt work on the way towards achieving the picture of success.*

*You can aim to play to your strengths when doing the work and, if possible, get help with the other aspects of the work.*

- *You can encourage yourself on the journey.*

*You can follow your preferred way of working, take regular breaks, set short-term goals and get a feeling of success.*

- *You can keep working towards achieving the long-term picture of success.*

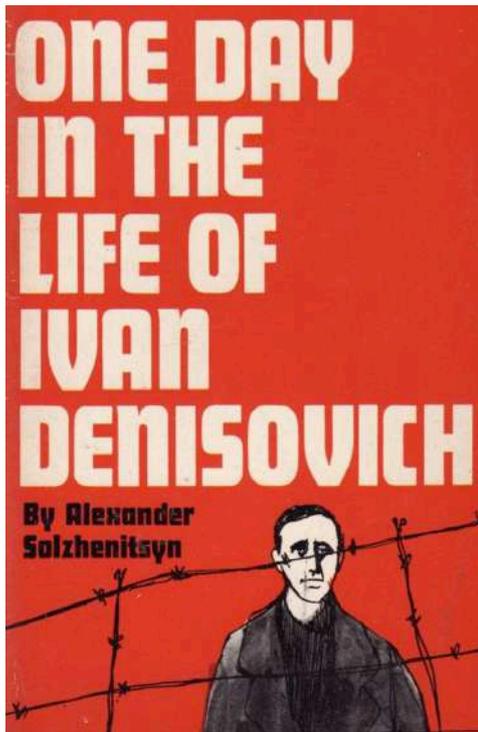
*Keep getting successes on the journey. You can then do your best to achieve the long-term picture of success.*

Some people manage the grunt work by using positive reframing. They may reframe it as a chance to add certain skills or give themselves time to think. (I took the latter approach when working in factories for six years.)

Alexander Solzhenitsyn highlighted these themes in his book *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. He describes how Ivan Denisovich Shukhov, who is serving a ten-year sentence in the Gulag, takes pride in his daily work. This is how several commentators described Shukov's approach.

*He acts under a moral code that allows him to continue to respect himself. He no longer thinks much of home or freedom but instead thinks about that day, taking pride in his work as a mason.*

*In working hard at his masonry and taking pride in building a good, strong, straight wall, he is in effect subverting the prison authorities who seek to punish him by making him work.*



*Shukhov, instead, is gaining self-esteem by learning a new skill in prison and making his actions meaningful to himself.*

*He finds a sort of freedom through work because he is no longer working for the authorities but for himself.*

*He even wants to carry on building when the signal for the end of the day sounds.*

Let's assume you reframe the situation and make the best of the grunt day. You can start by finding a larger meaning in your work – for yourself or for other people – and then set your goals for the day.

Break down the day into chunks. Get an early success and build in time to re-energise yourself at points during the day. Encourage yourself by ticking items as you complete them along the way.

Taking a break, you can again refocus on your lifetime picture of success and then plunge back into the work. Looking back at the end of the day, you may feel almost exhilarated.

Sounds odd? Perhaps, but like Shukhov you may have beaten the system. The grunt day may even get a 7/10.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Grunt Days*

*The specific situation where I would like to do my best during a possible grunt day is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do my best to during such a grunt day are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Setbacks As A Springboard To Success Approach*

### *Setbacks As A Springboard To Success*

*Some people see setbacks as an opportunity to take stock, to explore their potential future strategies and then to work towards a new compelling picture of success.*



Everybody has both successes and setbacks. Some people build on the successes. They also use the setbacks as a springboard to achieving future success.

Such people deal with the latter part in different ways. Some take the following approach:

*They take time to reflect, recover and manage the emotions involved with the setback;*

*They begin to see the setback as an opportunity to take stock and consider their potential future strategies;*

*They then use the setback as a springboard towards achieving a new compelling picture of success.*

A person in the 60s may find their job terminated with little hope of another full-time role. They may reframe this as an opportunity to provide specialist help to decision makers in their network who want experienced people to do certain projects.

A young football player may be discarded by their club or suffer a career-ending injury. They may reframe this as an opportunity to become a coach or provide advisory services for young players who find their dreams have been dashed.

A person with a harmful addiction may have a traumatic experience. This leads them to making a decision: "Do I want to live longer? Or do I want to continue with my addictions and die soon?" They may choose to see this as an opportunity to live a healthier life.

A couple may try for years to have a child. This becomes emotionally draining and challenging. After a number of years, however, they decide to reframe it as an opportunity to adopt children and provide them with a loving home and family.

A company that hits the rocks may see it as an opportunity to shape a better future. They may return to doing what they do best with the customers with whom they work best. They may then build a company that creates wins for all its stakeholders.

Looking back, can you think of a time when you used a setback as a springboard for achieving future success? This could have been in your personal or professional life.

What did you do then to reflect, recover and explore the future opportunities? What did you do to pursue your chosen path? How did you do your best to achieve future success?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Setbacks As A Springboard To Success In The Past*

*The specific situation in the past when  
I used a setback as a springboard  
to achieving future success was:*

\*

*The specific things I did to use  
the setback as a springboard  
to achieving success were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that happened as  
a result of taking these steps were:*

\*

\*

\*

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may use a setback as springboard towards achieving future success? How can you channel your energy in this way?

You will follow your chosen approach to making this happen. If appropriate, however, you may want to pursue some of the following steps in your own way.

*You can take time to reflect,  
recover and manage the  
emotions involved with the setback*

Different people choose different ways to deal with setbacks. Each approach may have both pluses and minuses. It can be helpful for a person to act in a way that works for them and other people.

Some individuals choose to leap into action. This may be necessary to prevent further problems or shape a better future. Sometimes a person may simply do something that provides a distraction from the pain.

Some individuals use other ways to manage the emotions. They may sleep, talk with friends or go deep into themselves. Some may fall into a downward spiral. Some may begin to recover and gain strength.

Some individuals may feel down. They may recognise, however, that they need to do something to change the feeling. They may therefore do something that they know will give them positive energy.

Some individuals may take time to reflect on the setback. They may aim: a) to clarify what they did well; b) to clarify what they could have done better; c) to clarify the lessons learned and how to apply these in the future.

Imagine that you have gone through some of these steps in your own way. It may then be time to move on to the next stage.

*You can begin to see the setback as  
an opportunity to take stock and  
consider your potential future strategies*

Different people see the world in different ways. This also influences the way they see and deal with setbacks.

Some individuals are positive but realistic. They prepare, plan ahead and do their best. But they also realise there will be both delights and disappoints.

Such a person may take time to recover from a shock. After a while, however, they may take stock and begin to explore some of the following themes.

*What can I do in the future? Are there any ways that I can use this setback as an opportunity? What are my assets? How can I take charge of shaping my future?*

*Looking ahead, how can I build on my strengths? What are the possible routes I can follow? What may be some of the potential opportunities? How could I pursue these possibilities?*

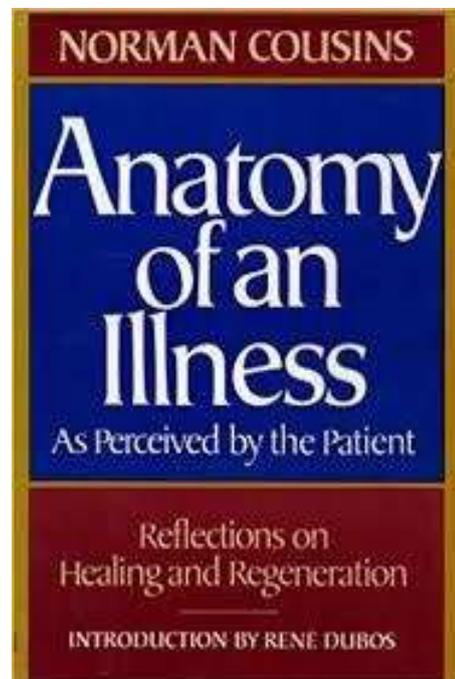
*What is the route I want to follow? What would be the pluses and minuses involved? How can I build on the pluses and manage the minuses? On a scale 0-10, how motivated do I feel to do what is required to follow this route?*

*Looking ahead, what are the real results I want to achieve? What are the key strategies I can follow to give myself the greatest chance of success? When do I want to begin? How can I get some early successes?*

Imagine that you have gone through some of these steps in your own way. It may then be time to move on to the next stage

*You can then use the setback as a springboard towards achieving a new compelling picture of success.*

Different people use setbacks in different ways. Some use them to reinforce their view that the world is wrong. Some use them as an opportunity to do their best during their time in the world. Let look at one of the most well-known examples of somebody choosing the second route.



Norman Cousins was born in 1915 and lived till 1990. He was a political journalist, well known for his humanitarian views.

He reached a wider audience, however, with his book *Anatomy of an Illness*. The book showed how people could mobilise their inner strength to fight illness.

In addition to his journalistic work, Norman was Adjunct Professor of Medical Humanities for the School of Medicine at the University of California. He specialised in researching how human emotions could affect a person's ability to stay healthy and overcome illness.

Norman translated this into action himself when diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. Told that he had little chance of surviving, Cousins developed a personal recovery programme.

This involved taking lots of Vitamin C, together with mobilising his positive emotions. The latter involved him watching lots of Marx Brothers films. Norman later wrote:

*I made the joyous discovery that ten minutes of genuine belly laughter had an anaesthetic effect and would give me at least two hours of pain-free sleep.*

*When the pain-killing effect of the laughter wore off, we would switch on the motion picture projector again and not infrequently, it would lead to another pain-free interval.*

Norman recovered and published his findings in medical journals. This led to him producing the book, whose full title was *Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient: Reflections on Healing and Regeneration*.

Whilst warning against charlatans who ignored real medical problems, Norman stressed the importance of people mobilising their inner resources to live healthy lives. He wrote:

*Hearty laughter is a good way to jog internally without having to go outdoors.*

*Anatomy* was published in 1979 and had a profound influence on the way people began conducted themselves as patients. Norman believed that people could take a stand towards setbacks. He wrote:

*Wisdom consists of the anticipation of consequences.*

*A human being fashions his consequences as surely as he fashions his goods or his dwelling his goods or his dwelling. Nothing that he says, thinks or does is without consequences.*

Norman was, above everything, a world citizen. He believed that humanity could create a better world. But this would require both imagination and will power. He wrote:

*The main failure of education is that it has not prepared people to comprehend matters concerning human destiny.*

*Leadership on this higher level does not require mountains of gold or thundering propaganda. It is concerned with human destiny. Human destiny is the issue.*

*The essential lesson most people still resist is that they are members of one species.*

*It is this that we all share - the emergence of a common destiny and the beginning of the perception, however misty, that something beyond the nation will have to be brought into being if the human race is to have any meaning.*

This sounds a big task, but Norman remained a positive realist. Each of us could contribute by encouraging the spark in other human beings. He wrote:

*If something comes to life in others because of you, then you have made an approach to immortality.*

## *The You Can Either Succeed Or You Can Get Stronger Approach*

### *The Succeed Or Get Stronger Approach*

*This approach involves playing to your strengths and doing superb work. You can then either succeed or – if you do not yet succeed - you can get stronger.*



There are many models for managing emotional responses to succeeding or not yet succeeding. Here is one approach.

Imagine that you are going to tackle a task. You may be aiming to do your best when playing a sport, applying for a job, doing a project or performing another activity.

You may start by clarifying what you can control in the situation. Bearing these things in mind, you will aim to play to your strengths, follow your chosen strategies and do superb work.

Moving into action, you will aim to do your best and to give everything. Depending on the situation, may find that either:

*You can maybe succeed.*

*You can, if you don't yet succeed, choose to get stronger.*

Some people see themselves on a lifetime journey. Sometimes they succeed; sometimes they do not yet succeed. When the latter occurs, they choose to get stronger.

Different people do this in different ways. Looking at the work they have done in the situation, they may focus on:

*The specific things they did well and what they could do better in the future;*

*The specific things they learned – both on a personal and professional level;*

*The specific things they can do to apply these lessons in their future life.*

Such people aim to learn and get stronger. Sometimes they apply the lessons to improve in their sport, creative work or other activity. Sometimes they apply the lessons in other areas of life.

They may have learned about caring, compassion or continuous improvement. They may have learned about positivity, professionalism or peak performance. They may then use these lessons to help themselves or other people.

People can learn from succeeding and not yet succeeding. They can learn lessons that they can apply: a) to keep improving and grow stronger; b) to help themselves and other people. You will, of course, do this in your own way.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may encounter a setback? How could you use it as a springboard towards achieving future success?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Setbacks As A Springboard To Success In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future when  
I may encounter a setback may be:*

\*

*The specific things I may be able to do  
then to use the setback as a springboard  
to achieving future success may be:*

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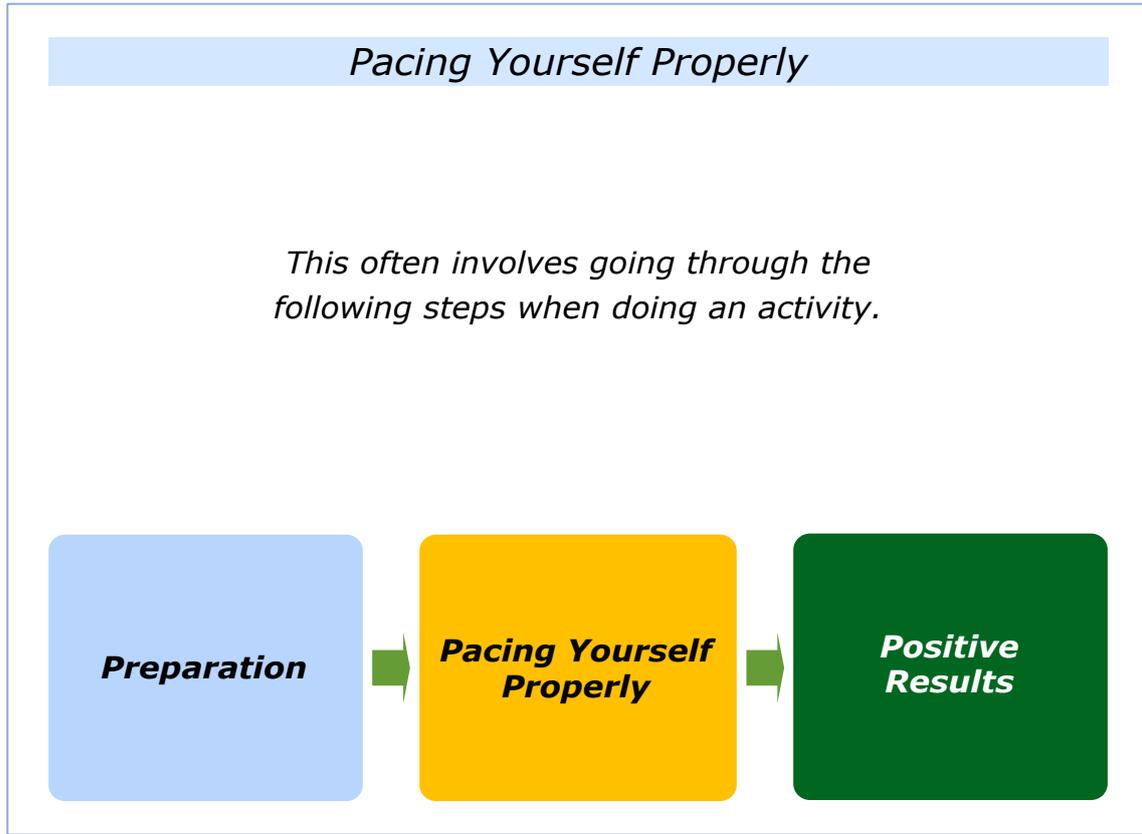
*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Pacing Approach*



Imagine that you are working towards a long-term goal. It may be important to do things at the right pace. Let's explore this theme.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you paced yourself properly? You may have been searching for a job, doing a creative project, tackling a challenge or doing another activity.

What did you do to manage your energy both physically and psychologically? You may have taken some of the following steps.

### *Preparation*

You felt motivated and ready to do the activity. You planned ahead and clarified the real results you wanted to achieve. Making sure you had the right resources, you organised your schedule.

You may have organised your time in blocks. This gave you time and space to prepare, pace yourself and achieve positive results.

Looking ahead, you rehearsed the strategies you wanted to follow. You also made plans for tackling any potential difficulties. Feeling you had prepared fully, you moved on to the next stage.

### *Pacing Yourself Properly*

Moving into action, you did things at the right pace. Sometimes you went slowly, sometimes you went quickly. Sometimes you absorbed yourself completely, sometimes you took time to reflect.

Great workers follow their chosen rhythm. Sometimes this involves doing different things at different speeds. Pep Guardiola, the football manager, explained this in the following way.

*"Football must be played in different rhythms. Sometimes you have to walk, sometimes you have to have rhythm and sometimes you have to change the rhythm."*

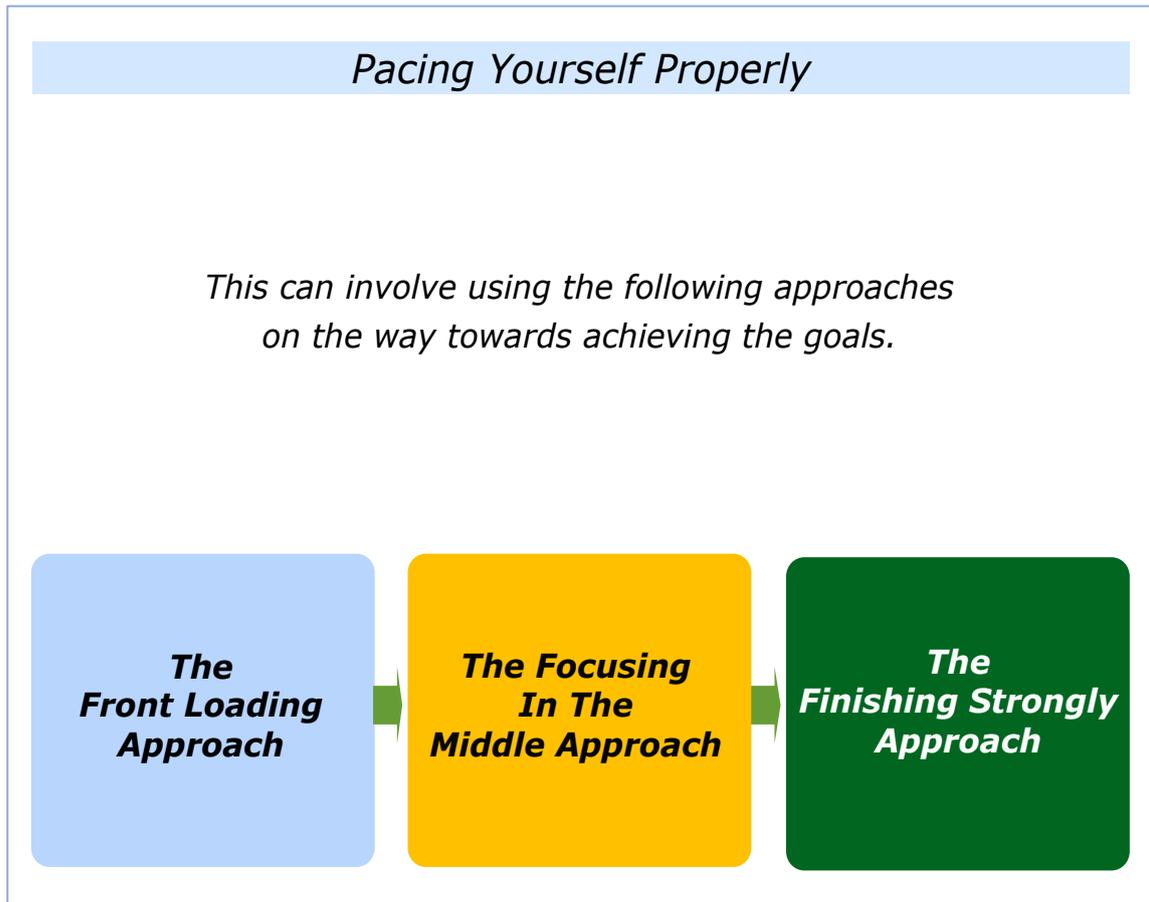
### *Positive Results*

You may have broken-down the journey into smaller steps and set achievable goals. Following your chosen strategies, you got some quick wins and built momentum.

Sometimes you worked for a long time, sometimes in intense bursts. Sometimes you took time out to rest, reflect and rehearse what you were going to do next.

Approaching the finishing line, you relaxed. You then aimed to flow, focus and finish. You did your best to deliver the goods and get positive results.

Imagine that you are working towards a longer-term goal. There are also several approaches it can be worth bearing in mind when following your chosen rhythm.



### *The Front Loading Approach*

Great workers often start by doing an enormous amount of front loading. This preparation can take different forms and depends on the field in which they perform.

One freelancer aimed to bring in more than 60% of their desired income during the first six months of the year. This provided a platform for them to keep following their principles and get positive results.

One mediator began by meeting individuals before gathering people together. They showed respect to each person and clarified their aims. Bringing people together, they built on areas of agreement and got some early successes.

One person had a financial approach to front loading. They always earned enough money to pay for things before buying them. They

felt more comfortable taking this approach and refused to go into debt.

One trusted advisor had an emotional approach to front loading. During the 2008 recession they kept giving to others and, in many cases, helping them without asking for funding. This built enormous goodwill with people and paid off in later years.

### *The Focusing In The Middle Approach*

Great workers go beyond motivating themselves when beginning and finishing an activity. They also maintain high standards during the middle part of doing the work.

The yachting team I worked with anticipated the challenges they would face during the middle of the race. Spending a year away from their loved ones would create its own problems.

These might be compounded by being stranded in the potentially windless corridor called the Doldrums. The crew developed strategies for encouraging themselves and others during such times.

Rosebeth Moss, an expert on leadership, describes how even visionary optimists can feel weary when aiming to shift a culture.

She explained this in an article she wrote for the Harvard Business Review called *Change Is Hardest In The Middle*. Here is an excerpt.

*Welcome to the miserable middles of change. Everything looks like a failure in the middle. Everyone loves inspiring beginnings and happy endings; it is just the middles that involve hard work.*

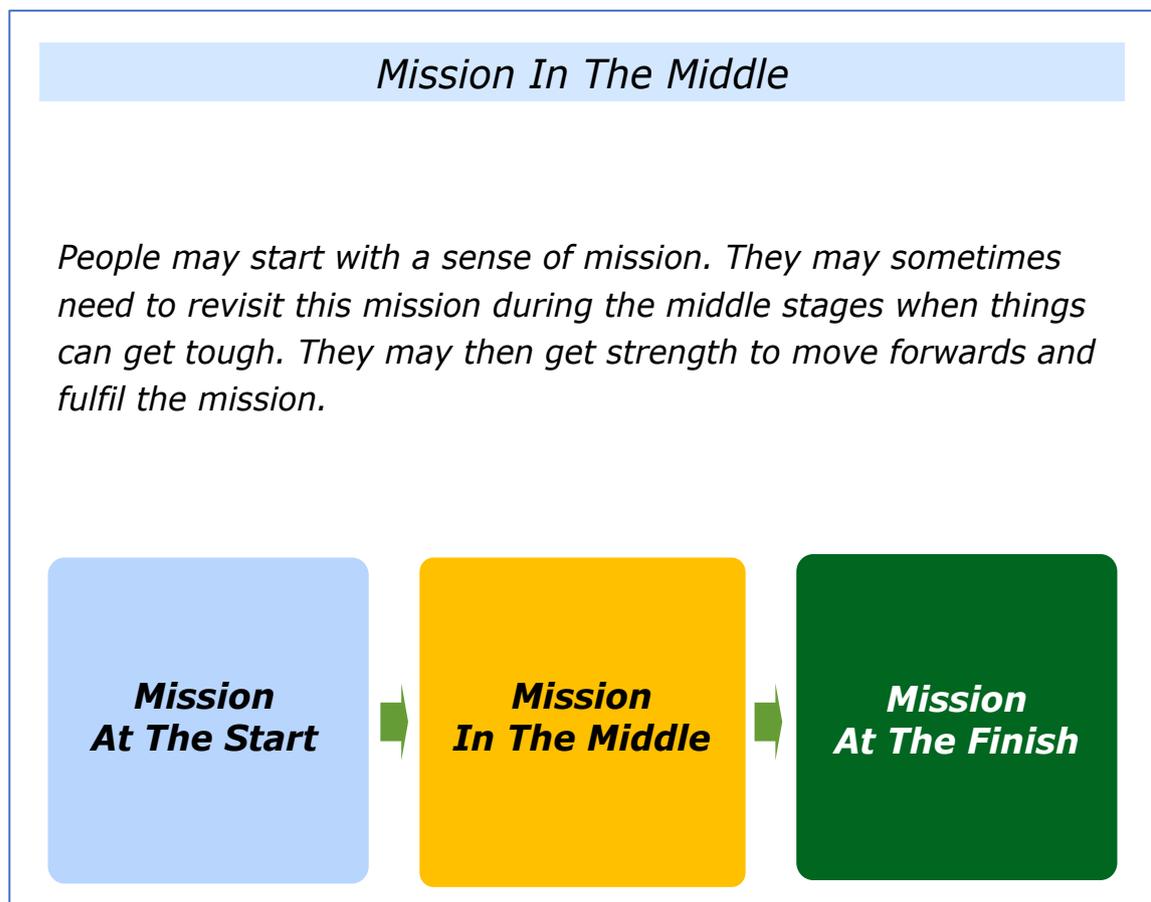
*Stay with it through its hurdles, make appropriate adjustments, and you could be on the way to success. Though some ideas are dead-ends, many simply need mid-course corrections.*

*Those who master change persist and persevere. They have stamina. They are flexible. They expect obstacles on the road to success and celebrate each milestone.*

How to motivate yourself during the middle? One approach is: a) to recall what you have achieved so far; b) to remind yourself of the benefits of achieving the goals.

You can also keep reading reality. It can be helpful: a) to build on what is working; c) to improve in the other areas. You can then keep working towards toward achieving the picture of success.

### *The Mission In The Middle Approach*



This is an approach that is sometimes used by individuals, teams and organisations. Different people do this in different ways.

Some take this approach in their personal or professional lives. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"My work used to be a mission, then it became a career, now it is a job. I would like to regain my sense of mission."*

Such individuals sometimes refocus on doing work they believe in. They then find ways to do fulfilling work that also provides funding.

Great teams also focus on their mission. Many teams returned to this approach during the Covid pandemic. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"Our medical team found it tough during Covid. We were working long hours under arduous conditions, but we all pulled together."*

*"We kept revisiting our mission. We aim to care for people and help them to be healthy. We re-energised ourselves by focusing on our calling and aiming to live it every day."*

Great leaders also take this approach. They recognise that their teams may sometimes get bogged down by concentrating on tactics. At this point a leader may say something along the following lines.

*"Let's go back to our mission. The things we really want to do in our work are these."*

*"We want ..."*

\*

\*

\*

*"We are busy and may sometimes get distracted. We obviously need to deal with daily problems and fix details."*

*"At times, however, we may need to step back. We can return to our mission and the guidelines we can follow translate it into action.*

*"Let me know if there is any way I can help you and your team members to keep following the mission."*

One leader followed elements of this approach when preparing for a workshop with their leadership team. People had been working hard and had sometimes lost sight of their real goals.

The workshop gave them the opportunity to recentre and refresh themselves. Bearing this in mind, the leader sent the following message to people before the session.

#### *Looking Forward To The Workshop*

*As you know, we are having a workshop next week. Looking ahead, I have set myself some goals for the day.*

*My goals are that at the end of the day, people are saying:*

*"We have revisited our mission and – after having had the chance to add our ideas – really believe in following it in our work.*

*"We have agreed on the strategies we want to follow to translate the mission into action in our daily work.*

*"We are again feeling a sense of mission and want to spread the word to our people (and the world)."*

*Maybe that sounds ambitious, but it is something I would like to help us to feel.*

*During the day I will be asking you to each contribute the ideas that you have: a) to build on the mission; b) to translate it into action; c) to maintain our health in the process.*

*At the end of the session I will be asking for mission holders who want to implement the various parts of the strategies. I will then give them the support they need to deliver the goods.*

*Let me know if there any other items – such as themes or challenges – you would like to add to the agenda.*

*I look forward to seeing you on the workshop.*

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach. This could be when doing work by yourself or when working in a team.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Mission In The Middle Approach*

*The specific situation in the future when I or the team may gain strength from revisiting the mission may be:*

\*

*The specific things I or the team can do then to revisit the mission are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Finishing Strongly Approach*

Great workers are often good finishers in the areas where they excel. Such people embody some elements of what Daniel Kahneman called Peak-End Theory.

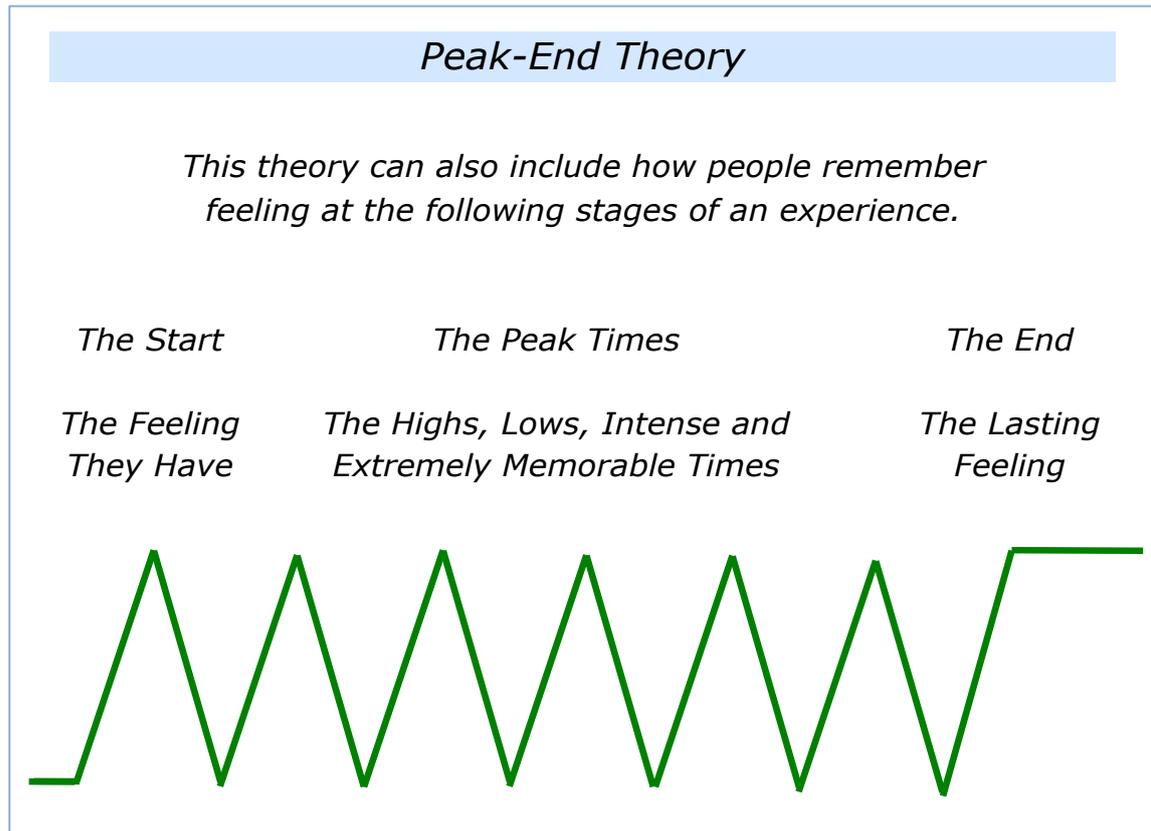
The theory says that, when looking back, people do not necessarily recall their feelings throughout an experience. Instead, they remember the way they felt at:

*The peak times – the intense times – and the end of the experience.*

The peak times may be pleasant or unpleasant. These are the memories that stay with us, as does the way we felt at the end of the experience.

An additional view is that people also remember how they felt at that start of an experience. For example, whether the start was welcoming, enjoyable or difficult. This approach can be applied to how we remember, for example:

*A relationship ... A job we did at some point in our career ... A sporting event, musical performance or other experience.*



Many singers and other entertainers follow this approach. The old rule applies:

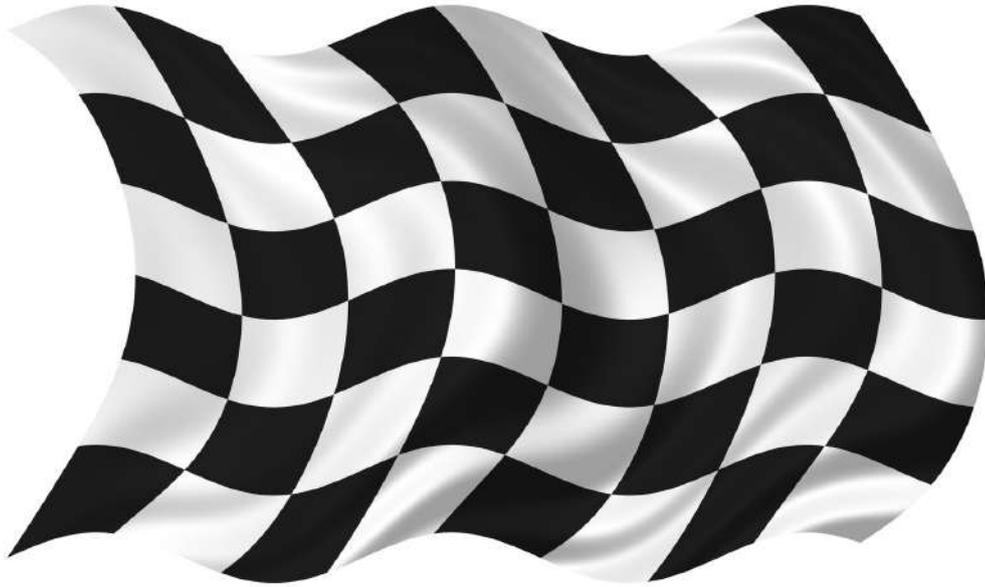
*Start Big - Give Lots of Highs - End Big*

Great workers sometimes follow similar principles. They start well, maintain high standards and finish strongly. They aim to do this each day on the journey towards achieving their longer-term picture of success.

Let's conclude this part by returning to the concept of finishing. Here are some examples to bear in mind when aiming to complete a project, reach a goal or finish properly.

## *Finishing – A Phrase From Motor Racing*

***In Order To Finish First,  
First You Have To Finish***



There is some dispute where this phrase originated, though the favourite is from the world of motor racing.

The Formula 1 team may be gung-ho about winning the Grand Prix, but first they must do everything to complete the race. Otherwise they have no chance of winning.

This is a rule that applies in other sports and in life. Sometimes you see a football team spraying each other with champagne when they have qualified for a final.

Certainly it is important to celebrate, but the job is not yet finished. The team then needs to complete the job in the final. They can then release the champagne.

This is a principle that can be followed in life. It is vital celebrate certain moments. These provide strength, energy and momentum. It is then to go to complete the task and earn the actual champagne moment.

## *Certain Kinds Of Moments On The Journey Towards Finishing*

*People may go through the following stages on  
the journey towards achieving a specific goal.*



Let's return to your own life and work. Think of a specific project you would like to do in the future. How can you pace yourself properly when doing this project? What will be the benefits of taking this approach?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Pacing Myself Properly*

*The specific project  
I want to do is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do  
to pace myself properly  
when doing this project are:*

\*

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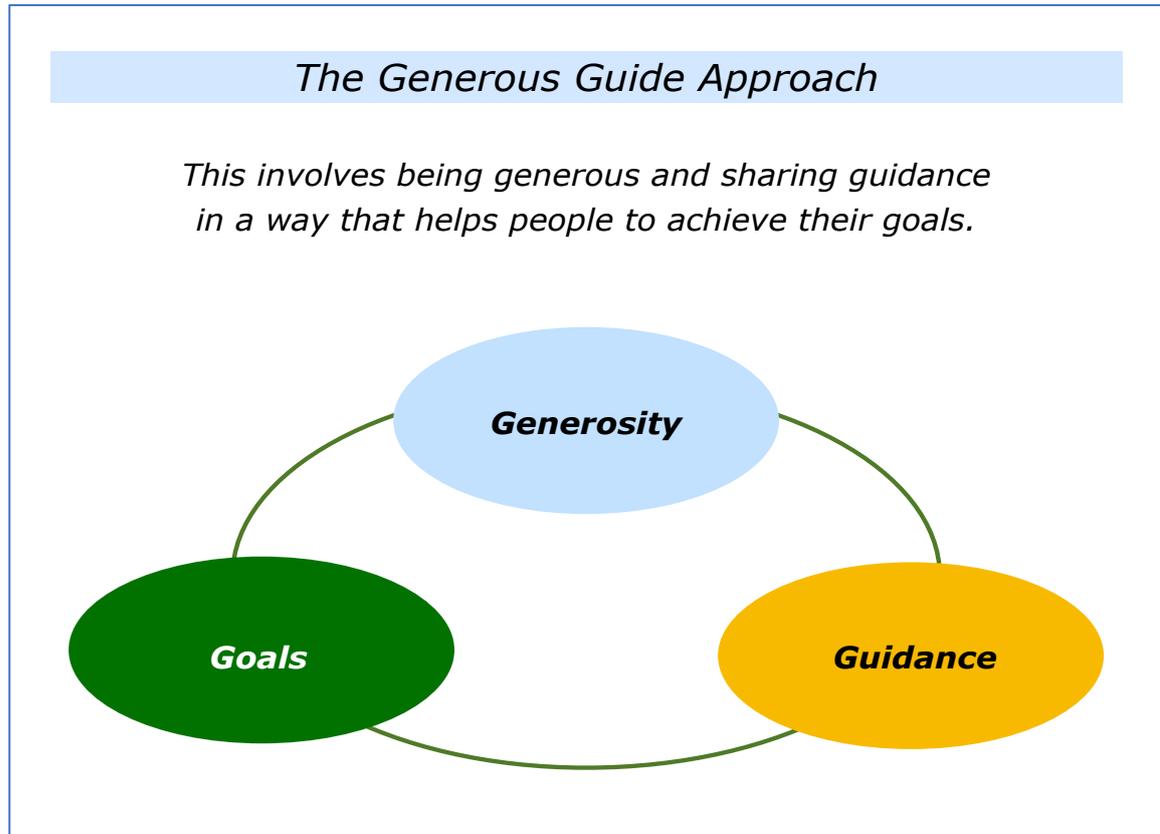
*The specific benefits of  
taking these steps will be:*

\*

\*

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## *The Generous Guide Approach*



This approach involves being generous and sharing guidance in a way that helps people to achieve their goals. It is one I saw in action early in my career. It was embodied by some of the sages I visited to learn about encouraging people.

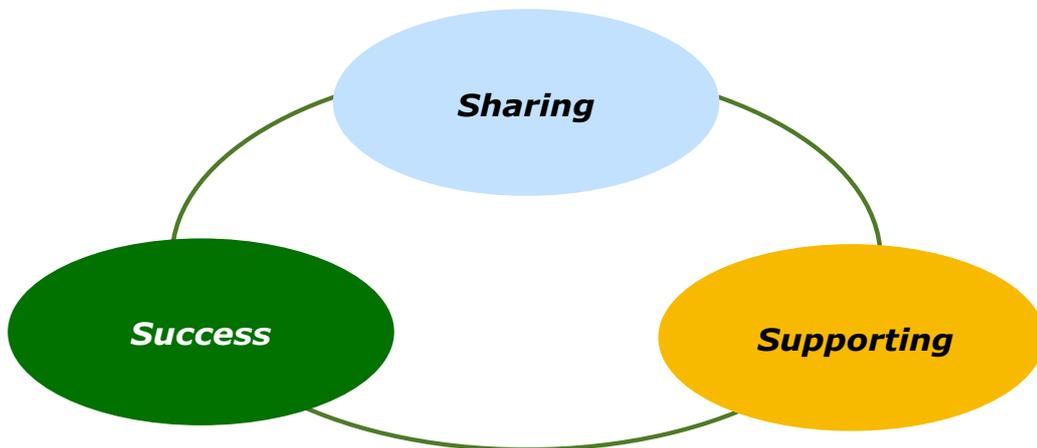
Such people often combined the elements of being kind, driven and humble. They saw themselves as lifetime students. At the same time they had strong convictions about how to help people during their time on the planet.

They embodied the generosity of spirit shown by great educators. They often helped people by working through the stages of clarity, customisation and concrete results.

Generous guides often focus on the sharing rather than selling approach. They love to share knowledge that helps people to succeed.

## *The Sharing Rather Than Selling Approach*

*Generous guides embody this approach. They love to share knowledge, support people and help them to succeed. They focus on:*



Such people often start by making a person feel welcome and clarifying their goals. Sometimes this involves focusing on the person's spirit, strengths and long-term picture of success.

Drawing on the eternal lessons passed on by wise people, they sometimes add their own ideas. They then share this knowledge a way that helped the person to achieve their goals.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you may have followed some elements of the generous guide approach? This could have been in your personal or professional life.

You may have done this when helping a student, colleague, customer or other person. You may have done it in your role as a friend, educator, coach, counsellor, leader, trusted advisor or in another role.

What did you do to make the person feel welcome? How did you clarify their goals? Bearing in mind what they wanted to achieve,

how did you draw on the knowledge passed on by wise people? How did add your own ideas?

How did you share this guidance in a customised way to ensure it was relevant to the person and their situation? How did you build on what resonated with them? How did you then do your best to help the person to achieve their goals?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Generous Guide Approach In The Past*

*The specific situation in the past when  
I followed some of the principles in  
the generous guide approach was:*

\*

*The specific things I did then to  
follow some of these principles were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that happened as  
a result of taking these steps were:*

\*

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\*

Generous guides come in many forms. Let's look at one person who embodied this approach.

### *Virginia Satir – A Generous Guide*

Virginia was a pioneering family therapist who created many concepts that have been used to build healthy families, teams and organisations. She provided people with tools they could use to build their strengths and find solutions to challenges.



*Problems are not the problem:  
coping is the problem.*

*Life is not what it's supposed to  
be. It's what it is. The way you  
cope with it is what makes the  
difference.*

*The event does not determine  
how to respond to the event.*

*The way in which we respond  
will direct and influence the  
event more than the event itself.*

Looking back on her life, Virginia said she was five-years-old when she decided to be a 'children's detective on parents'. She explained:

*"I didn't quite know what I would look for, but I realized a lot went on in families that didn't meet the eye."*

She went on to provide many practical tools that have benefited thousands of people. Here are some of the things she said.

## Parenting And Families

*I regard parenting as the hardest, most complicated, anxiety-ridden, sweat-and-blood-producing job in the world.*

*Succeeding requires the ultimate in patience, common sense, commitment, humour, tact, love, wisdom, awareness and knowledge.*

*At the same time, it holds the possibility for the most rewarding, joyous experience of a lifetime, namely, that of being successful guides to a new and unique human being.*

*Every word, facial expression, gesture, or action on the part of a parent gives the child some message about self-worth. It is sad that so many parents don't realize what messages they are sending.*

## The Nurturing Family And Society

*Feelings of worth can flourish only in an atmosphere where individual differences are appreciated, mistakes are tolerated, communication is open, and rules are flexible. The kind of atmosphere that is found in a nurturing family.*

*I feel that adolescence has served its purpose when a person arrives at adulthood with a strong sense of self-esteem, the ability to relate intimately, to communicate congruently, to take responsibility, and to take risks. The end of adolescence is the beginning of adulthood. What hasn't been finished then will have to be finished later.*

*Families and societies are small and large versions of one another. Both are made up of people who have to work together, whose destinies are tied up with one another.*

## *Background And Philosophy*

Virginia was born in Wisconsin in 1916. She was the eldest of five children born to Oscar and Minnie Pagenkopf, whose ancestors came from Germany.

She had several medical setbacks early in life. She contracted Mastoiditis when aged 5 and lost her hearing for two years. Seven years later she suffered a life-threatening illness.

Minnie was a Christian Scientist and at first resisted calling medical help. Oscar eventually stepped in and insisted that Virginia get treatment. She had a ruptured appendix and spent five months in hospital.

Looking back, Virginia felt she learned positive things from both her parents. Despite the hospital episode, Minnie was ambitious for her eldest daughter, who showed great ability to learn. For example, Virginia taught herself to read by the age of three.

Minnie later insisted the family move from their farm to Milwaukee so that her daughter could attend High School. Virginia said that Minnie taught her how to fix things, while Oscar taught her the value of honesty. Both embodied strong ethics.

They also taught her to focus on possibilities – and solutions – rather than get dragged down by problems. She would later say:

*"Problems are not the problem. Coping is the problem."*

Virginia studied hard at High School. Money was scarce – America was going through the Depression – so she took jobs to fund her studies. She then went on to the Milwaukee State Teachers College.

Whilst studying to be a teacher, she worked in a department store and with children at weekends. She also worked at an African-American Community Centre called Abraham Lincoln House. This

opened her eyes to racism – people being discriminated against because they were different.

Managing and rejoicing in differences became a key theme in her later work with families and organisations. Whilst extremely practical, she also encouraged people to explore their possibilities.

Qualifying from college, Virginia spent several years working as a schoolteacher. Wanting to broaden her experience, she worked in different cities, including Ann Arbor, St. Louis and Miami, Florida.

Deciding to focus on social work, she began doing graduate work at Northwestern University in Chicago in 1937. Virginia studied on a part-time basis for the first few years – university in the summer - whilst doing her teaching work during the other months.

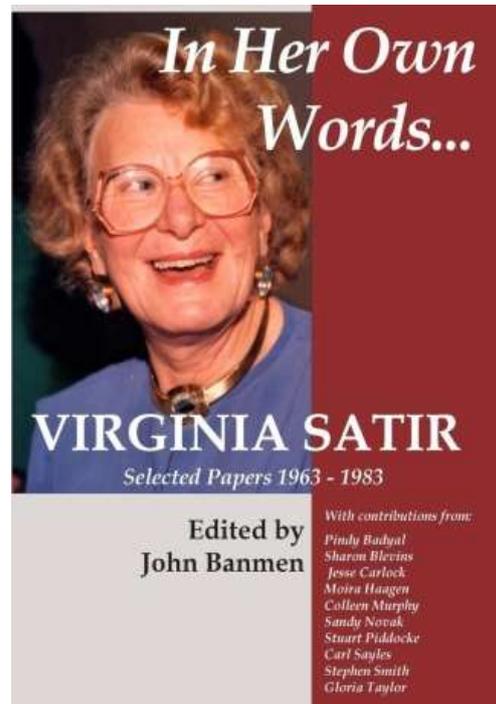
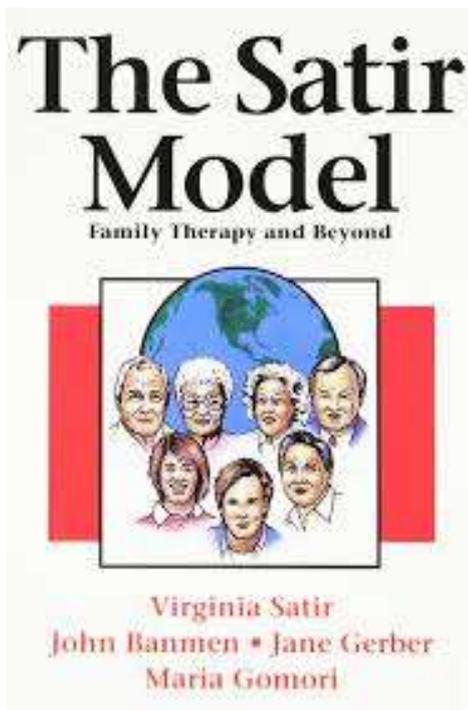
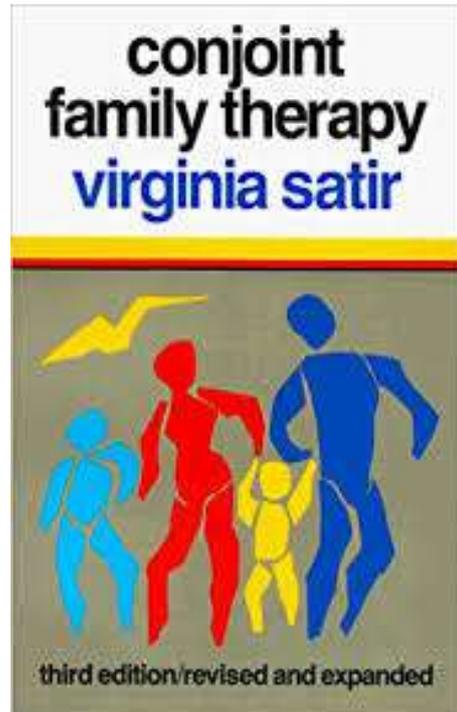
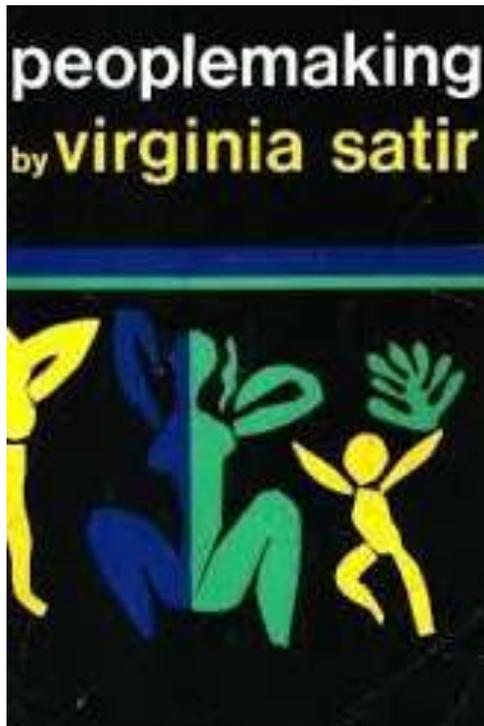
She then switched to full-time study, finishing her coursework by 1943 and her thesis by 1948. She also got married in 1941 and then divorced in 1949.

Virginia initially found the academic side tough, but she excelled at the practical aspects. The university culture was not conducive to married women who wanted to pursue a career.

Alongside the academic work, she was given a potentially nerve-racking placement at the Chicago Home for Girls. She flourished in the environment, even without the benefit of ongoing supervision.

Virginia's approach was considered unconventional but it produced fine results. She would follow this path for the rest of her life. The University of Chicago did finally recognise her gifts. In 1975 it awarded her a Gold Medal for service to humankind.

Her work had a profound influence on generations of individuals, families and professional workers. Here are some of the books about Virginia's work



## *Virginia's Approach*

Virginia completed her Masters dissertation and started her own practice. Looking back on her first therapy session with a whole family in 1951, she realised the value of seeing the whole picture.

This was a time when systems theory – and seeing the whole family as a system – was coming to prominence. Previously the problem child was taken away, treated and then put back in the family. Frequently the problem child relapsed into their old behaviour.

Certainly the person must take responsibility. But there was also something in the system – such as family pain or unresolved issues – that was shifted onto the family scapegoat.

Virginia believed it was vital to help the whole family to grow. During the next decade she pioneered work on family therapy and used many innovative techniques.

She taught people how to see the family as a system which had certain rules. Some rules were obvious but some might be hidden. The family might, for example, have rules about how people got attention – such as by falling sick, creating problems or behaving in other ways.

She helped them to identify the rules around many topics – such as showing affection, expressing anger and managing differences. People were then able:

*To see the rules;*

*To see the consequences these rules;*

*To practice the rules they wanted to follow in the future.*

Virginia used her warmth and insight to educate people about such dynamics. Many felt that, at last, somebody understood their role in the family. She enabled them to create a healthier future.

## Virginia Helped People To Build Healthy Systems

- *She saw the family as a whole system.*

*She helped people to see how the system worked by focusing on how people communicated and related to each other. It was possible to build a healthy system in which everybody could grow.*

- *She helped people to build healthy families and systems.*

*She helped people to follow certain guidelines. These included respecting each person, helping them to express their feelings in a healthy way and learning how to manage differences.*

- *She helped people to communicate clearly and grow.*

*She said that people had good intentions but these could get lost because of their communication styles. She helped people to communicate in a clear and encouraging way.*

## Communication Styles

*Virginia helped people to identify different communication styles. She did this in a loving way and helped them to understand the style they wanted to adopt in the future.*

### *The Leveller*

*Somebody who took responsibility and gave clear messages. Later in her career Virginia used the term Congruent rather than Leveller to symbolise such clear communication.*

### *The Placater*

*Somebody who pleased others and put themselves last. For example, somebody who took the role of perfect child, later to grow-up to be a martyr.*

### *The Blamer*

*Somebody who blamed others and created arguments.*

### *The Computer*

*Somebody who was scared of expressing feelings and intellectualised emotions.*

### *The Distracter*

*Somebody who distracted, often by behaving in a problematic way to get attention or, for example, create a diversion to stop family conversations that were entering difficult territory.*

*Virginia helped people to communicate in clear and healthy ways that helped themselves and others to grow.*

## *Communication Plays A Key Role In Systems*

*People may give the following kinds of messages.*

***Clear Messages***      ***They may give messages that are crystal clear and people understand what is meant.***

***Confusing Messages***      ***They may give messages that are confusing and people find it hard to untangle what is meant.***

***Conflicting Messages***      ***They may give messages that are conflicting and which can lead to uncertainty or problems.***

Virginia believed in helping people to fulfil their potential. She saw her job as helping to relieve family pain but did this in a positive way.

She often began by asking the couple to relive the magic of when they first met. She then asked each family member about the best times in the family. Most of all, she gave each person the following message:

*"I understand. You want the best for your loved ones and you are doing your best. Sometimes it is confusing that things don't work out how you intended. Let's look at how to make them better."*

Virginia created many tools for helping people to grow. She invented *The Self-Confidence Pot* exercise that was described earlier in the book. This helped a person to understand their Pot Fillers and Pot Drillers. She also helped people to take the next step.

### *Helping People To Build Healthy Systems*

Virginia found that healthy systems – marriages, families, organisations and societies - demonstrated certain characteristics. They often pursued the following principles:

*They shared similar values;*

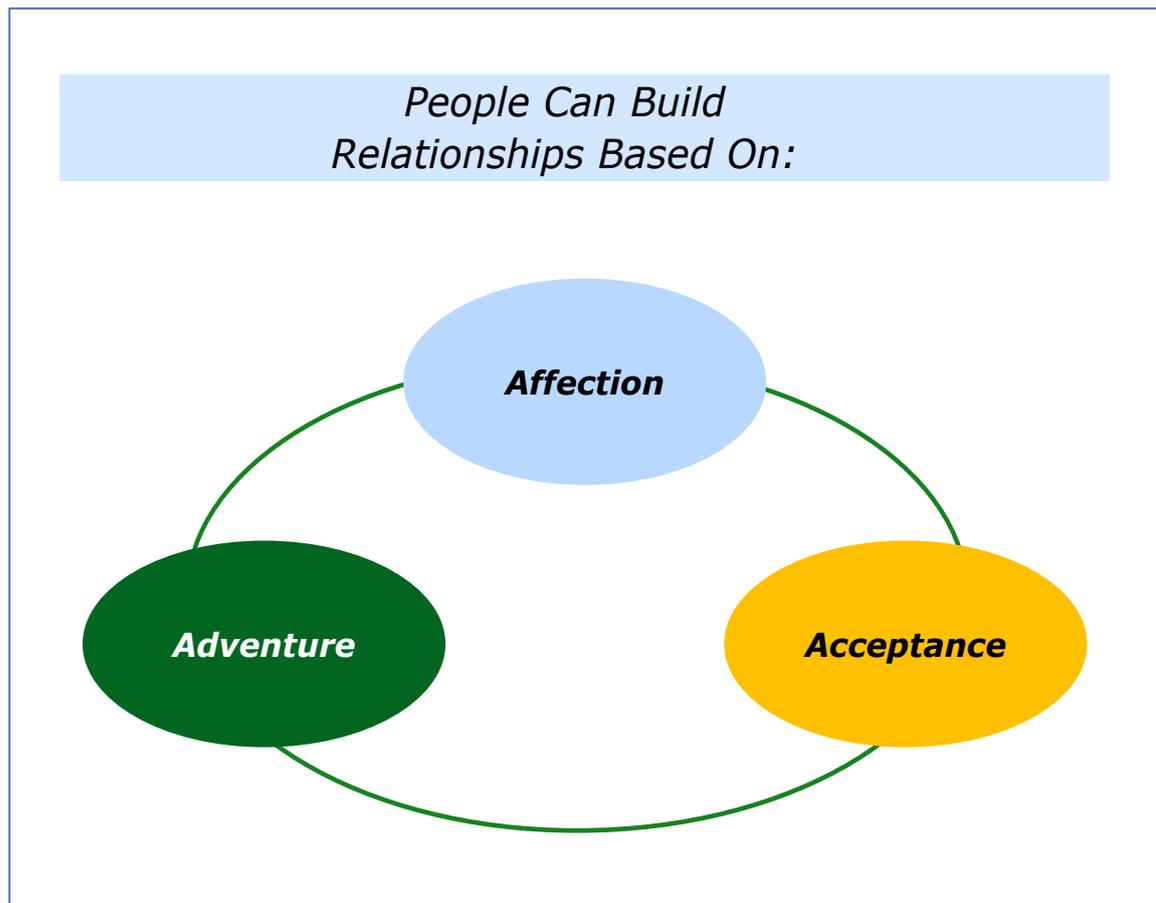
*They respected and encouraged differences – obviously within certain parameters;*

*They built on their similarities and encouraged people to use their differences to tackle challenges and grow.*

Sick systems often had people who believed their own values were paramount and suppressed those who disagreed. They also actively crushed differences.

Virginia's work inspired many people to create exercises that people could use to build partnerships and other relationships. Here are some of these.

*Affection, Acceptance And Adventure  
– Three Themes In Caring Relationships*



Virginia helped us to learn from healthy couples. People can, however, apply similar principles in other relationships. Healthy couples often base their relationship on affection, acceptance and adventure.

*Affection*

They show each other affection. Some may do this in a physical way. Some may do it in a psychological way.

They may show affection by making the other person feel welcome and helping them to feel the centre of their world. They may do it in simple ways, such as making them a cup of tea, listening and encouraging them.

## *Acceptance*

They build on the things they have in common. They also find ways to encourage and, in some cases, manage any differences. They recognise that differences can make or break a relationship.

(There is an in-depth exercise on this theme further on in this section of the book.)

Healthy couples, for example, accept each other rather than constantly try to change each other. They realise that, after a certain time, people do not change all that much. They are clear on:

*The differences they want to encourage, because these make the other person special.*

*The differences they are prepared to accept, because the person probably won't change certain habits.*

*The differences they would like the person to change and how. It is vital for them to give a positive alternative.*

Regarding the latter differences, they may suggest how they would like the person to behave in the future. But what if the person refuses to change? The person making the suggestion has a decision to make.

They can recognise that the other person is not going to change and accept the difference. They can keep trying to persuade the person to change. They can, if they feel the difference is too painful, choose to leave the relationship because there is no point in being a victim.

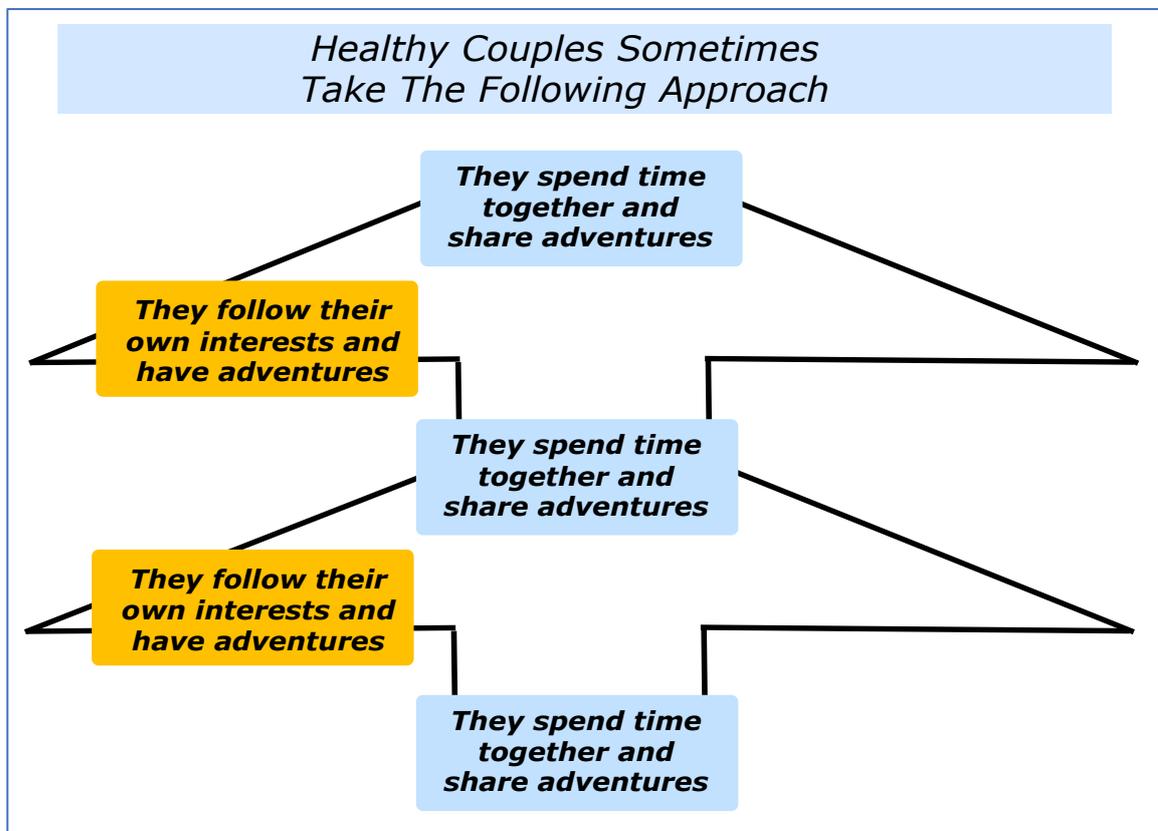
## Adventure

Healthy couples share adventures together. These can be big adventures or even simply enjoying small talk together. They feel uplifted after their time together.

They may then individually go apart and pursue their own interests and adventures. This are ones that help them to feel alive but that do cause pain in the relationship.

The couple may then come back together to share what they have each been doing. They then build on what they have in common and share adventures. Sometimes this is simply chatting but in a positive way.

Such couples aim to enjoy their time together and also when they are apart. They take this approach to building a mutually enriching relationship.



You can, of course, apply these principles in your own way to build with the people that you enjoy being with. Taking these steps will continue to give you positive energy.

There are many views about how people build a good relationship. One model is for people to base their relationship on affection, acceptance and adventure.

Let's move on to another exercise that people use to build long-term relationships. This explores qualities a person would like in an ideal partner.



*My Ideal Partner*

*Clarifying the qualities you  
would like in a long-term partner*

The approach can apply to romantic relationships but similar principles can be followed when building other kinds of relationships. The exercise is in several parts. Here are the themes that it can be useful to explore.

*Describe the individual women or men  
with whom you have felt encouraged*

If you are looking to build a partnership with a man, write the names of the men with whom you have felt alive, accepted and able to be yourself.

If you are looking to build a partnership with a woman, write the names of those with whom you have felt alive, accepted and able to be yourself.

These do not necessarily need to have been romantic relationships, even if you are looking for such a relationship. It could have been a parent, teacher, coach, friend or other person.

*Describe the positive qualities in  
each of the people you have listed*

Each person will have had different qualities. Looking at some of the individuals, you may say for example:

*"They accepted me ... They listened to me ... They were creative ... They were a fair fighter ... They were self-managing ... They were sometimes exciting to be with ... They had great vision ... etc."*

It is doubtful if every person will have the same qualities, but you may find that certain themes keep occurring.

Some of these qualities may mirror those of your own - such as having a positive attitude. But sometimes a person may have qualities that complement your own and enable you to be yourself. Here is the exercise.

*People With Whom  
I Have Felt Encouraged*

*Write the names of the people with whom you have felt alive, accepted and encouraged. If you are aiming to build romantic relationship, write the names of the people of this gender.*

*The Name Of The Person ...*

*The Positive Qualities They Demonstrated Were:*

*\* They ...*

*\* They ...*

*\* They ...*

*The Name Of The Person ...*

*The Positive Qualities They Demonstrated Were:*

*\* They ...*

*\* They ...*

*\* They ...*

*The Name Of The Person ...*

*The Positive Qualities They Demonstrated Were:*

*\* They ...*

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*\* They ...*

*The Name Of The Person ...*

*The Positive Qualities They Demonstrated Were:*

\* *They ...*

\* *They ...*

\* *They ...*

*The Name Of The Person ...*

*The Positive Qualities They Demonstrated Were:*

\* *They ...*

\* *They ...*

\* *They ...*

*My Ideal Partner – The Qualities  
I Would Like In Such A Person*

Imagine that you have describe the positive qualities that each person demonstrated. If appropriate, move on to the next step.

*Describe the qualities you  
would like in your ideal partner*

Take a look at the list of the people with whom you have felt good. Looking at these, can you see any recurring qualities?

Bearing these in mind, describe the qualities you would like in your ideal partner. It can be useful to describe quite a lot of qualities and then list these in order of priority.

The qualities you have listed have worked for you in the past and they may work in the future. If appropriate, however, you may wish to list additional qualities you would like a person to demonstrate.

It will be hard to find a person with all the qualities, so it can be useful to list the qualities you want in order of priority. If you want somebody who has a positive attitude to life, for example, it may be hard to live with somebody who keeps complaining.

A person may also demonstrate some of the qualities you want some of the time but not at others. If you want somebody who is energetic, visionary and a doer, for example, they may not always stop what they are doing to listen to you.

Nevertheless, it can be useful to list the qualities you want. Then we will go on to the next step.

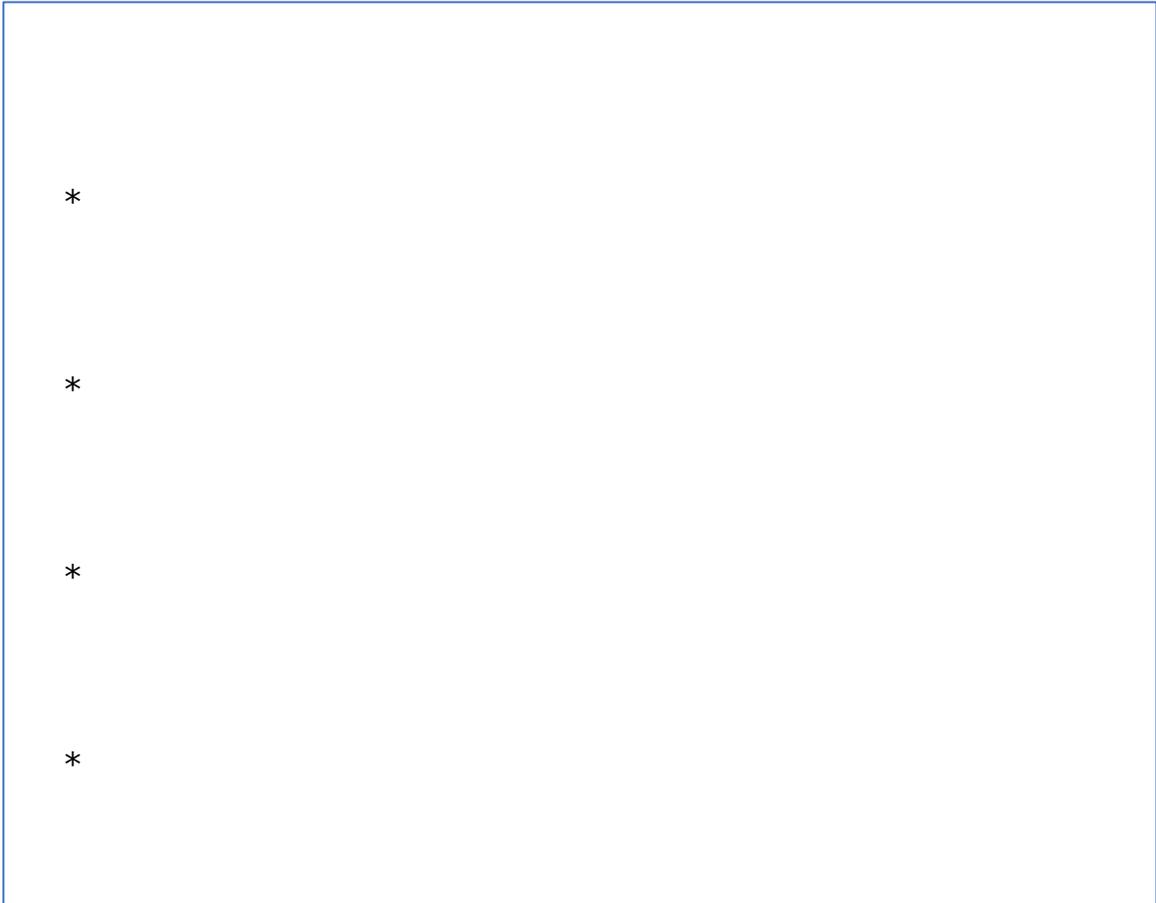
### *My Ideal Partner*

*The qualities I would like in my ideal partner is somebody who:*

\*

\*

\*



*My Ideal Partner – Taking The Next Steps*

The next steps you will depend on: a) whether you are already in a relationship; b) whether you are looking for somebody with whom to build a relationship.

*Imagine you are  
already in a relationship*

Bearing in mind the qualities you want in an ideal partner, you may want to explore the following themes.

*Which of these qualities does my partner already demonstrate?*

*Which qualities may they have that they can develop?*

*Which qualities may I wish to, if appropriate, look for elsewhere?*

If your top priority is to be with somebody who encourages you, for example, it will be important to that your partner demonstrates this quality. Otherwise life will be difficult.

There may be some qualities you would like that your partner may have the ability to develop. If these are latent, then that may be possible. But the nurturing of these may need to be done in an encouraging rather than challenging way.

It will be hard to find a person with all the qualities you would like. When appropriate, it may be important to find ways to get these outside the relationship. This will need to be done in a way that helps rather than hurts your present relationship.

Looking at the qualities you would like in an ideal partner - and bearing in mind that nobody is perfect - you can ask yourself:

*Is there the basis for building in our relationship?*

*If so, how can I encourage my partner and continue to build a good relationship?*

*If there is not the basis, what decisions may I need to take?*

It can also be important remember that many long-term relationships go through certain stages.

Some marriages, for example, take different forms as they develop. These may differ from how things were at the beginning. But the individuals may still care for each other and develop an enriching relationship.

*Imagine you are looking for somebody  
with whom to build a relationship*

This can involve exploring a different set of questions. It calls for:

*Clarifying the qualities you want in an ideal partner;*

*Clarifying the kinds of places where you are most likely to meet somebody who demonstrates these qualities;*

*Clarifying the things you want to do when you meet somebody who may have these qualities.*

Imagine that you are looking for somebody who is caring, supportive and yet not putting themselves down. You can ask yourself some of the following questions.

*What are the kinds of places where you are likely to meet this kind of person? What are the kinds of jobs such a person might do? How can you increase the chances of meeting such a person?*

As we know, there are many ways to meet people and build good relationships. The My Ideal Partner exercise has helped people to take some of these steps.

This is certain not an exact science, however, and building good relationships can be lifetime journey.

Here is the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentence.

### *My Ideal Partner*

*The next steps I want take to  
build a good relationship are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Managing Differences Successfully*

Virginia Satir believed that the way people managed their differences determined whether a relationship would flourish or die. This section describes an exercise that was inspired by her approach.

Although the exercise relates to couples, the principle of managing differences successfully has been applied to many other systems, such as teams and organisations.

Imagine you are working with a couple. You can invite them to work through the following steps. Each person makes lists describing the following things.

*Similarities: How my partner is similar to me*

This can cover every aspect of life. These may include values, attitudes, habits, behaviour, physical things, psychological things, philosophical things or other topics. A person may list the way their partner is similar to them by writing the following:

*"They have two children – ours; they like walking in the countryside; they get angry about injustice; they like Italian food; they enjoy watching sport; they enjoy having pets; etc."*

*Differences: How my partner is different from me*

This can also cover every aspect of life. A person may list how their partner is different from them by writing:

*"They are a morning person, whilst I am an evening person; they are introvert, whilst I express my feelings; they have different standards of tidiness in the house; they drink quite a lot; etc."*

*Similarities: How we can build on what we have in common*

Each partner describes how they want to build on what they have in common. Providing these are healthy similarities – things that benefit both – it can be good to build on this foundation. For example, people may plan to share more projects in the future.

*Differences: How we can manage the differences*

This is the crunch part. Differences can make or break a relationship. They can add juiciness or they can be a nightmare.

Each person is to take the following steps. Looking at how their partner is different, they can explore the following themes.

*The differences they want to encourage - because these make the other person special.*

*The differences they are prepared to accept - because their partner probably won't change certain habits. Bearing in mind the whole package involved in living with their partner, they may be prepared to accept some of the differences.*

*The differences they would like their partner to change and how they would like them to behave. It is vital for them to give a positive alternative.*

This final point is crucial. For example, Partner A may be upset because Partner B behaves in a certain way – such as suppressing their feelings, drinking lots of alcohol, fighting dirty during arguments or whatever.

Partner A has several options. Each option has consequences.

*They can put up with the behaviour.*

*They can harangue the other person and hope they will change.*

*They can give the other person a positive alternative. They can explain how they would like the person to behave in the future. They can also describe the potential benefits for everybody.*

Imagine Partner A gives a positive alternative but Partner B says:

*"I am not prepared to change."*

Partner A can then ask themselves:

*"Am I prepared to stay in the relationship? Is it worth the whole package?"*

If so, fine. If not, then Partner A has a decision to make. Here is the exercise on the theme of managing differences successfully.

## Managing Differences

*People often build on their similarities. They may also enrich the relationships by enjoying and nurturing the differences.*

*Sometimes the differences bring pleasure but they can also cause problems. The way that people learn to manage these differences can make or break the relationship.*

*The following exercise can be used to focus on how it may be possible to manage the differences successfully. It invites a person to complete the following sentences.*

<p><i>Similarities</i></p> <p><i>How my partner is similar to me</i></p>	<p><i>Differences</i></p> <p><i>How my partner is different from me</i></p>
*	*
*	*
*	*
*	*
*	*

## *Managing Differences Successfully*

### *Similarities*

*Describe the similarities you want to build on. Describe the specific things you can do to build on these similarities.*

### *Differences*

*Describe the differences you want to encourage because these make the person special. Describe the differences you are prepared to accept as part of the whole package.*

*Describe the differences you would like the person to consider changing and what you would like them to do instead. Describe how you can try to communicate this in a positive way*

Virginia opened people's eyes to the importance of managing differences successfully. This idea has been used many other people.

Looking at my own work, for example, I apply it to building positive teams. As described elsewhere in the book:

*Great teams are based on similarity of spirit and diversity of strengths.*

Healthy systems – whether they are families, teams or organisations – are based on similar values. These provide the foundation. They only flourish, however, if on top of this they encourage variety.

Virginia embodied many of the qualities demonstrated by generous guides. Let's explore one of these characteristics.

## *Generous Guides – They Provide A Customised Approach To Development*

Generous guides often use the customised approach when helping people to develop. They do this whether working as an educator, mentor, trusted advisor, online learning tutor or in another role.

Such guides follow certain beliefs about development. They believe that the learner learns what the learner wants to learn. They also aim to make the learning personal, practical and, in the widest sense, profitable.

They focus on clarity – establishing the real results to achieve – customisation and concrete results. They then do their best to help people to achieve success.



Generous guides recognise that each person's situation is different. They clarify what is happening in the person's world. They focus on

the theme the person wants to explore and the real results they want to achieve.

They may, in a respectful way, do some consciousness raising in terms of helping the person to see possible ways forwards. They may help them to see the big picture and positive models that work.

They then offer a customised approach that resonates with the person. This involves moving from the concepts to the concrete. It calls for being able:

*To focus on the person's specific situation;*

*To provide practical tools the person can use in their own way;*

*To help them to achieve the desired concrete results.*

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation when you may want to follow some of the principles in the generous guide approach?

How can you be generous but not be taken for granted? How can you welcome the person and make clear working contracts? How can you clarify their goals?

How can you then use the customised approach? How can you, if appropriate, help them to see the big picture? How can you pass on knowledge and practical tools that resonate with the person?

How can you help them to map their chosen way forwards? How can you help them to rehearse following their strategy? How can you help them to achieve the desired concrete results?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Generous Guide Approach In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future when I may want to follow some of the principles in the generous guide approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to follow some of these principles are:*

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*The specific things that may happen as a result may be:*

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\*

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## *The Enlightenment To Excellence Approach*



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to go through the stages of enlightenment, effectiveness and excellence. Let's consider these steps.

### *Enlightenment*

Looking back, can you think of a time when you were exploring a topic and had a moment of enlightenment? This could have taken different forms.

*You may have been tackling a problem and had a creative breakthrough;*

*You may have been trying to understand something and found that things fell into place;*

*You may have had a flash of insight about a situation and the path you wanted to take in the future.*

Enlightenment has many different names - such as epiphanies, realisations or 'Aha!' moments. Such moments are exciting but not all stand the test of time.

Andre Agassi, the former tennis player, described how many people have epiphanies but the key is to make use of these breakthroughs. He described this in the following way.

*"Epiphanies don't change your life. It's what you do with them that changes your life."*

Some people choose to quickly act on the insight. Some reflect, sleep on it and see if the breakthrough still resonates. Sometimes the idea gets stronger. If so, they then decide whether or not they want to translate it into action.

## *Effectiveness*

Great workers go beyond the moment of enlightenment. Allowing the idea to incubate for a while, they move on to the next stage. They decide what they want to do and aim to do effective work.

Different people take these steps in different ways. Some focus on the things that give them positive energy and become obsessed about pursuing a particular route.

Great workers often throw themselves into their chosen activity. Sometime during the early part of their career this can involve working at the grass roots. They may take this approach to immerse themselves in nursing, sports, technology or another activity.

Such people often learn through the hearts, hands and head. They do what they love and enjoy doing work that is hands on. They aim

make sense of what they have learned and keep developing their experience.

Great workers aim to develop expertise in a particular activity. Some may have natural strengths in this area but also want to develop their repertoire of strategies and skills.

Such people love to learn and make things work. They study what works and apply what works. They do effective work and then aim to continually deliver excellence.

## *Excellence*

Great workers aim to evolve and are committed to continuous improvement. They may do this when playing a sport, singing on song, developing breakthrough technology or doing another activity.

Such a person may go beyond doing work that is effective and excellent. Sometimes they may go into another dimension and do work that exceptional. This can have profound effects for themselves, for other people or for a society.

The following pages describe people who have followed some elements of this approach. Everybody's journey is different, but each of these people moved from enlightenment to effectiveness to doing excellent work.

### *Marcus Rashford*

Marcus Rashford was successful on the football field. He felt a strong desire to feed children, however, during the Covid-19 pandemic. Drawing on his own experience, he dedicated himself to specific projects that tackled child food poverty.

Working with the FareShare organisation, Marcus helped more children to be fed. Here is a quote from the organisation after six months of his work supporting their efforts.



*We've been overwhelmed with the amazing support our ambassador Marcus Rashford has helped galvanise over the the past six months.*

*We will now be able to provide an additional 6 million meals to vulnerable children and families through this difficult and uncertain time.*

Marcus brought the issue to national attention with an open letter to the government. At the time this was particularly aimed at extending meal vouchers for children during the summer holidays. Here are excerpts from the letter he wrote

### *Tackling Child Food Poverty – An Open Letter*

*My story to get here is all-too-familiar for families in England: my mum worked full-time, earning minimum wage to make sure we always had a good evening meal on the table.*

*But it was not enough. The system was not built for families like mine to succeed, regardless of how hard my mum worked.*

*As a family, we relied on breakfast clubs, free school meals, and the kind actions of neighbours and coaches. Food banks and soup*

*kitchens were not alien to us; I recall very clearly our visits to Northern Moor to collect our Christmas dinners every year.*

*It's only now that I really understand the enormous sacrifice my mum made in sending me away to live in digs aged 11, a decision no mother would ever make lightly.*

*As their stomachs grumble, I wonder if those 200,000 children will ever be proud enough of their country to pull on the England national team shirt one day and sing the national anthem from the stands.*

*Ten years ago, I would have been one of those children, and you would never have heard my voice and seen my determination to become part of the solution.*

*This is not about politics; this is about humanity.*

*Looking at ourselves in the mirror and feeling like we did everything we could to protect those who can't, for whatever reason or circumstance, protect themselves.*

*Political affiliations aside, can we not all agree that no child should be going to bed hungry?*

*The government has taken a "whatever it takes" approach to the economy – I'm asking you today to extend that same thinking to protecting all vulnerable children across England.*

*I encourage you to hear their pleas and find your humanity. Please reconsider your decision to cancel the food voucher scheme over the summer holiday period and guarantee the extension.*

*Yours sincerely, Marcus Rashford*

## Maya Angelou

Maya aimed to do what she believed in and also encourage other people. Here is an excerpt from her famous poem *Still I Rise*.



*Out of the huts of history's shame  
I rise  
Up from a past that's rooted in pain  
I rise  
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,  
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.  
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear  
I rise  
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear  
I rise  
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,  
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.  
I rise  
I rise  
I rise.*

She used her own pain to embark on a journey to stretch herself. Here is an excerpt from her biography published by The American Academy of Achievement.

*At age seven, while visiting her mother in Chicago, she was sexually molested by her mother's boyfriend. Too ashamed to tell any of the adults in her life, she confided in her brother.*

*When she later heard that an uncle had killed her attacker, she felt that her words had killed the man. She fell silent and did not speak for five years. Maya began to speak again at thirteen, when she and her brother re-joined their mother in San Francisco.*

*Maya attended Mission High School and won a scholarship to study dance and drama at San Francisco's Labor School, where she was*

*exposed to the progressive ideals that animated her late political activism.*

*She dropped out of school in her teens to become San Francisco's first African American female cable car conductor. She later returned to high school, but became pregnant in her senior year and graduated a few weeks after giving birth to her son, Guy.*

*Maya left home at sixteen and took on the difficult life of a single mother, supporting herself and her son by working as a waitress and cook, but she had not given up on her talents for music, dance, performance and poetry.*

She went on to do stimulating work and stretch herself. Living and working in many countries, she learned to speak French, Spanish, Italian, Arabic and the West African language Fanti.

Maya's work has inspired many people to channel their emotions in a creative way. They have followed the path of being able to rise and use their strengths to shape a positive future.

## *Maggie's Centres*

Maggie's Centres aim to empower people to live with, through and beyond cancer. The following section includes excerpts from the organisation's website and images from some of their many centres.

*Maggie Keswick Jencks was the co-founder, alongside Charles Jencks, of Maggie's Cancer Caring Centres. Maggie was a writer, a landscape designer, a painter and a mother of two.*

*In May 1993, Maggie was told that her breast cancer had recurred and spread to her bones, liver and brain. When asked, her Dumfries oncologist gave her two to three months to live.*

*By joining a trial involving advanced chemotherapy Maggie extended her life by a further 18 months and it was in this time that her idea for a cancer caring centre was born.*



### ***Our approach***

*We know that when you're diagnosed with cancer you need much more than just medical treatment.*

*We're here for anyone with cancer and their family and friends, whatever kind of cancer, and whatever stage they're at.*

*All our support is free. There's also no time limit on our support, we're here for as long as we're needed.*



### ***Professional support***

*Maggie's isn't part of the NHS – we're an independent charity – but our centres are beside major cancer hospitals across the UK and we have excellent relationships with our partner hospitals.*

*Many of our staff are NHS-trained and all our Cancer Support Specialists have expert knowledge about cancer and treatment.*

*She worked closely with Laura Lee, her oncology nurse, and was asked to write an article for a medical journal on a patient's perspective on being treated for cancer.*

*Maggie was convinced that everybody would feel better if they felt able to take some active role in what was happening to them.*

*She talked to her medical team at the Western General Hospital in Edinburgh about a place to help their patients with the very real, if not medical, problems of living with cancer.*

*She drew up a blueprint for a pioneering venture, in a stable block in the grounds of the hospital. Maggie died in July 1995. The first Maggie's Centre opened in Edinburgh in November 1996.*

*Charles Jencks was a renowned cultural theorist, landscape designer, and architectural historian. "The Architecture of Hope" was co-authored by Charles with journalist and author, Edwin Heathcote. It explores the history of Maggie's and the architectural tradition to which our centres and their gardens belong.*

*After Maggie's diagnosis in 1993 Charles not only supported her through her treatment but also in her idea of better spaces for people with cancer.*

*He encouraged Maggie to set up the very first centre that bears her name and after her death continued to champion the huge importance of environment in helping people with cancer and their families.*

*Charles helped to create beautiful buildings that contribute to the significant work done at Maggie's.*



### ***A friendly space***

*We work with some of the best architects in the world to design our centres because we know that light, colour and a connection to nature can help people to feel better.*

*Every Maggie's is thoughtfully designed to be calming and welcoming.*

*We also make sure there are plenty of peaceful corners for quiet moments and a chance to gather your thoughts.*

## ***George Lyward***

George was a charismatic educationalist who achieved outstanding results at Finchden Manor, a pioneering therapeutic community for troubled boys. I was fortunate to learn from him when visiting the community.

Many youngsters found solace at Finchden. It was a place to heal and decide what they wanted to do with their lives. Some went on to become well-known, including musicians such as Alexis Korner and Tom Robinson.



Many people visited Finchden to find the secret of its success. Walking around the ramshackle huts, they saw boys playing guitars, kicking footballs, tending gardens or engaged in study.

Finally the visitors crammed into the large hall and bombarded George with questions. Curious about what they had seen, they asked him:

*"What is the therapy programme? What is the staff's role, because they seem to do little except watch the boys?"*

George thought for a moment and replied along the following lines.

*"You are right about the staff. They are watching the boys. Watching is one of the hardest things to do in life.*

*"Our staff watch the boys painting, mending cars, playing music, helping each other or doing other activities.*

*"They look for when somebody comes alive. The staff then encourage them to build on their talent and shape their future lives."*

George's work reached a wider audience with the publication of Michael Burn's book, *Mr Lyward's Answer*. This led to more people visiting the community.

They saw the physical chaos, but also something deeper. Some called it poetry.

George – affectionately known to all as the 'Chief' – created an environment in which troubled boys were able to heal themselves. He believed that the youngsters got into trouble because they had not been given love and were fighting the world.

Finchden gave them the chance to live, learn and begin to shape their futures. He said:

*"We give young people the chance to have their childhoods. We let them do all the things they want to do as children. If they don't do these now, they'll do much worse things later."*

Watching George in action, he was both spiritual and practical. He immediately connected with troubled boys and encouraged them to be their true selves. He created a stimulating sanctuary in which the boys could lose time, explore possibilities and shape their futures.

The boys pursued many creative activities. These included staging reviews at the local village hall. One performance included a sketch that depicted life at the community.

One boy played the role of George whilst another took the role of a troubled boy who wanted to come to Finchden. The dialogue that was written by the boys captured the approach taken by George. Here is an extract from the sketch performed by the boys.



*GL: And what can we do for you, my boy?*

*Boy: Please. I want to come to Finchden. I've got schizophrenia. (Bursts into tears.)*

*GL: There, there, my boy. (Pats Boy vaguely on head.) You shall come to us.*

*Boy: Oh, thank you, sir! What shall I bring?*

*GL: Bring? Bring nothing.*

*Boy: Nothing, sir?*

*GL: Well - ah - my boy - bring a toothbrush. And - ah - if you have one, bring a dream.*

## *E.F. Schumacher*

Fritz Schumacher is best known for his book *Small Is Beautiful*. He believed that economics should serve people rather than the other way round. The aim of societies should be to enable people:

*"To obtain the maximum amount of well-being with the minimum amount of consumption."*



*“Call a thing immoral or ugly, soul-destroying or a degradation to man, a peril to the peace of the world or to the well-being of future generations: as long as you have not shown it to be ‘uneconomic’ you have not really questioned its right to exist, grow, and prosper.”*

### *Background*

Ernst Friedrich Schumacher was born in Germany in 1911. He studied as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford before settling in England in 1936.

After the Second World War he acted as an economic advisor to organisations helping to rebuild the German economy. He then became Chief Economic Advisor to the British Coal Board, a post he held between 1950 and 1970.

Despite playing a key role in shaping British industry, Fritz began exploring alternative models. During the 1950s he acted as an economic advisor to countries in Asia.

This led to him developing what he called Buddhist Economics. The principles he espoused included:

*That good work plays a vital part in healthy human development;*

*That developing local resources for local needs is the most rational way of economic life';*

*That it is possible to empower local communities to employ appropriate technology they can use to shape their futures.*

These ideas need to be seen in relation to the economic beliefs prevalent from the 1950s onwards – the belief that bigness was best. This led to building bigger schools, hospitals, factories, institutions, aid programmes and government departments.

Such an approach produced some upsides, but there were also downsides. Bureaucrats controlling the levers of power were further away from the effects of their decisions.

### *Small Is Beautiful*

Writing in *Alias Papa*, Fritz's eldest daughter Barbara Wood says he made a key decision in 1970. He left full time work with the Coal Board to write the books that had been in his mind for years.

He wrote *Small Is Beautiful*, which was published in 1973. The book would have a remarkable effect on people for several generations. More than thirty years later, Kamran Mofid would describe the book in the following way.

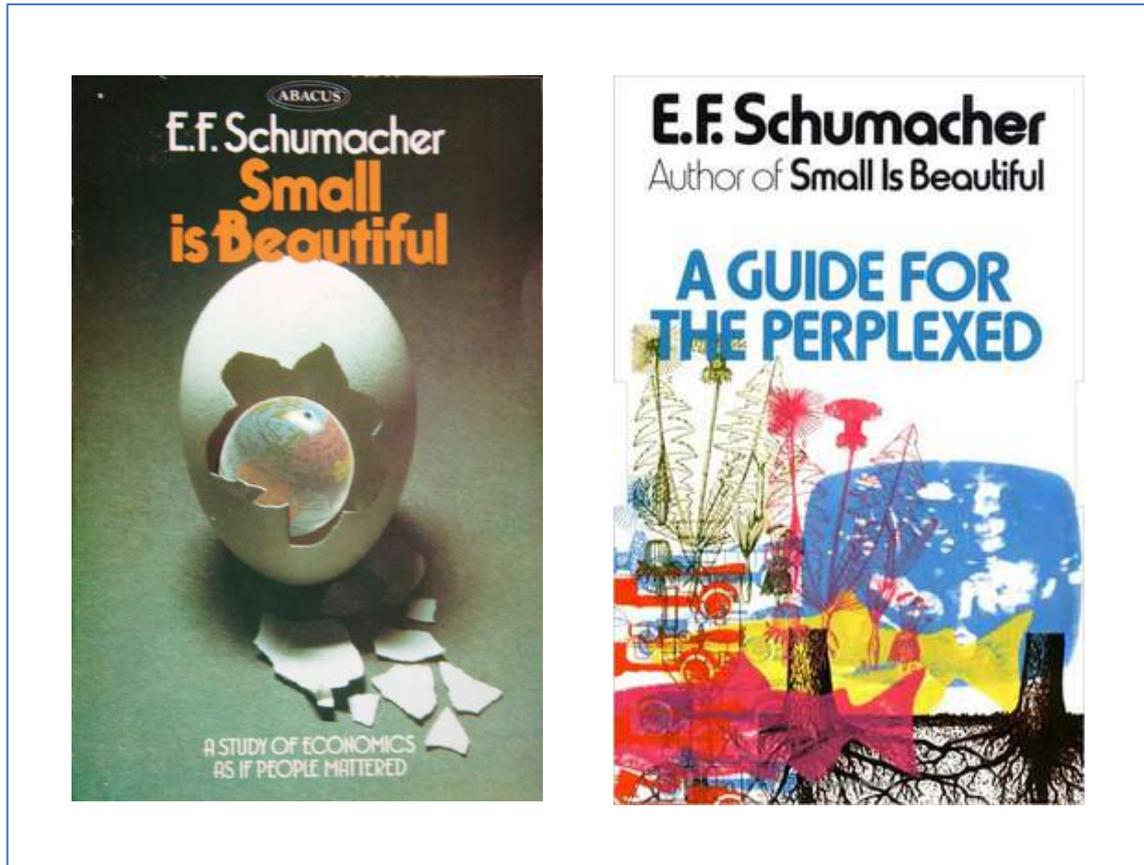
*Schumacher's Small is Beautiful is an appeal to the deep instinctive understanding of the common good that all people share.*

*It is an appeal to our essential humanity. It deals with some of the most pressing concerns of people the world over, concerns which every generation must consider and answer.*

*The book encourages us to reflect on and understand things we seem to have forgotten: What is Education? What is Knowledge? What is Wisdom? What is the source of happiness and wellbeing?*

*What is the good life? What is the purpose of economic life? What does it mean to be a human being living on a spaceship with finite resources?*

*The remedy he proposed - a holistic approach to human society, which stressed small scale, localised solutions - flew in the face of economic orthodoxies of the time.*



### *The Role Of Work*

Fritz believed work had a three-fold purpose:

*To provide people with useful goods and services; To provide people with the chance to use and perfect their gifts; To provide people with the chance to collaborate with others in order to liberate themselves from inbuilt egocentricity.*

Ever the practitioner, Fritz began translating his ideas into action. This led to creating The Intermediate Technology Group. This

enabled local communities to employ the appropriate technology to meet their needs.

### *The Role of Education*

Fritz believed education could play a key role in enabling people to develop wisdom. Unfortunately, he said, modern education has become atomised.

Education should instead enable people to connect with the key issues of life – such as how they could be truly healthy and happy. He said that it should help people:

*To act as spiritual beings; To act as neighbours and to render service; To act as responsible people; To be creatively engaged, using and developing the gifts that they had been blessed with.*

Fritz believed it was vital to be true to the spirit of the Earth that has given us life. The danger was that we would become disconnected.

Therefore we needed to recognise what was truly important in life. Writing in *A Guide For The Perplexed*, he explained this in the following way.

*The generosity of the Earth allows us to feed all mankind.*

*We know enough about ecology to keep the Earth a healthy place; there is enough room on the Earth, and there are enough materials, so that everybody can have adequate shelter.*

*We are quite competent enough to produce sufficient supplies of necessities so that no one need live in misery.*

Fritz left an enduring legacy. He used his talent to enable people to do good work and build a better world. Let's explore another dimension on the road to achieving excellence.

## *The Great Work After Hitting Gold Approach*

### *Great Work After Hitting Gold*

*This approach involves following your chosen guidelines and doing good work to reach a goal. It then involves moving into another dimension and doing great work after hitting gold.*



Different people behave in different ways after working hard and hitting a seam of gold. The way they behave can determine whether or not they maintain success.

*Some people think they have made it, down tools and stop doing the good things that helped them to hit gold.*

*Some people keep working and follow the good habits that helped them to hit gold.*

*Some people go into another dimension and do great work after hitting gold.*

Great champions in sports, for example, have a track record of building on their successes after winning their first major prize. They may pause for a short while to regather their strength and

plan their future strategy. They then work hard to achieve ongoing success.

Looking back, can you think of a time when you did great work after hitting your equivalent of gold? You may have done this after completing a creative project, winning a competition, gaining a sale, publishing a book or doing another activity.

How did you build on the success? How did you keep doing what was working and tackle the areas for improvement? What happened as a result of taking these steps?

Imagine that you want to follow similar principles in the future. You may start by setting a clear goal. You may aim to build a business, win a part in a musical, launch a product or achieve another aim.

You may then follow your chosen guidelines – the principles you want to follow – to work towards the aim. You will keep doing the grunt work and the good work needed to reach the goal.

Imagine that you get your first hints of success. This could be winning your first customer, publishing an article or, when playing football, your team getting the first goal in a match.

Different people react in different ways when achieving the glimpses of success. Here are some of these approaches.

*Some people knock off for  
lunch after hitting gold*

A young footballer may think they have made it after making their first team debut. A company that gets its first customer may think that everything will now be easier on the way to achieving success.

Reaching the first milestone can be a cause of celebration, but it is not a reason for taking your foot off the gas. There may be a long journey ahead and it can be useful to build on the initial success.

*Some people reflect, recharge their batteries and then continue doing good work after hitting gold*

This is an approach I saw with successful sports teams. They followed a certain ritual after taking the lead in a match.

They educated their players: a) to buy time to pause – especially in the few seconds after scoring a goal; b) to refocus on what they were going to do next; c) to follow good habits and regain their rhythm.

Such teams kept following their guidelines – the principles they aimed to follow. This enabled them to keep controlling the game and work towards getting the desired results.

*Some people make decisions that enable them to go into a new dimension and do great work after hitting gold*

One travel company I worked with in the early 1990s took this approach. It launched a new offer on the day I was due to run a workshop with their leadership team.

Starting the session at 9.00, we were interrupted by two middle managers. They said something along the following lines.

*"The phones are going crazy. Literally hundreds of people are calling to make bookings.*

*"Some are asking if we can offer them a special price if they make bookings for several holidays over the next year. What can we do?"*

The company believed the new offer would be attractive but had not counted on it being so successful. The leadership team decided to capitalise on hitting gold.

The Managing Director apologised to me. Cancelling the workshop, he said the leadership team members needed to start answering the phones. Before doing so, however, the team clarified:

*The specific things they could and could not offer to customers who wanted to book multiple holidays;*

*The specific messages they wanted the staff to give to the customers and to give these in a way that maintained the company's good reputation;*

*The specific things they could do to reward their staff at the end of this working day.*

The leadership team acted as good models. They manned the phones, supported their staff and gave them tangible rewards. These included giving staff the chance to take their loved ones to locations offered in the new holidays.

The company increased its profits massively in the next year. Despite some of the extra work involved, the employee engagement and morale scores also increased.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may hit gold? This could be in your personal or professional life.

How can you build on this success? How can you buy time to think and settle on your strategy? How can you go into a new dimension and do great work? How can you keep developing after hitting gold?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Great Work After Hitting Gold In The Future*

*The specific situation the future  
when I may aim to do great  
work after hitting gold may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to aim  
to do great work after hitting goals are:*

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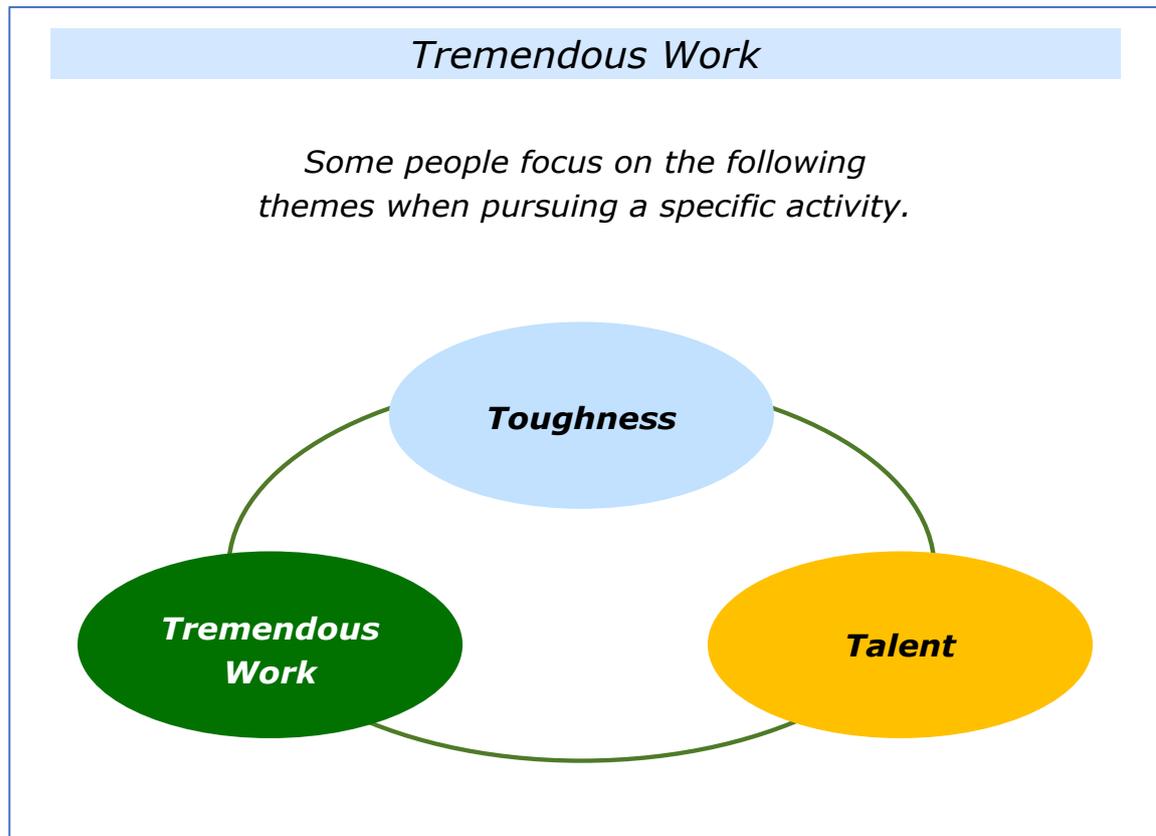
*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Tremendous Work Approach*



There are many ways to do superb work. Some people focus on the following themes when pursuing a specific activity. They demonstrate toughness, apply their talents and do tremendous work.

The Covid Vaccine researchers, for example, worked intensely to produce vaccines at great speed. The toughness they showed involved working long hours and, for some, dealing with losing loved ones during the lockdowns.

Many researchers cooperated to reach the goal. They applied their talents, shared ideas and followed rigorous procedures. They did tremendous work and developed vaccines that saved lives across the world.

Great workers often start by concentrating on a specific activity where they have the ability to do superb work. They then focus on the following themes.

## *Toughness*

Different people show this quality in different ways. They may demonstrate strength of character, mental toughness or the ability to deal with changing circumstances.

Some gain strength from pursuing a vocation or mission. Some feel compelled to pursue a specific activity. Some feel a sense of duty to use the talent they have been given.

Such a person may demonstrate toughness in one area of their life but not in others. They may be good at managing emotional or intellectual challenges, for example, but get upset when things don't work in their everyday life.

Looking at your own life, what are the specific activities where you show toughness? How do you display this quality? When have you shown this ability in the past?

## *Talent*

Great workers recognise that talent is the starting point but they need to apply this properly. Sometimes this involves focusing on the following themes.

A person may aim to pursue certain tactics. This often calls for following successful strategies that will help them to achieve their specific goal.

They may also need to develop the technique. Sometimes this calls for developing certain skills. Alternatively, they may cooperate with other people who provide these qualities.

Bearing these factors in mind, such workers aim to take the following steps to work towards their chosen goal.

## Great Workers

*They clarify how they can use their talent to achieve a specific goal. They focus on how:*

- *They can build on their talent and apply it to achieve the specific goal;*
- *They can follow certain tactics – such as successful strategies – to achieve the specific goal;*
- *They can develop their technique – such as certain skills – to achieve the specific goal.*

Looking at your own life, how can you apply your talents to achieve a specific goal? What are the tactics you can follow? What are the techniques you may need to use? How can you develop these or work with other people who provide these qualities?

## Tremendous Work

Great workers always do superb work. Sometimes they go further and produce tremendous work. Different people do this in different ways.

*They may:*

*Create a wonderful artistic experience ... Produce a medical breakthrough ... Deliver an outstanding sporting achievement ... Help warring parties to find solutions to a conflict ... Share a paradigm that enables people to see things in a different way ... Produce an act of kindness that inspires people across the world.*

Different people learn about tremendous work in different ways. Looking at my own life, like many other people I read books about human beings performing at their best. I also went to see great performers in action.

During the late 1950s and early 60s, this involved watching great football teams. These included the Manchester United Busby Babes and the Tottenham Hotspur double-winning team.

The next step was to watch artists in action. This involved attending concerts by people such as Roy Orbison on his first tour of the UK. I also saw Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel before they became famous.

Looking at my early professional work, I attended seminars led by key figures in psychology. These included people such as Viktor Frankl, Sydney Jourard and many others.

Such people maintained high standards and sometimes did work that was magical. They showed how it was possible to move into another dimension.

You will have your own approach to learning from others. Sometimes you may want to build on your inherent toughness, apply your talents and aim to do tremendous work.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Tremendous Work*

*The specific situation in the future where I may want to do tremendous work may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to demonstrate toughness, apply my talents and do my best to perform tremendous work are:*

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\*

*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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Let's return to your view of excellence. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific activity where you would like to translate enlightenment into delivering excellence?

How can you take these steps? How can you translate your enlightenment into a clear vision? How can you clarify the real results you want to achieve?

How can you do effective work? How can you do work excellent work? How can you go beyond this and do your best to do exceptional work? What will be the benefits of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Enlightenment To Excellence*

*The specific activity in which I would like to translate enlightenment into doing excellent work is:*

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*The specific things I can do to do my best to do excellent work in this activity are:*

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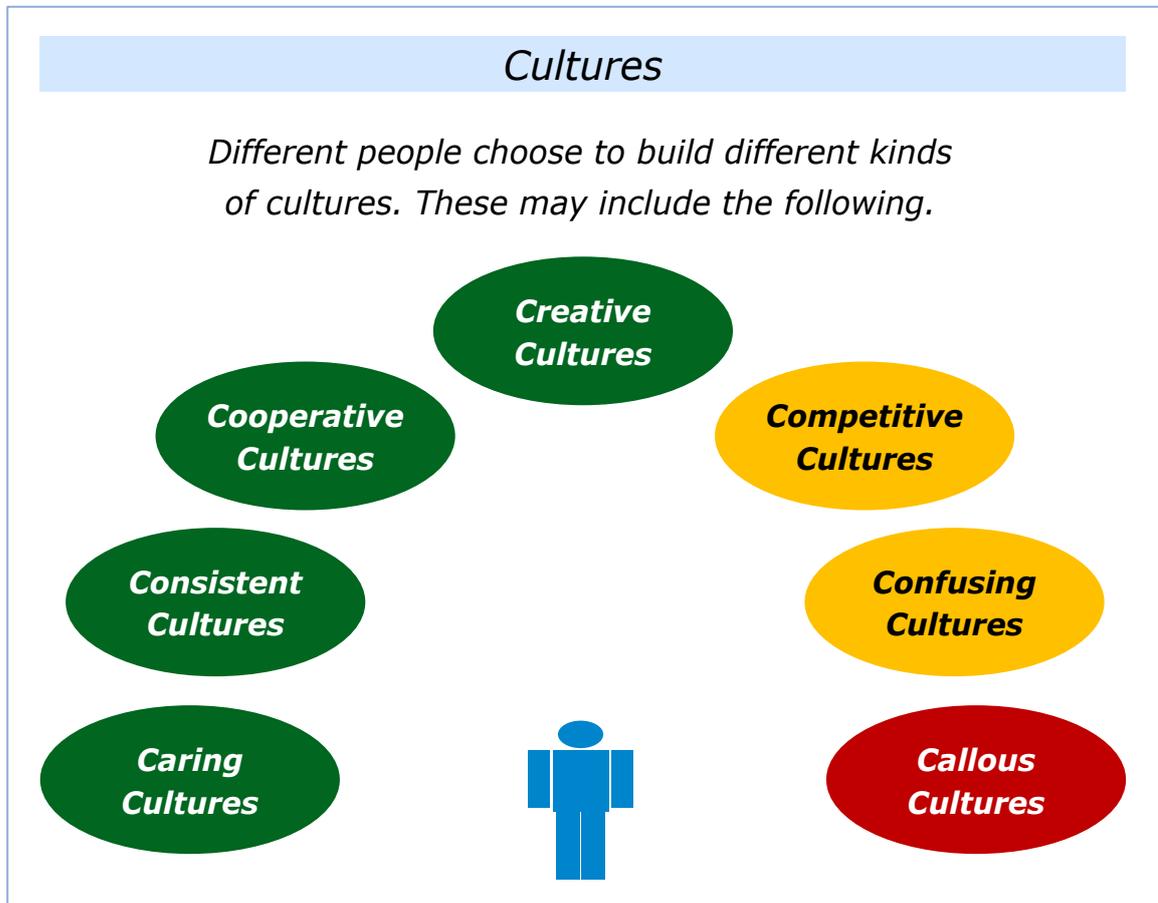
*The specific benefits of taking these steps would be:*

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## *The Caring To Callous Cultural Approaches*



Different people choose to build different kinds of cultures. Each of these has consequences. Marvin Bower described culture as:

*"The way we do things around here."*

Looking back on your life, what are the kinds of cultures you have experienced? You may have encountered these in the family, school, work and society. What were the effects of these cultures?

You may have spent time in environments that were caring, consistent, cooperative or creative. On the other hand, you may have been in places that were competitive, confusing or callous.

There are, of course, many kinds of cultures. For the moment, however, let's explore those that range from caring to callous.

## *Caring Cultures*

When have you experienced a caring culture? You may have had encouraging parents, educators or managers who created an environment in which people could grow.

Looking at my own life, I met many leaders of therapeutic communities who created such places. They had high standards, however, and emphasised that everybody should have this caring ethic.

People who joined the communities needed to understand the ethos. They were expected to take responsibility and encourage others, rather than be irresponsible. The caring principles applied to everybody.

Caring cultures have many pluses and some minuses. The pluses are that they create an ethos of kindness, encouragement and respect. This enables people to be themselves, help others and grow.

The culture may act as a caring model that people may want to emulate in the future. This may benefit others they meet in their lives and work.

There are potential minuses. Some people may take advantage of the culture in ways that hurt others. They may then also expect people to excuse them.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe a time when you experienced such a caring culture.

This could have been in the family, school, team, organisation or another place. It also invites you to describe the pluses and potential minuses of such an environment.

## *Caring Cultures*

*The time when I experienced  
a caring culture was:*

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*The pluses of  
the culture were:*

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*The minuses of  
the culture were:*

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## *Consistent Cultures*

Consistent cultures are those where people give clear messages and actually translate these into action. They do what they say they are going to do. People know where they stand in such cultures.

Good leaders, for example, are often like good parents. They are positive, predictable and create an environment in which people can achieve peak performances. Poor leaders are sometimes negative and unpredictable.

Consistent organisations give people clear messages about the following things. They say things like:

*"The organisation's goal is: ..."*

*"The Dos and Don'ts for working towards achieving the goal are: ..."*

*"The rewards of reaching the goal will be: ..."*

Such organisations make the professional deal clear. They communicate the responsibilities of both the organisation and the employee. They then invite people to choose whether they want to contribute towards achieving the goal.

Consistent cultures keep sharing success stories and show people what good looks like. They also act decisively if people choose not to follow the required professional standards.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe a time when you experienced such a culture. It also invites you to describe the pluses and potential minuses of such an environment.

## *Consistent Cultures*

*The time when I experienced  
a consistent culture was:*

\*

*The pluses of  
the culture were:*

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\*

*The minuses of  
the culture were:*

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## *Cooperative Cultures*

When have you experienced a cooperative culture? You may have encountered this in a school, workplace or organisation. What were the effects this had on you and other people?

There are different kinds of cooperative cultures. Some give people the following messages.

*"We believe in encouraging people to build on their strengths and become the best they can be. We also believe that, at times, we need to cooperate and combine our strengths to achieve certain goals."*

Great leaders recognise that people often work well together when combining their talents to achieve a compelling goal. They do this when managing a crisis, dealing with an emergency or tackling other kinds of challenges.

Leaders recognise that it can be difficult to create such aims when things are going relatively smoothly. They therefore often taking the following steps to encourage people to combine their talents.

*They communicate a compelling picture of success;*

*They show people the benefits of achieving the picture of success;*

*They encourage and enable people to combine their strengths to achieve the picture of success.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe a time when you experienced being in such a cooperative culture.

## *Cooperative Cultures*

*The time when I experienced  
a cooperative culture was:*

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*The pluses of  
the culture were:*

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*The minuses of  
the culture were:*

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## *Creative Cultures*

Creative cultures can be stimulating. People enjoy the buzz of working in such environments. They feel alive when using their talents and doing fulfilling work.

Such cultures can be exciting, but they can also unpredictable and disorganised. Sometimes people lapse into pursuing their personal agendas.

Good leaders recognise that people often work best when they align their efforts towards achieving a specific goal. This can be a challenge in creative cultures.

Such leaders there take a certain approach. They keep communicating the organisation's purpose. They then take the following steps to maintain a stimulating environment.

*They reframe the culture as one that keeps running a series of campaigns that contribute towards achieving the purpose;*

*They encourage people to choose to opt into contributing to the campaigns;*

*They then enable people to produce successful campaigns that contribute towards achieving the purpose.*

Such leaders encourage people to be creative but they are also prepared to make tough decisions. These may be needed if certain people choose not to contribute to the organisation.

Looking back, when have experienced a creative culture? What were the pluses? What were the minuses? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe your experience of being in such a culture.

## *Creative Cultures*

*The time when I experienced  
a creative culture was:*

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*The pluses of  
the culture were:*

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\*

*The minuses of  
the culture were:*

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## *Competitive Cultures*

When have you experienced a competitive culture? You may have encountered this in a school, workplace or organisation. What were the effects this had on you and other people?

There are different kinds of competitive cultures. Some encourage people to compete against themselves and give them the following messages.

*"We encourage you: a) to set goals you want to achieve; b) to take ownership for working towards these goals; c) to keep improving and doing your personal best."*

Some organisations have a more ruthless approach. They have the following philosophy.

*"We believe life is about winning and losing. We urge people to compete against others – both inside and outside the organisation. We measure success by whether we win and whether others lose."*

Some people, schools, teams and organisations become addicted to competing. They strive to become Number One, but that is never enough. They need to repeat the cycle every year.

Some kinds of competition can spur people to do their best. They compete against themselves and keep improving. Other kinds of competition can have other consequences.

People can become neurotic. They feel that, whatever they do, it will never be good enough. They may hurt themselves or others in the pursuit of the goal.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Competitive Cultures*

*The time when I experienced  
a competitive culture was:*

\*

*The pluses of  
the culture were:*

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*The minuses of  
the culture were:*

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## *Confusing Cultures*

Confusing cultures can exist in the family, workplace and society. They often have the following characteristics.

*The leaders or other key people say one thing but they do another;*

*The behaviour of such people causes confusion and others find it hard to get clear answers;*

*The guidelines and goal posts sometimes keep changing.*

People can find such cultures to be frustrating. Why? People like clarity. They like to know the rules of the game. They can then decide whether they want to opt in and work towards achieving success.

Different people respond in different ways in such cultures. Some simply go ahead and make their own rules. Some wait for clarity to appear. Some play safe and retreat into their own worlds.

There seem to be few pluses in such a culture, though some people may find it justifies them doing nothing. There are, however, quite a few minuses.

Looking back, can you think of a time when you experienced such a culture? How did you feel in such a situation? What effect did it have on you?

How did you maintain health? How did you try to get as much clarity as possible? If this did not work, what were your coping strategies? What were the pluses and minuses of these strategies?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe your own experience of being in such a culture.

## *Confusing Cultures*

*The time when I experienced  
a confusing culture was:*

\*

*The pluses of  
the culture were:*

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*The minuses of  
the culture were:*

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## *Callous Cultures*

Callous cultures are often those where the key leaders pursue their own agenda. They may do this in ways that are cruel, uncaring and hurt other people.

Such leaders focus on their own importance and may be addicted to conflict. They try to make themselves look big by belittling others. They make sure that they win and that other people lose.

Callous cultures create an atmosphere of fear. Some people fall into line and become agents of the regime. Some hide and minimise their contact with others.

There are few pluses to such an approach. Individuals may respond to threats by working harder in the short term, but this is unsustainable in the long term. People will leave because they don't want to be bullied.

Looking back, have you ever been in such a culture? How did the key people demonstrate their callousness? What effect did this have on you and other people?

How did you manage to deal with the culture? Was there a point when you decided to move on? If so, what was the trigger that led to you making this decision?

How long did it take you to recover after you moved on? What were the lessons you learned from the experience? How have you applied these in your life and work?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe your experience of being in such a culture.

## *Callous Cultures*

*The time when I experienced  
a callous culture was:*

\*

*The pluses of  
the culture were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The minuses of  
the culture were:*

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## *Creating A Culture In The Future*

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a culture that you would like to create in the future? You may want to create this in a family, team or organisation.

What would be the characteristics of such a culture? You may, for example, want to combine elements of a caring, consistent and creative culture. If so, you may want to explore the following themes.

How can you create a caring environment? How can you maintain consistency by giving clear messages about the desired standards? How can you encourage people to channel their creativity towards achieving a compelling goal?

Imagine that you are clear on the kind of culture you want to create. What would be the pluses of such an approach? What may be the potential minuses? How could you build on the pluses and manage the minuses?

Looking back on our lives, we often recall the kind of culture we experienced in the family, school, team or organisation. The stand we take towards these memories – the pleasures, pains or problems – can play a key part in shaping our futures.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. Looking ahead, this invites you to do the following things.

## *Creating A Culture*

*The specific kind of culture I would like to help to create in the future would be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to help to build such are culture are:*

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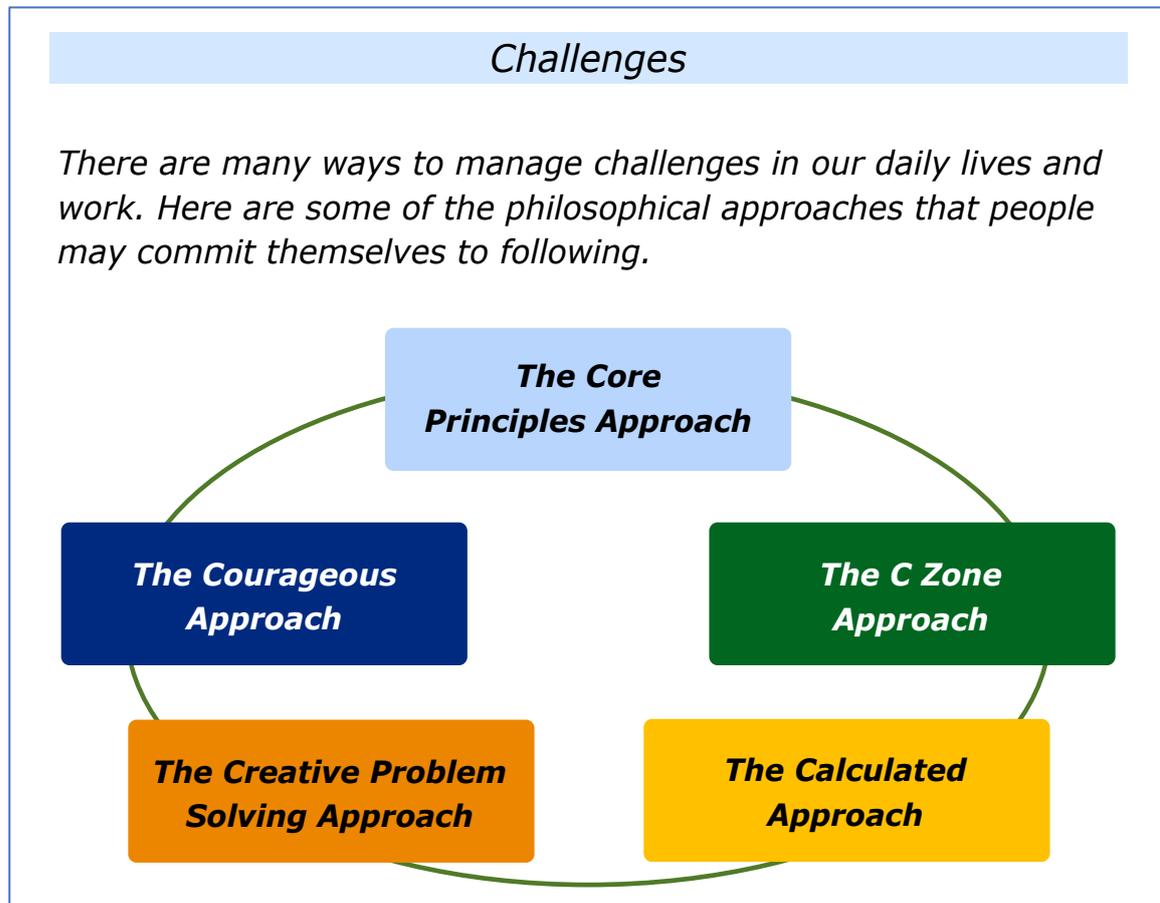
*The specific benefits of building such a culture would be:*

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## *The Managing Challenges Approach*



There are many ways to manage challenges. The first part of this section provides an introduction to philosophical approaches that people may take. This is followed by describing many practical tools that people use in their daily lives and work.

Different people choose to follow different philosophies when tackling challenges. They then commit themselves to pursuing their chosen route. Here are some of these approaches.

### *The Core Principles Approach*

People who take this route take time to reflect and return to their inner compass. They then ask themselves the following questions.

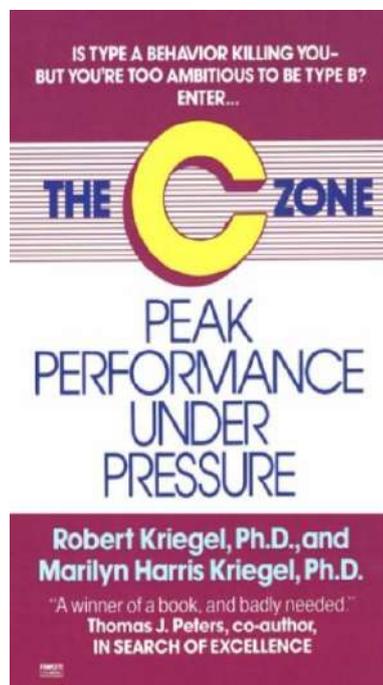
*"What are core principles I want to follow in my life and work? How can I follow these to tackle the challenge? How can I translate these into action and do my best to achieve success?"*

They then aim to be true to themselves and follow the principles they believe in. This often gives them the strength to do what is required to tackle the challenge.

### *The C Zone Approach*

People who take this route aim to be calm, controlled and centred. They then commit themselves to pursuing their chosen strategy to achieve their goals.

Many people were inspired to this approach after reading *The C Zone: Peak Performance Under Pressure*. Written by Robert Kriegel and Marilyn Harris Kriegel, this was published in 1989.



*The C Zone is characterised by the following elements.*

*Being in control – by being prepared, skilled and effective;*

*Being confident – being prepared to dare and take initiatives without feeling overwhelmed;*

*Being committed – being prepared to do your best to achieve peak performance.*

Some people have added their own C words to this approach. Such as the importance of being calm, clear on their strategy and then committed to doing their best to achieve success.

### *The Calculated Approach*

People who take this approach calculate the best way of achieving the goals. Some drain themselves of emotion and gather information. They then aim:

*To clarify what is happening and the specific results to achieve;*

*To clarify the potential options and calculate the chances of success;*

*To commit themselves to pursuing the strategy that is most likely to achieve success.*

Such people do this in a clear and cold way. The calculations they make, however, need to include the human consequences of the approach they choose to pursue.

### *The Creative Problem Solving Approach*

People who take this approach apply the Three C Model we have explored elsewhere in this book. This involves focusing on Clarity, Creativity and Concrete Results.

*Clarity - This involves clarifying the real results to achieve and translating these into a clear picture of success.*

*Creativity - This involves clarifying the possible choices, consequences and creative solutions.*

*Concrete Results - This involves pursuing their chosen route towards achieving the picture of success.*

Mentors sometimes use this framework when helping people to find solutions to challenges. You can discover more about they do this approach in the section called *The Mentoring Approach*.

### *The Courageous Approach*

People who take this approach may not see themselves as courageous. Such individuals may describe their actions along the following lines.

*"I did what I believed in ... It was the obvious thing to do ... It was my duty to do something ... I am not really a risk-taker but it would have been a greater risk to not do anything."*

People may demonstrate cold courage or hot courage. Some drain themselves of emotion and act in a calculated way. Some follow the adrenaline drive and seize the moment. They then do what is necessary to achieve the desired results.

This section has introduced some of the philosophical approaches to tackling challenges. The next section focuses on some of the real issues that people may face in their daily lives.

As ever, take the ideas you like and use them in your own way. If appropriate, you may also want to pass on the ideas to people so they can continue to manage challenges successfully.

## *The Managing Challenges Approach*

*There are many strategies for managing challenges.  
This section explores the following approaches.*

- *The Taking Control Approach*
- *The Choices And Consequences Approach*
- *The Change Curve Approach*
- *The Sanctuary, Shaping And Success Approach*
- *The Vulnerability Is A Great Teacher Approach*

- *The Different Kinds Of Time Approaches*
- *The Positive Reframing Approach*
- *The Positive Scripting Approach*
- *The Positive History Approach*
- *The Positive Patterns Approach*

- *The Professional Success Approach*
- *The Managing Sorrow Approach*
- *The Renewal Approach*
- *The Creating Space In Your Life Approach*
- *The Monotasking And Multitasking Approach*

- *The Stimulating Approach*
- *The Resourceful Approach*
- *The Growing Things Approach*
- *The Managing Rome Approach*
- *The Cottage Castle And Cathedral Approaches*

- *The Recognising Warning Signs Approach*
- *The Managing Triggers Approach*
- *The Beating The Double Bind Approach*
- *The Rewarding The Behaviour  
You Want Repeated Approach*
- *The Giving Tough Messages  
To A Team Member Approach*

- *The Strengths Combinations Approach*
- *The Finishing Successfully Approach*
- *The Building A Positive Team,  
Organisation And Legacy Approach*
- *The Working Towards A Long-Term Goal Approach*
- *The Sustainable Success Approach*

## *The Taking Control Approach*

*Control*

*On a scale 0-10, to what extent do you feel in control of shaping your future?*



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

People like to feel in control. They like to feel able to take charge of shaping their future lives. Sometimes they can experience difficulties, however, if they feel things are beyond their control.

A person can only do their best and there are events they can't control. But they can choose their attitude regarding how they respond to such events.

During the past 50 years I have worked with many people who have explained they have distressing symptoms. They have said some of the following things.

*"I am feeling stressed ... I have lots of mood swings ... I am no longer enjoying my work ... I am in a situation where I feel trapped ... I am beginning to have panic attacks."*

Sometimes there may be medical reasons for these symptoms. When appropriate, I therefore suggest that they consult a doctor to check for any medical causes. There is one question, however, that I ask. This is:

*"On a scale 0-10, to what extent do you feel in control of shaping your future?"*

People who feel healthy often give a rating of 7+/10. They recognise that there may always be events that are beyond their control, but they feel able to deal with most situations.

The following section starts by describing two people I worked with who aimed to take more control of their lives. This is followed by some practical tips you can use in your own way to shape the future. If appropriate, you may wish to move straight onto those tools.

Here are the two people I worked with – Laura and George. They answered in the following ways when asked to rate the extent to which they felt in control of their lives.

### *Laura*

*"Right now I would give myself 3/10. This is unusual, because normally it would be at least 8/10.*

*"I am an organised person and pride myself in being able to deal with problems. That is what I do in my work, where I manage the accounts of several difficult customers.*

*"My father died recently, however, and since then I have been having panic attacks. I have been to the doctor who ran some tests. He says there is no medical reason for the attacks.*

*"My father and I were close and his death was unexpected. Since then I have taken care of everything - the funeral, my mother,*

*relatives, solicitors, everything. This is normally the case in the family and at work.*

*"But now I don't take care of myself. Suddenly I get panic attacks in the street or at work and it is embarrassing.*

*"It will take time to come to terms with my father's death. But I just need to find a way to deal with the panic attacks and get on with my life."*

## *George*

*"At the moment it is around 7/10 in my personal life but 5/10 in my professional life. I used to enjoy my work but that has changed since I got a new boss. They like to micro-manage people and this causes stress.*

*"I am an engineer myself but I don't like having a boss who tells me exactly how I should be doing the work. My preference is to know the results that need to be delivered and get a clear brief. I then like to be left alone to get on the job.*

*"In the past I have always delivered so this has not been a problem. But now my boss wants to instruct me how to do my job. I am not sure how long I can go on this way."*

Each person wanted to shape their future. Bearing this in mind, we focused on some practical tools they could use:

*To feel more in control, find solutions to specific challenges and feel successful;*

*To follow a weekly structure, do things that gave them positive energy and gain a sense of satisfaction;*

*To focus on their long term aims, follow the principles they believed in and do something each day towards achieving their lifetime picture of success.*

Each person was different, of course, so this called for exploring different themes. We began, however, by clarifying how they could take more control of shaping their futures.

### *Laura*

Laura recognised that she may not be able to control her mood swings because these were part of grieving. She wanted to take control of her behaviour, however, rather than succumb to panic attacks.

Trying to fight the feelings did not work, so we took another approach. Did she know when the attacks were going to happen? What were the warning signs? Laura described the sequence.

*She felt tired through lack of sleep, often after spending hours counselling other people in their extended family.*

*She felt a tingling sensation in her hands, which then crept up her body.*

*She felt detached and began to feel dizzy.*

*She had difficulty breathing and started to sweat.*

*She wanted to escape from the situation and, if possible, find a place to be quiet.*

*She managed to recover after 10 minutes and was able to resume whatever she had been doing before the attack.*

Looking at this sequence, Laura saw that they could intervene at the first warning sign, the tingling sensation in her hands.

She could probably do something to start a positive sequence which had more healthy effects, rather than fall into the negative sequence. The question was: "How?"

Looking back on her life, we explored when she had managed to stay calm in a challenging situation? Laura gave the following answer.

*"I used to compete as a high jumper. During the events I used to put on my headphones and play soothing music. This also helped me to breathe more deeply.*

*"Putting on the music, I went into my own world, even if only for a few minutes. This worked. It helped me to deal with any nerves and do my best."*

How could she follow similar strategies in her daily life? Laura could certainly put on her earphones and play music when travelling to work on the tube. This would help her to feel calmer, but it would be more difficult at work. Laura began to explore this theme.

*"Breathing is probably the key. I can contact my old sports coach. He knows several people who help athletes to perform under pressure. Failing that, I will revisit my old breathing techniques."*

We explored strategies she could use to manage her feelings when experiencing difficulties at work. These included practical things she could do:

*To buy time to collect her thoughts;*

*To clarify the results she wanted to achieve and rehearse what she was going to do in the situation;*

*To follow her chosen strategy and do her best to achieve the desired results.*

Looking ahead, we rehearsed how she could follow these steps in specific situations. These included during meetings and when thrown a curve ball by her boss. She began building her repertoire for buying time, reflecting and then doing her best to get the desired results.

Laura also planned to take more care of her physical and psychological health. This called for getting more sleep, eating properly and returning to daily exercise. She aimed to spend more time with her encouragers rather than only counsel other people.

Two months later she reported that, whilst experiencing some mood swings, she felt more able to manage her feelings. It would take time, but Laura felt more in control of being able to shape her future life.

## *George*

George had a micromanaging boss and was no longer enjoying his work. The longer-term aim would be to ensure he could do satisfying work, but he also needed a short-term survival strategy.

We began by clarifying what he could control. He could have a positive attitude, be professional and do good work. But he could not control how his boss responded.

George also recognised that he needed to be better at managing upwards. This was something that he sometimes failed to do properly. It was vital to clarify what his key stakeholders wanted and to deliver the required results. As ever:

*It was vital to manage Rome otherwise Rome would manage him.*

Looking at the challenges ahead, we explored the practical tools he could use:

*To be proactive and make clear working contracts with his boss regarding the specific results to be delivered;*

*To be professional, keep the boss informed about his progress, get some quick wins and deliver the required results;*

*To take charge of shaping his career and, if necessary, find another role in a more positive environment.*

George needed to get on the front foot rather than wait for his boss to intervene. Looking ahead, we planned how he could be proactive, make clear working contracts and keep his boss informed. He could then do his best to deliver the goods.

There was no guarantee that this would succeed. But it would be a first step towards getting some breathing space and maybe even doing some satisfying work.

George and I then explored how he could shape his future career. His boss would probably not change, so it was important to have a Plan B and Plan C.

Looking back, we explored when George enjoyed his work. He gave the following answer.

*"I enjoyed working for my previous boss. He recruited me to come here after we had worked together on a project in a previous company.*

*"He knew how I worked best and used me on a special project. He was also good at providing air cover which allowed me to get on with my job.*

*"Three months ago he left to join another company. Since then he has been back in touch to say that, whilst he would like me to follow him, this might take some time.*

*"My ideal would be to work with him again, but I am not sure if this will happen. Bearing this in mind, I probably need to explore other avenues."*

George described the qualities he would like in his ideal manager. He also named previous managers who had demonstrated some of these qualities.

He then made an action plan to reconnect with some of these people. Not one for self-promotion, he would do this in a way in which he felt comfortable.

George spent the next couple of months continuing to behave in a professional way and being proactive towards his boss. This helped to keep him out of his hair, although the boss did resort to micromanaging on some occasions.

Six months after our first meeting George moved to another company. Conversations with his previous boss resulted in him being asked to lead a project suited to his specialist skills.

The micromanaging boss asked him to stay, but the die had been cast. George wanted to feel fully alive again. He moved on to doing more satisfying work.

People like to feel in control. For some people this is almost as vital as oxygen. They want to feel in charge of their lives, finances and future. Some want to feel in control of their own death.

### *The Focusing On Your Life Goals Approach*

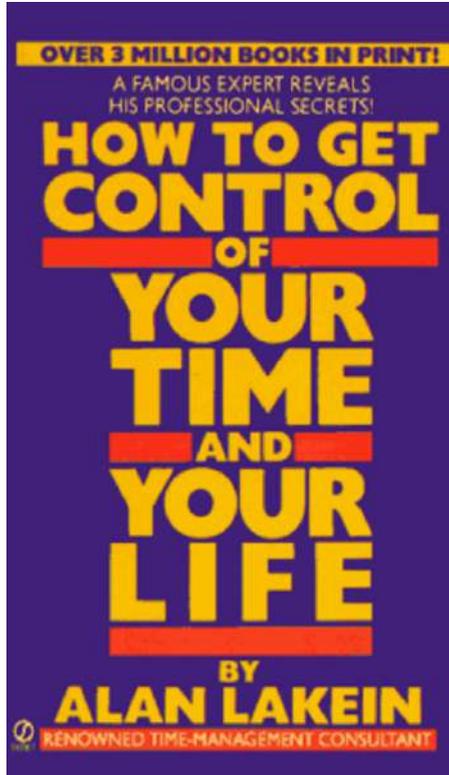
As mentioned many times, healthy people aim to build on what they can control and manage what they can't. They also keep focusing on their life goals.

There have been many books on this topic. One of the most influential was Alan Lakein's 1970 book *How To Get Control Of Your Time And Your Life*.

Many of the ideas seem commonplace now, but many people found them helpful. Here are some ideas from the book.

*Keep focusing on your lifetime goals – put these in a place where you can see these each day.*

*Clarify your A, B and C priorities – remember these may evolve over time.*



*Focus on your top priorities – do something towards these each day and get some quick successes.*

*Do weekly & daily planning – schedule your time so you have the chance to do things properly.*

*Cross off items as you do them – this will give you the feeling of success.*

*Ask Alan Lakein's question:*

*"What is the best use of my time right now?"*

The following pages show one way that a person can apply Alan's approach. This can also help them with their priority management. A person can use this:

*To focus on their life goals – such as clarifying their A, B and C goals together with the sub-goals under each category;*

*To focus on their priorities – such as the specific actions they want to take towards achieving their A, B and C goals.*

As mentioned earlier, different people applied Alan's ideas in different way. This is one approach that some people have found useful.

## *My Life Goals*

*The following pages describe the three main goals I want to work towards achieving in my life.*

*These are listed as my A, B and C goals – together with the sub-goals under each of these.*

*Therefore I have my A1, A2, A3 goals and so on.*

### *The Three Main Goals I Want To Work Towards Achieving In My Life Are:*

*A) To ...*

*1) To ...*

*2) To ...*

*3) To ...*

*B) To ...*

*1) To ...*

*2) To ...*

*3) To ...*

*C) To ...*

*1) To ...*

*2) To ...*

*3) To ...*

## *My Priorities*

*The following pages describe the specific actions I want to take towards achieving each of my goals.*

*The top priority will be work towards my A goals, then my B goals, then my C goals.*

### *The Priorities – The Actions I Want To Take Towards Achieving Each Of These Goals Are:*

*A) To ...*

- 1) To ...*
- 2) To ...*
- 3) To ...*

*B) To ...*

- 1) To ...*
- 2) To ...*
- 3) To ...*

*C) To ...*

- 1) To ...*
- 2) To ...*
- 3) To ...*

## *The Proactive Approach*

### *The Proactive Rather Than Passive Approach*

*Some people choose to be proactive. They aim to plan ahead, pursue practical strategies that work and get the desired positive results.*



Different people choose different ways to shape their lives. Some people aim to proactively shape the future. Some people are reactive and respond to events when they happen.

This section describes people who choose to be proactive in both their personal and professional lives. Such people sometimes take the following approach to future events.

*They have often done some work on clarifying their life goals – their lifetime picture of success;*

*They plan ahead to shape future events, clarify the possible strategies that may work and pursue their chosen strategy;*

*They do their best to get positive results on the way towards achieving their lifetime picture of success.*

Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach in your own way. What are the areas of your personal and professional life where you are good at being proactive? What do you do to stay ahead of the game?

Different people take this step in different ways. Here is a summary of how one person expressed their approach.

*"Many years ago I began to focus on my life goals. This happened after attending a workshop on career development.*

*"During the session we were invited to clarify our long-term personal and professional goals. Since then I have made key decisions based on how these fitted with achieving my life goals.*

*"I also learned how to plan things by starting from the destination and working backwards. This is an approach I have applied in many aspects of my life.*

*"Bearing in mind the results to achieve, I consider the strategies I can follow to give myself the best chance of success. This leads to making action plans for the next day, week, month or even for the year.*

*"The planning part also involves anticipating and managing unexpected events. I then move into action and do what I can to deliver the goods."*

### ***Being Proactive In Your Personal Life***

Looking at your personal life, what are the areas where you are good at being proactive? What are the areas where you could be better?

You may be good at planning and doing the daily tasks, managing your money and caring for your loved ones. You may not be so good at taking care of your health or doing other things to shape your future.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Proactivity In My Personal Life*

*The specific ways that I am good at  
being proactive in my personal life are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific ways that I could better at  
being proactive in my personal life are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Being Proactive In Your Professional Life*

Looking at your professional life, what are the areas where you are good at being proactive? What are the areas where you could be better?

You may be good at planning to do the practical aspects. These may include organising your schedule, taking care of customers and managing your key stakeholders. You may also stay ahead of the game regarding doing the necessary tasks on various projects.

You may be good at managing the psychological aspects. These may include encouraging your colleagues and taking care of their wellbeing. You may also plan ahead and ensure the team will have positive and professional team members in the future.

Some people are now finding that their professional world is becoming more complex. Some organisations are also asking their people to deliver higher targets whilst, at the same time, being good at managing the key internal and external stakeholders.

This calls for individuals to be more self-managing. They may need: a) to be proactive and focus on their priorities; b) to achieve their professional goals; c) to take care of their personal wellbeing.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe: a) the specific ways you are good at being proactive in your professional life; b) the specific ways you could be better. Here is the exercise.

## *Proactivity In My Professional Life*

*The specific ways that I am good at being proactive in my professional life are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific ways that I could be better at being proactive in my professional life are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *Being Proactive In The Future*

Many people are now aiming to take more control of their lives. This approach also helps them to buy time to think when unexpected events happen. They are then more likely to make good decisions.

Different people take this approach in different ways. Some aim: a) to plan ahead; b) to clarify the possible strategies that may work;

c) to pursue their chosen strategy and do their best to get positive results. They also keep working towards achieving their life goals.

You will do this in your own way. If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Proactivity In The Future*

*The specific things I can do to continue to be proactive in my life are:*

\*

\*

\*

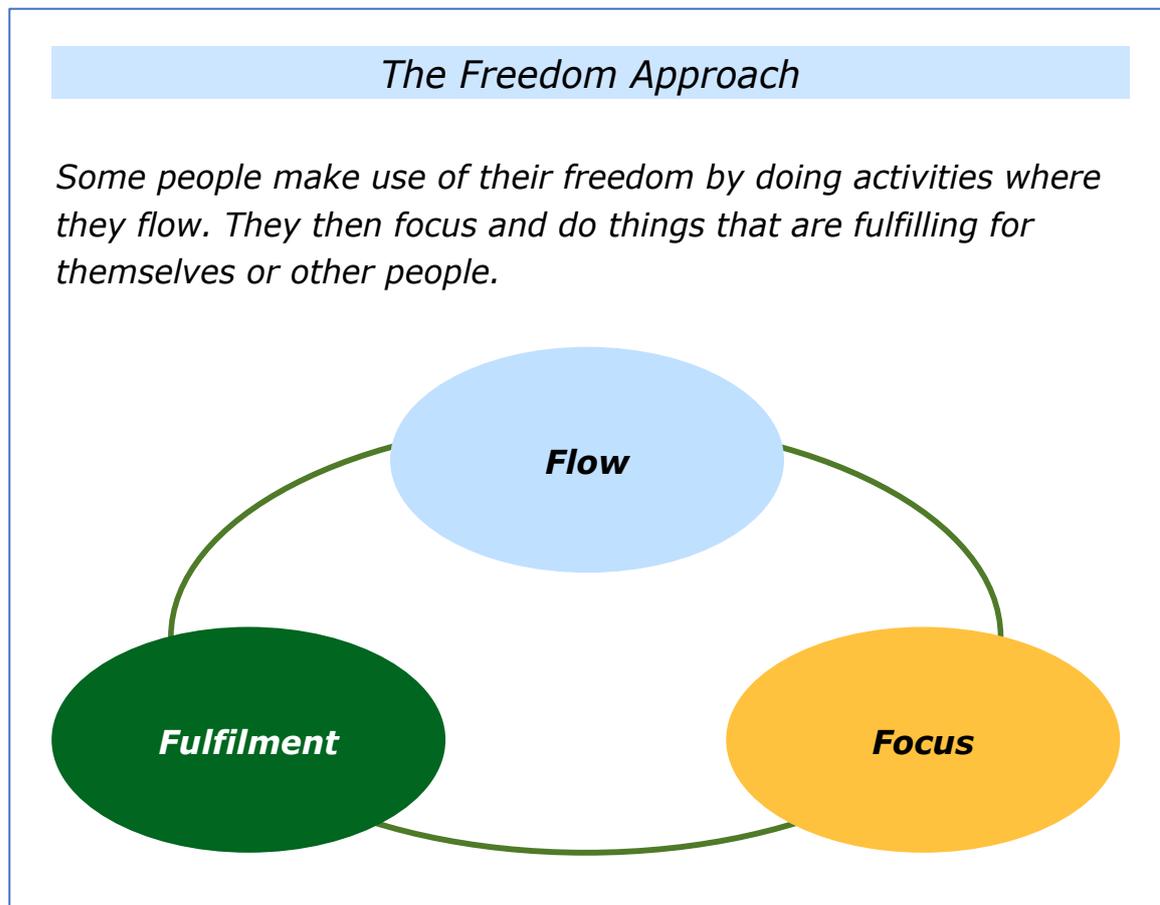
*The specific benefits of taking these steps will be:*

\*

\*

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## The Making Use Of Freedom Approach



Let's explore another aspect of taking control. Many people work towards having a sense of freedom. A person who is working to reach a specific goal may say something like the following.

*Everything will be okay:*

*When I have enough money to retire ... When I sell my business ...  
When I get out of this place ... When I have got the right  
qualifications ... When I meet the right person ... When I win the  
Gold Medal.*

Sometimes this proves to be the case. A person feels free and moves into shaping their future. They find it easy to do things that are rewarding for themselves or other people.

Sometimes this proves more difficult. A person who has been working towards a specific goal, for example, may experience post-purpose syndrome.

Such a person previously had a sense of purpose. They followed a certain schedule when aiming to sell their business, win the Olympic title or reach another target. Suddenly they may need to find a new sense of purpose.

Another person may grab the opportunity. Certainly there may be dips along the road, but they are grateful for the chance to shape their future. Different people do this in different ways.

*They may do activities where they experience a sense of flow. They may focus on these and do work that is fulfilling for themselves or other people.*

*They may do things that give them positive energy. They may translate these into doing a specific project and work towards this new sense of purpose.*

*They may clarify the positive things they want to give to people during their time on the planet. They may focus on doing these activities and passing on a positive legacy.*

Let's return to you own life and work. Looking into the future, can you imagine a time when you may feel a sense of freedom? This could be in your personal or professional life.

What can you do then to make use of this opportunity? How can you use this freedom in a way that is beneficial? How can you use it to do things that may be fulfilling for yourself or other people?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Freedom Approach*

*The specific situation in the future when I may have a sense of freedom may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to make good use of this sense of freedom are:*

\*

\*

\*

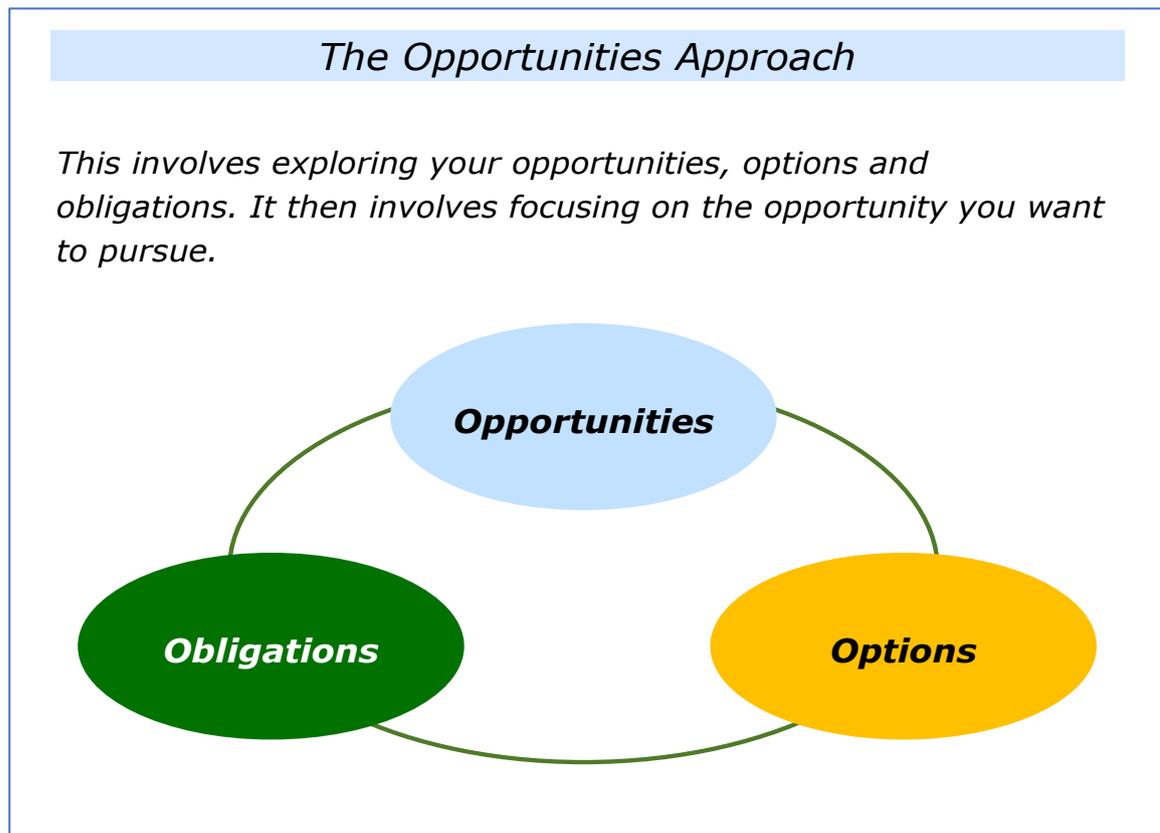
*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Opportunities Approach*



Different people see the world in different ways. Some people see opportunities, some see only obstacles. Some see possibilities, some see only problems.

There are different reasons why people take these approaches. Sometimes this has to do with their background. Sometimes it depends on how they choose to view life.

Looking back on your life, what were the messages you were given about opportunities or obstacles? Did the significant people in your life say it was okay to be yourself and focus on possibilities? Or did they tell you to restrict yourself and focus on barriers?

Some individuals get to a point in life where they focus on: a) their opportunities; b) their options; c) their obligations. They then pursue their chosen option whilst also fulfilling their obligations.

Imagine that you want to use elements of this approach when helping people in your work. You may do this when working as a counsellor, coach, mentor or in another role.

It can be useful to try the approach on yourself. You can then see how to adapt it when helping others. Bearing this in mind, let's explore these themes.

## *Opportunities*

What are the opportunities you have in your personal and professional life? Try brainstorming all the routes you can pursue in the future.

Don't worry about whether or not these seem possible. The key is to get all the opportunities out there. Let's explore how this approach can work in practise.

Donna was a former athlete who felt ambivalent about her role as a psychologist in a state school. She enjoyed helping the individual students but worried about the school system.

Before looking at her opportunities, I asked Donna to describe her background. This helped to explore her strengths and successful style of working.

She had always been good at sports. Donna excelled at football, tennis and fencing. Whilst be able to compete at a high level, she became disillusioned with the ruthless cultures in some sports academies.

Continuing with her sporting career until her late-twenties, Donna then decided to qualify as a physical education teacher. She also developed an interest in coaching. This led to her coaching junior teams in football, hockey and individual sports.

Donna believed sport gave some young people a chance to flourish, but many others never got a chance to shine. Bearing this in mind, Donna decided to specialise in psychology.

She went on to take a series of jobs as a psychologist helping students in schools. The individual work was rewarding, but she found aspects of the educational culture to be troubling.

Donna had reached her mid-thirties and felt at a critical point in her life. The road she took in the future might define the rest of her career. What were her possibilities?

We explored the routes she could pursue in her future. After some encouragement, she explored many possibilities she had not previously considered. Here are some of the things she wrote.

### *Opportunities*

*The opportunities I have in my personal and professional life include the following:*

*I can stay in my present work ... I can do a similar role in another organisation ... I can try to influence the educational system by producing a blog or articles about how to help students who are different.*

*I can move to another country ... I can return to the US where I was on a sporting scholarship ... I can take a bigger role in sports coaching ... I can pursue a career in sports administration.*

*I can set up a business with my partner ... I can apply what I learned from sport in other fields ... I can use these skills to help people in business to achieve peak performance.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Try brainstorming all the opportunities you have in your life and work. Later we will explore how you may want to follow some of these routes. Here is the exercise.

## *Opportunities*

*The many opportunities I have in my personal and professional life are:*

*\* I can ...*

## *Options*

You will have brainstormed many opportunities. It is now time to begin focusing on the three or four that you find most appealing. Looking at these routes, it can also be useful to ask yourself the following questions.

*Are there any other creative options? Is it possible to combine elements of several options? What is the route – or combination of routes – that I find most attractive to follow?*

Donna went through these steps. We explored the obvious options and also began to add some possibilities. Here is an overview of the main options she considered.

### *Options*

*The options I have are:*

*To continue in my present role, do good work but also be clear on what I could and cannot expect from the school system;*

*To do my present role on a part-time basis, publish articles to build credibility as a specialist in helping students and to run workshops on this topic;*

*To apply what I have learned from sports to help people in business to achieve peak performance.*

Donna was particularly interested the third option. Looking at her past, she had an advantage when offering their services as a coach to businesses.

During her sporting career she had met many individuals who had moved on to forging careers in business. She could ask these people if they knew any individuals in their businesses who might benefit from peak performance coaching.

Donna had unique skills. During her time in sports she focused on individual and team performance. She knew about project management through preparing teams for competitions.

She would need: a) to identify her target audience; b) to clarify the specific things she could offer to help them to achieve success; c) to position what she offered in a way that was attractive to the potential audience.

Donna explored another option that was not on her original list. Looking back at her experiences, she had talked about the ruthless culture in some sports academies.

This approach led to athletes being cast aside. Some academies provided follow-up services for such young people, but many leave the youngsters to fend for themselves.

Donna could help these young people. Many had dedicated their lives to pursuing a specific purpose. They could be helped to channel their energies into developing a new sense of purpose.

Such people might go through a period of depression, but many had a can do attitude. They had also followed certain principles as athletes. They had chosen:

*To focus on something they felt passionately about ... To set specific targets ... To follow certain disciplines ... To achieve daily goals ... To maintain high standards ... To be resilient ... To achieve the targets.*

She could help the individuals to focus on something they cared about and follow these principles in the future. Such programmes were desperately needed, but funding may be an issue.

Donna was prepared to contact academies she knew and offer it as a complementary service. She could then publish success stories and perhaps get funding for such programmes in the future. She began to focus on the option to pursue. Before committing herself, however, it was important to explore the next step.

## *Obligations*

Different people feel they have different obligations. These may be practical, psychological or philosophical.

An individual may feel an obligation to support their family, care for their parents or help other people. A spiritual person may feel an obligation to follow their faith. A creative person may feel an obligation to make full use of their talents.

Donna felt she had certain obligations regarding her relationships and vocation. She explained these in the following way.

### *Obligations*

*The obligations I have are:*

*To be the wage earner in the relationship with my partner and support her during her recovery from chemotherapy;*

*To support my parents as they get older – this will be emotionally, financially and practically;*

*To use my knowledge to help people – such as working with former students who have asked me to mentor them in their careers.*

The obligations are vital to consider. Such responsibilities may seem challenging, but it is often possible to find ways: a) to pursue their chosen opportunity; b) to fulfil their obligations. This leads to the next step.

### *Choosing To Pursue The Opportunity*

Some individuals like to reflect before settling on the route they want to follow. This can lead to finding creative solutions to what may seem difficult challenges.

One approach that has become more common is for a person to pursue several opportunities as part of a portfolio career. Donna chose to take this approach.

She aimed; a) to eventually do the school role on a part-time basis; b) to do peak performance coaching in businesses; c) to work with young people released from sports academies. She would also produce articles about the work in each field.

She and I worked on the plan for doing the coaching in business. It proved relatively simple to do this on a complementary basis, but it took longer to generate funding. This eventually happened, however, and allowed her to move to four days a week in school.

Donna's journey is still a work in progress. Like many people in today's world, she has developed a different way of working.

She is aiming: a) to follow her principles; b) to express these in several different places; c) to do satisfying work and help others to achieve success. She has moved on from the idea of expecting to get everything she wants from one specific job.

Let's return to your own life and work. What are your opportunities you have in your personal and professional life? What are the options you can pursue? What are your obligations?

What is the opportunity – or combination of opportunities – that you would like to pursue? How can you follow this route and also fulfil your obligations? What would be the benefits – both for yourself and other people?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Choosing To Pursue The Opportunity*

*The opportunity I would like to pursue  
in my personal or professional life is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do  
to pursue this opportunity are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Spring Cleaning Your Life Approach*

There are many exercises that invite people to focus on their priorities and life goals. The follow pages describe several approaches.

Some people amass lots of things in their lives. Imagine that you want to spring clean your life. This exercise invites you to look ahead and focus on the following things

### *Three People*

Who are the three people – in addition to your loved ones – that you would like to spend time with and encourage? How would you like to build with these people?

### *Three Strengths And Three Goals*

What are three strengths you have that you would like to build on? What are the three main goals you would like to focus on in your life? How can you work towards these goals?

### *Three Possessions And Three Other Things*

What are the three possessions that you would like to keep? What are three other things you would like to keep in your life? How can you appreciate or use these in a beneficial way?

### *Focusing In The Future*

Bearing in mind what you have written, describe the specific steps you can take to build on these things in the future. This can help you to keep focusing on what you believe is important.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Spring Cleaning My Life*

*The three people I would like to encourage and focus on – in addition to my loved ones - are:*

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*The three strengths I have that I would like to build on are:*

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*The three goals I would like to focus on working towards in my life are:*

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*The three possessions I  
would like to keep and use are:*

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*The three other things I would  
like to have in my life are:*

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*The specific things I can do to  
build on what I have described are:*

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## *The Feeling More In Control In Difficult Situations Approach*

How can you help a person to feel more in control in difficult situations? As we have seen earlier in the book, this often involves helping them to focus on controlling the controllables.

Sometimes this can be difficult, however, and much depends on the particular situation. Let's look at one specific example where a person wanted to learn how to deal with certain kinds of conversations.

Carrie had taken several months off work to care for her partner who was having treatment for cancer. The time spent at home helped her to appreciate the important things in life.

She also wanted to take more control in certain situations. One was how to deal with the caring phone calls that knocked her off-track. She explained this in the following way.

*"People ring and, though they are well-meaning, it takes ages to answer their questions.*

*"They want to know how my partner is doing. I don't want to be rude to them, but sometimes the phone calls are exhausting. It is like going up and down an emotional roller coaster.*

*"The phone calls start with them expressing sympathy, but sometimes the roles get reversed and I end up giving them therapy. Have you any suggestions about how to deal with these kinds of situations?"*

Carrie chose to create a script she could follow to be polite but also manage her energy. Whether it was a phone call or a caring enquiry from elsewhere, she would thank the person for asking. She would then go through the following messages.

*"The treatment has gone well. The medical staff have been great and they are doing a wonderful job."*

*"One of the upsides has been that it has brought us even closer as a family. We are appreciating the simple things in life and plan to go on several special trips."*

*"I will let you know if anything changes. How are you?"*

The final piece asking, "How are you?" was crucial.

Carrie could use it to close the topic and move things back to the caller. She would then feel more able to control the conversation.



People like to feel in they can shape their futures. How to take this step? One approach is for them to build on their strengths, focus on something they want to shape and achieve success.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you took this approach? You may have aimed to shape your diary, shape your career, shape a project, shape a culture or shape something else.

What did you do to shape the activity? How did you set specific goals and follow certain strategies? How did you do your best to achieve success? What happened as a result of taking these steps?

As mentioned earlier, people like to shape things. They like to feel they can control aspects of their future, set specific goals and see the fruits of their labours. This can help them to build their confidence.

The term 'shaper' gained popularity in organisations as a result of Meredith Belbin's research on effective teams. This outlined the roles that people can play to contribute towards delivering success.

One of these roles is to be a shaper. The Belbin Organisation describes the characteristics of the shaper in the following ways.

### *Shapers*

*They provides the necessary drive to ensure that the team keeps moving and does not lose focus or momentum.*

*They can be challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. Has the drive and courage to overcome obstacles.*

*They can be prone to provocation, and may sometimes offend people's feelings. They can also risk becoming aggressive and bad humoured in their attempts to get things done.*

A person may or may demonstrate some of these characteristics when aiming to shape things in their personal or professional life. Let's look at one example.

## *Kathy – Shaping A Positive Future For The Planet*

Kathy worked as a project director for a leading digital company. A superb orchestrator, she could get diverse individuals to combine their strengths to do pioneering work.

She also felt passionate about caring for the planet. Bearing this in mind, she made a presentation to her company's leadership team. This focused on the following themes.

*How the company could reduce its emissions and eventually become carbon neutral.*

*How taking these steps would benefit the company and many other stakeholders.*

Much to her surprise, the leaders were receptive and backed her proposal. Kathy was delighted, but then began to worry. During one of our sessions she wanted to explore the following questions.

*"Are the leadership team really serious? What happens if they aren't? What if they are just doing it for public relations reasons? What happens if they pull the plug halfway through the project?"*

Kathy and I focused on what she could and could not control when shaping the project. Here is a summary of what she concluded.

### *Shaping The Project*

*Can Control. The things I control are:*

*I can set short-term goals based on where I know it is possible to get some quick successes.*

*I can publicise these quick wins, produce success stories and show how it is possible to build on this momentum to get more successes.*

*I can share success stories in a way that develops the company's reputation for aiming to build a sustainable and successful future.*

*Can't Control. The things I can't control are:*

*I can't control if the company's leaders suddenly decide to pull the plug on the project because they have other agendas.*

*I can't control whether or not the principles embodied in the success stories are followed right across the company.*

Kathy built on her strengths. She shaped the project and the results were well received by the company's leaders. This led to them offering her a role on in the senior team.

She felt in a dilemma. The offer was tempting and would fit in with what Kathy had previously felt to be her career goals.

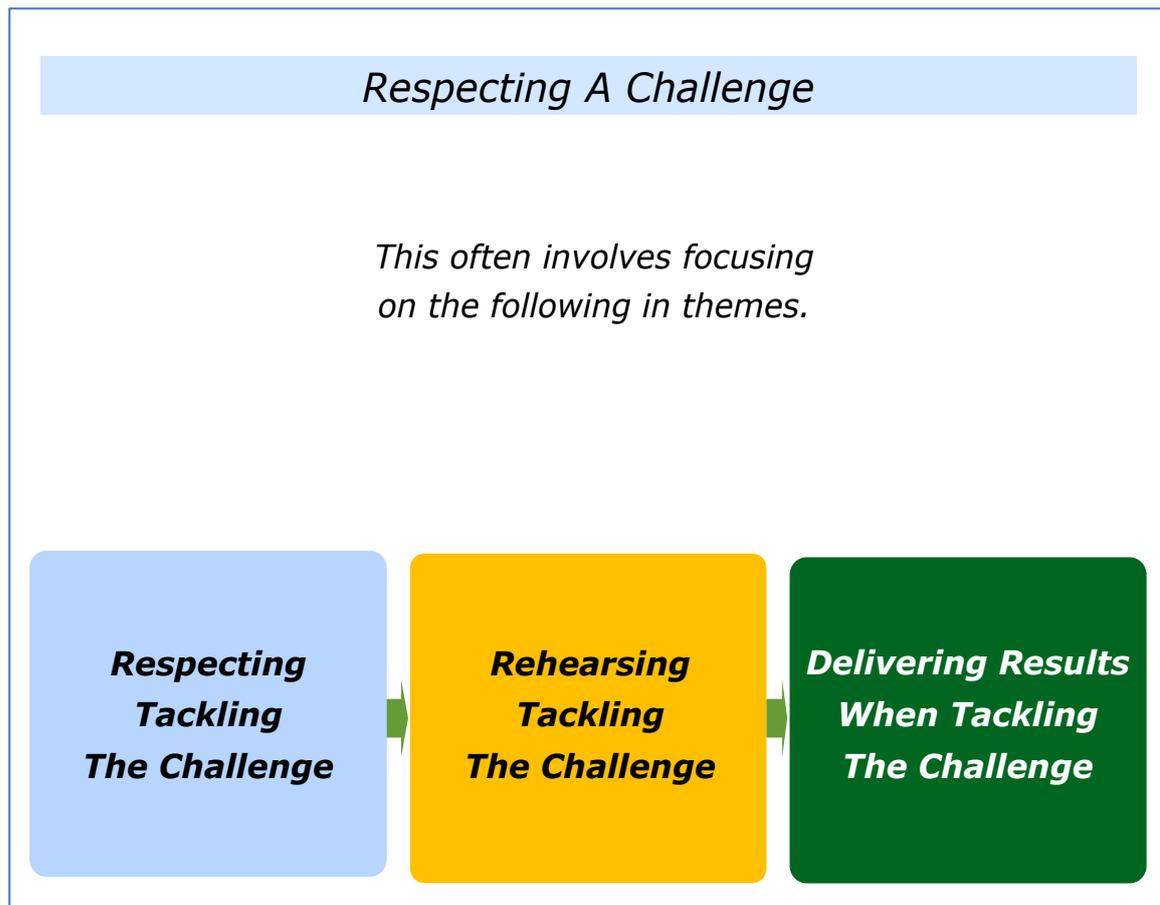
The pluses would be: to perhaps have power to introduce real change in the company; to have a senior role and more salary; to have the chance to use this to spread the messages across society.

The potential minuses would be: to maybe be just a figure-head; to be asked to roll-out processes, which was not her strength; to be stuck in meetings and removed from the hands-on work.

She opted instead to set-up her own business helping companies to reduce their carbon footprint. Some people saw this as risky, but she wanted to shape her own future. The early signs were promising, but she had a back-up plan.

Kathy kept in touch with key people she knew in various companies. Who knows? One day she may want to return to a full-time role being the person responsible for building a sustainable and successful company.

## *The Respecting A Challenge Approach*



Great workers respect the challenge they face. They do this whether they are tackling a routine task, climbing a mountain or turning around a company

Some people do not respect a challenge and fall off the mountain. One leader explained how they fell into this trap.

*"Several years ago I learned a severe lesson. It came off the back of achieving a success, but then I went into another role and messed it up badly*

*"During the previous five years I had built and sold a business. The work was challenging, but my colleagues and I enjoyed working towards a common purpose.*

*"Three months after selling the company I was much richer, but there was something missing. I needed to restart working. So I took on a senior role with another business.*

*"I felt the new role would be relatively simple, but that was my undoing. The role was 'not as advertised'.*

*"The work did not provide a sense of purpose and I began making sloppy mistakes. Eventually the business and I decided to go separate ways.*

*"This taught me a valuable lesson. Nowadays I do my due diligence and make sure I am motivated to achieve the goal."*

Looking at your own life and work, can you recall a time when you respected a challenge? What did you do right then to rehearse and then deliver the required results? Let's explore these themes.

## *Respecting A Challenge*

People perform many routine tasks each day as a matter of course. They get used to driving a car, solving problems at work and dealing with other issues. They may get into trouble, however, if they fail to concentrate or prepare properly.

Great workers do the following things when considering whether to tackle a challenge. They aim:

*To research the challenge;*

*To rate their motivation for tackling the challenge;*

*To make sure they respect the challenge.*

Imagine that you have been offered the opportunity to tackle a particular project. You may have the chance to launch a new business, take over a failing team, lead an initiative across a company or do another activity.

Your interest is piqued, but you also have reservations. On the one hand you think it could be interesting. On the other hand, you may have done similar things before, so it could feel mundane.

You want to do satisfying work and have a reasonable chance of success. This calls for doing a reality check before committing yourself to the challenge.

Your first task will be to gather information. One approach is to explore questions on the themes of What, Why, How, Who and When? These can be used to researching any potential project.

### *What*

*What are the stated goals of the project? What are the real results to achieve? What will be happening that will show you have reached the goals? What is the picture of success?*

*What is actually happening now? What is the state of play? If the project is already going: a) What is going well; b) What can be done better and how? What are the successful and unsuccessful patterns?*

*What are the key challenges you will face? What are the resources you will need to tackle these challenges, do superb work and reach the goals? Will these resources be available?*

*What are the things you can control on the project? What are the things you can't control? How can build on what you can control and manage what you can't?*

### *Why*

*Why do people want to do the project? What will be the specific benefits for the various stakeholders – such as the company, customers, colleagues, community and other groups?*

*What will be the pluses and minuses that you and other people may encounter on the road towards achieving the goals? How can you*

*build on the pluses and minimise the minuses? Looking at the pluses and minuses involved, are you prepared to accept the whole package?*

### *How*

*How can you do your best to reach the goals? What are the three key strategies you can follow that will provide the greatest chance of success? How can you use your own and other people's strengths to reach the goals?*

*What are the potential difficulties you may meet along the road? How can you anticipate and prevent these difficulties happening? How can you manage the difficulties if they do happen?*

*How can you make sure that you go in with your eyes open? What are the things you can and can't expect from the culture – the organisation or company – in which you will be working?*

*What could you do to thrive, rather than just survive, when working in or alongside the culture? What will be the support required? How can you get some early successes?*

### *Who*

*Who are the key stakeholders – the people you must satisfy? What is their picture of success? What is their mental model about how they believe people should work in order to achieve success? What do you believe are the overall Dos and Don'ts they ask people to follow?*

*Will you feel okay working with these people? How can you proactively keep them informed about the progress towards achieving the goals? How can you create enough space to make sure you can get on with the job?*

*Who are the people you may need on a team? What are the qualities – the spirit, strengths and skills – they will need to*

*demonstrate? Looking at the people already in the team, try answering the following questions.*

*Which of the people already have these qualities? Which people may have the qualities? Which people probably don't have the qualities?*

*Bearing these things in mind, what are the decisions you may need to take about people? How can you do this in a moral way? How can you employ the right people in the right places in the team?*

*What are the specific results that people in each of the roles will need to deliver? How can you make clear contracts with them about their contributions towards achieving the goals? How can you make sure that people are given the support required to do the job?*

### *When*

*What are the specific results that must be delivered by when? What are the key milestones? What are the short, medium and long-term goals? How can you get some early successes?*

*How can you continue to ensure that the project is on track and people deliver the goods? How can you continue to do reality checks about: a) What is working; b) What can be better and how? How can you encourage people on the journey?*

*How can you do everything possible to reach the goals? How can you ensure that people do the basics and, when appropriate, add that brilliance? What else can you do to deliver the picture of success?*

Imagine that you have researched what may be involved when doing a particular project. Bearing in mind what you have explored, the next steps is to rate your motivation for doing the work.

You may be considering whether to write a book, run a marathon, climb a mountain or do another activity. You may be considering whether to lead a team, shift a culture or tackle another challenge.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to look ahead at a potential project and rate your motivation for doing it. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Potential Challenge*

*The specific challenge – such as a project – that I may consider tackling is:*

\*

*The extent to which I feel motivated to tackle the challenge is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things that I could do – or that could happen – to increase the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Rehearsing Tackling The Challenge*

Imagine that you have chosen to do the particular project. The next step is to show respect for what needs to be done by rehearsing every aspect of the journey.

The theme of rehearsing properly is explored elsewhere in the book, but here are the headlines. It can be useful to focus on the picture of success and:

*To rehearse following the key strategies that will give you the greatest chance of success;*

*To rehearse dealing with the potential challenges along the ways;*

*To again rehearse doing your best to achieve the picture of success.*

Imagine that you feel ready to embark on the journey. It can then be useful to rest before clicking into action. You will then move on to the next step.

## *Delivering The Desired Results When Tackling The Challenge*

Great workers show respect by giving their full attention to tackling the challenge. They do this whether counselling a person, climbing a mountain, leading a creative project or doing another activity.

They follow the key strategies most likely to deliver the desired results. They also do this by managing their energy and efforts in the most effective way.

Such people work at the appropriate pace. Sometimes they may buy time to think; sometimes work intensely. Sometimes they may work in short bursts; some work for long stretches.

Great workers continue to use their antennae when tackling the challenges. They keep asking themselves the following questions.

*What are the real results to achieve? Am I on course to deliver these results? How can I keep on course to deliver success?*

*What is actually happening? What is going well? How can I build on these things? What can I do better and how? What are the potential things that could happen in the future? How can I manage these things?*

*What else can I do to achieve the desired results? How can I do these things? How can I finish in a good way and achieve the picture of success?*

Whatever challenge you tackle, the aim will be to respect the work. Such an approach can enable you and other people to reach the summit - rather than fall off the mountain – and get down safely.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to clarify how you can respect a challenge, rehearse tackling it and deliver the desired results.

## *Respecting A Challenge*

*The specific challenge that it may be important for me to respect may be:*

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*The specific things I can do to respect the challenge, rehearse properly and do my best to deliver the desired results are:*

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*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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Let's return to the theme of taking charge of your life. Can you think of a situation where you may want to feel more in control? You may want to focus on your key life-priorities, feel more in control at work or manage difficult conversations.

Looking at the situation, how can you build on what you can control? How can you clarify and focus on your priorities? How can you shape the future and achieve your picture of success?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Feeling More In Control In The Future*

*The specific situation where I want to feel more in control is:*

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*The specific things I can do to feel more in control in the situation are:*

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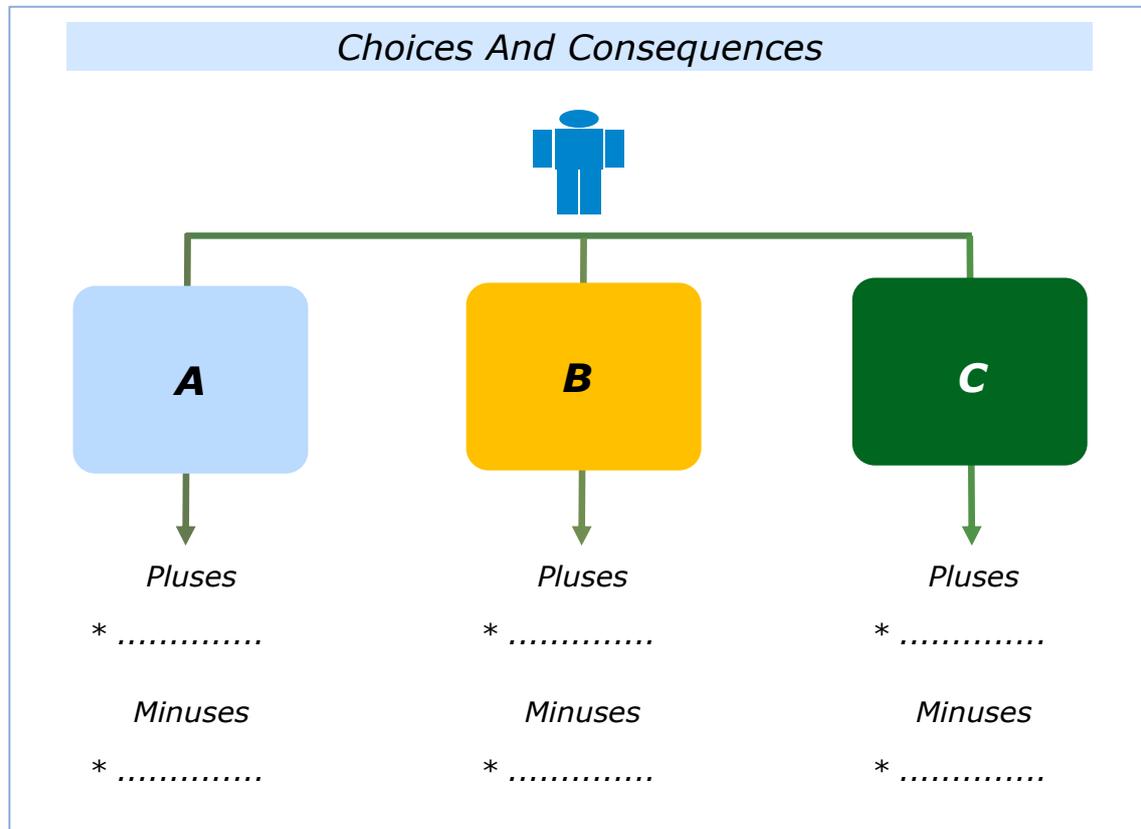
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## The Choices And Consequences Approach



People experience both successes and setbacks. The ways they choose to respond to these experiences can have a profound effect on their futures.

A person who achieves a success can celebrate for a while. They can then be complacent or use the success as a springboard towards continuous improvement.

A person who experiences a setback may need time to reflect. They can then choose to develop or dwell on the disappointment. They can be decisive and shape their futures or just drift.

People make choices all the time. The choices they make have consequences both for themselves and other people. Choosing not to do something is an option – but is also a choice.

Viktor Frankl's work reached millions through his book *Man's Search For Meaning*. The book described his harrowing journey through the Nazi concentration camps.

Surrounded by terror, he wondered how to make sense of this madness. Viktor concluded each person had the freedom to choose their attitude. He described this in the following way.

*Man is not free from his conditions, but he is free to take a stand towards his conditions.*

*Everything can be taken from a man or a woman but one thing: the last of human freedoms to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.*

Chance played an enormous part in the death camps, of course, but each person faced choices each day. Viktor describes how it was vital to look alert and ready to work. New arrivals found the ordeal began when the railway trucks drew into the camp sidings.

Recalling his own experience, he describes joining a long line which shuffled towards an SS Officer. The Officer looked at each person and casually pointed to the left or the right. Viktor explains:

*It was my turn. Somebody whispered to me that to be sent to the right side would mean work, the way to the left being for the sick and those incapable of work.*

*My haversack weighed me down a bit to the left, but I made an effort to walk upright.*

*The SS man looked me over, appeared to hesitate, then put both his hands on my shoulders, I tried very hard to look smart, and he turned my shoulders very slowly until I faced right, and I moved over to that side.*

Viktor survived the Nazi camps, emigrated to America and worked as a psychiatrist. Working with suicidal people, he recognised the

similarity between them and prisoners in the death camps. He recalled two prisoners who talked of taking their lives.

Both men used the typical argument: that they had nothing more to expect from life. The challenge was to show the men that life was still expecting something from them. Viktor continues:

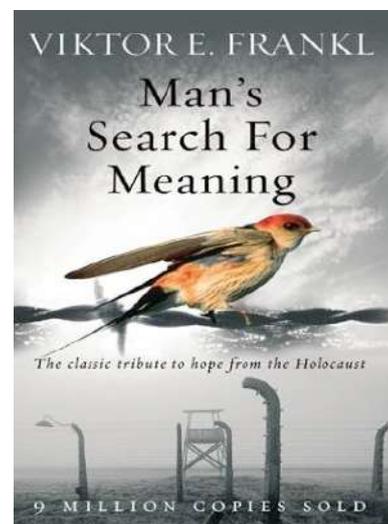
*We found, in fact, that for the one it was his child whom he adored and who was waiting for him in a foreign country. For the other it was a thing, not a person.*

*This was a scientist and had written a series of books which still needed to be finished. His work could not be done by anyone else, any more than another person could ever take the place of the father in his child's affections.*

*A man who becomes conscious of the responsibility he bears toward a human being who affectionately waits for him, or to an unfinished work, will never be able to throw away his life. He knows the 'why' for his existence and will be able to bear almost any 'how'.*

### Viktor Frankl - Choosing Our Attitude

*"Man is not free from his conditions, but he is free to take a stand towards his conditions. The last of human freedoms is the ability to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances."*



The choices and consequences approach is strongly influenced by decision making theory and existential psychology. It can be used to help people to explore and expand their potential options for achieving their goals.

These themes are embodied in an approach called Choice Therapy and these will be summarised at the end of this section. The approach can be adapted to help people to make choices in many different situations. The following pages give one example.



*The Choices And  
Consequences Approach*

*This approach helps people to explore and  
expand their options for achieving their goals*

*It can be helpful:*

- *To create an encouraging atmosphere but also expect the person to take responsibility for shaping their future;*
- *To focus on the topic they want to explore, clarify the real results to achieve and clarify the picture of success;*
- *To clarify their choices - their options - for going forwards together with the consequences of each option;*
- *To add to their repertoire of choices by offering knowledge, strategies and solutions they can use to achieve their goals;*
- *To clarify the route they want to follow, translate this into an action plan and enable them to achieve their picture of success.*

Dave was somebody I worked with several years ago. A high-flyer in financial businesses, he moved to leading a high-tech company. The early months were promising, but then people began complaining about his management style.

Whilst they admired his drive, they became upset about his mood swings and sniping. His home life was also deteriorating, especially the relationship with his teenage daughter. She was doing well in several school subjects, but he criticised her efforts in other areas.

Dave's view was that his daughter had to get used to what he called 'the real world'. But comparing her unfavourably to other classmates did not have the desired effect.

He approached me soon after receiving a warning from the company's board. Whilst they believed in his business expertise, they were questioning whether his management style would get the best from the company's knowledge workers.

Dave explained that, for one of the first times in his life, he felt like he was failing. He felt the need to take stock - both as a professional and as a parent.

Looking ahead, we clarified the real results that Dave wanted to achieve. These included the actual words:

*He would like his daughter and wife to be saying about him;*

*He would like the board and the employees to be saying about him;*

*He would like to be saying about himself.*

We explored his choices – the various routes - he could take towards achieving these goals. Each route had consequences with both pluses and minuses. As with all decision making, the key question to answer was:

*What set of consequences did he want?*

Dave knew the route he wanted to follow, but sometimes he got impatient and spoke without thinking. At times he could be sarcastic and belittle people. This was followed by him feeling guilty.

Looking back at his life, we explored when Dave had been caring, encouraging and yet also clear when necessary. How could he follow these principles in the future with his family and colleagues?

Dave also needed to recognise the triggers that led to him behaving in a callous way. He then needed to buy time, think and pursue the route that would be more likely to achieve the desired consequences.

Dave's experience mirrored that of many people. They can sometimes choose to be caring, to be callous or to swing between the two extremes.

Dave wanted to follow the caring approach in the future. Looking ahead, we rehearsed the specific things he could do:

*To behave in a caring way in both his personal and professional life;*

*To manage the potential triggers that could lead to him being callous.*

During the following months Dave followed his successful style for helping people. He did this in a genuine way. He also got better at buying time to think before saying things that would hurt people.

There are many variations of the choices and consequences approach. Some people arrive at a point where they feel ready to make a decision.

On some occasions, however, the person may be asked to decide how they want to shape their future. This can particularly be the case if they are part of a team or an organisation.

Let's look at one approach to taking this step. It sounds rather tough, but sometimes it is necessary. This is especially the case if their behaviour is affecting other people.

### *The Decisiveness Or Drift Approach*

This is an approach that is sometimes used when working with people in demanding environments. Variations of it may be used in therapy interventions or when inviting a talented person to clarify how they want to shape their future.

The approach can be used in a positive and professional way. Whilst it invites a person to make a choice, it is also important to give them time to reflect.

One outcome could be that a person chooses not to make a decision but to continue to drift. That is in itself a decision.

*A Person Can Choose To Take  
Either Of These Approaches*

***To be decisive***

***To take responsibility***

***To make full use  
of their talents***

***To follow the ethic  
of earning things***

***To dedicate themselves  
to achieving a goal***

***To continue to drift***

***To not take responsibility***

***To not make full  
use of their talents***

***To have a sense  
of entitlement***

***To demonstrate a  
dereliction of duty***

The possible options facing a person will depend on their specific situation, but here are some examples. It may involve asking them something along the following lines.

*"What do you want to do in the next part of your life?"*

*"To be healthy or to be unhealthy ... To make full use to your talents or to not make full use of your talents ... To be fully committed to the role or to not be committed?"*

*"The first step is to be honest with yourself. The second step will be to clarify your chosen route and to be clear on the consequences. The third step may be to dedicate yourself to following your chosen route and, if you wish, get help on the journey."*

This sounds tough and is suited to when a person may need to make a key decision. Let's explore another approach that involves choices and consequences.

## *A Person Choosing Their ABC Approach To Life*

*A person can choose their attitude and how they behave in certain situations. The way they do this can increase the likelihood of certain consequences.*



There are many models for clarifying a person's approach to life. Some are relatively straightforward yet backed by evidence. Some are complex and interpret why somebody behaves in a certain way.

The ABC approach focuses on the following themes. When appropriate, it invites a person to choose the ways they want to behave in the future.

### *Attitude*

The approach says that a person can choose their attitude. The attitude they adopt in certain situations can have a profound effect on them and other people.

### *Behaviour*

A person can choose how they behave in certain situations. The choice they make may be heavily influenced by the experiences

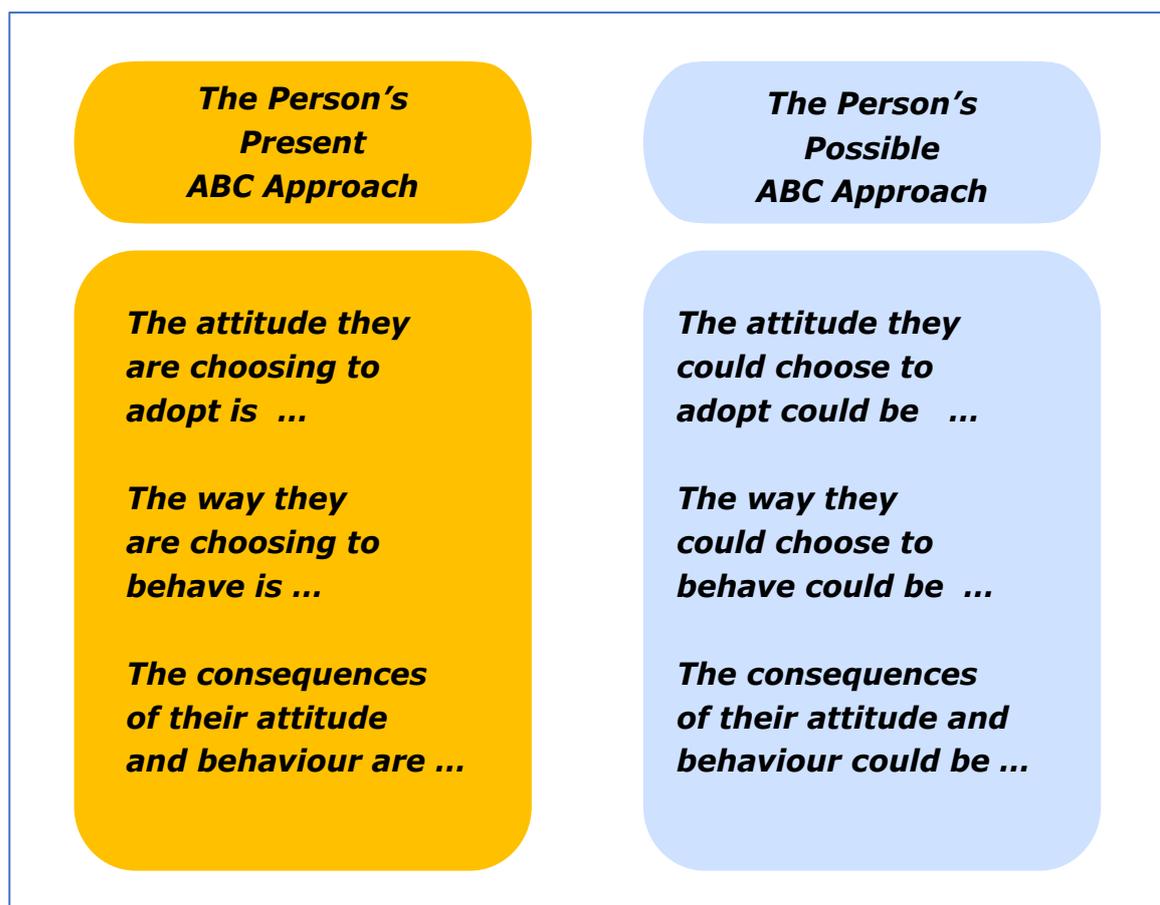
they have had in their life. If they wish, however, they can be helped see other ways of behaving in the future.

## *Consequences*

The attitude and behaviour that a person demonstrates can have consequences. These may be positive or negative.

If they wish, a person can choose to adopt another attitude and behave in another way. This can increase the likelihood of producing certain consequences.

These outcomes are not guaranteed. But there are things a person can do to increase the chances of achieving their desired results.



Some people find the ABC model to be helpful, whilst others see it as too simple. A person who chooses to take this approach can see that:

*They can choose their attitude ... They can choose to behave in a certain way ... They are then more likely to get certain consequences.*

Some people take this approach when facing critical decisions. They then do their best to shape a positive future.

### *The Choice Therapy Approach*

Let's return to one of the topics mentioned earlier. Choice therapy is strongly influenced by existential psychology, reality therapy, logotherapy and the work of some self-help groups.

Choice therapy, like all therapy, is based on certain assumptions about people. These involve encouraging people yet also expecting them to take responsibility for shaping their futures.

Imagine that you are qualified to provide therapy sessions and that somebody has asked for your help. Here is an overview of some of the guidelines you may follow in your own way.

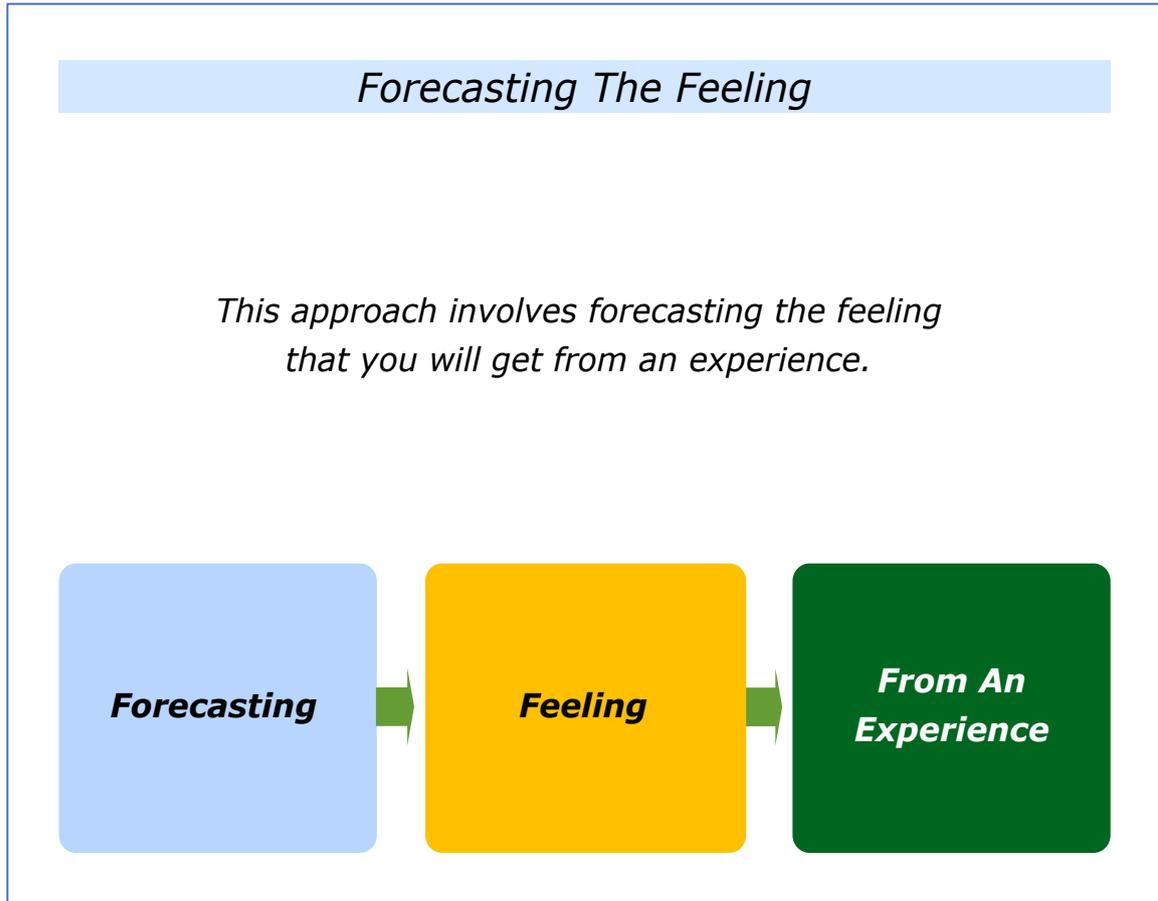
## *Choice Therapy*

*Imagine that somebody has asked for your help. It can be useful to focus on the following themes.*

- To help the person to feel welcome and encourage them to describe the topics they want to explore;*
- To explain what you can and can't offer and to make clear working contracts – the ways you can help and also their responsibility in working towards the goals;*
- To focus on the first theme they want to explore and clarify the real results they want to achieve - their picture of success;*
- To explore their choices – the options they can pursue – towards achieving their goals;*
- To explore the consequences of each option – the pluses and minuses – and for them to rate the attractiveness of each option on a scale 0-10;*

- *To, if appropriate, ask if it is okay for you to share some other possible options;*
- *To share knowledge – successful strategies, positive models and practical tool – that they can use in their own way to achieve their goals;*
- *To invite the person to reflect and, if they wish, choose the option – or combination of options – they want to pursue;*
- *To focus on the practical steps they can take to pursue their chosen option – this includes building on the pluses, managing the minuses and doing their best to achieve their picture of success;*
- *To move on to the next topic they want to explore.*

## *The Forecasting The Feeling Approach*



Some individuals have the ability to consider their potential ways forwards and the emotional consequences of these options. This involves them taking the following steps.

*They look ahead to the potential experience;*

*They forecast the possible feeling they may get from the experience;*

*They decide if they want to go ahead and pursue the experience.*

Different people demonstrate this ability in different degrees. The ways they do this can depend on:

*What they have learned from their life experiences;*

*How they can extrapolate this knowledge to explore what may happen if they embark on an experience.*

Many people can forecast what they will feel in relatively straightforward situations. They may be going for a run, eating a meal, visiting friends, going to a festival or doing another activity.

Some can forecast what they may feel in challenging situations. They may be thinking of helping an addict, dealing with a micromanaging boss, turning around an unsuccessful team or doing another activity.

Some can forecast what they may feel during a complex or uncertain experience. They may be launching a business in turbulent times, opting for a certain kind of medical treatment or leading a first responder team.

Some have the ability to forecast what other people may feel during an experience. They seem to know what other people will feel before these individuals feel it.

Such individuals may therefore aim to shape or design experiences that help others - even if such situations may be challenging. They aim to help people: a) to be able to build on the positive feelings; b) to manage any challenging emotions.

Some individuals have a memory of the future. They seem able to envisage many scenarios and how to find solutions. It is almost as if they have already been there. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"I transport myself into the future and aim to see, touch and feel what it is like in various scenarios. This helps me to deal with any feelings and find solutions. I can then make better decisions when we meet such challenges."*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Forecasting The Feeling*

*The specific activity where I may have the ability to forecast the feeling that I or others may feel during an experience is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to build on and use this ability in the future are:*

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\*

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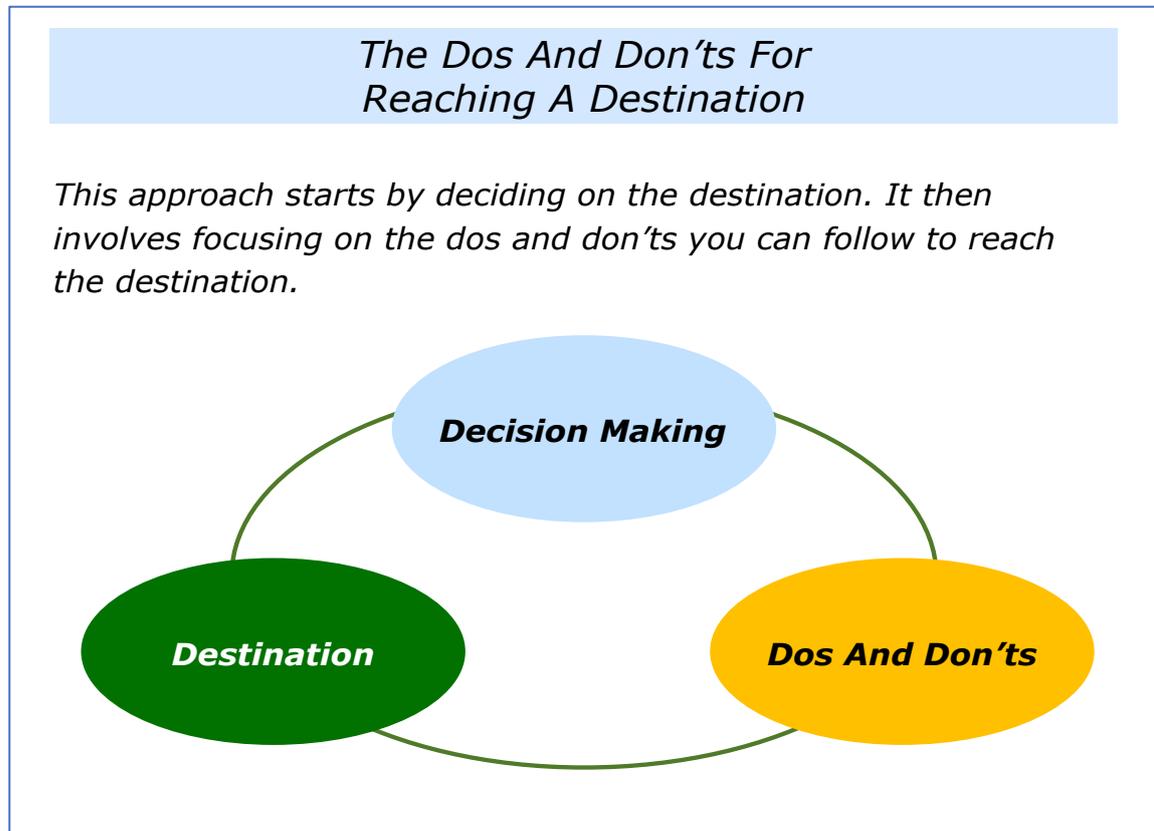
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Dos And Don'ts For Reaching A Destination Approach*



This is an approach that can be used by individuals, teams and organisations. It helps them to focus on the principles they can follow to achieve their picture of success.

The first step is to decide on your destination – the real results to achieve. The next step is to clarify the dos and don'ts – the guidelines - you can follow to reach the goals. The final step is to do your best to reach the destination.

### *Decision Making*

Imagine you want to use elements of this approach. You may wish to start by spending some time deciding on the destination. This could be a specific goal you want to achieve in your personal or professional life.

Different people will obviously have different aims. Here are some that individuals may mention when exploring this theme.

### *Destination*

*The destination I want to reach is:*

*To have a sense of peace ... To produce music that inspires people ... To help the academy footballers I coach to develop as people and as professionals ... To provide compassionate palliative care.*

*To help people to find peaceful solutions to conflicts ... To enable teachers to follow their vocation and retain their sanity in the school system ... To show businesses how they can make a profit and care for the planet.*

Let's return to your own life. What may be a destination – the goal - you want to reach your personal or professional life?

Looking at this aim, what are the real results you want to achieve? What will be happening that will show you have reached the goal? What may be the benefits – to all the various stakeholders – of achieving these aims?

As you saw from the examples given above, sometimes the destination can also be a journey. It can be useful to set goals that provide milestones on the way.

But you also want to keep improving. The journey becomes entwined with short, medium and long-term destinations.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Decision Making*

*The destination I want to reach is:*

\*

*The real results I want to achieve  
by reaching this destination are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of reaching  
this destination – for the  
various stakeholders - will be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Dos And Don'ts*

Imagine that you have settled on the goal you want to reach. The next step will be clarify the dos and don'ts you can follow to do your best to reach the destination. These will differ depending on the work you do.

The paramedic will follow certain guidelines when arriving at the scene of an accident. The medical team will follow their procedures when receiving a patient. The psychologist will follow their dos and don'ts when caring for patients and their families.

The writer will follow their framework for producing articles that achieve the desired results. The technical problem solver will follow their framework for finding solutions to issues. The sports coach will follow their own beliefs about how to help athletes to perform at their best.

Different people their dos and don'ts in different ways. Here is one framework it is possible to use.

*Bearing in mind the picture  
of success, you may aim:*

*To clarify what works – the strategies people follow to deliver  
success - in your chosen field;*

*To clarify the strategies you can follow to give yourself the greatest  
chance of success;*

*To translate these into the dos and don'ts you can to follow to do  
your best to achieve success.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Dos And Don'ts*

*The destination I want to reach is:*

\*

*The dos I want to follow to do my best to achieve the desired results are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The don'ts I need to bear in mind when doing my best to achieve the desired results are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Destination*

Some people define their destination in terms as achieving tangible results. Some also think of achieving emotional results. They clarify the feelings they want people to have at the end of the journey.

Good mediators take this approach. They define their aim as:

*To find a solution where, as far as possible, all the parties feel that want to make it work and achieve the agreed picture of success.*

This is an approach I was introduced to when helping people to find solutions to tough challenges. Looking from the outside, it can be relatively simple to see potential way forwards. But sometimes there are deep emotional issues that cloud people's judgement.

Here is one example. A person who was leaving for a competitor wanted to tell their present employer how they resented being treated by their present organisation. But there was a complication.

Their manager in the new company was friends with their present manager. Bearing this in mind, we explored the following theme.

*"The feelings you have are real for you. The way you choose to express these feelings, however, can have consequences for you and other people."*

The person chose: a) to focus on how they could get some quick successes in their new role; b) to move on from their present role in a positive rather than negative way.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, how can you do your best to achieve your aims? What are the actual things that will be happening that will show you have reached your desired destination?

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Destination*

*The destination I want to reach is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to do my best achieve the desired results are:*

\*

\*

\*

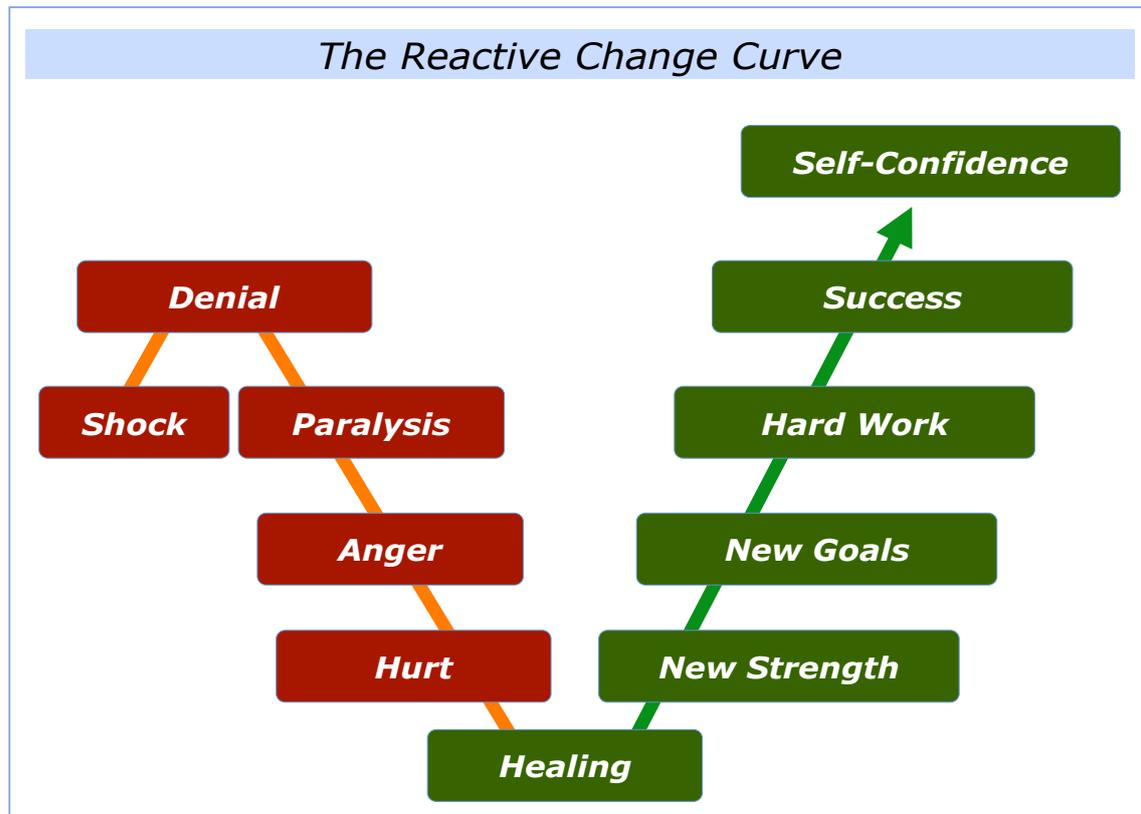
*The specific things that will be happening that will show I have reached the destination will be:*

\*

\*

\*

## The Change Curve Approach



Peak performers have a pattern of overcoming setbacks. Sometimes they emerge stronger from such experiences. They grow wiser and more able to do great work in the future.

There are many models regarding how people manage change. One approach is when a person initiates proactive change. They feel in charge of the process and this gives them a sense of being in control.

They choose to look ahead, take initiatives and set specific goals. They perform superb work and do their best to achieve success. Such people continue to be proactive and focus on constant improvement.

Some people go through the process of reactive change. They may encounter an unexpected event or crisis that throws them off course.

This can be harder to overcome because people like to feel in charge. They feel better when they have initiated the change rather than feel it has been forced on them.

Many of the models for understanding reactive change are based on the work of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. She is probably best known for the stages of grief and her book *On Death and Dying*, which was published in 1969.

Elisabeth said that people often go through certain stages when facing the prospect of death, experiencing a loss or encountering a negative transition. They may go through the following stages.

*Denial: "This can't be true."*

*Anger: "Who is to blame?"*

*Bargaining: "If things work out, I promise to live a better life."*

*Depression: "This is awful. I can't see a way forward."*

*Acceptance: "I am ready to move on."*

Elisabeth explained that the phases were not necessarily sequential and people may go through some, but not all, of them. There would be ups and downs, regressions and leaps forward.

Some researchers have pointed out that Elisabeth's model was based on people who knew they were coming to the end of their lives. It did not necessarily apply to every situation where people experience setbacks or changes.

Many people found the model helpful, however, because it help them to make sense of difficult experiences. liberating. Some have built on Elisabeth's work and added to the model.

The following section looks at one approach that is based on the original model. Let's explore some of these stages.

## *Shock*

People experience a crisis. They lose their job, suffer an accident or get some bad news.

Shock is the first reaction to trauma. This can be the case when somebody gets the sack, is involved in a car accident, loses a loved one or gets caught in a disaster. Shock gives way to the next stage.

## *Denial*

A feeling of unreality follows and a person may deny what is happening. They may say:

*"It's not true. It can't be happening. I can't believe it."*

The driver climbs out of a smashed car, insists they feel all right and wants to continue their journey. The patient hears they have an incurable disease, but insists the hospital has mixed up the x-rays.

During the 1989 Hillsborough football disaster in England, for example, the authorities denied there was a problem, even though injured spectators were trying to find safety on the pitch. The authorities just wanted to get on with the game.

## *Paralysis*

The police froze at Hillsborough. Constables reported that they had been ordered to stop spectators getting onto the pitch whatever the circumstances.

Distressed fans were therefore herded back into pens that had become death traps. Crucial minutes were lost before they evacuated spectators trapped behind the terrace barriers.

Paralysis is common in many stress situations. Bureaucrats in threatened organisations continue to follow old procedures, hoping the dangers will disappear. Passengers relax on planes that have

crash landed successfully, thinking their ordeal is over, only to be overcome by toxic fumes.

### *Anger*

"Let's find somebody to blame," is the cry. People search for scapegoats.

Victims pin blame on, for example, the police, the authorities, political parties, the other car driver or God. Some blame Life that has treated them cruelly. People often need to vent their feelings and experience a catharsis before entering the next stage.

### *Hurt*

Pain seeps through the body, the organisation or the nation. Tears are shed and nightmares are re-lived.

Individuals react differently. Some may want to talk, sleep or retreat into silence. Some try to numb the pain with drink or other substance. Some relapse into depression.

Some people feel they are sinking downwards and fear they won't pull out of the dive. Many come to terms with the pain, however, and enter the next stage.

### *Healing*

The optimistic scenario is that the body recovers and the mind begins to understand. Full acceptance takes longer, but it is time to start on the road to recovery.

The pessimistic scenario is that people sink deeper and experience a breakdown. Some stay at this level for a long time.

People obviously need encouragement at this stage. But at some point they must also take responsibility for their own future. Many

people pull the pieces together and decide that life must go on. This takes us to the next step.

### *New Strength*

People emerge from mourning as the mind searches for deeper meaning. The 45-year-old who experienced a heart attack, for example, considers developing a healthier lifestyle. They mobilise the physical and psychological strength needed to tackle future challenges.

The body feels stronger, the mind more determined. It is time to move forward and translate the feelings into action.

### *New Goals*

After a painful divorce, the person aims to start a new relationship. After surviving a car accident, the driver again gets behind the wheel.

After the Hillsborough disaster, some football clubs removed the cages that had fenced in fans, whilst some clubs still procrastinated. Eventually all the clubs were forced to revamp their stadiums. They were set new health and safety goals.

People need hope. They sometimes do this by setting their sights on a long-term vision. At the same time, however, they also set short-term realistic goals that will produce visible successes.

### *Hard Work*

People start fresh relationships, find new jobs, rebuild their cities or repair their nations after a disaster. This often calls for hard work and the sweat can have a cleansing effect. People feel they are doing something and begin to see results.

As mentioned earlier, however, the process is not linear. People may start getting the lives back together, but then maybe have

flashback. Some also relapse, returning to Anger and Hurt. The next step is to translate the action into some early wins.

## *Success*

A recovering alcoholic aims to stay sober each day. A sacked worker feels better after completing their first week in a new job. A divorced person feels better after developing a more enriching relationship.

People cannot be given success. They have to earn it. They can be offered the right encouragement and tools to do the job. But they must get out of the chair and do the work.

## *Self-Confidence*

People put the bad experience into perspective. Some individuals may still feel bitter, but others have different reactions. A person may say:

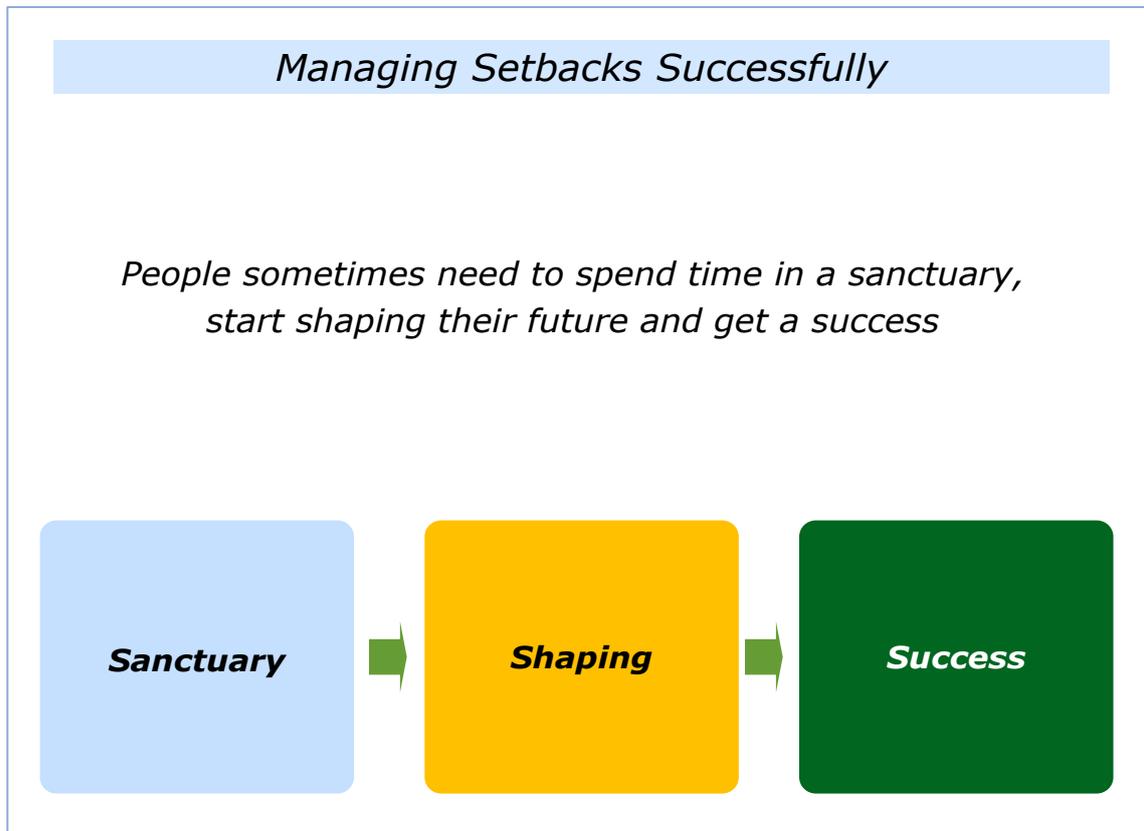
*"It was the best thing that ever happened to me. It taught me that I could survive many things. It made me appreciate life and concentrate on what is important."*

How do people come through the curve? They may manage it by themselves, talk with a friend, join a self-help group or use another approach.

Classic counsellors, for example, provide a supportive and non-directive environment in which a person can talk through their experiences. This enables a person to work through the change curve.

Let's look at one approach that people sometimes follow – either by themselves or with help from others – to manage setbacks successfully.

## *The Sanctuary, Shaping And Success Approach*

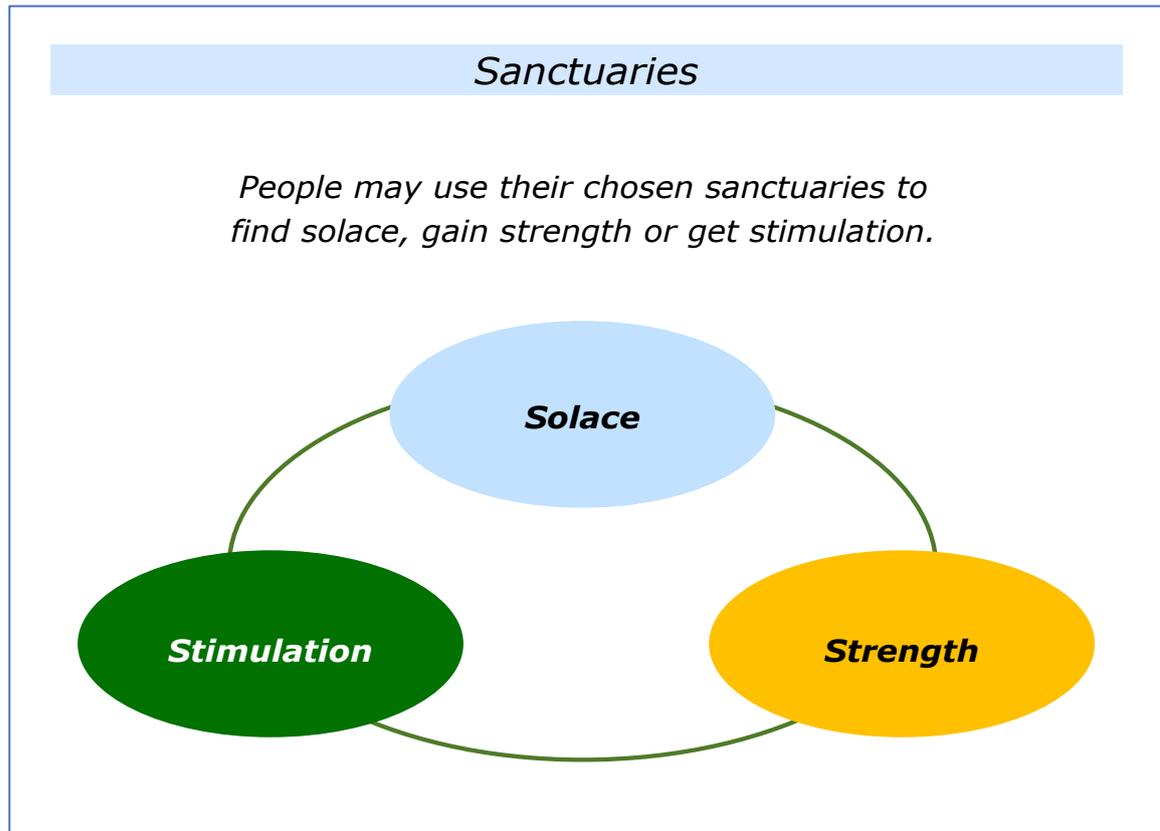


People who suffer a setback often need time to heal. They may need to lick their wounds and begin to make sense of the experience. They sometimes take these steps by spending time in a sanctuary, shaping their future and getting success.

### *Sanctuaries*

Different people spend time in different kinds of sanctuaries. They may rest, sleep, listen to music, talk with friends or do another activity. They need a safe place where they can heal their body and soul.

They may then use their chosen sanctuaries to find solace, gain strength or get stimulation. Let's explore some of these themes.



### *Solace*

Some people use sanctuaries to find comfort after a loss, setback or other event. They may cry, mourn or experience other emotions. Some return to their spiritual faith or inner compass. They may then go through certain rituals before moving on to shape the future.

### *Strength*

Some people use sanctuaries to rest and regain strength. They give themselves permission to sleep, relax or do other things to revitalise their body and soul. Sometimes this involves reflecting and beginning to make sense of their experience. They then emerge stronger and ready to shape the future.

## *Stimulation*

Some people use sanctuaries to get stimulation. They walk, listen to music, spend time with positive people or do other activities. They may also do this when aiming to develop a new sense of purpose.

Some take this approach when faced by a challenge. Buying time to think, they spend time in their chosen sanctuary and so do some slow thinking. This helps them to see things in perspective and make better decisions.

Some people create times during their day when they can recentre and refocus. This enables them to regain their energy, refocus and rehearse what they are going to do next. They are then more able to take care of their wellbeing and do good work.

Where are your sanctuaries? You may have a favourite place at home, like to walk or a hideaway at work. You may immerse yourself in a creative activity or doing exercise.

How can you spend more time in these sanctuaries? What may be the benefits? One person expressed this in the following way.

*"When I was younger I was addicted to experiences. I threw myself into activities and packed my diary with back-to-back events. I felt most alive when doing things, dealing with crises or striving to achieve a goal.*

*"Nowadays I like to create time to think. Maybe it is because I have got older or because we are now bombarded with information. I need time to reflect and make sense of experiences.*

*"This had led to me spending time in my sanctuaries. Sometimes I go for a walk, play music or have a nap. I find this helps me make better decisions and then rehearse what I am going to do next."*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Sanctuaries*

*The sanctuaries where I can find solace,  
gain strength or get stimulation are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to  
spend time in these sanctuaries are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

Let's return to how a person may take charge of their future after a setback. They will spend time resting and healing. They may then move on to the next stage.

## *Shaping*

Sanctuaries are great for a while. But then it can be important to move on because otherwise the muscles atrophy. There comes a time to begin shaping one's future.

Different people do this in different ways. A person recovering from an accident will begin exercising to build up the muscles. A jogger recovering from a mugging will start running in a safe place or with a friend.

A person who aims to shape their future may start by focusing on controlling the controllables. They will build on what they can control rather than what they can't control.

Many individuals who re-take charge of their lives start by doing something physical. They start exercising, move house or do other things that will bring them a quick win. They follow one of the oldest rules regarding change:

*Change the physical things to change the psychological things.*

Whichever route they take, it is important for the person to set things up to succeed. This leads to the next stage.

## *Success*

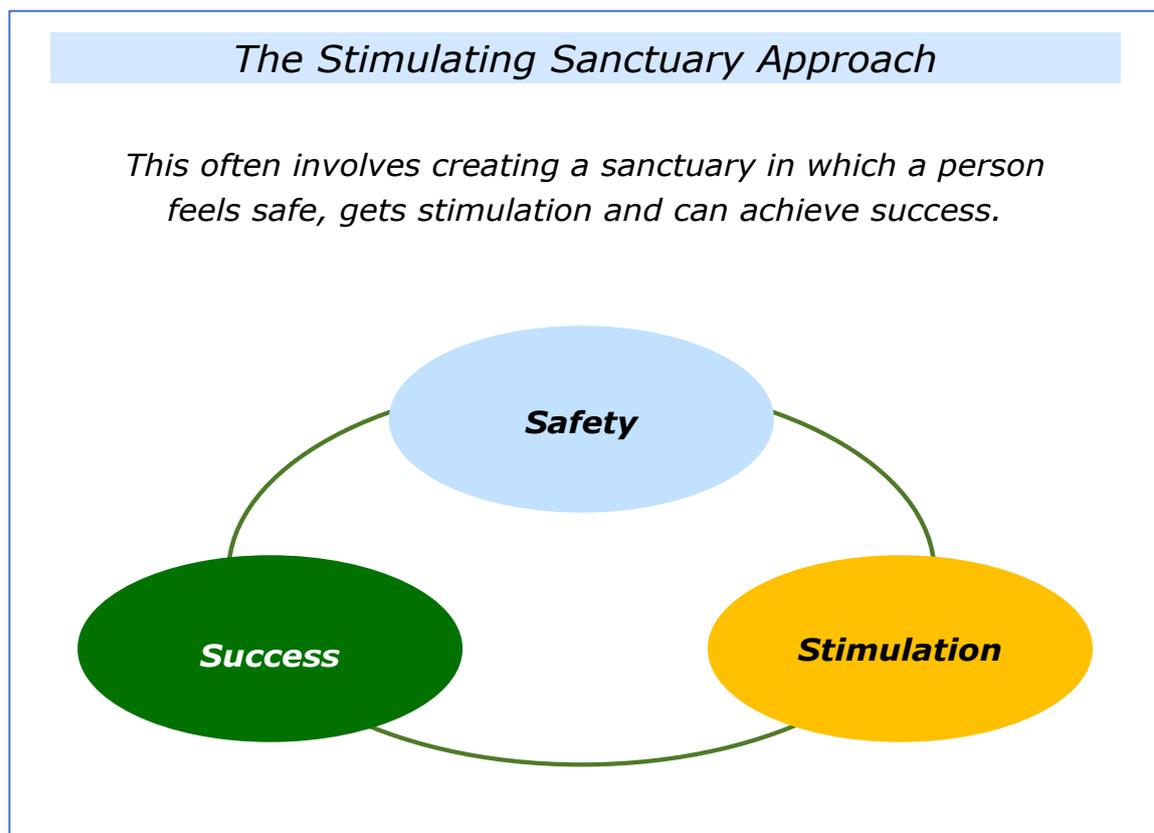
A person will begin by setting short-term goals. They may take their first steps after an accident. They may do a piece of project work for a friend after being made redundant. They will do something simple to follow their version of getting back on the horse.

A person will plan things carefully, rehearse what they are going to do and then click into action. They will aim to be fully present, do their best and work to achieve their picture of success.

Going out into the world again can take a lot of effort, so a person may then wish to return to their sanctuary for a while. This is perfectly natural and will give them time to recover.

Feeling more confident, however, they will then take the next step in their life or work. They will aim to shape their future, set a specific goal and work to achieve success.

Sometimes a person is able to go through these stages by themselves. Sometimes they may be helped by another person who creates a stimulating sanctuary. Let's explore this approach.



Encouragers often create a stimulating sanctuary in which a person feels safe and at ease. They may do this when acting as a friend, counsellor, education, coach, mentor or in another role.

Sometimes the person may simply want somebody to listen. Sometimes they may want practical tools they can use to tackle a challenge and reach a specific goal.

Imagine the person wants to do the latter. The encourager will listen and then, when appropriate, ask if it is okay for them to offer support or share ideas. If so, they will aim to do this in a way the person finds stimulating.

Sometimes this can help the person to gain strength. Sometimes it can help them to pursue strategies towards achieving their picture of success. Let's explore these themes.

### *Safety*

Encouragers make a person feel welcome and able to explore their own agenda. Different people do this in different ways, but many give the person the following messages.

*"It is okay to be you ... It is okay to express yourself ... It is okay to explore topics and challenges ... It is about your agenda."*

*"It is okay to relax ... You are not on stage ... You do have to perform ... You do not have to impress."*

*"It is okay to talk about any themes you wish. If appropriate, we can then explore how you can follow these and achieve success."*

A leader, for example, may not have anybody with whom they can explore ideas in a safe way. They may appreciate the chance to share their aims. It can then be useful to move on to the next step.

### *Stimulation*

Encouragers often help a person: a) to talk about their goals; b) to describe how they have worked towards their goals. If appropriate, they may then ask the person:

*"It is okay for me to share some ideas?"*

If so, they will aim to pass knowledge that the person may find stimulating. This may include positive models and practical tools that the person can use:

*To see the big picture and the possible routes they can follow towards achieving their goals;*

*To build on their strengths and follow their successful patterns to work towards achieving their goals;*

*To settle on the practical strategies they can follow to help them to achieve their goals.*

Stimulation is a vital part of this process. It is important to provide knowledge and practical tools that the person find relevant and rewarding.

Sharing these ideas can sometimes stimulate things in the person's brain. This can nurture their imagination and help them explore various possibilities.

Sometimes this won't happen straight away. Sometimes the person may need time to reflect. They may then make connections and begin to settle on the future path.

### *Success*

Encouragers aim to enable people to achieve success. Sometimes this can happen within the session. The person may say something like:

*"I feel happy about the steps I want to take in the future. I can see a way forward that may work. It is now up to me to make it happen."*

Sometimes the success comes when the person implements their plan and reaches their goals. Sometimes the success happens at a much later date.

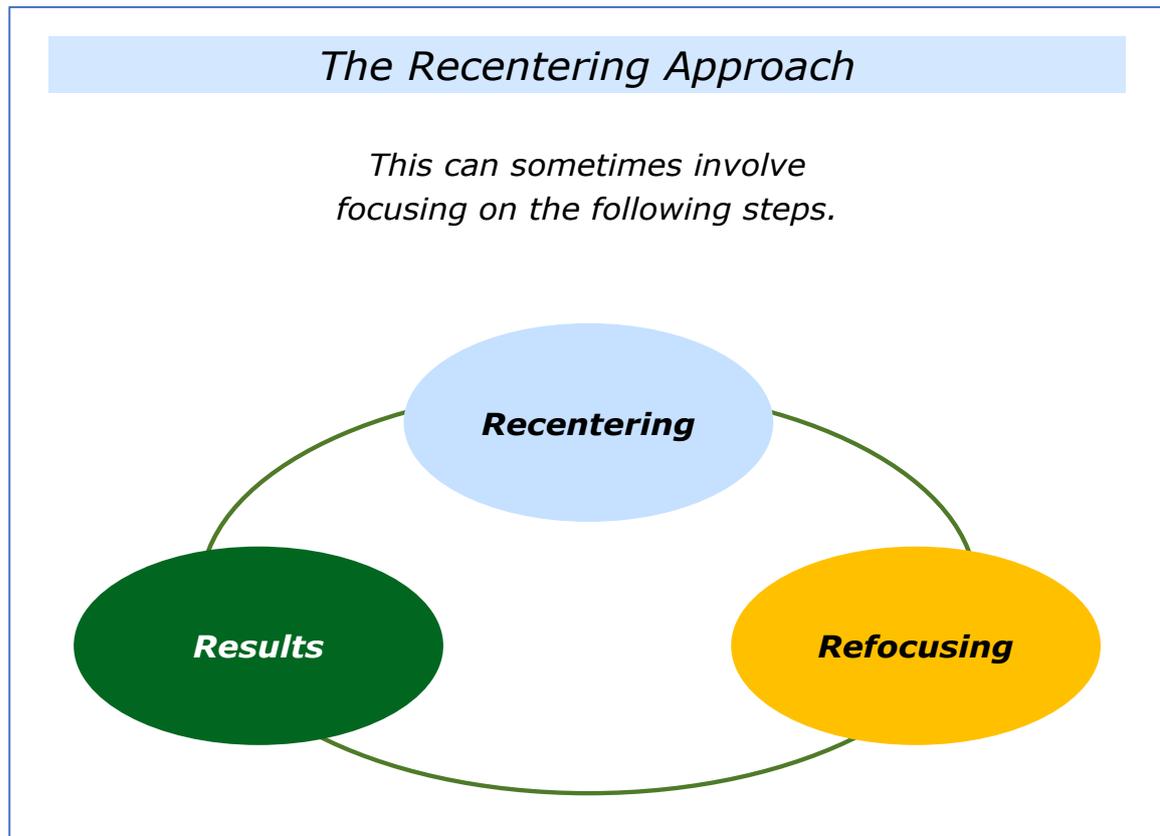
One mentor described how they met a person whom they had worked with a year previously. When asked about their situation, the person replied along the following lines.

*"I really enjoyed our session. For various reasons I did not follow my original plan. Something happened in the meeting that got me thinking, however, and I began to explore in another way. I am now following that path and it looks like being successful."*

The person's brain had been stimulated and set them off in a different direction. This can happen after experiencing a stimulating session.

Different people do different things during their time in sanctuaries. The following section looks at two approaches that people find useful.

## *The Recentering Approach*



Different people use the recentering approach in different situations. They may do so when reflecting on what is important in life, recovering from setbacks or shaping their future. It involves going through the following steps.

They take time to rest, reflect and recentre. They reconnect with inner compass and clarify the principles they want to follow. Sometimes they take the opportunity to revitalise themselves. They then refocus on the future.

They raise their sights and explore the possible ways forward. Clarifying the real results they want to achieve, they rehearse pursuing their chosen strategy. Moving into action, they then do their best to deliver the desired results.

(Please note. In this section I have chosen to use the US spelling recentering rather than the English recentring.)

Looking back, when have you followed some elements of the recentering approach? This could have been in your personal or professional life.

You may have done this when been feeling vulnerable - such as being ill or after experiencing a setback. You may have done so when taking time to reflect on your values and explore your future possibilities.

What did you do to reflect, recentre and revitalise yourself? What did you do to revisit your inner compass and core principles? What did you then do to shape your future?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe what you did to follow some elements of the recentering approach.

## *Recentering In The Past*

*The specific situation when  
I followed some elements of  
the recentering approach was:*

\*

*The specific things I did then to  
follow some elements of the  
recentering approach were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that happened as  
a result of taking these steps were:*

\*

\*

\*

Imagine that you want to follow some of these principles in the future. Let's explore how you can take these steps.

### *Recentering*

The first step is to take time to recenter. Sometimes it is possible to set aside time to rest, reflect and revitalise yourself. Sometimes it calls for buying time to think in the midst of a hectic activity or environment.

You will follow your own ritual for recentering. You may aim to find a quiet place, do deep breathing or find another way to relax. Choosing to reflect, you may go through some of the following stages.

### *Reconnecting With Your Inner Compass*

Some people use the time as an opportunity to reconnect with their inner compass. Depending on the situation, different people do this in different ways. Some ask themselves the following questions when faced by a challenge or when looking into the future.

*"What are the things that I believe are important in life? What are the core principles I want to follow in my life or work? What are the reasons why I believe it is important to follow these principles?"*

*"How can I follow these principles in the future? What will be the pluses and minuses of following these principles? Bearing these in mind, what is the route I want to follow?"*

Imagine that you want to take this approach at some point in the future. Sometimes it can be useful to think ahead and revisit your inner compass. This can help you to act decisively when it matters.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *My Inner Compass*

*The core principles I want to follow in my life or work are these.*

*I want:*

\* *To*

\* *To*

\* *To*

Good organisations also take time to recenter. They do this to ensure they are building on their core principles. They believe this approach is more likely to help them to achieve sustainable success.

Some organisations take a different approach. During the Covid-19 crisis, some rushed into the suggested process of recovery, reimagining and aiming to get results. They wanted build a better future, but there was a potential problem.

Rushing to fill a gap in the market, they may or may not have been building on their principles. This might produce short-term wins. But over the long time, however, they may find themselves far away from their core strengths.

## *Revitalisation*

Some people use the recentering time as an opportunity to revitalise themselves. Different people do this in different ways.

Some do this on a physical level. They rest, sleep or find other ways to revitalise the body. Some do it on a psychological level. They focus on things that give them positive energy. Some do it on a philosophical level. They revitalise their soul by focusing on their spirit and strengths.

Revitalisation has several meanings. These include the following: to give new life, to reinvigorate, to regenerate, to renew, to re-establish on a new, usually improved, basis. The revitalisation process can involve building on the best of the past and generating energy to shape the future.

Imagine that you have done some of these things. It will then be time to move on to the next step.

## *Refocusing*

There are many ways to refocus and shape the future. Building on their core principles, people may build on their core principles may choose either:

*To manage the present challenge and achieve success;*

*To set medium-term goals and achieve success;*

*To raise their sights, set stimulating goals and achieve success.*

Let's assume you know how to manage any immediate challenges and also achieve medium-term goals. It can be useful to explore the following step.

## *Raising Your Sights*

Some people use the recentering process as an opportunity to raise their sights. They explore the following themes.

*What are my core principles? How can I follow these principles in the future? How can I use this situation as an opportunity? What are all the possibilities?*

*What are my strengths? What could I do if I raised my sights and set stimulating goals? How could I do something really special? What would be the benefits to all the various stakeholders?*

*Looking at all the possibilities, what is the route I want to follow? What are the real results I want to achieve? What are the key strategies I could follow to achieve the picture of success?*

Imagine that you have taken this approach and have settled on your chosen route forwards. It can then be useful to take the next step.

## *Rehearsal*

Peak performers often rehearse following their chosen strategy. This is a process we explored earlier in the book, so here we won't go into it in greater depth.

Great teams also rehearse pursuing their strategy. One Premier League football team in England, for example, make sure that everybody knows their part in implementing the game plan. Here is how the team's captain explained the approach.

*"Every player knows the team's playing strategy and what we want to achieve. They know exactly what they are supposed to do in the process.*

*"They also know the movements of the other players. This makes it second nature to know where to pass the ball.*

*"Every player knows what to expect during the week. After finishing the training on one day, we are told what we will be doing in training the next day.*

*"Everybody can then prepare properly for the training. This provides a framework where we can apply our talents to win matches."*

## *Results*

Imagine that you have gone through the recentering process and feel revitalised. You have also raised your sights, refocused and rehearsed pursuing your strategy.

You can follow your ritual for clicking into action. Being fully present, you can follow your principles and aim to do superb work. This is a step we have already explored earlier in the book, so here we won't go into it greater depth.

One approach is for a person to follow their chosen rhythm. It is then to keep reading reality, keep improving and do their best to deliver the desired results.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to go through the stages of recentering, refocusing and delivering results?

You may aim to do this when managing a crisis, overcoming a setback, tackling a specific challenge or doing another activity. You may do this when acting in your role as a parent, friend, educator, coach, trusted advisor, leader or in another professional role.

What can you do then to buy time to recentre and reconnect with your inner compass? How can you raise your sights and refocus? How can you follow your rhythm and deliver the desired results?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Recentering In The Future*

*The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of the recentering approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to follow elements of the recentering approach are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Beating Yourself Up Or Being Better Next Time Approaches*

*You can respond to a mistake  
or a setback by choosing to:*

**Beat  
Yourself Up**

**Or Aim To:**

**Be Better  
Next Time**

Different people choose different ways to respond to setbacks, making a mistake or falling short of their own standards. The way they respond can have consequences for themselves and other people.

Some people choose to beat themselves up. They may dwell on making a mistake, for example, and go round in negative circles. They may keep revisiting the pain, like picking at a sore, and fail to give it time to heal.

Some people choose to look to the future. Whilst acknowledging they have made a mistake or had a disappointment, they will focus on how they can do better in the future.

Such a person may ask themselves some of the following questions. They will then aim to act on these answers in the future.

*What actually happened? What did I do? What did other people do? What do I feel now? What do I want to do with this feeling? Do I want to dwell on it? Or do I want to use it to do better in the future?*

*Looking ahead, are there any potentially similar situations coming up in the future? What can I do then to manage the situation better? What can I do to manage any triggers that may lead me to behaving in a way that may cause problems?*

*What can I do to buy time to think? How can I behave better in this kind of situation? How can I translate these strategies into action? How can I encourage myself and others on the journey? What may happen as a result of taking these steps?*

People can learn from their successes. They can clarify what they did right to do superb work. They can then follow these principles – plus add other skills – to achieve success in the future.

People can also learn from setbacks. It has become a cliché to say that you cannot know a person's true potential until you have seen how they respond to difficulties.

Cliché or not, this is probably true. People often show their true mettle when managing setbacks in their personal or professional lives. Some use these as a springboard to future success.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to clarify how you may want to do better next time – rather than beat yourself up – when managing a future setback.

## *The Being Better Next Time Approach*

*The specific situation in the future where I  
may want to follow this approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to  
focus on being better next time  
rather than beating myself up are:*

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*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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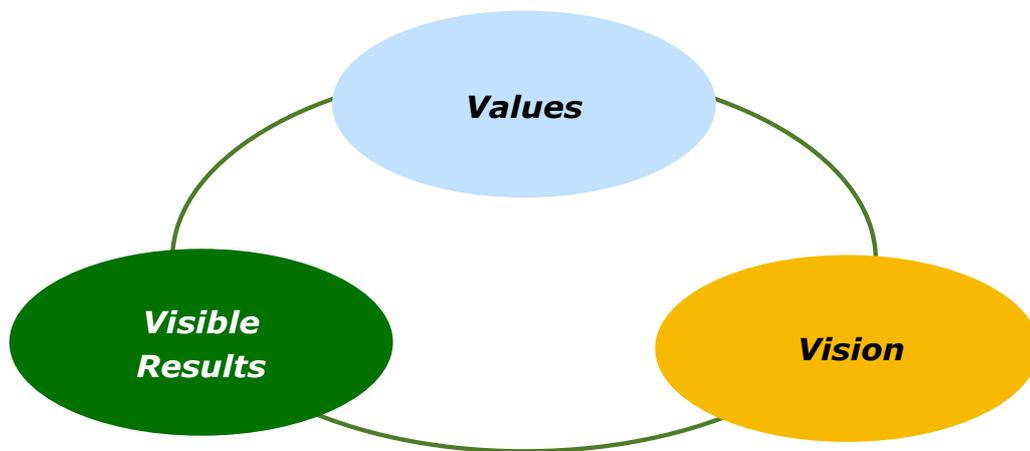
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## *The Vulnerability Is A Great Teacher Approach*

### *Vulnerability Can Be A Great Teacher*

*It can encourage us to clarify what is really important in life and focus on the following themes.*



Vulnerability can sometimes help us to learn about what is important in life. Sometimes wisdom seeps into our bones and we apply the lessons in our lives. Other times we forget the messages.

Can you think of a time when you felt vulnerable? You may have had an illness, lost someone close, suffered an unexpected setback or experienced another difficulty.

Suddenly you felt out of control. You felt unable to shape everything in your world. Certainly you aimed to control the controllables, but many levers lay beyond your reach.

What did you do next? After a while you may have begun to reflect, go deeper and listen to your soul. We are sometimes told:

*"Everything is temporary, nothing is permanent."*

It is when we feel vulnerable that this lesson hits home. We have the chance to consider what is important in our lives and work.

Brené Brown, the author of *Daring Greatly*, describes how people often grow by learning from vulnerability. They are prepared to do their best and live with their imperfections. Here are some quotes from Brené about people who dare to be human and show courage.

*"We desperately need more leaders who are committed to courageous, wholehearted leadership and who are self-aware enough to lead from their hearts, rather than unevolved leaders who lead from hurt and fear."*

*"The courage to be vulnerable is not about winning or losing, it's about the courage to show up when you can't predict or control the outcome."*

*"The only thing I know for sure is that if you're going to dare greatly, you're going to get your ass kicked at some point. If you choose courage, you will absolutely know failure, disappointment, setback, even heartbreak. That's why we call it courage. That's why it's so rare."*

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you learned from being vulnerable? What did you learn from the experience? How did you try to put some of these lessons into action?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Vulnerability In The Past*

*The specific situation in the past when  
I learned from being vulnerable was:*

\*

*The specific things I learned  
from the experience were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I did to  
try to translate these  
lessons into action were:*

\*

\*

\*

Different people learn different lessons from their vulnerable times. Some clarify their deepest values, translate these into a clear vision and aim to achieve visible results. Let's explore these themes.

## *Values*

Imagine that you have been through a challenging time. As a result you have decided to follow certain values. These can act as an inner compass that can guide your future actions. For example, you may want:

*To care for your loved ones ... To maintain a sense of gratitude ... To enjoy the simple things in life ... To do work you believe in ... To try to give people positive experiences.*

Some organisations also take the opportunity to do some soul searching during difficult times. During Covid, for example, some decided to return to their core values. They then used these as a basis for shaping a successful and sustainable future.

Different people are driven in different ways when making decisions. Sometimes they combine elements of the following options.

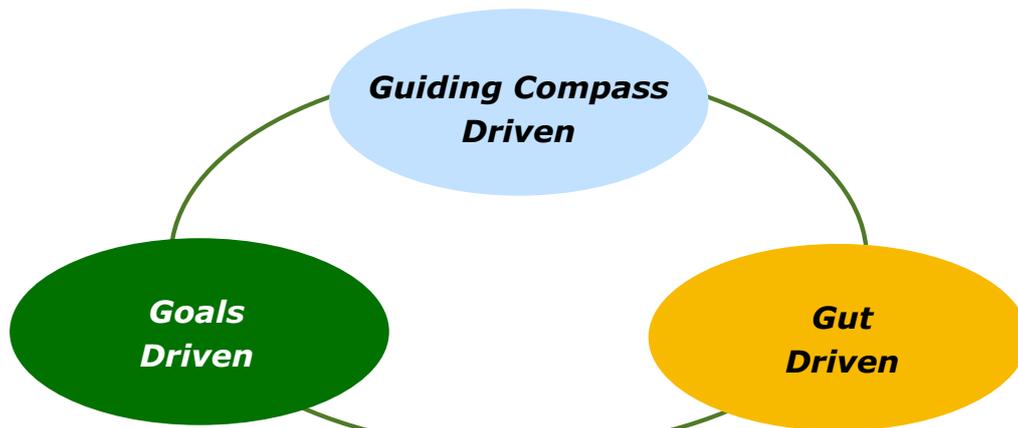
Some people are guiding compass driven. They often use their values as the basis for choosing their way forwards.

Some people are gut driven by their feelings. They sometimes back this up by looking for information that supports their feeling.

Some people are goals driven. They keep focusing on their short, medium or long-term goals.

### *Different People Are Driven In Different Ways When Making Decisions*

*Some people are guiding compass driven, some are gut driven, some are goals driven. Some people combine elements of all these drives when making decisions.*



Values can be a useful guiding compass for individuals, organisations and societies. But then comes the real part – translating these values into action. This often calls for exploring the next stage.

## *Vision*

Looking back, when have you chosen to follow a certain value? How did you translate this into working towards a clear vision?

Some people make key decisions after experiencing difficulties. A person who is treated unjustly may choose to study law and help other people. A footballer who suffers a career ending injury may choose to become a coach.

J.K. Rowling described how she took this approach when addressing students at Harvard about *The Fringe Benefits of Failure and the Importance of Imagination*.

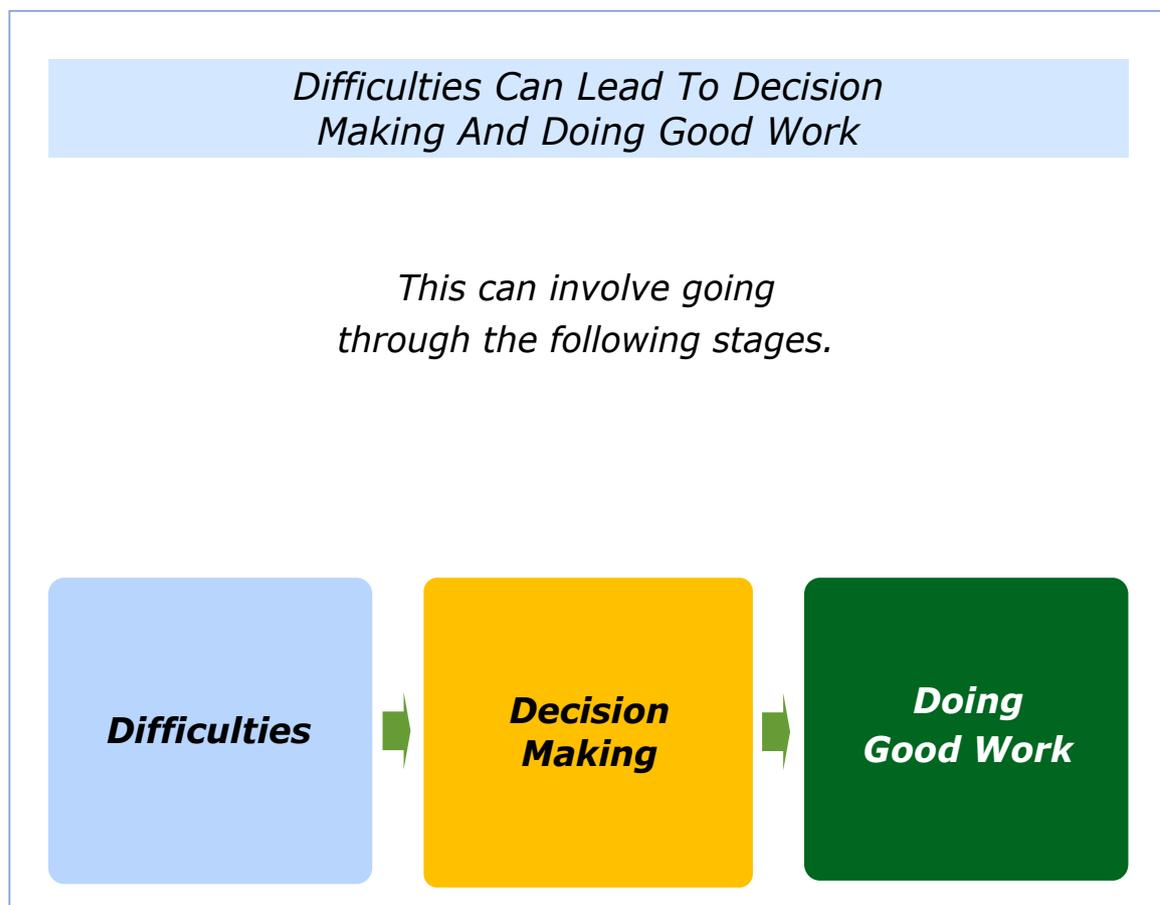
Deep into the address she talks about how, after leaving university, she could be seen as a failure. Instead of studying a degree that

might lead to a well-paid job, she had studied classics. She had little money and her marriage had broken.

J.K. had some great assets. In addition to having some wonderful friends, she mentioned three things. She had:

*"A daughter I adored ... An old typewriter ... And a big idea."*

She then worked towards her vision of producing the books about Harry Potter.



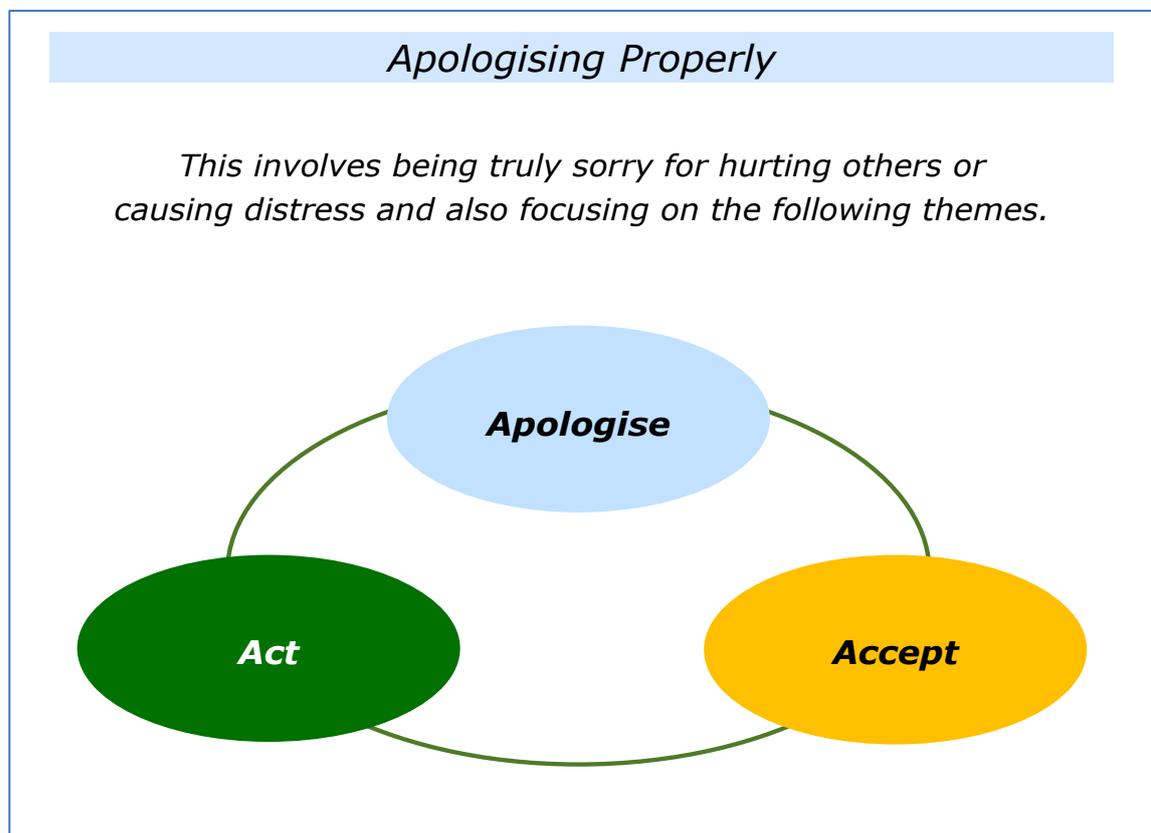
Sometimes we are most vulnerable when we make a mistake and do something that hurts other people. Let's explore how it can be possible to make amends and improve in such situations.

The first thing is be truly sorry for hurting people or causing distress. It is not being sorry for yourself or, for example, that you got caught doing something.

You can then aim to really make amends. This can involve clarifying how you should have behaved, what you have learned and the specific steps you can take to improve things in the future.

It is vital to apologise to the people involved. If you lead a company that makes a mistake that hurts others, for example, then this should be a sincere apology. It should not be something written by a PR company.

The following section describes some steps involved in apologising properly. These can be followed by individuals, leaders or organisations that cause distress.



As mentioned above, however, it is important that the person making the apology is really sorry. They must also want to improve how they behave in the future.

### *Apologise*

This involves apologising properly to the people who have been hurt or to whom you have caused distress. This should be done sincerely and in a humble way.

### *Accept*

This involves listening to people. It also involves accepting that their feelings and views are real for them. Sometimes it can involve explaining that you had good intentions, but also accepting that your actions caused distress.

### *Act*

This involves saying how you intend to act make amends and improve in the future. It sometimes also involves asking the people what they would like to see you do.

There will be times when you take all their ideas onboard. There may be other occasions when you choose not to adopt these ideas.

It will then be important to show you are serious. You can act to make amends and behave in ways that show you have taken some ideas onboard.

The real test will be how the people who are fair view to your future actions. It will be important to continue to behave in the way you have vowed to do. By your fruits, people will know you.

### *Visible Results*

Many people choose to follow their values and work towards achieving a specific vision. Sometimes they produce obvious results.

They may do their best to create a happy family, help students to learn or work to pass a law that enables people to shape their

futures. They may produce a play, design a building or do something else that gives people pleasure.

Sometimes the results are less obvious but these may become visible in other ways. They may help people to develop their self-confidence, create enriching experiences or give people positive memories for life.

Let's return to your life and work. Looking ahead, there may be times when you will feel vulnerable. How can you manage these situations in a positive way?

We all like to feel in control and create as much predictability as possible. We also recognise that this can be an illusion, however, so it can be useful to anticipate challenges.

Different people mention different things when exploring how to manage future vulnerabilities. Here are some of the topics they consider.

*How to take care of my health as I get older ... How to earn a living if my present work is replaced by technology ... How to deal with sorrow after certain life events ... How to enjoy each day that we are alive.*

Successes can help us to grow, but so can setbacks – providing we heed the lessons. Vulnerability can be a great teacher.

Looking ahead, what can you do to follow your values and manage vulnerability in the future? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Vulnerability In The Future*

*The specific things I can do to  
follow my values and manage  
vulnerability in the future are:*

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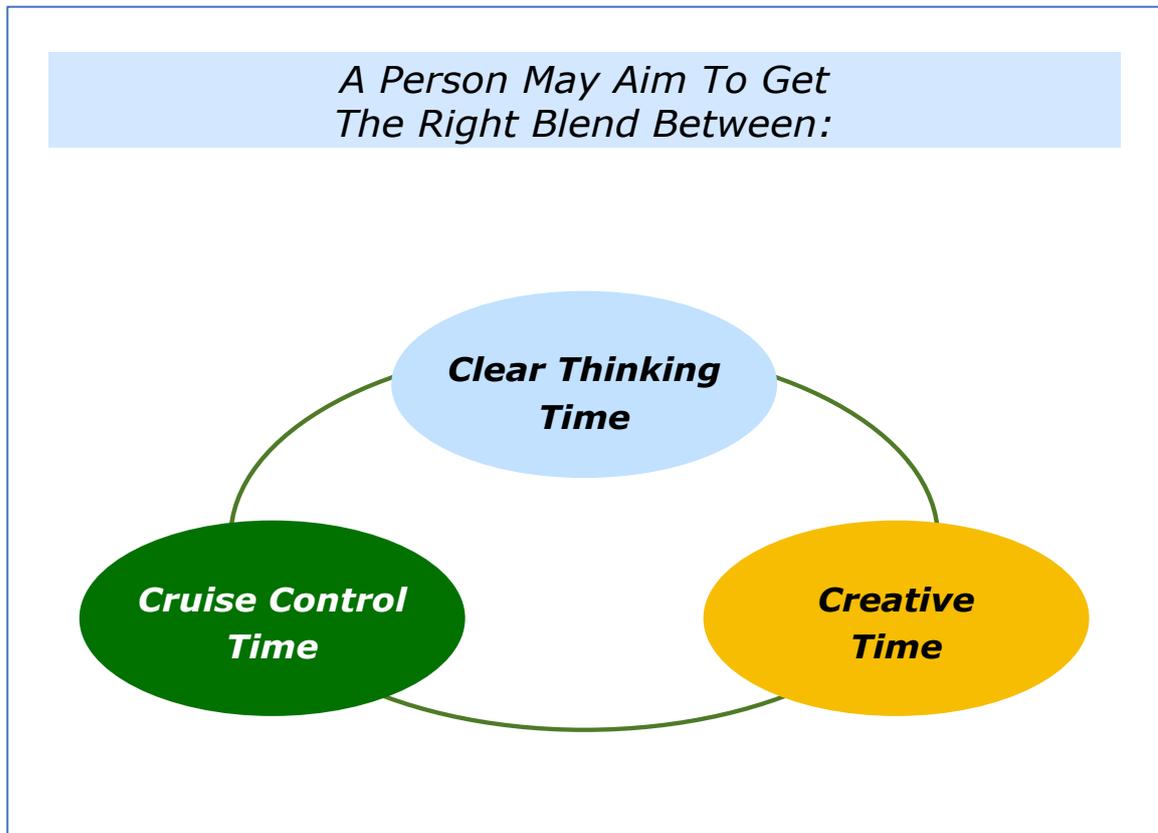
*The specific benefits of  
taking these steps will be:*

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## *The Different Kinds Of Time Approaches*



This section looks at the different kinds of time. It starts by exploring clear thinking, creative and cruise control time. It then move on to considering other kinds of time. Let's start by focusing on the following theme.

### *Clear Thinking Time*

When do you create clear thinking time? How do you get oxygen into your brain? How do you then use your imagination? Different people follow this path in different ways.

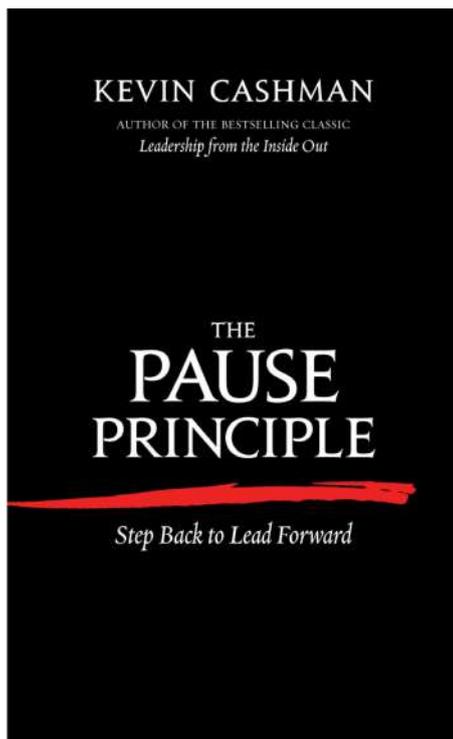
*They may aim:*

*To get enough sleep ... To compose themselves at the start of the day ... To look ahead to the decisions and actions they need to take during the day ... To organise their time in blocks so they can give full attention to what they are doing*

*To have breaks so they can regain their energy ... To build in time to reflect ... To go for a walk, run or have another kind of break ... To sometimes just let their mind wander and explore ideas ... To then refocus and rehearse their next thing they are going to do.*

*To buy time when making key decisions ... To do their due diligence ... To clarify the real results they want to achieve ... To explore the possible choices and consequences ... To make their decision and translate this into a clear action plan.*

Good leaders try to stay calm and buy time when making decisions. Kevin Cashman highlighted this approach in his book *The Pause Principle*. Here is an excerpt from his website.



*Cashman believes every leader is on a journey from being a transaction-focused manager to an authentic leader that inspires real change.*

*At the core of this transformation is the ability to pause.*

*Pausing is a conscious and intentional process of stepping back to reflect and deliberate, and then lead forward with greater clarity and impact.*

*Cashman's work centres around one simple truth: that fast thinking is the domain of management transaction, while slow thinking is the leadership domain of strategic, innovative transformation.*

Looking at your own life, how can you create times for clear thinking? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Clear Thinking Time*

*The specific things I can do to create clear thinking times are:*

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*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

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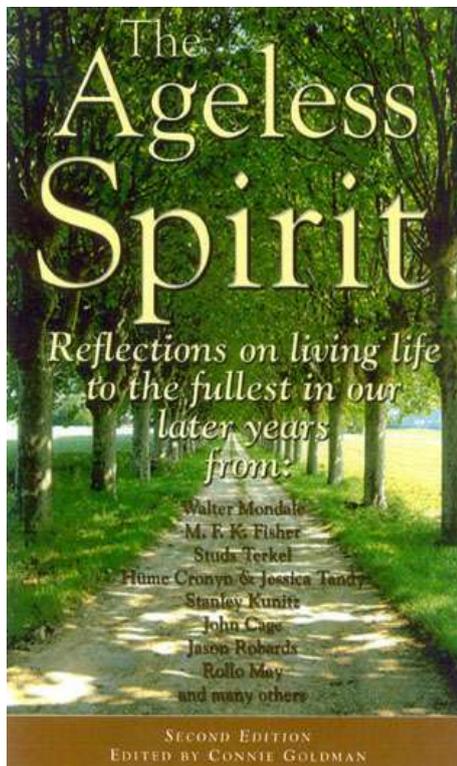
## *Creative Time*

When do you feel most creative? Are there any times of the day that are your prime times? These are when you have most energy. How can you protect and make good use of these times?

Sometimes we have lots of energy. Sometimes we need to rest in order to become revitalised. Are you at your best in the morning, the afternoon, the evening or a combination of these times?

Rollo May, the psychologist, believed people could become more effective by making good use of such times. It is important to catch the wave, otherwise it is gone forever. Writing in the first edition of *The Ageless Spirit*, he explained his own schedule for a day.

*I stay in my studio each day for four hours, but the last hour and a half isn't worth very much. It was hard for me to accept, but what can I do? All I can do is make the most of the creative time I've got.*



*So for two and a half hours I'm moving marvellously; the rest of the time I'm simply fiddling around.*

*But I find joy in fiddling too. I have to accept the fact that I'm not a God. I have to accept my destiny.*

*I have to accept the fact that I can only do creative work for a few hours a day, but that does not diminish one iota the joy I get from those two hours.*

Different people use different methods to use their creative times. Some organise their diary so they can work without interruption. Some set up customer visits for when they have most energy.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Creative Time*

*The specific things I can do to safeguard and make good use of my creative times are:*

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*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

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## *Cruise Control Time*

When do you feel in cruise control? When do you do things almost automatically but are able to do the required work?

Cruise control can be useful, because sometimes you have to conserve your energy. At the same time, it is vital to respect the task in hand and deliver the required professional standards.

Peak performers often follow a daily rhythm that has elements of cruise control. They follow certain rituals that enable them to click into action and follow good habits.

Some professions involve following a rhythm but also paying full attention at critical moments. Nurses and doctors need to show compassion towards patients, for example, even when following a daily routine.

Looking at your own life, what are the times of the day that you go into cruise control? What are the kinds of jobs that you do during this time? You may do routine work, administration or other necessary chores.

Are there certain rituals you follow to get yourself into the mood to do such work? You may lock yourself away, go through lists and get a kick from crossing off each item. You may drink coffee, play music or do other things to encourage yourself when doing the tasks.

Imagine that you get interrupted. How do you switch into being fully concentrated? If appropriate, how do you buy time to do some clear thinking? How do you then do everything possible to reach your chosen goals?

Great workers try to balance their clear thinking times, creative times and cruise control times. If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on these themes. This invites you to describe the specific things you can do to make good use of your cruise control times.

## *Cruise Control Time*

*The specific things I can do to make good use of my cruise control times are:*

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*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

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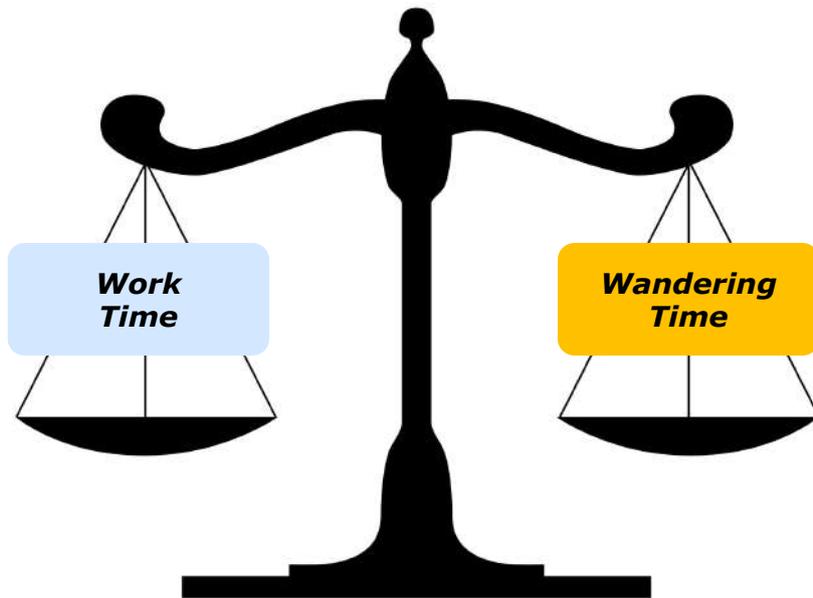
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There are many kinds of time. The following section explores two other approaches that people can use to stay creative.

## *The Work Time And Wandering Time Approach*

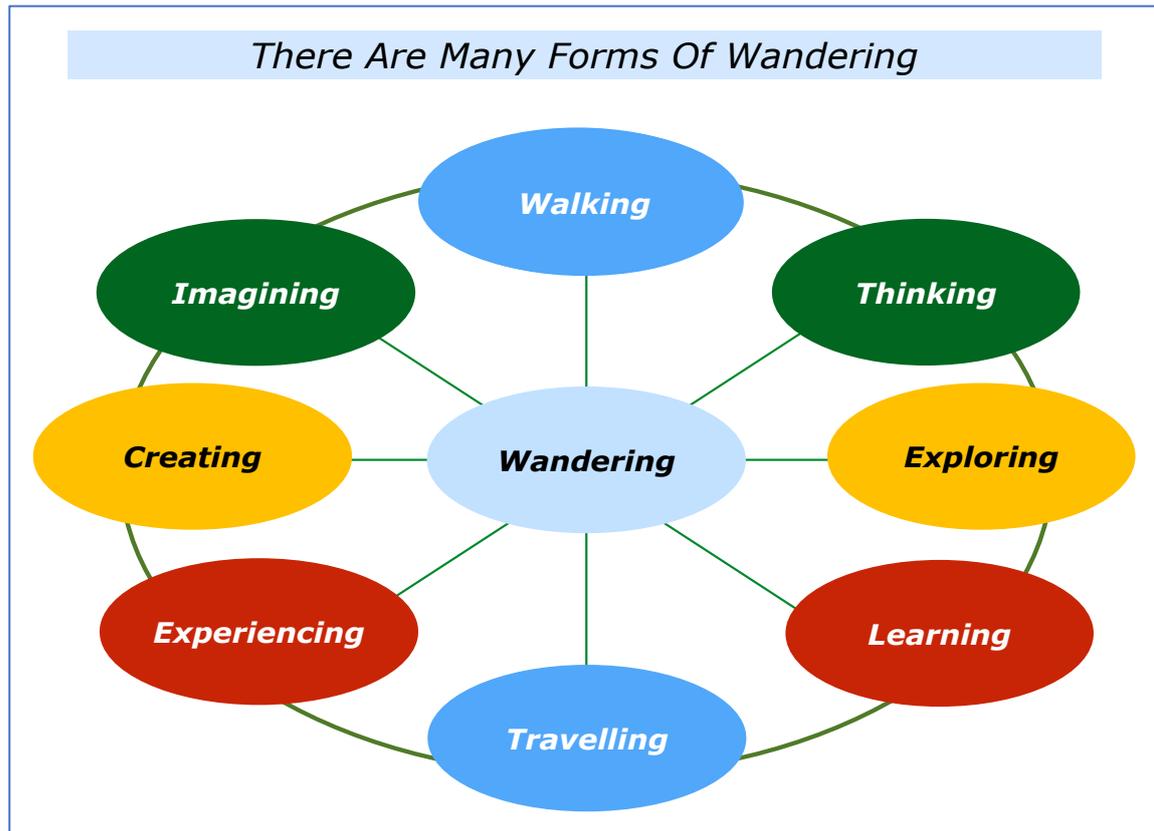
*Getting The Right Blend Between Your:*



There are many ways to recharge your batteries and take time to find solutions to challenges. One approach is to get the right balance between your work time and wandering time.

Creative people love their work time, but they also love their wandering time. This comes in different forms, but it serves the function of opening their minds.

They may enjoy the physical process of wandering - such as walking, exploring or having new experiences. They may also enjoy other forms of wandering - such as thinking, learning, creating and imagining.

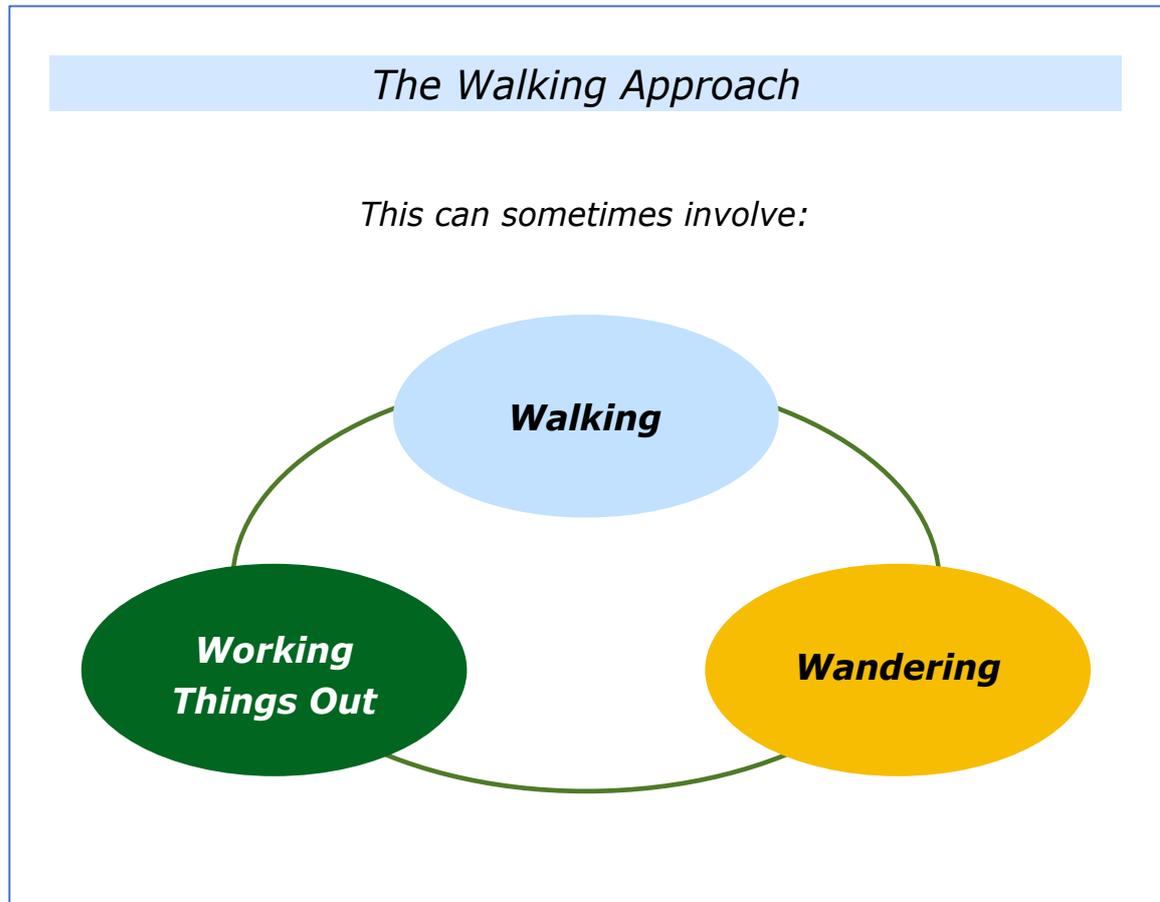


During the past decade it has become more acceptable to switch off and let your mind wander. Carl Honoré popularised many of these ideas with his book *In Praise of Slow*.

Good decision makers often set aside time to do some slow thinking. Fast thinking often generates the pieces of the jigsaw, but slow thinking may be needed to make sense of the whole picture. Our epiphanies sometimes emerge when doing some slow thinking.

Looking at your own life, what are the kinds of wandering that you enjoy? You may enjoy letting your mind drift when walking, gardening, exploring the web or doing other activities.

Some people swear by the benefits of walking. They may love to walk in green spaces, cities or elsewhere. Sometimes this enables them to let their minds wander or even work things out.



Different people get different benefits from exploring during their wandering times.

People who are achievers, for example, can become addicted to activity. Sometimes it can be helpful for them to be proactive and give themselves time to think.

People who take this approach are more likely to see things in perspective. They may also find that it helps them to focus on what is really important. This can include taking care of their wellbeing.



Some people get stuck at the surviving stage, however, and this can affect their personal and professional lives. They may then enter a questioning period for their lives. Sitting in a traffic jam one day, the person may say:

*"I am successful, but I am not happy. What can I do about it?"*

Failing to see an immediate answer, they may numb themselves and work to gain another promotion. One day another wake-up call arrives. They hear about a school friend who has died.

Reflecting on the shock, they embark on the existential journey travelled by many people. They explore what they want to do in the rest of their life.

A savvy person may stay in their job, but also begin pursuing a parallel strategy. They explore how they can do satisfying work and get a reasonable salary. They may also want to enjoy a better quality of life.

At this point they begin to strike a new balance between their work time and wandering time. They become more selective to be effective. Realising they have only so much energy, they are more careful about the work they commit themselves to doing.

They do their due diligence before taking on new jobs. They also make clear contracts with their stakeholders to make sure they get the support they need to deliver success.

Such people organise their weeks to balance work time and wandering time. They may organise their time in blocks, for example, and make sure there are few distractions. They can then immerse themselves fully in a piece of work.

At a certain point they take time to wander. This can take different forms. When at work, they may simply go for a walk or relax. This can enable them to reflect, make better decisions and explore ideas.

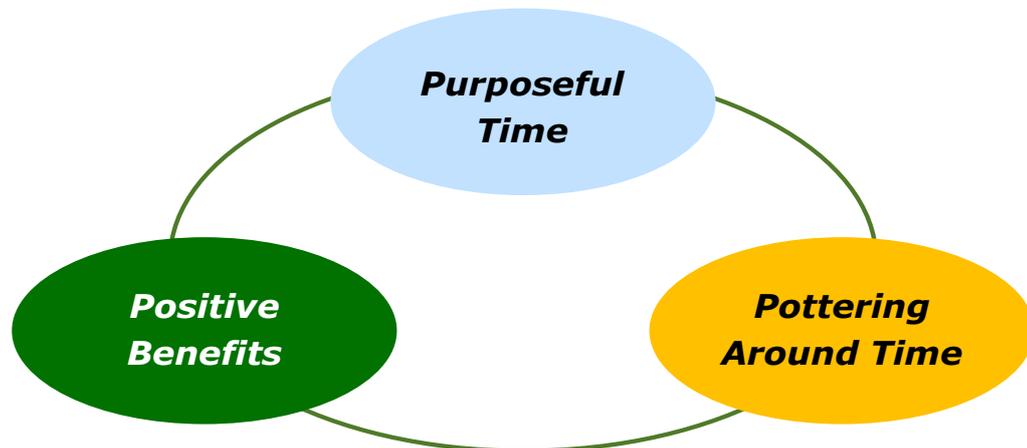
Looking at the rest of their life, however, the person may build in more time to develop. They may return to a former passion – such as playing music – or embark on physical tests, such as running marathons.

Such adventures do more than satisfy the soul. They also provide the person with an opportunity to think. They see things in perspective and chart their future path in life.

As mentioned earlier, there are many ways to enjoy your wandering time. Let's look at another way that people use this approach.

### *The Pottering Around Time Approach*

*Some people enjoy both their purposeful time and pottering around time. Both can have positive benefits.*



Some people divide their day into purposeful time and pottering around time. Purposeful activity can be inspiring but you can only ride the wave for a certain length of time.

Sometimes you need to rest, reflect and regain your energy. Some people relax by simply pottering around. One definition of pottering around is:

*To move about without hurrying and in a relaxed and pleasant way.*

Some people do physical activities such as gardening, fixing cars or doing chores. Some do intellectual pottering around. They let their minds wander, peruse books or explore ideas.

There can be benefits to just pottering around. People may find that it enables them to pause and let things fall into place. Their unconscious works on finding solutions to problems.

Sometimes it is important to simply pause. This can help to refresh the mind, body and soul. It can also help us to see things in perspective.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau believed that sometimes we learn by developing the art of losing time rather than saving time. We can become absorbed in pursuits we find interesting. Sometimes the adventure is simply pleasurable, sometimes it provides revelations.

Some people aim to balance mindfulness and mindlessness. Mindfulness can help us to be fully aware of what we are doing, but sometimes it is important to let our minds wander. This can help us to explore new dimensions.

Pottering around involves moving in an overall direction but it does not always have a specific aim. On some occasions, however, it can result in a person solving other problems that are on their mind.

There are many views about how it is possible to develop new ideas and then do the work required to deliver the goods. Let's have a look at another approach.

### *The Brain Waves Approach*

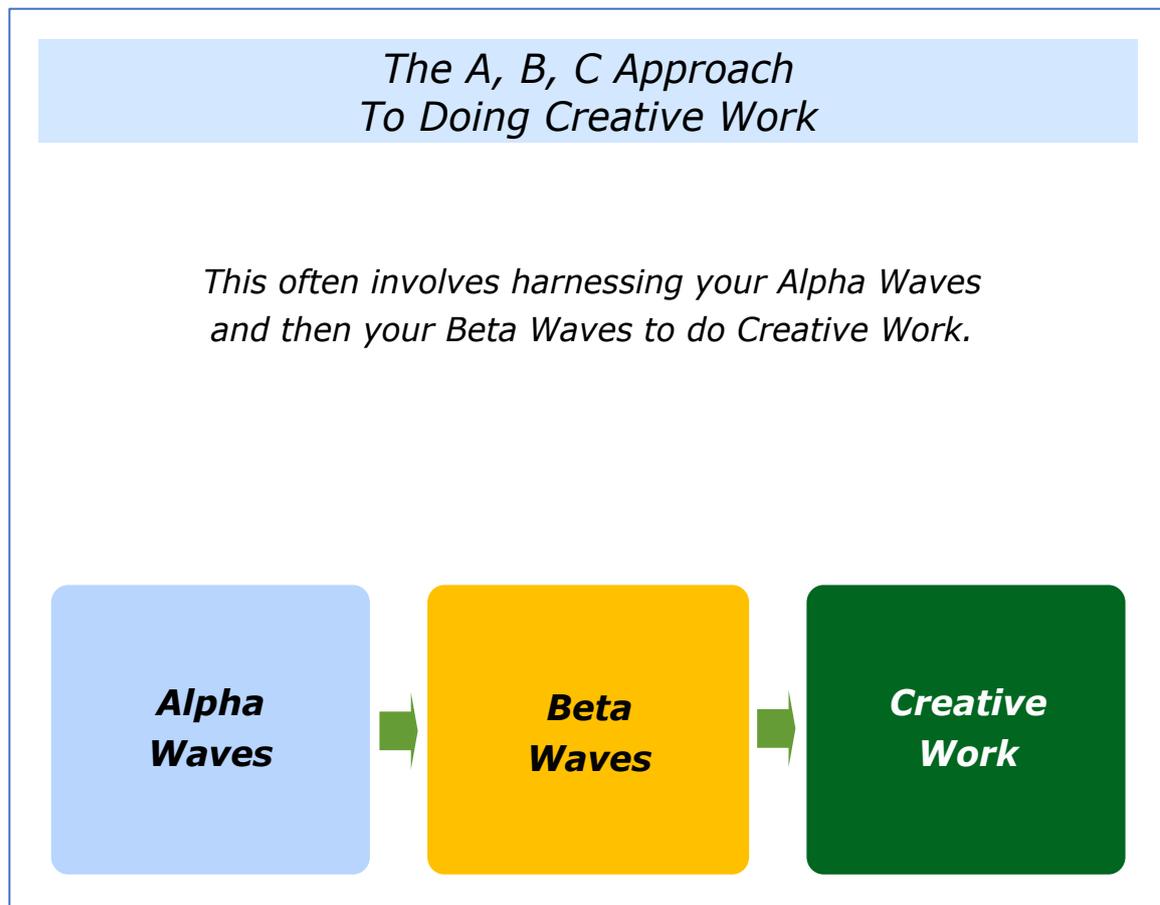
Some people build on their understanding of the research on brain waves. They then apply this to do creative work.

They start by doing things that may increase their Alpha Waves. These are associated with relaxation, calmness and sometimes having creative ideas.

They then do things that may increase their Beta Waves. These are associated with concentration, engagement and being focused on specific activity.

They then move between these states of relaxation and relentlessness on the way towards doing creative work. This can

lead to them enjoying peak experiences which have been associated with Gamma Waves.



You will have your own approach to developing the different kinds of waves. You can then apply these in your own way to do creative work.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking to the future, how can you get the right balance between your work time and wandering time?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Work Time And Wandering Time*

*The specific things I can do to  
get the right balance between  
work time and wandering time are:*

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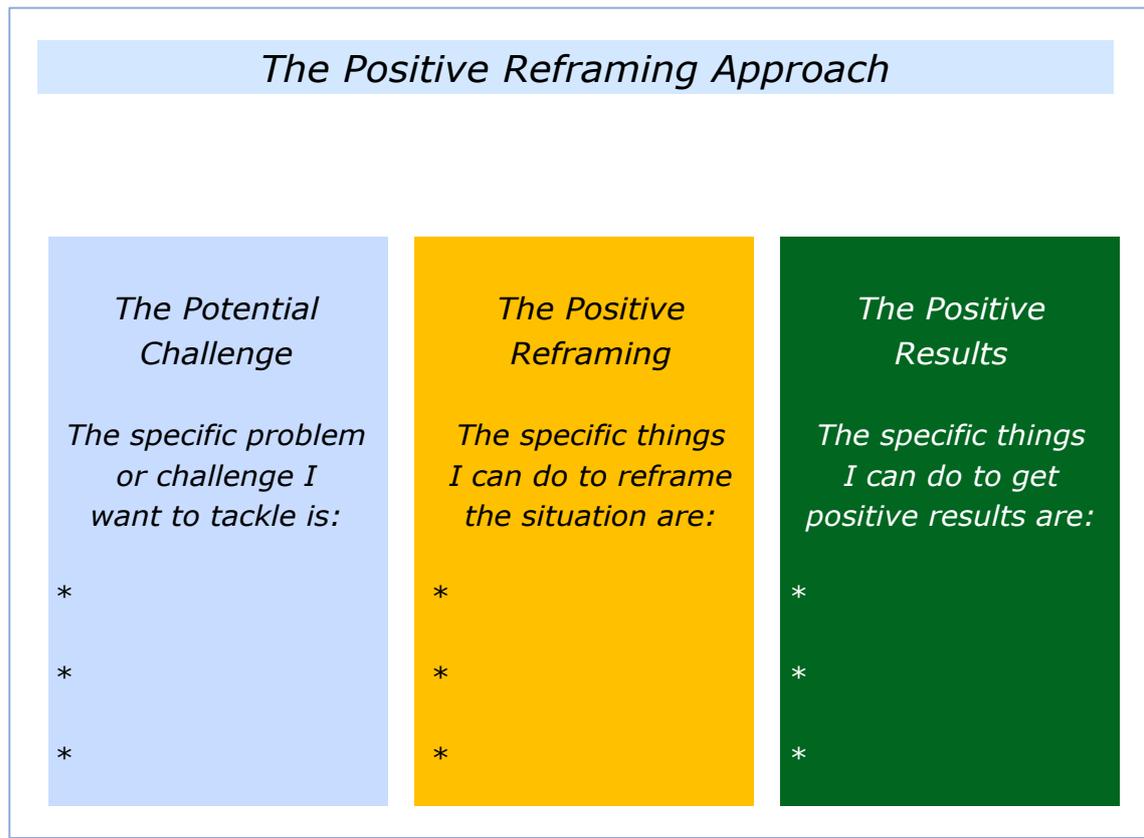
*The specific benefits of  
doing these things will be:*

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## *The Positive Reframing Approach*



Great workers are often positive realists. They have a positive attitude but are also good at reading reality.

Some also have the ability to reframe potential problems in a way that gives them positive energy. They then do their best to achieve positive results.

Robert Muller, an Assistant General Secretary of the United Nations, was somebody who reframed challenging situations as a chance to find creative solutions. He had lots of opportunity to do this in his work at the United Nations.

Robert also adopted this approach as a student when he was hunted by the Nazis during the Second World War. One day he found himself trapped in an attic on the top floor of an hotel that also served as an office building.

Several Nazis entered the reception area and asked people where they could find Robert. How could he escape the hunters?

Drawing on his positive attitude to life, Robert began thinking of creative solutions. He explained his approach in the following way.

*"I was a great fan of Hollywood films, so I decided to see the situation as taking part in a film. I was being hunted, so how could I find a way to escape?"*

David Gillies takes up the story in his biography about Robert called *The Hatmaker's Son*. Here are excerpts from David's book.

*Robert took several deep breaths.*

*"I must overcome my fear and think rationally," he decided. This was the moment of moments to be creative.*

*"What an opportunity, what a tremendous adventure – a 20-year-old student trapped by Nazis in a fancy hotel. Won't it be great if I slip through their fingers?"*

Robert took a few minutes to consider his options. The Nazis had some idea what he looked like but they probably had an old photo. How could he take on a different persona?

The hunters were also expecting to find a cowering student trying to hide in the milling crowds on each floor of the building. How could he be ingenious and do what the Nazis least expected?

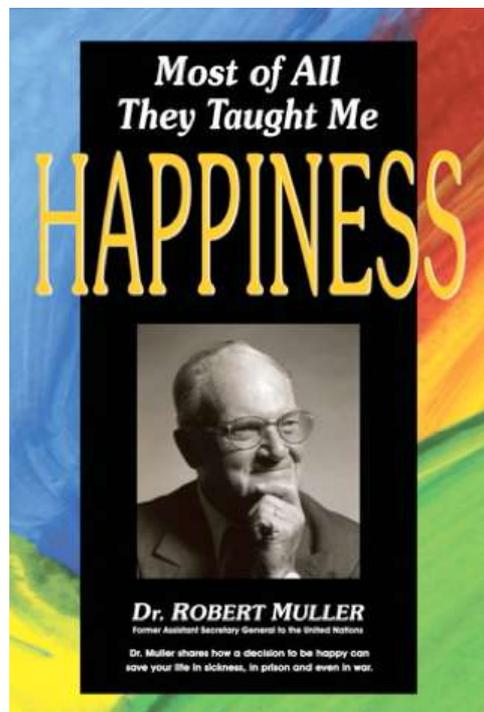
Robert settled on his plan and began translating it into action. This involved making his way down four floors from the attic and walking out onto the street.

Putting a thick file under his arm, he exuded an air of authority as he made his way from floor to floor. Nonchalantly smoking a cigarette, he passed various groups of people.

Reaching the ground floor he approached a group of Nazis who were quizzing the receptionist. She chose not to recognise him, even though she was being threatened.

Robert went up to the Nazis and asked what was happening. They replied they were looking for Louis Parizot (the name by which Robert was known in the building).

He responded by saying he had seen Parizot on the top floor. Just like in a film, the Nazis rushed up the stairs. Robert then made his way out onto the street and rode away on a bike.



*Robert Muller faced many challenges when working at the United Nations. He chose to believe it was possible to build on what people had in common and find solutions.*

*Sometimes this could take time, but he remembered what his parents and grandparents taught him. He focused on helping others rather than being concerned about himself. He said:*

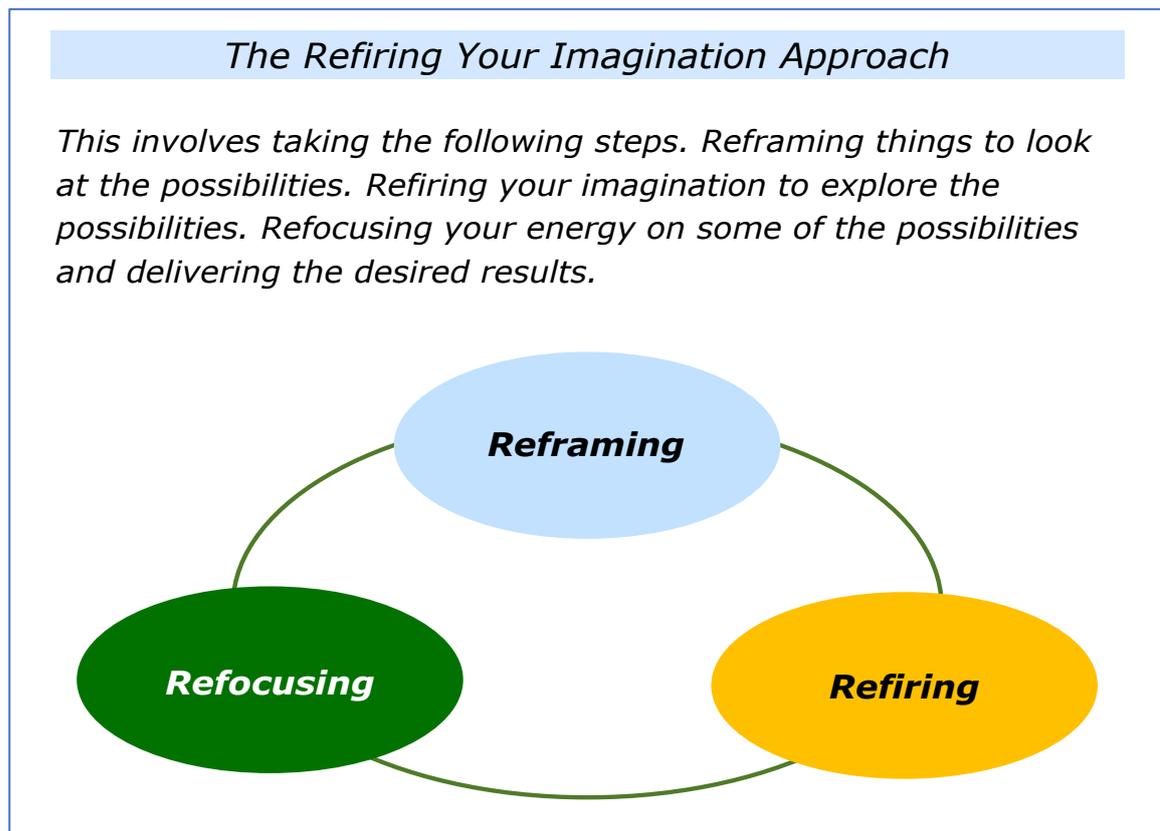
*"Today, whenever despair menaces me, I hasten to count my blessings, I concentrate on one of them, and almost forthwith my worry vanishes or takes on a more reasonable proportion."*

Robert faced many challenges in life, but he tried to see things in perspective. During a time spent in prison he focused on how he could appreciate life and give to others.

Strongly influenced by his parents and grandparents, he aimed to help others and build a better world. He continued to apply this approach throughout his life.

Thankful for the love he had been given, Robert kept returning to this positive philosophy. Even in the darkest hours, he had a sense of gratitude. He then applied his skills to help people to build on what they had in common and positive solutions.

People who reframe things often refire their imagination. This enables them to be inventive, implement new ideas and have a positive impact. Let's look at this approach.



People love to use their imagination. They love to explore, imagine possibilities and then sometimes make these happen.

Some people find the daily grind stops them using their imagination. Like any muscle that is not used, their imagination can wither. This can have a detrimental effect on both their inner and outer life.

Imagine that you are helping an individual, team or organisation to shape their future. This may simply involve clarifying the obvious strategies they can follow to achieve success.

Sometimes it may involve inviting them to use their imagination. One approach is to encourage them to go through the following steps.

*Reframing things to look at the possibilities.*

*Refiring their imagination to explore the possibilities.*

*Refocusing their energies to pursue some of the possibilities and deliver the desired results.*

This approach has been used by many people to translate difficult situations into opportunities. You can apply it in your own way to help individuals, teams and organisations to develop.

Imagination is one of our greatest assets. As mentioned earlier, however, the first step is often to reframe situations in a positive way. Let's explore some more ways to make this happen.

### *Reframing Things As A Chance To Build On Your Strengths*

Some people take this approach after experiencing a setback. They see it an opportunity to build on their strengths and follow their successful style of working.

During the 2008 Recession, for example, I worked with many companies that chose to refocus on their strengths. They asked the basic questions:

*If we were to start the business again:*

*What would we do to build on our strengths and achieve sustainable success?*

*What would be the specific products and services we would offer to our customers? Who would be our perfect customers and what would be the specific challenges they would be facing? What would*

*we do to build on our strengths and do great work that helped these customers to achieve success?*

*Who would be the people we would hire? What would be the infrastructure we would need? What else would we do to help our customers and ourselves to achieve success?*

Some companies used the recession as an opportunity to go back to basics. This laid the foundations for future success.

### *Reframing Things As Projects*

Some people take the emotion out a situation by reframing them as projects. Bearing in mind what that can control, they focus on:

*The specific results they want to achieve;*

*The specific strategies they can follow to do their best achieve these results.*

This is an approach I learned many years ago when reading about Ken Kesey. A leading figure in the counter-culture movement, he was said to have treated events as projects. One person reported that Ken even saw his approach to dying as a project.

This approach was helpful when I was fortunate to get an early diagnosis of prostate cancer. After a short while, it was possible to reframe it as a project. The aims were:

*To do research and get the best non-invasive treatment;*

*To produce a blog that helped other men to get such treatment;*

*To continue to enjoy life and give to people.*

Fortunately I was treated by some of the best surgeons in the world who did superb work and helped with the recovery. The blog also reached men who then chose to have non-invasive treatment. The

journey also helped me to appreciate life and give to people. A good project.

## *Reframing Fallow Times As Fruitful Times*

### *Fallow Times Can Be Fruitful Times*

*People can sometimes feel in flow when doing a stimulating project. After completing it they may feel frustrated and fallow.*

*They can make good use of the fallow times, however, and move on to being in flow on the next project.*



People can sometimes experience a sense of flow when doing a stimulating piece of work or project. They enjoy setting specific goals, doing superb work and achieving success.

This is a process I have seen when working with driven people, start-ups and peak performing teams. They have sense of purpose and work hard to achieve their picture of success.

Finishing can bring a great deal of satisfaction but can be followed by a sense of emptiness. People had a reason to get up each day and they want to fill this void. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"I love working on a rewarding project. But after completing the job I sometimes go into the doldrums.*

*"I am then tempted to jump into the next project, even though it may not be too stimulating. Sometimes it takes ages to find a new project that is satisfying."*

Great workers sometimes experience fallow times. Let's explore how it can be possible to make good use of such times.

### *Recognising The Fallow Times*

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's work on flow showed how a person can become completely absorbed in an activity. He explained that people then have a sense of purpose and do stimulating work on the way to achieving their picture of success.

Reaching the goal is satisfying, but this can be followed by a sense of frustration. It may be difficult to find the next adventure where they will experience a sense of flow.

At these times it can be useful to remember the agricultural tradition of allowing a field to lie fallow. The pasture can rest, recover and become revitalised.

Some creative artists recognise the value of giving themselves permission to be fallow. Providing these times are used properly, fallow times can be fruitful times.

### *Making Good Use Of The Fallow Times*

People can be vulnerable during the fallow times. They may have completed a satisfying project, sold a company they built or fulfilled another dream.

Looking for a new sense of purpose, they can sometimes feel empty. Because of this searching, they are open to the influences around them. They may feel a vacuum inside, but this can open the door to ensuring that such times becoming fruitful times.

People do like to feel in control, however, so it can be useful for them to set their agenda. Even if this is simply to say:

*"I am going to give myself permission to explore rather than strive to find the next project."*

People who are open can benefit by surrounding themselves with positive – rather than negative – influences. Exposing themselves to enriching experiences can sow the seeds of future growth.

Imagine that you experienced such a fallow time. What would you like to surround yourself with at such times? You may wish to sleep, visit beautiful places, walk by the sea, spend time with kindred spirits, play your favourite music, study success or whatever.

### *Moving On From The Fallow Times To Flow*

People who surround themselves with enriching experiences often find that a stimulating project emerges. Some may be cautious, however, and wonder if the new project is the right thing to do.

They wonder if they will recapture their previous sense of purpose. There is no perfect answer to these questions. When looking at the stimulating project that emerges, it can be useful for them to consider the following themes.

*Will doing the project give me positive energy? Will doing it give me a chance to follow my personal or professional principles? Will doing it help people or the planet?*

If the answers are "Yes," it can be useful to seize the opportunity. The touchstone is whether or not it gives them positive energy.

Making good use of the fallow times increases the chances of choose a stimulating project. Embarking on the adventure, they can then flow, focus and finish.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe the specific things you can do make good use of the fallow times.

## *The Fallow Times*

*The specific things I can do to make good use of the fallow times are:*

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*The specific benefits of doing these things will be:*

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## *Reframing Limits*

### *The Liberated By Limits Approach*

*Some people feel liberated by limits. They may be limited:*

- *By being good at a few things rather than being good at lots of things;*
- *By having few resources they can use in an creative way rather than by having unlimited resources;*
- *By having to focus on what they can do rather than worrying about what they can't do.*

Looking back at your life, when have you felt liberated by having limits? You may have had only a few materials to work with, but you used these as the springboard for being creative.

What did you do to assess your resources? What did you do to set a specific goal, do superb work and find solutions to challenges? How did you do your best to achieve your picture of success?

Creative people often do their best work when dealing with limits. Some gardeners prefer to work within the confines of a small garden rather than in a big field. Some writers prefer to be given a topic to write about rather than given a blank page. Some

One teacher explained this to me in the following way. He encouraged me to focus on what I did have rather than worry about what I didn't have. He said:

*"You are lucky, because you are only good at a couple of things. You can focus on making full use of these talents.*

*"People who are good at many things can sometimes feel split. They fail to commit and don't make use of their talents."*

Looking to the future, can you think of a situation when you may choose to feel liberated by limits? This could be in your personal or professional life.

You may be limited by having few strengths or resources. You may have limited amounts of time or money. You there may also be other factors that you cannot control.

Looking ahead, how can you clarify your resources? How can you settle on your specific goals? How can you use your imagination to do superb work? How can you find creative solutions to challenges? How can you do your best to achieve success?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Liberated By Limits*

*The specific situation in the future when I may choose to be liberated by limits may be:*

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*The specific things I can do to clarify my resources, set specific goals and do creative work to achieve the picture of success are :*

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*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *Reframing Vulnerability As A Chance To Develop*

Vulnerability can be a great teacher. Sometimes we learn valuable lessons about what is important in life.

Sometimes wisdom seeps into our bones and we apply the lessons in our daily lives. Other times we forget the messages. Let's explore what we can gain from such times.

Can you think of a time when you felt vulnerable? You may have suffered a debilitating illness, lost someone close, experienced an unexpected setback or whatever.

Suddenly you felt out of control. You felt unable to shape everything in your world. Certainly you aimed to control the controllables, but many levers lay beyond your reach.

What did you do next? After a while you may have begun to reflect, go deeper and listen to your soul. We are told:

*"Everything is temporary, nothing is permanent."*

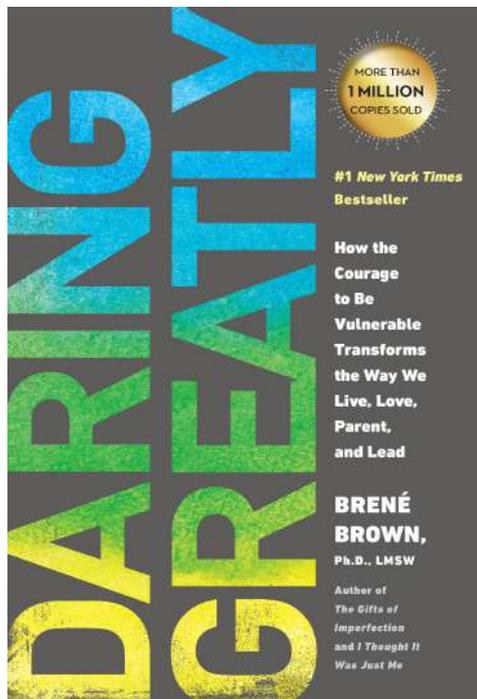
But it is when we feel vulnerable that this lesson strikes home. We have chance to consider what is important on life.

Brené Brown is a researcher who reached a wide audience with her famous TED Talk about vulnerability. Looking at people who had demonstrated courage by embracing vulnerability, she also asked:

*"What are the qualities demonstrated by people who live wholeheartedly?"*

Whole-hearted people are prepared to be real and live with their imperfections. They focus on joy and gratitude. They embrace the concept of abundance and love to give to others. They give themselves to life and are prepared to live with uncertainty.

Brené believes that people often grow from worthwhile struggles. She has written about how such people live wholeheartedly in her book *Daring Greatly*.



*Courage can be daring to embrace vulnerability.*

*"Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, and creativity.*

*"It is the source of hope, empathy, accountability, and authenticity.*

*"If we want greater clarity in our purpose or deeper and more meaningful spiritual lives, vulnerability is the path."*

Sometimes we learn about our deepest values during times of vulnerability. Sometimes we also apply these lessons in the future. Here is how one person explained this approach.

*"My wife suffered a serious illness. Then, to make matters worse, my job came under threat. So our income was threatened.*

*"My first reaction was to simply want everything to be like it was before. But then I realised that things had changed forever. We could give up or learn to manage the new reality.*

*"Starting to research my wife's illness, we scoured the web for information and met with patient groups. This paid dividends. She eventually chose a specific form of treatment with a fine doctor.*

*"We also took stock of our assets - our finances, relationships, professional contacts and other resources. We soon realised how wealthy we were in real terms.*

*"We explored the possibility of downshifting. This would mean moving to another part of the country, perhaps near my wife's parents, and starting a different kind of life.*

*"My wife recovered and the job survived. But we also heeded the lessons.*

*"One year later we moved closer to her parents. She returned to part time teaching, which she loves, and I set up my own business.*

*"Our daughter likes living in the country and has started doing part time work at a stable. Our son changed his chosen subjects at university. Rediscovering his youthful idealism, he plans to become an environmental journalist."*

"Near death experiences focus our minds," we are told. Our deepest learning is in our bones not just our hearts or minds. Setbacks can teach us to re-evaluate our lives.

Sometimes we embrace the lessons, sometimes we don't. Sages throughout history have journeyed into the wilderness to overcome hardship. They emerge humbler, stronger and wiser.

Sometimes, however, the wilderness comes to us. We then gather our forces, focus on what we can do and embrace lessons for the future. Successes help us to grow, but so do setbacks. Sometimes we can reframe it as a chance to follow our deepest principles.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to take this approach? What can you do to reframe things in a positive way and then do your best to achieve positive results?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Positive Reframing In The Future*

*The specific situation where I may want to reframe things in a positive way may be:*

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*The specific things I can do then to reframe things in a positive way and do my best to get positive results are:*

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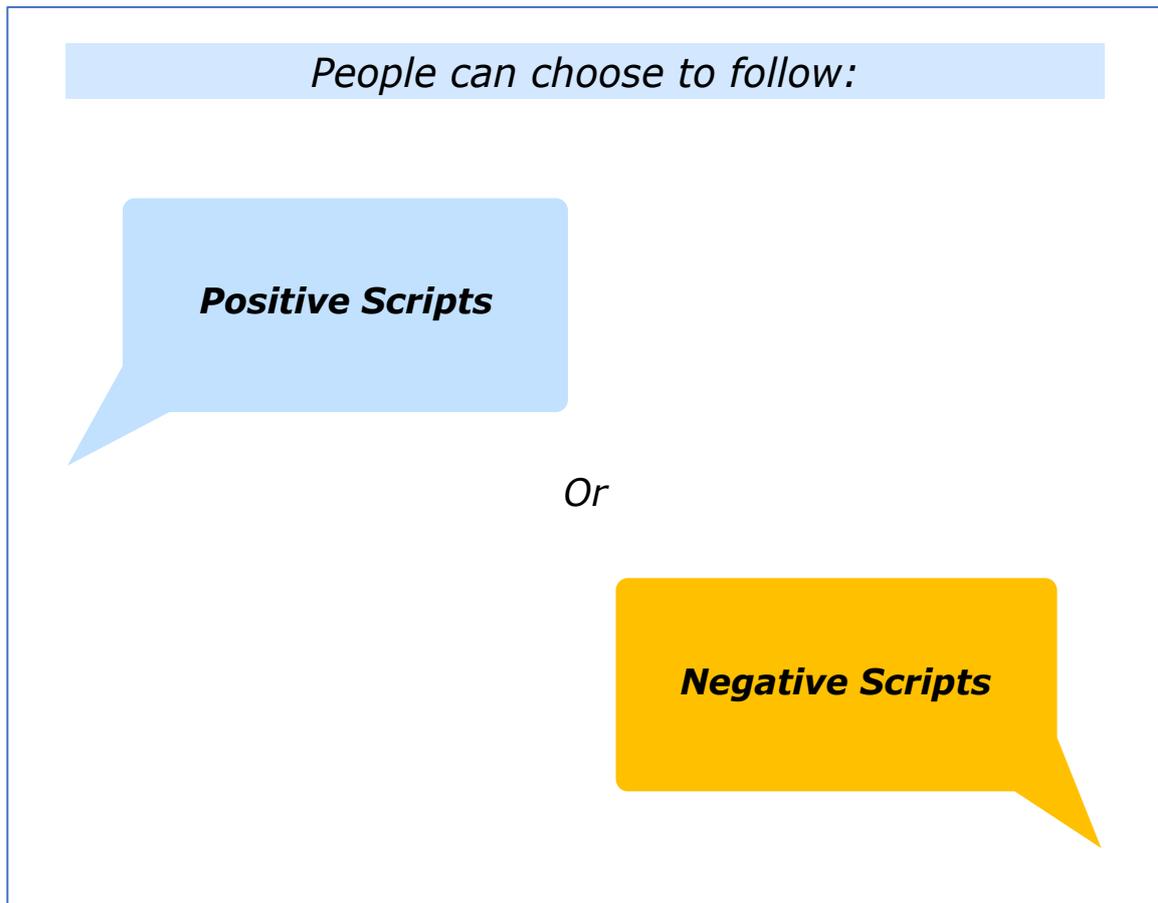
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Positive Scripting Approach*



Sometimes it can be worth exploring the old question regarding our daily conversation with people. This is:

*"Who is the person you have the most conversations with?"*

The answer is, of course, yourself. A person may have multiple conversations going on inside their head but there may be certain themes to which they keep returning. These themes can become positive or negative scripts.

A person with a positive script may keep saying:

*"I want to do my best in life."*

A person with a negative script may keep saying:

*"Life is difficult and other people are luckier than me."*

Different people develop different scripts. Here are some of the phrases that individuals may say to themselves.



The idea of scripting became popular in the 1960s. Eric Berne, the founder of Transactional Analysis, explained that individuals learn life scripts that act like an internal programme.

Parents and teachers play a strong part in the scripts that people internalise. Imagine if you grew in an environment where the key messages were either:

*"You can build on your strengths and become the best you can be."*

Or:

*"You keep working hard but you will never be as good as other people."*

A person can get to a point in life where they choose to create their own script. They sometimes do this after encountering a difficult situation. When writing their own script, however, it is vital for them to keep one thing in mind.

*They need to focus on the things they can control rather than the things they can't control.*

Imagine, for example, that you are a sports psychologist who is helping an athlete. They often get to the final of events and then falls apart. They may have two contradictory messages going through his head. These may be:

*"I must try to win but I am bound to fail."*

Some people may advise such a person to believe in themselves. They may advise them to keep saying:

*"I am going to win."*

This may or may not work. One challenge, however, is that such an approach is focusing on something the athlete cannot control.

Another approach is to invite the athlete: a) to focus on what they can control; b) to write a script they believe in; c) to then do their best to follow this mantra. Bearing this in mind, the athlete may say:

*"I am going to flow rather than freeze."*

People who write their own script also shape their mental model – the way they perceive life. This shapes the running commentary they may have inside their head.

Such people sometimes take the following steps when working through this approach.

*They create a positive script they want to follow;  
They take practical steps to translate this into action;*

*They take time to pause – especially when things get tough – and revisit their positive script.*

Different people develop positive scripts in different ways. During the 1970s I also attended several workshops where people learned how to rewrite their own scripting.

Each person considered the main positive and negative messages they were given by their mother and father. These messages could have been spoken or unspoken – such as in the way the parents behaved towards them.

One person wrote two messages they were given by their parents. These were:

*"Keep working hard, but you will never be as good as your sister."*

As a result, the person had developed the habit of thinking:  
*"Whatever I do, it will never be good enough."*

On the workshop people learned that their parents probably wanted to do the best for their children. Unfortunately parents sometimes have good intentions but poor communication. This can confuse children.

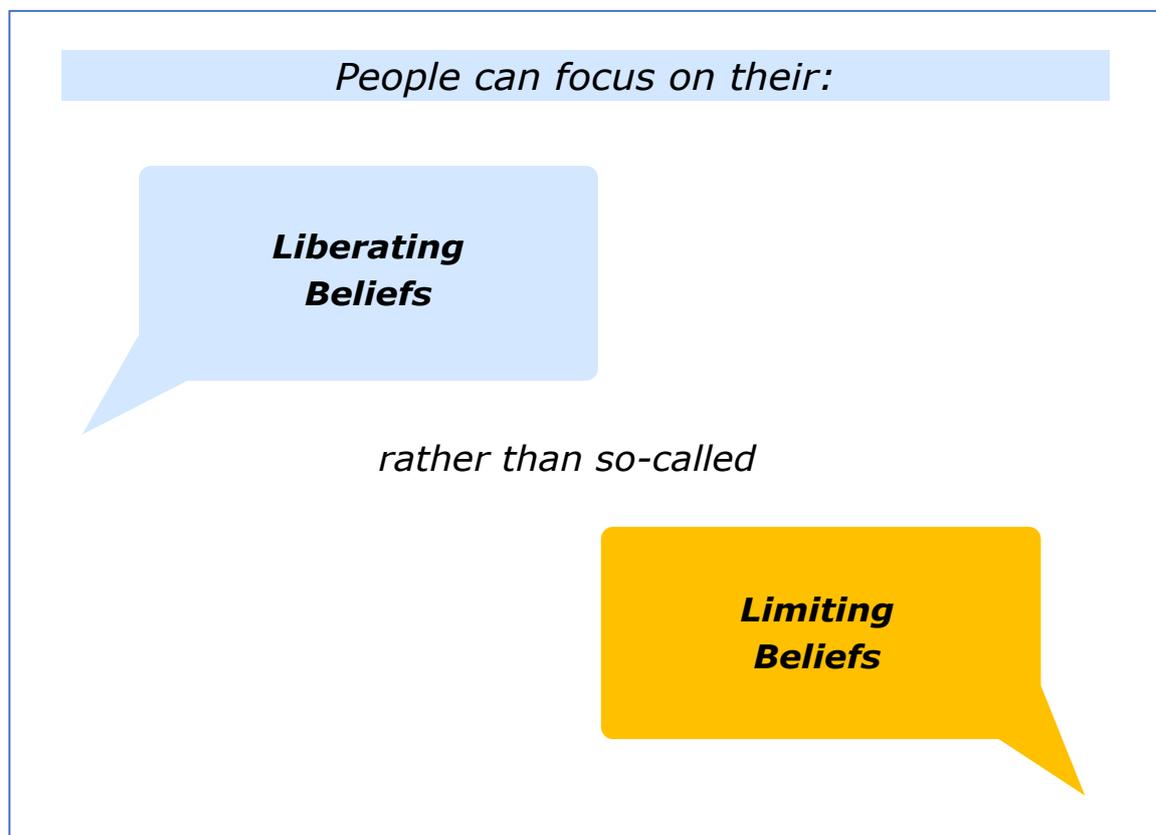
Bearing this in mind, the person decided to rewrite the messages they had internalised. They chose to write:

*"Keep working hard and become the best you can be."*

Some people turn their scripts into mantras that they use to remind them of certain beliefs. The mantras they use may consist of single words or phrases. Here are some examples.

*Count your blessings ... Choose your attitude ... Be kind ...  
Encourage others ... Stay calm ... See things in perspective ... Every  
day is a bonus ... Always give your best.*

Let's look at another approach to positive scripting. This involves taking the following steps.



People can focus on their liberating beliefs. They can then translate these into action and aim to do their best.

Some psychologists urge people to focus on their so-called limiting beliefs, but taking this route can increase people's self-doubt.

Another approach is for people to focus on their liberating beliefs. Such beliefs need to be based on reality, of course, rather than wishful thinking.

Bearing this in mind, people often go through the following steps to clarify their liberating beliefs.

### *Liberating Beliefs*

*People sometimes clarify their liberating beliefs by going through the following steps.*

- *They recall a specific time in the past when they performed superbly. They may have managed a challenge, reached a goal or achieved another form of success.*
- *They recall what they did right then – the principles they followed – to perform superbly. They clarify how they can follow these principles in the future.*
- *They translate these principles into positive affirmations and specific actions they can follow. These then become their liberating beliefs which they can follow to perform superbly.*

Looking back at your life, when have you pursued a liberating belief that helped you to reach a goal? You may have done this when working to pass an exam, deliver a project or reach some other goal.

If appropriate, how did you translate this belief into positive affirmations? Different people do this in different ways. A person may say, for example:

*"I can do it. I have done it before, so I can do it again. I just need to keep doing certain things in the right way. I will then reach the goal."*

Some psychologists take the liberating belief approach when working with clients. They invite a person to recall when they have managed a similar situation successfully.

The client then develops belief from the gut. They have done it before, so they can do it again. Building on this feeling, they can follow similar principles to tackle the present challenge successfully.

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that you want to follow some of your liberating beliefs and follow a positive script. As mentioned earlier, begin by focusing on the things you can control.

Looking ahead, what is the script you would like to follow? If appropriate, start by brainstorming the phrases you can say to yourself. You can then settle on a positive script you believe in.

What are the practical steps you can take to translate this into action? What may be the potential pluses of following this script? Are there any potential minuses? How can you build on the pluses and minimise the minuses?

Sometimes you may hit difficulties or get blown off-course. How can you buy time, pause and revisit your positive script. How can you then follow it in the future?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Positive Scripting*

*The positive script I want to say to myself and keep following is:*

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*The practical steps I can take to translate this positive script into action are:*

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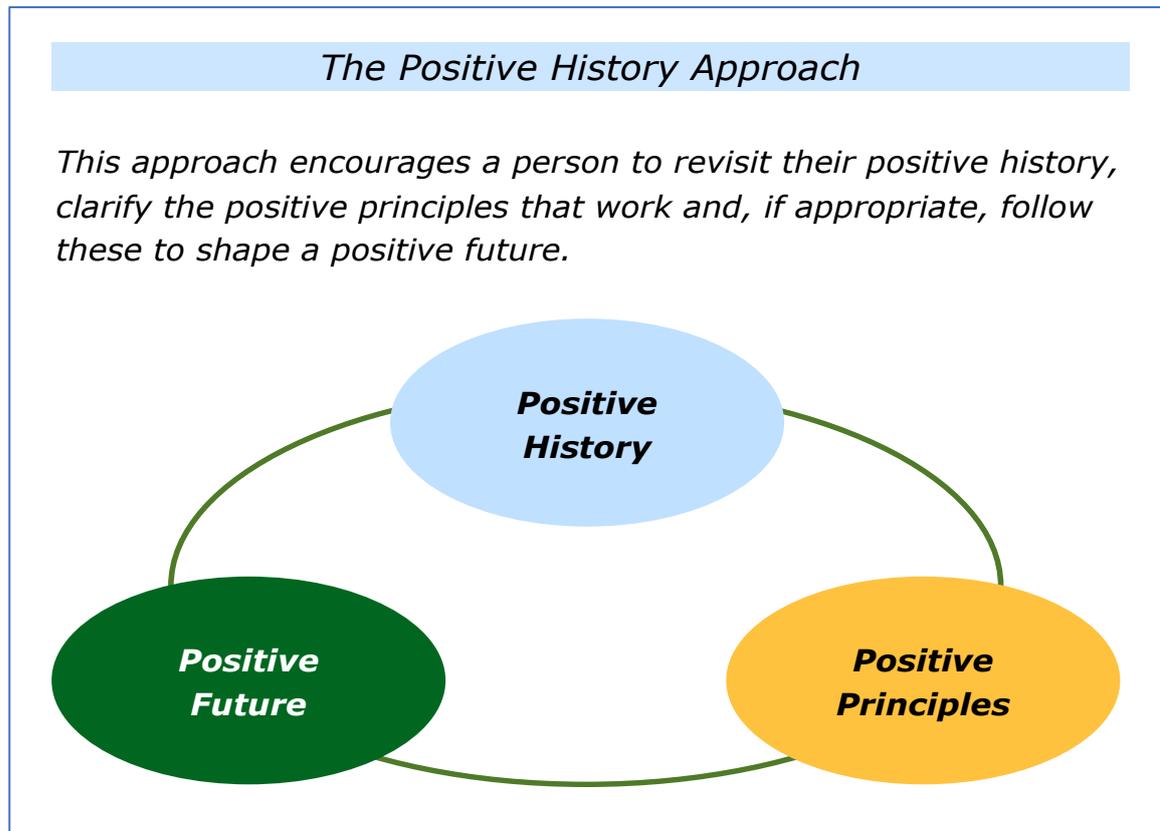
*The specific things I can do to pause and revisit my positive script are:*

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## *The Positive History Approach*



Imagine that you are counselling somebody who has experienced a difficult setback. One approach is to create a welcoming environment where they can talk and work through the classic change curve.

Another approach is to help a person to follow their positive pattern for overcoming challenges. Let's explore what this means and how it can be applied to tackling difficulties.

Everybody has a positive history. Everybody has achieved specific goals or overcome challenges. They may already have within them some of the resources needed to shape their future.

A person may have recovered from illness, made a difficult transition or managed a trauma. They may be able to follow some of these principles to tackle a present challenge.

Babette Rothschild is somebody who encourages this approach. She has helped many people to deal with traumas. Her work combines kindness, wisdom and practical tools. She says:

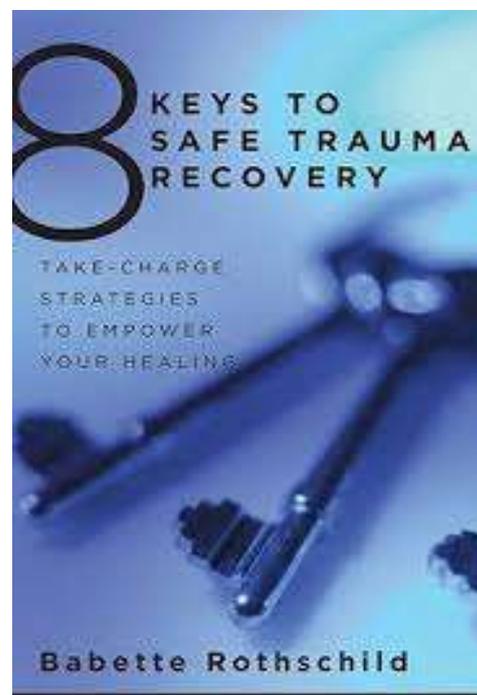
*"The first goal of trauma recovery should and must be to improve your quality of life on a daily basis."*

Babette creates a safe environment in which a person feels at ease. She then, if appropriate, provides practical tools that they can use:

*To manage flashbacks and traumatic feelings;*

*To build on their inner strengths and successful patterns for dealing with challenges;*

*To add further skills they can use to improve the quality of their lives.*



Babette is considered an expert in her field, but she also believes that people often resolve many issues without requiring professional help. She explains this in the following way.

*"The vast majority of humans who experience traumatic events resolve them on their own, relying on internal resources, the family, the community, the environment, spiritual beliefs and so forth."*

When people do seek Babette's professional help, she often begins by helping them to learn how to manage flashbacks. She explains this in the following way.

### *Applying the brakes*

The client should learn how to apply the brakes to stop the process or take control of flashbacks or other symptoms. They will then feel more confident in being able to proceed with the therapy.

Babette underlines the importance of building on the client's strengths. She describes this in the following way.

### *Building on inner resources*

*"When the focus is on trauma, it is easy to forget the accompanying mechanisms that have helped people to survive and carry on, even when they have PTSD."*

*"Resources of both the past and the present are important allies; they mediate the negative effects of trauma. Resources are partners that make survival and life after trauma possible."*

*"Wise therapists will listen as carefully for coping mechanisms as they do for possible trauma."*

Babette believes it is vital to help a client to build on their resources. This will make it easier to proceed with the trauma therapy.

Some counsellors may take this approach when working with individuals who are experiencing difficulties. Whilst acknowledging the person's feelings, they invite them to recall when they have dealt with challenges successfully. They may say something like the following.

*"Looking back, when have you encountered a similar challenge and come through it successfully? What did you do right then? What were the principles you followed to tackle the challenge successfully?"*

*"Let's explore how you might follow these principles – plus maybe add other skills – to tackle the present challenge."*

This is an approach that I have found works. It encourages the person to build from within and also increases belief. They have succeeded in the past and they can succeed in the future.

There is a similar approach that is a variation on this theme. This involves taking the following step.

### *Channelling Your Champ rather than Your Chimp*

Positive people often aim to channel their inner champ rather than their inner chimp. What does this mean?

Steve Peters, a psychiatrist, has helped many athletes to manage their chimp. Their chimp can take many forms. It can be self-doubt, irrational emotion and negative self-talk.

Steve helps people to use the logical parts of their brains to manage these impulses and perform at their best. You can discover more about this approach in his many books, including *The Chimp Paradox*.

Another way of looking at such challenges is to help a person to channel their champ whilst also managing their chimp. Let's explore one example.

A singer going for an audition may begin to feel nervous. The logical part of their brain tells them that, providing they perform at their best, they stand a reasonable chance of success.

On the way to the audition, however, doubts begin to creep in and they allow their chimp to takeover. They get into a cycle of worrying about their performance and how they will be judged.

The chimp keeps reminding them of the times they have failed, forgotten the lyrics or been rejected. By the time the person arrives for the audition they are a bag of nerves.

Their feelings of potential failure are well on the way towards becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. They have allowed their chimp take over and cause havoc in their brain.

How to tackle this challenge? One approach is to help a person to manage their chimp. Another approach is to encourage the person to channel their champ rather than their chimp. It is to recall a time when they performed at their best – when they produced their equivalent of championship performances.

Several years ago I worked with a singer who wanted to feel at ease when performing live in front of audiences. She explained this in the following way.

*"My career took off but then it stalled. I became preoccupied with being loved by everybody. It got to the point where I froze if I spotted a person in the audience who was not being appreciative.*

*"There is now an opportunity coming up, however, where I have the chance to sing live. I would love to take it, providing I can deal with my version of stage fright. I want to enjoy singing and also give people great experiences."*

I invited the singer to recall her most satisfying performance. Looking back, she said her best performances came when she served the song. She described one particular experience when she sang one of her favourite songs.

*"I rehearsed in my room and in my mind for many weeks. Then came the day of the performance.*

*"Getting to the theatre, I went through my usual rituals for centring, which included deep breathing.*

*"Moving from the dressing room, I snapped into action and strode onto the stage. Forgetting myself, I sank deeply into the music and aimed to serve the song.*

*"Before I knew it, the song was over and the audience gave rapturous applause. I am not exactly sure what happened, but people said it was the best performance I had ever given."*

Looking deeper, we began to explore what she had done right on that occasion. We then looked at other times when she had given fine performances. Could we see any recurring patterns?

Eventually we began to clarify the key principles and how she could follow these in the future. Looking ahead, she felt it would be useful to pursue the following themes.

*To play to my strengths when choosing a song.*

*To forget myself and serve the song.*

*To perform superbly and, when appropriate, to add something special.*

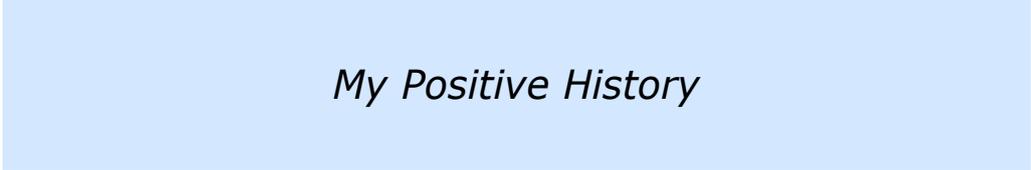
We focused on the specific steps she could take to translate these principles into action. This resulted in her feeling more at ease when giving performances. She did this by channelling her champ rather than her chimp.

## *The Positive History Exercise*

There are many ways to help a person to learn from their positive history.

One option is to invite them to focus on specific situation when they did positive work. It is then to explore how they can follow similar principles in the future.

Another option is to invite them to look at the positive things they have done during the stages of their life. This is a much longer exercise. But it can be help a person to clarify their successes and focus on how they can shape their future.



*My Positive History*

## Introduction

*Every person has had many experiences and done positive things in their life. Looking back, they may have:*

*Overcome an illness as a child;  
 Performed in play;  
 Played sport at a high level;  
 Written an article;  
 Built a good relationship;  
 Designed a house;  
 Learned a language;  
 Led a team to success;  
 Built a successful prototype;  
 And done many other things.*

*This exercise invites a person to do the following things.*

- *Describe their history.*

*The person is to list some of the things they have experienced and the positive things they have done during their life. They are to start from the age of 0 and continue till their present age. (They don't necessarily have to populate every stage of their life.)*

*They may start by looking for big things. But if they start populating the pages they will find that lots of things appear.*

- *Describe some of the positive things they have done in their life.*

*The person can be encouraged: a) to focus on one or two the positive things they have done in their life; b) to describe what they did right – the principles they followed – to do the positive things.*

- *Describe how they may want to follow some of these principles in the future*

*If appropriate, the person can be encouraged to explore how they can follow some of these principles in the future. They may want either:*

*To do this in general terms – such as how they want to follow certain principles in their life or work;*

*To focus on how they can follow these principles to tackle a specific challenge or work to achieve a specific goal.*

*You can, of course, adapt this exercise in your own way. Here is the framework you can encourage the person to follow.*

### *My Positive History*

*The experiences I have had and the positive things I have done during the following stages of my life have been these:*

**0**

**10**

**15**

**20**

**25**

**30**

**35**

**40**

**45**

**50**

**55**

**60**

**65**

**70**

**75**

**80**

**85 And Onwards**

*Positive Things*

*Two of the positive things I have done in my life and the things I did right – the principles I followed – to do these positive things.*

### *The First Positive Example*

*When I ...*

*The things I did right then – the principles  
I followed – to do the positive thing were:*

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### *The Second Positive Example*

*When I ...*

*The things I did right then – the principles  
I followed – to do the positive thing were:*

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*The Principles -  
Following These In The Future*

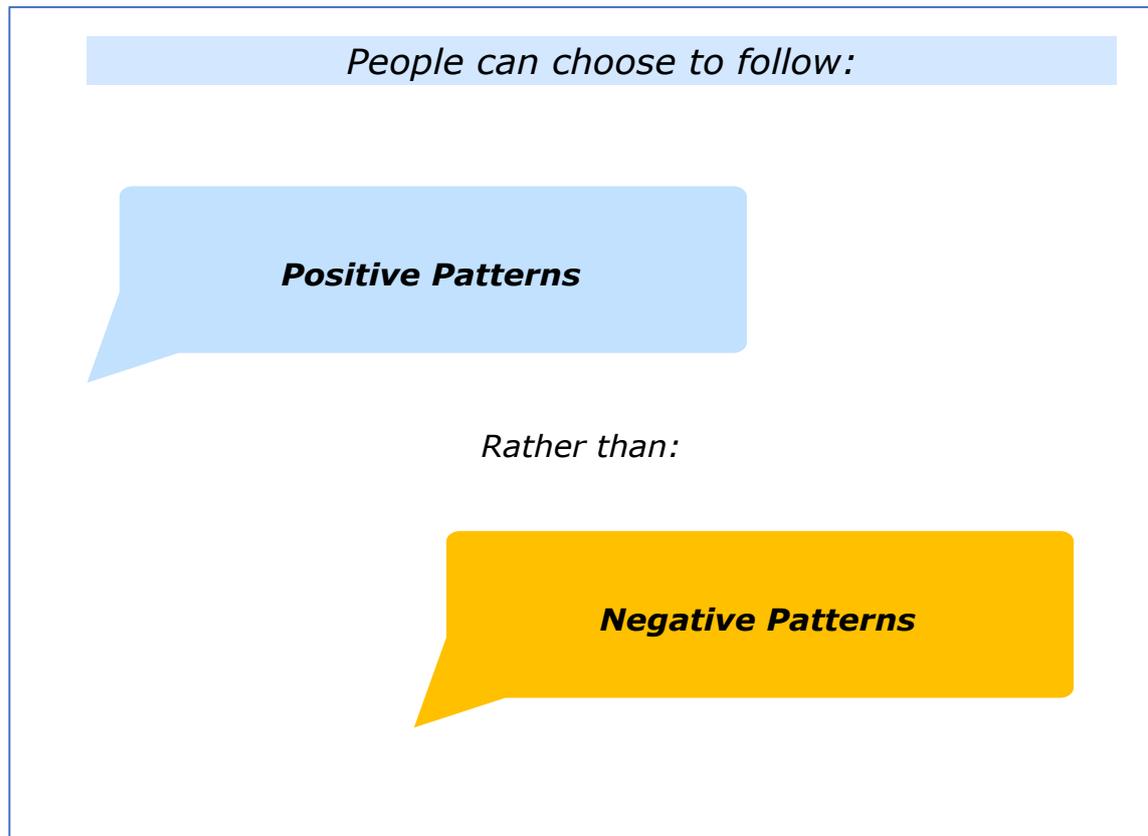
*The specific things I can do to follow  
some of these principles in the future are:*

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## *The Positive Patterns Approach*



This approach is one that you can use in your own life or when helping other people. It is to follow positive patterns rather than negative patterns. It is to do things that are more likely to achieve success rather than be self-defeating.

The positive patterns approach is one I learned early in my career when working with people who aimed to be healthy. Different people came with different challenges they wanted to tackle.

Some people, for example, had addictive personalities. They were addicted drugs, anger or angst. Some were addicted to getting adrenaline highs in ways that hurt help themselves or other people.

Some people, especially those with psychopathic tendencies, got high by hurting people. Being cruel rather gave them the rush of feeling powerful but it had severe consequences for others.

One approach was to help them to develop positive addictions rather than negative addictions. This called for helping them:

*To clarify their personal or professional goals – their picture of success;*

*To clarify the positive patterns they could follow to increase their chances of achieving success;*

*To clarify and follow their specific action plan for achieving success.*

Some people may object to this approach. They may say:

*"Isn't that just replacing one addiction with another? Shouldn't the person be trying to find their true self?"*

Perhaps, but it sometimes proved more helpful for themselves and others. Some former addicts, for example, developed a positive addiction for exercise or helping other people who were in difficulties. This called for them choosing:

*To rehearse when they were going to do – particularly when faced by situations that might trigger negative habits;*

*To follow a set routine and get some quick successes;*

*To keep repeating this pattern and get positive results;*

Every person can be helped to find and follow their positive patterns. One model is to take the organic approach. This involves helping a person to recall when they have followed a certain pattern and got positive results. The person can then build on this pattern and continue to develop.

There are many views on what constitute positive patterns rather than negative patterns. The following pages describe some of these that can lead to positive results.

## *Positive Patterns*

*People can follow patterns that produce positive results rather than negative results for themselves and other people. They can choose:*

- To have a positive attitude rather than a negative attitude in their life and work;*
- To help people rather than hurt people;*
- To focus on what they can control rather than what they can't control;*
- To take responsibility rather than avoid taking responsibility;*
- To read reality and see the consequences rather than ignore reality and refuse to see the consequences;*

- *To be creative and resourceful rather keep complaining and be resentful;*
- *To focus their assets rather than their angst;*
- *To get into positive cycles rather than fall into negative cycles;*
- *To focus on shaping a positive future rather than blaming others for their present situation;*
- *To try to find win-win solutions rather than try to make sure they win and other people lose.*

There are many ways to help people by using this approach. The following pages describe somebody I worked with many years ago.

Karen made the decision to follow positive patterns rather than negative patterns. During our sessions she began to focus on the behaviours that would help her to feel successful.

Looking back in later years, Karen described the process of realising that she wanted to take control of events rather than let them control her. She explained this in the following way.

*"I got into the habit of following self-destructive patterns in my late twenties.*

*"At the time I was in a relationship that wasn't working, but neither of us had the guts to end it. I had got into bad habits, eating junk food and smoking.*

*"Work wasn't much better. Even though I was in a go-ahead industry, I had lapsed into doing routine stuff. My main solace was listening to music on my headphones, both at work and at home.*

*"The wake-up call came just before one Christmas. My mother fell ill and I spent lots of time taking care of practical things for her and my father.*

*"This got me thinking about what I wanted to do in my life. Even though I wasn't yet thirty, it felt like I was middle-aged.*

*"So I decided to get my act together. I began by ending the long-term relationship that wasn't working. This came as a relief to both of us.*

*"The next thing I did was to I cycling. I have always been adrenaline-driven but, if I don't have a goal to go for, I can get lazy.*

*"Bearing this mind, I set myself a target. I began by doing sponsored bike rides and raising money for charity. Plus I got back into doing mountain biking.*

*"Looking at my work, I decided to play to my strengths. I moved from doing general management to leading projects. I have always enjoyed organising things.*

*"Leading the projects gave me the chance: a) to set a clear goal; b) to orchestrate people's efforts to achieve the goal; c) to deliver the goal successfully. This proved more satisfying."*

Let's return to the topic of positive addictions rather than negative addictions. Sometimes this involves inviting a person to decide which route they want to follow.

*Positive Addictions Rather  
Than Negative Addictions*

*People can choose to feel good by:*

- *Helping People rather than Hurting People*
- *Being Caring rather than Being Cruel*
- *Giving To People rather than Grabbing From People*

Some people get their highs by helping people. The positive majority of people take this route. They love to encourage other people when acting as parents, educators, coaches, leaders, trusted advisors or playing other roles.

They love to nurture people. They care for others and, when faced by difficult situations, try to get win-win solutions. Such people want to plant seeds of hope that encourage both present and future generations.

Such people feel good after helping others. They can experience a rush, followed by a sense of calm. It is as if they have served something much greater than themselves. Sometimes they experience what is called the helper's high.

Some people get their highs by hurting people. The psychopathic minority of people take this route. They like to feel powerful in their roles as bullies, narcissists, sadists, critics or whatever.

Such people are often addicted to anger. They try to make themselves feel big by making others feel small. They not only want to win, they want others to feel they have lost.

This was a topic that was discussed during recent elections. It was pointed out that some people get a physical chemical reaction when they hurt others. They become addicted to this approach and look for the next situation where they can get this kick.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of an activity where you want to follow positive patterns rather than negative patterns?

You may want to do this to encourage yourself, take care of your health, perform creative work or focus on another area. You may want to do it to help other people in your personal or professional life.

Looking ahead, what are the patterns you want to follow? How can you translate these into action? What may happen as a result of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Positive Patterns In The Future*

*The specific activity where I would like to follow positive patterns is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to follow positive patterns and translate these into action are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Professional Success Approach*



This is an approach that can help people to continue to grow in professional careers. It is particularly useful when a person's daily work is not necessarily helping them to develop.

The approach involves helping a person explore their long-term professional picture of success. These are the specific things they want to do or achieve in their professional life. Bearing this in mind, it involves focusing on:

*The professional contribution they want to make to their present employer;*

*The professional development steps they want to take towards achieving their career goals.*

The ideal would be for these themes to be intertwined, but this is not always possible. Sometimes they may need to be pursued in parallel on the way towards achieving the person's picture of success.

Let's look at how this works in practise. Imagine that you lead a team of motivated people. It will be important to encourage each of them:

*To focus on the contribution they want to make towards delivering the team's goals;*

*To focus on their own professional development goals.*

The following approach seems like a long process, but it works. It involves going through the following steps with a person in a professional way.

*You can explain the present situation and that you are aiming to get positive results*

Imagine that you are meeting a person who says they joined the organisation because it promised lots of development opportunities. Because of certain events, however, the organisation is at a stage where it has become primarily focused on its financial targets.

This may be understandable, but some employees may feel they are simply doing the day job. How to manage this kind of situation?

One approach is to go through the following steps. As mentioned earlier, however, it is important to do this in a professional way.

*You can explain that the organisation is at a stage in its life where it is focusing on specific targets*

Each of us may have different opinions about the organisation's possible ways forward, but this is the reality of the situation. The

organisation has made its decision and is working towards certain goals.

*You can explain that each of us can decide whether we want to contribute towards achieving these goals*

You may wish to give some context about the modern world of work. This involves giving the big picture and, in some ways, explaining the facts of life. These include the following.

*The world of work has changed. We are all self-employed now. We can aim to build on our strengths, do satisfying work and deliver success to our customers and employers.*

*There are few fixed jobs anymore, but there are many projects. Because things can change quickly, we are all on rolling contracts. It is important to give our best to a customer or employer, but also to focus on how to shape our future.*

*Bearing this in mind, we each make choices. We can choose to join an organisation, go freelance, run our own business or take other routes. Each route has pluses and minuses.*

*When we choose to join an organisation, there are many pluses. These include getting a regular wage, some satisfying work and other benefits. There may also be certain minuses. The other options are to join another organisation, be self-employed or run our own business. These also have pluses and minuses.*

*We can each make our own decisions about whether or not we want to contribute towards achieving the organisation's goals.*

*Every organisation has a Scorecard – the mandatory things that must be delivered. We can make our best contribution to delivering our part of these things. If possible, we can also aim to do stimulating projects.*

Imagine that you have given the big picture a person in a professional way. You can then explain that you will, as far as possible, help them:

*To build on their strengths and make their best contribution towards achieving the team's goals;*

*To have separate sessions with them to focus on their professional development goals.*

You can explain that the second type of session will be confidential. It will be about the person and their aims. The information you get will not be used in any performance appraisal session. The aim will be to help the person to develop and work towards their professional picture of success.

You will have your own way of explaining the big picture. It can then be time to move on to the next stage.

*You can clarify the person's professional contribution towards achieving the team's goals*

Imagine that everybody is clear on the team's goals. You can then agree on the outcomes that each person will deliver towards achieving these aims.

There are many models for helping a person to clarify their individual contribution. The following framework mirrors that which was described in the section of this book called *The Positive Teams Approach*.

The following pages offer material that you can send to the person before meeting to clarify their best contribution. You can then meet with them to agree on the specific things they will deliver towards achieving the team's goals.

## *My Professional Contribution*

### *Introduction*

Bearing in mind the team's goals and your strengths, this exercise invites you to describe the following things.

*The specific results you aim to deliver towards achieving the team's goals.*

*These aims should be written in outcome terms - such as the specific results you will deliver - rather than as a list of activities.*

*The specific benefits - to the various stakeholders - of delivering these results.*

*The specific things you will do to proactively update people about your progress towards achieving the results.*

*The specific support you would like to help you to achieve the results.*

*The specific early successes you will aim to deliver.*

Complete these exercises up to and including the page Specific Early Successes and send these to your manager. You can then agree on your goals for the year.

After the meeting you can then complete the section in which you write your agreed goals for the year.

### *Some Background*

We aim to build a strengths based team and co-ordinate these strengths to reach the goal.

We must, however, deliver the Scorecard. These are the mandatory things the team must deliver. This will sometimes mean everybody getting involved in doing great work and helping to do the other tasks.

We want to encourage you to build on your strengths, because you are then more likely to do great work. At the same time, however, it is your responsibility to manage the consequences of any weaknesses.

We want to manage by outcomes, rather than by tasks. Once the outcomes are agreed, we ask you to be accountable for delivering the goods. How you achieve this - providing you follow the organisation's agreed principles - is up to you and your team.

### *My Specific Contribution*

*Bearing in mind the team's goals and my strengths, the specific results I want to deliver towards achieving the team's goals are:*

1) *To*

*For example:*

- *To*

- *To*

- *To*

2) *To*

*For example:*

- *To*

- *To*

- *To*

3) To

*For example:*

- To

- To

- To

### *The Specific Benefits*

*The specific benefits of making this contribution - for the team, customers, colleagues and other stakeholders - will be:*

1) To

*For example:*

2) To

*For example:*

3) To

*For example:*

### *The Specific Updates*

*The specific things I will do to proactively keep people informed about the progress towards delivering the results will be:*

1) To

*For example:*

2) To

*For example:*

3) To

*For example:*

### *The Specific Support*

*The specific support I would like to help me to achieve the goals, plus the support I will give to other people, is:*

1) To

*For example:*

2) To

*For example:*

3) To

*For example:*

### *The Specific Early Successes*

*The specific early successes I will aim to deliver will be:*

1) To

*For example:*

2) To

*For example:*

3) To

*For example:*

### *My Agreed Goals*

## *Introduction*

After clarifying your strengths you will then meet with your manager and agree on your goals.

When doing this, it is important to bear in mind the team's picture of success and your strengths. You will then agree with your manager on your contribution towards achieving this picture of success.

*Try to write your goals in outcome terms. Describe the actual things you will deliver, rather than a set of activities.*

You can then keep referring back to these goals when having ongoing meetings with your manager.

*After meeting with my manager, the agreed specific results I will aim to deliver are:*

1) *To*

*For example:*

- *To*

- *To*

- *To*

2) *To*

*For example:*

- *To*

- *To*

- *To*

3) *To*

*For example:*

- *To*

- *To*

- *To*

Imagine that the person has made clear contracts about the results they will deliver. You can continue to meet with them to ensure they make their best contribution towards achieving the team's goals. It can then be useful to move on to the next stage.

*You can help the person to develop and work toward achieving their professional goals*

There are many models for helping a person to shape their career. This approach involves helping a person:

*To clarify the specific things they want to do and achieve in their professional career;*

*To clarify the specific things they want to do build on the strengths and develop in other ways to work towards their professional goals;*

*To clarify the specific things they see as their responsibility when working towards their professional goals;*

*To clarify the specific kinds of support and help they would like – if possible - when working toward their professional goals;*

*To clarify their specific development plan for working towards their professional goals;*

*To clarify the specific benefits – for themselves and for other people – of working towards their professional goals.*

Imagine that you would like to offer this kind of session to a person. It will be important to underline that: a) the session is about their professional development – it is not an appraisal session; b) the topics you discuss will be confidential.

Bearing these things in mind, you will then do your best to help the person to work towards their professional goals. Here is the material you may want to send to the person before the session. You can then work through these with the person in your own way.

## *My Professional Development*

### *Introduction*

Dear ...

I am looking forward to meeting with you to explore how you want to continue to develop your career. There are many ways to explore professional development. This approach invites you:

*To explore the specific things you want to do and achieve in your professional career;*

*To make a development plan that will help you to work towards achieving your professional goals.*

The session is about your professional development. It is not an appraisal session. The topics we discuss will be confidential. I will then do my best to help you to work towards your professional goals.

Here are the exercises that I would like you to explore and maybe have a first go at before our session.

### *My Professional Goals*

*The specific things I want to have done or to have achieved when I look back on my professional career are these.*

\* *I want to have ...*

*For example ...*

\* *I want to have ...*

*For example ...*

\* *I want to have ...*

*For example ...*

### *My Professional Development*

*The specific things that I want to do to build on my strengths and develop in other ways to help me to work towards achieving my professional goals are these.*

\* *I want to ...*

*For example ...*

\* *I want to ...*

*For example ...*

\* *I want to ...*

*For example ...*

### *My Professional Responsibility*

*The specific things that I see as my responsibility  
- and that I want to do - to develop and  
work towards my professional goals are these.*

\* *I want to ...*

*For example ...*

\* *I want to ...*

*For example ...*

\* *I want to ...*

*For example ...*

### *My Professional Support*

*The specific kinds of support or help that I  
would like – if possible – when developing and  
working towards my professional goals are these.*

\* *I would like ...*

*For example ...*

\* *I would like ...*

*For example ...*

\* *I would like ...*

*For example ...*

### *My Professional Development Plan*

*The specific things that I aim to do to develop and work towards my professional goals are these.*

\* *I want to ...*

*For example ...*

\* *I want to ...*

*For example ...*

\* *I want to ...*

*For example ...*

### *My Professional Development – The Benefits*

*The specific benefits – both for myself and for other people – of developing and working towards my professional goals will be these.*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

\* *To ...*

*For example ...*

## *Professional Development Programmes*

Many organisations offer their people programmes on the themes of personal and professional development. These often depend on: a) the motivation of the participants; b) the quality of the people running the programme.

As mentioned earlier in the book, great educators make the learning personal, practical and – in its widest sense – profitable. They provide practical tools that enable people to achieve success.

Good leaders often want to help their people develop and to continue to make their best contributions to the organisation.

The following pages outline one approach to offering such programmes. This is a strengths based approach which helps both the individuals and organisations to achieve success.

The approach aims to deliver positive results. When appropriate, it can also act as a Trojan Horse for exploring many different themes that will help the person and organisation to achieve success.

Here is the introduction. You will, of course, have your own approach to providing such development programmes.

## *Professional Success*

*A strengths based programme for helping people to continue to develop*

*This approach enables people to continue to build on their strengths and tackle any areas for improvement.*

*It starts by clarifying the organisation's goals. It then provides practical tools that people can use to make their best contributions towards achieving the picture of success.*

*The approach focuses on the following themes but these can be customised to help people to achieve ongoing success.*

### *Strengths*

*We will focus on the person's strengths and any areas for development. We will help them to build on their successful style of working or leading and set specific goals. We will then move on to the next stage.*

### *Strategies*

*We will focus on the strategies and skills they can add to their repertoire. We will focus on how they can apply these: a) to do superb work; b) to implement solutions to challenges; c) to help their stakeholders to achieve success.*

### *Success*

*What will focus on how the person can continue to shape their career and deliver superb work. We will provide practical tools they can use to keep developing - as a person and as a professional - and continue to achieve success.*

There are many ways to help people to develop. One approach is to try to weave together the person's professional contribution and their professional development plan.

Sometimes this may work. There may be other times, however, when the demands of delivering the daily work leave less time for professional development.

One model is to follow the parallel approach. It is to help a person to focus on both their professional contribution and their professional development.

This approach can bring benefits to both the person and organisation. The person delivers their agreed contribution and also keeps working towards their professional picture of success.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe how you may wish to follow elements of this approach in your own way. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Professional Success Approach*

*The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of this approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to follow elements of this approach in my own way are:*

\*

\*

\*

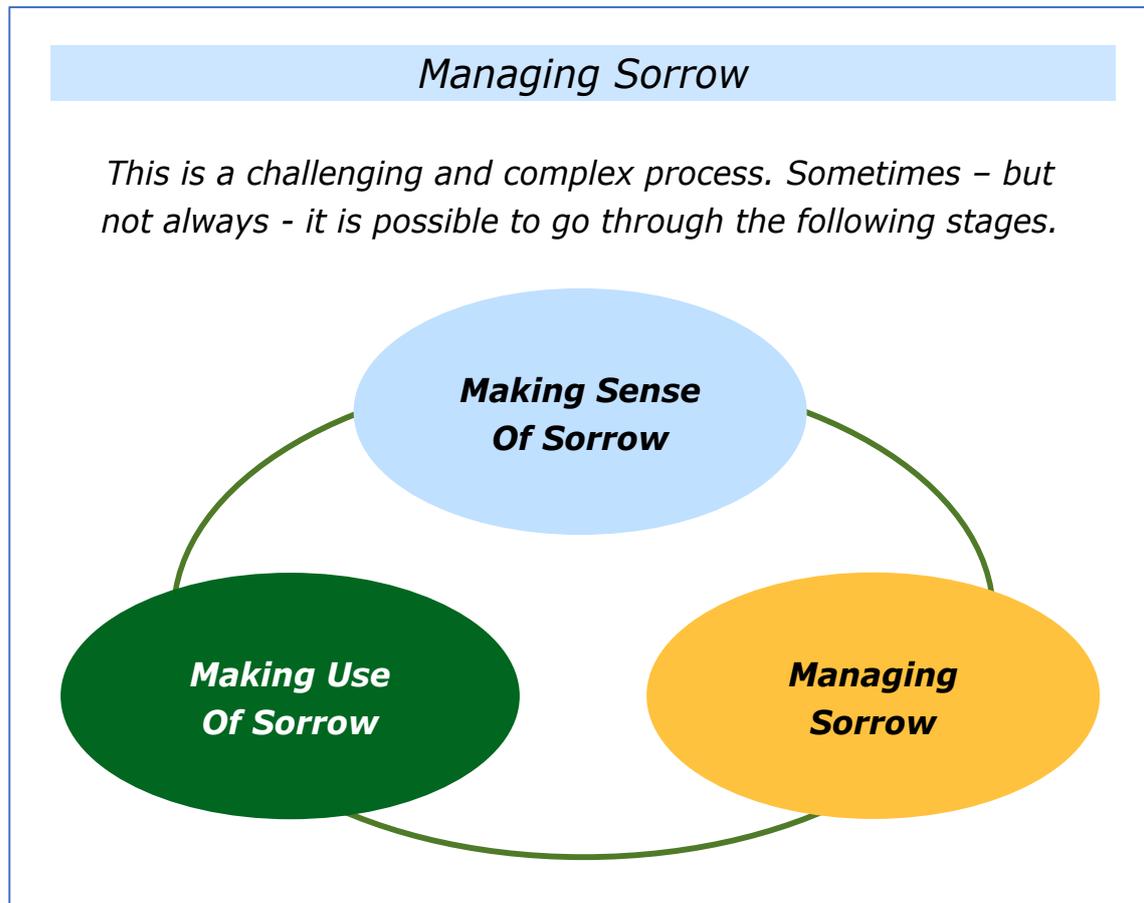
*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## The Managing Sorrow Approach



Sorrow is a feeling of deep sadness that can last for a long time. It can be one of the toughest feelings to manage. Each person may experience it in different ways.

*A person may feel sorrow:*

*When losing somebody or something that cannot be replaced ...  
When feeling life is painful and they cannot see the point of carrying on ...  
When feeling that human beings are doing damage to the Earth.*

A couple may have lost a child. A troubled person may feel overwhelmed and unable to take control of their life. A previously positive person may feel sadness but not know why.

A person may feel lonely or without hope. They may feel pain in their soul. They may, in extreme cases, feel they want to ease the pain by taking their life.

Different people express sorrow in different ways. They may cry or be unable to cry. They may experience chronic grief or fall into depression. Some people may express their sorrow through anger. They may do things that hurt themselves or other people.

People can be helped to navigate their way through the feelings and shape their futures. Every person is different, however, so it is vital to respect their experience.

The following pages describe some steps that people can take to understand and manage sorrow. This can be a challenging and complex journey, however, and cannot be summed up in a simple three step process.

## *Making Sense Of Sorrow*

Sometimes a person can find their own answers as to why they experience sorrow. They may ask themselves:

*"What are the reasons for these feelings? What do I feel sad about? What am I worried about? What do I feel has been lost or cannot be replaced?"*

Sometimes there are obvious reasons for the sorrow. A person may be experiencing a sense of loss, have suffered a bereavement or been through a traumatic experience.

Several years ago I worked with John, whose wife Sarah had died several hours after giving birth to their daughter. John felt lost. The joy he and Sarah experienced had been taken away. He was helped by going to grief counselling but the deep pain remained.

During the next few months we worked on: a) how he could do the best for his daughter; b) how he could manage the pain. He also

needed to take care of himself, because he had stopped eating and lost 10 kilos.

John devoted himself to caring for his daughter and got help from her grandparents. He also began to eat properly, exercise and do things that gave him positive energy. This helped him to shape the future.

Sometimes the reasons for sorrow can be complex. It can then take much longer to understand what may be happening and how to deal with these feelings.

Anna was a sensitive person who cared deeply about the planet. A high achiever, she got a First Class degree and joined a company that she believed could become a power for good.

The first years were promising, but then she became disillusioned. The company talked a good game about sustainability but the leadership team was dedicated to short-term profits.

Anna began to drift. Moving from job to job, she spent more time with pressure groups such as Greenpeace. Whilst believing it was important to take direct action, she despaired about the destruction being done to the world.

She felt a mixture of both anger and sorrow. This led to a personal breakdown. Anna had a feeling of lethargy and hopelessness. She was constantly worrying about the innocent people suffering across the world.

Later we will look how to manage such feelings. Before then, however, it may be useful to clarify some of your own thoughts about sorrow. If you wish, try exploring the exercise on this theme. This invites you to do two things.

First, describe what you believe may be some of the reasons why a person may experience sorrow. Second, describe some of the ways that they may express this feeling. Here is the exercise.

## *Making Sense Of Sorrow*

*Some of the different reasons why a person may be feeling sorrow may be:*

- \* They may ...*
- \* They may ...*
- \* They may ...*

*Some of the different ways a person may express sorrow may be:*

- \* They may ...*
- \* They may ...*
- \* They may ...*

## *Managing Sorrow*

John recognised that the pain of losing Sarah would not go away, but he wanted to learn how to manage it. He also wanted to honour what she had given him and their daughter.

His life had previously been fairly predictable. He had a loving wife and a job he liked. Things seemed set fair, especially with the forthcoming birth of their daughter.

Suddenly everything had caved in. Feeling lost, John wanted to create a structure he could follow in his life. Bearing this in mind, we compiled a list of Dos and Don'ts he wanted to follow:

*To keep giving love to his daughter;*

*To follow daily disciplines, set goals and get successes;*

*To manage his interactions with other people.*

This final part was crucial. People were shocked by his appearance and they immediately went into counselling mode. He found such conversations exhausting.

John was getting help from his counselling group. He did not want to keep reliving the trauma in every conversation with friends and colleagues.

We worked on a script he could follow: a) to thank people for their concern; b) to stay in charge of the conversation and, if appropriate, close down the discussion.

John then moved on to a bigger topic to explore. He explained this in the following way.

*"What do I tell my daughter when she is old enough to understand what happened to her mother?"*

*"When she is young I can say that her mother has gone to heaven. But later on she will want to know about the circumstances of her mother's death and her own birth.*

*"At some point she will need to manage her own feelings about the circumstances, but am not sure what to say. I do not want her to live her life feeling guilty."*

John and I explored the principles he could follow when explaining what happened. It was a topic he would revisit when his daughter was approaching her teenage years. For the moment, however, he settled on finding ways:

*To reassure his daughter that she was planned for and wanted by her mother and him;*

*To explain that after the birth there had been unexpected difficulties and her mother had died;*

*To again say that she was really wanted and that her mother would want her to live life fully.*

George Bonnano's book *The Other Side Of Sadness* focused on the strategies that people use to deal with bereavement, trauma and similar life-changing events. After a period of mourning, some people show the following characteristics.

### *Resilience*

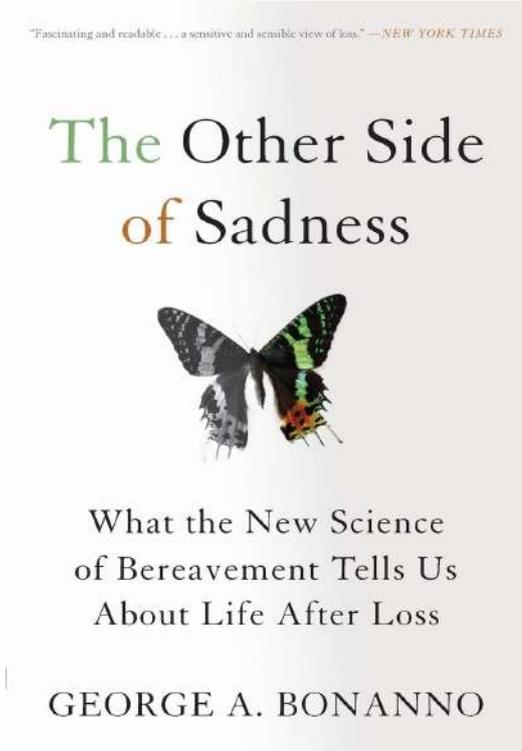
The majority of people, up to 65%, show resilience. They are affected, of course, but it does not change their life trajectory. They seem able to move on from the experience within several months.

### *Recovery*

Up to 25% of the people recover after a reasonable time. During this time they might experience lows, but eventually they recover and are able to get on with life.

## *Chronic Grief*

Up to 15% of the people find the experience debilitating over a much longer period. They fall into a state of chronic grief or other forms of dysfunction.

 <p>"Fascinating and readable... a sensitive and sensible view of loss." —NEW YORK TIMES</p> <p><b>The Other Side of Sadness</b></p> <p>What the New Science of Bereavement Tells Us About Life After Loss</p> <p>GEORGE A. BONANNO</p>	<p><b>Resilience</b></p> <p>Up to 65% of people are eventually able to get on with their lives.</p> <p><b>Recovery</b></p> <p>Up to 25% recover after a reasonable time.</p> <p><b>Chronic Grief Or Dysfunction</b></p> <p>Up to 15% find the event debilitating over a much longer period.</p>
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George found little evidence that people go through the stages outlined by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. These are Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance.

Whilst this model has helped many people, Elisabeth studied people who knew they were dying. He focused on those who had been affected by life-changing events.

George reports that some people felt relieved when told it was okay to not necessarily go through the classic stages. He found that:

There is no standard way of grieving.

Some people veer between sadness and more hopeful feelings. They have deep lows, but sometimes they might laugh and enjoy aspects of life. George also says something that sounds counter intuitive.

*Sadness can help us to deal with the situation. When we are sad we turn inwards. We slow down. Our heartbeat gets slower.*

*We pay more attention to things in a more accurate way. This enables us to focus on what is important when making decisions.*

Our states of sadness come and go. Sometimes we have other emotions, such as laughter and positivity. Staying sad for months on end overloads our system, however, and can lead to chronic depression

Anna felt she may be falling into such a depression. Concerned about the planet, she kept consuming bad news. Weighed down by worry, she projected gloom.

She cared about the world but depressed the people around her. Looking ahead, we explored the different paths she could take. She could choose either:

*To focus on the things she could control or the things she could not control;*

*To focus on the positive solutions being applied across the world – such as the work being done by social enterprises – or the negative things happening in the world;*

*To focus on encouraging the people close to her or to continue depressing those people.*

Anna had become addicted to bad news. Bearing this in mind, we revisited the concept that 'everything is food'. The old rule applies:

*"What we focus on, we become."*

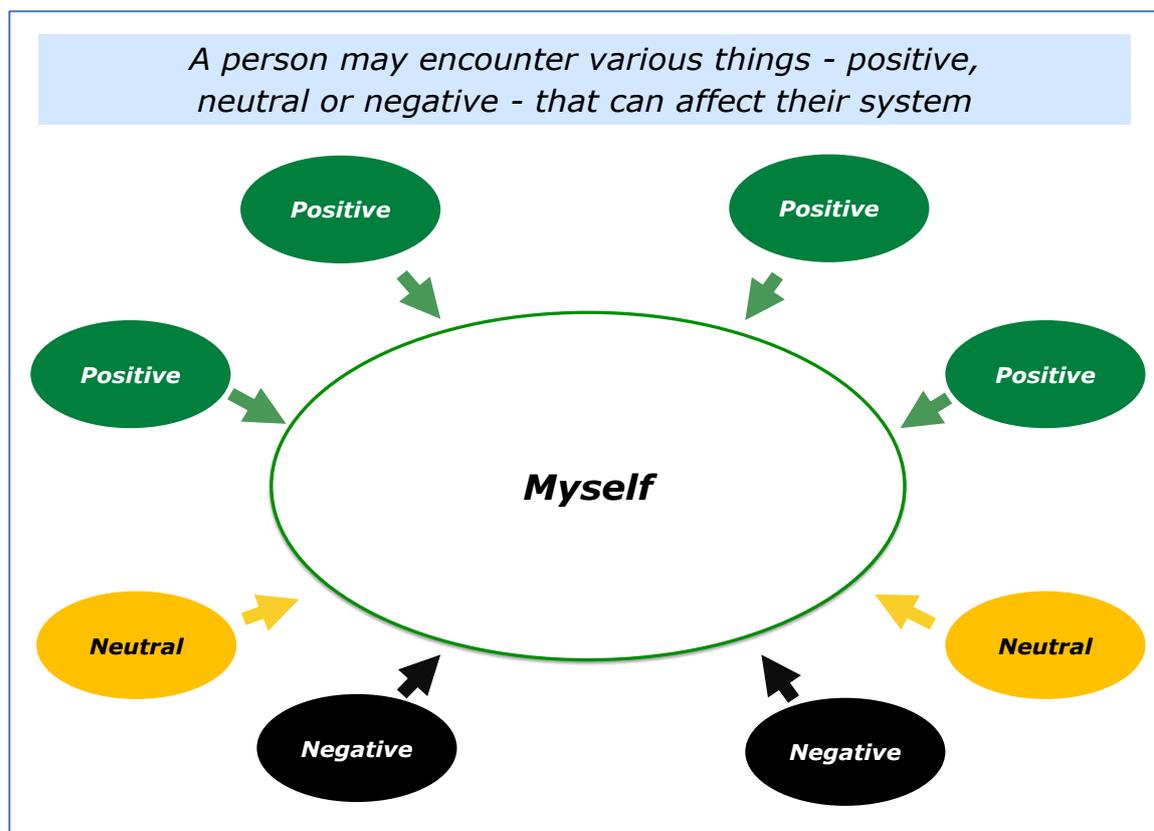
The things a person encounters each day can affect their body and soul. They can therefore explore the following questions.

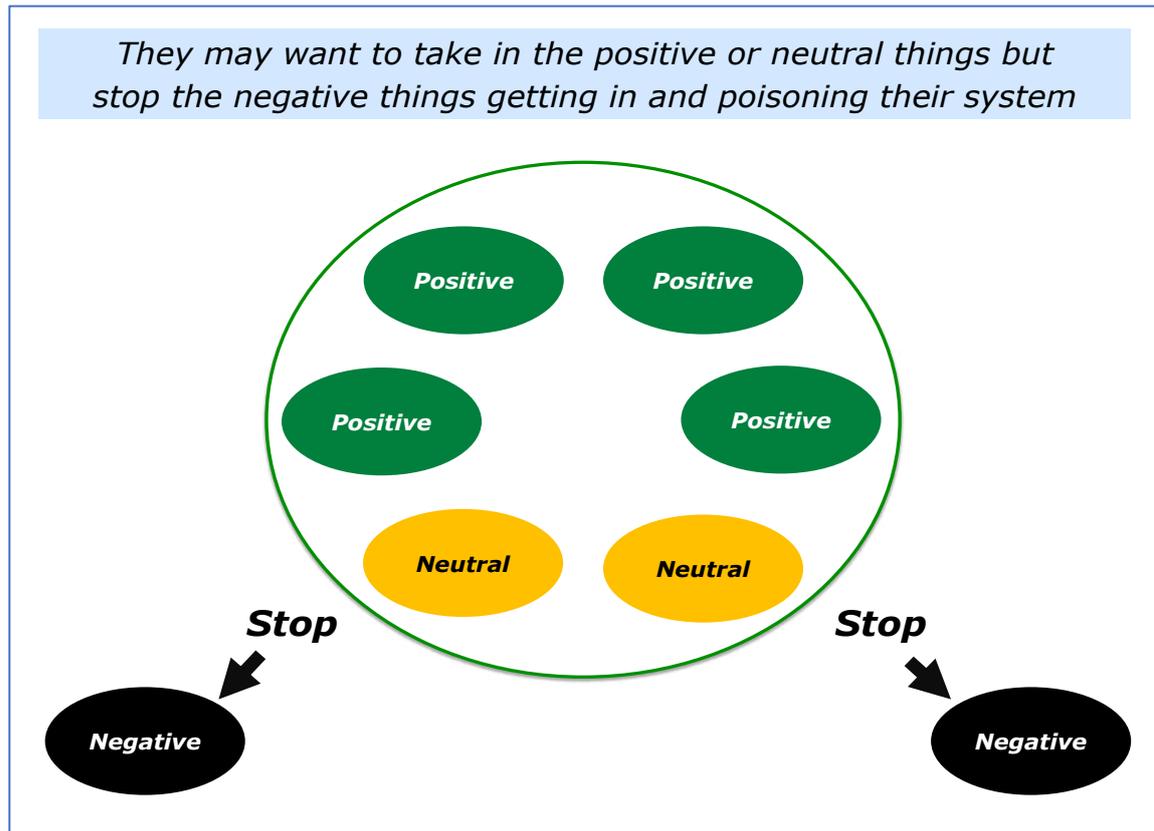
*"What are the kinds of food – the experiences – I expose myself to each day? What are the kinds of things I put into my system? Which of these are positive, neutral or negative?"*

*"Who are the people are meet? Are they positive, negative or a mixture of both? What are the places where I spend I time? Are these stimulating, sapping or a mixture of both?"*

*"What is the kind of work I do? Is it satisfying, something to endure or a mixture of both? What is the media I expose myself to? Do I find it uplifting or depressing?"*

*"What are the kinds of experiences – the kinds of food – that I want to put into my system? How can I take in more positive food? How can avoid or deal with the poisonous food?"*





Anna said she wanted to be both positive and realistic. But she recognised that this would be challenging because she felt drawn towards bad news. This called for switching her focus.

She could study the work done by social enterprises that tackle humanity's most pressing problems. These include organisations such as Ashoka, The Skoll Foundation and Echoing Green.

She could study the many educational projects that are helping young people to develop 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills – such as Clear Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration and Communication.

This is more uplifting than focusing on schools that still teach for the industrial age.

Anna recognised that making this switch would be difficult but it may be a better option. It was more likely to encourage herself and other people. She summed this up in the following way.

*"The route I am following now is not helping me or my friends. I want to be aware of what is happening in the world, but I also need to lift my spirits."*

Anna needed to change the things she put into her system. She resolved to re-join a choir because she loved singing. She aimed to return to dancing – an activity in which she felt alive.

She also focused on how to manage the triggers that sent her into a depressing cycle. She could buy time to think, breathe deeply and choose to do things that gave her positive energy.

This would take practice, but it would have greater benefits than becoming depressed.

Different people manage sorrow in different ways. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe the specific ways that you believe people can manage such feelings.

## *Managing Sorrow*

*Some of the different ways a person may manage sorrow are:*

\* *They may ...*

\* *They may ...*

\* *They may ...*

## *Making Use Of Sorrow*

Sometimes it is possible to make good use of sorrow. One person I know who was near to suicide turned his life around and became a counsellor for others who might be considering taking their lives. Other people choose other ways to renew their lives.

John regained joy by caring for his daughter. Returning to work after six months, he found it releasing to do professional projects. This was satisfying for a while, but he then decided to change his lifestyle.

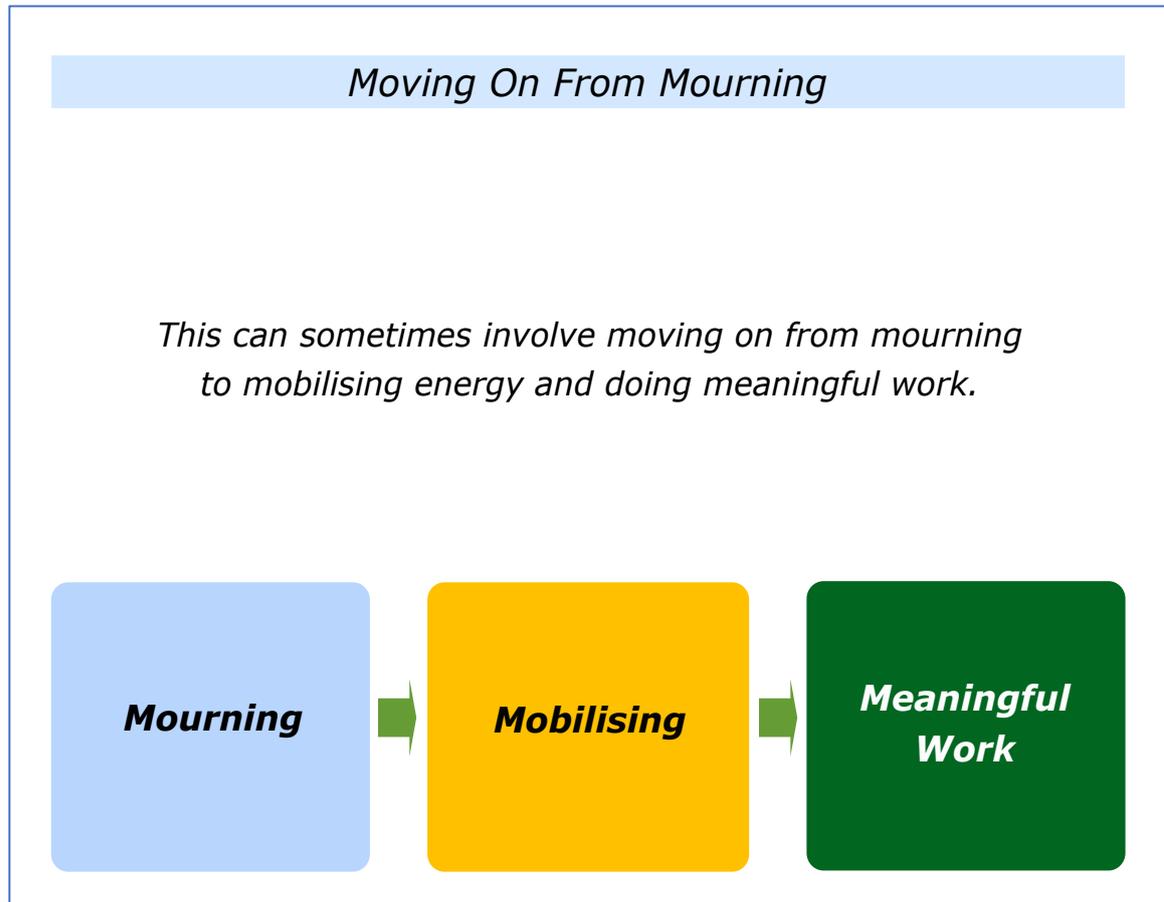
The top priority was his daughter, so he negotiated a four day working week. This helped him to provide the necessary care for both his daughter and himself.

Anna took much longer to turnaround her life. Working with social enterprises lifted her spirits but produced little income. Moving back to living with her parents worked on one level – she had her own space in a big house - but it was not the ideal solution.

Showing persistence, she built a network of people in the social enterprise world. Applying her talent as a writer, she published many success stories that highlighted the work done by such enterprises.

She eventually got enough funding to move into her own place. Anna also began to feel that, even in a limited way, she was doing something to build a better world.

Different people take different journeys on the way on the way to making use of their sorrow. One approach is for people to go through the stages of mourning, mobilising and making things better. Let's explore these themes.



### *Mourning*

Some people respond to painful events by going into a period of mourning. Sorry for what has been lost, they may numb themselves or find other ways to manage the feelings.

The events of 2016 led many people to go through this stage. Shocked by elections in Europe and the USA, many experienced a sense of sadness. Slowly regaining composure, they began to look for hope.

### *Mobilising*

During the past 50 years I have worked with some individuals who have experienced grief and fallen into depression. One of the hardest parts is for them to mobilise their energy and start moving again.

The first step is a psychological one that only they can take. It is to choose to focus on what they can control rather than what they can't control.

The second step is to explore how they may use the experience to help themselves or other people. They may then begin experiencing more positive feelings as they look at the possibilities.

The third step is to translate their ideas into positive actions and get some successes. At times they may slip back into depression, but they can then aim to do things that give them positive energy.

### *Meaningful Work*

Some people then aim to do meaningful work. Different people do this in different ways. They may aim to improve life and make things better for people in the future.

The following pages look at one person who took this step and helped many people.

### *Chad Varah - The Samaritans*

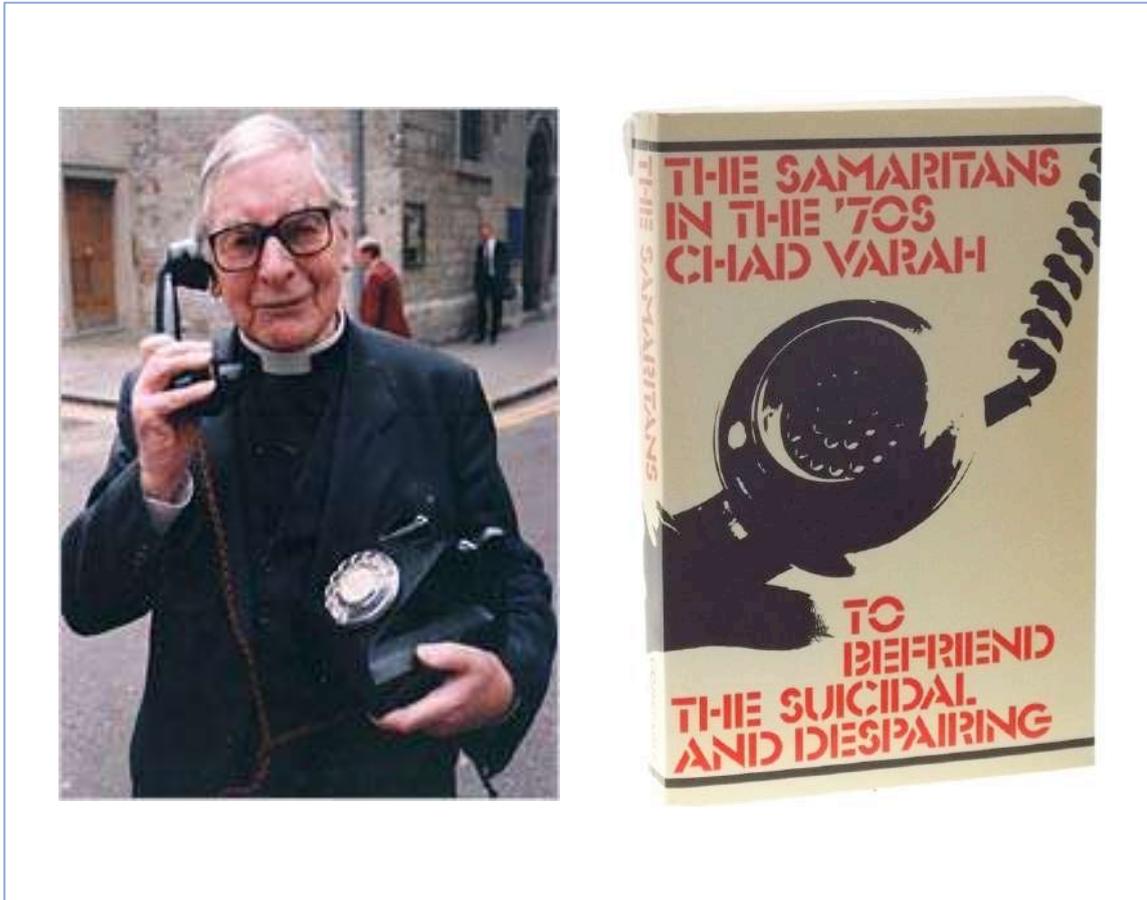
Chad was an Anglican clergyman who founded the Samaritans in 1953. Suicide was illegal at the time and he felt something could be done to help people in distress.

Here is an excerpt from the organisation's website. It explains Chad's motivation.

*The first funeral Chad Varah took as a curate prompted his lifelong commitment to suicide prevention and education.*

*The funeral was for a 13-year-old girl who had taken her own life because she feared she was seriously ill; in fact she had started to menstruate.*

*Chad vowed at her graveside to devote himself to helping other people overcome the sort of ignorance and isolation that had ultimately caused the young girl's death.*



Chad was born in Lincolnshire and studied at Oxford before attending Lincoln Theological College. He was ordained in 1936, then worked as curate in various parts of the UK before serving much of his working life in London.

Always daring to be different, he supplemented his early income by working as a children's comic scriptwriter. He helped to create *Dan Dare*, the spaceman, for *The Eagle* comic. The official Samaritans site explains more about his approach.

*An early proponent of sex education, Chad Varah alerted society to the approach of the permissive society, usually associated with the 1960s, with an article in the Picture Post in 1952.*

*Far more important to him than the outraged responses of conservative society were the 235 people who wrote in afterwards to bare their souls, 14 of whom showed signs of considering suicide.*

*The opportunity to act on his earlier promise to help people in emotional need came in 1953 when Chad was appointed Rector at the Church of St Stephen Walbrook in the City of London.*

*In the early 1950s, three suicides a day were officially recorded in Greater London; suicide was still an illegal act and sex education hardly existed.*

*Chad advertised in the press for people to help – not as trained counsellors, but as ordinary human beings offering a listening ear and emotional support.*

*Inundated with offers of help, he opened the first drop-in centre where emotionally isolated and distressed people could go to find a sympathetic ear – and Samaritans was born.*

*Chad continued to run Samaritans until 1987, thereafter remaining an active member of the organisation and retaining a watchful eye over it even after his retirement.*

The Samaritans found that providing a listening ear could enable people to take more charge of their lives. Certainly some might use it as a constant emotional crutch, but it was still worth it, even if it helped only one person to live longer.

Chad pioneering work created a caring framework. This enabled many people to help themselves and live more fulfilling lives.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe some of the ways that you believe a person may make use of sorrow.

Taking this step can help to translate the experience into something that helps themselves and other people. Here is the exercise.

## *Making Use Of Sorrow*

*Some of the ways a person  
may make use of sorrow are:*

*\* They may ...*

*For example ...*

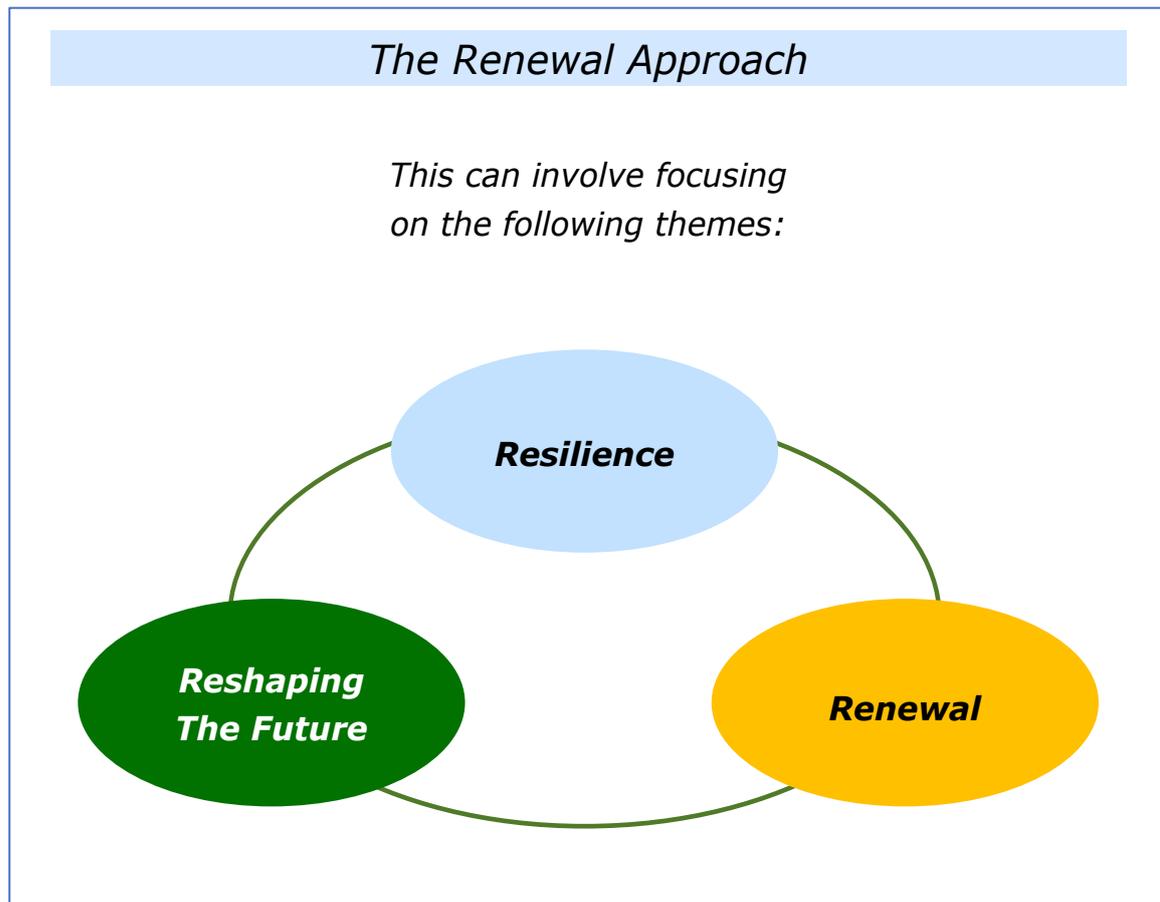
*\* They may ...*

*For example ...*

*\* They may ...*

*For example ...*

## *The Renewal Approach*



Some people turnaround their lives in dramatic ways after experiencing difficulties. Whilst being resilient, they may also take time to rest and renew themselves.

Looking back, can you think of a time when you renewed yourself? This may have been after a setback, when going through a crisis or simply reflecting on your life.

What did you do then to renew yourself? You may have taken time to rest and revitalise yourself. You may then have taken steps to refocus on your priorities in life.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences. We will then look at the themes of resilience, renewal and reshaping one's life.

## *Renewal In The Past*

*The specific situation in the past  
when I took time to renew myself was:*

\*

*The specific things I did  
then to renew myself were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that happened  
as a result of taking these steps were:*

\*

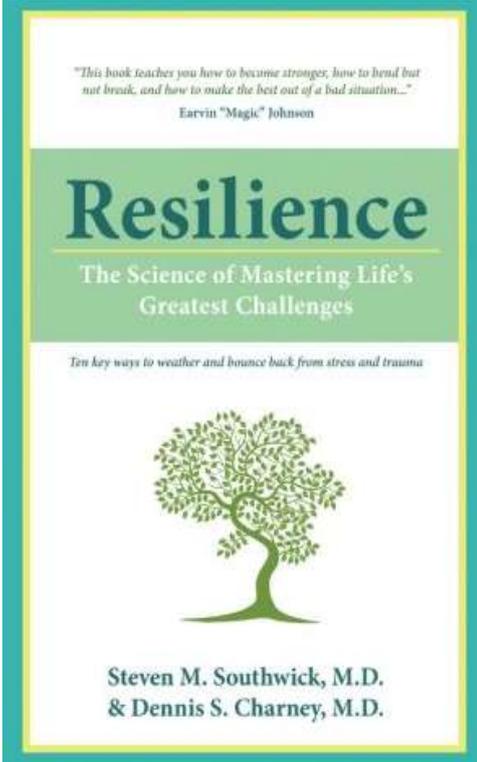
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## *Resilience*

There are many ways to demonstrate resilience. Some see it as showing grit and steely determination to battle through adversity. But there are many other ways to show this ability.

Dennis Charney, a professor of psychiatry, has studied these approaches. The following pages provide an introduction to his findings about people who are resilient. He explains this in the following way.



"This book teaches you how to become stronger, how to bend but not break, and how to make the best out of a bad situation..."  
Ervin "Magic" Johnson

# Resilience

The Science of Mastering Life's  
Greatest Challenges

Ten key ways to weather and bounce back from stress and trauma



Steven M. Southwick, M.D.  
& Dennis S. Charney, M.D.

*There are a couple of definitions of resilience.*

*One is if you've been traumatized in some way and you develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or depression, or other problems, but you recover - that's resilience.*

*Another definition is that you've been traumatized or experienced a lot of stress in your life but you don't develop issues related to depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder, or things like that.*

*My close colleague, Dr Steve Southwick, has been working with me for 30 years in studying resilience. We started out studying the causes of depression and PTSD to understand those conditions and develop new treatments.*

*We felt that if we could understand resilience - why some people are able to rise above difficulties in their life - that it might help us understand the conditions and develop the new treatments.*

*We decided to study resilient people, and along the way, we got to meet incredible people that we admired, who had changed their own lives.*

Dennis and Steven studied veterans and people who had overcome violence or other traumas. They found similar themes occurring.

This led to them outlining ten skills that people could use to manage such challenges. They found it would be helpful for people to develop the following qualities.

-  *To have a positive attitude but also be realistic – to have a clear-eyed view about the challenges they are facing;*
-  *To have a clear moral compass - such as a set of values, spiritual faith or sense of altruism;*
-  *To have resilient role models;*
-  *To draw lessons from their own traumatic experiences;*
-  *To develop active coping skills;*

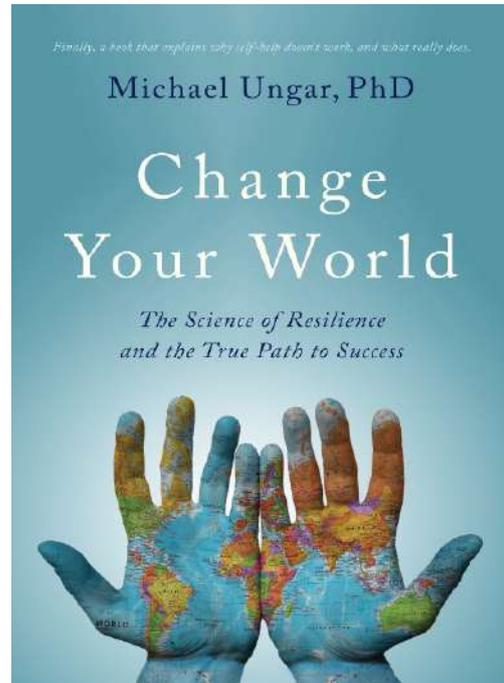
- *To train regularly and rigorously in areas such as their moral integrity, emotional intelligence and physical endurance;*
- *To recognise and foster their strengths - using them to deal with challenging situations;*
- *To care for their physical wellbeing;*
- *To have a strong social support network;*
- *To welcome challenges and believe they can find solutions.*

Michael Unger has helped many people to develop their resilience. These have included children, parents and people working in organisations. He is also the founder and Co-Director of the Resilience Research Centre.

Michael takes a holistic view of resilience. This is outlined on The Resilience Research Centre web site. Here are excerpts from this definition.

*Most commonly, the term resilience has come to mean an individual's ability to overcome adversity and continue his or her normal development.*

*However, the RRC uses a more ecological and culturally sensitive definition. This includes providing young people with a supportive environment. This creates the conditions where they can learn how to shape their futures.*



*Resilience is more likely to occur when we provide the services, supports, and health resources that make it more likely for every child to do well in ways that are meaningful to the individual, his or her family, and the community.*

Michael has helped many schools and organisations to help young people to grow. Below are some of the themes he highlights. His books provide many tools that you can use to follow this approach in your own way.

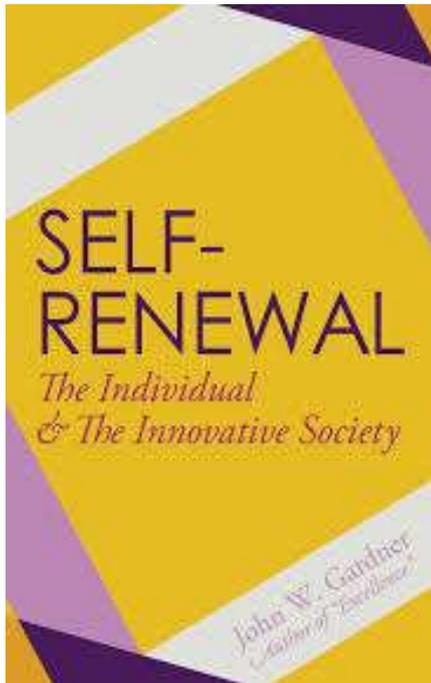
### *What Students Need To Succeed – Seven Core Elements*

- *To be able to fulfil their basic needs by having access to basic services.*
- *To enjoy positive relationships with an advocate, mentor or role models.*
- *To feel in control of their lives.*
- *To develop a sense of identity.*
- *To be treated fairly and experience social justice.*
- *To have a sense of cohesion, purpose or spirituality.*
- *To develop a sense of their own culture, whilst also respecting the cultures of others.*

## *Renewal*

Tough experiences can sometimes lead to a process of personal renewal. John Gardner wrote extensively about how this approach can be applied by individuals, organisations and societies.

John was the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare under President Lyndon Johnson. Here is an official description of his 1963 book *Self-Renewal*. It focuses on American society but the themes can be applied in many situations.



*In his classic treatise *Self-Renewal*, John W. Gardner examines why great societies thrive and die.*

*The twentieth century has brought about change more rapidly than any previous era, and with that came advancements, challenges, and often destruction.*

*Gardner cautions that "a society must court the kinds of change that will enrich and strengthen it, rather than the kind of change that will fragment and destroy it."*

*A society's ability to renew itself hinges upon its individuals. Gardner reasons that it is the waning of the heart and spirit - not a lack of material might - that threatens American society.*

*Young countries, businesses, and humans have several key commonalities: they are flexible, eager, open, curious, unafraid, and willing to take risks.*

*These conditions lead to success. However, as time passes, so too comes complacency, apathy, and rigidity, causing motivation to plummet. It is at this junction that great civilizations fall, businesses go bankrupt, and life stagnates.*

*Gardner asserts that the individual's role in social renewal requires each person to face and look beyond imminent threats. Ultimately, we need a vision that there is something worth saving.*

*Through this vision, Gardner argues, society will begin to renew itself, not permanently, but past its average lifespan, and it will at once become enriched and rejuvenated.*

John emphasised the importance of revitalising the spirit rather than simply amassing material things. Some take the following approach as people and as professionals.

### *Personal Renewal*

*There are many ways to continue to renew yourself.  
One approach is to explore the following themes.*

- *To continue to build on the best from the past;*
- *To focus on what you want to add, develop or do differently in the future;*
- *To continue to develop as a person and as a professional.*

John believed in the importance of lifelong learning and personal renewal. Below is a long excerpt from a speech he delivered to McKinsey & Company on November 10, 1990.

Many people in the audience were young and high achievers. He urged them to stay humble and curious throughout their lives.

John's speech has since been posted in full by many people. Here are some of the things he said. It a long piece but full of wisdom.

### *Self-Renewal*

*One of your most fundamental tasks is the renewal of the organizations you serve, and that usually includes persuading the top officers to accomplish a certain amount of self-renewal.*

*But to help you think about others is not my primary mission this morning. I want to help you think about yourselves. I'm going to talk about some basic problems of the life cycle that will surely hit you if you're not ready for them.*

*I once wrote a book called "Self-Renewal" that deals with the decay and renewal of societies, organizations and individuals.*

*I explored the question of why civilizations die and how they sometimes renew themselves, and the puzzle of why some men and women go to seed while others remain vital all of their lives.*

*The individual intent on self-renewal will have to deal with ghosts of the past - the memory of earlier failures, the remnants of childhood dramas and rebellions, accumulated grievances and resentments that have long outlived their cause.*

*The more I see of human lives, the more I believe the business of growing up is much longer drawn out than we pretend. If we achieve it in our 30's, even our 40s, we're doing well.*

*There's a myth that learning is for young people. The middle years are great, great learning years. Even the years past the middle years. I took on a new job after my 77th birthday - and I'm still learning.*

*Learn all your life. Learn from your failures. Learn from your successes, When you hit a spell of trouble, ask "What is it trying to teach me?"*

*The lessons aren't always happy ones, but they keep coming. It isn't a bad idea to pause occasionally for an inward look.*

*We learn from our jobs, from our friends and families. We learn by accepting the commitments of life, by playing the roles that life hands us (not necessarily the roles we would have chosen).*

*We learn by growing older, by suffering, by loving, by bearing with the things we can't change, by taking risks. The things you learn in maturity aren't simple things such as acquiring information and skills.*

*You learn not to engage in self-destructive behavior. You learn not to burn up energy in anxiety. You discover how to manage your tensions, if you have any, which you do.*

*You learn that self-pity and resentment are among the most toxic of drugs. You find that the world loves talent, but pays off on character.*

*You come to terms with yourself. You finally grasp what S. N. Behrman meant when he said: "At the end of every road you meet yourself."*

*You may not get rid of all of your hang-ups, but you learn to control them to the point that you can function productively and not hurt others.*

*You learn the arts of mutual dependence, meeting the needs of loved ones and letting yourself need them. You can achieve the simplicity that lies beyond sophistication. You come to understand your impact on others.*

*Of course failures are a part of the story too. The question isn't did you fail but did you pick yourself up and move ahead?*

*And there is one other little question: 'Did you collaborate in your own defeat?' A lot of people do. Learn not to.*

*One of the enemies of sound, lifelong motivation is a rather childish conception we have of the kind of concrete, describable goal toward which all of our efforts drive us.*

*We want to believe that there is a point at which we can feel that we have arrived. We want a scoring system that tells us when we've piled up enough points to count ourselves successful.*

*So you scramble and sweat and climb to reach what you thought was the goal. When you get to the top you stand up and look around and chances are you feel a little empty.*

*Maybe more than a little empty. You wonder whether you climbed the wrong mountain. But life isn't a mountain that has a summit, Nor is it - as some suppose - a riddle that has an answer. Nor a game that has a final score.*

*Life is an endless unfolding, and if we wish it to be, an endless process of self-discovery, an endless and unpredictable dialogue between our own potentialities and the life situations in which we find ourselves.*

*By potentialities I mean not just intellectual gifts but the full range of one's capacities for learning, sensing, wondering, understanding, loving and aspiring.*

*Perhaps you imagine that by age 35 or 45 or even 33 you have explored those potentialities pretty fully. Don't kid yourself!*

*The thing you have to understand is that the capacities you actually develop to the full come out as the result of an interplay between you and life's challenges - and the challenges keep changing. Life pulls things out of you.*

*There's something I know about you that you may or may not know about yourself.*

*You have within you more resources of energy than have ever been tapped, more talent than has ever been exploited, more strength than has ever been tested, more to give than you have ever given.*

*You know about some of the gifts that you have left undeveloped. Would you believe that you have gifts and possibilities you don't even know about? It's true.*

*It isn't possible to talk about renewal without touching on the subject of motivation. There is no perfection of techniques that will substitute for the lift of spirit and heightened performance that comes from strong motivation.*

*The world is moved by highly motivated people, by enthusiasts, by men and women who want something very much or believe very much.*

*I'm not talking about anything as narrow as ambition. After all, ambition eventually wears out and probably should. But you can keep your zest until the day you die.*

*The vitalizing thing is to be interested. Keep a sense of curiosity. Discover new things. Care. Risk failure. Reach out.*

*As Robert Louis Stevenson said, "Old or young, we're on our last cruise." We want it to mean something.*

*For many this life is a vale of tears; for no one is it free of pain. But we are so designed that we can cope with it if we can live in some context of meaning.*

*Given that powerful help, we can draw on the deep springs of the human spirit, to see our suffering in the framework of all human suffering, to accept the gifts of life with thanks and endure life's indignities with dignity.*

*Young people run around searching for identity, but it isn't handed out free anymore - not in this transient, rootless, pluralistic society. Your identity is what you've committed yourself to.*

*It may just mean doing a better job at whatever you're doing. There are men and women who make the world better just by being the kind of people they are –and that too is a kind of commitment.*

*They have the gift of kindness or courage or loyalty or integrity. It matters very little whether they're behind the wheel of a truck or running a country store or bringing up a family.*

*People of every age need commitments beyond the self, need the meaning that commitments provide. Self-preoccupation is a prison, as every self-absorbed person finally knows.*

*Commitments to larger purposes can get you out of prison.*

*I can tell you that for renewal, a tough-minded optimism is best. Men and women of vitality have always been prepared to bet their futures, even their lives, on ventures of unknown outcome.*

*But I did say tough-minded optimism. High hopes that are dashed by the first failure are precisely what we don't need.*

*We have to believe in ourselves, but we mustn't suppose that the path will be easy, it's tough.*

*We cannot dream of a Utopia in which all arrangements are ideal and everyone is flawless.*

*Life is tumultuous - an endless losing and regaining of balance, a continuous struggle, never an assured victory. Nothing is ever finally safe.*

*Every important battle is fought and re-fought. We need to develop a resilient, indomitable morale that enables us to face those realities and still strive with every ounce of energy to prevail.*

*You may wonder if such a struggle - endless and of uncertain outcome -isn't more than humans can bear. But all of history suggests that the human spirit is well fitted to cope with just that kind of world.*

*Many years ago I concluded a speech with a paragraph on the meaning in life. The speech was reprinted over the years, and 15 years later that final paragraph came back to me in a rather dramatic way, really a heart breaking way.*

*A man wrote to me from Colorado saying that his 20-year-old daughter had been killed in an auto accident some weeks before and that she was carrying in her billfold a paragraph from a speech of mine.*

*He said he was grateful because the paragraph - and the fact that she kept it close to her - told him something he might not otherwise have known about her values and concerns. I can't imagine where or how she came across the paragraph, but here it is:*

*"Meaning is not something you stumble across, like the answer to a riddle or the prize in a treasure hunt. Meaning is something you build into your life.*

*"You build it out of your own past, out of your affections and loyalties, out of the experience of humankind as it is passed on to you, out of your own talent and understanding, out of the things*

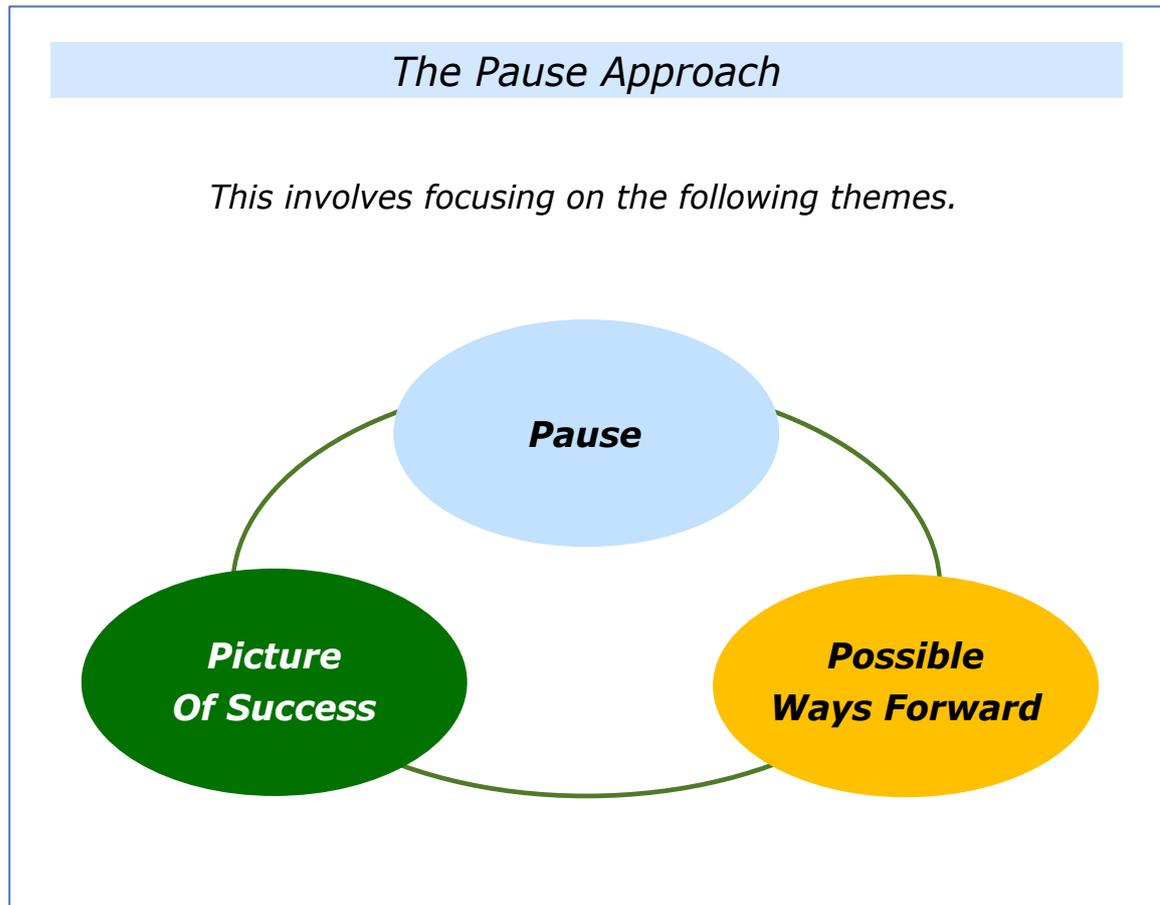
*you believe in, out of the things and people you love, out of the values for which you are willing to sacrifice something.*

*"The ingredients are there. You are the only one who can put them together into that unique pattern that will be your life.*

*"Let it be a life that has dignity and meaning for you. If it does, then the particular balance of success or failure is of less account."*

Different people renew themselves in different ways. The following pages explore some of these approaches.

## *The Pause Approach*



This is an approach that people sometimes follow to renew themselves or make key decisions. It involves taking time to pause, consider the possible ways forward and then work towards the picture of success.

Imagine you want to follow this approach in your own way. Let's consider these steps.

### *You Can Take Time To Pause*

Looking back, can you think of a situation when chose to pause and buy time to think? You may have done this when recovering from a setback, focusing on what is important in life or making a key decision.

What did you do then to reflect? You may have chosen to sleep, go for a walk, talk with a friend or take time to gather your thoughts. What were the benefits of taking this step?

Imagine that you want to take a similar approach in the future. What may be the kind of situation where you want to pause? You may want to do this after suffering a disappointment, being knocked off-course or when deciding the route you want to follow in the future.

What may be your favourite way to pause? Much will depend on the situation, of course, because you may have a limited time to think. Bearing this in mind, how could you take time to pause and reflect?

### *You Can Consider The Possible Ways Forward*

Different people use different techniques for exploring their possible ways forward. The approach they use may also depend on the specific situation.

A person who is experiencing emotional pain, for example, may begin by finding a way to manage their present feeling. They may then explore the following questions.

*What do I feel right now? How can I manage my present feeling?  
What do I want to feel instead? How can I move towards having this feeling?*

*What are the possible routes forward? What are the consequences - the pluses and minuses - of each option? Which of these options do I want to follow?*

Good decision makers explore the potential scenarios of pursuing each route. They may then make their decision based on the consequences of each option.

Imagine that you have decided on your chosen way forwards. It will then be time to move to the next step.

### *You Can Work Towards The Picture Of Success*

There are many models for making action plans. After deciding on your chosen way forwards, one approach is:

*To clarify the real results you want to achieve and translate these into a clear picture of success;*

*To clarify the strategies you can follow to give yourself the greatest chance of achieving success;*

*To clarify the action plan you want to follow and then work towards achieving the picture of success.*

This is a model we have explored throughout this book. As mentioned earlier, however, one of the keys is to take time to pause.

This approach can help you to reflect, recentre and see things in perspective. You may then be in a better position to explore the possible options and work towards your picture of success.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach? How can you take these steps in your own way? What may happen as a result?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Pause Approach*

*The specific situation when I may want to follow elements of this approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to pause, explore the possible ways forward then work towards the picture of success are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Giving Is Winning Approach*

### *Giving Is Winning*

- *Giving can create wins for other people*
- *Giving can create wins for yourself*
- *Giving can create wins for both present and future generations*



This approach is based on the philosophy that we are here to give to others. The act of giving can also create wins for both the receiver and the giver. Let's explore these themes.

### *Giving can create wins for other people*

Many people love to give to others. Different people do this in different ways. Sometimes it involves asking the following questions and then translating these into action.

*What do I want to give to people? How can I give them encouragement? How can I give them positive experiences? What are the practical things I can do to help them in their lives and work? How can I help them to achieve their goals?*

*Giving can create  
wins for yourself*

Many people feel better after giving to others. They love to help others but also make sure they do not become a victim. They may get the helper's high by following the philosophy that:

*You are most yourself when you forget yourself.*

Some people go into a state of flow when giving to others. They may do this when cooking for people, giving medical care, counselling or doing other things that help people. This can lead to a feeling of elation and happiness.

*Giving can create wins for both  
present and future generations*

Many people like to serve something greater than themselves. Some do it by serving a spiritual faith or vocation. Some do it by feeling part of a greater stream of service that helps people and the planet to develop.

Different do this in different ways. Some do it by asking the following questions.

*How can I continue to give to people? How can I pass on knowledge that helps people? How can I help them to develop their health, hope and happiness? How can I encourage both present and future generations?*

Sometimes giving to others can have a wider effect. Many encouraging teachers, for example, have had a profound influence on their students who have then passed on encouragement to others.

There are many ways to renew yourself. The giving approach can be one of the simplest and quickest. It can create wins for both yourself and other people.

## *The Achievements Approach*

### *My Achievements Book*

*This exercise invites a person to describe some of the things they have achieved in their life. These can be small or big things, personal or professional.*

*The exercise can be done at any time of life. It invites a person to write things under the following heading.*

Some people can renew themselves by focusing on the things they have done so far in their lives. This can help them to appreciate what they have achieved.

Most people have achieved many things in their lives. They may have raised children, helped people, done valuable work, spread happiness, passed on knowledge and done many other things.

The following exercise invites a person to describe some of the things they have achieved in their life. These can be small or big things, personal or professional.

This is an approach that is sometimes used with individuals in their later years, but the exercise can be used at any age. Some people find it to be uplifting. It helps them to realise that they have done many valuable things in their life.

*My Achievements. Some of the things I have achieved in my life have been the following.*

*I have:*

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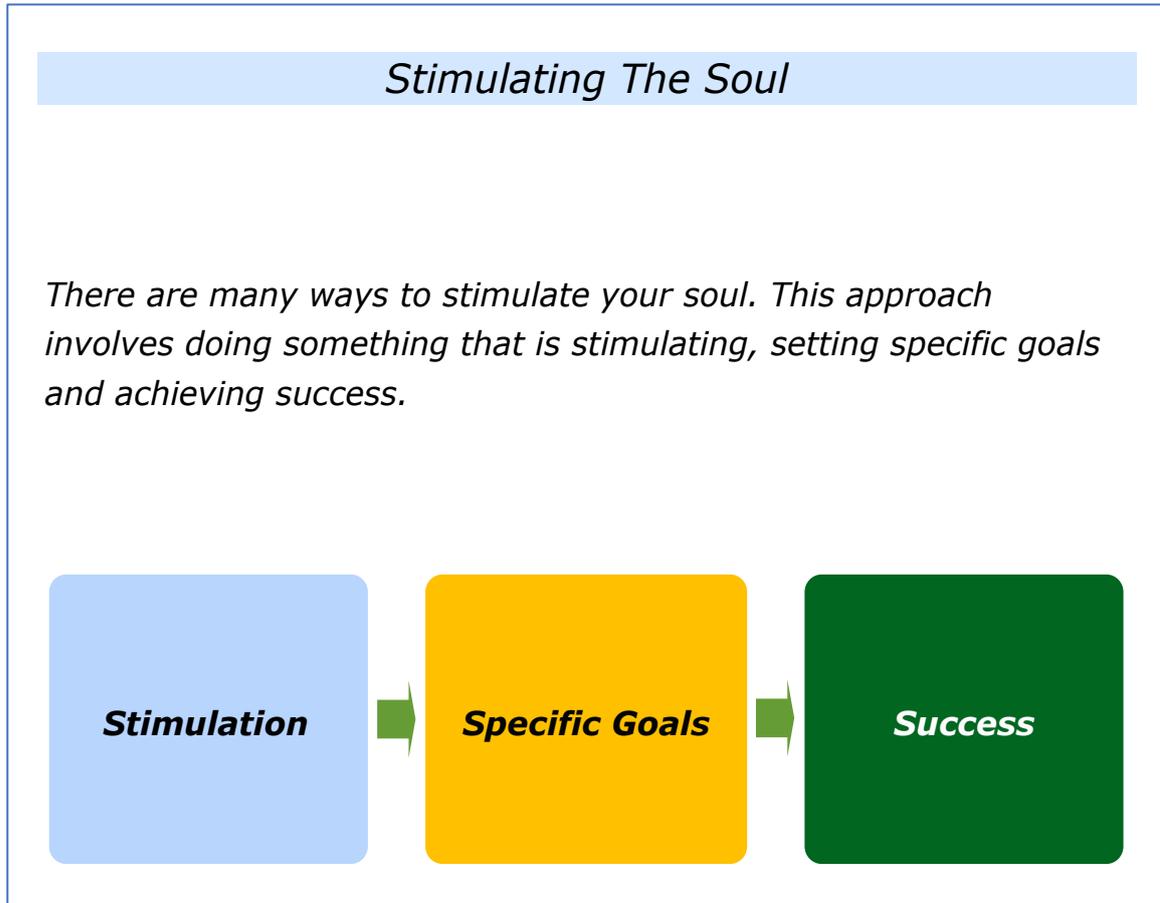
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## *The Stimulating The Soul Approach*



There are many ways to stimulate your soul. You may wish to do this when aiming to move on from feeling down, perform creative work or do another activity.

Different people take this step in different ways. Here are some of the themes they mention.

*The specific things I do  
to stimulate my soul are:*

*Counting my blessings ... Going on my favourite walk ... Listening to music ... Spending time with my dogs ... Being close to water ... Giving to other people ... Encouraging a positive person ... Doing something creative and getting a sense of satisfaction.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Stimulating My Soul*

*The specific things I can do to stimulate my soul are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of doing some of these things will be:*

\*

\*

\*

Imagine that you have described some of these activities. If appropriate, you may wish to move on to the next step.

This involves choosing to do one of these things, setting a specific goal and achieving success. Taking these steps can lead to a sense of satisfaction and stimulate your soul.

This approach can work on many levels. One person explained what they experienced when taking these steps.

*"Depression took over during the second year of the Covid pandemic. On one level I enjoyed being at home, but I also felt tired from many virtual meetings.*

*"On the surface I had everything – a nice house, enough money and a lovely family – but I had lost my spark. Then something happened.*

*"Out of the blue a friend called to say they were reconstituting the band we played in ten years ago. The aim was to put out videos of our old material – plus add other songs.*

*"It was great to fish out my old guitars, relearn the tunes and also perform – albeit to camera. I loved the camaraderie and creativity. It was also good to produce something tangible.*

*"As if by coincidence other things began happening in my life. I began walking for at least an hour a day and also ate better food. Feeling more alive, I found myself more able to deal with some of the challenges in my life."*

This approach can also be used when helping people to begin making transitions in their careers. One person I worked with applied it in the following way. They chose:

*To be super professional in their present role and continue making a good contribution to achieving the organisation's goals;*

*To spend extra time doing stimulating work with the customers they found stimulating and, in the process, they developed extra revenue for the organisation;*

*To then, with their employer's blessing, move full-time into doing this stimulating – this created wins for the organisation, wins for the customers and wins for them.*

The person enjoyed this role for six months and the results they delivered proved attractive to other organisations. They therefore decided to set up their own business.

At first the person still did four days a week with their present organisation. After several months, however, they moved on to do stimulating project work with three clients. This created a base for them to do satisfying work in the future.

Let's return to your own life and work. What are the specific things you can do to stimulate your soul? How can you translate these into setting specific goals and aiming to achieve success?

You may want to do simple things – such as walking, playing a sport, reading, cooking or spending time with loved ones. You may want to do bigger things – such as embarking on a creative project, spending time with stimulating customers or doing another activity.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Stimulating My Soul In The Future*

*The specific activity  
that stimulates my soul is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to pursue  
this activity, set specific goals and  
do my best to achieve success are:*

\*

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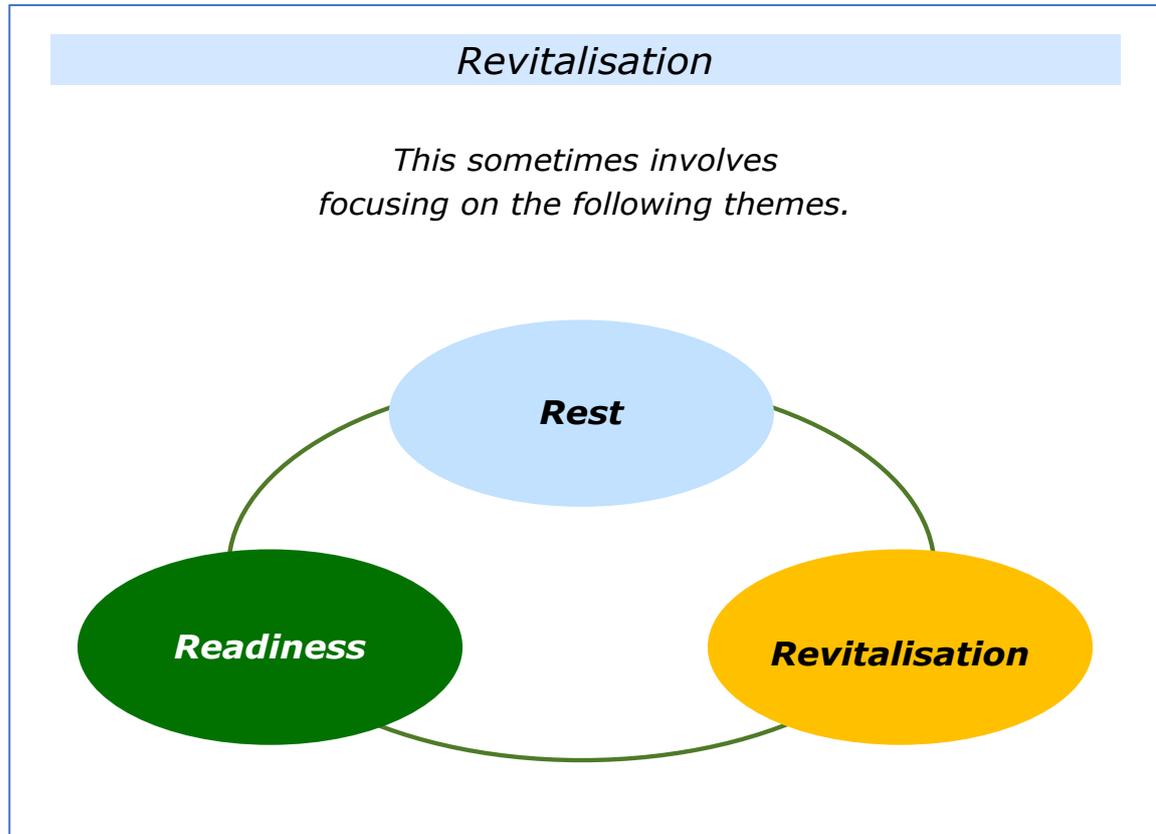
*The specific things that may happen  
as a result of taking these steps are:*

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## *The Revitalisation Approach*



Imagine that you have done rewarding work. How do you rest and revitalise yourself? How do you ready yourself for the next piece of work? Let's explore how you can take these steps in your own way.

### *Rest*

How do you rest your body and soul? How do you do this in a physical way? How do you do it in a psychological way? How do you rest in a philosophical way and let your mind wander?

Some people sleep for many hours, take short naps or use other methods to restore their body. They then feel more equipped to tackle the next challenge.

Some people do things they find restful. They spend time in certain environments, listen to music, potter around or do other things that soothe their soul.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Rest*

*The specific things I do to rest my body and soul are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of doing these things are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Revitalisation*

How do you revitalise yourself? Different people take these steps in different ways. Here are some of the things they say.

*I revitalise myself by:*

*Listening to inspiring music ... Walking in the fields with our dogs ... Running ... Spending time with positive people ... Studying success ... Making plans for the next day and then going to sleep – this often works.*

Some individuals revitalise themselves by returning to their inner compass. One person who did challenging work expressed this in the following way.

*"I take time to relax and remind myself of the things that are really important. I gain strength from refocusing on the principles I want to follow in my life.*

*"This is a technique learned when working with challenging patients in a psychiatric hospital. The work was rewarding but some days could be exhausting.*

*"My mentor at the hospital told me to take time: a) to decompress at the end of each day; b) to remind myself of why I was doing the work; c) to then let my body and soul do what it wanted.*

*"Sometimes I let my hair down by playing five-a-side football or going to a concert. Then it was off to bed and getting ready for the next day."*

Let's return to your own life and work. How do you revitalise yourself? What are the benefits of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Revitalisation*

*The specific things I do to  
revitalise my body and soul are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of  
doing these things are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Readiness*

Imagine that you have gone through the process of rest and revitalisation. How can you ready yourself for the next task?

Great workers start by clarifying the results to achieve. They clarify the strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success. They then translate these into specific action plans

They rehearse the specific things they can do: a) to follow their strategies; b) to manage challenges; c) to deal with any unexpected events along the way. They rehearse until they feel ready.

Such workers relax. Looking ahead, they rehearse the first actions they will take. They then move into action and aim to do their best.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe how you can ready yourself for the next task.

## *Readiness*

*The specific things I can do to ready myself for the next task are:*

\*

\*

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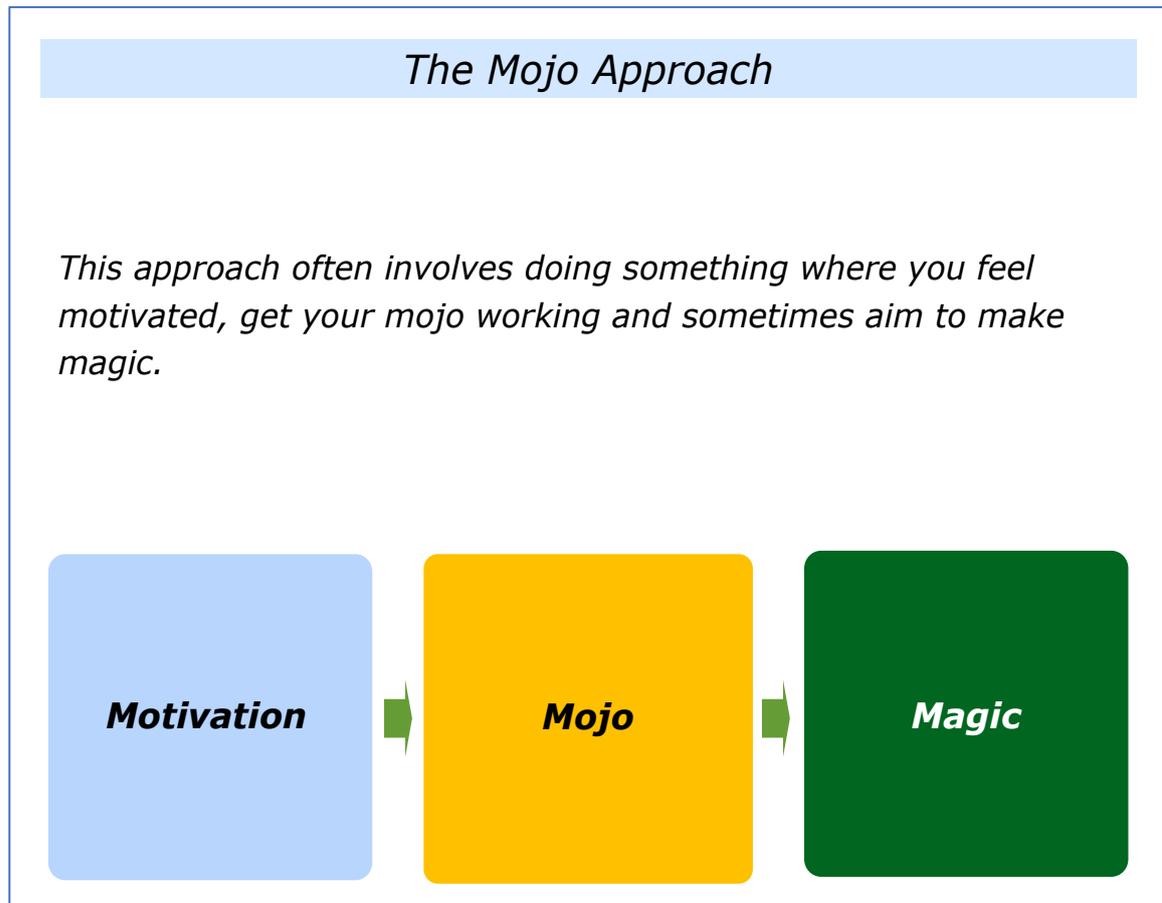
*The specific benefits of doing these things will be:*

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## *The Mojo Approach*



This is an approach that a person may follow to feel motivated or gain a sense of meaning. A person may say, for example:

*"I want to get my mojo back."*

The word *mojo* has several meanings. These include the following:

*A sense of being positive, energetic and successful ... A quality that causes one to excel ... A magical charm or power that is attractive and brings good luck.*

There are many views on how to maintain or regain your *mojo*. One approach involves focusing on the following themes.

## *Motivation*

The first step is for a person to do something they find motivating. This could be a simple activity or a big project. They may aim, for example:

*To do small things that gives them positive energy – such as going for a walk, playing music, pursuing a creative project or doing another activity;*

*To do satisfying work that gives them positive energy – such as where they can play to their strengths, do superb work and achieve success;*

*To do something where they are serving something greater than themselves – such as following a spiritual faith, their vocation or a sense of mission.*

The key is to regain or maintain a sense of motivation. This may take them to the next stage.

## *Mojo*

This step involves getting their mojo going and maintaining the momentum. Great workers often aim to follow a certain rhythm that enables them to perform at their best. Different people do this in different ways. They may aim, for example:

*To plan ahead and organise their time in blocks so they will be able to absorb themselves in their chosen activity and do deep work;*

*To rehearse what they are going to do, follow their ritual for moving into action and follow their chosen rhythm;*

*To manage their energy properly so they can perform superb work, revitalise themselves and then return to following their pattern for doing their best.*

You will have your own way of maintaining your mojo. Sometimes this may also lead to the next stage.

## *Magic*

Great workers follow their mojo and may also go into another dimension. They do the maintenance work and then sometimes make magic.

They may do this when playing a sport, performing on stage, pursuing a creative project, tackling a challenge or doing another activity. They go into their equivalent of the zone.

This can create a feedback loop. The experience feeds their mojo and they may continue to expand the dimension in which they create something magical.

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that you want to start or regain your mojo in the future.

Sometimes it can be useful to start by doing small things that give you energy and increase your motivation. How can you do some of these things?

If appropriate, how you can move on to doing something bigger that you feel motivated to do? This could be a creative project, a piece of satisfying work or tackling a challenge.

Looking ahead, how can you start by getting a quick success? How can you then follow your rhythm? How can keep your mojo going?

How can you manage your energy and perform superb work? If appropriate, how can you maybe aim to make magic? What would be the benefits taking this step?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Mojo Approach*

*The specific things I can do to start or regain my mojo are:*

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*The specific things I can then do to maintain my mojo, do superb work and sometimes aim to make magic are:*

\*

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*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

\*

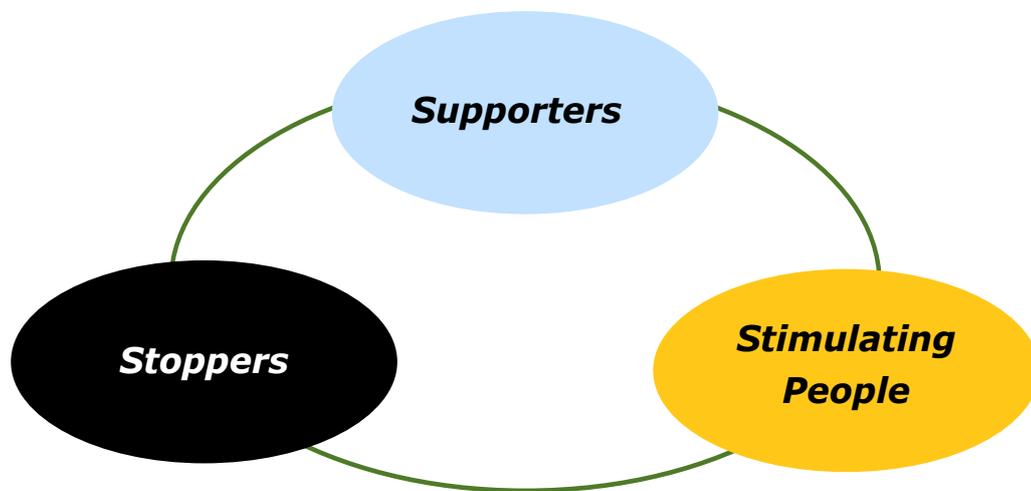
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## *The Supporters, Stimulating People And Stoppers Approach*

### *Supporters, Stimulators And Stoppers*

*People can spend time with supporters, stimulating people or stoppers. The experiences they have with these people can influence how they shape their future.*



Every person can take responsibility for managing their feelings. The people they spend time with, however, can have a strong influence on what they feel.

A person who spends time with people who act in a supportive way is more likely to feel good. This can help them to gain with strength and also learn from positive models.

Such supportive people may provide encouragement. They may also at times be truth tellers and, when appropriate, offer suggestions about how a person may choose to behave in the future.

Who have been the supportive people in your life? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This starts by inviting you to describe some of the people who have supported you in the past.

Looking back, you may have had a mother, father or others who encouraged you. There may have been a teacher, coach or other significant person who helped you to believe in yourself.

What did they do to support you? They may have helped you to feel safe, believe in yourself, build on your strengths or do other things. What did you gain from the help they gave you?

Here is the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe some of the people who have supported you in the past. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Supporters In The Past*

*The Person's Name:*

\*

*The specific things they  
did to support me were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The Person's Name:*

\*

*The specific things they  
did to support me were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The Person's Name:*

\*

*The specific things they  
did to support me were:*

\*

\*

\*

Who are the people that support you now? You may have a partner, friends, kindred spirits and others who provide encouragement.

What do each of these people do to provide support? Some may do this in practical ways, some may do it in psychological ways. The things they offer may help you to feel safe, encouraged and able to be yourself.

Some of these people may also be truth tellers. When appropriate, they may offer suggestions about how you can behave in the future to help yourself or others. You may take this on board because you know they have your interests at heart.

## *Supporters In The Present*

*The Person's Name:*

\*

*The specific things they  
do to support me are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The Person's Name:*

\*

*The specific things they  
do to support me are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The Person's Name:*

\*

*The specific things they  
do to support me are:*

\*

\*

\*

Let's move on to the people who have been stimulating. You may have had a teacher, coach or another person who was inspiring or acted as a positive model.

Alternatively, you may have gained inspiration from people you never met. These may have been writers, artists, thinkers or others who provided stimulation.

If you wish, try tackling the exercises on this theme. This invites you to describe the people who have provided stimulation in the past and those who do so in the present.

## *Stimulating People In The Past*

*The Person's Name:*

\*

*The specific things they did to  
stimulate or inspire me were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The Person's Name:*

\*

*The specific things they did to stimulate or inspire me were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The Person's Name:*

\*

*The specific things they did to stimulate or inspire me were:*

\*

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## *Stimulating People In The Present*

*The Person's Name:*

\*

*The specific things they do that  
I find stimulating or inspiring are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The Person's Name:*

\*

*The specific things they do that  
I find stimulating or inspiring are:*

\*

\*

\*

Let's move on to the more difficult part. Looking back, who are the people that you have experienced as stoppers?

These may have been people close to you or other you have encountered in your personal or professional life. Such people may have affected you in different ways.

Some may have had the best of intentions, but the way they behaved was not helpful. Some people try to motivate others, for example, by pointing out their faults.

Some stoppers have a negative attitude or pass on their own unhappiness to other people. They grumble and fail to see the good things in life. This can have a dispiriting effect on other people.

Let's come back to the present day. Do you have any people who you experience as stoppers? What do they do that has a negative effect?

How did you manage stoppers in the past? How did you aim to do more than to survive but go on to thrive? What happened as a result?

How do you manage any potential stoppers at the moment? You may aim, for example:

*To stop putting yourself into situations where you encounter such people;*

*To, if you can't avoid such people, rehearse what you are going to do when encountering such people;*

*To recognise the things they do that trigger your emotions and also to learn how to manage such triggers.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on themes. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Stoppers In The Past*

*The Person's Name:*

\*

*The specific things they did that led to me feeling they were stopping me were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I did to aim to manage the situation and thrive were:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Stoppers In The Present*

*The Person's Name:*

\*

*The specific things they do that lead to me feeling they are stopping me are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to aim to manage the situation and thrive are:*

\*

\*

\*

Let's move on to your potential action plan. What do you want to do with the information about the people who may be supportive, stimulating or stoppers?

If appropriate, you may want to take some of the following steps. As ever, however, it is important that you are comfortable with these and follow them in your own way. You may want:

*To spend more time with the people who are supportive and, in turn, offer them support – this can bring benefits to both yourself and other people;*

*To continue to get stimulation and inspiration from certain people and situations – this can help to generate your creativity and development;*

*To manage any people or situations where you experience being stopped – this can include not putting yourself into such situations or having a strategy for dealing with these when they do happen.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on these themes. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

# *Supporters, Stimulating People And Stoppers In The Future*

## *Supporters*

*The specific things I can do  
to spend time with the  
people who are supporters are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to support  
the people who support me are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Stimulating People*

*The specific things I can do to get stimulation and inspiration from certain people and situations are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Stoppers*

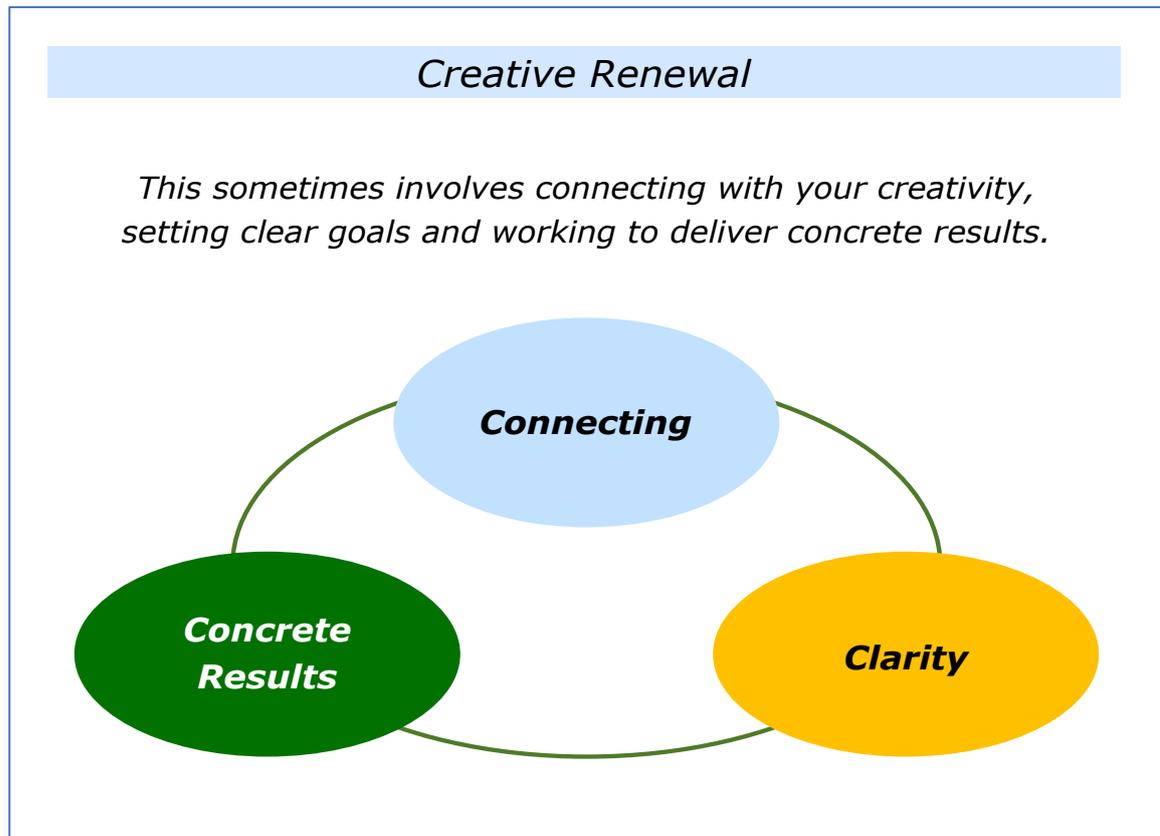
*The specific things I can do to manage any people or situations where I experience being stopped are:*

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## The Creative Renewal Approach



Different people choose different ways to renew their creativity. One approach is for them to take the following steps.

They connect with their creativity. They follow their creative drive and set clear goals. They do creative work and aim to achieve concrete results.

Imagine that you want to do this in your own way. How can you connect with your creative drive? Here are some ways that individuals take this step. They may choose:

*To sleep ... To let their mind wander ... To go for walks ... To play ... To listen to music ... To study success ... To potter around ... To do an unrelated creative activity.*

Some people set themselves challenges. They may aim to solve a problem, meet a deadline or find creative ways to reach a goal.

This is an approach that I sometimes use. It involves going through the following steps:

*To think of a topic I want to explore or a challenge that people may facing;*

*To translate this into a specific goal to achieve and clarify the picture of success;*

*To focus on how to achieve this specific goal by keep asking myself: "How to ...?"*

This releases creative energy. It can lead to discovering a piece of work that I want to do or to finding ways to do existing work.

Imagine that you have connected with your creative drive. The next step will be to translate this into setting clear goals. These will obviously depend on the kind of activity you want to pursue.

You may aim to pursue a passion, do superb work or do a specific project. You may aim to develop in your role as a counsellor, technical specialist, leader or in another professional role.

Imagine that you have taken this step. You have clarified: a) the specific results to achieve; b) the strategies to follow. You have also translated this into a clear action plan.

You will then aim to achieve the desired concrete results. This may involve you following your chosen rhythm, performing superb work and working to achieve your picture of success.

Different people renew their creativity in different ways. This section has described one approach. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

This invites you to describe how you can follow elements of this approach in your own way. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Creative Renewal*

*The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of the creative renewal approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to follow elements of this approach in my way are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Clearing Your Mind Rather Than Cluttering Your Mind Approach*

*A person can sometimes do their best by preparing properly and then by:*

***Clearing  
Their Mind***

*Rather than:*

***Cluttering  
Their Mind***

What are the situations where you want to clear your mind? What are the rituals you go through to take these steps? What are some of the things that may happen as a result?

Different people do different things to clear their minds. Some do deep breathing, some go for a walk, some take a nap. Some have a bath or a shower. Some do routine chores to get them out of the way.

Some creative people do things that sound counter-intuitive. They may play music or do activities that others would see as cluttering their minds. Every person is different, however, and finds their own way to approach tasks with a clear mind.

One writer had an unusual approach. Having relatively few books in their house, they explained this in the following.

*"The best way for me to remember what is in a book is to read it and then give it away. This forces me to write a short piece summarising the key points in the book.*

*"This helps me to keep my mind open when reading other books. Sometimes I need to buy the book again to revisit the key points but, by and large, I find that this approach works."*

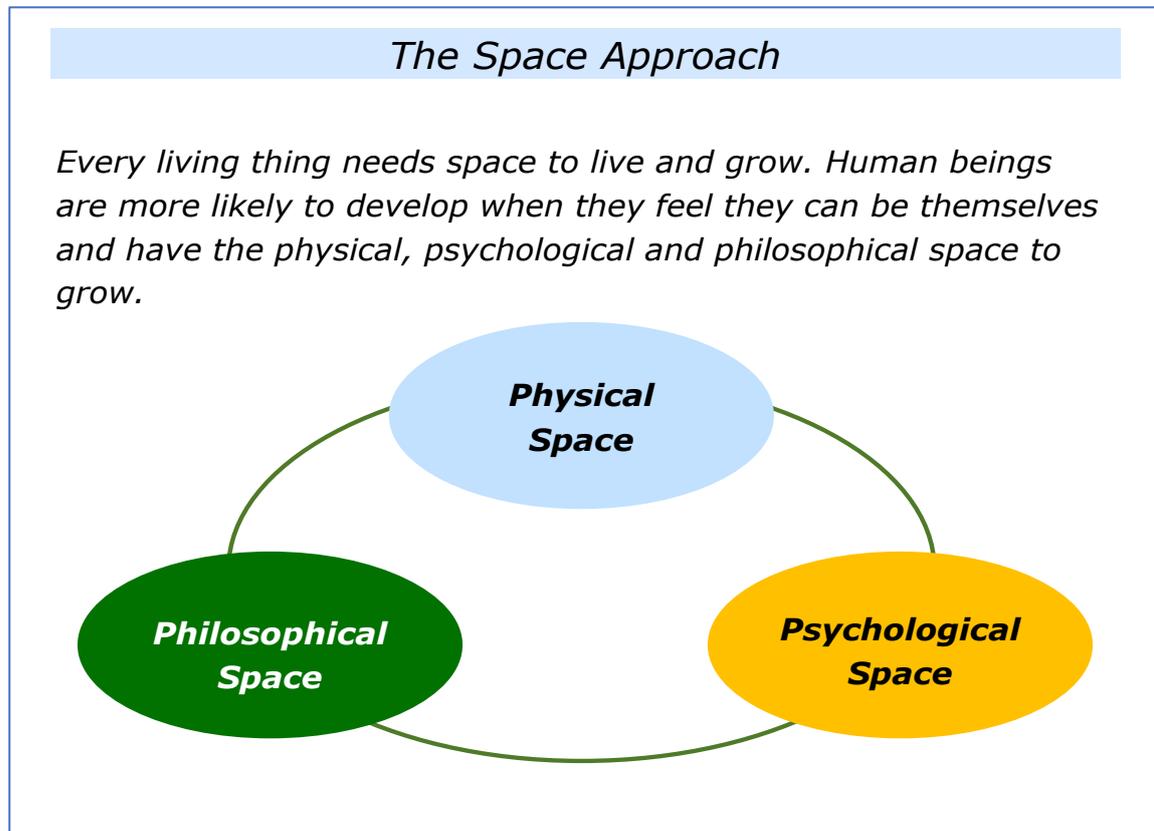
Looking at my own work, I do lots of research in the days leading up to a first session with a new person. It is vital to know about their strengths, their situation and the specific topics they may want to explore. The day before the session I rehearse the possible scenarios.

On the actual day I set aside half an hour to relax and again rehearse what may happen. Then, a few minutes before the session, I clear my mind and relax. Beginning the session, I aim to be fully present, help the person to feel at ease and clarify their aims.

Sometimes we cover topics that I have considered, other times the topics may be different. Whatever happens, I try to have a clear mind and pass on ideas the person can use to achieve their goals.

Let's return to your own life. What are the things that you do to have a clear mind rather than a cluttered mind? What are the steps you take? What happens as result?

## *The Creating Space In Your Life Approach*



Looking back on your life, when you do feel you have had space to grow? When have you felt it was okay to be yourself? How do you give other people the encourage and space to space develop?

Every living thing needs space to live and grow. Human beings are more likely to develop when they feel:

*They can shape their lives, care for their loved ones and use their personal and professional talents;*

*They can be themselves and have the physical, psychological and philosophical space to grow;*

*They can help other people and make a positive contribution during their time on the planet.*

People often feel driven to find or create a space where they can be themselves. This is not just a modern cliché where people talk about wanting space.

They have emigrated to new lands where they can have freedom to live, think and as they wish. They have chosen to live alone rather than be in relationships that are imprisoning. They have moved to professional roles where they could use their talents rather than be in painful cultures.

The following pages describe an exercise I used to give on workshops that helped people to use their talents. This involved giving each person a long roll of paper which they spread on the floor. They were then invited to do the following things.

*To map out the years they had lived in their life and also how long they would like to live in the future;*

*To draw how much space they felt they had during each stage of their lives and to note what was happening that those stages;*

*To recognise that this feeling of space is subjective – they could maybe have chosen to manage their experience in a different way – but it was important for them draw what it felt like;*

*To look ahead and describe how they wanted to create space for themselves – and make good use of it – in the future;*

*To clarify how they could encourage other people in their lives to be themselves and create space to grow.*

The final part was important because some people could feel it was indulgent to focus only on their lives. It was good to explore how they could use what they had learned to encourage other people to grow.

The following pages provide an introduction to the exercise. It also includes examples of what one person wrote.

## *Draw How Much Space You Feel You Have Had In Your Life*

*The following pages give you the chance draw how much space you feel you have had in your life. This will be subject, of course, but it can be useful to do this exercise.*

*You can then focus on how much space you want to create for yourself and for others to be themselves in life.*

*The space I have felt I have had to be myself in my life – together with the reasons why - has been the following.*

**0**

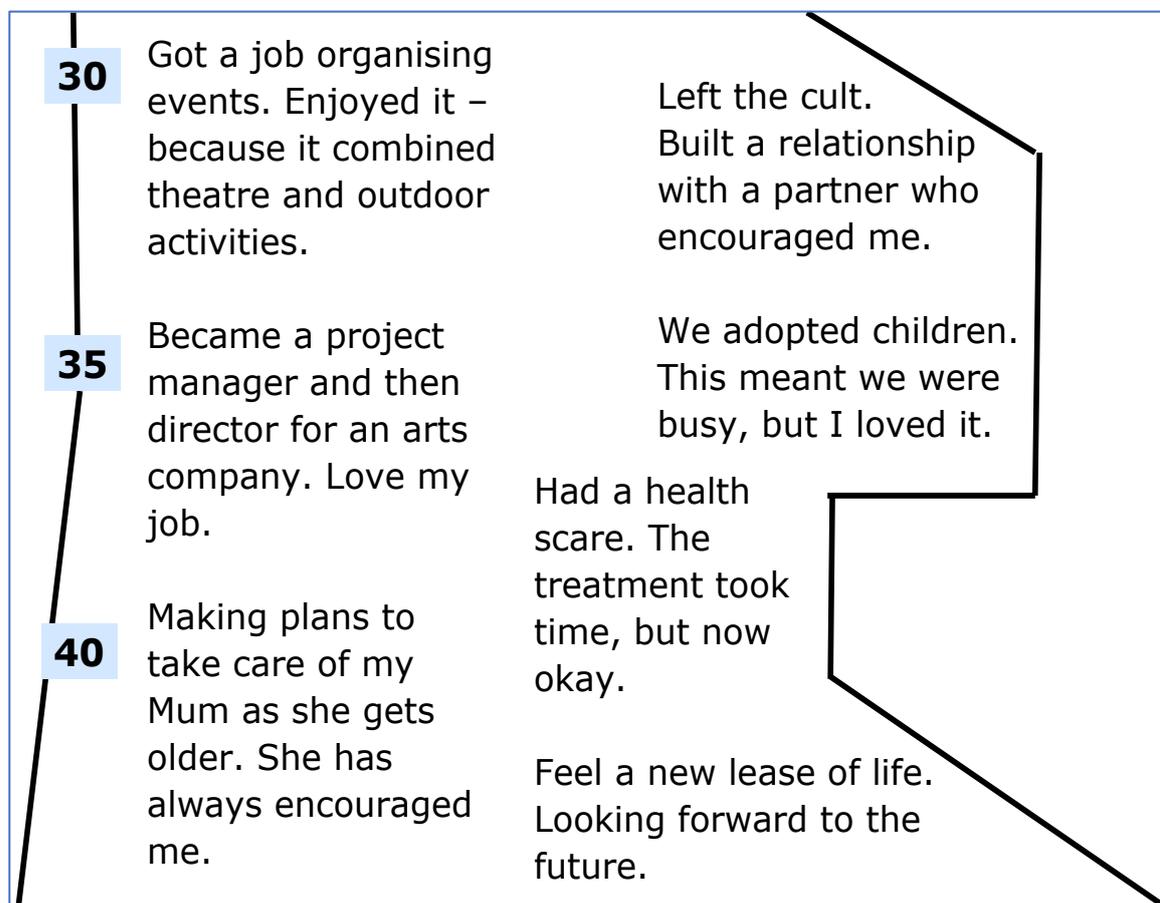
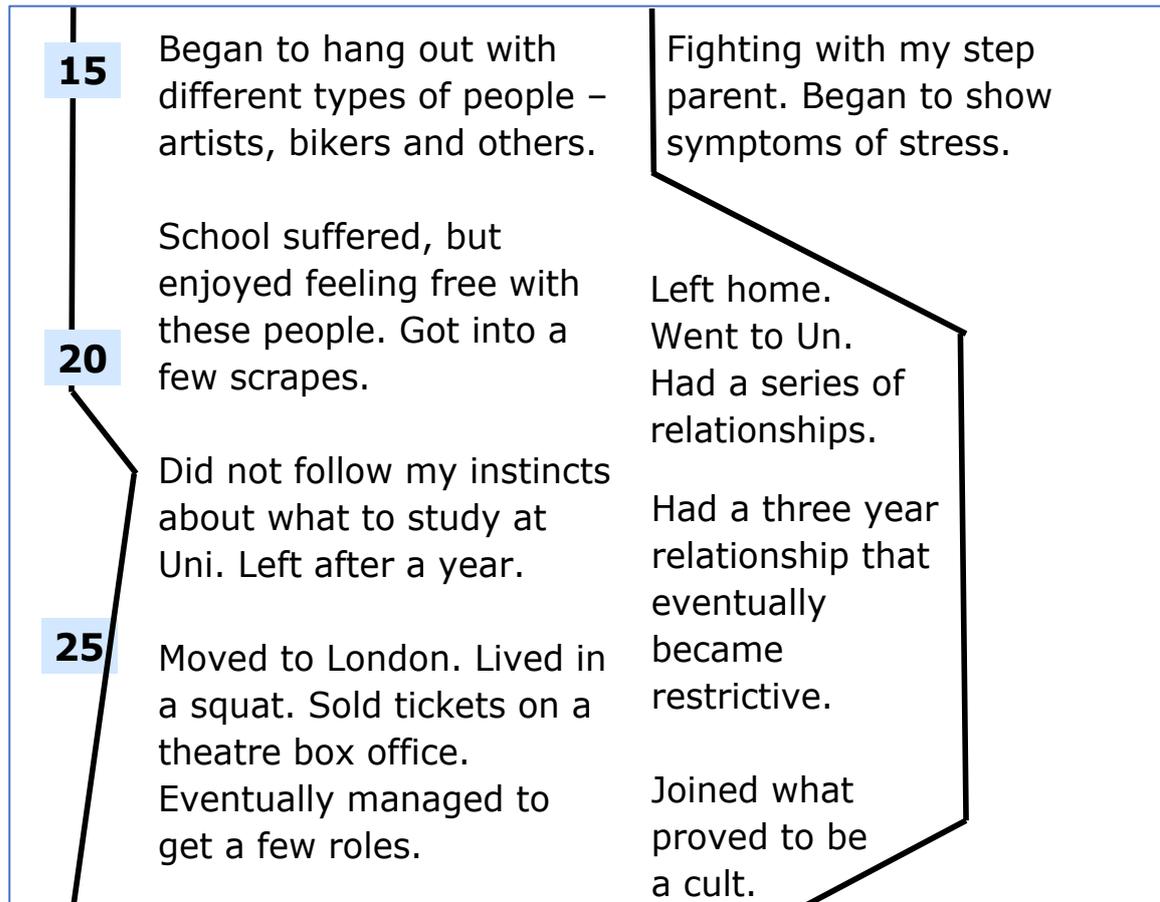
Happy childhood. All seemed well. Dad worked for a big company and we moved around the world.

**10**

I was good at both the arts and sport, so made it easy to fit into new schools. I enjoyed exploring in all ways.

Still felt free when playing sports, dancing and doing theatre at school.

Mum and Dad separated. Got a new step parent. They tried to discipline me and I began to lose confidence.



**45**

**50**

**55**

**60**

**65**

**70**

**75**

**80**

**85 And Onwards**

## *The What Really Matters, Maintenance And Magic Approach*

### *The What Really Matters Approach*

*This approach involves focusing on what really matters to people. It is then to help them to maintain their health, hope and happiness. It is also, when appropriate, to add the magic.*



There are many ways to help people. This model is based on Maslow's work and adds some variations. It involves aiming:

*To focus on what really matters to people;*

*To help them maintain their health, hope and happiness;*

*To, when appropriate, add the magic.*

The approach can be used by people in the helping professions, counsellors, educators, therapists, coaches, trusted advisors and mentors. It can also be used by decision makers who aim to build a caring society.

Imagine that you want to use elements of this approach in your own way. It involves focusing on the following themes.

*You can focus on what really matters to people*

This is the first step whether you are working in the helping professions or as a decision maker. It is to focus on what really matters to the person or the group of people.

The topics to focus on will differ depending on each person's circumstances. Most people, however, want to feel healthy, hopeful and happy, Bearing in mind Maslow's hierarchy of needs, they may need:

*To feel they have the basic materials for life and can shape their future;*

*To feel they can set specific goals, follow strategies that work and achieve success;*

*To feel they can pursue their chosen purpose, follow their principles and enjoy a sense of peace.*

Imagine that you are aiming to help people. The approach you take to focusing on really matters to them will depend on:

*The specific needs of the person or the group of people;*

*The specific role you are playing and how you can help them.*

You may be helping people to get basic materials for life – such as food, shelter, safety, love and encouragement. You may be helping them to shape their futures and achieve their personal picture of success.

How to clarify what is important to people? Much depends on the role you will be playing. Looking at my own work as a mentor, I ask the following questions before a session.

*Who is the person I am going to meet? What is happening in their world? What are the challenges they may be facing? What may be their short, medium and long-term goals?*

*What are the topics they may want to explore during the session? What are the positive models and practical tools I can offer that will help them to tackle these challenges and achieve success?*

*What are the actual words I would like the person to be saying after the session? How can I do my best to ensure they are saying these things? What else can I do to help them to achieve their picture of success?*

Imagine that you have clarified what is important to the people you aim to help. It can then be time to move on to the next step.

*You can focus on helping people to  
maintain their health, hope and happiness*

This step may call for helping people with different aspects of their lives. Depending on a person's situation, it can involve helping them:

*To maintain their health, hope and happiness;*

*To take control of their life and find solutions to specific challenges;*

*To set specific goals and achieve their picture of success.*

You will have your own approach to helping people to achieve their particular aims. This may also involve helping them to follow strategies they can use to maintain their desired quality of life.

Imagine that the people are working towards their aims. Sometimes this may involve moving on to the next step.

*You can focus on  
adding the magic*

This step can take many forms. It can involve passing on knowledge, positive models and practical tools that help a person:

*To continue to experience enjoyment, encouragement, creativity or peak performances;*

*To gain knowledge they can use to make sense of their experiences and shape a positive future;*

*To pursue their chosen purpose, follow their principles and enjoy a sense of peace.*

Sometimes it is possible to create magical moments when a person experiences a breakthrough. The key is to offer something that resonates with the person and helps them to shape their future.

This can happen in many ways. For example, the person may be helped: a) to see things in a positive way; b) to see how they can use a practical tool that works; c) to see how they can achieve their picture of success.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach in your own way?

How can you focus on what really matters to the person or the group of people? How can you help them to maintain their health, hope or happiness? How can you, if appropriate, help them to sometimes experience magic?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The What Really Matters Approach*

*The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of this approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to follow this approach in my own way are:*

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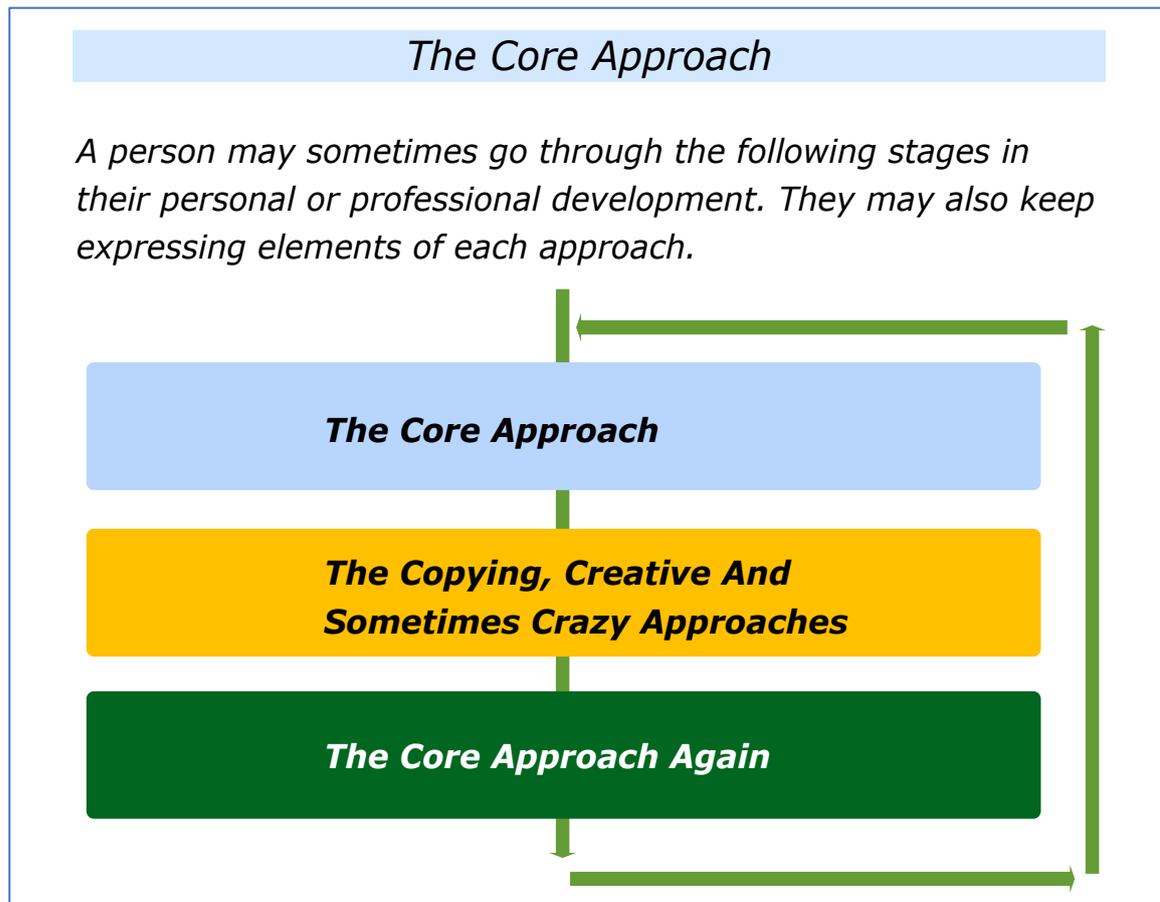
*The specific things that may happen as a result may be:*

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## *The Core Approach*



There are many views about how people develop. The following section looks at one approach that is sometimes used to help creative artists to understand their development. It can also be adapted to help people in all walks of life.

This approach says that each person has a core that they want to express in their daily lives and work. This core may have a positive self and also sometimes a negative self.

Many creative artists, for example, express this core in their early work. Some songwriters create fine work at the start of their careers. The songs they write may have a clear-eyed honesty and – in some ways – an innocence that makes them refreshing.

Young people may also have an idealism that is motivates them to build a better world. Sometimes they express this in positive ways, sometimes they be angry.

Some individuals are able to express their true self as they grow up. They may live in a supportive family, for example, that encourages them to do things they love.

Their parents may also help them to learn about the consequences of their actions. This helps the individual to behave in ways that help rather than hurt other people.

### *The Copying, Creative And Sometimes Crazy Approaches*

Some people go through a stage of copying icons and others they wish to emulate. This may be a natural and necessary stage. It can be important to learn from models and adopt their best practices.

A person may sometime copy the helpful or unhelpful aspects of the people they admire. This can produce positive or not-so positive consequences for them and other people.

Some people move onto the creative stage. Building on their core, they add what they have learned and do creative work. This can become a self-generating upwards spiral.

Building on their strengths, they keep doing good work. They are curious, explore and find creative solutions to challenges. They sometimes go into a new dimension and do exciting work.

A person may also feel the desire to experiment and feel fully alive. They may then move territory where they do what may be considered crazy things. Sometimes these are helpful, sometimes they may be potentially harmful.

## *The Core Approach Again*

Some individuals return to their core. Some creative artists, for example, seem to regain their authentic vision, but it is now enriched with life experiences. This can make their work even more powerful.

Some individuals return to being their true self. They may have been on many journeys in life. They may have known pleasure, pain and many other emotions.

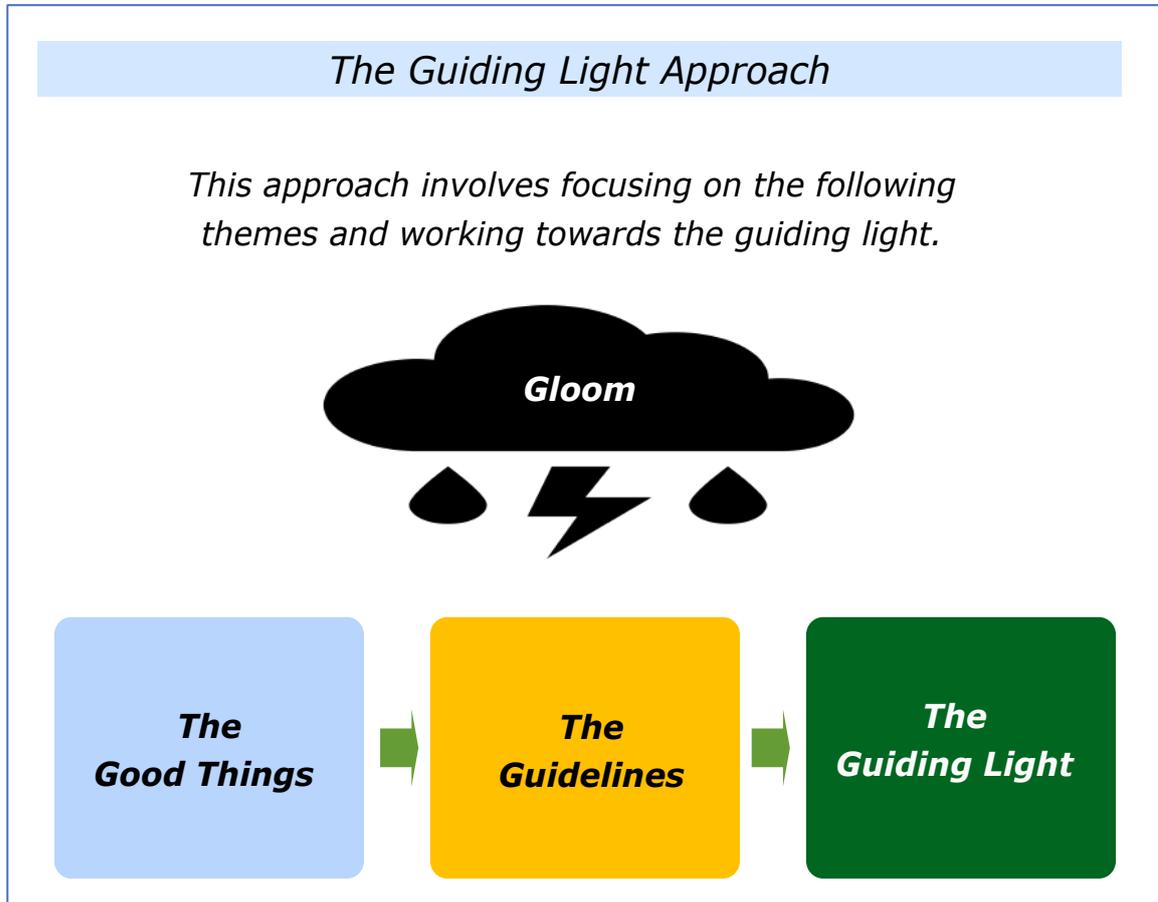
Such a person regains their sense self as they get older. This is shown in the studies of happiness. Such individuals choose to be who are they – only more so. They dress the way they want, play the music they want and do what they want.

They choose to take these steps by themselves. They may also explore by recentring, going on retreats, practicing yoga or doing other things that help them to develop.

Some individuals choose to get guidance. They may do this through talking with friends, learning from mentors or consulting other people.

Some therapists, for example, help individuals to return to and express their inner core. This can result in a person feeling more able to express their positive self in ways that help themselves and other people.

## *The Guiding Light Approach Rather Than The Gloom Approach*



This is an approach that can sometimes be used to encourage people who may feel the situation is gloomy. Whilst recognising the challenges, it helps people to work towards a guiding light.

There are several definitions for the term guiding light. It can refer:

*To somebody who acts as an inspiration for a person – they become a model and a guiding light;*

*To a set of guidelines that a person refers to in times of uncertainty – such as a spiritual faith – which provides them with a guiding light;*

*To a person working towards a safe harbour or a positive vision that becomes their guiding light.*

Here we are focusing on the latter definition. Let's explore how this approach is translated into action.

### *The Gloom*

Caring people recognise that a person or a group of people may feel gloomy about a challenging situation. Certain events may combine to cast darkness and cloud the future.

A person may have lost their job, been rejected or lost confidence. They may not feel hopeful about themselves, their prospects or even the future of the planet.

Each person can choose their attitude in situations. They can do their best to shape a positive future or resign themselves to falling into a negative spiral.

Caring people show a person that they recognise their feelings are authentic. When appropriate, however, they may ask the person whether they want to work towards shaping a positive future.

If so, they move on to the next stage. The approach they take may sound counter-intuitive in tough times, but it can help a person to see things in perspective.

### *The Good Things*

People who feel down may sometimes see only darkness. They may find it difficult to see any light. How to help them in this situation?

One approach is to help them to channel their energy in a positive way by inviting them to clarify their future picture of success. This can then become their guiding light.

Another option is to help the person to clarify the good things in their life and then move on to the potential ways forward. It can be to say something along the following lines.

*"I am sure we can find some ways to deal with the challenges. Before we do that, however, I wonder if we can look at some of the resources you have available?"*

*"We can then move on to how to achieve your future goals. Sometimes this can unearth strengths you can use to shape the future? Would that be okay?"*

Some people who feel down are happy to take this route. Some are hesitant at first but, after a little coaxing, are willing to embark on the process.

Caring people take different approaches to helping the person at this stage. Some use questions to uncover the person's resources. Some share what they see as the person's strengths. Some help the person to explore their potential ways forward and maybe even offer suggestions.

Whatever approach is used, the key is to help the person to begin to feel more positive. Bearing this in mind, it can be useful:

*To clarify the good things that may be happening in the person's life and also their assets – even if these are only few;*

*To clarify their strengths and their successful pattern for dealing with such challenges in the past;*

*To clarify what they can control in the situation, the possible ways forward and the potential picture of success.*

This approach often results in the person feeling stronger. It can then be useful to help them to begin focusing on their potential picture of success. This can become their guiding light.

## *The Guidelines*

Many people have hopes and dreams, but it is also important to have guidelines and a clear plan for achieving their goals. This is more likely to ensure they work towards a deliverable dream.

Imagine that a person has begun to see a way beyond the darkness. It can then be useful to help them to go through the following stages.

*To clarify the real results they want to achieve and translate these into a clear picture of success – this is the guiding light;*

*To clarify the guidelines – the strategies – they can follow towards the guiding light;*

*To clarify the action plan they can follow to work towards the guiding light.*

Many people get to this stage, but they then need to embark on the work. If appropriate, you can help them to take this step and encourage them along on the journey.

## *The Guiding Light*

During the past fifty years I had the opportunity to work many people who have pursued this approach. They were all prepared to put in the graft – the effort – required to work towards their guiding light.

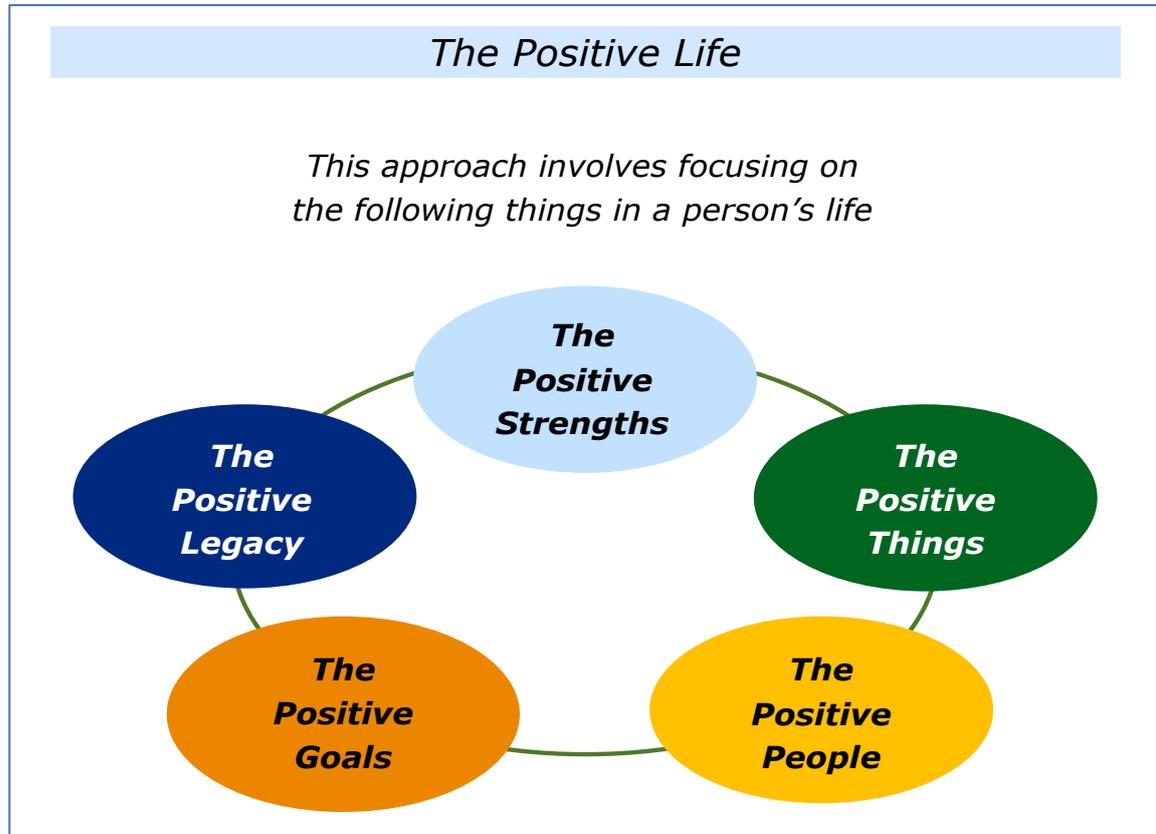
Some were teenagers who turned around their lives. Some were educators who helped students. Some were people who chose to do satisfying work. Some were leaders who created positive cultures.

They focused on the guiding light rather than the gloom. They built on their strengths, followed strategies that worked and got some quick successes.

Such people were also savvy. They developed their ability: a) to read reality; b) to anticipate and manage challenges; c) to manage their own emotions.

Many also gained strength from building on what was good in their life. They also found it rewarding to follow their chosen guidelines and work towards the guiding light.

## *The Positive Life Approach*



Imagine that a person has asked for your help. There are many models you can use to help them to shape a positive future.

The following pages describe one approach. It includes many of the themes we have already explored, but these are often worth considering when helping a person

This approach involves focusing on a person and exploring the following things in their life. You can, of course, apply these in your own life and work.

### *The Positive Strengths*

*What are the person's strengths? What is special about the person? What have they achieved in their life? What are the positive things they have given to people?*

*What are the specific goals they have achieved? What did they do right to achieve those goals? What the challenges they have tackled successfully? What did they do right to tackle those challenges?*

*When do they come alive? When are they in their element – at ease and yet able to excel? What are the specific activities in which they may be able to do superb work? How can they do more of these things in the future?*

### *The Positive Things*

*What are the positive things in the person's life? What are they are grateful for? What are the things they treasure in life? How can they appreciate and build on these things?*

*What are the specific things they enjoy in life? What are the things that give them positive energy? What do they find stimulating? How can they do more of these things?*

*What are the things that help them to feel in control in their life? What are those that provide consistency? What are those that provide creative stimulation? How can they build on these and shape their future life?*

### *The Positive People*

*Who are the positive people in the person's life? Who are their encouragers? Who are those that give them positive energy? How can they spend more time with these people?*

*Who are the people they enjoy being with in their professional life? Who are the colleagues and customers who give them positive energy? How can they spend more time with these people?*

*Who are the positive people – the individuals, writers, artists or other people – they learn from? How can they keep learning from these people and developing in their life?*

### *The Positive Goals*

*What are the person's life goals? What is their lifetime picture of success? Looking back in later years, what are the things they want to have done by then that will give them a sense of peace?*

*What are their personal goals? What do they want to do in the next week, next month, next year and next five years? How can they do some of these things? What will be the benefits?*

*What are their professional goals? What do they want to achieve and feel when they look back on their professional life? How can they work towards doing these things?*

### *The Positive Legacy*

*What are the positive things they want to give to people during their time on the planet? What are the experiences they want to help people to enjoy? How can they give these to people?*

*What is the positive knowledge they want to pass on to people? How can they pass on these things to people? What will be the benefits?*

*What are the actual words they would like people to be saying about what they did in life? How can they do their best to increase the chances of people saying these things? What else can they do to pass on a positive legacy in their life?*

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that you want to use elements of this approach in your own way.

You may want to use it to encourage a person who has asked for your help. Alternatively, you may want to use it to encourage other people or yourself.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe how you may want to use elements of this approach in your own way. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Positive Life Approach*

*The specific situation in which I may want to follow elements of this approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to follow elements of this approach are:*

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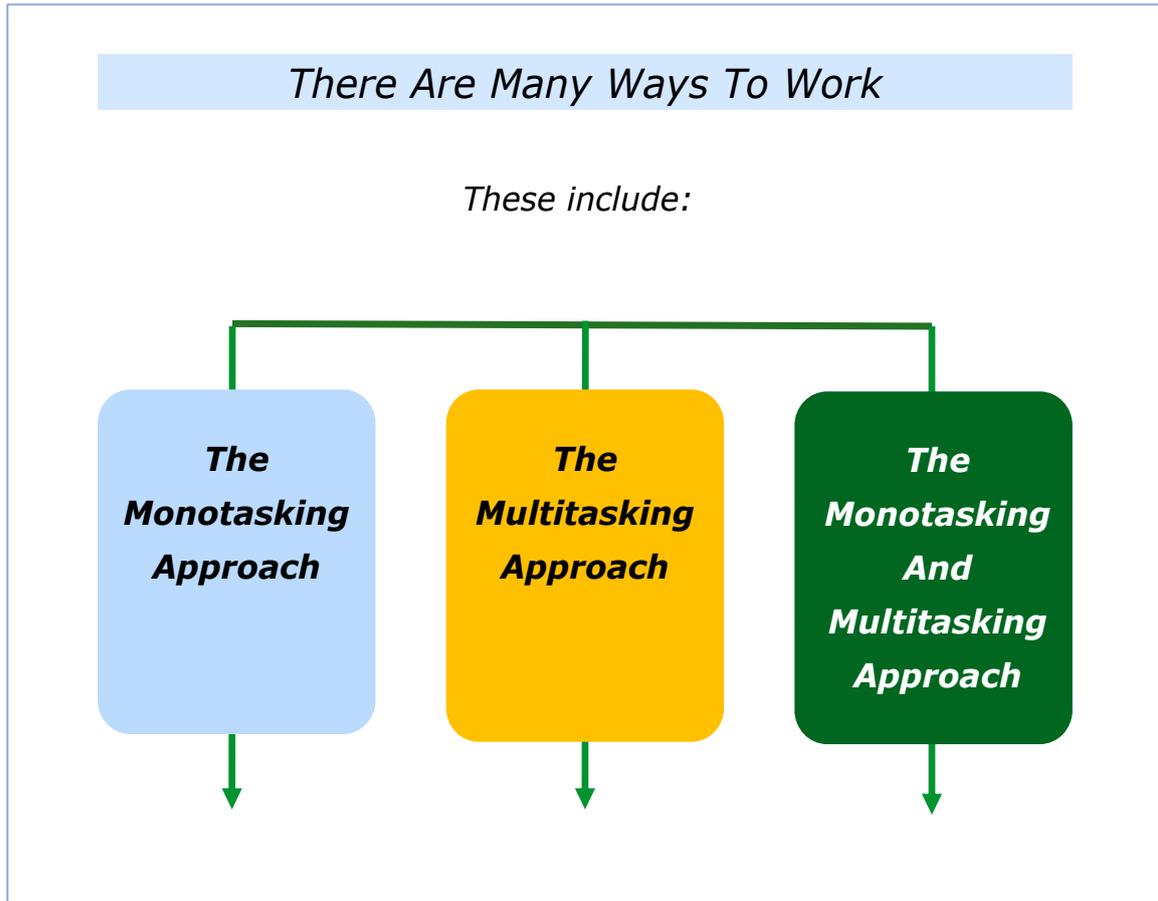
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Monotasking And Multitasking Approach*



Many people recognise the importance of monotasking. This involves focusing fully on a task, doing deep work and using their abilities to achieve a specific goal.

Multitasking calls for being able to move from one task to another and doing each efficiently. Sometimes this is necessary and possible, but there can be downsides. These can include feeling tired and failing to focus on what is really important.

There is also another option. You can do a big monotask and, within this, do various multitasks. This can work if you focus on the big goal and do tasks that contribute towards achieving this aim.

Samira Far wrote an article for Inc. on the theme of *Monotasking Keeps The Brain Healthy And You More Productive*. Here are some excerpts.

## Monotasking – Tips For Getting Into This Mindset

### ● Do Deep Work

*Deep work is the ability to focus on a demanding task - one that requires higher levels of cognitive ability and awareness - without distractions for an extended period of time.*

*Each day set aside 2 to 4 hours where you can focus on a single project without interruption. This kind of singular focus will engage both sides of your brain.*

*You will then be more likely to achieve the kind of breakthroughs that make the biggest impact on the project you are working on.*

### ● Locate Your Peak Performance Time

*Everyone has a specific period of the day when you are at your best. This is when you are sharpest, least distracted and most likely to have breakthrough moments.*

*This period of time is also when monotasking will be the easiest for you. For some it occurs in the morning and other's late at night. It is important to study yourself and locate what your peak performance time is.*

*Once you are able to identify your peak performance time of the day, set that time aside as your protected time to do deep work. Guard this time period. It's your holy moment.*

● *Eliminate Distractions And Focus On Two Questions*

*Monotasking is often about about eliminating distractions that prevent you from accomplishing the one goal. Start your day by asking yourself two questions:*

*What could I do today that will bring me a sense of meaning and purpose?*

*What are the two most important things I can do today that would have the greatest impact?*

*The first question reminds you to incorporate activities in your day that bring you fulfilment and promote wellbeing. The second question forces you to drill down on two items that actually matter.*

Many individuals recognise the downsides of multitasking. Flitting from one minor task to another, they do not feel in charge of their day. They have to switch from context to context and tactic to tactic. They may say something like the following.

*"I have been busy all day but am not sure that I have accomplished anything. I feel tired and need time to recover."*

Monotasking has become more popular, whilst multitasking has got a bad reputation. But there is another option to consider.

### *Great Workers Sometimes Combine Monotasking And Multitasking*

*Great workers sometimes take the following route. They do both monotasking and multitasking.*

*They do monotasking by working towards a compelling goal.*

*They may do lots of multitasking within this framework on the way towards achieving the compelling goal.*

*Such workers focus on the compelling goal but are adept at doing multiple tasks that enable them to reach the goal.*

Great workers take this route when performing as athletes, dancers, crisis managers or doing another activity. But it comes with a key proviso.

They keep focusing on their mission and must see how the multiple tasks contribute towards achieving their aims. They then develop their skills for managing these tasks and working towards the compelling goal.

Let's return to your own life. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to combine monotasking and, with in this framework, do some multitasking?

If so, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Monotasking And Multitasking In The Future*

*The specific situation when I may want to follow elements of this approach may be:*

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*The specific things I can do to focus on the big monotask and, within this framework, do the appropriate multitasks are:*

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*The specific things I can do to encourage myself when taking this approach are:*

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## *Reshaping The Future*

A person who goes through tough times may reappraise their life. After a period of reflection, they may ask themselves certain questions. These can include the following.

*"What can I learn from what happened? What do I think is important in life? How can I focus on these things in the future? How can I do what I believe in? How can I translate this into action? What may be the implications for myself and other people?"*

Tough experiences can lead to epiphanies that help us to clarify the possible ways forward. Here are some of the approaches that a person may use to reshape their life.

### *The Positive Energy Approach In Both Your Personal And Professional Life*

#### *The Positive Energy Approach*

*This approach involves doing activities where you are focusing on the following themes.*

*You are doing things that give you positive energy, following your principles and working towards a clear picture of success.*

*It is one that you can aim to follow in both your personal and professional life.*



This is an approach that can help people in many situations. They may be aiming to take control of their lives, do satisfying work, help other people or work towards certain goals.

The approach appears simple but, providing people do it properly, it is one that works. It encourages a person:

*To do things that give them positive energy;*

*To follow their principles;*

*To work towards a clear picture of success.*

During mentoring sessions, for example, individuals may say things like:

*"I want to regain my zest for life ... I want to regain a sense of purpose ... I want to play to my strengths ... I want to do more satisfying work ... I want to be a good leader ... I want to do my best to help other people."*

Bearing these things in mind, it can be useful to explore the following themes with a person. These relate to both their personal and professional life.

## *Personal Life*

*What are the things that give you positive energy in your personal life? You may enjoy walking, playing music, being beside water or doing other activities. How can you do more of these things in the future?*

*Who are the people that give you positive energy? Who are those that are supportive rather than sapping? How can you spend time with these people? How can you give them encouragement?*

*What are the principles you want to follow in your life? How can you follow these in your daily life and work? What will be the benefits of following these principles – both for yourself and other people?*

*What are your life goals? How can you do something towards some of these each day? What will be the benefits of taking these steps? How can you continue to keep focusing on your lifetime picture of success?*

## *Professional Life*

*What are the kinds of work that give you positive energy? What are those where you play to your strengths, do satisfying work and deliver success? How can you do more of these kinds of work in the future?*

*What are the principles that you want to follow in your work? How can you follow your principles and translate these into doing certain projects? How can you then work towards your picture of success?*

*What is the kind of professional role that gives you positive energy? You may enjoy working as a people worker, specialist, trusted advisor, pioneer, problem solver, designer, coordinator, orchestrator, leader or in another role. How can you find or create such a role? How can you then do your best get positive results?*

People are more likely to thrive when they do things that give them positive energy. The skill lies in helping them to translate these into action.

Here are the exercises that I have often used with people who want to take this approach. Taking these steps can often both themselves and other people to shape a positive future.

*The Positive Energy  
Approach In My  
Personal And Professional Life*

*Personal Life*

*The specific things I can do in my personal  
life that will give me positive energy are:*

*\* I can ...*

*\* I can ...*

*\* I can ...*

### *Professional Life*

*The specific things I can do in my professional life that will give me positive energy are:*

*\* I can ...*

*\* I can ...*

*\* I can ...*

### *The Positive Energy Approach – My Action Plan*

*The specific things I therefore want to do in my personal and professional life are:*

*\* I want to ...*

*\* I want to ...*

*\* I want to ...*

## *The Positive Benefits*

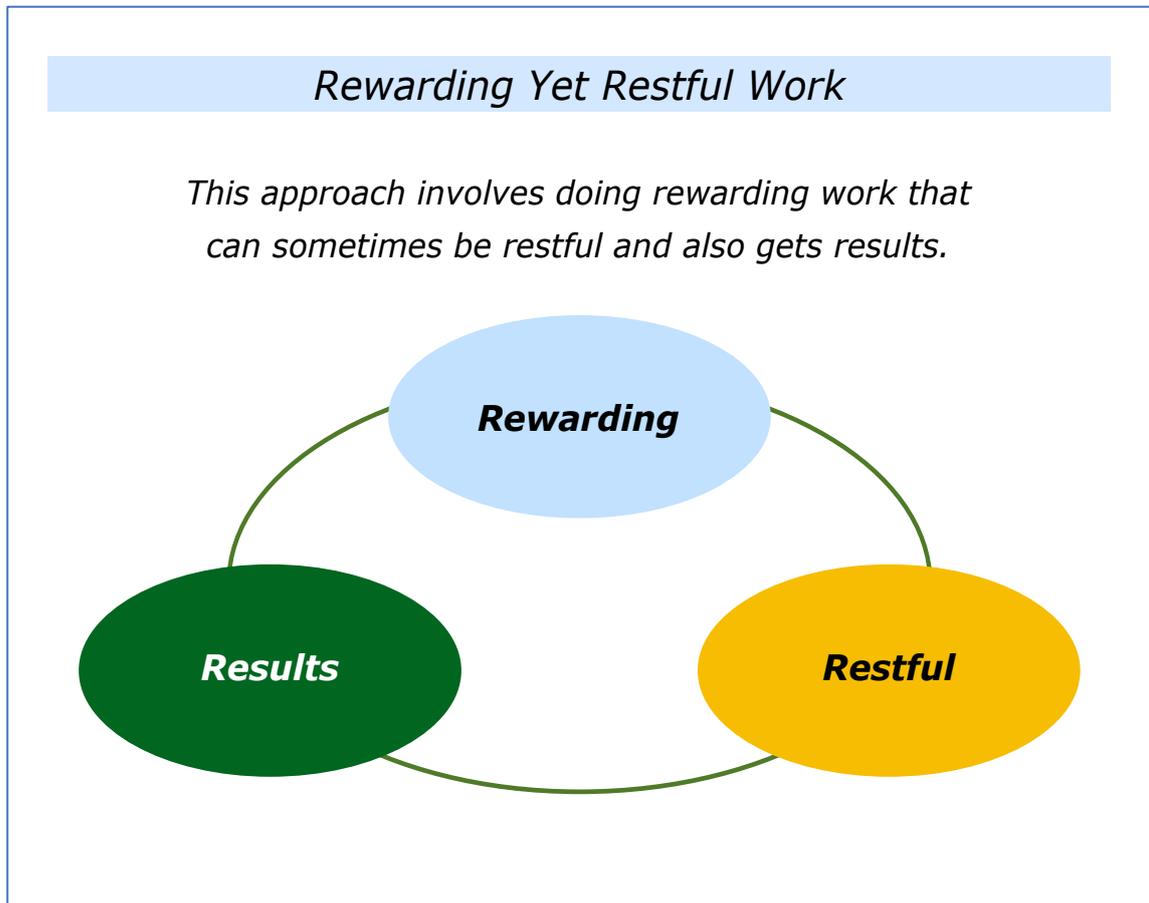
*The specific benefits of doing these things -  
both for myself and for other people – may be:*

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## *The Rewarding Yet Restful Work Approach*



This is an approach that sounds paradoxical but it is one that many people experience. It is to do work that is rewarding yet also restful on the way towards getting the desired results.

Such work sometimes embodies elements of flow. You feel in your element – at ease yet able to excel. You are then able to flow, focus, finish and, as a by-product, find fulfilment.

You may also find the work restful in some ways. You feel at able to be yourself when doing the work. You may also being using your strengths to achieve success. This eases your body and soul.

Looking at your own life, when do you do such work? You may be doing something that gives you positive energy or an activity where you forget yourself.

You may feel fully engaged when doing the work and it is only afterwards that you feel tired. This may be a positive tiredness, however, and be accompanied by a sense of satisfaction.

A craft worker may experience this when pursuing their craft. They may feel at ease when be working as a carpenter, musician, osteopath, technician or doing another activity. They draw strength from following their vocation and doing value work.

A footballer may expend masses of energy on the field, but they may feel more at ease there than anywhere else in their life. It is the place where they feel able to express themselves and get positive results.

Paradoxically, a nurse working an Accident & Emergency unit may feel calm in the midst of acute demands. They may feel alive, alert and yet also at peace that they are doing what they were meant to do.

Some individuals do rewarding work that they find restful but that others see as stressful. They feel true to themselves and able to use their strengths. This feeds their body and soul on the way towards getting the desired results.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a specific activity where you do rewarding work that is also in some ways restful? How can you do continue to do this in the future? How can you then do your best to get the desired results?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Rewarding And Restful Work*

*The specific activity where I do rewarding work that is also in some ways restful is:*

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*The specific things I can do to continue to do this in the future are:*

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*The specific things that may happen as a result may be:*

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## *The One Day At A Time Approach*



The one day at time approach is associated with recovering from addictions but it is used in many other situations. It may be followed by individuals who pursue a certain path or work towards a specific goal.

The approach starts by a person deciding on their destination. This can involve them focusing on:

*A state of being – such as being healthy, being kind or being at peace*

*A specific goal – such as a personal aim, a positive legacy or a picture of success*

The person may then make a specific action plan. They may focus on how they can do their best each day, each week and each time period on the way towards their chosen destination.

### *Doing Your Best One Day At A Time*

This approach is followed by people in many fields. They may aim to pursue a spiritual faith, follow certain habits or achieve a goal.

Virat Kohli, the captain of the India cricket team, takes this approach when aiming to improve himself and the team. Here is a summary of his philosophy.

*"We aim to do our best and keep improving one day at a time."*

Different people follow this approach in different ways. Some create mantras they aim to follow on the way towards achieving their aims. This can involve taking the following steps.

#### *The One Day At A Time Approach*

*This sometimes involves a person creating a mantra they want to follow. It is vital, however, that the person believes in it.*

*Here are some mantras that a person may focus on. You will, of course, create your own mantra.*

*Today I am going to do my best:*

*To be encouraging ... To help other people.*

*To stay healthy ... To follow my principles.*

*To deliver high standards ... To work towards the goal.*

Looking back, can you think of a time when you followed elements of this approach? This could have been in your personal or professional life.

You may have done this when recovering from an illness, helping a person to get through a crisis or when tackling a challenge. You may have applied it when working towards a long-term goal.

How did you make action plans for each day? How did you encourage yourself on the journey? How did you get short-term successes? How did you continue to work towards the long-term picture of success?

During my early career I worked with recovering addicts who focused on staying healthy one day at a time. Since then I have worked with many caring people, creative artists and peak performers who have taken a similar approach.

Such people often focus on one principle where they want to do their best. They may aim:

*To be encouraging one day at a time ... To help one patient at a time ... To write one page at a time.*

They may find that following their mantra in one area has a knock on effect. They may begin to improve in other areas of their life. They may also recognise the philosophy that:

*The journey is the destination and the destination is the journey.*

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of area of your life where you would like to follow elements of this approach?

How can you do this in your own way?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The One Day At A Time Approach*

*The specific area of my life where I would like to follow elements of this approach is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to follow the approach in this area of my life are:*

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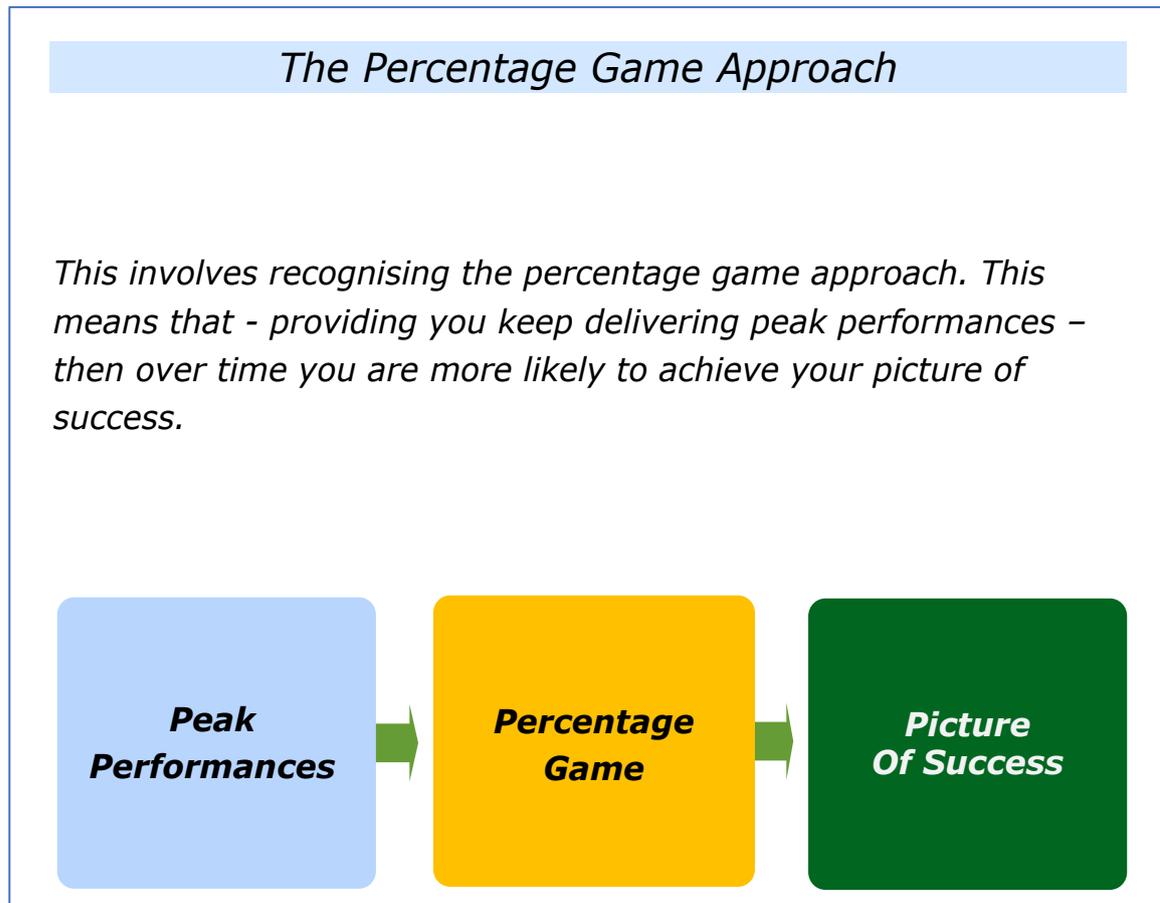
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## The Percentage Game Approach



This is an approach that it is sometimes helpful to share with a person when their efforts are not yet bearing fruit.

The person may be doing all the right things when applying for jobs, performing good work or doing another activity. But there may be certain things that are beyond their control.

Great workers are often resilient, but sometimes they can get depressed and feel down. How to help a person in such a situation?

The first step is to ensure they are playing to their strengths and aiming to do something they really believe in. It is then important to ensure that:

*They are following the principles that work and are most likely to increase their chances of achieving success;*

*They are continuing to do their best and consistently delivering peak performances;*

*They are persistent and recognise it is sometimes a percentage game regarding when they will achieve their picture of success.*

The latter point is crucial. There are many situations where - even when a person does their best - it is not within their gift to guarantee they will get the prize.

There is, however, some good news. Providing they are following the principles that work, it is often a matter of time before they achieve their aim.

Let's look at one example. During the Covid time many businesses made cuts that led to releasing excellent workers. Some of these people found jobs quickly, but others felt frustrated.

This led to some people losing confidence. One person I worked with expressed their situation in the following way.

*"I have applied for many jobs and not got one yet. I am highly qualified but sometimes I do not even get a reply.*

*"The interviews I have attended have not produced anything. This has surprised me because I have lots of experience in the roles employers are looking to fill.*

*"In the past I have always been approached by employers or headhunters. This is a new situation for me and it is draining my confidence.*

*"I am not sure what I am doing wrong. The clock is ticking and I need to find something relatively soon. Otherwise the situation may become desperate."*

Great workers sometimes express similar sentiments when they are doing work in their chosen fields. They may be playing a sport, leading a team, transforming a culture or doing another activity.

They may even be putting in peak performances but are not yet seeing the desired results. How to encourage such people? As mentioned earlier, the first step is:

*To ensure they are following the principles most likely to achieve their picture of success.*

The principles that work may differ, of course, depending on the activity the person is pursuing. It is therefore important to know what works when aiming to get a job, improve sales, compete for golf titles or do another activity.

Great workers study success and apply these principles in their own way in specific situations. They then do their best to achieve peak performance.

One key point to bear in mind. The what works approach comes with a proviso. The principles that delivered success in the past may still work. But they may need to be applied in a different way in the modern world to achieve success.

Searching for a job is such an example. As we know, one of the basic rules is that 'people hire people'. They often hire people they know or people that have been recommended to them by others in their network.

The employers wants to know what they are getting when they hire somebody. They like to know their strengths and their weaknesses. They can then see how the person will help them to achieve success.

In the old days this rule was applied through old ways of networking. Today it calls for a different kind of networking. It calls for recognising that:

*The purpose of networking is to give to people and help them to succeed – it is not about self-promotion.*

This rule also applies to interviewing for jobs. Sometimes a job applicant will say something like:

*"I want to impress them."*

That sounds reasonable, but sometimes it is important to explain that there is another approach. This is the following.

*"The interview is about showing them how you want to help them to succeed. It is about them, it is not about you."*

This is different from trying to sell yourself. It is about the buyer. It is about their needs, challenges and goals. It is then about showing how you want to use your strengths to help the buyer achieve success.

Let's return to a person who feels down about getting not yet getting a job. It can be useful to remind them about some of the basic rules about roles that are advertised. These include the following.

*The employer may have already made up their minds about who they want in the job and be far down the line in filling the position.*

*They may be looking for somebody who is less costly and can fulfil their need in another way.*

*They may be looking for something different from what you offer – such as a person who had different experiences or is at a different stage of their career.*

The applicant must still aim to do their best at an interview. But the factors mentioned above may be beyond their control. This why it can be important to explain to a person that:

### *Sometimes It Is A Percentage Game*

- *You can keep following the principles that work in the specific activity;*
- *You can keep doing your best and delivering peak performances;*
- *You can keep being persistent and then - through the law of percentages - it is more likely that eventually you will achieve your picture of success.*

This is what worked for the person I mentioned earlier. They extended their financial runway by doing contract work for some decision makers in their network.

The person eventually got full-time role that played to their strengths. The journey it took two years - including interviews with seven potential employers and lots of disappointments. They now feel back on the route towards achieving their career aspirations.

Similar rules apply in many areas of life. It is important to keep following the principles you believe in that also work. You can then keep encouraging yourself on the percentage journey towards achieving success.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation when you may want to follow elements of the percentage game?

This could be any area of your life. It could be when searching for a job, playing a sport, leading a team, reaching a specific goal or tackling a challenge.

How can you clarify the principles that work in this activity? How can you clarify the principles that you believe may work? What are your reasons for thinking they can? How can you follow your chosen principles in your own way?

How can you do your best and deliver peak performances? How can you be persistent? How can you recognise that sometimes it is a percentage game? How can you continue to do what works? How can you keep increasing the chances of achieving success?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Percentage Game In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future when  
I may aim to follow elements of the  
percentage game approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to deliver  
peak performances, be persistent  
and play the percentage game are:*

\*

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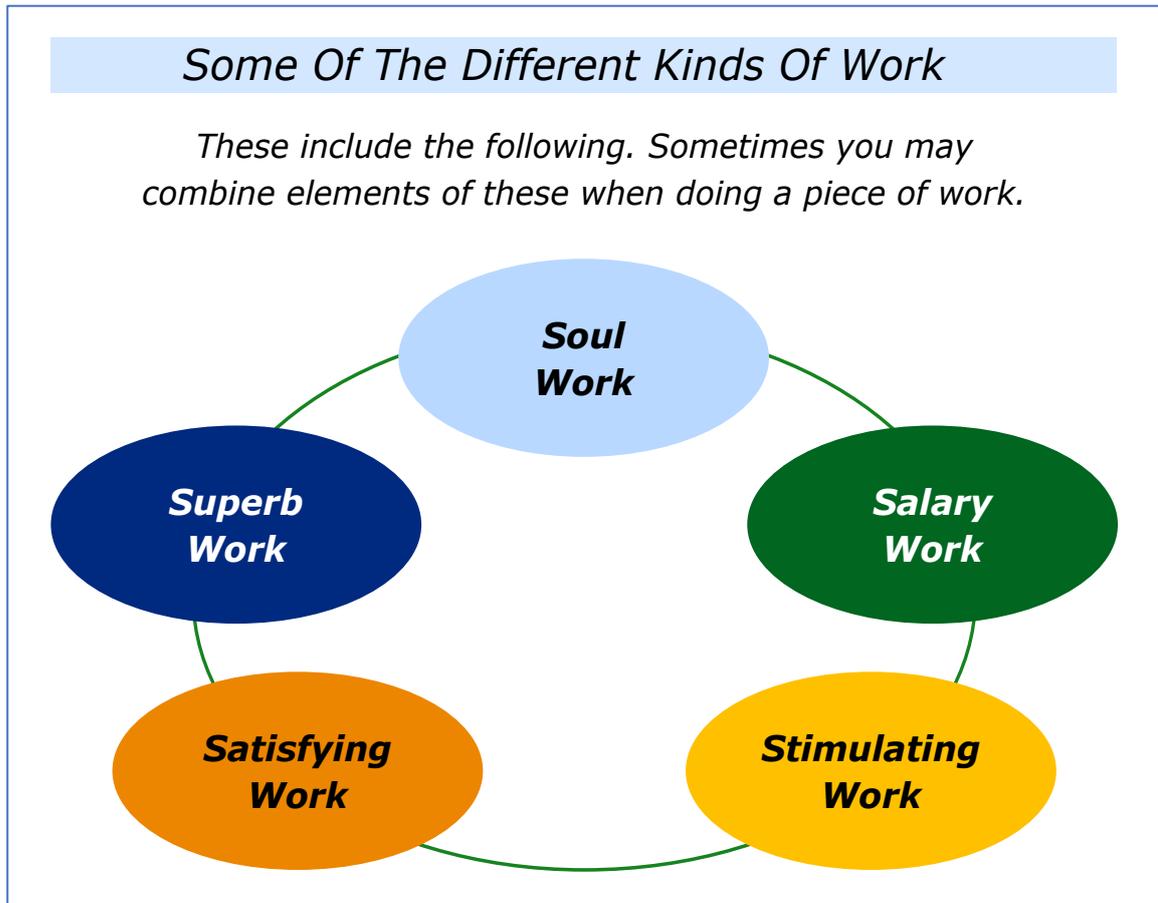
*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Soul Work Approach*



Some people renew themselves by returning to doing aspects of their soul work. There are, of course, many kinds of work, these include the following.

**Soul Work.** This is work where you express your soul.

**Salary Work.** This is work where you simply earn a salary.

**Stimulating Work.** This is work that you find stimulating.

**Satisfying Work.** This is work that you find deeply satisfying.

**Superb Work.** This is work where you deliver superb quality.

This section explores how to get the right balance between your soul work, satisfying work and salary work

Many people would love to just do their soul work and get a salary. This can be challenging, but it can be possible to get the right blend between the different kinds of work. Let's explore these themes.

### *Soul Work*

When do you feel you are doing your soul work? When does soul sing? You may feel this when gardening, painting, encouraging people, designing, leading teams or doing another activity.

What are the principles you are following when doing such soul work? You may be shaping things, solving certain kinds of problems, helping people to succeed or following other themes.

How can you do more of your soul work? How can you translate this into doing specific projects? What would be the benefits of doing such work – both for yourself and for other people?

### *Satisfying Work*

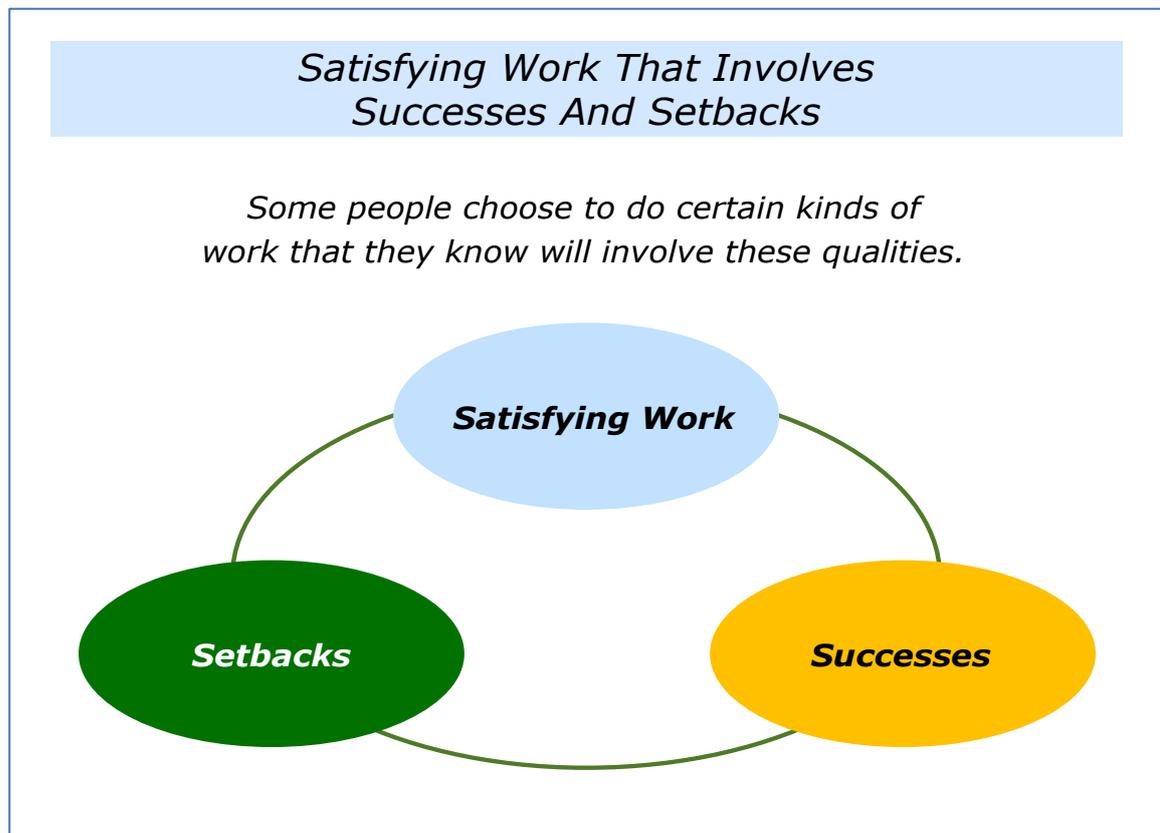
When do you feel you are doing satisfying work? You may be doing certain types of tasks in your personal or professional life. What are the feelings you get after doing such work?

What are the principles you are following when doing this work? You may be setting stimulating goals, finding solutions to challenges and achieving a sense of success.

How can you continue to do such work? How can you organise your time properly, immerse yourself fully and reach your goals? What will be the benefits – both for yourself and for other people?

There are many dimensions to doing satisfying work. Sometimes this involves being aware of both the pluses and minuses involved. It then means making a decision regarding whether you accept the whole package.

The following pages describe how this can be necessary when doing certain kinds of work. Let's explore these themes.



Some people choose to do satisfying work that they know will involve successes and setbacks. They may go into medicine, sports, the arts, sales or other fields.

A footballer will experience victories and defeats. They may get trophies and also suffer injuries. A medical worker will see many patients return to health. They will also treat many who do not recover.

An actor will know the joy of performing on stage. They may also experience disappointments when being turned down for roles. A business leader may get pleasure from running a company. They may also need to deal with bad times and redundancies.

Different people deal with these situations in different ways. Some learn to manage their emotions by focusing on the following steps

## *Satisfying Work*

Some people gain strength by doing satisfying work. They make sure they are doing work they believe in. They then aim to keep doing the basics and sometimes add the brilliance.

One medical worker talked about looking forward to working each day in their Accident & Emergency Unit. They expressed this in the following way.

*"Many days are hectic, but these are often the most satisfying. It is great to treat patients and see them leave happier. My colleagues are wonderful and we have such camaraderie. It is a place where I feel at home."*

## *Successes*

A salesperson may get high from making a sale. An athlete will enjoy achieving a personal best in a competition. A chef will get pleasure from seeing diners enjoying a special meal.

Successes provide a boost in any job. They can help to create momentum and positive energy. They also give people something to look back on and enjoy when reflecting on the day.

Some people organise their day so they get some quick successes. This provides a platform for continuing to do professional work and, in some cases, deliver peak performances.

It is a cliché that people learn more from their mistakes than their successes. But this may simply be because they have not got into the habit of reflecting on their best performances.

Great workers often focus on the principles they followed to deliver superb work. goods. They then aim to repeat and add to these skills to deliver great performances in the future.

## *Setbacks*

Every person experiences disappointments. Sometimes it can be useful to help a person:

*To clarify the specific times when they have managed setbacks successfully;*

*To clarify the principles they followed then to manage these successfully;*

*To clarify how they can follow these principles – plus maybe add other skills – to manage potential future setbacks successfully.*

Some organisations explore this theme with candidates who apply for certain roles. When doing this, they find it useful:

*To explain the potential satisfaction, successes and setbacks the person may experience in the professional role;*

*To explain the person will be helped to find and follow their successful pattern for managing potential setbacks in the professional role;*

*To explore if the person is prepared to accept the whole package – the pluses and minuses – involved in the professional role.*

The person can make a considered decision whether they really want to do the work. If so, they can be helped to learn how to manage their emotions in a healthy way. They can then continue to put their heart and soul into doing the satisfying work.

Imagine that you want to do satisfying work in the future. How can you continue to enjoy doing such work? How can you enjoy the successes and manage any potential setbacks?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Satisfying Work*

*The specific kind of satisfying work that I want to do is:*

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*The specific things I can do to enjoy doing the satisfying work, enjoy the successes and manage the potential setbacks are:*

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*The specific benefits of taking these steps will be*

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## *Salary Work*

When do you feel you are doing salary work? You may find the work boring or not see how it contributes to achieving a worthwhile goal. You may also feel it is hurting your physical or psychological health.

Different people manage salary work in different ways. One person reframed such activities in the following way.

*"Today I am going to work with a challenging client. I will be professional and do my best to help them succeed. I reframe the work, however, as: 'Today I am going to earn enough money to pay towards buying a new fridge.' That is a good motivator."*

Another person chose a different method. They explained this in the following way.

*"I draw on the principles I follow when doing soul work. The principles I follow then are to build on my strengths, set stimulating goals and do work that helps other people to succeed."*

*"Bearing these principles in mind, I try to follow them when doing salary work. Sometimes it works, but other times it can be difficult. Nevertheless, it is an approach that I found helps me to get through some of the salary work."*

Doing soul work can help your wellbeing. But if you want to do soul work that puts food on the table it calls for adding savvy. One approach is to do the required inner work and outer work.

## *The Inner Work*

This involves looking within. It begins by clarifying the soul work you do that could be translated into something that helps other people. The service you offer may enrich people's lives, fix problems or provide specialist expertise that helps people to succeed.

## *The Outer Work*

This involves looking outside. It begins by clarifying your perfect customers or employers. What are the characteristics of such people? What are the challenges they face?

Bearing in mind your soul work, how can you help these people? How can you reach them in a way that fits your values? How can you use your strengths to help them to succeed?

Looking ahead, how can you do more of your soul work? How can you do more of the satisfying work? How can you find ways to manage the salary work?

We will be exploring these topics in greater depth later in the book. If you wish, however, try tackling the exercise on these themes. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Soul Work In The Future*

*The specific things I can do to do more of my soul work are:*

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*The specific things I can do to do more of the satisfying work are:*

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*The specific things I can do to manage the salary work are:*

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Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation when you may want to renew yourself? This could be a time when you may feel vulnerable, have a shock, go through a transition or have another experience.

What can you do then to rest and renew yourself? What can you do to reflect and, if appropriate, reappraise your priorities? What can you do to reshape your future life?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Renewal In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future when  
I may want to renew myself may be:*

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*The specific things I can do  
then to renew myself are:*

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*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Stimulating Approach*

### *The Stimulating Rather Than Straining Approach*

*This approach involves a person building on their strengths and doing things that are stimulating – rather than straining - and then doing their best to achieve success.*



The stimulation approach used by many people who want to maintain their zest for life, be creative or find a new purpose. It is one used by artists, song writers, designers and people from all walks of life.

The key is for a person to build on their strengths and do things they find stimulating. They will then be prepared to put in the equivalent of sweat and stretch themselves when doing superb work.

This approach is different from a person continually doing work that strains their body and soul. It is possible to do that for a short time but doing so for longer can cause damage.

Different people pursue the stimulation approach in different ways. One model involves focusing on the following steps.

## Strengths

The person starts focusing on their strengths. Let's look at one person who has built on some of his strengths and translated these into doing stimulating work.

Mark Evans is known in the UK for his work as a vet and making films about wildlife. He also loves renovating cars and Land Rovers. Mark explains his passion for vehicles in the following way.



**MARK THE VET**



**MARK THE SCIENCE EXPLORER**



**MARK THE PETROL HEAD**



**News**  
Mark's latest news  
[Read more](#)



**TV**  
Mark on TV  
[Read more](#)



**Corporate**  
Mark helping business



**Gallery**  
Mark's photos and video clips

*I have always loved diesel engines ever since making their acquaintance as a young lad obsessed by tractors.*

*I learned to drive on a Massey Ferguson 135 when I was about 13 and, to this day, the faintest whiff of red diesel mixed with hydraulic fluid and harvesting dust brings back a tsunami of very happy memories of my early days as a farmhand.*

*It's why I am so drawn to sniffing tractors whenever I get the chance. Is it just me? With a bit of filtering to get rid of the cod, batter and bits of saveloy, my Land Rover would happily rock along fuelled by the waste oil from my local chippy.*

## *Stimulation*

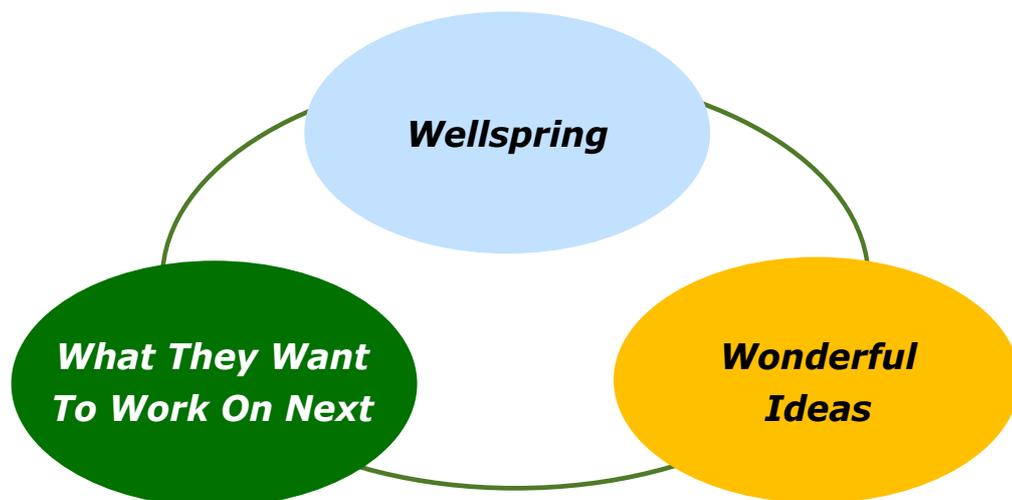
Imagine that you want to build on your strengths and translate these into doing something stimulating. How to take this step?

Some people start by doing things that increases the possibility of them getting stimulation. They may go for a walk, listen to music, sleep or do another activity.

Some people get inspiration from their equivalent of a wellspring. Like a spring or the source of a river, this is a place where things can sometimes start. This can lead to them getting ideas about what they do next.

### *The Wellspring Approach*

*Some people go to their favourite wellspring to get inspiration. They sometimes get wonderful ideas or ideas about what they want to work on next.*



Some people visit their equivalent of a muse. Here are some dictionary explanations of this concept.

*The Muses were nine goddesses who were believed to give encouragement in different areas of literature, art and music. A person about to begin work would call on their particular Muse to inspire them.*

*A muse may also be one's special creative spirit. It can also be an imaginary force that gives ideas and helps you to write, paint or make music. It can also be a physical representation of this force.*

A person may also find that serendipity plays a part in getting stimulation. They may hear a chance remark or experience something that sparks their imagination.

You will have your own approach to getting inspiration. If you wish, try exploring the following questions.

*What are the specific situations where you are more likely to get stimulation?*

You may be enjoying certain experiences. You may be listening to music, walking, visiting special places, appreciating beauty, studying success or experiencing other things.

*What are the specific activities you do where you are more likely to get stimulation?*

You may be doing certain things that give you positive energy. You may be writing, painting, cooking, encouraging people, designing things or doing other activities.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Stimulation*

*The specific situations where I sometimes get stimulation are:*

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*The specific activities I do where I sometimes get stimulation are:*

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*The specific things I can do to put myself into more of these situations or do more of these activities in the future are:*

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A person may channel their inspiration into doing a specific activity. They may want to pursue their love for writing, gardening, counselling, designing, fixing a problem or doing another activity.

The next step may be to translate this into doing a stimulating project. They may then aim:

*To clarify their picture of success;*

*To clarify the benefits of achieving the picture of success;*

*To clarify the strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of achieving success.*

The person may then move into action and begin working towards achieving the desired results. Let's look at one person who took such an approach.

Katrina Sutcliffe was about to move to Bali to set up a yoga centre but this was stopped by Covid. Doing sessions via Zoom, she began combining these with her love for netball.

This led to running yoga sessions for netball teams. These proved successful and were much appreciated by the players. Katrina has gone on to offer these to other athletes. Here is an excerpt from her website.

*About 7 years ago I accidentally fell in love with Yoga. I've always been extremely active, juggling everything from ultra-running to surfing, and netball, to rock climbing and whilst yoga began as just 'another sport', it quickly became so much more.*

*Our breath is our life force, and in Yoga and Meditation it is the magical rhythm that moves our body and mind.*

*I believe that what we learn on the mat – focus, introspection, opening our heart, awareness, stillness, challenge – we take with us into the world.*



*My classes are focused on this connection between movement and breath, and encourage my students to be authentic and intuitive in their practice.*

*My Vinyasa/ Rocket sequences are creative, strong and playful but I also teach Slow Flow and Restorative Yoga as I believe there is balance in variety.*

*In a time like this, it is a gift to be able to share yoga online, to move and breathe with people all over the world.*

Imagine that you have built on your strengths and translated these into doing a stimulating project. It may then be time to move on to the next step.

## *Success*

Sometimes people get a sense of success from simply doing the things they find stimulating. Sometimes they want to go further and share the fruits of their labour.

Different people follow these steps in different ways. Some set aside blocks of times to do deep work on their chosen project. They then follow their successful style of working.

Some people follow a certain rhythm. They manage their energy to make use of their prime times – the times of the day when they have most energy – and make full use of these times.

Such people set reachable goals for the session and go through the stages of absorption, adventure and achievement. They get successes on the way towards achieving the long-term goals.

Such people also manage their energy properly. They recognise that it can be good to follow a certain rhythm but also build in time for rest, recovery and rejuvenation. Rehearsing what they are going to do next, they then throw themselves back into doing the work.

They also aim to enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goals. This is why it is important to get some ongoing wins on the way towards achieving the overall picture of success.

As mentioned earlier, different people choose different ways to go through the stages of stimulation, shaping and success. The following pages describe the route taken by one person. It is a long story, but well worth reading.

Archie Duncanson and I met more than 40 years ago when he attended a workshop in Sweden. He later translated his passion about the environment into publishing a book.

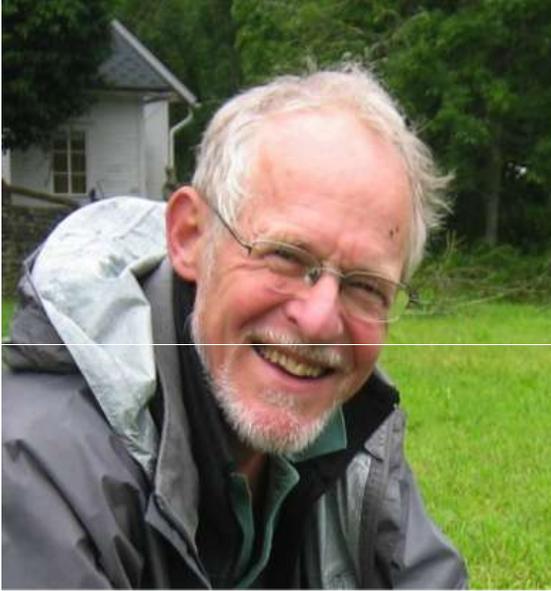
Here is some background to his book. This is followed by Archie writing his own story. I am reproducing it here in full, because it shows what can sometimes be a long but rewarding road towards achieving success.

### *Background*

*Ecologist Archie Duncanson set his heart on being a writer when he was a boy. Disappointed by his teenage attempts at fiction, he gave up.*

*Then, driven by his passion for the environment, he finally committed pen to paper and wrote his first book at the age of 40.*

*First published in 1989 is recognised as a standard reference book for people who want to make simple changes in their lives at home.*



*Read it in one sitting and fell in love with it ... fun, immediately rewarding, and easy enough to do right this minute.*

*Community Regeneration, Rodale Institute, USA, 1990.*

*An essential guide to low-impact living ... easy steps we can all take at home to reduce our impact on the planet.*

*Friends of the Earth, Scotland, 2006.*

*The most important single book any citizen of the planet can read on environmental issues... amazingly clear and simple ... immensely empowering ... bursting with creativity and the fun of exploring.*

*Pierre Pradervand, author of The Gentle Art of Blessing, in Cygnus Books reviews, April 2009.*

## *Archie's Story*

*As a boy I admired many writers and wanted to be like them. One was Thomas Paine who wrote essays on democracy at the time of the American Revolution. I admired him for speaking out for what he believed in.*

*At the age of 13 I had nothing revolutionary to write about, so I tried to write a short story. I didn't get very far—nothing came!*

*So I concluded that I wasn't meant to be a writer and gave up. I became an engineer instead and enjoyed being creative in design and analysis.*

*As for writing, when I was far from home I wrote long letters to family and friends, giving a travelogue and sharing my reflections with them.*

*I always enjoyed the writing - it gave me the feeling of having a conversation with a like-minded soul.*

*The years went by and still I felt I had little special to share, apart from my engineering work with colleagues.*

*Then one day a friend who was part of an amateur poetry circle said they were putting out a little booklet of poetry, and asked if I would I like to do some drawings to illustrate the poems.*

*Despite apprehension and worry about criticism, I decided to give it a go. I had fun using my imagination and coming up with interesting drawings and I got only positive feedback. Thus at age 40 I took my first step out into the public eye.*

### *Discouraged With The World, I Decided To Act*

*About this time, I became very discouraged with the world's problems, especially the environment, and with what politicians and authorities were doing to solve them.*

*Nothing was happening; the environment was getting worse, not better! Out of this discouragement I one day decided to act and see if I couldn't do something on a very small scale at home in my own little private world.*

*I set about trying to reduce my garbage – and succeeded, step by step! Then I began cutting down my laundry detergent, other chemicals and electricity. I repaired things instead of throwing them away.*

*I bought higher quality: fresh organic vegetables, cloth table napkins instead of paper, and other things that last. My life began feeling it had more quality and yet I saved money and pollution.*

*I was so satisfied with my experiments and results that I wanted to share them with others! But I wasn't ready for a book yet. You might be, but I lacked the confidence.*

*So I took a smaller step, I wrote a three page letter describing what I was doing, how anybody could do similar things, and how satisfying it was – that we can each affect the big world problems with garbage, chemicals and energy by doing our part at home.*

*I made one hundred copies and sent them out to friends all over the world.*

*Soon I got back many positive replies. Friends liked the ideas and the fact that I had actually done something, rather than just thinking about it. My friend Carol wrote back:*

*"Someone should write a book telling us what to buy, what to eat, etc. for the good of the environment."*

*My eyes fastened upon the word 'someone' and I thought: I could do that. The more I thought about it, the more I felt I was just the right 'someone'.*

*I had the personal experience, I had the pedagogical skills to explain things simply and I had the desire.*

## *I Decided To Share My Experiences*

*I put together an outline of the subjects I wanted to include in my little handbook for living 'environmentally friendly' – garbage, chemicals, food, clothes, the car, etc. I kept my list short because my intention was not to write an all-inclusive reference book.*

*It was to enthuse and inspire into action others who were discouraged as I had been.*

*I simply wanted to say, look, it's easy to solve the world's big problems, just start with your own share at home!*

*With that purpose I began writing, subject by subject. Instead of talking problems I gave example after example of my solutions.*

*Using my experiences as a teacher drawing on the blackboard, I used simple diagrams, pictures and tables to get the message across straight-away without a lot of words.*

*I kept it simple and made it fun, which was not hard since I myself had experimented with enthusiasm and watched my results grow with joy and satisfaction.*

*When I went to the library in the 1980's to learn more, I noticed that most of the books on the environment were disheartening.*

*They detailed fully the overwhelming nature of the problems and solutions were described as being dependent on everyone changing their habits ("If everyone would take public transport to work instead of the car...") which seemed unrealistic, if not impossible.*

*Most books were several hundred pages long, filled with small print that made green living seem like a difficult science in which you could make many mistakes if you were not careful.*

*I saw my task as that of a good teacher, to provide the essentials in a given short time, and to make it enjoyable and interesting as well as useful.*

*With this vision in mind, I had to rewrite some sections of my text again and over again many times until I felt satisfied.*

*The section on the car was the most difficult; I so easily fell into blaming the manufacturers and the oil industry. I had to step back and ask myself:*

*"What had I written that was new and interesting, that added to the positive alternatives and not just to the blame?"*

*I knew that I did not have all the answers, but wanted to share the best of the ones I did have.*

*So my approach to the car was to tell how happy and satisfied I felt every time I saved a litre of petrol by riding my bike or walking to the shops.*

*When I had a rough draft of the whole book, I showed it to friends. My reviewing friends were both encouraging and helpful in their comments.*

*Out of our discussions came new ideas for solving environmental problems in daily life and new thoughts about how to present the material to beginners.*

*I am grateful still today for all the support that people gave me.*

*Finally, I was done to my own satisfaction. My story was told to the best of my ability and illustrated with my own drawings. I was ready to go to print.*

## *Publishing My Book And Bringing It Home!*

*It came as a revelation to me that any person anywhere can go to a print shop and, for a fee, pay to have their manuscript printed and bound as a book!*

*In fact, most books throughout history were published privately, until the last century or so, when publishing houses came to dominate!*

*I did not have the confidence to go to a publisher, so instead went to a special place in Stockholm.*

*This was the Writer's Book Machine (Forfattares Bokmaskin), a non-profit cooperative print shop where the author prints his or her book cheaply by doing much of the work themselves.*

*This called for doing the layout, mounting, collating, binding, trimming – everything except the actual printing.*

*They were very helpful and I learned how to make a book. When I did the binding, which required handling each copy many times, I felt like an artisan from an earlier century.*

*It strengthened the feeling that my book was a personal gift to each reader as well as to the world.*

*It is hard to describe the feeling I had when I brought the first printing of 500 copies home. After living with it for a year so intensively, like a pregnancy, here was my ecology book now in my hand!*

*As I looked at it, it almost seemed as if a stranger had produced it, and I could not fully comprehend that I had had the perseverance to handle all the thousand and one details that went into its making.*

*But, like finishing college or running a marathon, I had concentrated on one step at a time, and kept at it until I reached my goal. Like Pooh Bear, I felt very satisfied with myself.*

## *Spreading The Book In The World*

*I had no publisher to do the selling and advertising, so I sent the book out to magazines and newspapers in Sweden where I lived.*

*I quickly got an excellent review in a popular green magazine, whose editor even offered to help me by selling the book via the magazine.*

*Despite the fact that the book was in English (a foreign language in Sweden), it received many glowing reviews.*

*They liked its simplicity, positive attitude, practicality, and that it offered the reader a chance to make a difference. I was aglow! All my dreams had come true! I had succeeded!*

*From the magazine articles, people wrote or called me to order the book. I sold it for a low price to encourage its spread and usually sent them off the same day.*

*I began translating the text into Swedish so that it would be in the reader's native language.*

*The Swedish edition came out 4 months later, published at the same place. This time I dared to produce a thousand copies. They sold like hotcakes.*

*After a very fine review in the Swedish Library Journal, virtually every library in the country ordered it, so I went back and this time printed four thousand copies.*

*The binding and trimming wasn't quite as thrilling as the first time, but still very satisfying knowing that every reader, even in a public library, was receiving a personal gift directly from me.*

*Soon invitations were coming in from schools, communities and environmental organizations to talk about the ideas in the book.*

*I had a lot of fun giving talks and meeting some of my readers and others who thought in the same way as I did.*

*It also gave joy and satisfaction, confirming my belief that people truly want to care for the planet - they just need to know that what they do makes a difference - and a little basic info on how to make better choices.*

*I loved telling about my many composting failures (before I got it right) and demonstrating how to cook spaghetti and pasta without extra water, saving half or more of the cooking energy.*

*I showed slides from my home experiments and displayed gadgets that I had made.*

*I summarised my message with a one page handout titled "Archie's Eco-Checklist", which gave examples from my actions in the areas of garbage, chemicals, energy and food for the reader to check-off when they had tried them.*

*Within a year the book and its ideas were all over Sweden, spreading the joy and satisfaction of personal environmental responsibility to homes, day care centres and schools.*

*I also sent the book to international environmental organisations and to magazines in America, but with no response at all.*

*With a slight touch of bravado, I sent it off in 1989 to President Ronald Reagan, Soviet Premier Michael Gorbach, several European heads of state, Prince Charles of Britain and to the King of Sweden!*

*The book spread slowly in other countries through friends abroad and readers with international contacts. Due to the difficulty of selling internationally, I decided to send out free copies whenever requests came in.*

*Over the years I sent out more than a thousand free copies of the English edition to interested individuals around the world.*

*Some wrote back describing their use of the book in environmental education, which was satisfying for me.*

*My address was in the back of the book, and I made many interesting acquaintances through this work.*

*In the U.S., I printed a separate edition and with the help of my sisters and friends sold about 500 copies but eventually gave away the rest. Without my presence and without distribution channels, the book never took off as it had in Sweden.*

*In my innocence I relied on individuals and NGOs to help me spread the book with its ideas, as had happened in Sweden.*

*I had hoped environmental organisations would sponsor cheap translations and local non-commercial editions in different countries.*

*Stubbornly, I refused all offers for commercial editions and so lost many possible translations, with all of their potential readers.*

*After six years of working with the book in Sweden, demand abruptly died off in 1997 and I had to look for other work. That was OK, because it had done its job in Sweden and I was ready for a change.*

*But I was not quite satisfied because I still had many copies in English in my cellar and it had never gotten off the ground outside of Sweden.*

*As I took up other employment, I decided to give all remaining copies to libraries and schools.*

*I began sending them out to universities and public libraries in the U.S. Some appreciated the gift, but from most I never heard anything.*

## *Finishing A Dream*

*Five years and many library copies later, I got the idea to put the book on Internet – then the modern way to distribute information.*

*There it would be available instantly to the entire world! It would also save me a lot of postage and trouble.*

*So I began revising the book for the Internet because by now 14 years had passed since the original edition, and there was room for many additions and improvements.*

*Still, much of the text stood the test of time, I believed, and the book could yet serve as an easily readable and practical introduction to living with fewer resources and less impact on the earth.*

*Just as I finished revising the book for Internet, and being a different person now, it occurred to me, wouldn't an international publisher be able to spread the book and its message even better?*

*I decided to give it a try, and sent the manuscript to five likely publishers. One responded positively, Green Books in the U.K., the people who put out publications by E. F. Schumacher, one of my inspirers.*

*I came to agreement with Green Books and rewrote the book with their editorial help to meet the British audience in the year 2004.*

*I was happy, but still not quite satisfied, because it was not readily available outside of Britain, and freight charges made it expensive.*

*So I decided to finish my idea of putting it up on Internet, to which Green Books generously agreed. A few weeks later it was up for free download.*

## *At Last: Peace, Joy And Satisfaction*

*Now, at last, I can relax, satisfied and peaceful. My work is done, my gift given. I have come to understand that what matters most in life is to give our gifts, whatever they are.*

*If I hold back, I feel stingy and unfulfilled – out of nothing comes nothing. When I give, I create something where before there was nothing.*

*I plant a seed that can grow into something and may someday give back - either to me or to someone else.*

*I have learned that I must believe in myself and dare to do what feels right in my life, day by day, action by little action.*

*Each time I do that, I experience the satisfaction it gives at the time, and then with its memory even in all the years to come.*

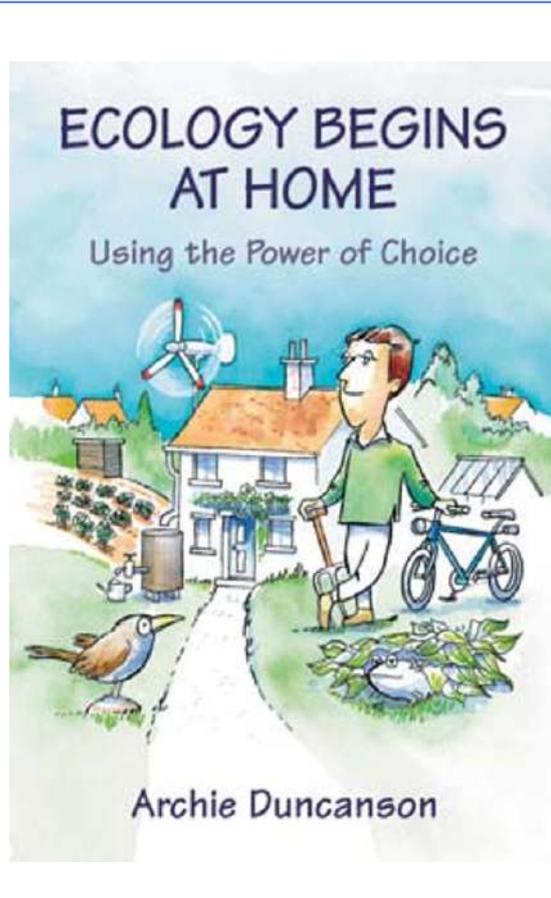
*And like a seed, the gift may grow, providing ever more joy and satisfaction, as it did with my first letter titled Ecology Begins at Home and sent out to a hundred friends.*

*When a dream, big or small, arises in your mind, seize the opportunity.*

*Believe in yourself, in your own uniqueness, in your own special way of doing things, with your own something special to give to the world.*

*Publishing my book, and doing it myself, with my own hands at the Writer's Book Machine, has meant more to me than anything else I have done in life, except being a father and teaching.*

*Were I to die tomorrow, my life would be complete – my book is out, my message said, my gift given. Let me encourage you to do the same!*



*The most genially simple and concrete guide to practical ecology out today. Should be spread in massive editions, not the least to children, who easily understand it and who are usually less habit-bound than we adults.*

*Swedish Library Service 1990.*

*The best book yet on how to green your lifestyle ...makes the whole subject very clear and understandable.*

*Permaculture Magazine UK, 2005.*

Different people generate their zest for life in different ways. One approach is for them to do things they find stimulating. It is then to translate these into shaping a satisfying project and working to achieve their definition of success.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow some elements of the stimulating approach? How can you do this in your own way?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Stimulating Rather Than Straining Approach*

*The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of this approach may be:*

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*The specific things I can do to follow elements of this approach are:*

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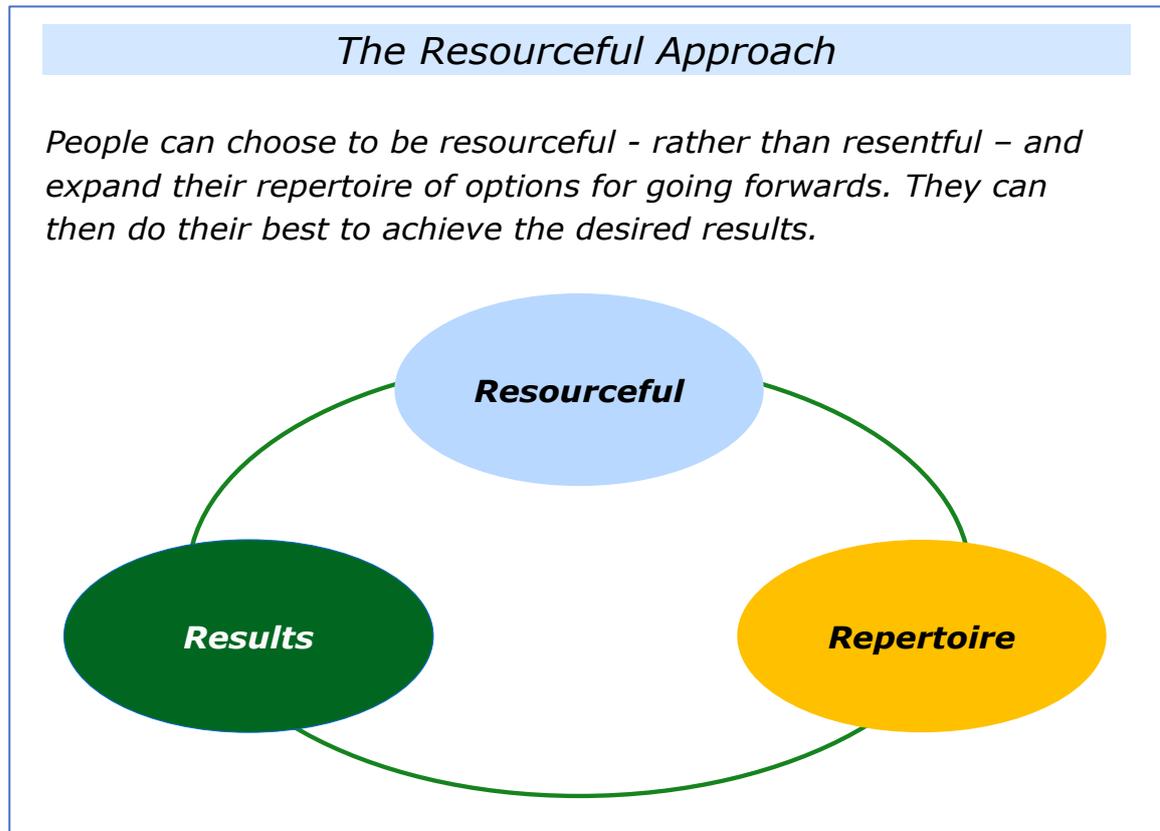
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Resourceful Approach*



People love to feel in charge of shaping their futures. There are many situations, however, where some of the quotes attributed to Epictetus remain true.

*It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters ... Make the best use of what is in your power, and take the rest as it happens ... The greater the difficulty the more glory in surmounting it ... Skilful pilots gain their reputation from storms and tempests.*

Today there are many books written about resilience and recovering from setbacks. Many provide excellent models and tools that people can use in their own ways.

Every person is different, however, and chooses their own ways to respond to disappointments. This can be complicated by feelings of injustice, hurt or rejection. A person may need time to rest, reflect and heal. They can then, at some point, choose how they want to

shape their future. Some people choose to be resourceful rather than resentful.

Al Siebert helped many people to take this step. Here are excerpts from a piece he wrote to help people who had lost their jobs. The following ideas from his 1993 book *The Survivor Personality* are still relevant today.

*Losing your job through no fault of your own can wipe you out emotionally.*

*How do you find the energy to search for work? How do you deal with your anger? How can you be pleasant, relaxed, and self-confident in an interview when you don't feel that way?*

*Here are some guidelines for handling the emotional challenge of dealing with job loss and searching for new employment.*

### *Guidelines For Thriving During Job Loss And Job Search - Al Siebert*

- *Write down how you feel. Get your feelings out in a safe way. Take creative action and begin your job search.*
- *Talk with people with whom you can share ideas. Brainstorm how to find employment opportunities.*
- *Rebuild your self-esteem. Describe the things you've done in the past year that you like yourself for doing*
- *Write a detailed description of what you do well. Practice talking about your reliable strengths.*
- *Discover something of value in your experience. What have you learned? How has it made you a stronger, better person?*

- *Make finding a job a job. Most job openings are never advertised. Find out what is happening in places where you would like to work.*
- *Focus on the employer's needs more than your own. Find a position you would like and research what the managers need.*
- *Customise your application to fit exactly with what this employer needs. They must see you as uniquely qualified for the position.*
- *Before your job interview take a few minutes to meditate on your past successes and reliable skills. Make the interview about how you want to help them.*
- *Be persistent. Be open to unexpected opportunities. Keep taking care of yourself and your health.*

### *Resourcefulness – Learning From Your Own Experiences*

Looking back, can you recall a situation when you chose to be resourceful rather than resentful? You may have made this choice after suffering a loss, experiencing a disappointment or feeling a sense of injustice.

What was your first reaction to the event? You may have felt angry, hurt or rejected. How did you take time to heal, reflect and begin to resurface?

How did you employ your resourcefulness to explore the possible ways forward? How did you clarify the real results you wanted to achieve? How did you explore your possible options for achieving these results? How did you consider the pluses and minuses of each option? How did you decide on your chosen route forwards?

How did you plan your chosen route? What was the structure you aimed to follow? If appropriate, what did you do to pause and reflect before starting out on the journey?

How did you move into action? How did you get an early success? How did you maintain the momentum? How did you follow your chosen rhythm? How did you encourage yourself on the journey?

Did you experience any setbacks? If so, how did you take time: a) to consider your achievements so far; b) to consider your options going forwards; c) to rejuvenate yourself and pursue your chosen route?

How did you keep doing reality checks? How did you build on what was working? How did you improve the other areas? How did you keep delivering high standards?

How did you energise yourself before entering the final lap? How did you pursue your chosen strategy? How did you do your best to finish properly and achieve the desired results?

### *Resourcefulness – Learning From Other People’s Experiences*

You have your own approach to being resourceful but it can also be useful to learn from other people’s experiences. Al Siebert’s books laid the foundations for much of the work on resilience, thriving and delivering results.

He spent over 40 years studying life’s survivors - those who grew when overcoming tough challenges. Al initially focused on people that met four criteria:

*They had survived a major crisis. They had surmounted the crisis through personal effort. They had emerged from the experience with previously unknown strengths and abilities. They had, in retrospect, found value in the experience.*

The situations they faced included sexual assaults, life-threatening illnesses, being prisoners of war, addictions, physical attacks and crippling accidents.

How do people cope with such adversity? Some don't, says Al. They feel victimised, become helpless or lash out at others.

Some people do deal with adversity. They stay calm, clarify the situation and chart their strategy. Committing to their course of action, they concentrate fully until they reach their chosen goal. Al wrote:

*They thrive by gaining strength from adversity and often convert misfortune into a gift. Are life's best survivors different from other people?*

*No. They survive, cope, and thrive better because they are better at using the inborn abilities possessed by all humans.*

### *The Survivor's Approach To Tackling Challenges*

- *They quickly read the new reality.*
- *They take responsibility for making things work out well.*
- *They stay calm, clarify what is happening and chart their path.*
- *They maintain a sense of perspective.*
- *They are resourceful and open to doing anything.*
- *They have life-competence that helps them in emergencies.*
- *They totally commit to doing their best.*

### *They quickly read the new reality*

Survivors have experience of overcoming difficulties in life. They read situations quickly and start considering the consequences.

Other people ignore what is happening or bury their heads in the sand. Survivors click into awareness mode and take snapshots of what is actually happening.

### *They stay calm*

Why? They realise it is vital to establish clarity. They must clarify what is happening and then make decisions about the way forward. The best way to do this is to get in the helicopter and take an overall view.

### *They maintain a sense of perspective*

People who are diagnosed with a serious illness, for example, may reframe it as a project. Looking at it from this perspective, they are able to remove themselves and plan the path ahead.

They clarify the assets. They focus on their relationships, knowledge, talents and the healthy parts of their body. Mobilising these assets, they then tackle the challenge.

### *They are resourceful and open to doing anything*

AI found that survivors chose their strategies from a wide repertoire of options. One contributing factor is that they have a quality common to many peak performers. Such people embrace what appear to be seeming paradoxes.

They are able to see the big picture *and* the small details, to be focused *and* flexible, to be serious *and* playful. This means they are able to see a wider number of options than people who have been trained to behave in one way.

*They have life-competence  
that helps them in emergencies*

Survivors are life-long learners. Such people tend to be savvy rather than having lived a sheltered life. This enables them to read situations, call on their experience and make decisions.

Moving into action, they observe what is happening – what is working and what isn't – and are prepared to change direction. This is a great advantage when tackling problems or emergencies.

*They totally commit  
to doing their best*

Survivors make their decision and throw themselves into pursuing their chosen strategy. They employ every ounce of energy to reach the goal. AI described this in the following way.

*The survivor way of orientating to a crisis is to feel fully and totally responsible for making things work out well.*

Such people often grow from the experience. They continue to expand their resilience and repertoire, but they also develop a sense of perspective about life. AI described them in the following way.

*Resilient adults are happy rather than hostile. They forgive instead of holding grudges and are more playful than serious.*

*They get better and better every decade because they have a child-like curiosity. They ask questions, explore, want to know how things work, and learn valuable lessons in the school of life.*

Being resourceful sometimes involves communicating with people in challenging situations. Let's explore this approach.

## *Resourcefulness - Clarifying The Script You Want To Follow In A Challenging Situation*

### *Clarifying My Script*

*The Key Messages I Want To Give Are:*

- \*
- \*
- \*

There are many ways to be resourceful. One approach is to clarify what you want to do and say in a potentially challenging situation.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you took this approach? You may have done this when:

*You were ending a relationship;*

*You wanted to give somebody clear messages about how you would prefer them to behave in the future;*

*You needed to give a tough message to an employee;*

*You wanted to explain the decision you had made about your chosen way forwards;*

Let's explore how some people have dealt with such situations. Sometimes these involved the person wanting to get things off their chest. They then realised that the way they planned to do this could lead to difficulties.

Dave was going to leave his present employer for a new job. He planned to break the news by telling his manager he was disappointed that the organisation had not fulfilled certain promises.

This approach could come across as negative. We therefore explored how to manage the situation in a more positive way.

Dave wanted to leave on a good note. Bearing this in mind, he formulated the script he wanted to follow.

Looking ahead to meeting his manager, he aimed to give them the following messages. He would do this in a calm and clear way.

*"I have learned a lot here and it is has been a good couple of years.*

*"I have been offered an opportunity that plays to my strengths and I am planning to take it.*

*"I will do everything possible to make a good handover to whoever replaces me."*

His employer was shocked at first, but Dave gave the messages in a professional way. Saying that he wanted to move to the role that played to his strengths, he did not go over old ground. This helped him to move on in a positive way.

Different people choose to give their chosen messages in different ways. Imagine, for example, that you want to give tough messages to an employee about the way they behave.

Some managers start by identifying where the team member is failing. They then aim to point these out to the person and urge them to change. Sometimes this can work, sometimes it fails.

Another approach is to explain the professional standards you want the person to follow in the future. It is to then invite them to decide if they want to behave in these ways.

Imagine you are going to have such a conversation with a person. You may want to give them the following messages.

*"As you know, we have certain professional standards that people need to follow to deliver the agreed goals. These include the following things that we expect people to do:*

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*"Looking ahead, I would like to decide if you want to follow these professional standards. This would involve you choosing to do the following things:*

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*"I would like you to take time to reflect to decide if you want to follow these professional standards. If so, then I would also like you to let us know the specific things you want to do to translate these into action."*

You may want the person to demonstrate a positive attitude, encourage their colleagues and manage their key stakeholders. It can be useful to give examples of how they can do this in the future.

How to give these messages? There are some Dos and Don'ts you may wish to follow.

Do keep referring to the required professional standards. Do give examples of how they can translate these into action in the future. Do show the benefits to them and to others of behaving in these ways.

Do focus on the future and don't get into arguments. Dirty fighters sometimes want to get you into the gutter and fight about details. Don't fall for it. Do keep saying it is up to them to decide if they want to follow the required professional standards.

Looking ahead, can you think of a challenging situation where you may want to give some key messages to a person or a group of people? You may have certain feelings that you want to express, but it will be important to consider the following things.

*Clarify what you can and can't control*

You can control your attitude and how you give the messages. You can't control the way people receive them or how they will react.

*Clarify what you do and don't want to do*

*You may want to be calm, positive and professional. You may also want to achieve certain aims. You may not want to be a victim or come across as blaming others.*

*Clarify the key messages you want to give*

Clarify how to position the conversation. Depending on the topic you want to discuss, you may say something like:

*"I would like to talk with you about something when you have the time. It is about some of the possible ways forward. Can you let me know when it may be a good time to talk?"*

The way you position the conversation will depend on the topic you want to cover. If possible, position it in a way so that the other party has the chance to prepare themselves for the conversation.

Write down the key messages you want to give to the person or group of people. Looking at these messages, you may want:

*To change any negative ones into giving the other person or the group positive suggestions or alternatives;*

*To, if appropriate, focus on how you or the other party can behave in a positive way in the future.*

You can clarify what you want to say and also to rehearse the situation. Here are some things to bear in mind.

### *Giving Key Messages*

*You may want:*

- *To write down the key messages you want to give and rehearse giving these in a way that fits your personality;*
- *To anticipate how the other party may behave and the way that you will respond;*
- *To rehearse going back to the key messages that you want to give and not being knocked off-track.*

Let's look at another situation where a person may want to clarify and give certain messages.

A medical consultant may be due to see a patient who has been through several courses of chemotherapy. The latest x-rays show that the illness is worsening.

How to break the news? The consultant will aim to show respect to the person but also explain the realities of the situation. Making the person feel welcome, they may then say something along the following lines.

*"We have got the x-rays back and unfortunately it is not the news we were hoping for. There are, however, several ways forward. Each route has both pluses and minuses.*

*"What would you like me to do first? I can explain the x-rays or I can go through the possible ways forward. Which would you prefer?"*

Sometimes it is hard to give tough news but people want to be treated like adults. They also want the opportunity to explore the ways forward and then make decisions.

There are many frameworks that people can use to use to be resourceful in challenging situations. The following pages explore some of these approaches.

## *The Imagination Approach*

### *The Imagination Approach*

*This can involve focusing on the following themes and then deciding if you want to work towards achieving the goal.*

- *You can imagine the picture of success – the goal;*
- *You can imagine the ways of achieving the goal;*
- *You can imagine the benefits of achieving the goal;*
- *You can imagine the work involved in achieving the goal.*

Imagination is one of our greatest assets. We can use it to explore, create or achieve specific goals. There are many views on how to use our imagination. One approach is to take the following steps.

First, to imagine the picture of success – the goal. Second, to imagine the different ways to reach the goal. Third, to imagine the benefits of reaching the goal. Fourth, to imagine the actual work involved in reaching the goal.

This leads to making a decision. Bearing these factors in mind, do you really want to work towards achieving the goal?

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you used your imagination to clarify and work towards a specific goal? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Imagination In The Past*

*The specific situation in the past when  
I used my imagination to clarify  
and work towards a specific goal was:*

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*The specific things I did then to use my  
imagination to take these steps were:*

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*The specific things that happened as  
a result of taking these steps were:*

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## *Imagining The Picture Of Success – The Goal*

Different people use their imagination in different ways. Some simply like to let their mind drift, explore ideas and see where this takes them. Some consider how to get their ideal job or follow their dreams. Some turn their attention to tackling a specific challenge.

Masaru Ibuka, the co-founder of Sony, took the latter route. He enjoyed walking and listening to music. How could he do both at the same time? This eventually led to producing the Sony Walkman.

Creative people dare to explore. Settling on a topic, they aim to find a solution or achieve a specific aim. Such people then clarify the What. This is their goal – their picture of success.

## *Imagining The Ways To Reach The Goal*

Such people move on to the How and again use their imagination. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"I find it relatively easy to imagine the goal. Projecting myself into the future, I can see it, feel it and sense it. I can tell exactly what is happening when reaching the picture of success.*

*"The next part can also be easy if I am just relying on myself to do the work. Then I just keep asking myself the following questions.*

*"How can I reach the goal? What are all the possible ways I can try? What are the obvious ways? What are the other potential creative ways? What are the other things I can try?"*

Some people see their imagination as a muscle that they need to keep using. The following pages describe some ways to take this approach. We will then return to exploring how a person can use their imagination to clarify the benefits of achieving a goal.

## *Imagination And Creativity*

*Michaela Cristallo suggested many ways to boost imagination and creativity in an article for the Lifehack website. Here are excerpts from her suggestions.*

- *Pursue interests that energize you.*

*Do things that light you up inside and give you natural energy. Find what things work for you and make a point to do them every single day to boost your energy and nurture creativity.*

- *Take time out for regular meditation and reflection.*

*When you calm your mind you give yourself a chance to refresh. This makes you more open taking in everything around you, which in turn nurtures your creativity.*

- *Experiment with creative materials.*

*Take some time out to experiment with your creative materials. You don't need a master plan or end goal. Just play and see what happens.*

- *Get plenty of sleep.*

*Getting a good nights rest is essential to nurturing your creativity and boosting your intuitive awareness. It makes you sharper and more open to creative opportunities throughout the day.*

- *Do something special for yourself once a week.*

*Do something just for you once a week. Indulging yourself once a week will provide some much needed creative inspiration and the calmness of mind to take it all in.*

- *Spend some time in nature.*

*This could be anything from a leisurely walk along the beach to a hike through the mountains. The benefits to your creativity and intuitive awareness are limitless.*

- *Take up a hobby just for fun.*

*Not everything needs to be tied to a goal or special outcome. Take up a hobby just for fun. By living in the moment you'll boost your awareness and facilitate the flow of creative ideas.*

- *Exercise your imagination.*

*Give yourself a fun creative challenge every day. Start by asking yourself a trigger question, such as: "How to ..." This will nurture creativity and boost your creative abilities long-term.*

- *Read every day.*

*When you read, you are exposed to the amazing ideas of others and bring them into your consciousness where they brew alongside your own thoughts to create something magical.*

## *Imagining The Benefits Of Reaching The Goal*

Great workers often clarify the benefits. They may do this for several reasons.

First, they may clarify the benefits to check their own motivation. This is because creative people generate lots of ideas for projects but only follow a few. Much depends on what they see as the benefits. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"The work I do involves helping people to solve conflicts. This can be time consuming and arduous. It means setting aside several months to work with the different parties.*

*"Sometimes I am inundated with requests for help but can only focus on two or three projects. At those times I consider which ones will bring the most benefit.*

*"Although I consider myself and the personal rewards, I normally judge which project to take: a) on the possibility of success; b) on the benefits this will bring to the various parties. This helps me to make a decision."*

Second, they may clarify the potential benefits for other people. The following section describes two people who pursued different approaches when applying for jobs during the Covid period.

Person A took a conventional route. They sent a general email to more than 100 people saying that they were looking for a role. They also posted on Linked In to say that they were: 'Looking for the next challenge'.

Person B took a creative route. Focusing on twenty people in their network, they wrote customised emails to each of these individuals.

They described the specific benefits they would like to deliver to an organisation. These included improving profitability, product quality

and customer satisfaction. They matched these outcomes to what they knew about each person's agenda.

Person B did not ask these individuals for a job. Instead they asked whether the person knew of anybody or any organisation that might be interested in them delivering these results.

Person A received a few polite replies but no concrete offers. Person B got replies from several people. This led to them doing contract work that eventually turned into a full-time role.

People buy benefits. This is the eternal rule when checking your own motivation or presenting potential projects.

### *People Buy Benefits*

*This is the eternal rule to bear in mind when focusing on your own motivation or when sharing possible ways forward with people. It is to clarify the specific goals you can deliver or the specific goals you can help others to deliver. It is then:*

-  *To clarify the specific benefits – for yourself and for other stakeholders - of delivering the goals;*
-  *To clarify your potential audience – the various stakeholders – and show how they will benefit from delivering the goals;*
-  *To clarify how you can get some quick wins that will reassure people and create momentum on the way towards delivering the goals.*

## *Imagining The Work Involved In Reaching The Goal*

Great workers go beyond understanding the big picture. They are also capable of diving deep to see the specific work that must be done to reach the goal. They may not do the detailed work themselves, but they recognise what must be completed.

This leads to making a decision. Bearing in mind all the factors, do they want to commit to the project? If so, how can they build on the pluses and minimise the minuses on the journey?

Some people decide straight away. Others reflect on whether they want to commit to delivering the goods. This may involve imagining various scenarios and how they can deal with the challenges.

A person may also see the project in context. How does it fit with their present circumstances? How does it fit with their life goals? Bearing these things in mind, they then make a decision whether to work towards the specific goal.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to use elements of the imagination approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Imagination In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future when I may want to use my imagination to clarify and work towards a specific goal may be:*

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*The specific things I can do then to use my imagination to take these steps are:*

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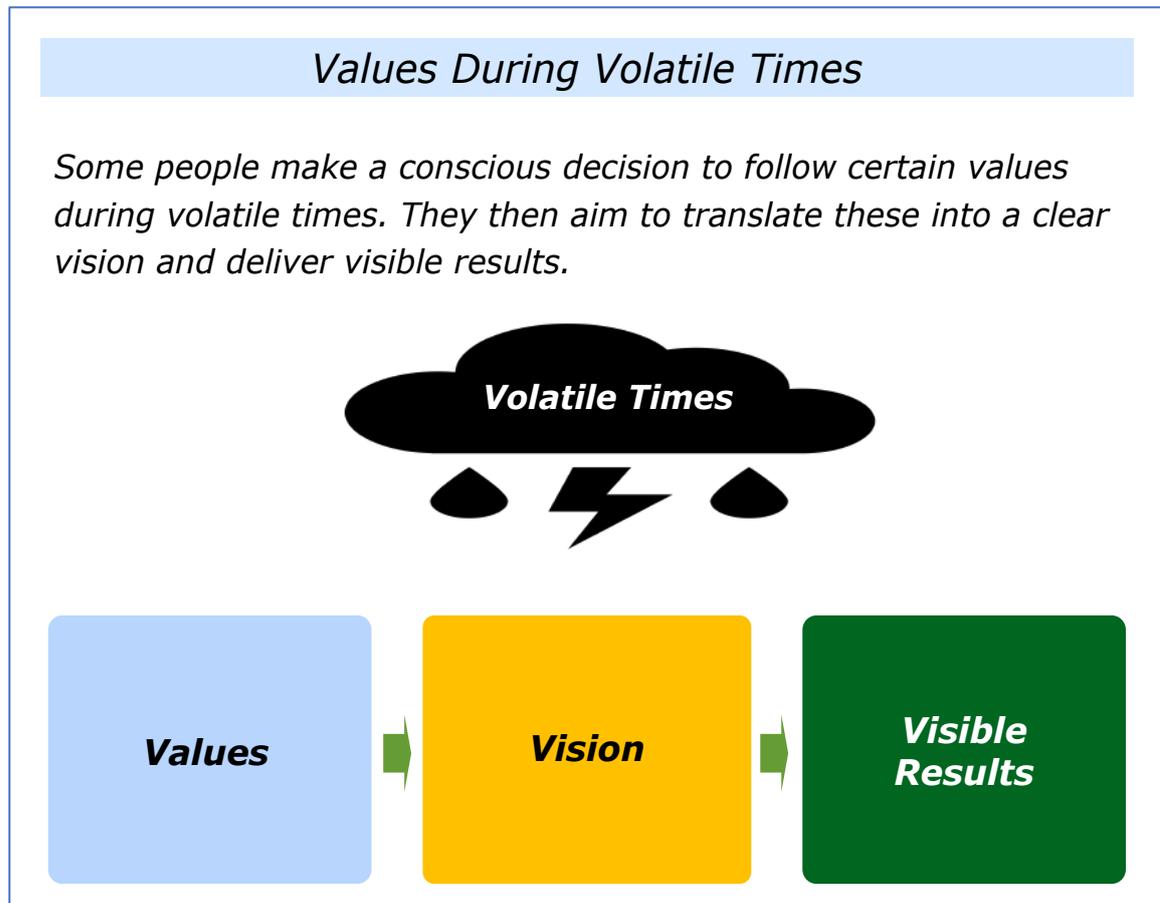
*The specific things that may happen as a result may be:*

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## *The Values During Volatile Times Approach*



Different people behave in different ways during volatile times. The way they deal with the challenges can have consequences for both themselves and other people.

Some people take time to reflect and focus on their inner compass. They then make a conscious decision to follow certain values, translate these into action and achieve visible results.

Some people follow caring values in such situations. Whilst caring for their loved ones, they also show generosity towards other people. They aim to find win-win solutions to challenges.

Some people follow callous values. Demonstrating greed, they grab what they want and then go for more. They want to make sure that they win and other people lose.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you followed your values during a volatile time? This could have been in your personal or professional life.

You may have been experiencing challenges on a personal level, in a relationship or in your work. Alternatively, you may have been affected by changes in society that had an impact on your life.

How did you manage the challenge? How did you clarify the values you wanted to follow? How did you translate these into action? What happened as a result of taking these steps?

Different people choose to follow their values in different ways. This was exemplified during the Covid crisis.

Some people chose to care for their neighbours, support medical staff, supply food banks and help others. Others chose to make a quick profit by selling faulty medical equipment, marketing fake cures or phishing.

Caring organisations often use their values as a guiding compass. Johnson & Johnson, for example, has sometimes followed this approach successfully. Sometimes it has also failed to follow its stated values.

Let's start with the positive example, which is the famous Tylenol case. Here is a brief overview of what happened.

In 1982 several batches of its Tylenol medication were found to have been injected with cyanide. Despite the loss of earnings involved, the company immediately withdrew every packet of Tylenol from the market.

Why did Johnson & Johnson act so quickly? The company said that it returned to the first line of its Credo. This read:

*We believe our first responsibility is to doctors, nurses and patients, to mothers and fathers and all others who use our products and services.*

The company put its long-term reputation before short-term cash and withdrew Tylenol from the shelves. Johnson & Johnson prepared for such moments.

During the 1970s it involved its employees in a programme called The Credo Challenge. People were invited:

*To envisage specific situations that might challenge the Credo;*

*To explore how to follow the Credo in such situations.;*

*To then consider whether the company could actually be true to its Credo.*

If people found it was possible to follow the guidelines, then the Credo should be published. If not, then there was little point in just using it as a PR exercise.

Johnson & Johnson found that the Credo withstood robust challenges. They therefore chose to use it as their guide during difficult situations. This led to the company being lauded for its ethical approach.

Since then the company has fallen from grace when allegations about harmful effects from its baby talcum powder were denied. This has led to lawsuits and damage to its reputation.

During the past two decades it has become a cliché to say that we live in a VUCA world. The term was coined in the 1990s to describe a world that had become increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous.

Such a world provides opportunities for people who stick to their values. It gives them the chance to translate these values into action in their daily lives and work.

Some people find such a world to be frightening. It creates opportunities for demagogues who promise simplistic solutions or who create scapegoats. Some people yearn for a return to what they believed was a more predictable world.

How can you live in such a world? How can you create a sense of stability? How can you deal with challenging events in the midst of what sometimes appears to be chaos?

As mentioned earlier, one way is to return to your deepest values. You can ask:

*"What are the values that I believe are important in life? How can I follow these in my daily life and work?"*

You can make these values the anchor for your life. They will help to prevent you being tossed around by events like a cork on the ocean. When in doubt, you can return to these values. These can provide stability in your life.

This approach also works in organisations. Over the years I have worked with many organisations that have asked:

*"How do we cope in such a world?"*

The key has been to help them to return to their values. They have then focused on how follow these in their daily work. These values have provided a compass they can follow in a volatile world.

Many people took this step after the shocks provided by elections in Europe and the USA. After a period of mourning, they mobilised themselves by focusing on their deepest values. They then looked at how to translate these into action in their daily lives and work.

Some regained strength by spending time with their loved ones and appreciating the simple things in life. Some supported organisations that worked for decency and human rights. Some worked for movements that aimed to care for people and the planet.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a potentially challenging situation where you would like to be resourceful? This could be in your personal or professional life.

Bearing in mind what you can control, what are the results you want to achieve in the situation? How can you be resourceful and do your best to achieve the desired results? What may happen as a result of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Resourceful Approach*

*The potentially challenging situation when I may want to be resourceful may be:*

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*Bearing in mind the things I can control, the real results I want to achieve in the situation are:*

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*The specific things I can do to do my best to achieve these results are:*

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## *The Growing Things Approach*

### *The Growing Things Approach*

*This approach starts by deciding what you want to help to grow. It then involves choosing the right ground, growing things and doing great work.*



Some people want to help physical things to grow. Some people want to help philosophies to grow. Some want to help people, teams or organisations to grow. Some want to help societies to grow.

Imagine that you want to take these steps in your own way. You can start by deciding what you want to grow. The next step is crucial. It is to choose the right ground.

This needs to be one where you stand a good chance of achieving success. It could be working with specific types of people. It could also be a specific niche, workplace, environment or culture.

Moving into action, you can then do your best to help things to grow. This can involve setting goals, following a certain strategy and providing support.

You can then aim to do good work. Sometimes you may aim to go further and produce great work. You may also aim to share what you have learned. People can then use this knowledge in their own lives and work. Let's explore these steps.

## *Ground*

Imagine you want to help things to grow. You may aim to be a trusted advisor, provide health services or write articles that inspire people. You may aim to shift a culture, develop a business, build a successful prototype or do another activity.

Many people want to plant seeds. As mentioned earlier, the key is to find fertile ground where these have a chance to grow. The same rule applies to many things that people want to do in their lives and work.

Some people try to do good work in places where they have little chance of success. They may then spend years trying to change other people or the culture.

Sometimes this approach can work, but it is rare. A company culture, for example, may only change with new leadership or because of a massive shock.

Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to find or create fertile ground. You can then do good work and deliver success.

Success can be attractive. The results you produce may interest people in other places. If appropriate, you can help them to follow similar principles to help things to grow.

How to choose the right ground? One approach is to follow the path taken by many creative people. It is:

*To clarify your strengths and how you can help people to achieve success;*

*To clarify your perfect customers – the kinds of people you like working with or those who may be open to what you offer – and understand their picture of success;*

*To clarify how you can reach these people in a way that fits your values system and then use your strengths to help them to achieve success.*

The following pages give examples of people I have worked with who took this approach. Sometimes it took years to find the right place, but eventually they found the ground where they could help to make things grow.

### *Person A*

One football coach was good at helping young players to develop their talent and perform well on the field. They also wanted to help the players to grow as people as well as professionals.

Whilst taking their coaching badges they took lowly paid roles in several clubs. Some clubs said they wanted to help the players to develop life skills as well as technical skills, but this did not always prove true.

The football coach took several years before finding the right fit with one club. They provided specialist skills that helped the young players:

*To develop their footballing talent;*

*To develop their ability to make a living in football – either with their present club or at another level;*

*To develop transferable skills they could use in other fields of work.*

The coach continued at their club and also ran programmes at national football associations across the world.

These associations then ran coaching programmes that went beyond helping clubs to produce players for their first teams. They provided practical tools that helped youngsters to grow as people and professionals.

### *Person B*

One customer services director wanted to develop a new model for providing great service. They wanted to show how this could produce wins for the company and wins for the customers.

Spending over a decade in corporations, they recognised it would be hard to shift a whole system towards this approach. Bearing this in mind, they began looking for other opportunities.

They eventually found a retail company that wanted to try a new approach. Driven by the digital revolution, it aimed to set up a customer service centre away from London.

The customer service director put together a proposal. They showed how they would be able:

*To create a centre that would be located outside London but also in an area that had access to a good pool of talent;*

*To create one that utilised the latest technology yet also provided the human touch and delivered great customer service;*

*To create one that delivered wins for the company, wins for the customers and wins for the colleagues.*

Getting the go-ahead, they created the centre from scratch in a new building. This approach proved successful and gained lots of plaudits.

Two years went by and the customer services director was invited to London. They were offered a new project that looked attractive, but there were warning signs.

The company wanted them to persuade the bulk of its staff – around ten thousand people – to change their old habits. This would involve attempting to shift the mind sets of sceptics.

It did not take long for the customer services director to make up their mind. They thanked the company for its offer, but said they had a job to finish at their present location.

Seeing the writing on the wall, they coached their leadership team to take over the running of the centre. They then moved on to lead a business that helped other companies to provide great customer service.

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that you have clarified your strengths and the things that you want to grow. What might be the most fertile ground for doing this kind of work?

You may aim to work with certain kinds of people. What may be the characteristics of these people? How can you reach them in a way that fits your values system? How can you help them to achieve success?

You may prefer to work in a certain kind of culture, team or organisation. What may be characteristics of such a place? How can you find or create such an environment? How can you begin to deliver success?

## *Growing Things*

Imagine that you have found a place where you can do good work. The next step will be to help things to grow. This way you do this will depend on the kind of work you do.

A counsellor may help a person to manage their emotions and grow. A community leader may help local people to shape their neighbourhood and grow. A business leader may help a company's performance to grow.

Different people take different approaches, but many pursue similar themes. They often aim:

*To clarify the specific goals to achieve – the picture of success;*

*To do good work that enables things to grow and achieve success;*

*To, when appropriate, pass on knowledge about the principles that have helped to deliver success.*

The following pages describe how one person applied this approach in their own way.

### *Person C*

One health professional began their career by throwing themselves into many aspects of health care. During their early twenties they did voluntary work in nursing homes, psychiatric hospitals and counselling centres.

They decided to specialise in the physical and psychological aspects of helping people to take care of their wellbeing. This called for getting the appropriate qualifications. They then worked in various parts of the national health service.

Five years later they set up their own practice. This happened after working with people in the corporate sector who demonstrated symptoms of stress. One notable client asked them to visit their office and give talks on wellbeing.

The health professional positioned what they offered as helping people to care for their wellbeing and deliver peak performance. This led to them spending one day a week holding sessions at the client's main office.

The next step was to offer similar services to organisations in several fields. Whilst some government organisations showed interest, the main clients proved to be sports clubs and businesses.

The health professional passed on their knowledge in the form of articles, books and podcasts. They became known as an expert on wellbeing and peak performance. They have since helped many people to grow.

## *Great Work*

There are many definitions of great work. One stems from sports and can be summarised in the following way:

*Great workers often help other people to perform at their best and do great work.*

During the past fifty years I have had the opportunity to work with many people who have taken this approach. The Foresight Group in Sweden was one such group of people.

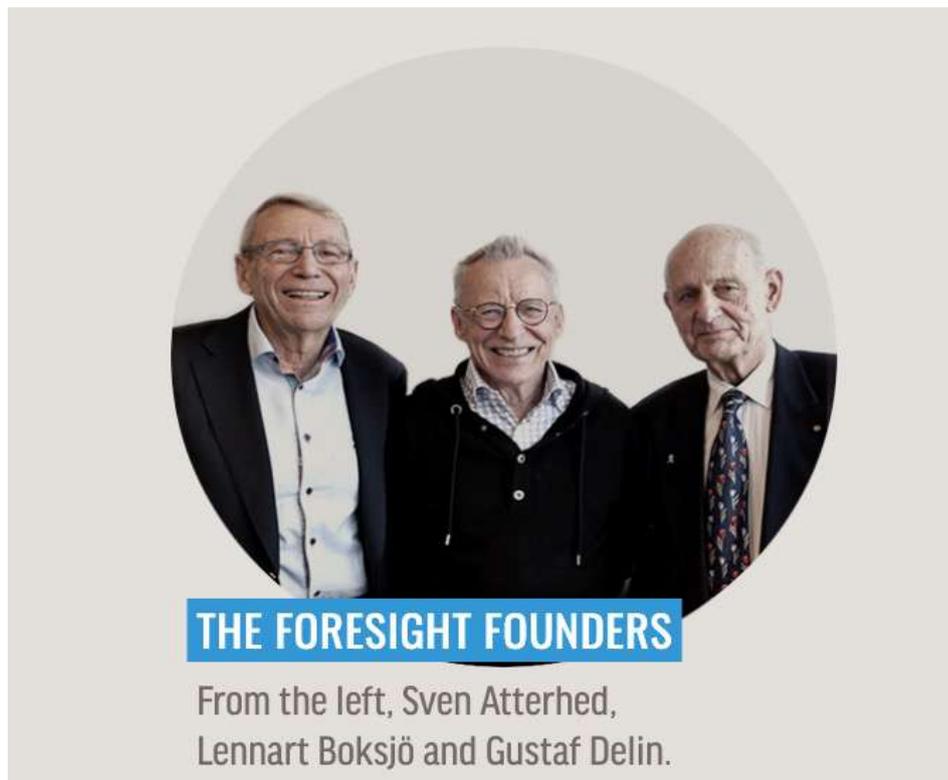
They set up the world's first school for intrapreneurs. This resulted in many people applying their creativity to get wins for their companies and for themselves. Here an introduction from the present company's website.

### *The ForeSight Group – The Legacy*

The three initial ForeSight founders, Sven Atterhed, Lennart Boksjö and Gustaf Delin had line management backgrounds in large companies.

They first worked together as consultants at Innotech, a leading US consulting firm, in the development of business concepts. It soon became clear to the Swedish trio that creative business concepts/ideas were only one ingredient in the success of new ventures.

From venture capitalists in the USA the group learned early that the entrepreneur and the entrepreneurial team account for some 75% of the success of a new venture. A new concept "Intrapreneurship" was born.



*Supporting internal entrepreneurs  
within large organizations*

Looking at the way venture capitalists engage on the open market to support entrepreneurs prompted The ForeSight Group in 1979 to develop programs to support internal entrepreneurs, within large organizations.

A new concept was born to help speed up the process of innovation and change in large companies, drawing on the energy and drive of internal **entrepreneurs – intrapreneurs**.

*The idea was to create a win-win situation for companies and for intrapreneurs.*

The companies would keep their internal entrepreneurial talent for creating new businesses and the intrapreneurs would build on the established brand names and networks of the large company and share in the success at limited risk.

The ForeSight methodology helped companies to speed up the process of bringing new ventures, products and services to market and of implementing internal projects.

During the 1990s ForeSight worked with top-management teams on emergent strategy, in parallel with front-line innovation driven by intrapreneurs.

This involvement became a powerful means of influencing corporate cultures towards becoming more entrepreneurial.

## *The Project That Is Off-Centre But In Parallel Approach*



This is an approach that it is sometimes followed by people who have the following characteristics.

*They like to develop ideas, lead entrepreneurial projects or build prototypes;*

*They don't like to become part of the central operational engine of an organisation;*

*They like to do work that may be off-centre – such as doing a project or building a business - that runs parallel to the organisation's direction and helps it to achieve future success.*

Different people follow this approach in different ways. The usual way is to do a specific project that complements the organisation's existing offering.

Some people may choose to pursue an approach that enables both them and an organisation to take a bigger leap. Let's look at one example.

Bill had built a transformational digital company. He enjoyed the building part but got bored with the transactional work required to keep the engine running. He had several options.

*He could concentrate on the daily operations, improve its profitability and eventually sell the business;*

*He could concentrate on what he did best – developing new ideas – and hire somebody to run the business;*

*He could sell the business – probably for much less than he had anticipated – start another business but again take a low salary;*

*He could take a role in a big company – something he had been offered along with lots of shares - and use his skills to help that business to achieve its targets.*

Bill was seriously considering this latter option. A well-known business leader had approached him about running a large department in a company that was growing at a fast rate.

Looking at the pluses and minuses, Bill felt torn. The logical route would be to take the job, but he was bugged by one question. Would he love going to work each day?

The pluses included a large salary, shares that might produce a massive windfall and working with bright people. The minuses included not feeling in control, being one voice in a large leadership team and not looking forward to Mondays.

Bill began considering other options. How could he use his strategic business building skills and also get a good salary?

Certainly he could do another start-up, but that would be repeating the cycle. He would get a certain point and become bored. He would also need to draw a start-up salary.

He began exploring other possibilities. The business leader who had approached him wanted Bill to become part of the large leadership team.

Whilst attractive from a salary and shares point of view, he would simply become an operational person.

Bill listed the qualities he wanted in a role. He wanted: a) to be able to feel in control; b) to build something he believed in; c) to do brilliant work and get some of the benefits. How to make this happen?

He could sound out the leaders he knew to explore another possibility. Several were building businesses that were becoming large operational units.

Great organisations often make this necessary step. But sometimes they miss out on entrepreneurial opportunities that could run parallel with their main business. Bill could help a growing organisation to leverage such opportunities.

*He could build a business that was off-centre to an organisation's daily operations but also in parallel and help it to achieve future success.*

Bill could show how the new business would be able: a) to run in parallel with the organisation's present direction; b) to complement the organisation's offering; c) to help the organisation to achieve future success.

Bill began pursuing this path. He handed over the reins of his digital business by appointing a managing director. This took longer than he anticipated, but he eventually found the right person. He also began exploring ways to work with leaders he respected.

Several months of discussions led to him joining a big company. The remit was to build a parallel business that helps the organisation achieve future success. This remains a work in progress, but the signs are promising.

Bill is able to feel control. He realises that the new business must complement the existing organisation, however, otherwise it could be seen as a distraction.

What happens if the new business falls out of favour? There may be several options if it ever reaches that stage. Bill could pass on the business to somebody who could integrate it more with the present organisation.

Alternatively, he could offer to buy that arm of the organisation and run it himself. That might be repeating the old cycle, but Bill would cross that bridge when he came to it. In the meantime, he could get on with building the new business and enjoying having a reasonable salary.

Let's return to your own work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to apply elements of this approach? You may do this when leading a project or building a complementary business. If so, you may want to explore some of the following questions.

What may the kind of organisation where I could build a parallel project or business? What would be the project or business I would like to build? What would be the benefits for myself and for the organisation?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Project That Is Off-Centre But In Parallel Approach*

*The specific situation where I could lead a project or build a business that is parallel with an organisation's direction could be:*

\*

*The specific things I could do then to lead the project or build the business could be:*

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*The specific benefits of taking these steps could be:*

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Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to use elements of the growing things approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

What is the specific kind of work you would like to do? How can you find or create the ground – the people you like to work with, the workplace or the culture – where you can do this work?

How can you then set goals and help things to grow? If appropriate, how can you do your best to perform great work? What will be the benefits of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Growing Things Approach*

*The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of this approach in my own way may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to find the right ground, help things to grow and do my best to perform great work are:*

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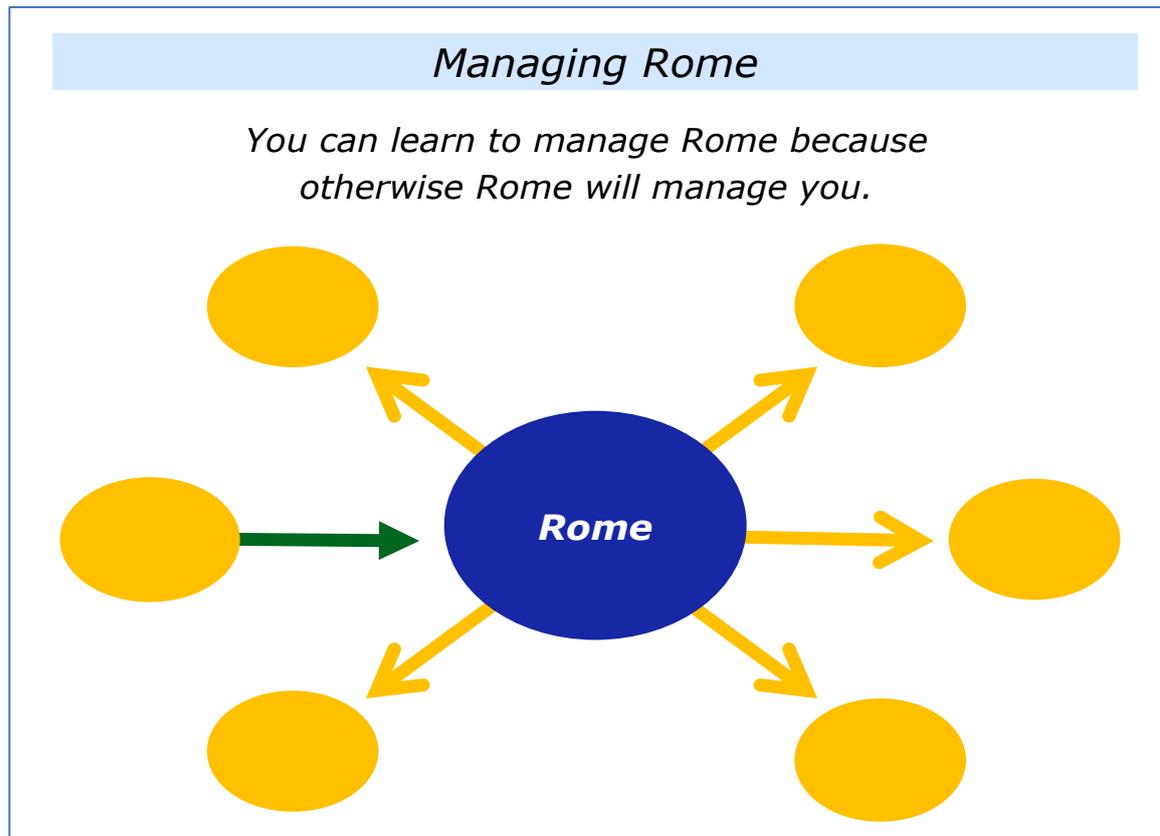
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## The Managing Rome Approach



This is an approach that I have used many times when working with people in big organisations. It is important for people to learn how to manage Rome – the centre – otherwise Rome will manage them.

Senior managers sometimes complain about the difficulties of managing their bosses. They may express the following concerns.

*"The people at HQ keep changing their minds and giving confusing messages. Sometimes we don't know what the centre wants.*

*"One leader gives one message whilst another leader gives another message. This can make life difficult. It is as if they are each on their own agendas rather than having a common goal.*

*"Some of the leaders are micromanagers. Much of our time is spent managing the centre rather than doing good work for customers."*

If you join an organisation, then morally you must satisfy the centre. The organisation is paying your wages. Your job is to help it to succeed, but sometimes this can be challenging.

Imagine that you lead a team. It can be useful:

*To show you understand the world from the centre's point of view;*

*To be proactive, clarify the specific results the key stakeholders want your team to deliver;*

*To make clear contracts about the agreed outcomes and explain how you will proactively keep them informed;*

*To get some quick successes to reassure the centre;*

*To proactively keep the stakeholders informed about the team's progress towards achieving the goals.*

You then need to proactively keep managing Rome. The key stakeholders at the centre are your key customers and it is important to satisfy them.

Sometimes this can be challenging. Some of the stakeholders may be fighting each other, for example, and want different things from your team. If this is the case, it can be useful:

*To meet each stakeholder to clarify what they want;*

*To clarify the desired outcomes that the stakeholders have in common;*

*To make clear contracts about the desired outcomes and then to deliver the goods.*

Great workers recognise that much of their time can be taken up by managing upwards. This is fine - providing the key stakeholders give support and manage by outcomes rather than by tasks.

Chaotic stakeholders cause problems by micromanaging or continually changing direction. Sometimes the process of managing them can become unsustainable and can lead to you choosing to move on.

Great workers also recognise the importance of managing Rome when doing a long-term project. A football manager, for example, may be hired to help a club to nurture its young players and achieve long-term success. That sounds great, but it is vital to produce short-term results – otherwise they may get fired.

Great workers deliver the agreed outcomes, but often do this in their own ways. They also heed the following advice.

*"When you visit people at Rome, take them the trophies and the taxes, but don't talk too much about tactics."*

*"They may then explain what are doing it wrong and give you a 360 page manual to follow. They may also offer to come and supervise you to make sure that your team are doing things in the right way."*

*"Finally, even though it may hurt, sometimes allow Rome to take credit for the trophies."*

Great workers recognise that Rome has many satellites. The people at the centre will focus on the satellites that have problems or those they want to supervise. So keep Rome at bay by delivering success.

Such workers recognise they have a moral responsibility to deliver the desired outcomes to the centre. Continuing to do this will enable them to retain their autonomy and get on with doing great work.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to manage Rome? How can you manage the centre and do good work?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Managing Rome*

*The specific situation in the future  
when I may want to manage  
Rome – the centre - may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then  
to do my best to manage Rome are:*

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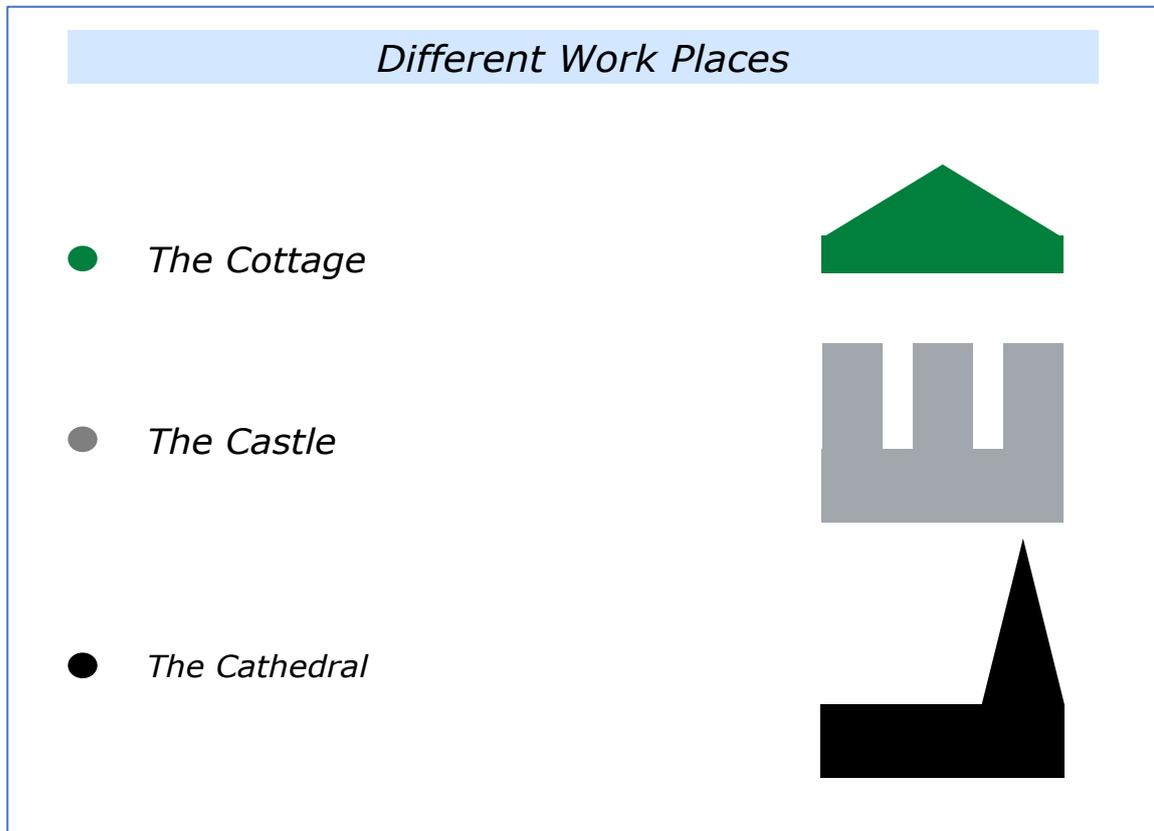
*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Cottage, Castle And Cathedral Approaches*



People may choose to work in three places during their lives: the cottage, the castle or the cathedral. Some individuals try all three and may then return to the cottage. Let's explore these places to work.

### *The Cottage*

Creative people often start by working from the cottage. Because they have little money, they use their imagination to reach the market, provide great service and satisfy their customers.

Such people feel in control of their growing business. Every decision counts and they see an immediate effect. Every day is an adventure and they must live off their wits.

Creative people attract attention, however, and one day they are visited by a messenger from the castle. This may be a larger organisation or the company headquarters. The messenger from the castle says something along the following lines to the creative person.

*"Your energy is just what we need to inject life into our organisation. Imagine what we can achieve with your creativity and our resources.*

*"We can conquer the world. Can you come and help us to be successful?"*

The creative person turns down the offer, saying they want to remain independent. Two months pass, then another messenger arrives.

Higher in the chain of command, they wave a big cheque. They urge the creative person to reconsider and by saying something along the following lines.

*"We really need your creativity. Just think of the resources at your disposal."*

Another refusal: but this is followed by another visit and a bigger cheque. Feeling it is worth giving it a go, the creative person finally accepts the offer to work in the castle.

(They may also create a back-up plan, however, which involves having an escape route.)

Looking back, can you think of a time when you worked in your equivalent of the cottage? You may have been working as a freelancer, in a small team, on a pioneering project or doing another activity. What did it feel like in that situation?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Cottage*

*The specific time when I worked in my equivalent of the cottage was:*

\*

*The specific things I did when working there were:*

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*The specific things I felt when working there were:*

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## *The Castle And The Cathedral*

The creative person is welcomed to the castle with open arms. It feels great to be lauded as a potential saviour. Time passes. They begin to learn the ways of the castle but things go slowly.

Two months after their arrival, the creative person feels impatient. Planning to get the show on the road, they aim to present their first imaginative idea at the next departmental meeting.

Politeness decrees they test it out with the person who invited them into the castle, so they run it past him in a one-to-one session. The person responds in the following way.

*"Great work, this is exactly why we brought you into the organisation. Before implementing the idea, however, there are some key players you need to get on-side. They are busy people, but you can get into their diaries within the next three months.*

*"Looking at your suggestion, I also believe a working party on the other side of the castle is studying something similar. You can get your voice heard by sitting on their committee. As I said at the beginning, though, this is just the sort of energy we want you to bring to the organisation."*

After two years of following the rules of court, the person feels drained.

Some individuals stay on, hoping to one day reach the inner sanctum. Some join the castle's process police and enforce decrees from the centre. Some retire to their equivalent of the cathedral or Academia. They take time to study or write about their experiences.

Can you think of a time when you worked in your equivalent of the castle or the cathedral? What did it feel like in that situation?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Castle Or The Cathedral*

*The specific time when I worked in my equivalent of the castle or cathedral was:*

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*The specific things I did when working there were:*

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*The specific things I felt when working there were:*

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## *The Return To The Cottage*

Creative people often return to the cottage. Oxygen is vital. They return to running their own business or finding a stimulating project where they can breathe.

Shapers by nature, they want to feel in charge of their lives. Revisiting customers fires their imagination and energises their brain. Regaining their zest, they help their customers to succeed.

Happy in their work, they get the right balance between innovation, implementation and impact. Life is good and they enjoy the air. Then one day a courier arrives from another castle. They say something along the following lines.

*"The dynamic company you have built fits perfectly with our strategy for becoming the world's Number One. The problem is that we do not have your kind of creativity in our business. How much would it cost for you to join us in the castle?"*

Some people accept the cheque. Some accept a deal in principle but find a way to retain their autonomy. They protect their culture by insisting on staying in the cottage and getting a cheque for producing great results.

Some feel at home in the cottage where they have the freedom to continue doing creative work. Bearing this in mind, they politely give the following answer.

*"Thanks for your interest, but we are happy working in our company."*

Looking back, can you think of a time when you returned to your equivalent of the cottage? What happened as a result?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. We will then look at another aspect of maintaining your personal and professional health.

## *The Return To The Cottage*

*The specific time when I returned to my equivalent of the cottage was:*

\*

*The specific things I did when working there were:*

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*The specific things I felt when working there were:*

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## *The Recognising Warning Signs Approach*



Many people enjoy working hard but it is important for them to recognise any potential warning signs. They may get headaches, forget appointments, neglect their family, feel exhausted or have other symptoms.

### *Recognising the warning signs*

Different people get different warning signs. One person explained their symptoms in the following way.

*"Every Friday night I got a splitting headache in my left temple. Despite working hard during the week - and feeling tired - I only get the headache when driving home on Friday."*

*"Visiting an osteopath to deal with another problem, I asked about the headaches. She found a tight nerve in my right shoulder, which was where the pressure was located.*

*"She taught me how to massage the muscle, which eased the stress, but also taught me to recognise the symptoms earlier.*

*"I have always been duty driven. Sometimes it feels like I am responsible for taking care of my family, my team and my mother.*

*"Without getting into fluffy territory, I decided to take some time for myself and not carry the world on my shoulders.*

*"That meant saying 'Yes,' to some things and 'No' to others. Now I have been free from headaches for the past 2 years."*

Do you ever get warning signs? These can take different forms. Here are some things that people have mentioned regarding such signs.

*"I take on too much, feel tired and forget things. I once double-booked myself for appointments in Sheffield and Singapore on the same day."*

*"I lose my temper for no apparent reason. This can lead to me lashing out and hurting my loved ones."*

*"Sometimes I feel empty, lack purpose and begin to drift. This is unlike me, because I am usually extremely decisive."*

Looking at your own life, what are the warning signs you may get? How do you try to take heed of the warning signs? What happens if you do not take heed of these signs?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Recognising The Warning Signs*

*The specific kinds of warning signs that  
I sometimes get in my life or work are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I do to try to  
take heed of the warning signs are:*

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\*

\*

*The specific things that can happen if I  
do not take heed of the warning signs are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Understanding the reasons for the warning signs*

What may be the reasons for any warning signs? You may feel out of control, have little time to rest, be in an unsatisfying job, be surrounded by negative people or need a new sense of purpose.

The reasons can be physical, psychological or a mixture of both. Sometimes the reasons may be deep seated, sometimes they can be more obvious. Let's look at one example of the latter.

A footballer had a good disciplinary record but then he got himself sent off twice in a month. Nobody could understand why. He was always the first to training, the last to leave and would do anything for the team.

The answer lay in front of our eyes. Over the past month he had been asked to play out of position and felt extremely uncomfortable. He explained this in the following way.

*"My head is in a whirl because I strain to remember the manager's instructions. That isn't the case when I'm playing in my natural position, because then I don't have to think and I enjoy the game.*

*"Now I get confused trying to remember the instructions. This leads to me making mistakes, getting upset sometimes arguing with the referee. I'm counting the games to returning to my best position."*

The player's problem was quite solvable. Learning a technique for managing his anger, he volunteered to play one more game out of position. Strangely, because he now recognised what upset him, he had a storming game. He was then grateful to return to his natural role on the field.

When do you get warning signs? What may be the reasons? How can you heed these warning signs? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Reasons For The Warning Signs*

*The specific times when  
I get warning signs are:*

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*The potential reasons for  
the warning signs may be:*

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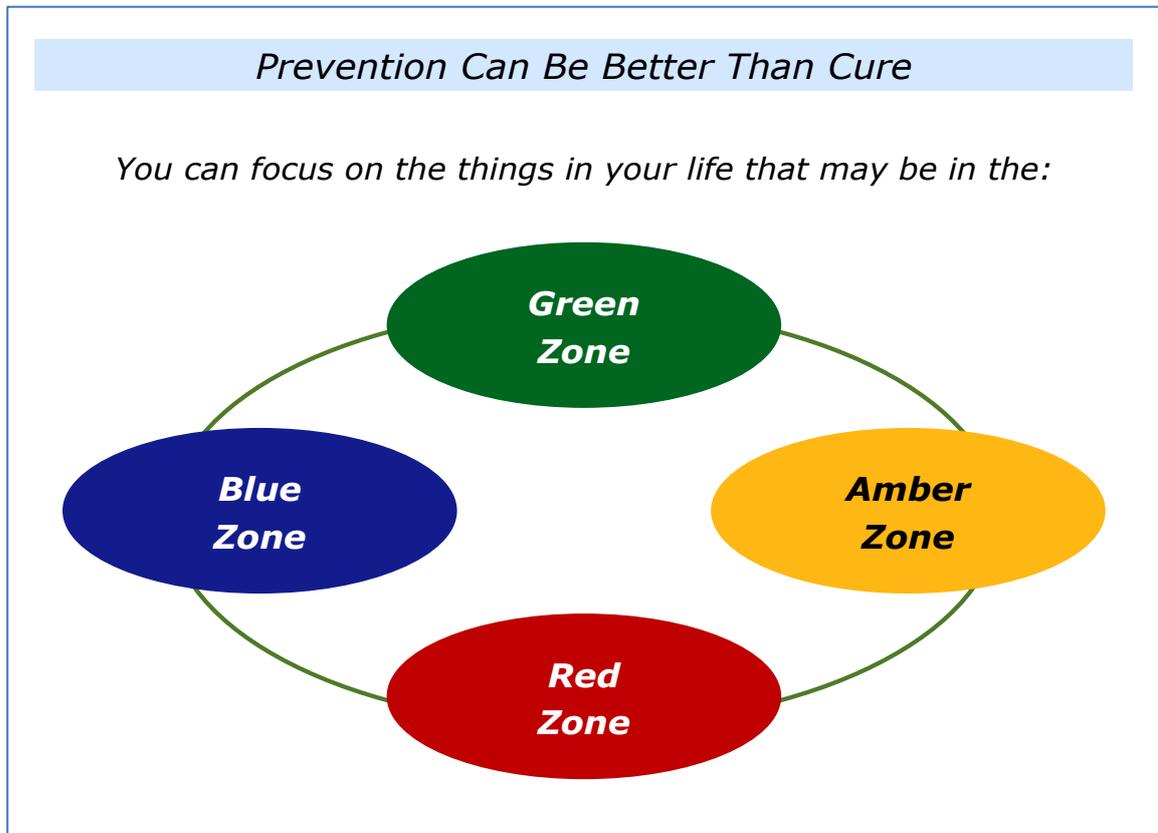
*The specific things I can do to  
take heed of the warning signs are:*

\*

\*

\*

Later we will return to what you can do about the warning signs. Before then, however, let's focus on the following theme.



There are many ways to take care of your health. One approach is to adapt the green, amber, red and blue zones exercise that was mentioned earlier in the book.

You can clarify how things are going regarding your health, relationships, work or other areas. Let's explore these steps.

### *The Green Zone*

What is going well in your life at the moment? You may be taking care of your body, enjoying time with your children, developing new skills at work or whatever. One person said the following.

*"My relationship with my wife is blossoming. So I aim to keep spending quality time with her.*

*"Two broken marriages have left their toll. I don't want it to happen again. We plan to stay together for the rest of our lives.*

*"I am also doing a stimulating project at work. I want to build on this and show my employers how we can turn it into a profitable service for our customers.*

*"Looking at other things, I have returned to singing in a band and writing songs. This is something I did in my youth, but have put aside for a while. I intend to create my own website where I can publish the songs."*

Looking at your life, what are the things that are in the green zone? How can you build on these? What will be the benefits?

## *The Amber Zone*

What are the activities where there are warning signs? You may detect these signals in your health, some relationships, financial matters or aspects of your work.

Are there things in the amber zone that it may be important to tackle? One person said the following.

*"My health may be becoming issue. During the past year I have put on 2 kilos. Doesn't sound much, but in the old days I was able to lose weight easily.*

*"So it's time to start moving. Even though it is January, I am going to start running, rather than wait for the spring.*

*"There are also some warning signs at work. The team I lead is successful, but a couple of the team members have started to behave in negative ways that affect other people.*

*"I will clarify whether they want to follow the agreed professional principles. If not, that is okay. I will replace them with people who want to behave in a professional way and contribute towards achieving the goals."*

How are things for you in work? Do you spend the majority of your time doing work that is satisfying? If not, what is the effect on your energy? What can you do to improve matters?"

Looking at your life, what are the things that are in the amber zone? How can you take action and improve some of these? What will be the benefits?

## *The Red Zone*

Are there any things that are not going well? Are there any recurring problems that create collateral damage for yourself or other people?

Sometimes it can be important to identify the issues and then make a decision about the possible routes forwards. One person said the following.

*"One day I realised that I simply had to take more control of my life and work. I had allowed myself to become overwhelmed at work and this affected my health.*

*"I always felt tired and I had high blood pressure. I tried to turn things around by working more hours, but this did not help.*

*"Matters came to a head when I tried to cram in a customer appointment on the way home, got caught in a traffic jam and missed my daughter's Christmas Play.*

*"This rude awakening taught me to take more control of my life. It also set me on the route to trying to repair my marriage."*

## *The Blue Zone*

You can also use your imagination to explore the blue zone. This involves taking time to reflect, look ahead and think of any ideas that you can use to shape your future.

Sometimes it can be good to do this by yourself. Sometimes you may want to explore the possibilities with the help of a friend, mentor or another person.

Different people consider different themes when exploring the blue zone. They may ask themselves some of the following question.

*What do I want to do in my life? What are the possible routes I can take? What are my strengths? How can I use these in my life and work?*

*What are the things that give me positive energy? How can I do more of these things? What are the kinds of projects that I find satisfying? How can I do more of these?*

*What can I do to continue to develop or be creative? How can I pursue these themes? What are the many other things I can do in my life? What may be the benefits of doing some of these things?*

If you wish, try tackling the exercises regarding the green, amber, red and blue zones. These invite you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Green Zone*

*The things that are going well  
in my life at the moment are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to  
build on some of these things are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of  
taking these steps may be:*

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\*

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## *The Amber Zone*

*The things were there  
are warning signs are:*

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*The specific things I can do to take action  
and improve some of these things are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of  
taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Red Zone*

*The things that are not going well are:*

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*The specific things I can do to make decisions and take action about these things are:*

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*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Blue Zone*

*The many possible things that I can do in the rest of my life are:*

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*The specific things I can do to pursue some of these things are:*

\*

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*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Learning from the warning signs and taking care of yourself in the future*

Imagine that you have had warning signs. Sometimes these can be resolved by making relatively simple adjustments. These may involve eating healthier food, exercising or doing things that give you positive energy.

Sometimes these may call for bigger adjustments. These may involve spending time with positive people rather than negative people, finding a more satisfying job or developing a new sense of purpose.

Sometimes what you learn can lead to shifts in the way you live your life. One person explained this in the following way.

*"My wake-up call came after getting prosecuted for speeding twice in five minutes. Suddenly I had six points on my driving licence.*

*"Now I see the prosecution as a blessing. Previously I had been addicted to speeding on the motorway. Fortunately I had never hurt myself or, worse still, maimed other people.*

*"The warning sign led to radically changing my working style. Previously I had got up at 5.00 every morning for the two hour drive and returned home at night.*

*"I decided to go freelance, do project work and mainly work from home. This was long before Covid forced this on many people and it worked. If I needed to be in an office, I travelled up by train the night before.*

*"This meant I had lots of energy, was on top of my game and did good work. It worked for myself, my customers and my family."*

Sometimes we can learn from the warning signs. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Learning From The Warning Signs*

*The specific things I may be able to learn from any potential warning signs:*

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\*

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*The specific things I can do to take more care of myself in the future are:*

\*

\*

\*

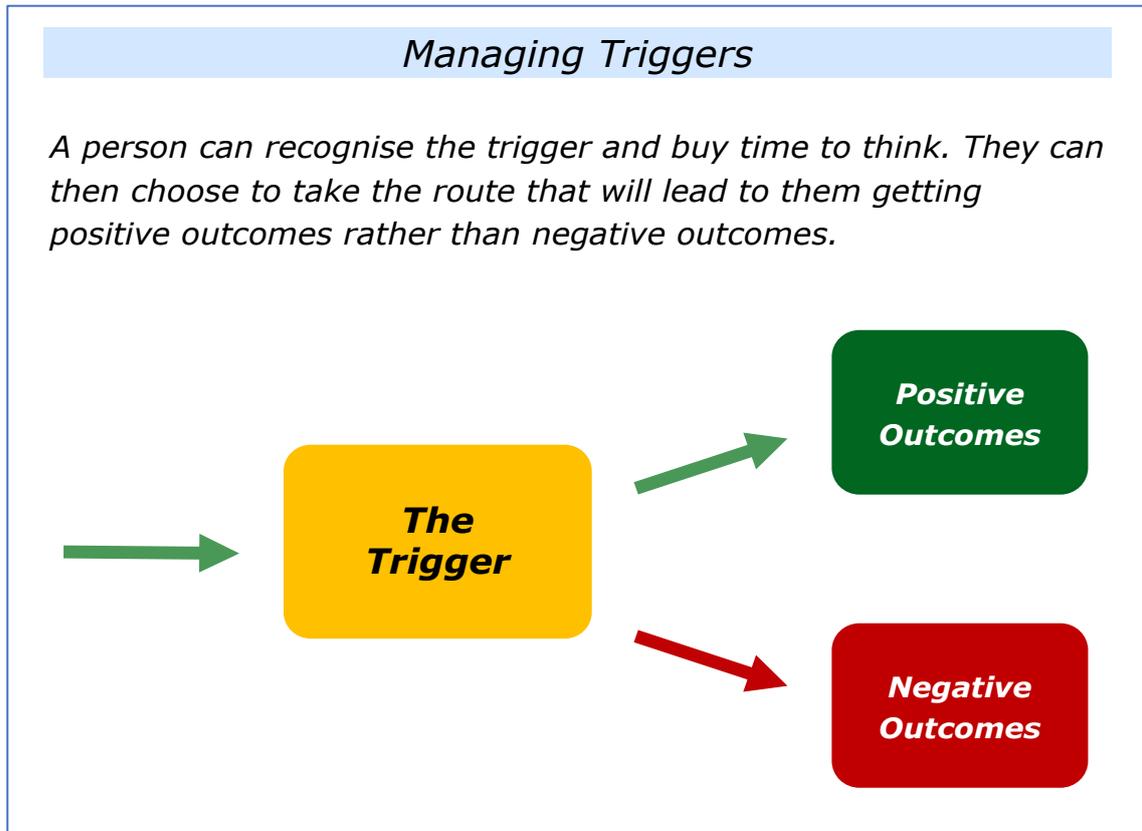
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

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## *The Managing Triggers Approach*



Different people have different triggers that can lead to them behaving in ways that cause difficulties. Sometimes they may manage such situations successfully. Sometimes they may fall into a downward spiral.

A recovering alcoholic may find it difficult to pass a crowded pub on a warm summer night. A person who frequently gets angry can be overcome by the rising red mist.

A footballer can make a mistake and punish themselves with negative self-talk. A normally positive person can fall into depression when hearing distressing news on the radio.

A drug user may respond to feeling anxious by searching for a quick fix. A couple may get into domestic arguments when one of them says something that hurts their partner.

Looking at your own life, are there any triggers that may produce difficulties? These may lead to you showing anger, getting depressed or behaving in ways you don't like.

If so, what are the specific triggers? What can happen as a result of not managing these successfully? What are the effects – both for you and other people?

Imagine you may want to manage trigger moments. The following sections provide a framework you can apply in your own way.

### *Recognising the triggers and avoiding putting yourself into those situations*

Different people have different triggers. A gambler may feel bored and click onto a betting site. A footballer may rush to confront a referee after a poor decision. A sensitive person may feel a panic attack coming on in a certain situation.

Looking ahead, can you think of a specific trigger that you might want to manage successfully? This could be in your personal or professional life.

You may have a trigger that leads to you wanting to smoke, overeat or having too much to drink. You may have one that leads to you getting angry, having a row with your partner, being depressed or behaving in another way you don't like.

How can you avoid putting yourself into such situations? How can you plan ahead and reduce the risk? How can you anticipate the potential warning signs? How can you mentally rehearse doing practical things to deal with the challenging situation?

### *Buying time to think if the triggers do happen*

Imagine that, despite all your efforts, you are suddenly confronted by a situation in which you are exposed to one of your triggers.

There are many ways to manage such a situation. Here are some that you may wish to consider.

*Staying calm and  
buying time to think*

Some people do deep breathing. Some have a ritual they follow to relax, recentre and refocus.

A tennis player may have a physical action that they follow after each point. They follow this routine to clear their minds and focus on the present. They then rehearse what they are going to do next.

Some individuals have a phrase they say to remind themselves about what is really important in life. They make sure they don't do anything rash by saying something like:

*"Stop. Plan. Act."*

You will have your own way of buying time. Assuming you have taken this step, it is then time to move on to the next stage.

*Considering the possible  
options for going forwards*

Good decisions makers take time to reflect and consider the possible options for going forwards. They then make their decision based on the outcomes they want to achieve.

Imagine that you are a divorced recovering alcoholic and you are passing a crowded bar on a sunny Friday evening. You look at the people smiling, talking and seeming to be having a good time.

Looking at the clock, you see it is 6.00 pm. You have nobody to go home to - just a television set and the promise of an empty weekend. You know that if you enter the bar it may result in you staggering home at 2.00 in the morning.

On the other hand, you know it makes sense to stay sober and take care of your health. This is the only way you will continue to have access to your children and, in the long run, keep your job.

What do you do? One choice is to walk in, get your first drink and relax. Another choice is to call your friend at Alcoholics Anonymous. Another is to walk past, go home and make yourself a meal. It is then to do positive things over the weekend.

Let's return to the potential trigger you may encounter. How can you buy time? How can you explore the options for going forwards? How can you consider the pluses and minuses of each option?

### *Pursuing the route that will get positive results*

Imagine that you have bought time to consider the possible options for going forwards. There are many models for managing such situations. One approach is to use the STOP model. This invites you to take the following steps.

#### *The STOP Model For Managing Trigger Situations*

- |   |                         |   |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| ● | <b>Stop</b>             | <i>Recognise the warning signs and stop what you are doing.</i>                                       |
| ● | <b>Think</b>            | <i>Breathe, buy time to think and see the big picture.</i>  |
| ● | <b>Options</b>          | <i>Ask: "What are my possible options going forward? What are pluses and minuses of each option?"</i> |
| ● | <b>Positive Results</b> | <i>Pursue the option most likely to get the desired positive results.</i>                             |

Imagine that you have chosen your way forwards. You can do something quickly to implement your action plan, get a quick success and build momentum.

The next stage will be to keep following good habits. How to make this happen? Some people take the following steps.

### *Refocusing*

*They start the day – or a piece of work – by following their chosen ritual and refocusing on their goals.*

### *Routine*

*They follow their chosen routine – or rhythm – and keep doing the right things in the right way.*

### *Results*

*They do what is necessary to get the desired results. They may then, when appropriate, give themselves a reward – though doing the right things may be a reward in itself.*

This section has explored some of the tools that people can use in trigger situations. Let's explore another strategy for managing difficult challenges.

## *The Beating The Double Bind Approach*

### *Beating The Double Bind*

***The Double Bind situation  
is one where it feels like ...***

***... whatever you do,  
you are bound to lose***

Have you ever been in a double bind? This is a situation in which – no matter what you do – you seem bound to lose.

Double binds cause great pain in the family and at work. Here are three suggestions for overcoming such situations.

### *Recognising The Double Bind*

A child used as a pawn between rowing parents, for example, will feel they cannot win. Here is the worst case scenario in a divorce.

*The mother says to the child:*

*"If you love me more than your father, come to me."*

*The father says:*

*"If you love me more than your mother, come to me."*

The child has an impossible choice. Showing favour to one parent will incur the wrath of the other. Both options are painful. Retreating into their private world is often their only salvation.

The Priest who abuses a child puts their victim in a double bind. They may say something like the following.

*"Nobody will believe you. They will believe me rather than you. Anyway, it was your fault. You led me on."*

The abuser presents themselves as the victim. This is another way of trying to put the abused person in a double bind. They also try to get the victim to doubt their own experience.

The abused person feels bad but may find it difficult to explain this to anybody. When running group sessions for survivors of abuse, for example, it is common to hear a person listen to other people's stories and then say something like the following.

*"That happened to me as well. I was told that it couldn't be true and I started doubting my own feelings. Sometimes I felt as if I was going mad."*

Double binds can happen in our relationships at work. A strong signal that you are entering such territory is when you feel a knot in your stomach.

Something happened - either between you and a manager, in a meeting, or elsewhere - which makes you feel uneasy. Examining the situation in detail, you find that you have been placed in a position where, whatever you do, you are bound to lose.

Some people even put themselves in double binds. For example, they use 50% of their energy thinking of a positive way forward in

their lives. They then employ the other 50% knocking it down by worrying about what can go wrong.

Confusing? Yes, but some people experience this inner dialogue. This becomes debilitating. They may then even start putting other people in double binds.

How to tackle this challenge? The first step is to recognise the double bind. Simply giving a name to it puts the situation outside yourself. You are not to blame and can move onto the next step.

## *Doing Your Best To Beat The Double Bind*

Clear contracting is the best way to untangle the double bind. Start by making a contract with yourself. You can focus on the following themes.

### *The Controllables*

*Clarify the specific things you can and can't control in the situation.*

### *The Dos And Don'ts*

*Clarify the specific things you do and don't want to do in the situation.*

### *The Action Plan*

*Clarify the action plan you want to follow and make a contract with yourself to follow it in the situation.*

Imagine that you have spent lots of time encouraging a person but they choose to continue blaming the world for their troubles. They start conversations by saying something like the following.

*"Why do things always happen to me? I feel so depressed, but when I try to talk about my problems, people walk away. You are the only person who takes the time to listen to me."*

This is a classic double bind. If you keep listening to the person you may feel depressed. You may also be enabling them to stay in their chosen role and keep saying "Yes, but."

If you don't listen to the person they may say that you, their final hope, does not care. This will confirm their view that the world is against them.

How to deal with such a situation? One approach may be to say something like the following.

*"I am prepared to help, but only if you are prepared to look for solutions. You are intelligent and I am sure it is possible to find a way forwards."*

*"If you wish, take time to reflect. Then, when appropriate, get back to me when you are ready to focus on finding solutions. I will then do what I can to help."*

Be prepared for the person to go into the victim role. They may say something like.

*"See, this confirms nobody understands and everything is against me. You were the last person I thought would desert me."*

Stand firm. Repeat that you would be happy to talk with them if they want to find solutions. This sound tough, but it is one way to move forward. The alternative is that you both end up feeling miserable.

If appropriate, you can try to make clear contracts with them about how you would like them to behave in the future. You can also outline the benefits both to themselves and other people.

Sometimes this approach works, but frequently it doesn't. The people causing the pain are not open to win-wins. They are stuck in win-lose or lose-lose.

It may not be possible to solve everything straight away. When in doubt, however, choose the route forward that will, in the long term, cause the least pain.

## *Recognising Potential Future Double Binds*

Healthy people develop the radar to spot double binds when these appear on the horizon. They recognise that avoiding such pain can save lots of energy.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation that may be a possible double bind? This could be in your personal or professional life. What may be the factors that make it a double bind? For example:

*If I do (a) the outcomes won't be good;*

*If I do (b) the outcome won't be good.*

Bearing these things in mind, how can you do your best to beat the double bind? Again, it may be useful to explore the following steps.

*Describe what you can and can't control in the situation.*

*Describe what you do and don't want to do in the situation.*

*Describe your action plan and follow it in the situation.*

When in doubt, try to avoid putting yourself in situations that are potential double binds. If you are going into such a situation, however, it may be useful to tackle the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Beating The Double Bind*

*The specific situation where I may experience a double bind may be:*

\*

*The specific factors that mean that, whatever I do, I am bound to lose are:*

*a) If I do ... the outcome will be ...*

*b) If I do ... the outcome will be ...*

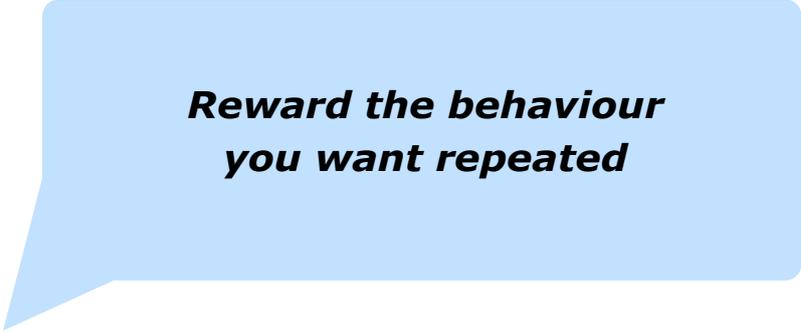
*The specific things I can do to do my best to beat the double bind are:*

\*

\*

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## *The Rewarding The Behaviour You Want Repeated Approach*



***Reward the behaviour  
you want repeated***

This is one of the basic rules of psychology. It is also a principle that applies when encouraging people in a team, organisation or the wider society.

Imagine that you have been given the mandate to lead an organisation that aims to shift its culture and achieve success.

You may want to communicate the guidelines that people can follow to reach the goals. These need to be specific rather than woolly statements. It is also useful to outline the reasons for following these guidelines.

Good leaders recognise that the carrot is mightier than the stick as a means of encouraging people to achieve peak performance. Such leaders also act quickly, however, if some people choose not to opt in. So after communicating the guidelines:

*They reward the behaviour the organisation wants repeated;*

*They act decisively regarding behaviour the organisation does not want repeated;*

*They do whatever is required to guide the organisation to success.*

Imagine that you are aiming to encourage people to follow certain guidelines. You may want to consider taking some of the following steps.

*You can communicate the behaviour people can demonstrate to help the organisation to achieve success*

Good leaders give clear messages about how they expect people to behave. They also give the reasons for these professional standards. Such leaders often start by taking the following steps:

*They clarify the behaviour that people need to demonstrate to help the organisation to achieve success;*

*They clarify the reasons why it is important for people to follow these guidelines.*

People are more likely to opt in if they see the reasons for behaving in certain ways. Some people may choose not to opt in, of course, but that will produce consequences.

Good leaders outline the guidelines – The Dos – that people can follow to reach the goal. For example, it may be important for people to do the following things:

*To have a positive attitude and take responsibility;*

*To make clear working contracts about their contributions towards achieving the organisation's goals;*

*To perform superb work, find solutions to challenges and encourage other people;*

*To keep others up-to-date with how they are progressing towards achieving the goals;*

*To do whatever is required to ensure the organisation reaches its goals.*

The Don'ts will probably be the reverse side of these behaviours.

Let's assume you are clear on the guidelines you would like people to follow. You can then aim to do three things.

*To be a positive model – because people learn from what you do not what you say;*

*To communicate the guidelines that people can follow to help the organisation to achieve success;*

*To explain the reasons why it is important for people to follow these guidelines;*

Imagine you are a leader who wants to set the tone in an organisation. Try completing the following exercises.

## *Building A Successful Organisation*

*The Dos – the guidelines – we want people follow to help the organisation to achieve success are these:*

\*

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\*

\*

*The reasons why we would like people to follow these guidelines are:*

\*

\*

\*

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## *You can continue to reward the behaviour you want repeated*

Different people encourage others in different ways. You may see somebody doing something well, for example, and have a special word with the person.

Be super specific about the behaviour – or the principles – you want them to repeat. The more specific you are, the more likely people are to repeat the behaviour.

One soccer manager spent time with one of his attackers at half time, for example, and described the specific things the player was doing well. He said:

*"The way you beat their full back three times in the first half was excellent. You dummed to move inside, but then changed direction to go down the right wing and put in dangerous crosses.*

*"I want you to keep doing that in the second half. It's up to you how you beat the full back. But I want you to get to the by-line and put in as many crosses as possible."*

The manager then checked with the player: a) if he had understood the message; b) if it was something he was happy to do. The manager then encouraged the player to keep doing their best.

## *You can keep sharing success stories*

As mentioned elsewhere in this book, it is vital to keep showing people what good looks like. People can then aim to follow these principles to achieve success.

Different organisations use different frameworks for publicising such stories. Here is one approach.

## Success Stories

*Good leaders keep showing people what good looks like by sharing success stories. They describe:*

- *The specific situation where people in the organisation did good work and delivered success;*
- *The specific principles that people followed - and how they translated these into action – to deliver success;*
- *The specific principles that people in the organisation can continue to follow to deliver success.*

### *You can deal with the behaviour you don't want repeated*

How to act when somebody steps over the line? Here are some options.

#### *You can give the person a positive alternative*

One approach is to say, for example:

*"In the future can you please do (x) rather than (y). The reason is because ..."*

This gives the person a positive way forward in the future.

*You can act immediately and practise zero tolerance*

Some leaders feel it is vital to do this if a person's behaviour contravenes a team's agreed rules. It is important to never walk past a quality problem, otherwise the leader has said that such behaviour is okay.

*You can give the person a warning, outline the consequences of repeating the behaviour and be prepared to follow-through*

Many leaders believe that it is moral to give the person another chance. The key is to make sure the person knows that the leader is serious.

Some behaviour can lead to instant dismissal. On other occasions it is more appropriate to outline the professional standards that are required.

Good leaders then follow through. If the person does not meet the professional standards, then they are choosing to move on.

"Reward the behaviour you want repeated," may sound an over-simple philosophy, but it works in many situations. People soon get the message about the desired culture and 'the way we will do things round here'.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to:

*To describe the specific things you want do to reward the behaviour you want repeated;*

*To describe the specific things you can do to deal with any behaviour you don't want repeated;*

*To describe the benefits of taking each of these steps.*

## *Rewarding The Behaviour We Want Repeated*

*The specific things I can do to reward  
the behaviour we wanted repeated are:*

\*

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*The specific things I can do to deal with  
behaviour we don't want repeated are:*

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\*

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*The specific benefits of taking  
each of these steps will be:*

\*

\*

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## *The Giving Tough Messages To A Team Member Approach*

### *The Outcomes Approach*

*Sometimes you may need to clarify whether a person has the attitude and ability required to deliver certain professional standards. You can then focus on the outcomes that a person in this role is required to deliver. You can aim:*

- To clarify whether the person has the potential to deliver the desired outcomes;*
- To clarify whether the person wants to deliver the desired outcomes;*
- To then, if appropriate, clarify the steps the person can take to deliver the desired outcomes*

Imagine you have taken over the leadership role in a team. You are pleased with virtually everybody you have inherited. But one person is falling short of the mark. It is now decision time.

You may need to decide whether or not to persist with the person. If you want to continue working with the person, you will need to give them some clear messages.

You will also give them every opportunity to succeed. Let's explore one approach to taking these steps.

## *Step One: Clarify whether the person has the potential to deliver the desired outcomes*

Start by clarifying what you believe somebody in this role should be delivering. Ask yourself:

*What are the specific outcomes that we would like a person in this role to deliver?*

*These can be outcomes in terms of demonstrating certain professional standards. These may also include behaving in certain ways to customers, colleagues and stakeholders.*

*What are the actual words that the key stakeholders – such as the leaders, colleagues, customers and others - would be saying about a person who delivers outcomes?*

*The leaders in the organisation may be saying:*

*"The person is proactive, sees things from the organisation's point of view – rather than just their own – and keeps us informed."*

*Their colleagues may be saying:*

*"The person is positive, make a good contribution during meetings and helps us to succeed."*

*The customers may be saying:*

*"The person shows they understand our business, provides great service and takes ownership for solving any issues we have with their organisation."*

Move on to clarifying the person's potential. Bearing in mind the outcomes to achieve, ask yourself:

*To what extent is the person delivering these results today? How would I rate them on a scale 0 - 10?*

*What is their potential? Do they have the right attitude and ability to achieve the required results?*

*Given the right coaching, what rating do I think they can achieve? Can they go beyond 7/10?*

Considering your answers, then ask yourself the following questions.

*Do I believe the person has the potential – the right attitude and ability - to achieve the required rating?*

*Do I believe the person is actually more suited to another role - inside or outside the organisation - where they can deliver better performances?*

You are looking for the person to achieve at least 7+/10. Otherwise it will be extremely difficult. Based on your answers, decide whether or not you want to help the person to master their particular role.

Morality is crucial. If you want the person to move on, it is vital that you have previously given them a clear message about improving their performance. Otherwise the bad news comes out of the blue, leaving them with little chance to bridge the gaps.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

*The Person's Potential To  
Deliver The Desired Outcomes*

*The Person's Name Is:*

\*

*The specific outcomes that we would like  
a person in this role to deliver are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The actual words that we would like  
the key stakeholders to be saying  
about a person in this role are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The likelihood of the person being able to deliver these outcomes is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things they would need to do to achieve a rating of at least 7+/10 in terms of delivering these desired outcomes are:*

\*

\*

\*

*Bearing these things in mind, the specific actions I want to take with the person are:*

\*

\*

\*

Let's imagine that you decide you want to work with the person on improving their performance. This takes us to the next step.

*Step Two: Clarify whether the person wants to deliver the desired outcomes*

You may wish to go through the following stages. It is important, of course, to do these in a professional and polite.

*Set-up a meeting and position it properly.*

Contact the person. Explain that you want to talk about how they can continue to improve their performance. Say it is a session about growing into a role - it is not a 'Goodbye' meeting.

Don't be afraid to say farewell to people, but there is a lot of work that can be done before such an exit.

*Create a script that you want to follow – including the messages you want to give the person – and rehearse the meeting.*

Before the meeting, be crystal clear on several things. These include the following.

*The specific way you want to start the meeting and the atmosphere you want to create.*

*The specific key messages you want to give the person and how you can, if possible, put these in a positive way.*

*The specific things you can do to keep returning to the key messages if things get difficult.*

You can then mentally rehearse the session. Make sure you are comfortable with knowing how to set the scene, conduct the meeting and, if appropriate, keep returning to the key messages you want to give the person.

*Start the meeting by welcoming the person and explaining that you want to do a reality check.*

Describe what you plan to cover in the session. Explain that you will explore what the person does well and what they can improve.

You will also share your picture of success regarding what a person in the role can aim to be delivering. You will then invite them to consider the possible options moving forward.

Explain that, while you are aiming for a positive outcome, the session won't always be easy. Some messages may be tough to take on board. Your overall goal is, however, to get wins for both them and the organisation.

*Describe the outcomes you would like somebody in this role to be delivering.*

Talk about the desired outcomes, because people must have something to aspire to in the future. Do not harangue them with details; otherwise it is easy to get into an argument. Give them clear messages about:

*The specific outcomes that a person in this would be delivering would be:*

\*

\*

\*

*The actual words that we would like the stakeholders – the leaders, colleagues and customers - to be saying about a person in this role would be:*

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\*

\*

*Invite the person to evaluate their own performance in relation to the picture of success and, if appropriate, repeat the reality check.*

Invite the person to reflect for a moment. Ask them:

*"On a scale 0 - 10, how would you presently rate yourself in terms of delivering the required results?"*

*"What do you think you can do to maintain or improve the scores?"*

Invite them to evaluate their own performance. Listen carefully. Ask for examples where appropriate. If it is helpful, give positive but honest feedback regarding their successes.

But there may be hard news to deliver, so communicate this by moving on to the next stage.

If appropriate, repeat again the outcomes that a person in this can aim to be delivering. If the person has rated their performance as 8/10 in a weak area, for example, you may want to say something like the following.

*"Is it okay if I share some information? I am doing this in terms of a reality check. It may be a bit difficult to take on board, but that is up to you."*

*"I am sharing it because I want to help you to succeed. So is it okay if I share the information?"*

Wait for the person to say it is okay. Why? You are making a psychological contract with them. If the person does not want to hear the tough news – or wants to argue – that is their choice. As the old saying goes:

*'The person must have the will before they can learn the skill.'*

Let's assume the person says that they are willing to listen to the reality check. You may then want to say something along the following lines.

*"Looking at the big picture, I see that in this particular area \_\_\_ you give yourself 8/10. Now comes the tough message. Unfortunately this is an area where several key stakeholders have given you 4/10.*

*"The specific positive things you would need to do to get at least 7+/10 would be: a) To ... b) To ... c) To ...*

*"I would like you to take some time to consider if you want to do some of these things. If so, we can look at how to make them happen.*

*"I can give you more information about the specific things you would need to do to achieve the scores. But I am not getting into arguments.*

*"I am sharing this to give you the chance to look at how you can continue to develop as a professional in your work. It is up to you how you want to use the information."*

*If appropriate, consider taking a time out at this point. Before doing so, however, explain that they can choose their way forward.*

Invite the person to take time to reflect on the possible ways forward. For example, you can meet in two days to explore the options. (You do not have to adjourn for such a long time. A short break for ten minutes might also do the trick.)

Why take a time out? If the tough news is unexpected, a person may get stuck in denial. Don't get locked in arguments about details. Give them time to lick their wounds.

The aim is for them to take ownership for deciding their future route. Explain that they do have choices and each one has consequences. For example:

*They can ignore the reality check.*

*They can argue about details, say you are wrong and seek another opinion.*

*They can go through the motions of taking the ideas on board but continue as before.*

*They can create a plan for focusing on the role and achieving an agreed performance rating.*

*They can explore other options in the business. For example, there may be roles where they are more likely to achieve 8+/10.*

Let's imagine the person returns saying:

*"I want to try to deliver the required results."*

### ***Step Three: Clarify the steps the person can take to deliver the desired outcomes***

One approach is to begin by inviting them to create a Coaching Contract. This described elsewhere in the book, but here are the themes. The person should describe:

*The specific goals they want to achieve;*

*The specific things they see as their responsibilities in working towards achieving the goals;*

*The specific kinds of help they would like in working towards achieving the goals;*

*The specific action plan they want to follow to work towards achieving their goals.*

You can then work with the person to encourage and enable them to reach the agreed goals. When doing this, it can be useful:

*To make clear contracts with the person to make sure they really want to do their best to achieve the desired outcomes;*

*To meet regularly and for the person to describe: a) the specific things they are doing well; b) the specific things they can do better and how;*

*To continue to work with them to help them to achieve goals – but only if they are doing their best to deliver the desired outcomes.*

What if the person does not fulfil their responsibilities? There is no point in haranguing them. If appropriate, you can have a session where you aim:

*To ask if they still want to work towards achieving the desired outcomes;*

*To, if they want to, then invite them to again describe their responsibilities and the help they would like;*

*To invite them to describe the specific quick successes they aim to achieve on the way towards delivering the outcomes.*

How often to have this kind of session? My own approach has been to do it a maximum of two times, but you will have your own view.

### *Finally - Some Things To Bear In Mind*

Providing the person has the right attitude and ability, they may be able to deliver the required professional standards. But what if they are not successful? They may decide to leave or you may decide they will never achieve beyond 6/10.

If so, help the person to move onto other things, inside or outside the organisation. Looking back at your work together, however, you will have acted in a moral way and given them a good opportunity to succeed.

Good leaders keep such discussions in perspective. They know that their mission is to ensure the team achieves its picture of success. It is not to spend all their time trying to persuade people to change. They continue:

*To communicate the team's purpose, principles and picture of success;*

*To invite people to make clear contracts about how they want to contribute towards achieving the picture of success.*

*To do whatever is required to ensure the team achieve the picture of success.*

Leaders also have a limited amount of energy. Much of this should go on encouraging the positive people in the team. These are the people who will continue to play a huge part in helping the team to achieve its goals.

Bearing this in mind, how much time can you spend coaching the poorer performers in an intensive way?

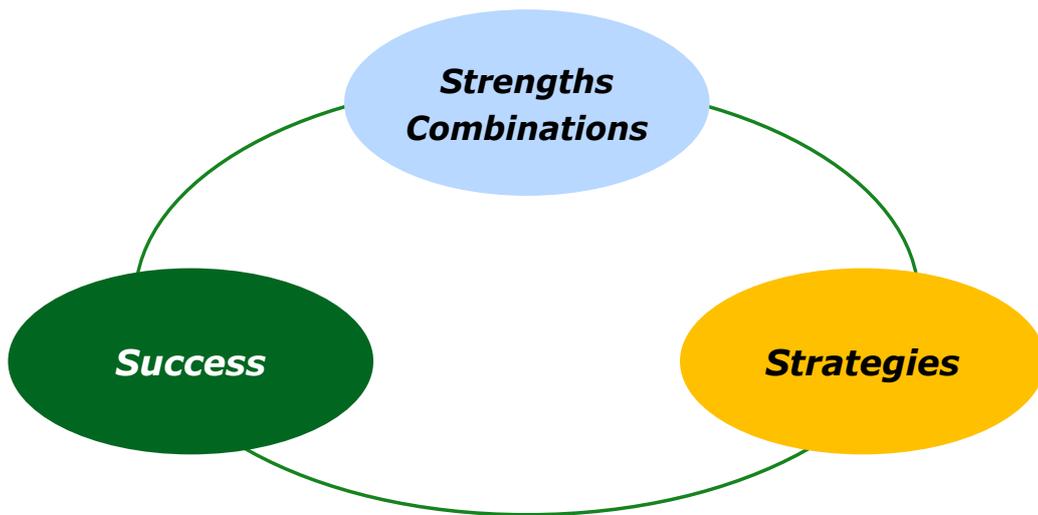
Good leaders spend 90%+ of their time focusing on the people who want to be professional and deliver peak performance. But they also give others the chance to deliver the required professional standards.

They always have a back-up plan, however, and build a queue of people who want to join. This gives them the ability to make changes when they want to improve the team.

## *The Strengths Combinations Approach*

### *The Strengths Combinations Approach*

*This approach involves encouraging people to combine their strengths and focus on the following themes when working towards a clear picture of success.*



Great teams coordinate people's strengths to achieve their goals. Such teams go beyond focusing on each person's contribution. They build combinations of people who do superb work to achieve the picture of success.

The strengths combinations approach is one that can be used when working with pairs, trios, teams and larger groups. It can be applied in sports, music, creative projects and other fields.

Great teams bear several things in mind when taking this approach. They recognise that it is vital:

*To have leaders and coordinators who know how to lead such teams;*

*To have a clear strategy for achieving a compelling picture of success;*

*To have people with the right spirit and strengths required to achieve the picture of success.*

Different teams apply this approach in different ways. Let's explore how it can be translated into action.

### *Setting Up The Team To Succeed*

Imagine that you aim to lead a team to achieve a certain goal. The first step will be to set-up things to succeed rather than fail.

Great teams take this step whether planning to climb a mountain, lead a team or do another project. Bearing in mind what they can control in the situation, they often take the following steps.

*They clarify the real results to achieve – the picture of success;*

*They clarify the key strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success;*

*They get the right resources – such as the right people and the right support – required to achieve success.*

Imagine that you are clear on: a) the results to achieve; b) the strategies that people can follow to achieve success. The next step will be make sure you have the right people.

Bearing this in mind, you may want to ask yourself the following questions.

*What are the kinds of people we want in the team? What is the spirit – the attitude – they need to demonstrate? How can we make sure they demonstrate these characteristics?*

*What are the strengths we need to achieve the goal? What are the strengths we already have in the team? What are the strengths we need to add?*

*How can we find people who have these strengths? How can we check their track record of delivering certain results? How can we do our best to select such people?*

*How can we let them know about: a) the goal we want to achieve; b) the spirit they will need to demonstrate – such as helping others to succeed; c) the specific contribution they may want to make towards achieving the goal?*

*How can we give people the opportunity to present their potential contributions? When they make these presentations, what are we looking for in terms of: a) the potential personal contributions; b) the potential combinations of people who could make contributions?*

Imagine that you have put together your team. Everybody knows the attitude they need to demonstrate. They also say that they want to combine their strengths to achieve the picture of success.

It can then be time to start on the actual work. You can do this by focusing on the following theme.

### *Strengths Combinations*

Great teams clarify the strategies they can follow to achieve their aims. They then coordinate people's strengths to do superb work and achieve the picture of success.

They often start by communicating the picture of success. They then take the following steps.

*They make clear contracts with individuals about how they can use their strengths to make their best contributions;*

*They put together combinations of people – pairs, trios or other groups – who can combine their complementary strengths to do superb work;*

*They clarify whether these people are prepared to combine their strengths to do such work and, if so, they make clear contracts with them about:*

*a) the specific outcomes to achieve; b) the specific things they can contribute – as individuals and in their units - towards achieving these aims; c) the specific support they need to achieve the outcomes.*

Imagine that you have gone through this step. It will then be time to move onto the next stage.

## *Strategies*

Great teams clarify the strategies they aim to follow. They then aim to coordinate people's strengths to achieve the picture of success. Such teams often focus on following steps to make this happen.

## *Results*

*They clarify the real results to achieve – the picture of success.*

## *Responsibilities*

*They clarify each person's strengths and, bearing these in mind, the responsibilities they want to take in working towards the picture of success.*

## *Roles*

*They agree on the role that each person and each combination will play in working to achieve the picture of success.*

This approach concludes by making clear contracts about: a) the role each person will play; b) the responsibilities they will cover; c) the results they will deliver.

The approach is based on coordinating people's strengths. This is different from other models that start by assigning roles. Here is an overview of this strengths-based approach.

### *Strengths Combinations*

*The following pages outline one approach to clarifying people's best contributions. This approach can be used with individuals, pairs, trios and other combinations of people.*

## *Clarifying The Contributions*

*This starts by working through the following steps.*

### *Results*

*This involves clarifying real results to achieve - the picture of success*

### *Responsibilities*

*This involves clarifying each person's strengths and, bearing these in mind, the responsibilities they want to take towards achieving the picture of success.*

### *Roles*

*This involves agreeing on the role that each person and each combination will play. They then make clear contracts about their contributions towards achieving the picture of success.*

## *Clear Contracting*

*Imagine that people have worked through the previous framework. They then complete the following steps.*

*They make make clear contracts about: a) each person's contribution; b) each combination's contribution.*

*They also agree on: a) the support people need to deliver the work; b) the specific things people will do to proactively keep others informed about their progress towards the goals.*

*The Team's  
Picture Of Success*

*The real results we want to achieve are:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

*Person A*

*The role they will play in working towards  
achieving the picture of success will be:*

\* *To ...*

*The responsibilities they will cover will be:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

*The results they will aim to deliver will be:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To*

**Person B**

*The role they will play in working towards achieving the picture of success will be:*

\* To ...

*The responsibilities they will cover will be:*

\* To ...

\* To ...

\* To ...

*The results they will aim to deliver will be:*

\* To ...

\* To ...

\* To

**People In Combination C**

*The role they will play in working towards achieving the picture of success will be:*

\* To ...

*The responsibilities they will cover will be:*

\* To ...

\* To ...

\* To ...

*The results they will aim to deliver will be:*

\* To ...

\* To ...

\* To

### People In Combination D

*The role they will play in working towards achieving the picture of success will be:*

\* To ...

*The responsibilities they will cover will be:*

\* To ...

\* To ...

\* To ...

*The results they will aim to deliver will be:*

\* To ...

\* To ...

\* To

### People In Combination E

*The role they will play in working towards achieving the picture of success will be:*

\* To ...

*The responsibilities they will cover will be:*

\* To ...

\* To ...

\* To ...

*The results they will aim to deliver will be:*

\* To ...

\* To ...

\* To

## Support

*The specific kinds of support that people need to deliver their parts of the picture of success are:*

\*

\*

\*

## Progress Reports

*The specific things that people will do to proactively keep others informed about their progress towards achieving the goals are:*

\*

\*

\*

Great teams ensure that their people rehearse pursuing the agreed strategies. This is particularly vital when people are working in combinations.

Such teams translate the strategies into action plans. They clarify the specific things people can do: a) to follow the strategies; b) to manage any potential challenges.

People keep focusing on these plans until everybody is clear on what they will do in every situation. Sports teams for example, go out onto the practice field. They aim:

*To rehearse following the strategies to achieve the picture of success;*

*To rehearse managing the challenges they may encounter on the road towards achieving the picture of success;*

*To again rehearse following the strategies to achieve the picture of success.*

Great teams often create a stimulating and supportive culture. They aim: a) to provide people with the support they need to do the job; b) to encourage their people to support each other – especially when things get tough.

Such teams employ people who want to help to help their colleagues to achieve success. People who don't follow this approach are replaced by others who want to contribute to the stimulating and supportive culture.

## *Success*

Great teams encourage their people to perform superb work. Such teams also keep doing reality check. They encourage their people:

*To keep sharing their progress toward achieving the goals;*

*To keep focusing on what is working – such as by sharing success stories – and what they can improve in the future;*

*To keep encouraging themselves and others on the way towards achieving the goals.*

Good leaders also spend time with the individuals and combinations of people. Such meetings may have different functions. Here are two examples.

*The leader may normally focus on a person's or a combination of people's contribution and any help they need to deliver their part of the picture of success.*

*The leader may, on other occasions, focus on a person's development and any help they need to shape their future to achieve their professional picture of success.*

Great teams build their strengths and manage the consequences of their weaknesses. They also encourage each person and each combination of people to follow this approach. They are then more likely to embody the ethic of continuous improvement.

Such teams go beyond the normal practice of focusing on individuals. They build combinations of people who perform superb work and contribute towards delivering the picture of success.

Let's return to your own life work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation when you may want to use elements of the strengths combinations approach?

You may want to do this when managing a project, leading a team or orchestrating people's talents to achieve a compelling goal? How can you follow this approach in your own way?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Strengths Combinations In The Future*

*The specific situation when I may want to follow elements of this approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to follow elements of this approach are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Finishing Successfully Approach*

### *The Finishing Successfully Approach*

*There are many ways to finish things. One approach is to take the following steps.*

-  *You can choose something you want to finish successfully.*
-  *You can clarify your successful pattern for finishing.*
-  *You can follow your successful pattern and aim to flow, focus and finish.*

Finishing is a key skill in life. Sometimes we are not taught how to finish things successfully. This can apply to finishing tasks, projects and even relationships.

What is your successful pattern for finishing? How can you follow this to finish things properly? How can you do this in your personal or professional life?

“Flow, focus, finish and, as a by-product, find fulfilment,” is the motto. Sounds easy in theory, but how does it work in practise? Let’s explore some of the principles for completing things successfully.

*You can choose something  
you want to finish successfully*

Looking into the future, can you think of something you want to finish? You may want to write an article, launch a web site, move on from an employer, finish a relationship or complete another activity.

Good finishers choose to be selective to be effective. Creative people start lots of things but may only finish certain projects. It is impossible to complete everything in life.

Sometimes it can be useful to make a conscious decision and - providing you accept the consequences - it can be okay to say:

*"I don't want to finish it."*

Good finishers focus on the things they want to complete. How they aim to do this depends on what they want to finish properly.

Some people find it relatively simple to set specific goals and work to complete a task. Providing they do the job well, they get satisfaction from solving a problem, creating a product or getting a visible result.

People sometimes find it harder to manage emotional issues. They are seldom taught how to find win-win solutions to conflicts or move on from relationships in a relatively positive way.

Can you think of something you would like to finish? What would be the benefits of doing the work and reaching the goal? How would you feel? What would be the pluses - both for you and for other people? What might be the potential minuses?

Looking ahead, how motivated do you feel to do the work involved? Rate this on a scale 0-10. What can you do to increase the rating?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Finishing*

*The specific thing that I  
want to finish successfully is:*

\*

*The potential pluses and minuses involved  
in working to finish this successfully are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The rating I would give regarding  
me being motivated to do what  
is involved and get the benefits is:*

\_\_\_ / 10

## *You can clarify your successful pattern for finishing*

Everybody has a positive history. Everybody has a successful pattern for finishing. Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to find and follow your successful pattern.

How to make this happen? One approach is to look back at some of the things you have finished successfully.

Some of these may be tangible things. You may have worked to pass an exam, get your driving licence, become healthier, complete a project, overcome a setback or tackle a challenge successfully.

Some of these may be less tangible but also significant. You may have given specific encouragement to a person, helped students to find work they enjoy, found win-win solutions to a conflict or ended a relationship in a relatively good way.

Looking back, what did you do right to finish some of these things successfully? What were the principles you followed? How did you translate these into action? What happened as a result?

Can you see any patterns? What were the principles you followed for finishing some of the tangible things successfully? What were those you followed for managing the emotional things in, as far as possible, a positive way?

Looking ahead, what may be some of the principles you can follow in the future? You may need to add some other skills, of course, but following these principles may help you to finish things successfully.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

# *Finishing Successfully*

## *The First Example*

*The specific time when I finished something successfully was:*

\*

*The specific things I did right then  
– the principles I followed -  
to finish it successfully were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that happened as  
a result of taking these steps were:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Finishing Successfully*

### *The Second Example*

*The specific time when I finished something successfully was:*

\*

*The specific things I did right then  
– the principles I followed -  
to finish it successfully were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that happened as  
a result of taking these steps were:*

\*

\*

\*

## *My Successful Pattern For Finishing*

*Looking at these examples,  
some of the principles I  
follow to finish successfully are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Finishing In The Future*

*The specific things I can do to follow these  
principles – plus add other skills – to  
finish things successfully in the future are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *You can follow your successful pattern and aim to flow, focus and finish*

Imagine you have found your successful pattern for finishing. Here are themes that people mention when describing their approach.

### *My Successful Pattern Is:*

*To decide if I really want to finish something ... To consider the pluses and minuses involved in doing the work ... To clarify the strategy I can follow to give myself the greatest chance of success.*

*To set aside blocks of time to do the work ... To set myself achievable goals each session ... To follow good habits ... To get some successes along the way ... To reach my goal for the session.*

*To keep reminding myself of the benefits ... To encourage myself on the journey ... To find solutions to challenges ... To relax before the final push ... To do my best to finish properly.*

Looking ahead, how can you follow your successful pattern? How can you manage your energy properly? How can you set and reach achievable goals each session?

Great workers build on their strengths and manage the consequences of their weaknesses. Bearing this in mind, are there any other skills you need to add to help you to reach the goal?

If so, how can you add these to your repertoire? You may need to add certain skills if you are aiming to complete a tangible task or manage an emotional challenge.

Imagine you have taken these steps. Looking ahead, you may see the end in sight. Reminding yourself of the benefits, you can then aim to flow, focus and finish.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Finishing Successfully*

*The specific thing I want  
to finish successfully is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to follow my  
successful pattern – plus maybe add  
other skills – to finish it successfully are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen  
as a result of taking these steps are:*

\*

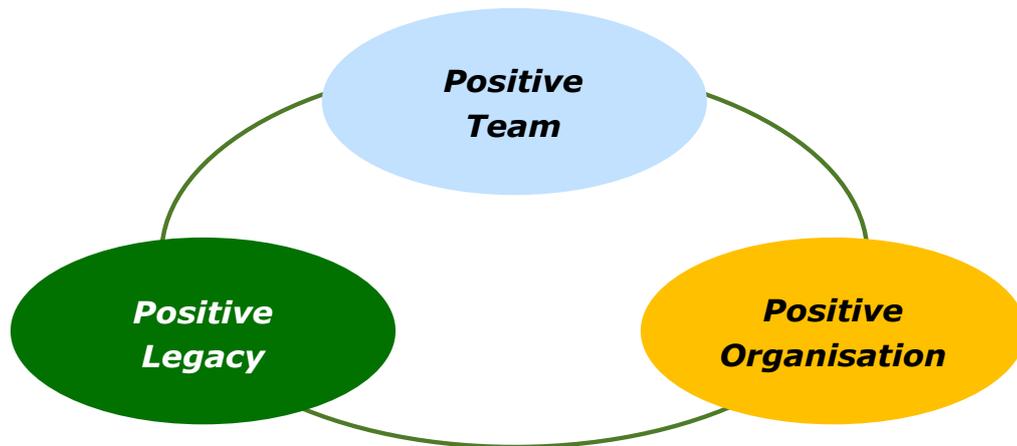
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## *The Building A Positive Team, Organisation And Legacy Approach*

### *The Positive Team, Organisation And Legacy*

*This approach starts by building a positive team. If appropriate, it then involves helping to build a positive organisation. Sometimes this can contribute to building a positive legacy.*



This is an approach that is borrowed from sports. Some sporting coaches aim to build a team, then a club and then a dynasty. Such an approach can sound good, but it calls for doing things in a certain order.

The first step is to build a successful team. This establishes the coach's credibility and produces a good feeling. It also buys time to put in place other factors that can lead to future success.

Some sports coaches go into a club and try to change the whole organisation. They say that this will get the foundations right for building a long-term dynasty. This sounds reasonable, but it is vital to start by building a successful team.

Failing to do this can lead to the coach getting fired. One football manager explained this in the following way.

*"First you must build a team that delivers results, otherwise you will get the sack. Then you will never have the chance to build a club and a dynasty."*

The same rules apply in an organisation. Let's look at how this can work.

## *A Positive Team*

Imagine you have taken over a team in an organisation that needs to shift its approach to shape a successful future. The challenge of making such changes may be difficult, so it is important to focus on what you can do.

Kate, the leader of a sales team, explained her approach to making this happen. She began by concentrating on her own team.

*"I needed to turn things around quickly. Our team was failing badly. Not because of our products – which were similar to those of our competitors – but because of a terrible service culture."*

*"Coming into the business, I inherited a team with three good performers, five who were steady and two who kept complaining. Meeting with each person, I asked them to describe their strengths the kinds of work they found satisfying."*

*"I then outlined: a) the team's goals; b) the principles we could follow to achieve the goals; c) the practical support I would give to people if they wanted to contribute towards achieving the goals."*

*"I gave each person time to reflect and decide if they wanted to help to achieve the goals. Seven people chose to immediately opt-in. One was uncertain. Two wanted to debate and tell me what was wrong with the organisation."*

*"I built on the seven who wanted to contribute and we worked to deliver some quick wins. I gave some time to the other three, but only to invite them to decide if they wanted to follow the principles."*

*"The first months were tough. Whilst building on the positive people, I threw myself into compensating for the people who were not performing.*

*"We improved the service and sales, which led to getting repeat business. This helped to build our credibility, which was useful when I went to the key stakeholders to ask for more resources.*

*"When doing this, I aimed: a) to describe the increased targets we could deliver; b) to describe the quick successes we could get; c) to describe the support that would help us to deliver these targets."*

Kate got the backing she wanted. This included getting four motivated people who replaced the three who were not delivering. The team's performance continued to improve, which led to Kate being invited to take a larger role in the organisation.

Imagine that you have taken over a team in an organisation that needs to evolve. One approach is to tell the leaders of the organisation that they need to change. Another approach is to show a successful way forwards by building a positive team. When doing this, it can be useful:

*To make clear contracts with your stakeholders about the positive goals to achieve;*

*To set things up to succeed so that, providing you do superb work, you have an 8+/10 chance of delivering success;*

*To build a team of people who aim to demonstrate a positive attitude, do positive work and get positive results.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Positive Team*

*The specific situation where I may aim to build a team that delivers positive results may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to build a team where people have a positive attitude, do positive work and get positive results are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *A Positive Organisation*

Imagine that you want to use your strengths to help to build a positive organisation. You are more likely to be able to do this if you have the power to decide on:

*The purpose, principles and picture of success;*

*The people you can employ who are prepared to follow the principles and deliver the picture of success;*

*The practical steps you can take to enable these people to implement the principles and achieve the picture of success.*

Many people do not have such power, but they may still want to shape their organisation's future. Let's explore some ways to make this happen.

Imagine that you have built a team that has followed certain principles and performed superbly. This has impressed the key stakeholders and they now want you to create change in other parts of the organisation.

This can be a tempting proposition but, before leaping into action, it can be important to consider several factors. It seldom works to run programmes that urge people to change.

There are several principles to follow that are more likely to enable people to develop. It sometimes works:

*To share positive examples that people want to emulate on the way towards achieving success;*

*To share the principles that other people have followed to achieve success;*

*To give people the opportunity to follow these principles in their own way – within certain parameters – and to provide the support they need to achieve success.*

Kate followed some of these steps when asked to spread ideas inside her organisation. During the subsequent months she chose:

*To work with five teams that were open to following the successful principles and using them to improve the business;*

*To help people to implement the principles in their own ways to achieve specific goals that benefited the business;*

*To produce success stories that each of these teams then presented to the key stakeholders in the business.*

People found that making presentations reinforced the motto that the best way to learn is to teach. They had to focus on reality and produce actual examples. This helped them to bring to life:

*The specific things they had done to translate the principles into action;*

*The specific things that worked and the things they could do better in the future;*

*The specific benefits to the customers, the company and the colleagues.*

The key stakeholders appreciated the presentations. Some invited the teams to make similar presentations to managers in their own departments.

Kate was offered the opportunity to take a large operational role in the business. Whilst this meant an increase in status and pay, it did not play to her strengths. She chose instead:

*To lead her present team but also appoint somebody who could take care of the day-to-day operations;*

*To become Dean of the professional development programme that the company planned to introduce;*

*To do one-to-one mentoring with rising professionals in the company.*

Kate did this work for the next three years. This had a profound effect on many individuals and teams. Parts of the company still continued on the downwards path, but the work she and others did helped to lay the foundations for shaping a better future.

Imagine that you want to help to build a positive organisation. When exploring the possibilities, it can be helpful to consider how you can apply your strengths. It can then be useful:

*To clarify the specific piece of work you want to do – such as a project –that will bring benefits to the organisation;*

*To clarify the specific things you can do to set up things to succeed so that you have at a least an 8+/10 chance of achieving success;*

*To clarify the specific things you can do to do superb work, deliver the benefits and contribute towards building a positive organisation.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Positive Organisation*

*The specific situation where I may want to contribute towards building a positive organisation may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to contribute towards building a positive contribution are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *A Positive Legacy*

This article began by describing how people in sports talk about building a team, then a club and then a dynasty. The latter part refers to creating a sports organisation that wins trophies year after year.

The concept of building a dynasty can take different forms. Jim Collins described how some organisations achieve ongoing success in his book *Built To Last*. Some people questioned these findings by saying:

*"But haven't some of the companies failed since the book was published?"*

Yes, but there is an obvious reason. Such companies often stopped following the principles that made them great. Some then returned to focusing on these themes and how they could express to shape a successful future.

Today it is harder to build a dynasty in business. This is because the world is fast moving and ideas can be quickly replicated. It is also because many employees want to develop and move on to other organisations or start their own businesses.

People now talk more about building a positive legacy rather than a dynasty. Some people I work with recall their own great experiences in work. Such individuals say some of the following things.

*My memories of working at ...  
are that we had a culture where:*

*We enjoyed going to work ... We were encouraged to play to our strengths ... We were working to achieve an exciting goal ... We all knew our parts in achieving the mission.*

*We learned how to build great teams ... We learned lots of tools for shaping our future careers ... We have used much of what we learned in our subsequent careers ... We worked hard but we had a ball.*

Great workers often aim to build positive teams and contribute towards building a positive organisation. Some also aim to pass on a positive legacy.

Imagine that you want to do this in your own way. What may be the positive legacy that you want to pass on to people?

One person I worked with clarified what they wanted to achieve and pass on to people during their time as a member of the leadership team. They described this in the following way.

### *The Positive Legacy*

*The specific things I want to achieve by the time I move on from the company are:*

*To have created a culture that encourages people to do their best and attracts people who can help the company to shape a successful future;*

*To have enabled many of our people to clarify their strengths and them to have used these to make their best contributions to the company;*

*To have helped many people to develop lifelong transferable skills that they can use to shape their future careers and achieve success.*

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe the specific things you can do pass on a positive legacy.

## *The Positive Legacy*

*The specific situation where I may want to pass on a positive legacy may be:*

\*

*The specific things I may want to pass on to people as part of the positive legacy may be:*

\*

\*

\*

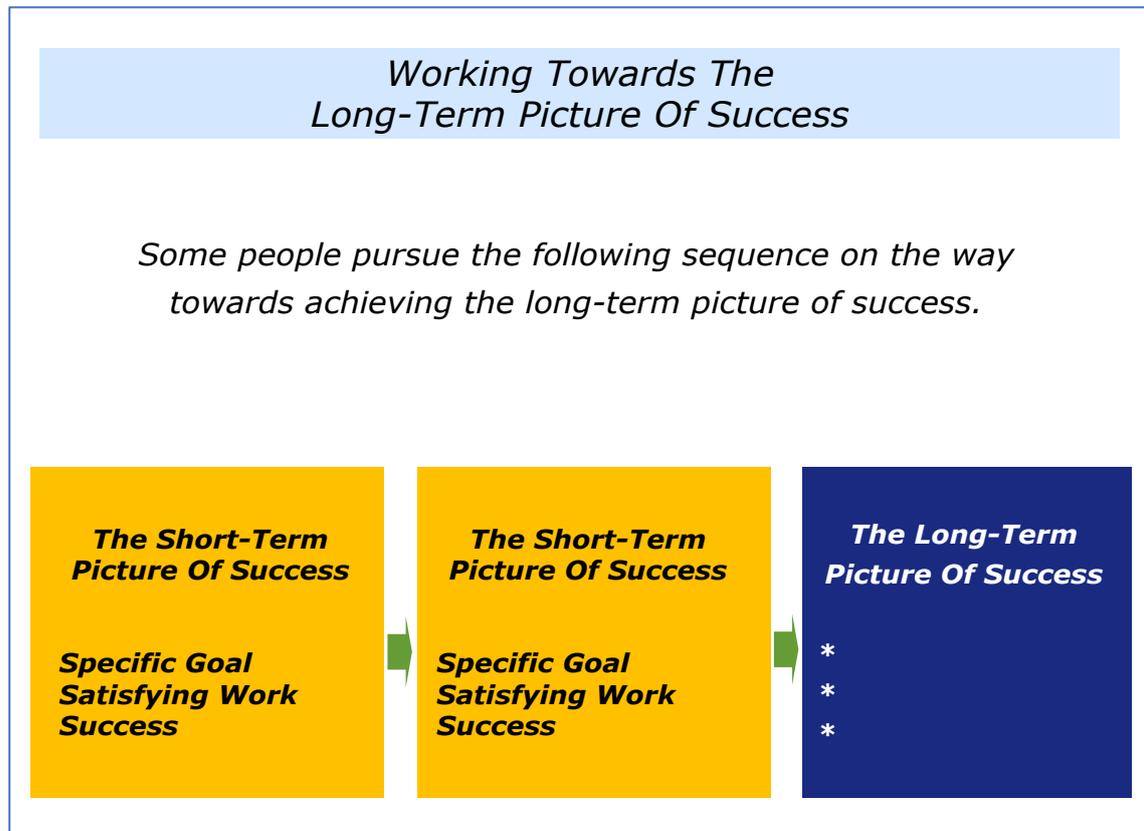
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Working Towards A Long-Term Goal Approach*



Imagine that you are working towards a long-term goal. You will aim to enjoy the journey, but sometimes this may be challenging.

This may be especially so if at times you need to do work that is not satisfying. Let's explore some of the themes you can focus on to encourage yourself when doing the work.

### *Clarify The Picture Of Success*

You will start by clarifying your destination. You may aim to write a book, live a healthy lifestyle, run a marathon, get your perfect job, raise money for a cause or achieve another personal or professional goal.

One thing you do know, however, is that it may take months or even years before reaching the destination. This will take persistence and patience.

Different people choose different ways to chart their journey. One approach is to use the model we have explored several times in this book. This involves clarifying the strategies you can follow to achieve your picture of success.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Picture Of Success*

*The long-term picture of success is:*

\*

*The real results I want to achieve  
by reaching this goal are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific strategies I can follow to give myself the greatest chances of success are:*

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\*

*The pluses and minuses involved in working towards and achieving the goal will be:*

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\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to build on the pluses and manage the minuses are:*

\*

\*

*The extent to which I feel motivated to do what is required to reach the goal is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

## *Setting Short-Term Goals*

Imagine that you have a clear action plan. The next step will be to translate this into action. It will also be to encourage yourself on the journey towards achieving the long-term picture of success.

There are many ways to take this step. One approach is organise your time in blocks. It is then:

*To set short-term specific goals;*

*To do satisfying work and manage the less-satisfying work;*

*To achieve a sense of success.*

You can set short-term goals it is possible to achieve within a certain time. This could be within the next hour, the next session or the next day.

Set aside a block of time where you can do the work and get a sense of success. This can provide encouragement on the way towards achieving the long-term picture of success.

This is similar to the 'One Day At A Time' approach followed by former addicts who aim to stay healthy. It also mirrors the approach used by some athletes. They may experience ups and downs, but it vital to stay focused.

Paul O'Connell, a former Rugby player, described how his coach Joe Schmidt helped him to take this step. Whatever had happened previously, the players were urged to look forward. They then followed the mantra:

*"Win the next moment."*

Some people take this approach in their daily lives and work. They aim to do their personal best in the next moment on the way towards achieving their picture of success.

Let's return to your work. Imagine you have set yourself a long-term goal. This may involve doing both satisfying and less-satisfying work. This can call for being both patient and persistent.

### *Doing Satisfying Work*

Different people choose different ways to the great work and the grunt work. Each approach has both pluses and minuses.

#### *Some people do the satisfying things first*

They take this approach whenever possible. They aim to protect their prime times – the times of the day when they have most energy. They reserve these for doing the satisfying tasks.

Such people find this approach uplifting. They get a high and feel they are doing something towards achieving the picture of success.

#### *The pluses of this approach are:*

The person looks forward to doing the satisfying tasks. They do their best work and it gives them positive energy. They set reachable goals, do superb work and achieve the feeling of success.

#### *The possible minuses of this approach are:*

The person may become captivated by doing the things they love and fail to see the big picture. They may sometimes put off the other more important tasks that are less-satisfying.

Let's return to your own project. What are the satisfying tasks you look forward to doing on the journey? How can you organise your time to do these tasks properly? How can you set reachable goals and achieve a sense of success?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Satisfying Things*

*The specific things that I will find satisfying to do on the way towards achieving the picture of success are:*

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*The specific things I can do to do these satisfying things are:*

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*The specific benefits of doing these satisfying things will be:*

\*

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## *Managing The Less-Satisfying Things*

This can be challenging. Whatever approach you take to doing such tasks, one rule stands out.

*It is important:*

*To see how doing these tasks will help you to achieve your long-term picture of success.*

Sometimes the link may be tenuous. For example, doing the tasks may simply be a way of earning money while you work towards the long-term goal.

Sometimes the link may be obvious but still challenging. An athlete may choose to get up at 5.00 am, for example, to put in the miles when working towards the Olympic Gold.

*Some people continually reframe  
the tasks as part of the journey*

This is the approach that was mentioned earlier. They see the tasks as helping them to get the funding, earn a qualification or put in the hard yards that will help them to achieve their goal.

Such people aim to see things in context. They echo Viktor Frankl's view that people who have a sense of meaning in their lives – such as working towards a goal – can see things in perspective. He said:

*"Those who have a 'why' to live, can bear with almost any 'how'."*

*Some people do the tasks during  
the cruise control part of the day*

Some people use their cruise control times to do the less-satisfying tasks. They remain professional and diligent, of course, but they find it is often possible to do such work during these times.

*Some people learn to manage  
their feelings when doing such tasks*

Sometimes the tasks may be tedious and or boring. One person described how they dealt with this in the following way.

*"Part of my role involves filling in lots of excel sheets, which I don't like. I counter the bad feeling by putting on my favourite music. I can still do the work, but the music makes me feel better."*

*Some people pay  
others to do the tasks*

This is the route taken by many freelancers. They build on their strengths and earn more money by doing what they do best. They then pay others to do the less-satisfying tasks.

This is more difficult if you work in a specific role for an organisation. If you lead a team, however, you may find a way to play to your strengths and work with others who can compensate for your weaknesses.

If you work as an individual contributor this approach may be more challenging. But sometimes it is possible to find ways to co-operate with others to ensure all the tasks get completed.

Let's return to your own project. Are there any ways it may be possible to manage such tasks? How can you take these steps? What may be the benefits?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Less-Satisfying Things*

*The specific things that I will find less-satisfying to do on the way towards achieving the picture of success are:*

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\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to find ways to manage these less-satisfying things are:*

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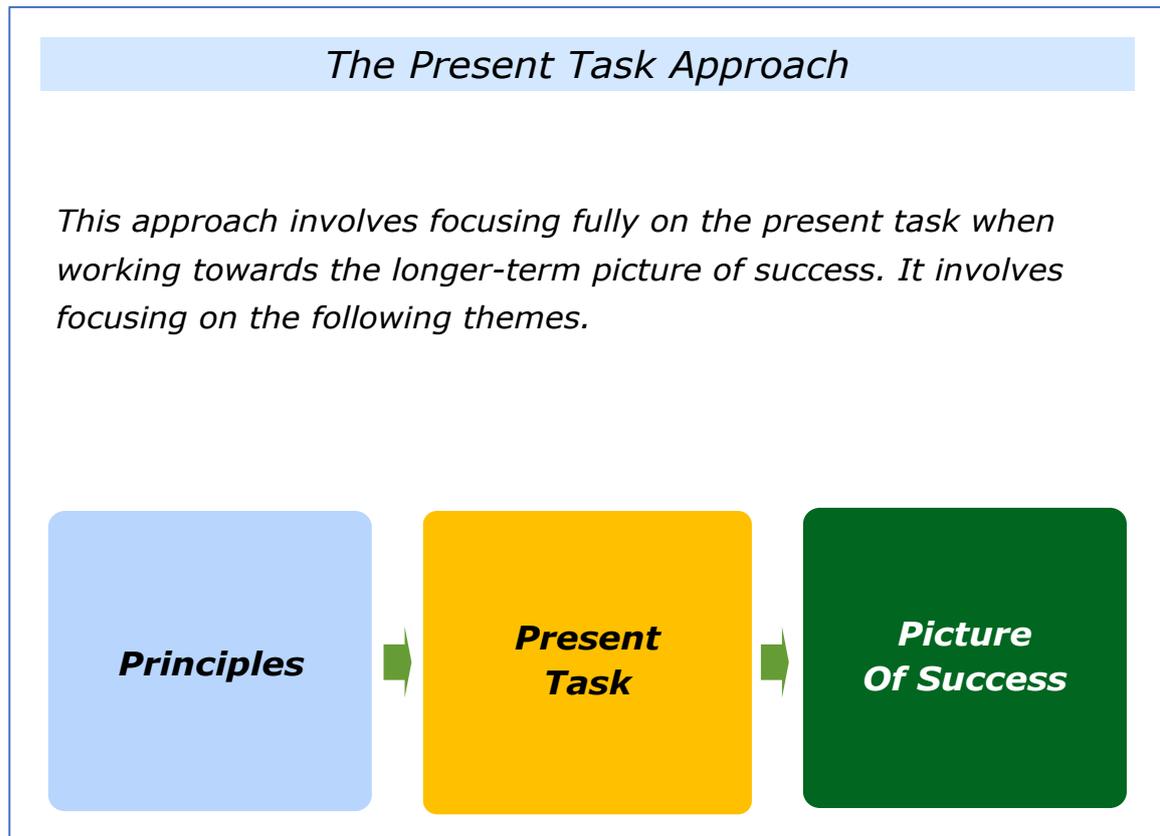
*The specific benefits of finding ways to manage these less-satisfying things will be:*

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## *The Present Task Approach*



Great workers apply themselves fully when doing a specific task that will contribute towards achieving their longer-term picture of success. They often take the following steps when pursuing this approach.

*They clarify the principles they want to follow in their work;*

*They clarify their longer-term picture of success;*

*They follow their principles when focusing fully on the present task and working towards their longer-term picture of success.*

Such workers aim to perform superb work on the present task whilst also being aware of the big picture. They use their antennae to focus on what is happening. They then do their best to achieve the desired positive results.

Can you think of a situation when you followed elements of this approach? What did you do then to follow your principles? How did you translate these into action when doing the specific task?

Imagine you want to apply this approach in the future. You may want to do this when performing a specific piece of work that is part of a long-term project. Let's explore how to take this approach.

### *The Principles*

You may want to start by clarifying the principles you want to follow in your work. Here are some answers people give on this theme.

*I Want ... To encourage people ... To help people to take care of their health ... To create beauty ... To provide great service to customers ... To develop technology that simplifies people's lives ... To create positive cultures that enable people to achieve success.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentence.

## *Principles*

*The principles I want to follow in my work*

*I want:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Picture Of Success*

Imagine that you have clarified the principles you want to follow in your work. The next step is to clarify your picture of success.

Different people do this in different ways. You may want to explore some of the following themes:

*To clarify your short-term goals – such as the specific things you want achieve when doing a specific project;*

*To clarify your medium-term goals – such as the specific things you want to achieve in your present role;*

*To clarify your longer-term goals – such as the specific things you want to achieve in your personal life or professional career.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentence.

### *Picture Of Success*

*The specific things I want to achieve*

*I want:*

\*

\*

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## *The Present Task*

Imagine that you have clarified the principles you want to follow and your picture of success. Bearing these in mind, the next step will be:

*To follow your principles;*

*To focus fully on the present task and perform superb work;*

*To deliver positive results that contribute towards achieving the overall picture of success.*

Imagine that you are aiming to do a piece of work that will help you to achieve the longer-term goals. What may be the specific piece of work?

How can you follow your principles when doing the work? What are the results you want to achieve? How will these contribute towards achieving the overall picture of success?

How can you rehearse properly? How can you click into action? How can you be positively engaged? How can you use your antennae to keep reading reality? How can you do your best to perform superb work?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to focus on a specific task that you may want to do on the road towards achieving your picture of success. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Present Task*

*The specific task that I may want to do that will contribute towards achieving the overall picture of success may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to follow my principles and aim to perform superb work when doing the task are:*

\*

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\*

*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

\*

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## *Keep Working Towards The Picture Of Success*

Many people are good at recovering from setbacks and doing their best to achieve short-term and medium-term goals. Sometimes it takes a different kind of psychology, however, to work towards long-term goals.

Some people were able to deal with the first few months of the Covid crisis. They found it more difficult, however, when the periods of lockdown were extended with no end in sight.

People can develop the ability to work towards long-term goals, but they may also need to encourage themselves. Bearing this in mind, it can be important for them:

*To remind themselves of the successes they have achieved so far on the road towards the picture of success.*

Building on these achievements, they can then focus on the next stage of the journey. As mentioned earlier, one approach is for them to take the following steps:

*To set short-term specific goals;*

*To do satisfying work and manage the less-satisfying work;*

*To achieve a sense of success.*

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Picture Of Success*

*The specific things I can do to keep working towards the long-term picture of success are:*

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*The specific things I can do to encourage myself on the journey are:*

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*The specific benefits of taking these steps will be:*

\*

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\*

## *The Sustainable Success Approach*



This approach goes beyond helping people to manage their present situation. It can enable them to shape a positive future.

It starts with them making a decision that they want to achieve sustainable success. It then helps individuals, teams and organisations:

*To build on their strengths;*

*To follow successful strategies;*

*To achieve sustainable success.*

A person may decide they want to develop a healthier lifestyle rather than just deal with their present symptoms. They may want

to take care of their health, spend time with positive people and do more satisfying work.

An organisation may decide it wants to go beyond fixing problems with today's business. They may want to follow the chosen strategy to build tomorrow's business.

Today many people are aware of systems theory. They recognise how things are connected and also how to build healthy systems.

Stretching a system can sometimes produce short and medium-term success. But continually over-stretching a system can lead to it becoming shattered.

People are therefore aiming to build systems that achieve sustainable success. They see this as a way forward for individuals, teams, organisations, societies and the planet.

### *Sustainable Success*

- *Stretching a system can be stimulating and can lead to short and medium-term success.*
- *Continually over-stretching a system can be damaging and can lead to it being shattered.*
- *Some people, teams and organisations therefore aim to achieve sustainable success.*

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you chose to take the route of achieving sustainable success? This could have been in your personal or professional life.

What was the trigger for making the decision? You may have done this in a reactive way after experiencing a setback, suffering from an illness or having a shock.

Alternatively, you may have done this in a proactive way. Looking ahead, you may have considered the different roads you could take in the future. You then decided to take the route of achieving sustainable success.

You may have chosen, for example, to take control of your finances. What did you do to put your bank balance into the black rather than the red? How did you maintain this pattern with your finances and stay ahead of the game?

You may have chosen to adopt a positive attitude rather than be negative. What did you do to be grateful rather than grumpy? What did you do to build on your assets and find solutions to challenges?

You may have chosen to move from a debilitating job to doing satisfying work. What did you do to plan properly, explore all the options and make the move? You may then have continued to be proactive by moving to new stimulating projects in your career.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe when you aimed to achieve sustainable success in a part of your life.

## *Sustainable Success In The Past*

*The specific situation in the past when I took steps to achieve sustainable success was:*

\*

*The specific things I did then to take steps towards achieving sustainable success were:*

\*

\*

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*The specific things that happened as a result taking these steps were:*

\*

\*

\*

The following pages explore some ways that individuals, teams and organisation can work towards achieving such a goal. It involves focusing on the following themes.

## *Start By Deciding On The Picture Of Success*

The first step is for people to decide they want to achieve sustainable success. It also includes the serious part – looking ahead and being prepared to do the work involved.

Different people make such decisions in different ways. Some people decide in an instant after having a Road to Damascus experience. They then translate this enlightenment into action by focusing on effectiveness and delivering excellence.

Some people take longer. They like to explore options, let the ideas incubate and make a considered decision. They then make a serious plan, set milestones and work towards achieving success.

Some people go through the motions. They may say that they want to take a certain route, but they then fail to translate this into action. This is in itself a decision.

Looking back at your own experience, what motivated you to work towards a particular goal? What did you see as the benefits of pursuing that route?

There are many views about what motivates people. The old saying is that people buy benefits. They buy success rather than the theory of success.

Here are some of the reasons why a person, team or organisation may choose to behave in a certain way.

## *People's Motivators*

- *Pleasure*

*They do things that will give them more pleasure.*

- *Pain*

*They do things that will give them less pain.*

- *Profit*

*They do things that – in the widest sense – will be more profitable.*

### *Pleasure*

People choose to do things that give them pleasure. They may aim to feel better, be happier or get an adrenaline high. Sometimes they opt for instant gratification, sometimes they work towards a long-term goal.

### *Pain*

People choose to do things that take away physical or psychological pain. They may do this in healthy or unhealthy ways. Sometimes they try to numb the pain, but eventually they may take action to heal themselves.

### *Profit*

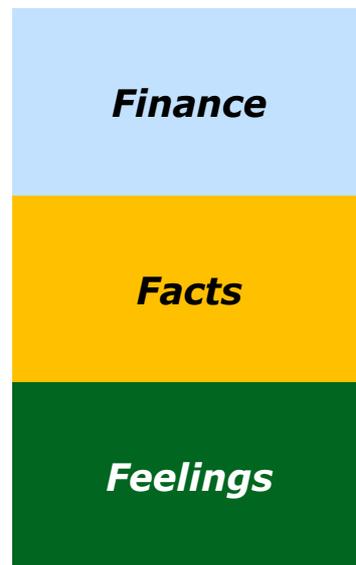
People choose to do things that are – in the widest sense – more profitable. This can be on an economic or emotional level. It can involve doing things that make them feel better or be better off

financially. They may also do things that help them to have peace of mind.

People sometimes operate on the levels of feelings, finance or facts. This has important implications for change agents who urge companies, for example, to shape a positive future.

Facts do not necessarily convince people. They may simply filter these through their own belief systems. Some will only change their behaviour if they believe it will help them to feel better or boost their finances.

*People may operate on the following levels when focusing how they can shape a positive future:*



Sometimes it can be useful to use this approach when offering ideas to people. Let's look at one example.

During the 1990s a team leader I was working with presented their company's board with the business case for doing a pilot

programme. This involved the people in their team working in the office three days a week.

The leader began by explaining the business benefits. These included the following.

*The team would surpass its business targets and proactively keep its key stakeholders informed about its progress towards achieving the goals;*

*The team would spend more time with their UK customers and be able to manage their hours better to deal with their customers around the world;*

*The team members would pilot a potential model for achieving a better quality of life whilst also fulfilling their obligations to the company.*

The company's board decided to back the project. This proved successful and became a model for other parts of the business.

There were other benefits. The company were able to recruit excellent staff who wanted to retain the quality of life or did not want to relocate. It was also able to reduce its office space and, in this way, increase the profit.

Imagine there is an area of your life where you want to achieve sustainable success. You may want to improve your lifestyle, do satisfying work or focus on another area.

Looking at this topic, try casting yourself into the future. What will be the specific things that will be happening that will show you have achieved this aim? What will be the specific benefits of achieving this goal?

Let's consider another scenario. Imagine that you lead a team or organisation. You may want to help it to manage today's business but also to shape a positive future.

Looking to the future, what will be happening that will show the team or organisation has increased the likelihood of achieving sustainable success. What will be the specific benefits of achieving this goal?

There are many ways to set such goals. The following pages outline one approach that can be used to help individuals, teams or organisations to clarify their picture of sustainable success.



*Sustainable Success*

*The specific area where I/We want  
to achieve sustainable success is:*

\*

### *The Picture Of Success*

*The specific things that will be happening that will show that I/We have achieved sustainable success in this area will be:*

\*

\*

\*

### *The Specific Benefits*

*The specific benefits of achieving sustainable success in this area will be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Strengths*

Imagine that you have clarified your picture of success. How can you do your best to achieve this aim? One approach is to start by assessing the resources you have available and do a strengths audit.

Let's begin with the first scenario. Imagine that you want to achieve sustainable success in a particular area of your life.

You may want to develop a healthy lifestyle, do satisfying work or achieve another aim. Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to ask yourself the following questions.

*What are the strengths I have that could help me to achieve the aim? What are my personal and professional assets? What are my other potential resources?*

*When have I achieved a similar aim in the past? What were the principles I followed? How did I translate these into action? How can I follow these principles – plus add other skills - to achieve my picture of success?*

Let's move onto the second scenario. Imagine that you want to help your team or organisation to achieve sustainable success. It can be useful to explore the following questions.

*What are our strengths? What are the specific activities in which we deliver As rather than Bs or Cs? What have we delivered to help our customers to achieve success?*

*Looking to the future, who may be the kinds of customers with whom we may want to work? What may be the challenges they face? How can we use our strengths to help them to achieve success?*

There are many ways to do a strengths audit. The following pages provide one approach. You will, of course, adapt this in your own way.

## *Strengths Audit*

*The specific area where I/We want to achieve sustainable success is:*

\*

## *Strengths*

*The strengths and assets I/We have that we can use to help to achieve sustainable success in this area are:*

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## *Strategies*

Let's move on to the action plan. What are the key strategies you can follow to give yourself the greatest chance of success? How can you encourage yourself on the journey?

It can be important to make a plan that: a) you believe in; b) you believe it is possible to follow; c) you believe will help to achieve sustainable success.

You can take these steps when doing something as an individual. Imagine, however, that you lead a team or organisation. Looking ahead, you can involve your people in exploring the following themes.

*Looking at our chosen field:*

*What are the changes that could affect our work in the next year, three years and in the future? What are the things that are likely to happen, could happen, are improbable but could happen?*

*What are the kinds of organisations that are likely to thrive in the future? What are the reasons they may thrive? What may be the challenges they face?*

*When have we worked successfully with such places in the past? Looking ahead, how can we use our strengths to help such places to succeed? How can we connect with them in a way that fits our values?*

*Looking at our own team, what can we do to equip ourselves properly to thrive? How can we implement the right strategies with the right people in the right way? How can we help ourselves and our customers to achieve sustainable success?*

There are many exercises for clarifying your strategies. The following page describes one exercise. You will, of course, adapt this in your own way.

## Strategies

*The specific area where I/We want to achieve sustainable success is:*

\*

## Strategies

*The specific strategies I/We can follow to increase the chances of achieving sustainable success in this area are:*

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\*

\*

## *Sustainable Success*

Imagine that you have clarified your plan. You may aim to maintain a healthy lifestyle, do satisfying work or reach another goal. Alternatively, you may aim to help your team or organisation to achieve sustainable success.

The next step is to translate your plan into action. As mentioned earlier, it is vital for a person, team or organisation:

*To pursue strategies they believe in and encourage themselves on the journey;*

*To get some quick successes, do superb work and find solutions to challenges;*

*To keep improving, produce success stories and deliver sustainable success.*

The leader who ran the pilot programme of working three days in the office followed these steps. Working with the key stakeholders on the board – which was crucial in order to retain their backing - they produced success stories.

Taking this approach maintained the momentum and enabled the company to take the credit. It also created a model that was followed by other departments. This helped to the company to shape a positive future.

As mentioned at the beginning, today many people are aware of systems theory and also want to build healthy systems. They see this as a positive way forward for individuals, organisations and societies.

Different people take these steps in different ways. Here is one exercise that people can use to take these steps. You will have your own approach to achieving sustainable success.

## *Sustainable Success*

*The specific area where I/We want to achieve sustainable success is:*

\*

## *Success*

*The specific things I/We can do to achieve and maintain sustainable success in this area are:*

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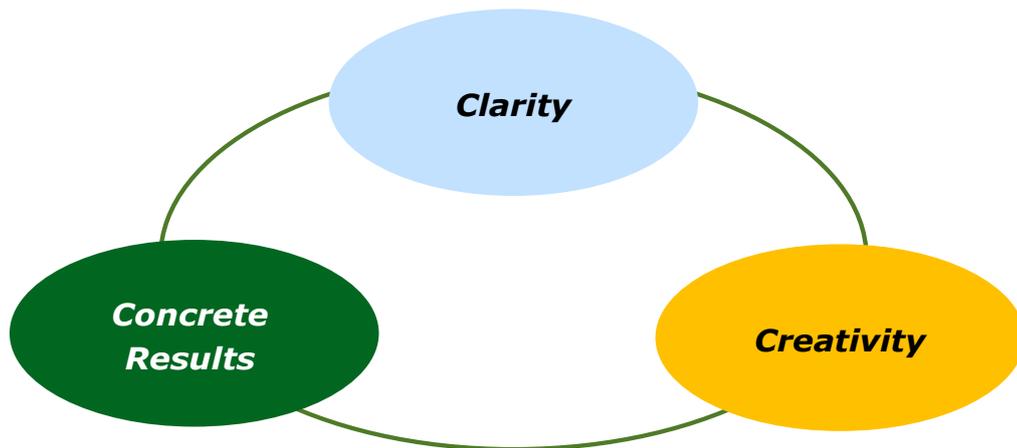
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## *The Mentoring Approach*

### *Mentoring - The Three C Model*

*The mentor creates a stimulating sanctuary in which the person can feel at ease. They then help the person to explore their chosen topic or challenge by focusing on clarity, creativity and concrete results.*



There are many ways to encourage people. One approach is to act as a mentor and pass on knowledge that helps people to succeed.

Mentoring is a huge subject. So let's start by considering some of the frequently asked questions about mentoring and coaching.

### *What do mentors do?*

Mentors are wise and trusted advisors. They share knowledge in a way that helps the mentee to achieve their personal or professional goals.

Many successful people use mentors. Why? They sometimes like to meet with a third party who helps them to get an overview of a situation. They can then explore their possible options, make decisions and chart their route forwards.

The word mentor comes from Homer's epic poem *The Iliad*. When Odysseus left to do battle in Troy, he asked a man called Mentor to take care of his son, Telemachus.

Rumour has it that Mentor was not always up to the task. The Goddess Athena therefore assumed his form and made him strong and wise.

### *Why do organisations use mentoring?*

Mentoring plays a key role in nurturing talent. It provides benefits for the organisation, the mentees and the mentors.

The benefits for the organisation include creating an encouraging environment, passing on wisdom and helping people to make good quality decisions. It can also act as a good retention tool.

The benefits for the mentee include feeling encouraged, making good decisions and shaping their future career. They also expand their repertoire of knowledge and get practical tools they use to achieve success.

The benefits for the mentor are that they will clarify their knowledge, because the best way to learn is to teach. They will also learn more about what is happening in their organisation and may get energy from their mentees.

### *What is the difference between mentoring and coaching?*

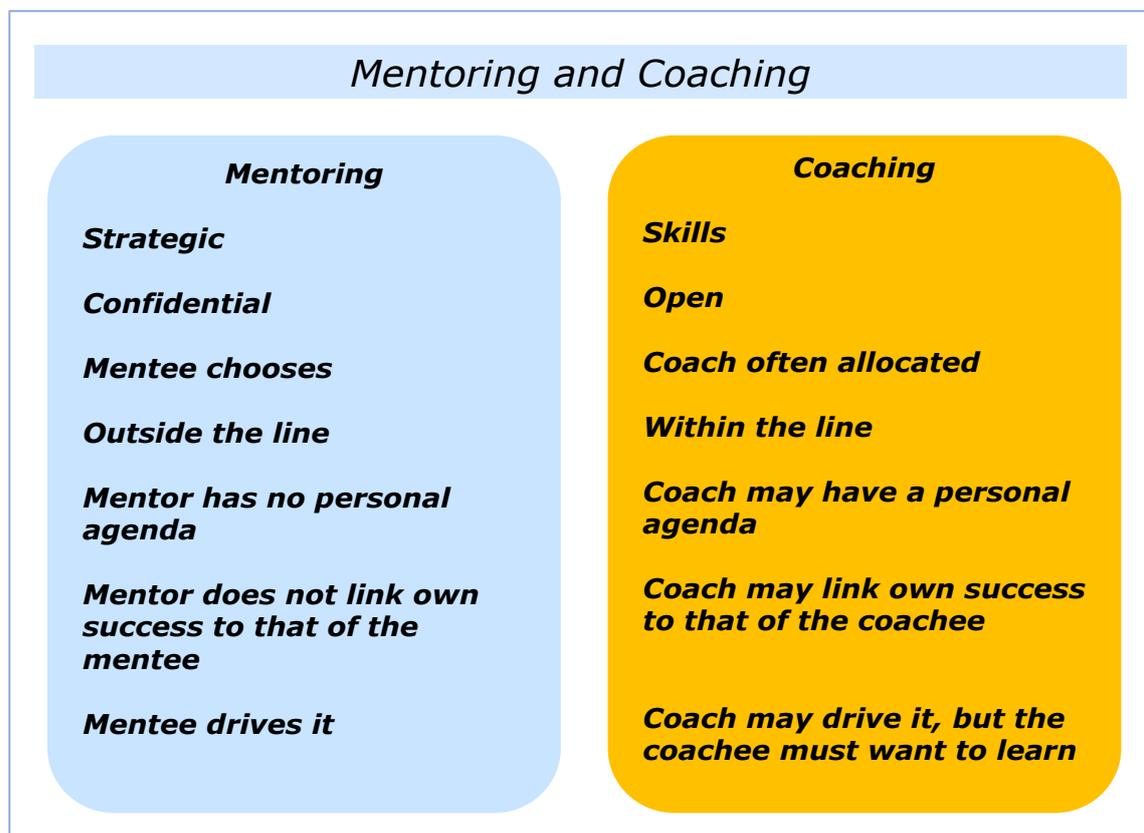
There are many views on the difference between mentoring and coaching. These views can also differ in different parts of the world and different cultures.

This brings us to the important point. When introducing mentoring into a culture, it is vital that people understand the organisation's

definitions. This does not mean that one view is right and another is wrong.

People simply need to be clear about what mentoring is and what it isn't in their organisation. They then know what they can and cannot expect from a mentoring session.

This piece focuses on the definitions that one organisation gave regarding mentoring and coaching. (Some organisations actually reverse the columns described below.) Everybody was clear on the differences, however, and knew how to make the best use of the sessions.



One key point is worth mentioning. The two columns outlined above come with a caveat.

The mentor's role is to pass on knowledge and practical tools the mentee could use to achieve success. This means that sometimes the sessions help the person to add to their repertoire of skills for

achieving their strategic goals. The two columns can, however, prove to be a useful guide for people.

### *What are the responsibilities of the mentor and the mentee?*

The mentor's responsibility is, first and foremost, to make sure they really want to be a mentor. Mentoring is rewarding, but doing it properly can also be time consuming.

After familiarising themselves with the organisation's approach to mentoring, it is to facilitate the sessions and pass on their knowledge in a way that the mentee can use to achieve success.

The mentee's responsibility is to be proactive in setting-up the sessions, prepare properly and make the best use of their session with the mentor.

Building on these definitions, the organisation can include the following points in their mentoring charter. These make sure the mentees know what they can and cannot expect from the sessions.

*The mentor's role is to focus on the mentee's agenda, to act as a confidential sounding board and to pass on tools the mentee can use to achieve their goals.*

*The mentor's role is not to act as a political door opener, to replace management or to communicate confidential information about people.*

The charter can include both the mentor's and mentee's responsibilities. These can be outlined in the following ways.

### *The Mentor's Responsibility Is:*

- *To make sure they really want to be a mentor, because it is a big commitment.*
- *To build on their own strengths as a mentor.*
- *To complete a mentor profile and describe what they can and can't offer as a mentor.*
- *To familiarise themselves with our model for facilitating a mentoring session.*
- *To pass on knowledge and practical tools that help the person to achieve their picture of success.*

### *The Mentee's Responsibility Is:*

- *To choose a mentor and drive the process.*
- *To familiarise themselves with the mentoring model and prepare properly for the mentoring session.*
- *To, at the start of the session, communicate the topics they would like to explore and what for them would make it a successful session.*
- *To explore each topic in turn and, when appropriate, be open to the relevant ideas and knowledge that the mentor may pass on to help them to achieve their goals.*
- *To take the ideas they can use and apply these in their own ways to achieve their picture of success.*

## *What are the qualities demonstrated by good mentors?*

Good mentors often demonstrate some common characteristics. How to identify these qualities? One approach is to look back at your own experience of being mentored.

When doing mentoring programmes, for example, I invite each person to do the following exercise.

*Describe somebody who acted as a good mentor for you in your personal or professional life.*

*Describe the specific things they did right – the principles they followed – to be a good mentor for you.*

*Describe the specific things you can do to, if appropriate, follow some of these principles – plus maybe add other skills – to be a good mentor for other people.*

Here are some of the common themes that emerge when people do this exercise.

## Good Mentors

*Here are some of the themes that emerge when people describe the qualities demonstrated by good mentors*

- *They were warm and welcoming. They made me feel the centre of their world.*
- *They listened to my story and showed that they understood what I wanted to achieve. They played back what they believed were my goals.*
- *They outlined the possible options for going forward together with the pluses and minuses of each option.*
- *They then asked if it was okay for them to share some ideas.*
- *They passed on their knowledge and provided practical tips that added to the possible options for going forwards.*

- *They shared their knowledge in a way that I could understand and use to achieve my goals.*
- *They underlined that it was ultimately my decision regarding the route I wanted to follow.*
- *They gave me time to reflect. They then, once I had made my decision, again explained the implications.*
- *They explained what I could expect to happen and the various roles - their role, my role and the roles of other people - as we moved forwards.*
- *They then used their compassion, knowledge and skills to provide support and do their best to help me to reach my goals.*

### *Preparing Properly*

Good mentors prepare properly for the session. They aim to find out what they can about the mentee, what is happening in their world and the possible themes the person may wish to explore.

The following pages describe some of the themes that the mentor may explore when thinking about the mentee. This is followed by an exercise they sometimes use to summarise their findings and how they can help the person to succeed.

## Mentors

*They prepare for the session by exploring the following themes*

- *Who is the person I am going to meet? What is happening in their world at the moment? What may be the challenges they face in their life and work? What may be their personal or professional goals? What are the real results they want to achieve? What may be their picture of success?*
- *What is the reason they want to meet? What may be the topics they want to discuss? What for them would make it a successful session? What are the practical things they may want to take away from the session to help them to achieve their goals?*
- *What do I know about the person's interests outside work? Are they interested in sports, music, the arts, design or other activities? What are the things that may give the person positive energy? When may they feel most alive and creative? What else do I know about the person?*
- *What are the person's strengths? What are the activities in which they deliver As rather than Bs or Cs? How can they build on their strengths and manage the consequences of any weaknesses?*

*What do I know about the person's successful style of working? What for them may have been the most satisfying projects - in the broadest*

- *sense of the word - that they have done in the past? What did they find satisfying about these projects? What were their principles they followed then? How can they follow these principles in the future?*

*When may they have tackled difficult challenges successfully? What may they have done right then? How can they follow these principles - plus maybe add other skills - to tackle similar challenges in the future?*

- *Looking ahead, how can I make the person feel welcome? How can I clarify the topics they want to explore? How can I show them I understand their hopes and aspirations? Looking at the first theme they want to explore, how can I clarify the real results they want to achieve?*

- *What are the positive models and practical tools I can offer to help them to achieve these goals? How can I pass on this knowledge in a way they can accept and use? What else can I do to help them to achieve their picture of success?*

## *Mentors*

*They then complete  
the following framework*

*The name of the person I am going to meet is:*

\*

### *The Person's World*

*The specific things that may be happening in the person's world at the moment, the challenges they may face and the goals they may want to achieve in their work are:*

\*

\*

\*

### *The Person's Agenda*

*The specific topics the person may want to explore in the meeting are:*

\* *How to ...*

\* *How to ...*

\* *How to ...*

*The Specific Ways I Can Help The Person*

*The specific things I can do to help the person to tackle their challenges and achieve their goals are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The actual words I would like the person to be saying after the session are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to do my best to ensure they are saying these kinds of things are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Mentoring Session*

There are many models for running a mentoring session. The section describes how you can use the Three C approach.

This helps people to tackle challenges or reach their goals by focusing on Clarity, Creativity and Concrete Results. You will, of course, use the model that works for you and the mentee.

## *Mentoring - One Approach To Running A Session*

*There are many models for running a mentoring session.  
One approach is to use the Three C Model. It is to invite  
the person to focus on Clarity, Creativity and Concrete Results*

### **Clarity**

**Challenges.** *The specific challenge they want to tackle is: 'How to ...?'*

**Clarity.** *The real results they want to achieve are:*

**Controllables.** *The things they can control in the situation are:*



### **Creativity**

**Choices.** *The possible options for achieving the results are:*

**Consequences.** *The pluses and minuses of each option are:*

**Creative solutions.** *The other possible creative solutions are:*



### **Concrete Results**

**Conclusions.** *The route they want to follow is:*

**Contracts.** *The contracts they need to make to achieve the results are:*

**Concrete results.** *The specific action plan for achieving the results is:*

## *Setting The Scene*

Imagine that you are running a mentoring session. You will start by creating a stimulating sanctuary in which the person feels at ease and able to explore their chosen themes.

Here are some of the things you may want to say when clarifying the person's challenges or aims. You will, of course, do this in your own way.

*"Welcome to the session. As you know, we can focus on any topic that you would like to explore. We can look at how to tackle specific challenges or achieve your particular goals.*

*"Once we have settled on the first topic, I will probably ask you lots of questions to build up the picture. Then, if it is okay by you, I will share some ideas and practical tools that you can use in your own way.*

*"Let's begin by seeing things in context. What is happening in your world at the moment? Are there any particular challenges that you face? Are there any particular goals that you would like to work towards?*

Different people will focus on different themes. Here, for example, are some of the questions that people have wanted to explore in our mentoring sessions.

*How can I take the next step in my career? How can I feel more in control of my life and work? How can I help my son to deal with school, even though his interests lie elsewhere?*

*How can I get on better with my manager? How can I turnaround a difficult team? How can I set-up and run my own successful business? How can we build a values driven organisation?*

Imagine that the person has described several themes they want to explore. You can then make clear contracts about the areas to cover during the session.

Good mentors know their strengths and areas of expertise. So, after listening to the topics the person wants to explore, you may want to say something along the following lines.

*"Looking at the various topics you have outlined, I can offer ideas and practical tools on the following themes:*

*\* How to ...*

*\* How to ...*

*\* How to ...*

*"Looking at another of the themes you have mentioned, whilst I can offer ideas, I think it may be advisable to explore those with another person or professional. Is that okay?"*

*"Bearing that in mind, which is the first topic you want to explore? As I mentioned earlier, I will ask you some questions about this topic. We will then focus on how to achieve your goals. Is that okay?"*

The next step will be to focus on the first topic the person wants to explore. You can help them to do this by working through the following stages.

## *Clarity*

Clarity is crucial. It is important to clarify the real results the person wants to achieve – the real What – before moving on to the How. Dare to spend a long time on this stage. You can do this by working through the following steps.

## *Challenges*

Imagine that the person has described a challenge they want to explore. It is important to frame this in positive terms. For example:

*"How can I stay healthy?"* rather than *"How can I stop smoking?"*

It can also be useful to frame the challenge in terms of "How to ...?" or "How can I ...?" This also encourages them to begin using their imagination to generate solutions. For example:

*"How can I feel more in control?"* rather than *"How can I stop feeling stressed?"*

If appropriate, you can then invite the person to give more background about the situation. This can help when focusing on their priorities. Bearing this in mind, invite them to focus on the following themes.

**Challenges**

*The first challenge I want to explore is:*

\* *How to ...*

*Here is some more background about the situation:*

\*  
\*  
\*

## *Clarity*

You can then clarify the real What before moving on to the How. A person often starts by presenting their view of How they can tackle an issue. But it is useful to clarify their picture of success.

Bearing this in mind, start by looking at the first challenge the person wants to tackle. Ask them:

*"What are the real results you want to achieve?"*

Sometimes this process takes a little time, but it is a vital step in creative problem solving. Here are some examples of how a person's original topic can change during the process of exploring the real results they wanted to achieve.

Person A originally said: *"How can I get promotion in my company?"*

They settled on: *"How can I build a satisfying career where I do stimulating work and get a good salary?"*

Person B originally said: *"How can I as a leader turn around difficult people in my organisation?"*

They settled on: *"How can I build a successful organisation?"*

Person C originally said: *"How can I deal with my manager who insists on micro-managing me every day?"*

They settled on two things: *"How can I deal with the present situation by behaving professionally towards my manager and delivering positive results? How can I find a rewarding role where I work with a manager whom I respect?"*

Sometimes the person may want to achieve lots of things related to their chosen topic. If so, clarify all their goals and list these in order of priority. The person may, for example, have both short and long term aims. You can work to help them to achieve these goals.

Imagine you are helping a person to tackle a specific challenge. Invite them to do two things. First, to clarify the real results they want to achieve. If appropriate, brainstorm all these goals. Second, to list these results in order of priority.

## *Clarity*

*The real results I want to achieve - in order of priority -are:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

## *Controllables*

Let's assume the person is clear on the results they want to achieve. Before pitching into finding solutions, however, it is good to do a reality check.

Peak performers aim to control the controllables. They can, for example, control their attitude, professionalism and other things. They can't necessarily control the outcome of their efforts. They can, however, do their best to influence it.

Such people build on what they can control and manage what they can't. The same rule applies to your client. Returning to the results they want to achieve, invite them to describe the things they can control in the situation.

## *Controllables*

*The specific things I can control in the situation are:*

\*

\*

\*

So far the person has clarified the challenge, the results to achieve and the controllables. It's now time to move on to the possible creative solutions.

## *Creativity*

Move on to encouraging the person to look at how to achieve their goals. This often involves going through the process of exploring the choices, consequences and creative solutions.

## *Choices*

Bearing in mind the goals they want to achieve, invite the person to explore all the possible options they can pursue. These can range from the obvious options – such as maintaining the status quo and doing nothing – to the more outlandish ones.

It's important to list all the options - even the ones they are not going to pursue - to consider the whole picture. This provides the whole context for choosing their way forward. So invite them to

outline the following choices. (There may, of course, be more than three options.)

*Option A is: To ...*

*Option B is: To ...*

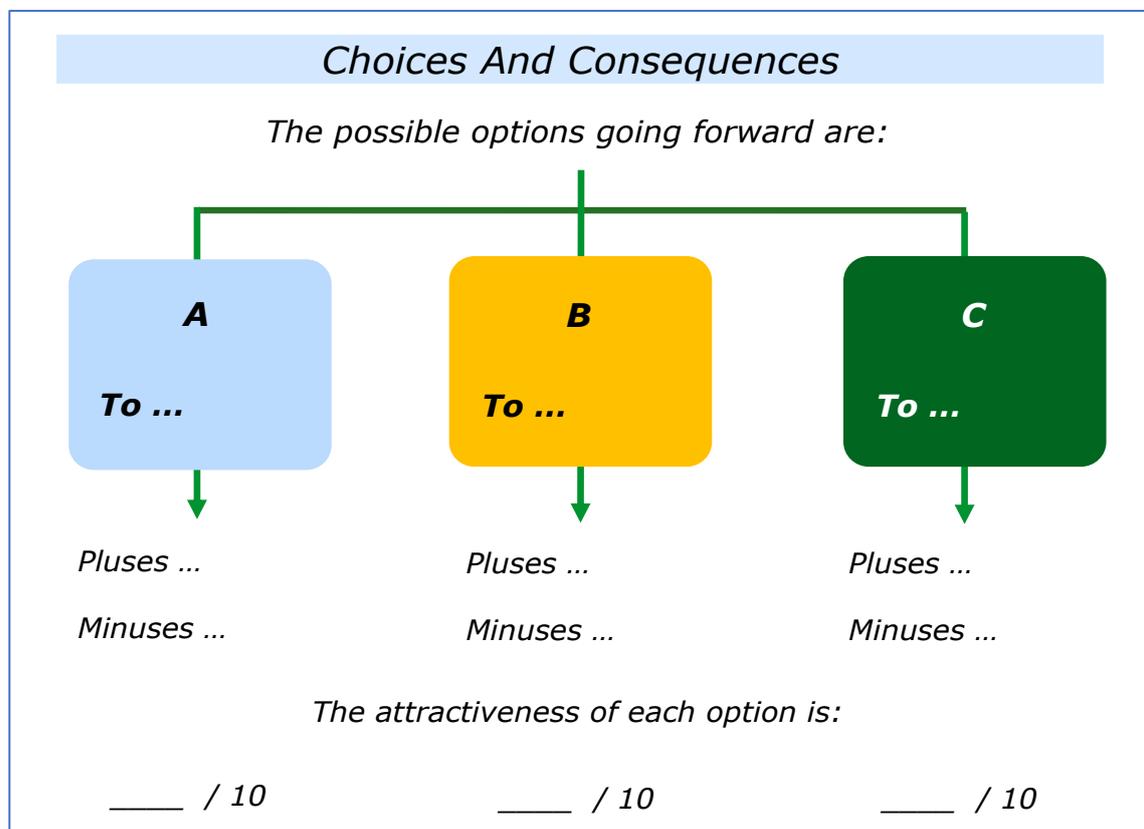
*Option C is: To ...*

### *Consequences*

Looking at each option in turn, invite the person to consider what they see as the respective pluses and minuses of each route.

Great decision makers often base their decisions on the consequences of each option, rather than the options themselves. They then build on the pluses and minimise the minuses.

Invite the person to outline the various options. They can then rate the attractiveness of each option on a scale 0–10.



## *Creative Solutions*

Looking at the goals the person wants to achieve, are there any other possible options? This is where mentors earn their corn. They pass on their knowledge in a way the client can accept and use.

You may want to begin by recapping what has been covered so far in the session. When appropriate, however, you can ask the person: "Is it okay for me to share some ideas?" They will probably say: "Yes."

Let's assume the person would welcome your ideas. You can share these in a way that gives them the chance to take the best and leave the rest. Look for the ideas that resonate.

Good mentors 'sit alongside' the person and look together at the goals they want to achieve. They then share possible ways the person can achieve these aims. They do, when appropriate, also offer practical tools the person can use in their daily life or work.

Let's look at how this works in practise. Imagine you are helping a person to explore their potential options. You will do this in your own way, but you may say something along the following lines.

*"Let's start by re-establishing your goals. As far as I understand it, the real results you want to achieve are to ... Is that right?"*

*"Let's look at the different options you have outlined. Which of these is the most attractive option?"*

*"Looking at the various options, is it possible to take the best parts of each route and create a new road?"*

*"Sometimes it can be useful to learn from our own successes. Looking back, have you ever been in a similar situation before and managed it successfully? What did you do right then? Is it possible to follow any of these principles to achieve the goals?"*

*"Sometimes it can be useful to learn from how other people have succeeded. Are there any other people, teams or organisations that have tackled this kind of issue successfully? What did they do right then? How can you follow these principles in your own way?"*

*"Is it okay for me to share some ideas? If so, looking at the goals you want to achieve, here are some options you may wish to consider."*

### *Creative Solutions*

*The other potential creative solutions are:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*"Looking at all the options, which are the ones that make sense? Which of these would you like to explore further? Looking at your chosen option, let's consider how these might look in practise."*

*"Looking at all the things we have explored, let's summarise things before moving on to the next stage. Looking at the goals you want to achieve, let's consider the following question."*

*"What do you believe are the three things you can do to give yourself the greatest chance of success?"*

Invite the client to keep going until they feel they have explored all the possible options. They can then move onto the final stage.

## *Concrete Results*

It is then time to translate the ideas in action. The person can do this by going through the following stages.

### *Conclusions*

Looking at the various ways forward, they can settle on the route they want to follow. Sometimes they will choose to pursue one main option; sometimes they will want to pursue multiple options. What will be the pluses and minuses involved? How can they build on the pluses and minimise the minuses?

Looking at the results they want to achieve, invite them to complete the following sentence.

### *Conclusions*

*The route – or combination of routes – I want to follow to tackle the challenge and achieve the results is:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

## *Contracting*

Looking at the road ahead, invite the person to consider if they need to make any contracts with people.

Their main contract, of course, is with themselves. Looking at the whole package – the pluses and minuses involved – do they want to make the commitment to achieving the goals?

They may also need to make clear working contracts with other people who can help them to reach the goals. In appropriate, invite them to complete the following sentence.

### *Contracting*

*The specific contracts I need to make to ensure the results are delivered are:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

### *Concrete Results*

Different mentors choose different ways to conclude each part of the session. Whichever route you take, it is important to take your cue from the person with whom you are working.

Sometimes the person may want to reflect before clarifying their next steps. Sometimes they may want to move straight to action planning. If the person wants to take the latter route, you can invite them to complete the following step.

### *Concrete Results*

*The specific action plan for achieving the results  
- including getting some early successes - is:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

How to finish the session? One approach is to ensure that you have covered the agreed themes. It is also to check that the person has got some practical tools they can use to achieve their goals.

Sometimes at the end of a session a person will say they want to reflect on the ideas. This may especially be so with introverts who prefer to let the ideas sink in. Sometimes, however, a person may have a clear action plan they want to follow.

One approach you can use - but only if it is appropriate - is to invite the person to clarify what they have learned, relearned or what they are taking away. This can help to finish the session in a positive way. Here is a framework they can use for clarifying their learning.

*My Take Aways  
From The Session*

*The specific things I have learned, relearned  
or am taking away from the session are:*

\*

\*

\*

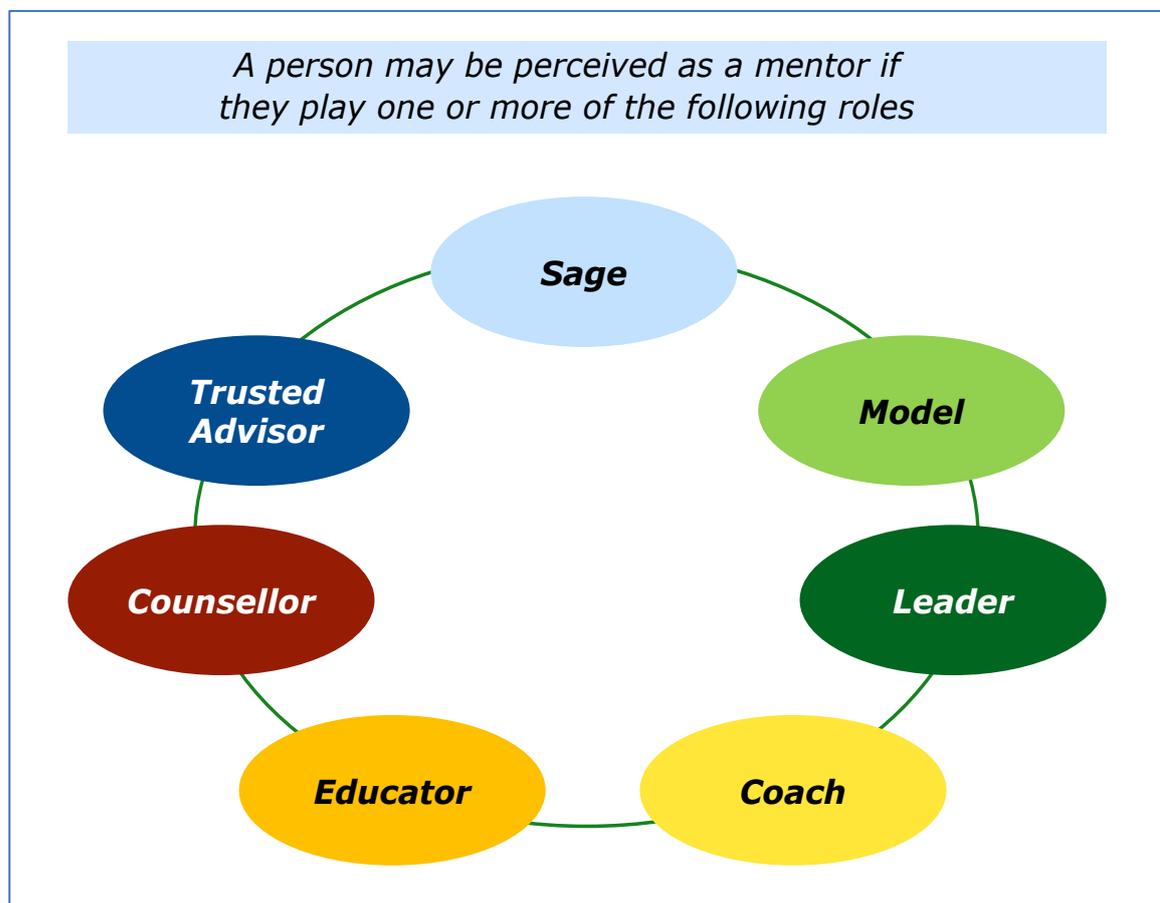
## *The Mentor's Many Roles – An Overview*

This section has focused on the mentor playing a strategic role rather than doing nitty-gritty coaching, but mentors come in all shapes and sizes. You may, for example, hear somebody say about a person they have met in the past:

*"They acted as a mentor for me."*

Therefore it can be useful to recognise that different people may mean different things when they are talking about somebody being a mentor.

Bearing this in mind, the following pages outline some of the roles that a person may play when being seen as a mentor. They also explain the qualities that a person may demonstrate in each of these roles.



## *Sages*

Sages are often generous people who act as wise and trusted advisors. They have credibility and are willing to pass on their knowledge. They see themselves as lifetime students, however, rather than being wise.

They help people to see the big picture and the possible roads towards achieving their goals. Moving from the concept to the concrete, they also pass on practical tools that people can use in their daily lives and work.

## *Models*

Models are people that we admire. They provide examples that we may wish to copy and emulate. Sometimes we find ourselves talking, dressing or acting like our models in our own lives.

Positive models at work teach us about the culture. They demonstrate 'the way we do things around here.' They also share success stories to show what good looks like. We can then follow these principles in our own way to deliver success.

## *Leaders*

Good leaders aim to build a positive culture in which motivated people can achieve peak performance. They believe in giving people the big picture. They therefore keep communicating the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success.

They then invite people to decide if they want to contribute. If so, they encourage people to build on their strengths and make clear contracts about their best contributions. They also give people the support they need to achieve success.

Good leaders manage by outcomes rather than by tasks. They do, however, expect people to proactively keep them informed about

their progress towards achieving the goals. They do their best to encourage, educate and enable people to achieve success.

They keep reminding people of the purpose and principles. They report the progress that is being made and highlight success stories. Good leaders are also prepared, however, to make the tough decisions that are required to achieve the picture of success.

## *Coaches*

Good coaches help people to improve in a specific activity. They help a person to build on their strengths, tackle areas for improvement and achieve ongoing success.

They like to watch a person in action or see a piece of their work. They then ask the following questions before giving any feedback.

*What is the person's goal? What are the real results they want to achieve? What is their picture of success?*

*What are the specific things the person is doing well? How can they do more of these things in the future to help them to reach their goal? What are the specific things they can do better in the future and how?*

*What are the key messages I therefore want to give the person? How can I put these messages in a way that the person can accept and use? Are there any other things I can do to help the person to achieve their picture of success?*

## *Educators*

Educators are often experts in their chosen field. They also want to encourage, educate and enable people to shape their future lives. They aim to make the learning personal, practical and profitable.

*Personal: it must relate to the person and their goals.*

*Practical: it must provide tools that help the person to reach their goals.*

*Profitable: it must be, in the widest sense, profitable and help the person to achieve their goals.*

## *Counsellors*

Counsellors help people who want to solve a problem they are experiencing in their lives. The classic method is to create a warm climate, use listening skills and be non-directive.

Sometimes the counsellor simply listens. Sometimes they may use facilitation skills, however, to help the person to find their own answers.

## *One Key Point*

Mentors may sometimes move between the various roles in a session. The most obvious is when they move from listening to passing on knowledge. As mentioned earlier, the mentor may then say:

*"As far as I understand it, the results you want to achieve are:*

*1) ...*

*2) ...*

*3) ...*

*"Bearing this in mind, is it okay if I share some ideas?"*

On some occasions the mentor may feel it could be useful to pass on some practical skills by going into coaching mode. If this is the case, they may say:

*"Would it be okay if I put on my coaching hat? If so, there are a couple of practical skills that it may be useful to cover that may help you to reach your goals?"*

Clear contracting is crucial. This is the case whether you are acting as a mentor, coach or in another role. People work best when they know the results to achieve and each person's role in working towards the goals.

*"Would it be okay if I put on my coaching hat? If so, there are a couple of practical skills that it may be useful to cover that may help you to reach your goals?"*

Clear contracting is crucial. This is the case whether you are acting as a mentor, coach or in another role. People work best when they know the results to achieve and each person's role in working towards the goals.

There are many views on the value of mentoring. One view is that it can help a person in the following way.

## *Mentoring Can Add To A Person's Mental Models*

*Mentoring can add to a person's mental models  
and offer them more options for shaping their future.*



Every person has mental models. These models sometimes include:  
a) how they perceive the world; b) how they act to achieve their  
picture of success.

Here is an introduction to the concept of mental models. These are  
from the Farnam Street website.

### *What Are Mental Models?*

*Mental models are how we understand the world. Not only do they  
shape what we think and how we understand but they shape the  
connections and opportunities that we see.*

*Mental models are how we simplify complexity, why we consider  
some things more relevant than others, and how we reason.*

*A mental model is simply a representation of how something works.*

*We cannot keep all of the details of the world in our brains, so we use models to simplify the complex into understandable and organizable chunks.*

### *Learning to Think Better*

*The quality of our thinking is proportional to the models in our head and their usefulness in the situation at hand.*

*The more models you have—the bigger your toolbox—the more likely you are to have the right models to see reality.*

*It turns out that when it comes to improving your ability to make decisions variety matters.*

Mentoring can help a person to add to their mental models. It can offer them more options by passing on knowledge, models and practical tool. It is then up to the person whether they use to shape their future.

### *Measuring The Mentoring*

Many organisations believe in offering mentoring to their people. At the same time, they like to know the value of the mentoring.

Sometimes it can be hard to measure this instantly. Many of us have had mentors in the past but maybe only realised their value later in life. Bearing this in mind, it can still be important for the organisation to clarify some benefits of the mentoring.

The following pages outline an approach that I have used in organisations. This invites the mentee to clarify the things they have learned, relearned and the benefits to the organisation.

## *Measuring The Mentoring*

### *Introduction*

*It can be hard to instantly measure the effects of mentoring but there are some ways to clarify the benefits. One approach is to invite each of the mentees to do the following exercises.*

*The mentee is reassured that they do not need to share anything they do not wish to, but it can be helpful to get their responses. The exercises invite the person to describe the following things.*

*The specific things they got from the sessions – such as the things they learned, relearned or took away from the sessions.*

*The specific things – the knowledge, models or practical tools - that they were able to apply in their work.*

*The specific benefits that the mentoring approach can bring for the mentee or the organisation.*

## *The Mentoring Sessions*

### *The Mentee's Views*

*The following pages offer an opportunity for you as a mentee to give feedback about the mentoring programme.*

*This is voluntary and also only share your ideas to the extent to which you feel comfortable.*

## *Introduction*

*As you know, we like to offer the opportunity of mentoring sessions to some people in our organisation.*

*Whilst the content of these sessions is confidential, we would like to get some feedback regarding the benefit of the sessions. This can help us to make a case for offering such sessions to other people in the future.*

*Bearing this in mind, we would like you to try completing the following exercises. Again, only do this to the extent that you feel comfortable with sharing your responses.*

*You do not have to do all the exercises, but any specific feedback you can give will be beneficial. The exercises invite you to write your ideas under the following headings.*

*The specific things that I have learned, relearned or have taken away from the sessions have been:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things – the knowledge, models and practical tools – that I been able to apply in my work have been:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits that I think the mentoring approach can bring for the mentee or the organisation are:*

\*

\*

\*

This section of the book has focused on how you can do positive work. Let's move on to how you can continue to encourage others during your time on the planet.

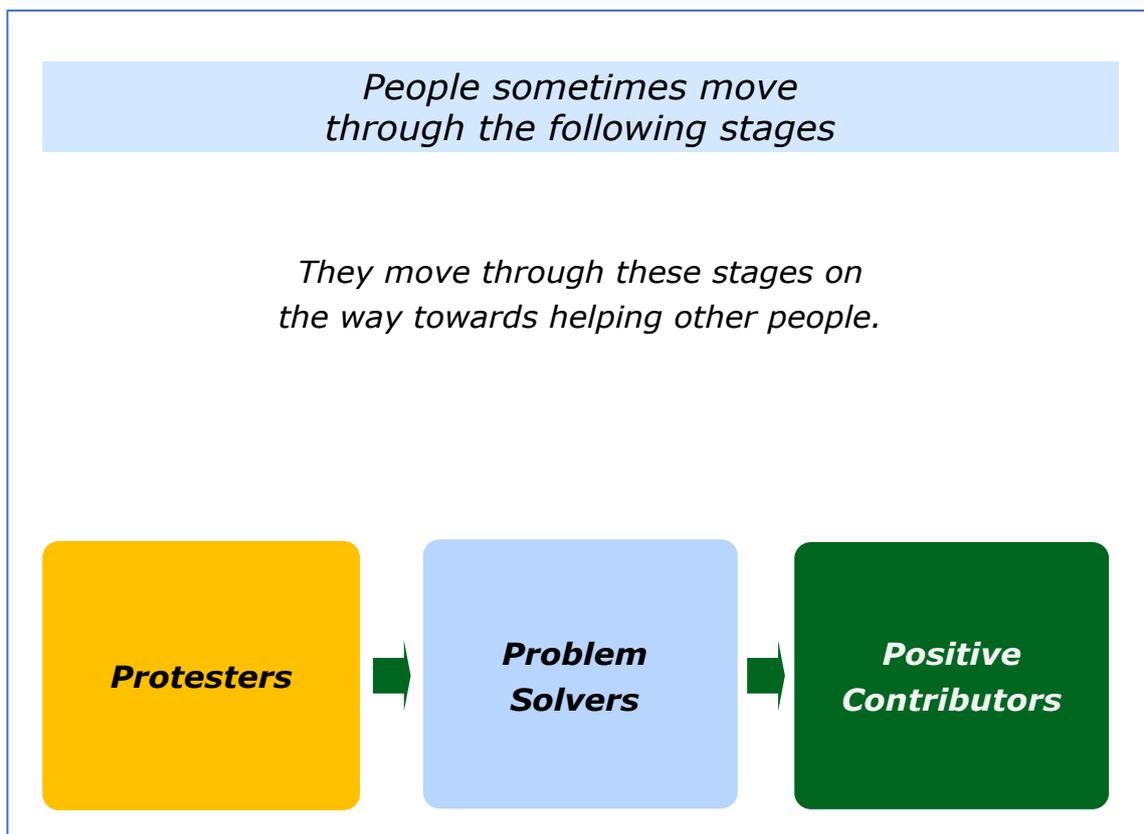
*Continuing To  
Build A  
Positive Planet*

## *Introduction*

There are many ways to live life. One approach is to encourage people in our daily lives and work. It is to plant seeds of hope during our time on the planet.

Some people move through several the stages in their lives. They move from being protesters to being problem solvers to being positive contributors. They aim to do their best to encourage both present and future generations

This can mirror the journey a person takes from their teenage years to maturity and then becoming an elder. Let's explore the steps that some people take.



### *Protesters*

Some people protest about what is happening in the world. Some protest about what is happening in their own life. They may express these feelings in ways that are helpful or hurtful.

A person may feel angry, hurt or sad about what is happening in the world. They may express these feelings in responsible or irresponsible ways. The ways they do this can have positive or negative consequences.

A person may be feeling upset, depressed or hurt about what is happening in their own personal world. They may feel depressed, disrespected or helpless. They may express these feelings in ways that hurt themselves or other people.

### *Problem Solvers*

Some people channel their energy into finding solutions. They want to improve life for people and the planet.

A person may become a problem solver in their professional life. They may find solutions to challenges when acting as an educator, health worker, technician, scientist or in another role.

A person may become a problem solver in their personal life. They may improve their ability to find solutions to personal challenges. They may also learn how to express their feelings in ways that help themselves or other people.

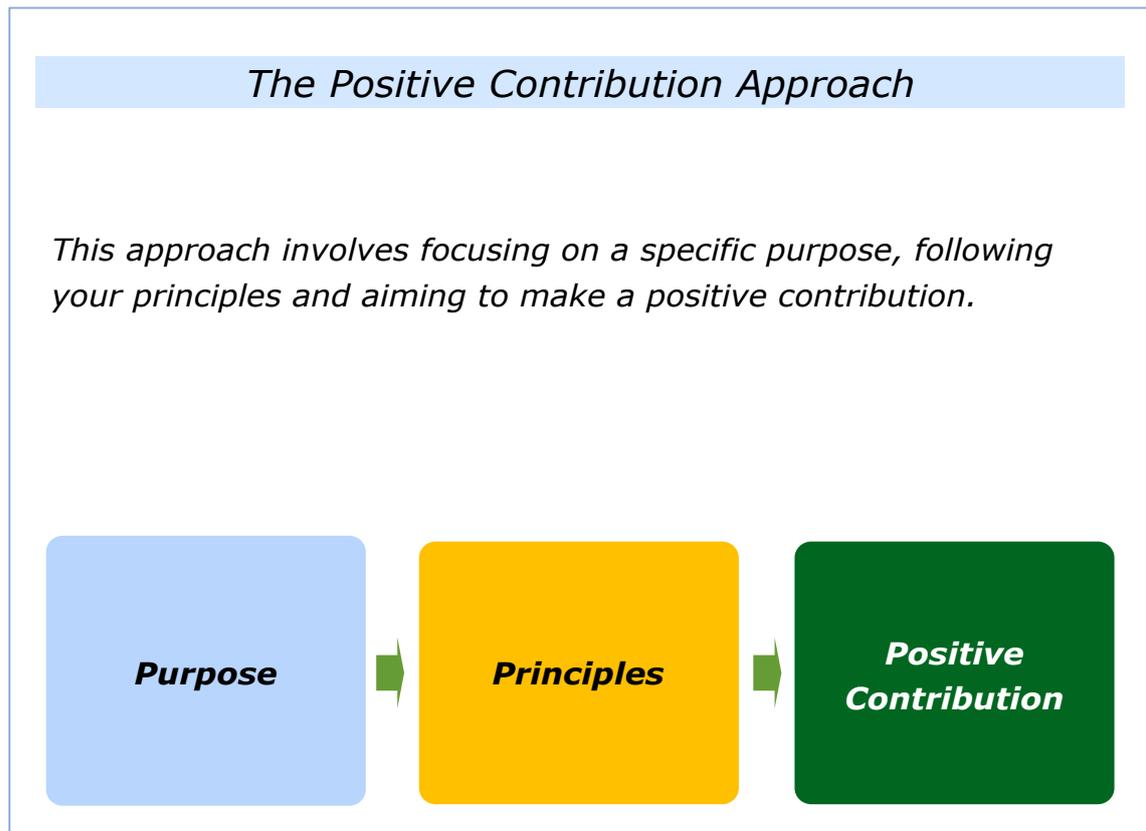
### *Positive Contributors*

Some people aim to make a positive contribution during their time on the planet. Some make a conscious decision to take this approach. Some move onto it naturally as they grow older.

Some people encourage others by simply being kind. Some do work that helps people to improve the quality of their lives. Some pass on knowledge, models and practical tools that enable people to shape a positive future.

Different people choose different ways to help others. Some may pursue a compelling purpose. They may start by aiming to care for their loved ones. They may also follow a spiritual faith, a set of personal values or a sense of vocation.

Such people follow their principles. They may aim to be kind and encouraging. They may also aim to pass on knowledge and make a positive contribution during their time on the planet. Let's explore how it is possible to take some of these steps.



Different people choose different ways to make a positive contribution. Here are some of the routes they may follow.

## *The Purpose Approach*

People love to have a sense of purpose. They love to do something they believe in and work towards a stimulating goal. This can provide a structure to their days and meaning to their lives.

Sometimes this can involve pursuing a short-term purpose, such as completing a satisfying task. Sometimes it can mean doing something each day towards achieving their life goals.

### *My Purpose*

*The specific things I  
want to do in my life are:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

Some people seem to know their purpose at an early age whilst for others it is a lifetime quest. One view is that finding it can happen in a Eureka Moment. Another is that it can develop over time.

People can feel overawed when exploring the idea of a purpose. Here are some exercises you can use to begin clarifying your aims.

## *Clarifying the positive things you want to give to people*

Here is an introduction to an exercise that we will return to later in the book. This invites you to consider the positive things you want to give to people during your time on the planet.

Here are some of the answers that people give when exploring this theme.

*I want:*

*To give my family a loving home ... To give people encouragement ... To give my students hope ... To give people nourishing food ... To show people how they can take care of their health ... To show people how to make use of their talents.*

*To give people tools they can use to build great organisations ... To give people models they can use to build successful and sustainable systems ... To pass on knowledge that helps both present and future generations.*

As mentioned above, we will return to this approach later when inviting you to clarify your positive contribution. Before then, here is another approach that some people take.

Some people experience a realisation when doing this exercise. They realise that what they want to give to other people may mirror the things they have been given in life.

Let's move on to another theme that you can explore when clarifying your best contribution.

## *Clarifying Your Lifetime Picture of Success*

People often get a sense of purpose by focusing on their life goal. They then doing something every day towards achieving their aims.

Everybody has different pictures of success. What is your picture? Looking back on your life when you are 80, what for you will mean you have had a successful life?

Many people say they want to have built a happy family and had a successful career. Some also recognise that success can mean having a sense of peace. It means looking back and feeling they have done their best during their time on the planet.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. People often cover three themes when doing this exercise.

### *Positive Relationships*

People may describe how they want to be remembered as a parent, partner or friend. A person may say, for example:

*I want my partner and I to have given our children the opportunity to enjoy a happy childhood.*

*For example, I want them to say things like:*

*"Our parents were always there for us. They encouraged us, helped us to develop our talents and learn how to make good decisions."*

### *Positive Experiences*

People often focus on how they want to enjoy life, pursue experiences and have no regrets. A person may say something like:

*I want to have lived life fully.*

*For example, I want:*

*To have visited many countries ... To have completed the book I promised myself I would write ... To have made full use of my talents.*

## *Positive Contribution*

People often talk about wanting to make a positive contribution to the world. Sometimes this can lead to having a sense of peace.

This may involve them following their vocation or doing something that improves life for other people. So a person may want something like:

*I want to have used my strengths to have done positive work that has helped other people.*

*For example, I want:*

*To have ...*

*To have ...*

*To have ...*

You may prefer to clarify your life goals in another way. Whatever approach you take, clarifying these goals can act as a long-term compass.

You can bear in mind these aims when making key decisions. When given the opportunity to take a new job, for example, you can ask yourself:

*Will taking this step help me to achieve my longer-term picture of success?*

As mentioned earlier, it can be useful to do one thing early each day towards achieving your life goals. This helps to provide a sense of meaning to the day. It also means you are doing something towards achieving your long-term picture of success.

## *My Picture Of Success*

*Looking back in future years, I will feel my life has been successful if I have done the following things.*

*1) I have ...*

*For example:*

*\**

*2) I have ...*

*For example:*

*\**

*3) I have ...*

*For example:*

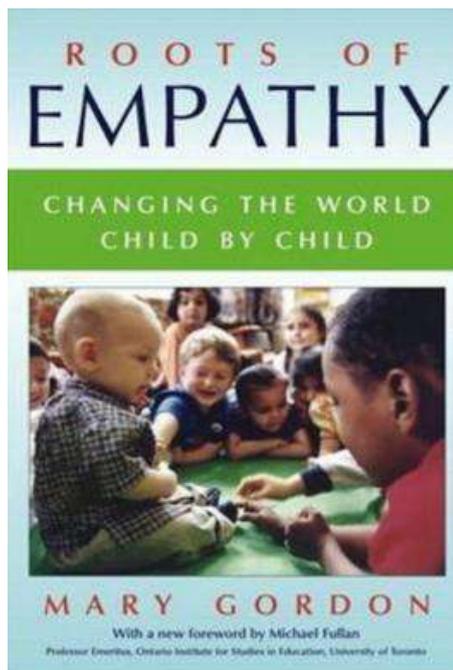
*\**

People have different motivations for pursuing a purpose. The following sections look at people who have followed their principles and aimed to leave a positive legacy.

## *Mary Gordon and The Roots Of Empathy*

Mary Gordon chose to help people to build positive relationships. She founded the organisation and programme called *Roots of Empathy*.

This aims to build caring, peaceful and civil societies through the development of empathy in children and adults. Here are excerpts from the organisation's website.



*The Roots Of Empathy programme involves bringing a local baby into the classroom.*

*Children then learn how to understand and care for the needs of another human being.*

*The programme has spread across many countries and produced remarkable results.*

*Children become more caring, peaceful and able to solve problems.*

*In the programme a parent and baby (who is two to four months old at the start of the program) from the community visit a classroom nine times over the course of a school year.*

*A trained Roots of Empathy instructor visits with the family to guide children as they observe the relationship between the baby and its parent.*

*The instructor also visits before and after each family visit to reinforce teachings. There are 27 classroom visits in total in a Roots of Empathy program.*

*In the program, the baby is the "Teacher." With each family visit, the instructor leads the children in noticing how the baby is growing and changing over the course of his or her first year of life.*

*The children also watch the loving relationship between the parent and baby and see how the parent responds to the baby's emotions and meets the baby's needs. The attachment relationship between a baby and a parent is an ideal model of empathy.*

*Children learn to understand the perspective of the baby and label the baby's feelings. They are then guided in extending this learning outwards so they have a better understanding of their own feelings and the feelings of others.*

Mary chose this path to pursue a compelling purpose. This has helped many young people to develop skills they can use to build positive relationships in their future lives.

## *Jo Berry, Patrick Magee and Building Bridges For Peace*

Jo Berry is dedicated to helping people to build on their common humanity. She created the organisation called Building Bridges For Peace. Later we will look at Patrick's contribution to this remarkable work, but first here are Jo's words.

*On October 12th 1984 my father, Sir Anthony Berry and four others were killed in the bombing of the Grand Hotel, Brighton as they attended the Conservative Party Conference.*



*I made a personal decision just two days later, to bring something positive out of this emotionally shattering trauma and to try and understand those who had killed him.*

*I chose to give up blame and revenge, instead taking responsibility for my pain and feelings, transforming them into passion for peace.*

*The journey of healing began with my intention and I trusted that life would then bring me the opportunities to heal and grow.*

*Two months later I randomly shared a taxi with a young Irish man whose brother had been in the IRA and had been killed by a British soldier.*

*We should have been enemies but instead we talked about a world where peace was possible and where there were no enemies. As I*

*left the taxi, I had a flash of inspiration, this was one way I could make a difference, I could build a bridge across the divide.*

*The hardest bridge to build was with Patrick Magee, who was sentenced for his part in planting the Brighton bomb and released as part of the Good Friday Peace Agreement in 1999.*

*I made enquiries from mutual friends and finally met Pat for the first time in November 2000 at a friend's house in Dublin.*

*My intention was to hear his story so that I could experience him as a human being rather than a faceless enemy. I was scared and had doubts, but the strongest part of me needed to see him and speak to him.*

*I asked him many questions and shared a little about my Dad. At first he began to express his political perspective, which though I was familiar with was hard to hear but I could see he was a sensitive and intelligent person.*

*Then something changed. He stopped talking and said he didn't know who he was any more, he wanted to hear my anger, my pain and what could he do to help.*

*It was as if he had taken off his political hat and had now opened up and became vulnerable. The conversation was very different after that and a new journey started, one which we are still on.*

*He now had a need to meet me and rediscover his lost humanity. When he planted the bomb he was not seeing human beings in the hotel, they were just a means to an end.*

*During our meetings, he began to develop the awareness that he had killed a human being with a soul, someone he could have sat down and had a cup of tea with.*

*He would later say that he was disarmed by the empathy I gave him, that he would have found it easier if I had met him shouting, blaming and defending my position. I wasn't there to argue my point; I was there to listen and experience his humanity.*

*After three hours I could not talk anymore and ended our meeting by thanking him for his willingness to engage with me so honestly and he said he was sorry he had killed my Dad.*



Patrick brings courage and humility to the process of building bridges for peace. Here is an extract from his story.

*I was released from prison in 1999, having served 14 years under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement. Whilst in prison I completed a PhD examining the representation of Irish Republicans in 'Troubles' fiction.*

*It was important for me as part of the peace process in North of Ireland to recognise that now we should engage with former enemies and political opponents, addressing the needs and grievances of victims, helping to break down differences by explaining ourselves to the other.*

*For 27 years I was a committed member of the IRA, whether on active service, on the run or in prison. I spent a total of 17 years either interned or sentenced because of my involvement.*

*A crucial part of that legacy is the need to look back over the conflict and to understand it in terms of the many conflicting perspectives.*

*That will entail ensuring that many voices previously excluded or misrepresented must now be heard, including the voices of the victims.*

*In that light, as an individual, I agreed to meet Jo. Her father, Sir Anthony Berry had been killed, along with four others, in the IRA's attack on the Grand Hotel. I had planted the bomb.*

*So, on the day, I was there to explain, in essence to justify, the armed struggle; and specifically 'Why Brighton'. I was wearing a political hat. We talked for three hours. But something happened during that first encounter.*

*Jo's openness, calmness; her apparent lack of hostility – in fact her willingness to listen and to try to understand, disarmed me. Had Jo instead shown anger, however justifiable, it would for me have been easier to cope with.*

*The political hat would have remained firmly attached. But in the presence of such composure and decency, as I said, I felt disarmed. It was a cathartic moment.*

*It didn't matter that as a former member of the IRA I could politically justify my past actions in terms of the legitimacy of the struggle.*

*As an individual I carried the heavy weight of knowing I had caused profound hurt to this woman.*

*I expressed a need to really hear what she had to say and to help her come to terms with her loss, if that were possible:*

*'I want to hear your anger, to hear your pain.'*

*A political obligation henceforth became a personal obligation. I now realised more fully that I was guilty of something I had attributed to the other: that our enemies demonised, dehumanised, marginalised, reduced us.*

*In agreeing to meet me that first occasion and in continuing to meet me she has demonstrated a truly admirable, strength and purpose in her endeavour to try to make sense of her loss and her preparedness to listen to my perspective.*

*No matter what we can achieve as two human beings meeting after a terrible event, the loss remains. Neither forgiveness nor understanding can fully embrace that loss.*

*The hope lies in the fact we continue to meet in order to further this mutual process towards understanding.*

Let's return again to Jo's story and her words. Here is how she summarises some key themes in the work of Building Bridges For Peace.

*I passionately believe that there is humanity in everyone, and every time we demonise the "other" we are delaying the onset of peace in this world.*

*Once we find our own humanity, and we see the humanity in the other, then we are going to want them to have their human rights, their good housing, food, medicine, education and freedom to be themselves, to be safe and secure.*

*We will want for them all what we want for ourselves. Peace happens when we treasure everyone, all creatures, our land, our planet, and work together to find solutions in which everyone wins.*

## Cindy Chang – *Before I Die*

Candy is an artist who is passionate about exploring how our public spaces can help us make sense of our lives. She became well-known through her participatory public artwork called *Before I Die*.

She made the original piece on land in New Orleans. Since then the approach has been replicated in more than 5000 cities across the world. Here are excerpts from how Cindy describes the project.



came to be.

*Before I Die* reimagines how the walls of our cities can help us grapple with mortality and meaning as a community today - and I never expected it to go beyond my neighborhood.

*I created the first Before I Die wall in New Orleans after the death of someone I loved. Joan was like a mother to me for fifteen years and there were still so many things she wanted to do: learn to play the piano, live in France, see the Pacific Ocean.*

*The shock of her death sent me into a long period of grief and depression. My inner world didn't feel like it belonged outside at all, and I noticed how much we avoid talking about death.*

*With time I felt gratitude for the time we had together and I found clarity in my life by contemplating death so much, but I struggled to maintain this perspective. It's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day and forget what really matters to you.*

*I lived a block away from an abandoned house that had been collecting dust and graffiti for years. I wondered if I could make it a nicer space for my neighborhood and make a tribute to Joan by creating a space to restore perspective. I made a homemade stencil that said:*

*"Before I die I want to ..."*

*With help from old and new friends, I painted the side of this crumbling house with chalkboard paint and stencilled it with this prompt so that anyone walking by could pick up a piece of chalk, reflect on death and life, and share their personal aspirations in public.*

*By the next day, the wall was entirely filled and it kept growing: Before I die I want to ...*

*"Sing for millions ... Abandon all insecurities ... Get my wife back. Eat all the carbs I want ... Hold her one more time ... Be completely myself."*

*The gamut of humanity was on full display, and the wall became an honest mess of the longing, fear, insecurity, gratitude, humor, pain, and grace you find in every community.*

*Seeing some private corner of your psyche reflected in someone else's handwriting on a public wall can be incredibly reassuring on*



## *Johann Olav Koss – Giving Children The Right To Play*



Johann was a speed skater who won three Gold Medals at the 1994 Winter Olympic Games. This opened the gate to many possibilities for his future career. But Johann had already committed himself to another path.

A few months earlier he had visited Eritrea. This led to him creating the *Right To Play* movement. Here is the organisation's Mission.

*Right To Play's mission is to use sport and play to educate and empower children and youth to overcome the effects of poverty, conflict and disease in disadvantaged communities.*

*For more than 20 years, Right To Play has worked in some of the most difficult and dangerous places on earth to help children to stay in school and graduate, resist exploitation and overcome prejudice, keep themselves safe from disease, and heal from the harsh realities of war and abuse.*

*It began with a boy in a long-sleeve t-shirt. He allowed his shirt to be rolled into a ball that could be used to play football. In 1994, Norwegian speed skater Johann Olav Koss led a humanitarian trip to Eritrea. There he came face-to-face with the realities of life in a country emerging from decades of war – and with the power of play.*

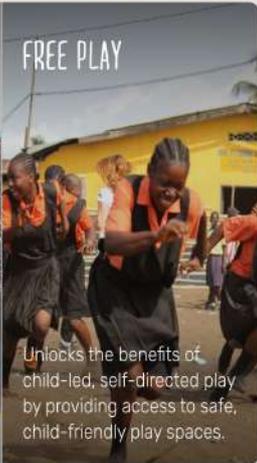
*Amid burned-out tanks, children played together, kicking the boy's shirt – which had been rolled into making a shirt ball - back and forth. The children's incredible resilience in the face of hopelessness inspired Koss to found Right To Play.*

*Since then Right To Play has grown to reach more than 2 million children in 15 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Canada. We create positive and safe environments where children can learn and succeed.*

## HOW WE PLAY

Different types of play give children the opportunity to learn different things. Inside the classroom, games help children to actively engage in their lessons, enhancing their learning. Outside of the classroom, they play through performance, music or dance to gain critical life skills.

Our work focuses on four types of play:

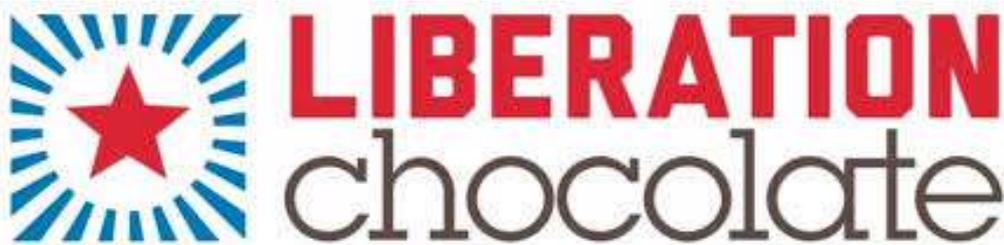
 <p><b>GAMES</b></p> <p>Ignite a passion for learning by providing resources that make learning and life-skills development active, engaging and fun.</p>	 <p><b>SPORT</b></p> <p>Transcends boundaries, inspires, instills positive values, and develops healthy behavior.</p>	 <p><b>CREATIVE PLAY</b></p> <p>Enables self-expression and creates a space for dialogue through art, drama, role-playing and performance.</p>	 <p><b>FREE PLAY</b></p> <p>Unlocks the benefits of child-led, self-directed play by providing access to safe, child-friendly play spaces.</p>
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## *Sheikh Abu Turay - Liberation Chocolate*

Sheikh Abu Turay is somebody who focused on a clear purpose. He rehabilitated child soldiers and enabled them to do good work in Liberation Chocolate. Let's begin with his own story.

Sheikh was ten years-old when he fled the war in Liberia. He spent the next 14 years in a refugee camp before returning home.

The war had killed more than 250,000 people. It had also put guns in the hands of 150,000 people, many of them children. Sheik takes up the story.



*Get around the right  
people, don't get defeated  
in times of adversity.*

*People will get excited  
about your idea and that  
will help you scale your  
impact.*



*When I returned to Liberia, I found a completely failed and devastated country with cocoa farms overgrown as far as the eyes can see.*

*I also witnessed former combatants turning in their guns in order to receive USD150 but these guys had no livelihood once the USD150*

*ran out. They were still vulnerable to fall back into crime and even get re-recruited by militants. I decided to tackle these problems by creating employment opportunities for these former child soldiers and the unemployed.”*

Cocoa farming, once an economic engine and critical source of employment in this impoverished West African country, had virtually collapsed.

Sheikh began to guide and coach the young people to become socially and economically responsible citizens and skilled, passionate cocoa farmers.

Here is a summary of the organisation’s work which is taken from the Social Entrepreneurship Forum website.

*Liberation Chocolate is an organisation that harvests cocoa from formerly abandoned cocoa farms. It employs former child soldiers as farmers paying them fair wages in an aim to rehabilitate and reintegrate them into society.*

*The business serves five key areas:*

*The farmers who are liberated from poverty through the provision of income generated from non-commercial farms;*

*The employees who are elevated and engaged in society;*

*The customers who are committed to quality products and Liberation Chocolate’s mission;*

*The end product consumers and social investors who are eager to enable Liberation Chocolates social mission and for-profit mode.*

The company aims to employ more than 1,500 former child soldiers across 80-plus reconditioned farms in Liberia. It has already produced positive results on both a human and economic level.

## *Paul Hawken: "You Are Brilliant And The Earth Is Hiring."*

Paul's work with business was described earlier in the book. Throughout his career he has embodied the elements of Right Livelihood. Such an approach involves doing work that cares for both people and the planet.

His books have had a profound impact on decision makers and others who aim to build a sustainable economy. Paul founded the Natural Capital Institute, located in Sausalito, California.



*My advice for people is to love the world they are in, in whatever way makes sense to them. It may be a devotional practice, it may be song or poetry, it may be by gardening, it may be as an activist, scientist, or community leader.*

*What I see everywhere in the world are ordinary people willing to confront despair, power, and incalculable odds in order to restore some semblance of grace, justice, and beauty to this world.*

*Photograph by Terrence McCarthy*

In 2009 he was invited to give the Commencement Address to students at the University of Portland. This inspiring talk highlights some of the choices we can make as human beings. Here are some extracts from his address.

*There is invisible writing on the back of the diploma you will receive, and in case you didn't bring lemon juice to decode it, I can tell you what it says: You are Brilliant, and the Earth is Hiring.*

*The earth couldn't afford to send recruiters or limos to your school. It sent you rain, sunsets, ripe cherries, night blooming jasmine, and that unbelievably cute person you are dating. Take the hint.*

*When asked if I am pessimistic or optimistic about the future, my answer is always the same: If you look at the science about what is happening on earth and aren't pessimistic, you don't understand the data.*

*But if you meet the people who are working to restore this earth and the lives of the poor, and you aren't optimistic, you haven't got a pulse.*

*You join a multitude of caring people.*

*No one knows how many groups and organizations are working on the most salient issues of our day: climate change, poverty, deforestation, peace, water, hunger, conservation, human rights, and more.*

*We have done great things and we have gone way off course in terms of honoring creation. You are graduating to the most amazing, stupefying challenge ever bequested to any generation.*

*Nature beckons you to be on her side. You couldn't ask for a better boss.*

*The most unrealistic person in the world is the cynic, not the dreamer.*

*Hope only makes sense when it doesn't make sense to be hopeful. This is your century. Take it and run as if your life depends on it.*

## *Clarifying Your Purpose*

As we have seen, there are many ways to pursue a purpose. Many people's primary purpose is simply to get access to the basics of life. They focus on how to get food and be healthy.

Many other people have access to these basics. Some then simply want to accumulate money, but some want to go further. They want to give to others and pursue a satisfying purpose.

Viktor Frankl, the author of *Man's Search For Meaning*, spent much of his life helping people to find their meaning in life. He explained this in the following way.

*Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life; everyone must carry out a concrete assignment that demands fulfilment.*

As mentioned earlier, there are several ways that people begin clarifying their purpose. These include the following.



### *Purpose*

*There are many ways for a person to develop a sense of purpose. Here are some of the most common approaches.*

- *They focus on the positive things they want to give to people during their time on the planet.*
- *They focus on how they can use their strengths to do satisfying work that helps other people to succeed.*
- *They focus on something they want to serve that is greater than themselves - such as a spiritual faith, a sense of vocation or a specific mission.*
- *They focus on their inner compass – such as their personal values, the things they care about or their life goals – and aim to follow this compass every day.*
- *They focus on doing their personal best in life and aim to leave a positive legacy.*

Some people may have a number of overlapping themes. That is fine. They can then choose one they want to focus on in the future.

Let's return to your own life. Imagine that you want to pursue a specific purpose. This could be a relatively simple aim, such as aiming to encourage people. Alternatively, it could be focusing on something bigger, such as following a compelling theme.

Here is the exercise called *My Purpose*. This invites you to describe something you really want to do in your life. You can begin by completing the following words.

### *My Purpose*

*The specific thing I really want to do is:*

*I want to ...*

If appropriate, start by brainstorming lots of things and then settle on one theme. Don't worry about getting it perfect. It may take a lifetime to get the wording right.

The one-liner you settle on, however, can give a pointer to your purpose. Here are some examples of phrases that people have written on this theme.

*The specific thing I really want to do is:*

*I want to encourage people ... I want to promote justice ... I want to help people to take care of their health ... I want to create enriching environments in which people grow ... I want to increase the amount of happiness in the world*

*I want to help people to recover from cancer ... I want to create beautiful things that give people positive memories for life ... I want to educate people to appreciate different cultures ... I want to help people to find peaceful solutions to conflicts.*

Here is the exercise on defining a purpose. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *My Purpose*

*The specific thing  
I really want to do is:*

\*

*The specific things I can do to  
translate this purpose into action are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of  
doing these things may be:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Principles Approach*

### *My Principles*

*The principles I want  
to follow in my life are:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

Imagine that you have begun to clarify your purpose. You may want to help other people, create beauty, do satisfying work, pass on a positive legacy or pursue another activity. You may then aim to pursue your purpose by following certain principles.

Different people follow different principles. Some aim to keep giving to people on the way towards doing good work. They love to do work that helps present and future generations.

Some individuals may do this in their role as a parent, educator, nurse, knowledge worker, trusted advisor or another role. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"I have been given so much by other people. My parents encouraged me to follow my interests even though I had difficulties at school.*

*"Later I had a dance teacher and a sports coach who encouraged me to do what I do best. This eventually led to me studying to be an osteopath and, with some help, learning how to pass exams.*

*"Now I want to help people to feel healthy. It is time to pass on the care I have been given and to help other people."*

Givers follow their chosen guidelines – principles – on the way towards doing good work. Many of them embody the positive traits that are admired across many civilisations.

Martin Seligman and Christopher Peterson explored such principles in their book *Character Strengths and Virtues*. Working with a team of researchers, they studied examples of positive traits and moral excellence that are admired across different philosophies, religions and cultures.

The researchers interviewed over 15,000 people in different cultures. After extensive research, the team settled on six key virtues – admired ways of behaving - though these are obviously interlinked. Martin explains their approach in the following way.

*When we look we see that there are six virtues, which we find endorsed across cultures, and these break down into 24 strengths.*

*The six virtues that we find are non-arbitrary - first, a wisdom and knowledge cluster; second, a courage cluster; third, virtues like love and humanity; fourth, a justice cluster; fifth a temperance, moderation cluster; and sixth a spirituality, transcendence cluster.*

*We sent people up to northern Greenland, and down to the Masai, and are involved in a 70-nation study in which we look at the ubiquity of these.*

*Indeed, we're beginning to have the view that those six virtues are just as much a part of human nature as walking on two feet are.*

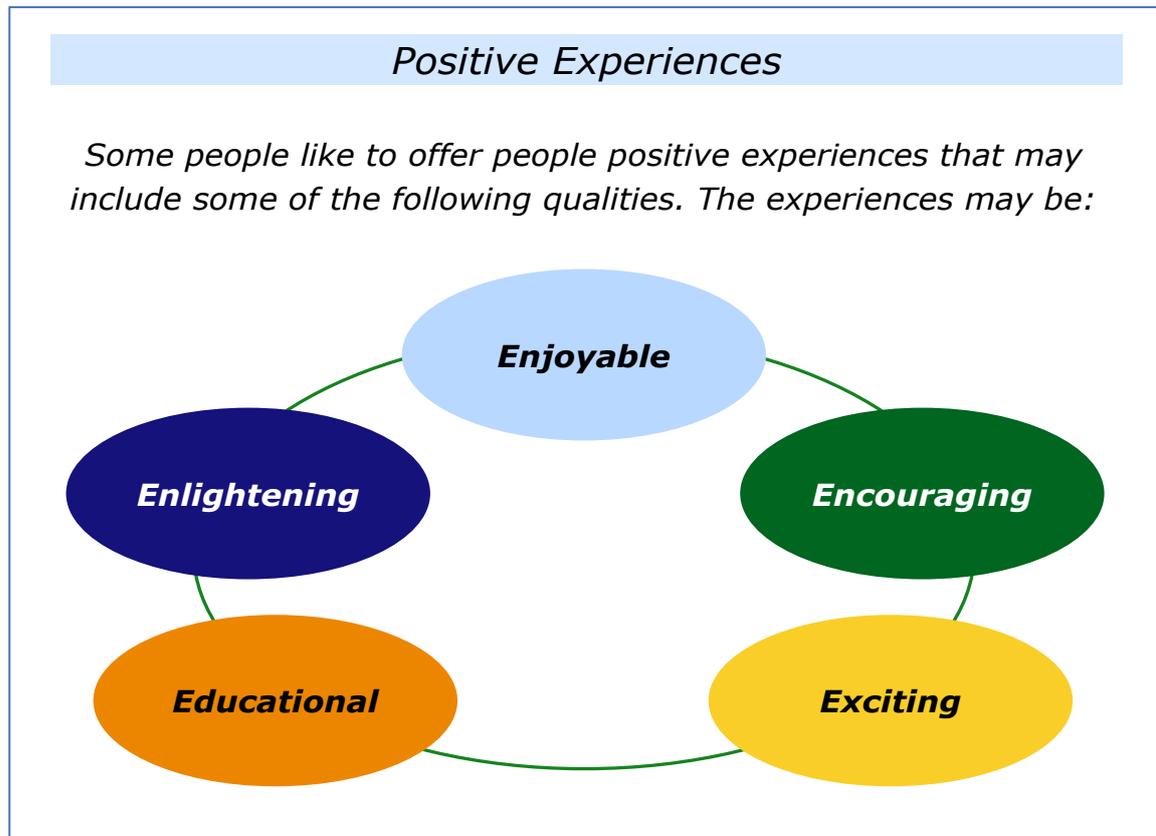
## *Positive Traits*

*The six human virtues and the 24 character strengths that are admired across cultures*

- |   |                             |  |
|---|-----------------------------|--|
| ● | <i>Wisdom and Knowledge</i> | <i>Creativity, curiosity, judgment, love of learning, perspective.</i>               |
| ● | <i>Courage</i>              | <i>Bravery, persistence, honesty, zest.</i>  |
| ● | <i>Humanity</i>             | <i>Love, kindness, social intelligence.</i>  |
| ● | <i>Justice</i>              | <i>Teamwork (citizenship, loyalty, social responsibility), fairness, leadership.</i> |
| ● | <i>Temperance</i>           | <i>Forgiveness, humility, prudence, self-regulation.</i>                             |
| ● | <i>Transcendence</i>        | <i>Appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humour, spirituality.</i> |

Different people choose different ways to embody the positive traits. Let's explore some of these approaches.

## The Positive Experiences Approach



There are many ways to encourage people. One approach is to offer people experiences that can create positive memories for life.

Different people do this in different ways. They may do it when encouraging people as parents, educators, carers, performing artists, event organisers, hospitality workers, leaders or in other roles.

There are many ways to take these steps. One approach is to offer experiences that may include elements of being enjoyable, encouraging, exciting, educational or enlightening.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you aimed to offer a positive experience to a person or a group of people? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Positive Experiences In The Past*

*The specific situation in the past when  
I aimed to offer a positive experience  
to a person or a group of people was:*

\*

*The specific things I did then to aim to  
offer the positive experience to them were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that happened as  
a result of taking these steps were:*

\*

\*

\*

There are many ways to offer positive experiences. Let's look at some of the possibilities.

### *Enjoyable Experiences*

Some people take this step by encouraging people to do what they enjoy. This can help others to feel alive, energetic and even inspired. It can enable them to gain strength to tackle challenges they may face in the future.

Some people use their strengths to provide enjoyable experiences. They may do this when working as a chef, hotelier, sports coach, entertainer, performing artist or when doing another activity. These can give people positive memories for life.

### *Encouraging Experiences*

Some people encourage others in their daily life and work. They aim to do this when acting as a parent, teacher, counsellor, mentor or in another role.

Ian Wright, the former Arsenal and England footballer, often talks about how he received such help from one of his teachers, Sydney Pigden. Many years later they met when Ian was making a television programme.

The producers invited Sydney along to pay a surprise visit. Ian later recounted what he had gained from his teacher. Here is a summary of what he said.

*"Mr Pigden had a massive impact on me. For me he will remain the greatest man in the world. He was a guiding light all the way through my career, as people saw in the video when I was reunited with him.*

*"I dedicated my book to him and I think that was the least I could do for somebody that literally turned my life around, in respect to teaching me how to be a decent human being.*



*"I met him when I was seven, so we're talking about 50 years ago, and it was because I wasn't being particularly good in class.*

*"I wasn't able to learn as quickly as the rest of the kids were. So he gave me responsibilities, like a registered a milk monitor, you know, things like that. Then when I started playing football, he really backed me.*

*"I don't know why he chose me. I'm glad that he did. Once he come in, everything was so much better.*

*"I used to collect the registers from the teachers. Then they made me milk monitor. I really liked that. It was really good. I just felt important.*

## *Exciting Experiences*

Some individuals use their talents to offer exciting experiences to people. They may do this in their role as an artist, entertainer, film maker, educator or when doing other work.

Some organise or lead experiences that people may find exciting. They may do this by offering volunteers or customers the chance to take part in exercise, mountaineering, yachting or other adrenaline activities.

## *Educational Experiences*

Many teachers, coaches, mentors and other individuals aim to provide people with great educational experiences. Such people sometimes aim:

*To clarify the person's goals – the specific things they want to learn;*

*To provide an experience that enables the person to develop the skills required to achieve their goals;*

*To encourage the person to clarify what they have learned and to apply these lessons to achieve their present and future goals.*

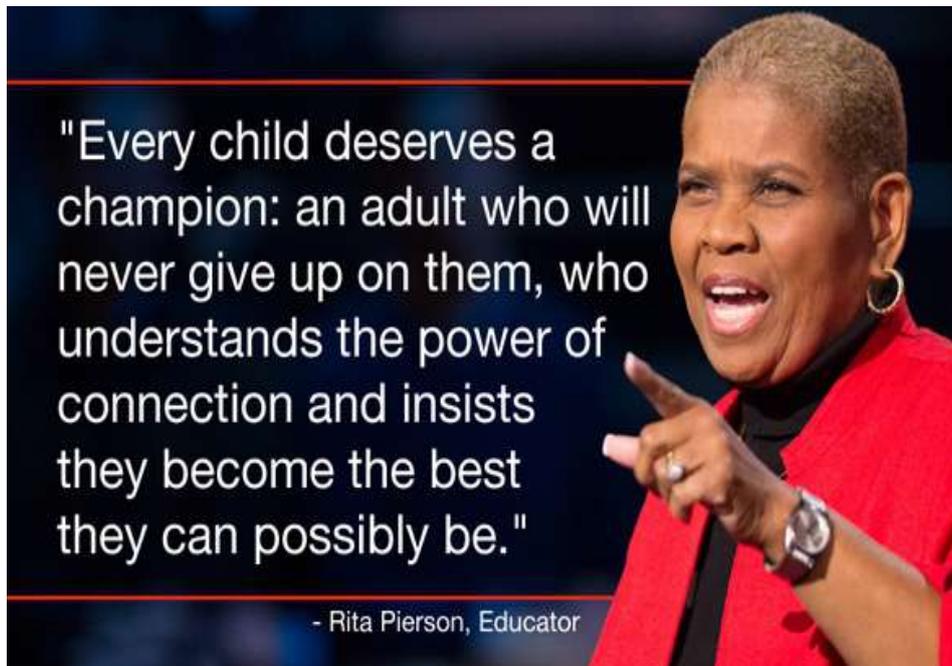
Some people do this in a school, college or other formal setting. Some do it in a workshop, on the training ground or during the working day. Some do it in more informal settings.

Educators aim to do this all the time. They also recognise the importance of building a good relationship with each of their students. This can create the environment in which people can grow.

Rita Pierson, who gave a famous TED Talk called *Every Kid Needs A Champion*, was one such teacher. The following section provides excerpts from how Rita described her work.

*Teachers don't make a lot of money and their major accomplishments are shared only with colleagues and family members and not the media. The celebration is often cut short by some catastrophe the next day.*

*Yet, in spite of the highs and lows, I cannot think of another profession that brings both joy and challenge on a daily basis.*



*In the spring of my career, I found myself questioning the choice of my life's work. I am now in year 40. And while I am no longer in the classroom or at the schoolhouse, I remain an educator.*

*It finally dawned on me that there was no other profession that would let me change children's minds and have an impact on their future, long after the school day and school year were over.*

*For every student that finally "got it," for every rookie teacher that said, "you inspired me to stay," I get the raise that never quite made it to my pay check.*

*We must address what we teach and when we teach it, but we must not forget to include how we deliver those lessons. Unless there is a connection between teacher, student and lesson, learning becomes tiresome to all involved. Veteran educator, James Comer, states that:*

*"No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship."*

*Strong relationships encourage learner exploration, dialogue, confidence, and mutual respect. I made it my business to know everything I could about my students.*

*Where they lived and with whom, how often they changed schools, how many siblings they had, whether or not they lived in a house or an apartment, whether there was trauma or drama in the household.*

*I went on home visits and shopped in the neighborhood stores so I could be certain to run into my students and the folk they lived with. (Some of my best parent conferences were held on the produce aisle at the grocery store).*

*The more you know about a person, the easier it is to develop an alliance (if that is your intention). Positive, healthy relationships rely on clear communication. Without it, misunderstandings occur and intentions are misinterpreted.*

*I want to look into your eyes when the answer finally dawns on you. I want to hear that inflection in your voice when you are angry with me. I want to see the smile on your face when you forgive me. I want to share in the joy when we both realize that we make a good team.*

## *Enlightening Experiences*

Some individuals provide opportunities for people to have enlightening experiences. Sometimes these may involve a person attending a retreat, spiritual practice, development workshop or similar gathering.

Some artists, writers and educators may also create experiences that some people find enlightening. David Attenborough and Jacques Cousteau, for example, created television programmes that enabled people to learn from the beauty of the planet.

Some sages also help people to make breakthroughs. The ones who do this are often generous and put themselves in the background. They do not try to sell themselves or some kind of programme.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to offer a positive experience to a person or a group of people?

You may want to help them to have an enjoyable, encouraging or exciting experience. Sometimes you may want to offer them an educational or even enlightening experience.

How can you do this in your own way? How can you help people to enjoy the experience? How can you help them to have a positive memory for life?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Positive Experiences In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future when I may aim to offer a positive experience to a person or a group of people may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to offer the positive experience to them are:*

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*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Following Your Tradition Approach*

There are many models for translating your principles into action. One approach is to find and follow your tradition. This involves asking:

*Who are the people I admire who have made a positive contribution? What were the principles they followed? How can I follow this path in my own way? How can I do my best to make a positive contribution?*

People who recognise their tradition feel they are part of something greater than themselves. Others have taken this route before and many will follow it in the future.

People who find their tradition often feel humbler yet stronger. Let's explore how you can follow these steps in your own way.

### *Finding your tradition*

Start by writing the names of the people you admire whose path you would like to follow in your own way. These may be people in a certain field or those who act as inspiring models.

My own models have been people such as Abraham Maslow, Virginia Satir and Viktor Frankl. They each wrote books that gave a positive view of people's possibilities. Whilst not having the same talent as these people, I want to build on their work in my own way.

What is your tradition? If you are caring for people in a hospice, you may be following the path taken by Dame Cicely Saunders and Elisabeth Kubler-Ross.

If you are aiming to encourage people in education, you may be following the path taken by Maria Montessori, John Dewey and other great teachers.

If you are doing pioneering work in technology, you may be following the path taken by Tim Berners-Lee and others who provide technology that helps people to shape their lives.

If you want to build a positive business, you may be following some of the principles demonstrated by Anita Roddick, Paul Hawken and other people.

Looking at the people you admire, what do you believe they did well? What were the principles they followed? How did they translate these into action? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Finding My Tradition*

*The names of the people I admire whose path I would like to follow in my way are:*

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*The principles they followed were:*

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## *Following your tradition*

How can you follow this path in your own way? How can you add to the tradition? How can you use your strengths to perform superb work?

Richard Bolles followed the tradition of helping people to do satisfying work. His practical approach reached millions through regular updates of his famous book *What Colour Is Your Parachute*.

Barrie Hopson and Mike Scally followed a similar tradition. They pioneered the first Careers Development unit in UK universities and then transferred this approach to organisations. They published their book *Build Your Own Rainbow* and helped many people to become architects of their careers.

John Wooden followed the tradition of helping individuals to become the best they could be. The vehicle he chose was basketball. David Hemery and many others have followed this path in different sports.

How can you follow your tradition? Everybody is born to finish something. They may have a book to write, a house to build, an invention to create, a relationship to fulfil or do another activity.

At the same time, however, it is important to enjoy the journey as much as reaching the goal. Providing you are pursuing your chosen road, you are keeping the tradition alive.

Seeing a finished product is satisfying - be it a painting, a project or a student who says, 'thank you'. Time catches up with all of us, however, which means we cannot complete everything.

The key is to follow your principles and try to make your best contribution each day. You will then honour the past and keep the road open for others to follow in the future.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Following My Tradition*

*The specific things I can do to follow  
and maybe add to my tradition are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of  
doing these things may be:*

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Let's look at another approach to clarifying your principles. This is based on the academic tradition of giving a Last Lecture.

## *The Last Lecture Approach*

*The title of this last lecture is:*

\*

*The key messages I would like to pass on to people if I was invited to give a last lecture would be:*

1) ...

*For example: ...*

2) ...

*For example: ...*

3) ...

*For example: ...*

This is a long-standing academic tradition. Many places of learning ask a key figure to give their version of a Last Lecture. The person is invited to pass on knowledge or wisdom they may have learned in their life.

Sometimes the students nominate such a person. On other occasions an institution will simply invite an outside speaker. Sometimes this may also take the form of an address to students who are beginning their studies or leaving the place of learning.

The nominated person chooses the topic they wish to cover in the lecture. Some focus on their field of expertise. Some pass on knowledge. Some give messages about the things they have learned in their lives.

Randy Pausch gave a famous Last Lectures that went viral. He began by describe what he wasn't going to talk about – such as his journey with cancer or his loved ones.

Randy said that the Last Lecture format was maybe appropriate for him because he did not necessarily have long to live. He then described what he wanted to talk about.

*"All right, so what is today's talk about then? It's about my childhood dreams and how I have achieved them.*

*"I've been very fortunate that way. How I believe I've been able to enable the dreams of others, and to some degree, lessons learned.*

*"I'm a professor, there should be some lessons learned and how you can use the stuff you hear today to achieve your dreams or enable the dreams of others.*

*"And as you get older, you may find that "enabling the dreams of others" thing is even more fun."*

Randy's talk is well worth watching. It can also be useful to watch many of the other videos of various people delivering their versions of the Last Lecture.

Sometimes I have used an adaption of this format when running workshops. On some occasions individuals have wanted to clarify their life philosophy and what they believe is important in life.

There are many exercises on these themes. This approach invites individuals to prepare and then present a ten-minute version of their Last Lecture. This is a challenging task.

Many people have found it rewarding to share their ideas, however, and also listen to others give their presentations. The exercise invites individuals to do the following things.

*To think of a title for their Last Lecture;*

*To outline the key messages they would like to give to people if they were invited to give their version of a Last Lecture;*

*To bring each of these messages to life by giving examples of how they can be translated into action.*

The final point is important. This encourages people to go beyond simply saying, for example:

*"Be true to yourself."*

Such headlines might provide good advice. But showing how these can be translated into daily life can have a much greater effect.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Last Lecture*

*The title of the lecture would be:*

\*

*The key messages I would like to give to people if I was invited to give a last lecture would be the following.*

1) ...

*For example ...*

2) ...

*For example ...*

3) ...

*For example ...*

## *The Passing Things On Before Passing On Approach*

### *The Passing On Approach*

*The positive things that I want to  
pass on to people before I pass on are:*

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This is a similar approach to The Last Lecture exercise. We all pass on. We move on from this life with many memories and maybe lessons we have learned. Looking at your own life, you may want to explore the following themes.

What are the positive messages I want to pass on? What is the positive knowledge I want to pass on? What are the other positive things I want to pass on to people?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Passing On Approach*

*The positive things that I want to pass on to people before I pass on are:*

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*The specific things I can do to pass on these things to people are:*

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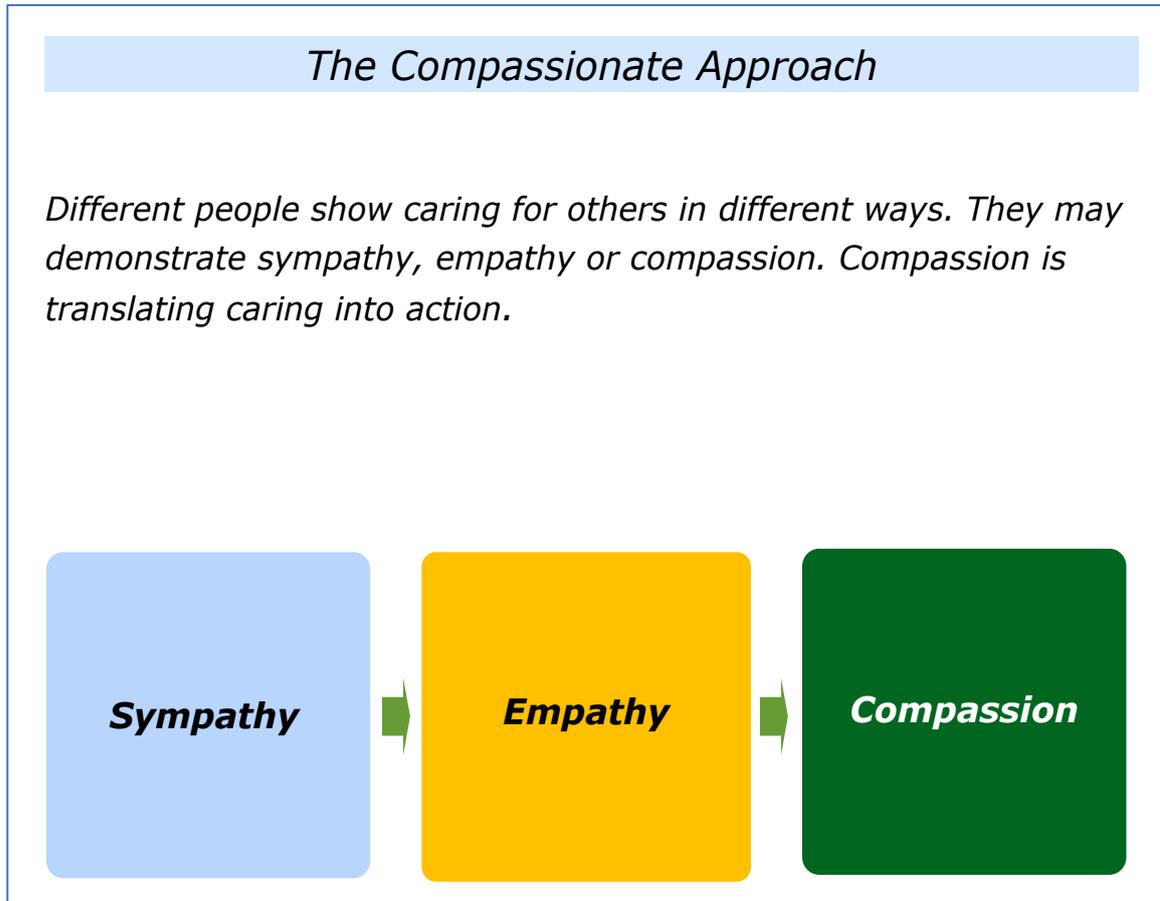
*The specific things that may happen as a result of passing on these things may be:*

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## *The Compassionate Approach*



People can choose to be compassionate or callous in their actions and words. The choice they make has consequences both for themselves and other people.

People who show compassion often have a history of being loved and being taught to respect other human beings. They believe in spreading happiness, rather than hate. They want to plant seeds of hope that will encourage both present and future generations.

Different people have compassion for different things. Some may feel compassion for themselves and their loved ones. They may then have compassion for their friends and kindred spirits.

Some may go further. They may feel compassion for specific groups of people they identify with, such as communities or nations.

Some may extend their compassion to include all human beings and future generations. Some may feel compassion for all living things and the planet.

### *The Charter For Compassion*

Karen Armstrong focused on the theme of caring in her TED talk that led to creating the Charter for Compassion. She believes it is vital to start from the heart and create hope rather than spread division. Here are some excerpts from the Charter.

*The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves.*

*Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.*

*It is also necessary in both public and private life to refrain consistently and empathically from inflicting pain.*

*To act or speak violently out of spite, chauvinism, or self-interest, to impoverish, exploit or deny basic rights to anybody, and to incite hatred by denigrating others - even our enemies - is a denial of our common humanity.*

*We acknowledge that we have failed to live compassionately and that some have even increased the sum of human misery in the name of religion.*



*We therefore call upon all men and women to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion*

*~ to return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred or disdain is illegitimate*

*~ to ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions and cultures*

*~ to encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity*

*~ to cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings - even those regarded as enemies.*

*We urgently need to make compassion a clear, luminous and dynamic force in our polarized world.*

*Rooted in a principled determination to transcend selfishness, compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological and religious boundaries.*

*Born of our deep interdependence, compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity.*

*It is the path to enlightenment, and indispensable to the creation of a just economy and a peaceful global community.*

Karen's work led to creating a board of Trustees who aim to translate the Charter for Compassion into action. Here is an excerpt from the website.

*Compassion is at the root of many religions and spiritual beliefs. So let's revive the Golden Rule.*

*Always treat all other people with the respect that you would like them to treat you with. Do not cause pain to others that you would not like inflicted on yourself.*

*Compassion can help to build a global community that helps to achieve the common good.*

*We believe a compassionate world is a peaceful world.*

*We believe a compassionate world is possible when every man, woman and child treats others as they would wish to be treated - with dignity, equity and respect.*

*We believe all human beings are born with the capacity for compassion, and it must be cultivated for human beings to survive and thrive.*

### *The Greater Good Center – Compassion*

The Greater Good Center, based at the University of California, Berkeley, focuses on the science of living a meaningful life. Here are excerpts from part of its website that is devoted to compassion.

*Compassion is not the same as empathy or altruism though the concepts are related.*

*While empathy refers more generally to our ability to take the perspective of and feel the emotions of another person, compassion is when those feelings and thoughts include the desire to help.*

*Scientific research into the measurable benefits of compassion is young. Preliminary findings suggest, however, that being compassionate can improve health, wellbeing, and relationships.*

*Many scientists believe that compassion may even be vital to the survival of our species, and they're finding that its advantages can be increased through targeted exercises and practice.*

*Compassion makes us feel good.*

*Compassionate action (e.g., giving to charity) activates pleasure circuits in the brain, and compassion training programs, even very brief ones, strengthen brain circuits for pleasure and rewards and lead to lasting increases in self-reported happiness.*

*Being compassionate - tuning in to other people in a kind and loving manner - can reduce risk of heart disease by boosting the positive effects of the Vagus Nerve, which helps to slow our heart rate.*

*Brain scans during loving-kindness meditation, which directs compassion toward suffering, suggest that, on average, compassionate people's minds wander less about what has gone wrong in their lives, or might go wrong in the future; as a result, they're happier.*

*Compassion helps make caring parents: Brain scans show that when people experience compassion, their brains activate in neural systems known to support parental nurturance and other caregiving behaviors.*

*Compassion helps make better spouses: Compassionate people are more optimistic and supportive when communicating with others.*

*Employees who receive more compassion the workplace see themselves, their co-workers, and their organization in a more positive light, report feeling more positive emotions like joy and contentment, and are more committed to their jobs.*

*More compassionate societies - those that take care of their most vulnerable members, assist other nations in need, and have children who perform more acts of kindness - are the happier ones.*

*Compassionate people are more socially adept, making them less vulnerable to loneliness.*

## *Compassion In Challenging Situations*

Compassion can produce enormous benefits, both for ourselves and other people. It can help us to shape a positive future.

Certainly it is possible to show compassion and become a victim, but that does not help anybody. At the same time, however, it is important to recognise that there may be big things at stake.

Marjorie Clifton describes this approach in her article called *Grace Under Pressure: Why difficult situations speak the most about you*. She begins it with the following statement.

*When my grandfather was once asked by a banker whether a dear friend of his of 20 years was trustworthy, he famously said, "I don't know, I've never seen his back against the wall."*

*I always wondered what he meant; after all, he had known the guy for most of his life. But, as a professional, and now a parent, I am acutely more aware of what he was really saying.*

Marjorie goes on to share ideas about how people can respond when faced by a difficult scenario. Here are the headline themes.

*Take a breath (or a walk) before you react ... If you have any hesitation, phone a friend ... Give people the benefit of the doubt ... Consider the long-term impact ... Take the high road, even when it hurts.*

Compassion can uplift others and can also lead to longer-term feelings of happiness. Emma M. Seppala explores this theme in her

article *The Best Kept Secret to Happiness: Compassion*. Here are some excerpts from this piece.

*Compassion and service don't just make us happy but they also have a host of other associated benefits and may even contribute to a longer life.*

*One reason compassion makes us happy is by broadening our perspective beyond ourselves. We know from research on anxiety and depression that these tense and unhappy states are highly self-focused.*

*When you do something for someone else, however, that state of self-focus immediately dissolves ... All of a sudden your attention was on helping them.*

*Rather than feeling blue, you began to feel energized and before you knew it, you may even have felt better and had gained some perspective on your own situation as well.*

### *Compassion Uplifts And Spreads*

*Why are the lives of people like Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, and Desmond Tutu so inspiring?*

*Research by Jonathan Haidt at the University of Virginia suggests that seeing someone helping another person creates a state of elevation.*

*Have you ever been moved to tears by seeing someone's loving and compassionate behavior?*

*Haidt's data suggests that it may be this elevation that then inspires us to help others – and it may just be the force behind a chain reaction of giving.*

*Social scientists James Fowler of UC San Diego and Nicolas Christakis of Harvard demonstrated that helping is contagious –*

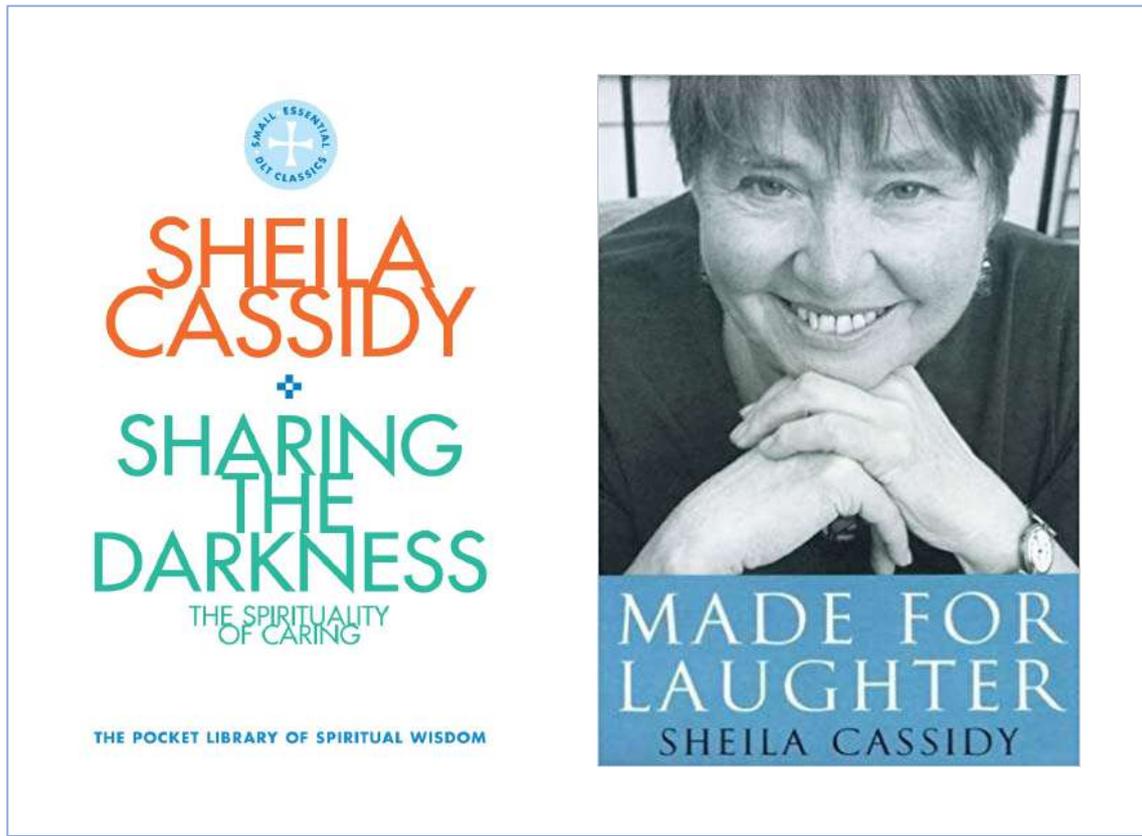
*acts of generosity and kindness beget more generosity in a chain reaction of goodness.*

*What can we take away from this research? That material goods may give us fun short-term pleasure but that long-term happiness and fulfilment lies less in what we can take than what we can give.*

*Compassion may just be the best kept secret to being not just happy but also healthy, wealthy, and wise.*

The following pages describe people who often aim to follow their principles and do positive things in their lives.

## Sheila Cassidy - Caring In Action



Sheila has dedicated much of her life to serving the principle of caring for people. Trained as a doctor, she was arrested and tortured after treating an opponent of the Pinochet regime in Chile.

Subjected to electric shocks, Sheila had a towel stuffed in her mouth to prevent her screaming. Later she would describe in graphic detail the pain of being tortured.

Torture victims often experience three kinds of pain. The memory of past pain, the experience of the present pain and the anticipation of future pain.

Sheila was in prison for almost two months before being released and returning to Britain. Looking back in later years, she explained that naivety led to her arrest in Chile.

*The daft thing is, I was never politically active: all I had done was to accede to a priest's request to treat a wounded man.*

*I also thought that no one would harm the daughter of a British Air Vice-Marshal. Surely, if I were caught, I would simply be deported.*

Sheila continued her career in medicine and became Medical Director of St. Luke's Hospice in Plymouth. Writing in *Sharing The Darkness*, she describes her first meeting with a patient.

*Once alone with a new patient I introduce myself, explain that I have come at the request of their doctor, and ask them to tell me their story. It is in the telling of the story that I meet my patient and in my listening to him that he meets me.*

*Everything depends on the quality of my listening: the patient must understand clearly from my verbal and non-verbal cues that I am interested in him as a person as well as his physical problems.*

Sheila talks of Frank, a Manchester builder, who suddenly became paralysed from the waist down. The cancer in his kidney reached his spine and the staff helped him to wrestle with his sense of loss. He would never walk again.

Driving around Plymouth, Sheila reflects on her own personality, her strengths and limits. She writes:

*I found myself saying again and again, 'You wash the feet that will not walk tomorrow', and realised that this was my job, my calling.*

*I, who have little patience with the demented and no love for tiny babies, have a special gift of warmth and understanding for those whose time is running out.*

*I, who hate parties and find it nigh impossible to make small talk know instinctively what to say and do for a gentle Manchester builder who is facing the humiliation of incontinence and the fear of death*

Hospices have much to teach our society, says Sheila. They value the vulnerable, the brain-damaged, the sick and the old. They do this in a world that values competition and economic success.

Sheila is not talking about building more hospices. She is talking about expanding the hospice philosophy across society.

All people are precious; all people need love; all people want to find peace in their lives. She felt humble in the presence of others who wanted to give. Sheila gives the following example.

*I recall the young Catholic woman dying of cancer who asked me one day, 'How can I use my suffering for others?'*

Sheila considers herself creative but messy. This is highlighted in the following description of her autobiography.

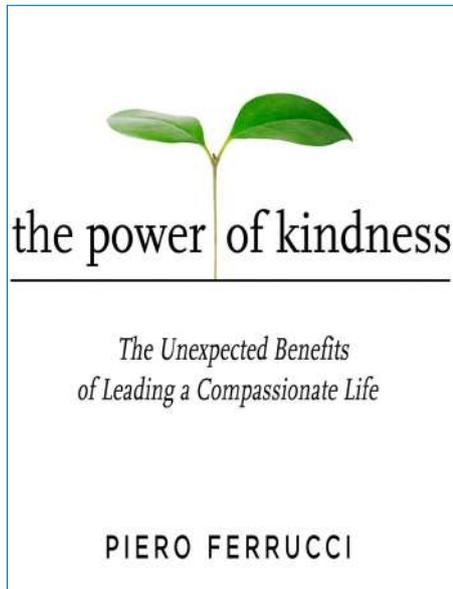
*In **Made for Laughter**, she writes with stark honesty of her struggle to overcome depression and insomnia, and her courageous but unsuccessful attempt to establish a new kind of religious order for women.*

*She returned to medicine, worked with the terminally ill and developed new approaches to the care of young cancer patients, before training as a psychotherapist.*

***Made for Laughter** is a story of grace under pressure, and an inspirational guide for everyone who has ever grappled with the puzzle of finding our true purpose in life.*

*Impetuous and irrepressible, Sheila Cassidy has discovered that, in the words of Desmond Tutu: "We are made for compassion, for caring, and for sharing - but also for laughter."*

## *Piero Ferrucci – The Power Of Kindness And Beauty*



*My thesis is that true kindness is a strong, genuine, warm way of being.*

*Kindness itself may seem lightweight, and yet it is a central factor in our lives.*

*It has a surprising power to transform us, perhaps more than any other attitude or technique.*

Piero is a psychotherapist who has spent much of his career helping people to live fulfilling lives. He has also written many books, including *The Power of Kindness and Beauty and the Soul*.

He believes in the benefits of kindness, both for the giver and the receiver. Paul also says that, despite many headlines about cruelty, millions of acts of kindness happen every day. He explains this in the following way.

*However special it may sound it (kindness) is by no means exceptional. On the contrary, it comprises a great deal of human interactions.*

*The fabric of our lives is made of care, solidarity, mutual service. These qualities are so embedded in our daily events that we may not even notice them.*

Piero believes that kindness can help future generations. He encourages us to care for the planet in the following way.

*Kindness is urgent in our relationship with our living environment. If we do not respect and love nature, do not treat her with loving kindness and the awe she deserves, we will end up intoxicated by our own poisons.*

*It is up to us. It is a choice in the life of each of us – to take the way of selfishness and abuse, or the way of solidarity and kindness. In this exciting but dangerous moment of human history, kindness is not a luxury, it is a necessity.*

*Being kind is taking a stand. By itself it may not help: Maybe our kindness will be ineffective. Never mind. We have affirmed a principle, a way of being.*

Piero believes that many people feel better when they are kind. He explains this in the following way.

*If we are healthier when we are caring, empathic, and open to others, it means we were born to be kind. If we push our way forward, cultivate hostile thoughts, or bear life-long grudges, we will not be at our best.*

*And if we ignore or repress our positive qualities, we may harm ourselves or others. As psychiatrist Alberto Alberti maintains, love that is not expressed becomes hate, joy that is not enjoyed become depression. Yes, we are designed to be kind.*

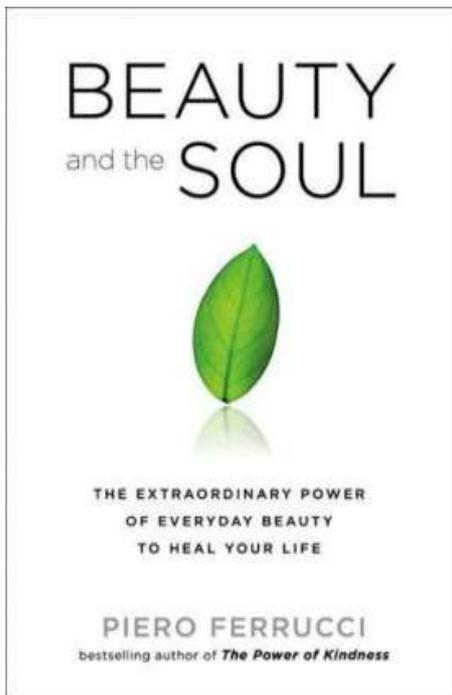
*My thesis is that true kindness is a strong, genuine, warm way of being. Kindness itself may seem lightweight, and yet it is a central factor in our lives. It has a surprising power to transform us, perhaps more than any other attitude or technique.*

Piero's views echo the words of Aldous Huxley. During his life Aldous experimented with many methods of developing human

potential. These included drugs, meditation, bodywork, Zen and other things. Towards the end of his life, Huxley said in a lecture:

*"People often ask me what is the most effective technique for transforming their life. It is a little embarrassing that after years and years of research and experimentation, I have to say that the best answer is – just be a little bit kinder."*

Piero also believes in the power of beauty. He says that all of us, in one way or another, seek beauty. We know it brings happiness and wellbeing.



*Beauty brings us back to the here and now. In the presence of beauty it is harder to be distracted.*

*To follow the way of beauty means to live in a state of mindfulness that does not admit distraction or escape.*

*We are here with our whole being. This is our kairos, as it was called in ancient Greece: The moment of opportunity, the timeless instant when revelation comes.*

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. A person may experience beauty in nature, art, music, theatre, sport, mathematics or another activity. Piero describes this in the following way.

*Some manage to see the inner beauty of people: generosity, intelligence, honesty. It is a beauty less evident, but deeper and more lasting.*

Beauty can help us to heal, feel alive and open our eyes, says Piero. It can help us to reconnect with our feelings, connect with other people and discover new dimensions.

Beauty is more than an extra, it is a basic. It is also the perfect medicine, says Piero. Its side effects are positive, rather than negative. This is certainly true when it comes to people. He explains this in the following way.

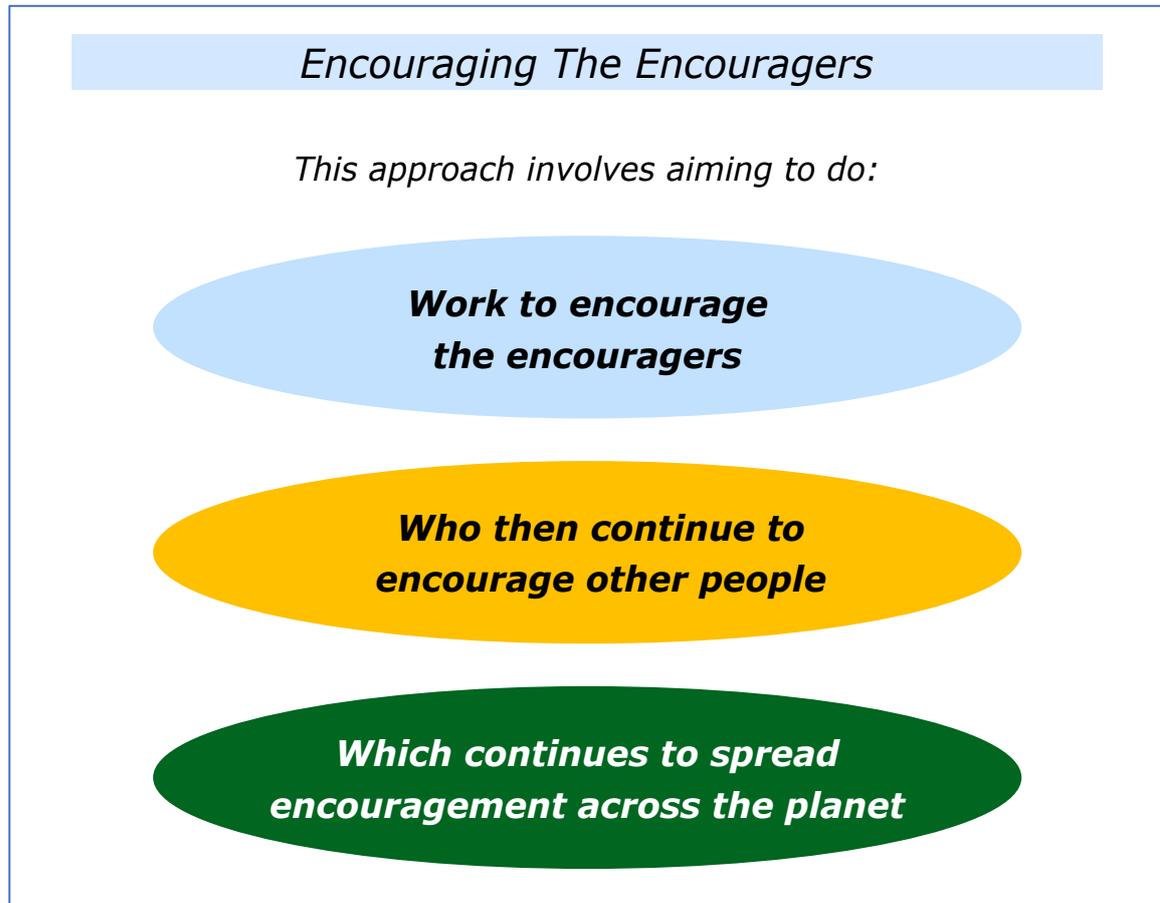
*Moral beauty is alive and well. In fact both kinds of beauty exist - outer and inner. The former is more obvious, more likely to attract attention, more immediate, gratifying and short-term.*

*The latter is subtler, deeper, usually needs more time to be perceived. And often it is not fully disclosed to the distracted eye. Physical beauty is a sprinter – it covers short distances faster. Beauty of the soul is a marathoner – it shows up over long distance.*

Piero writes like a poet but he supports this with facts. *Beauty and the Soul* describes many studies that show the tangible benefits of beauty in schools, hospitals, workplaces and society.

Beauty nourishes the soul, says Piero, but it goes further. Beauty may also be necessary for our survival as a species. It enables us to experience a sense of wonder and, when we wish, also create beautiful things.

## *The Encouraging The Encouragers Approach*



This is an approach that I began following during the early 1970s. Up until then most of the work involved helping people who were troubled. This was vital but something else seemed to be needed.

Many encouragers were helping others and needed support. Sometimes these individuals were given the following message:

*"You are so strong that you do not need encouragement."*

Bearing this in mind, I began running courses for such people. The aim was to help them to continue:

*To encourage other people ... To build encouraging teams and organisations ... To find ways to encourage themselves so that they could continue to do good work and encourage other people.*

The courses provided people with practical tools they could use to build on their own and other people's strengths. We also focused on solving some of the challenges they faced.

The sessions seemed to re-energise people. They also added to their repertoire of tools for building positive teams and organisations. This had the effect of helping more people in their daily lives and work.

Later we took a similar approach to working with organisations. Sometimes a leader would make the following request.

*"We need to run a change programme but some of our people are resistant to change. Can you help us to run such a programme?"*

Some organisations thought the key was to concentrate on the people who were resistant to change. But there was another way. This was:

*To focus on the motivated people who were professional and who wanted to help the organisation to shape a successful future;*

*To help these people to deliver pilot projects that embodied the principles that the organisation could follow to shape a successful future;*

*To encourage other motivated people to follow these principles and do work that helped the organisation to shape a successful future.*

The key, however, was to deliver success. The organisation could then continue to build on the people and the principles that would enable it to shape a successful future.

Who are the encouragers you know in your personal or professional life? How can you continue to encourage these people? What do you think may happen as a result? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Encouraging The Encouragers*

*The encouragers I know in my personal and professional life are:*

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*The specific things I can do to encourage some of these encouragers are:*

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*The specific things that may happen as a result may be:*

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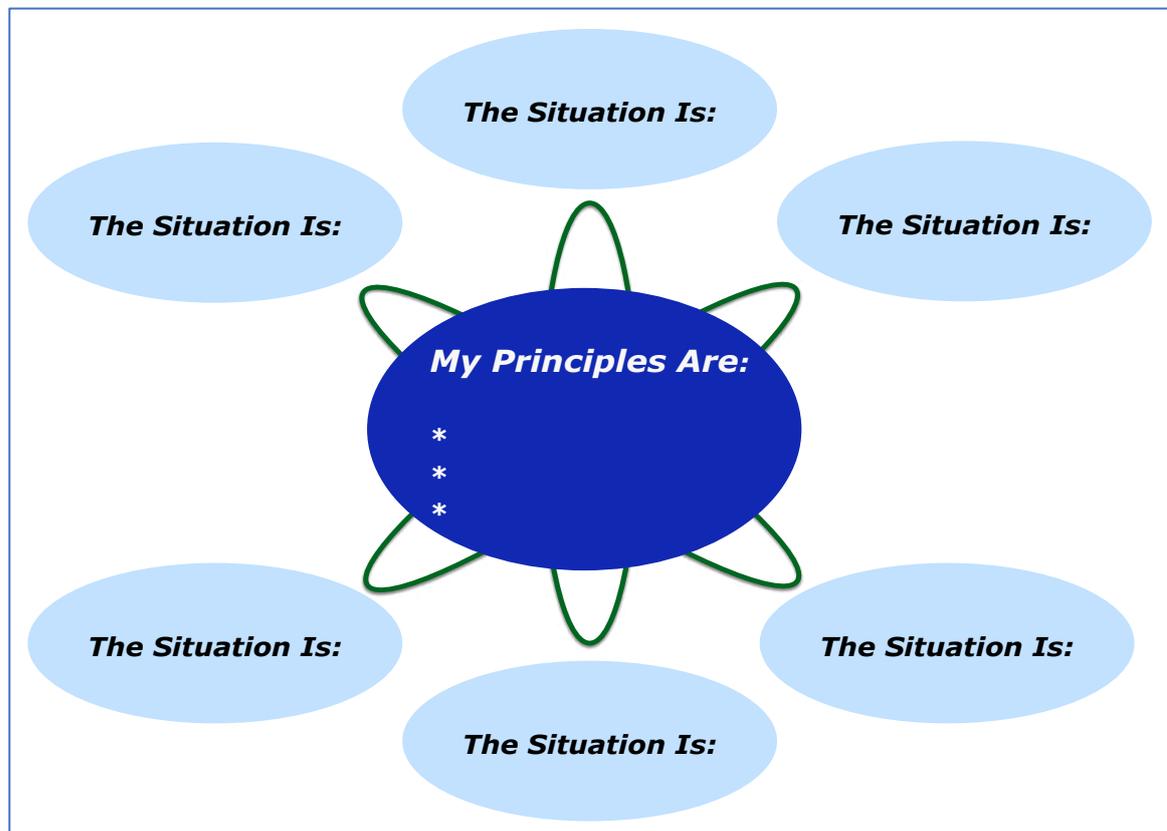
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## Clarifying Your Principles

### Principles

*A person can clarify the principles they want to follow in their life and work. They can then aim to express these principles in both personal and professional situations.*

*They can keep returning to their centre to remind themselves of their principles. They can then focus on how to express these in the next situation.*



Different people choose to encourage others in different ways. Many of them focus on the principles they want to follow in their life and work. The next section invites you to explore this approach.

Let's return to your own life. Imagine that you have begun to clarify your purpose. How can you translate this into action?

One approach is to clarify the principles you want to follow in your daily life and work. The Dalai Lama says, for example:

*"My religion is kindness."*

He therefore tries to express kindness in his daily life when communicating with people, giving television interviews and doing other activities. He keeps focusing on the core drivers in his life.

Many individuals clarify their purpose and the principles they want to follow to translate this into action. They then aim to express these principles in personal and professional situations.

How to take this step? One approach is to look ahead and ask the following questions before going into a situation.

*What is the situation I am going into? How can I follow my principles in the personal or professional situation? How can I do this in a way that helps other people? Can I do my best to achieve the desired positive results?*

The person goes into the situation, clicks into action and is fully present. They then aim to follow their principles whilst also helping the other parties to achieve success.

If they get thrown off-course, they buy time to think. They ask themselves some of the following questions.

*What is happening in the situation? What do we want to happen? What are the real results to achieve? How can I follow my principles and do my best to achieve these results?*

They aim to perform superb work and find solutions to challenges. They do their best to achieve the desired picture of success.

Returning from the situation, the person then returns to their centre. They relax, recentre and refocus on their principles.

This enables them to keep drawing strength from the central beliefs in their life. They then look ahead and explore how they can follow their principles in the next situation.

A person who takes this approach is more likely to be centred. They keep returning to their inner compass. They then focus on how they can follow their chosen principles in the different situations they encounter in life.

There are, of course, both pluses and minuses in following principles. Here are some of these.

#### *The Pluses Are:*

*You may find the principles provide an internal compass you can refer to when making decisions.*

*You may feel at ease by doing what you believe in and following long-standing principles that serve you well in many situations.*

*You may find following the principles produces tangible benefits – such as feeling you have done your best and delivering success.*

#### *The Potential Minuses Are:*

*You may find following the principles can mean making tough decisions and sometimes losing out on short-term gains.*

*You may find other people criticise you or reject your efforts for following these principles.*

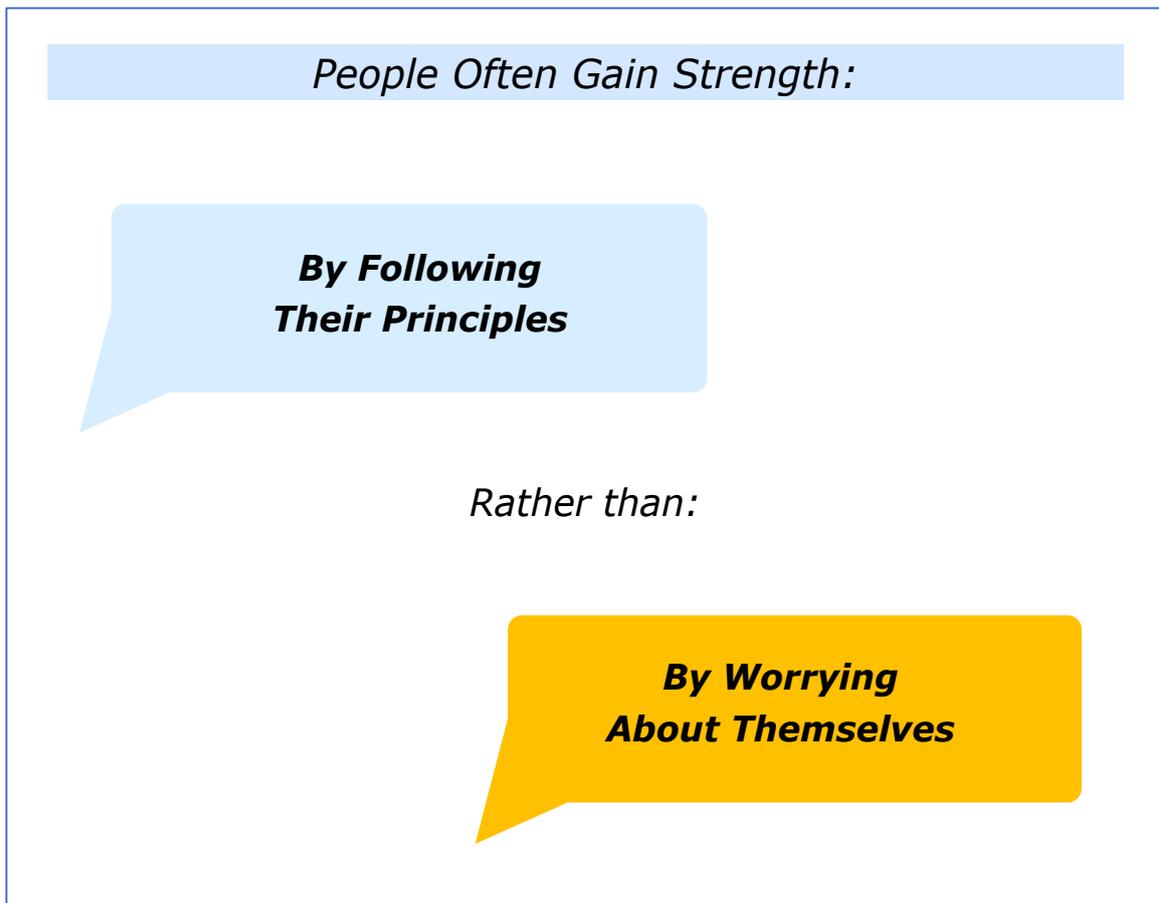
*You may sometimes fail to follow your principles and feel you have been untrue to yourself.*

People who do their personal best and follow their principles are more likely to live in what the existentialists call good faith. They are also more likely to, over the long run, feel a sense of peace.

### *Gaining Strength By Following Your Principles*

There are many views about how people develop personal or professional strength. Some focus on self-confidence, strategic know-how and building a track record of success. Such factors can play a big part in developing belief and resilience.

Another approach involves gaining strength by following your principles. This may sound counter-intuitive because it does not mention emotion, but it also highlights a lesson.



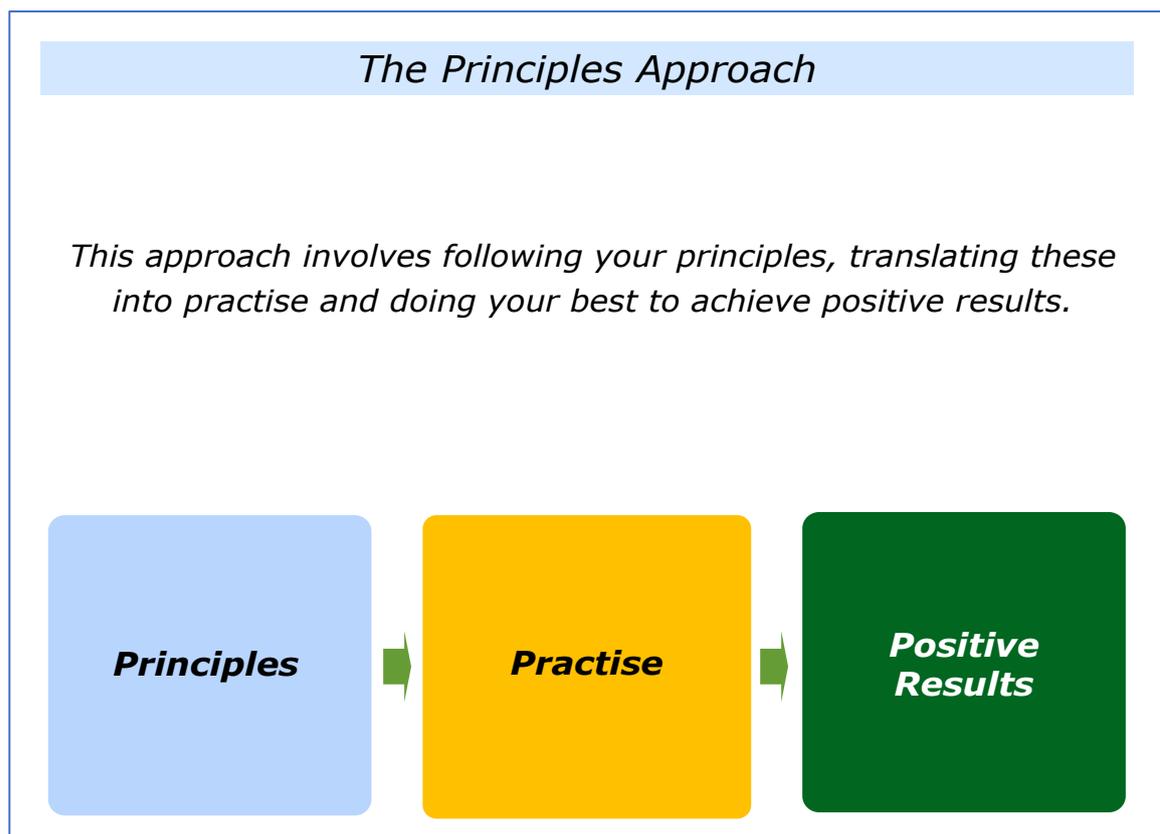
People who are strong in critical situations sometimes demonstrate what is called cold courage. Draining themselves of emotion, they

calculate what they can do to achieve certain goals. Describing the situation later, individuals say things like:

*"I did what I believed in ... It was the obvious thing to do ... I saw it as my responsibility to do what was necessary."*

Such people may talk about being scared, but they have an interesting way of managing this feeling. They would actually be more scared of not following their principles in the situation. Why? Because it would be difficult to live with themselves afterwards.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you gained strength by following your principles? How did you translate these into action? How did you manage any challenging emotions? What happened as a result of doing what you believed in?



The previous pages have invited you to begin clarifying the principles you want to follow. Imagine that you want to summarise how you can follow your principles in the future.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Start by describing the three key principles you want to follow in your life. You may want to be kind, maintain a positive attitude, do work that helps people, leave a positive legacy or do other things.

How can you translate your principles into action? What are the specific things you can do in the next day, week and month? What may be the positive benefits – for other people and for yourself – of taking these steps?

Here is the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *My Principles*

*The specific things I can do to follow my principles, translate these into practise and do my best to get positive results*

### *Principles*

*The specific principles I want to follow in my life are:*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

*\* To ...*

*For example ...*

## *Practise*

*The specific things I can do to translate these principles into action are:*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

## *Positive Results*

*The specific benefits of translating these principles into practise may be:*

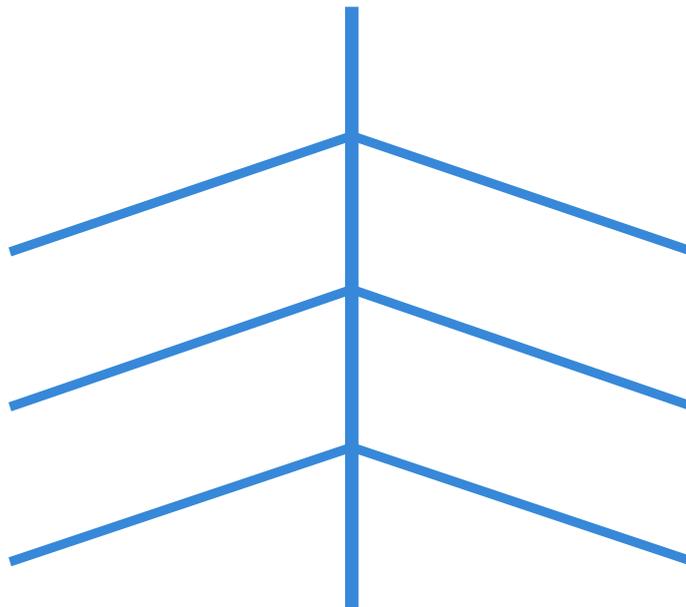
\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

\* *To ...*

## *The Strong Spine Approach*

*Great Workers And Teams  
Often Have A Strong Spine*



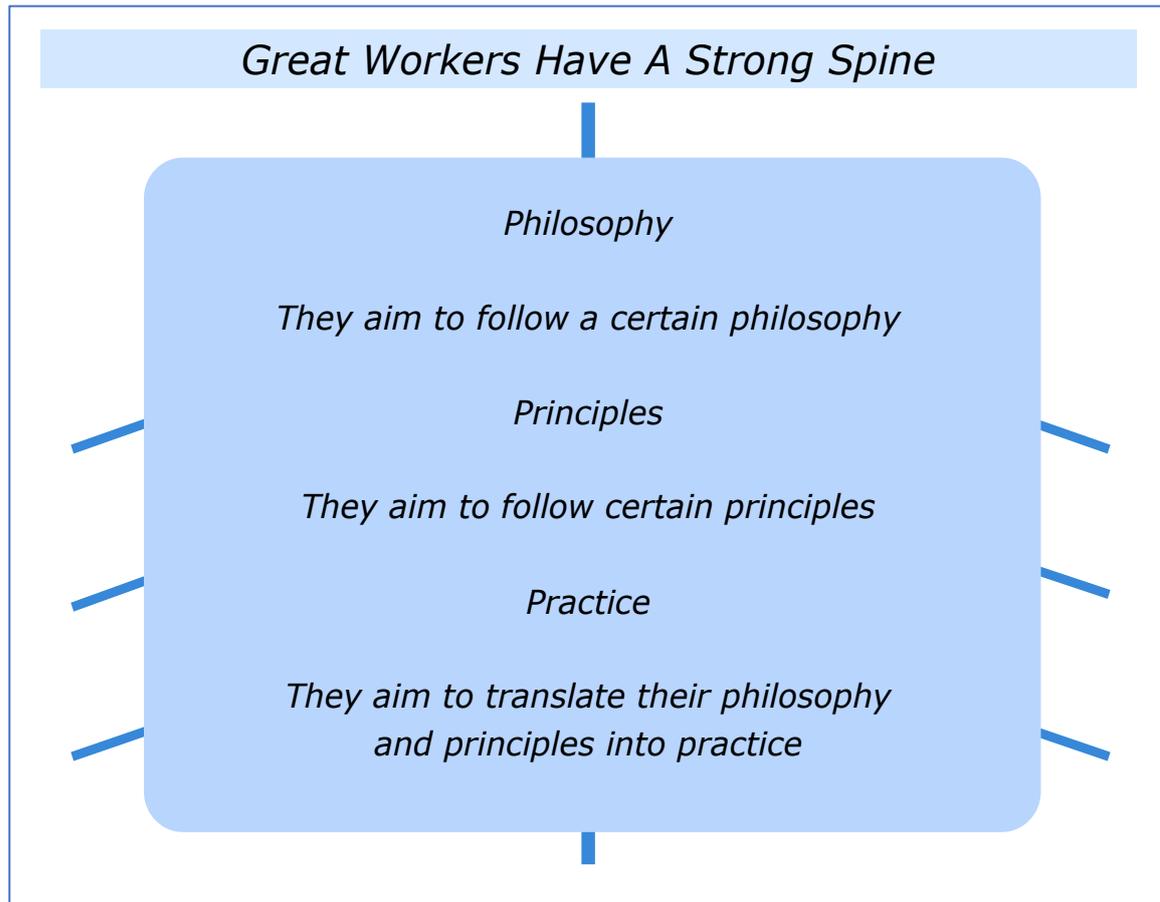
This approach mirrors some of the themes described in the previous section. Great workers often have a strong spine. This may be a philosophical, psychological or, in some cases, a physical spine that provides the backbone for their work.

Let's start by focusing on individuals. Sometimes it is said about a person that:

*"They have spine."*

There are many ways that a person may demonstrate this quality. One way may be that: a) they have a certain philosophy; b) they follow certain principles; c) they translate these into practice.

Such individuals have backbone. They show strength in both the positive and not-so positive times.



Great teams often have a strong spine. They have many people who embody the team's philosophy and act as custodians of the culture.

Such people act as the backbone of the team. They make sure that the team keeps focusing on its philosophy and guiding principles. They do this when the team is successful and also when it may be going through tough times.

Great teams aim to recruit, promote and retain such people. These individuals ensure the team follows its compass and maintains consistently high standards. This provides the platform for achieving ongoing success.



Let's return your own life and work. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

Start by describing the philosophy that you want to follow in your life. You may, of course, want to follow several philosophical themes that are bound together. If appropriate, settle on one of themes.

Bearing in mind the philosophy you have settled on, brainstorm some of the principles you want to follow to pursue this approach. Settle on three of these.

Move on to the next part. Describe the specific things you want to do to translate these principles into practice. The final step, of course, is to actually do these things.

Here is the exercise. It can be useful to do this every few months to see how your ideas evolve.

## *My Philosophical Spine*

*Philosophy. The philosophy I want to follow in my life is:*

\*

*Principles. The principles I want to follow to pursue this philosophy are:*

\*

\*

\*

*Practice. The specific things I want to do to translate these principles into practice are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *The Positive Contribution Approach*

### *My Positive Contribution*

*The positive things I want to give  
people during my time on the planet are:*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

*\* To ...*

Many people want to make a positive contribution during their time on the planet. They may want to encourage their loved ones and help others to be happy. They may also want to pass on knowledge that helps future generations.

They may do this in the family, school, workplace or society. They want to give people positive memories for life. Some people use their strengths to do superb work that helps people and the planet.

Such people often have a wholistic view of life. They also see the world as a living system in which things are connected across the planet. Many subscribe to the views outlined by Buckminster Fuller. He explained this in the following way.

*We are blessed with technology that would be indescribable to our forefathers.*

*We have the wherewithal, the know-it-all to feed everybody, clothe everybody, and give every human on Earth a chance.*

*We know now what we could never have known before - that we now have the option for all humanity to make it successfully on this planet in this lifetime.*

*Whether it is to be Utopia or Oblivion will be a touch-and-go relay race right up to the final moment.*

*We are not going to be able to operate our Spaceship Earth successfully nor for much longer unless we see it as a whole spaceship and our fate as common. It has to be everybody or nobody.*

How to clarify your contribution? Some people explore questions similar to those asked by Buckminster Fuller at a challenging time in his life. He then went on to produce books such as *Operating Manual For Spaceship Earth*.

### Positive Legacy

*Some people explore the questions that Buckminster Fuller asked himself at a challenging time in his life.*



*"What is my job on the planet?"*

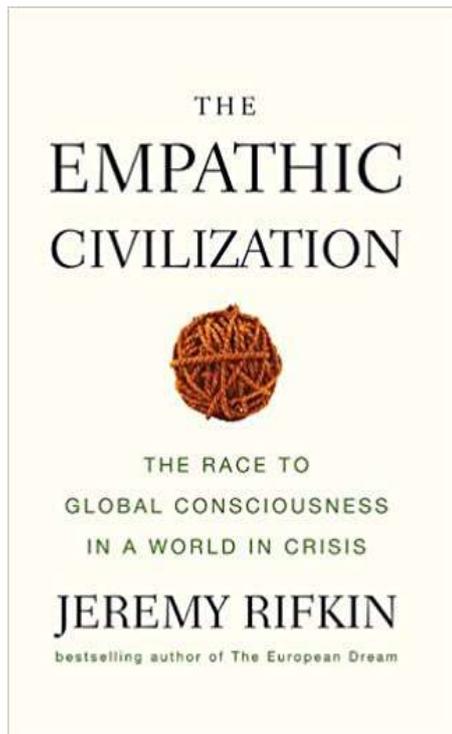
*"What is it that needs doing, that I know something about, that probably won't happen unless I take responsibility for it?"*

*Such people then aim to pursue this purpose, follow their principles and pass on a positive legacy.*

People who want to make a positive contribution often see how things are connected. They believe that what you put into a system – be it a relationship, organisation or planet – affects the future of the system. They therefore aim to act with compassion rather than cruelty.

Jeremy Rifkin outlines a similar approach in his book *The Empathic Civilization*. He believes it is vital to recognise that our actions have consequences on the whole system.

This calls for extending our empathy to the entire human family and the biosphere. Taking this step will increase our chances of surviving as a species.



*The Earth is a connected whole system. The actions we take can affect all living things. The consequences can then come back and affect us.*

*"The most important question facing humanity is this:*

*"Can we reach global empathy in time to avoid the collapse of civilization and save the Earth?"*

Jeremy describes how we can widen our circle of empathy. We can go beyond feeling empathy for our loved ones and other people. We can also develop empathy for all living things and for the planet.

Many people develop this ability as they get older. Jeremy also sees this in younger people. He describes this in the following way.

*A younger generation is fast extending its empathic embrace beyond religious affiliations and national identification to include the whole of humanity and the vast project of life that envelops the Earth.*

Let's explore some of the themes that people may consider when clarifying their contribution to building a better world.

## *People Choose Different Ways To Help To Build A Better World*

There are many views about how to help to build a better world. Here are some of these approaches.

### *People Who Work To Build A Better World*

*They may choose to take some of the following approaches.*

*The Pollination Approach*



*The Paradigm Approach*



*The Positive Knowledge Approach*



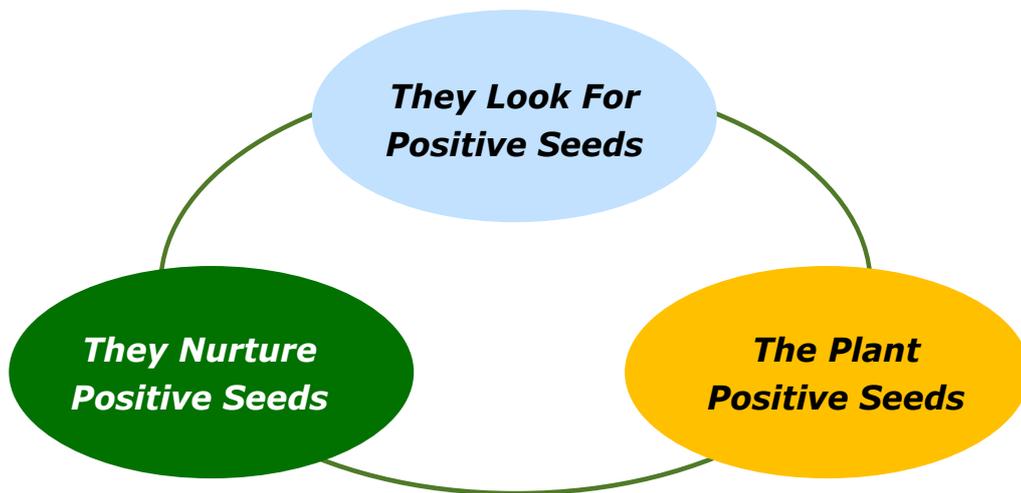
### *The Pollination Approach*

People who take this approach aim to plant seeds of hope and encourage other people. They share positive models and practical tools that people can use to get positive results. They believe these seeds may spread and, through the pollination process, help to build a positive planet.

The pluses of this approach are that it is organic and it provides positive models that work. People are then more likely to share these and help to build a positive planet. The minuses are that it takes a long time.

## *The Positive Seeds Approach*

*People who take this approach often pursue the following steps.*



### *They Look For Positive Seeds*

They look for when people come alive or do superb work. They see what people are doing right then and encourage them to follow these principles in the future.

### *They Plant Positive Seeds*

They aim to affirm people and encourage them to explore their aspirations. When appropriate, they pass on positive knowledge and practical tools that people can use to achieve their goals.

### *They Nurture Positive Seeds*

They enable people to achieve their aims. When appropriate, they offer people strategies and support that can use to shape their futures and achieve ongoing success.

## *The Paradigm Approach*

People who follow this approach recognise that people often have a certain paradigm – a way of looking at the world. This paradigm influences their daily actions.

They aim to share a positive paradigm that other people can see is profitable - in the widest sense of the word - for both themselves and future generations.

The pluses of this approach are that it can show a way of living that produces benefits for people. The minuses are that it can come across as criticism or preaching. It can also be difficult to encourage people to shift their belief systems.

## *The Positive Knowledge Approach*

People who follow this approach aim to pass on positive knowledge that other people can use to shape their futures. They may also aim to show how people can build sustainable systems that achieve ongoing success.

Such people may have specialist expertise, but they are also savvy. They aim to pass on practical models that will create wins for all the various stakeholders. They aim to show how taking these approaches will be profitable for both people and the planet. The pluses of this approach are that it provides knowledge and practical tools that people can use to achieve success. The minuses include that there it is up to the receiver how they interpret and use the information.

Some people combine elements of all these approaches aim to plant positive seeds, share a positive paradigm and pass on positive knowledge. Let's look at this latter part.

## *Passing On Knowledge*

Imagine you want to pass on knowledge in your own way. One approach is to focus on the *What, Who, Why, How* and *When*. It is to work through the following themes.

<i>Passing On Knowledge</i>	
● <i>The What</i>	<i>The specific knowledge I would like to pass on to people is ...</i>
● <i>The Who</i>	<i>The specific people I would like to pass on this knowledge to are ...</i>
● <i>The Why</i>	<i>The specific reasons why I would like to pass on this knowledge to people are ...</i>
● <i>The How</i>	<i>The specific ways I would like to pass on this knowledge to people are ...</i>
● <i>The When</i>	<i>The specific situations when I would like to pass on this knowledge to people are ...</i>

### *The What*

What is the knowledge you want to pass on? You may have learned lessons from pursuing your vocation, doing projects, managing crises, leading teams, solving particular problems or whatever.

### *The Who*

Who would you like to reach? Would they be young people, budding entrepreneurs, athletes, leaders, social entrepreneurs, therapists or other people? What would be the characteristics of these people?

### *The Why*

Why would you like to pass on this knowledge? What would be the benefits for people? It can be useful to pass on what works. People gain strength when they see how they can succeed. They are then more likely to pursue these strategies to achieve success.

### *The How*

How would you like to share your knowledge with people? You may prefer:

*To act as a positive model ... To act as a mentor, coach or trusted advisor ... To run teaching sessions, seminars, workshops or other forms of education ... To write articles, create websites, write blogs, produce learning materials, make videos or whatever.*

### *The When*

When do you want to share the ideas with people? What would be the preferred setting or situation for passing on the knowledge? When do you want to start on the journey and get a quick success?

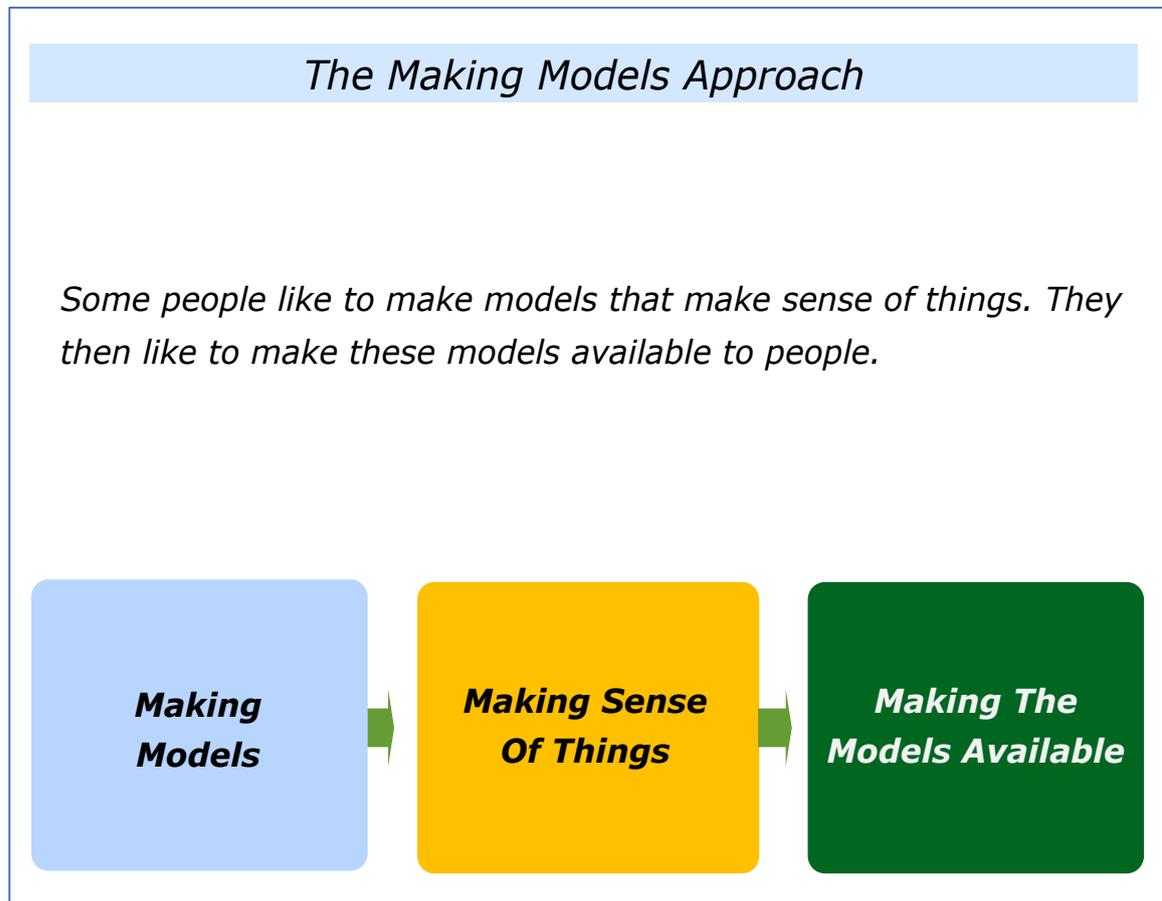
As mentioned above, different people pass on knowledge in different ways. Let's look at one approach.

## *The Making Models Approach*

This is an approach sometimes adopted by people who want to pass on knowledge to people. A person may start by focusing on a topic they find fascinating.

You will have your own areas of interest. Looking at my own work, for example, it has involved studying how people, teams and organisations achieve success.

Gathering information, the person may begin looking for patterns. When studying success, for example, this involves identifying the principles that people follow to make things work.



This is an approach sometimes adopted by people who want to pass on knowledge to people. A person may start by focusing on a topic they find fascinating.

Gathering information, the person may begin looking for patterns. When studying success, for example, this involves identifying the principles that people follow to make things work.

The next step involves translating the principles into a positive model and then, when appropriate, testing the model to see that it works. When helping people to achieve their aims, for example, it is important to create a model that makes sense to them.

### *One Approach To Making Models*

*There are many ways to make models. One approach is to gather information. It is then to look for patterns, focus on principles and clarify what works.*

*The next step is to translate this information into a positive model that works. It is also to add practical tools that people can use in their own ways to achieve their goals.*

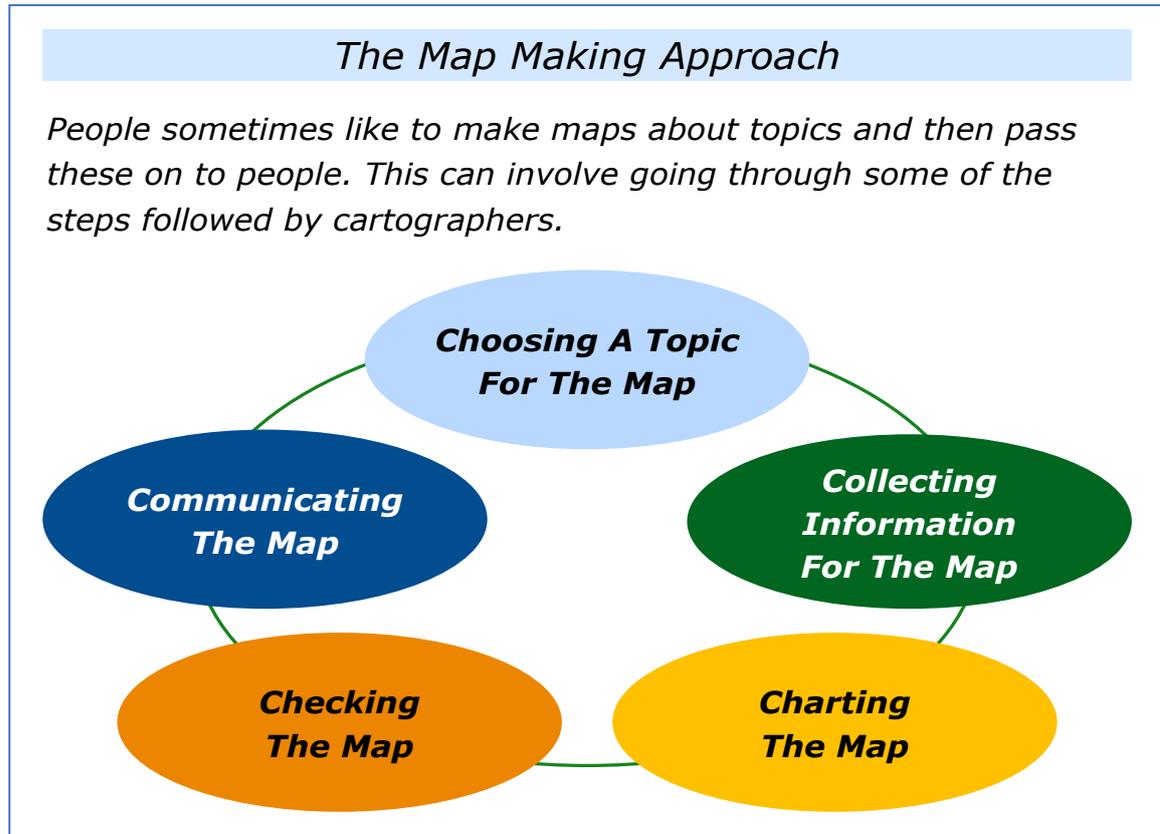


People often want more than models, so it can be useful to move onto providing practical tools that work. They can then apply these in their own lives and work.

The final step can be to make the knowledge available to people. This can be done through writing, teaching, mentoring or using other media.

Let's explore a similar approach to passing on knowledge – one that has stood the test of time.

## The Map Making Approach



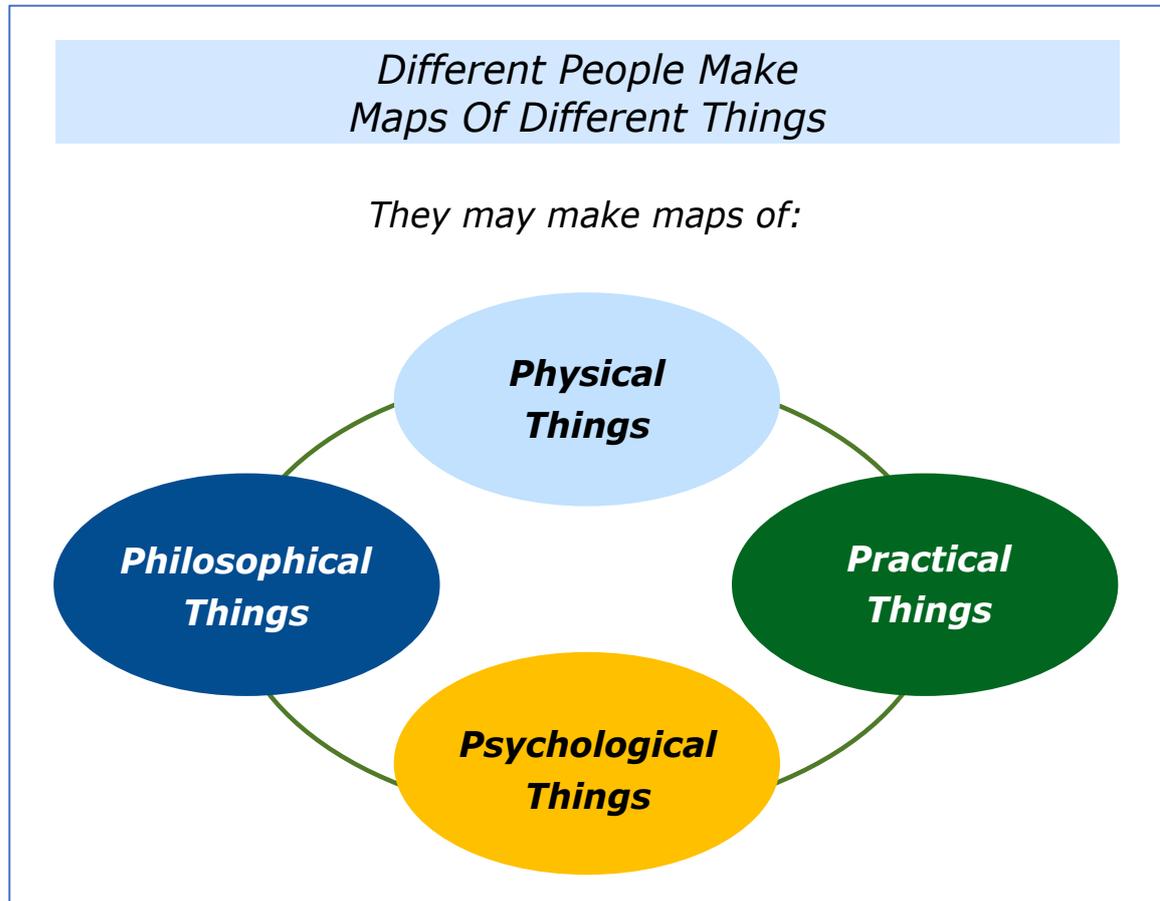
People sometimes like to make maps about certain topics and pass these on to people. They like to provide information that people can use to pursue their chosen journeys successfully.

Some people make maps of physical things. These may include towns, countries and planets. They may chart journeys across land, sea or space. Some may create diagrams of the body, brain or other physical objects.

Some people make maps of practical things. They may provide guidebooks, instruction manuals or designs that enable people to use tools, run projects or do practical tasks successfully.

Some people make maps of psychological things. They may provide models that help people to make sense of human emotions, behaviour and challenges.

Some people make maps of philosophical theories. They may use diagrams, models or other methods to highlight the key concepts. They may also show how this information can be applied in life.



Looking back, can you think of a situation when you followed some elements of the map making approach? You may have done this when aiming to pass on knowledge as a teacher, coach, mentor, project leader or in another role.

What did you do to create and pass on a map that people could use to navigate the topic successfully? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Map Making In The Past*

*The specific situation in the past when I followed some elements of the map making approach was:*

\*

*The specific things I did then to follow some elements of this approach were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that happened as a result of taking these steps were:*

\*

\*

\*

Imagine that you want to follow some elements of this approach in the future. The following steps mirror some of those taken by cartographers. You will, of course, follow these in your own way.

### *Choosing A Topic For The Map*

You may start by choosing the topic for the map. This could involve exploring a subject that you find fascinating or want to understand. It may also involve passing on this knowledge to other people.

You may want to help people to pursue a physical, psychological or other kind of journey. The aim would be to help them to understand the territory and reach their chosen destination successfully.

Imagine that you have chosen to focus on a certain topic. It can be useful to clarify the real results you want to achieve and your plan for making the map.

Different people do this in different ways. One approach involves exploring similar questions to those asked by an author before they do a piece of work. These include the following.

*What is the purpose of the piece of work? What are the reasons why I want to produce it? What are the real results I want to achieve by doing the piece of work?*

*Who is the audience? What is happening in their world? What are the challenges they may face? What are their goals? What can I pass on that will help them to achieve their goals?*

*What are the key messages I want to get across to people? What is the knowledge I want to share? How can I do this in a way that resonates with people? How can I make the work attractive and accessible?*

*How can I use my strengths to produce the piece of work? How can I compensate for any weaknesses? How can I encourage myself on the journey when doing the work?*

*Let's return to the desired results. What are the things I want people to be saying, thinking and feeling after they have experienced the work? How can I do my best to achieve these results?*

Imagine that you have clarified your plan for making the map. It will then be time to move on to the next stage.

### *Collecting Information For The Map*

You will gather information in your own way. Much will depend on the kind of map you are making.

Cartographers often visited the actual landscape. They used surveying tools and other methods to produce accurate representations of the territory. Since then photography and other technology has led to producing highly detailed maps.

Writers, educators and people who create maps of knowledge use their own methods for gathering information. Studying their chosen topic, they may build on the existing thinking and also add their own observations. They continue until they are ready to move to the next stage.

### *Charting The Map*

You may then begin charting the map. Sometimes this involves providing an accurate description of the data. This will be the case if you are conveying a factual map – such as drawing a physical landscape.

Sometimes it may involve summarising the key headlines plus showing people how they can get more information. This may be the case if you are helping people to understand a particular theory or concept.

Different people use different approaches when, for example, charting a psychological or philosophical theory. The key is to

provide people with a map they can use to understand and apply the information.

### *Checking The Map*

Cartographers continually check and test their map. They do this in order: a) to check the information is accurate and reliable; b) to check the latest developments as they recognise the map will keep evolving.

Good educators continually test the information they are passing on to people. They also keep checking that the map works. They want to ensure that it is reliable, resilient and will help people to achieve their desired results.

### *Communicating The Map*

Different people choose to communicate the map in different ways. They may convey the information through an atlas, models, books and other media.

You will do this in your own way. When doing so, it can be useful to return to some of the questions we explored earlier. These include the following.

*Who is the audience? What are their goals? How can I communicate the map in a way that helps them to reach their goals? How can I provide practical tools that they can use to achieve their picture of success?*

Imagine that you want to follow some elements of the map making approach in the future. What may be the situation where you can use this approach? How can you apply it in your own way? What may happen as a result of taking these steps.?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Map Making In The Future*

*The specific situation in the future when  
I may want to follow some elements  
of the map making approach may be:*

\*

*The specific things I can do then to follow  
some elements of this approach are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as  
a result of taking these steps may be:*

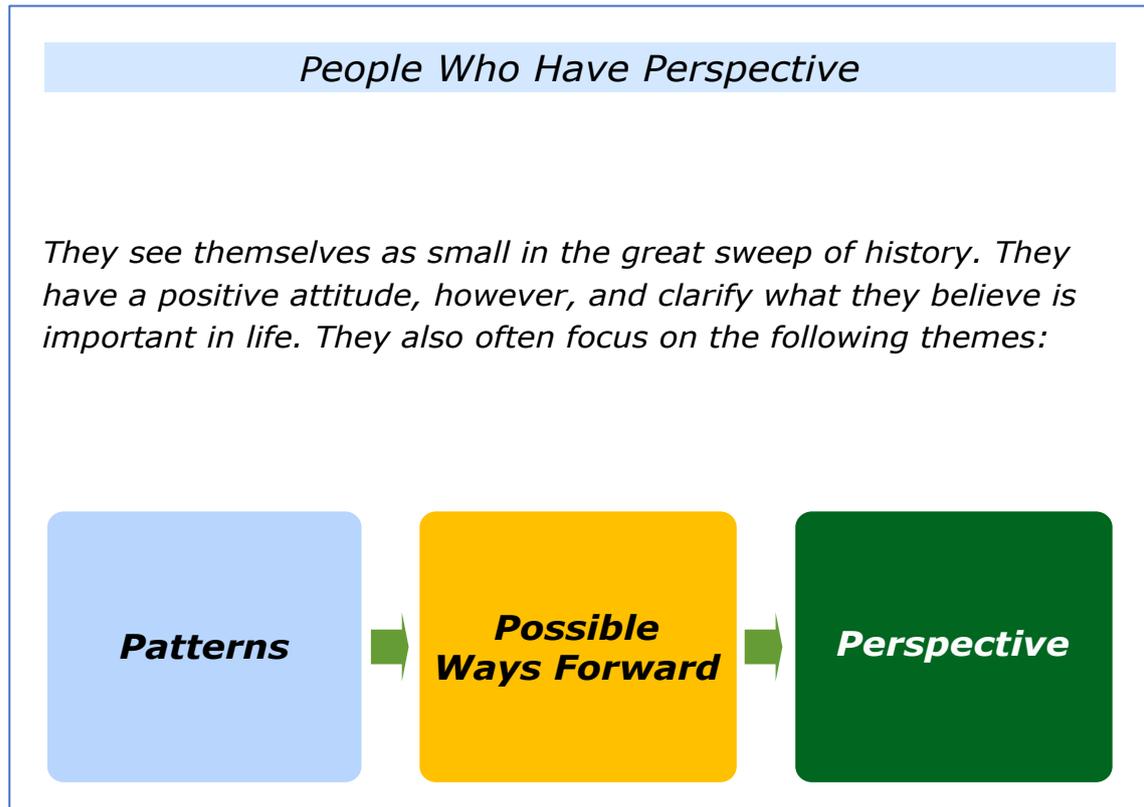
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Different people experience different journeys on the way to making their best contribution in life. Let's explore some approaches they may take.

## *The Sense Of Perspective Approach*



Many people develop a sense of perspective as they get older. They see themselves as small in the great sweep of history, but they also recognise that their actions have consequences. The things they do can help or hurt both present and future generations.

Such people clarify what they believe is important in life and keep focusing on those priorities. They then aim to do their best during their time on the planet.

They sometimes focus on a particular topic. Gathering information, they see patterns. They also see the possible ways forward and the potential consequences. They then try to see the big picture and maintain the ability to see things in perspective.

Such people may be asked to share knowledge when acting as mentors, trusted advisors or in other roles. They may then go through the following steps with the person.

*They invite the person to pause, explain the topics they want to explore and clarify the real results they want to achieve – the picture of success.*

*They explore or explain the possible options for going forward – together with the consequences of each option – when working towards achieving the picture of success.*

*They then, if appropriate, pass on knowledge and practical tools the person can use in their own way to achieve the picture of success.*

Different people develop a sense of perspective in different ways. Here are some of the routes they may take towards developing this ability.

### *People Who Have Perspective*

*Here are some of the routes that people may  
take towards developing a sense of perspective.*

- *They may recognise they are small in the great sweep of history but that their actions have consequences – both for themselves and other people.*
- *They may choose to have a positive attitude, clarify what they believe is important in life and aim to keep focusing on those priorities.*
- *They may have a sense of gratitude – being thankful for what they have been given – and want to be generous by giving to other people.*
- *They may have studied the human qualities that are most admired across many cultures – such as kindness and wisdom – and try to follow these principles in their own life.*

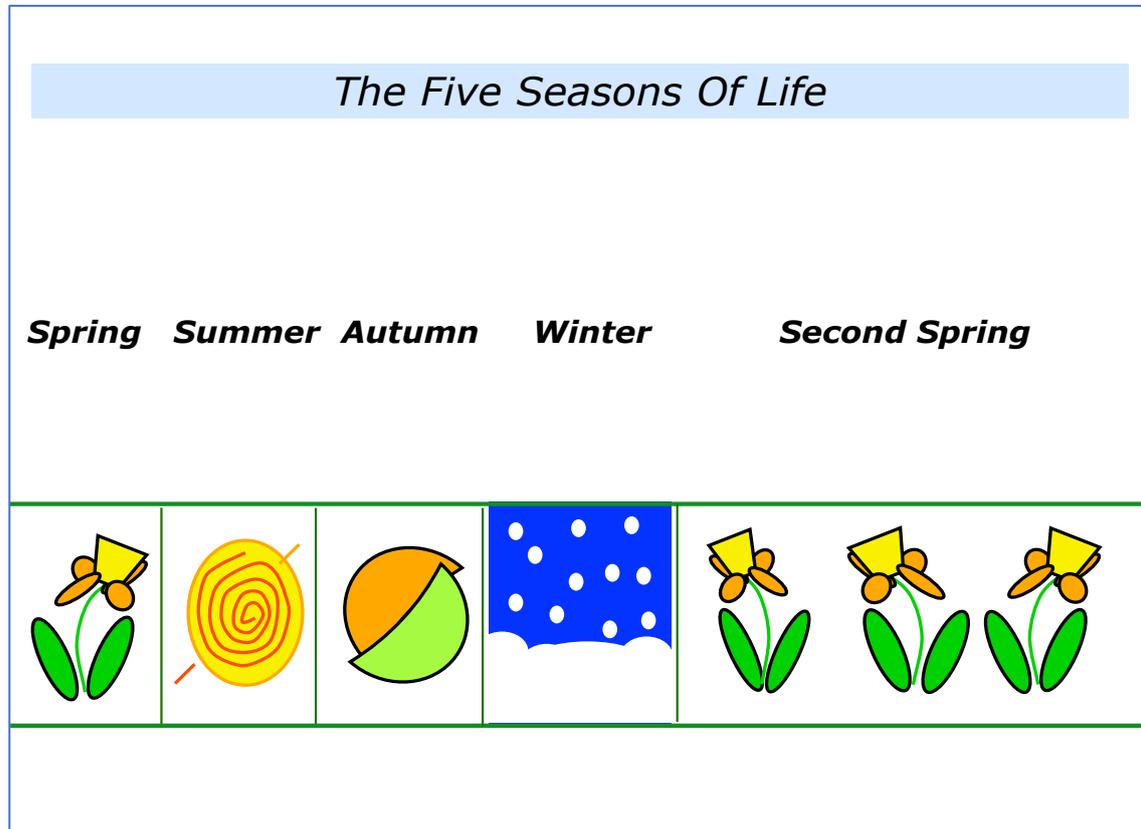
- *They may focus on what human beings have in common - such as wanting to be healthy, hopeful and happy - and how people can work together to achieve these common goals.*
- *They may have chosen to serve something greater than themselves – such as a spiritual faith, purpose or sense of vocation.*
- *They may have a personal philosophy that enables them to see events - such as successes or setbacks - in context and continue pursuing their chosen principles in life.*
- *They may want to continue to learn and make sense of life - such as by learning from experiences, teachers and books that help them to see things in perspective.*

- *They may have lived in many different cultures which has helped them to see things from different angles and also respect that there are many ways to live life.*
- *They may have experienced a sense of wonder and gained profound insights when being fully present in nature, witnessing beauty or seeing people perform brilliantly.*
- *They may have had life-changing experiences or epiphanies and have actually implemented what they learned from these times.*
- *They may have experienced vulnerabilities - such as illnesses or difficulties - that have reminded them about what is really important in life.*

- *They may have developed the ability to make good decisions by seeing the big picture, the many possible ways forward and the consequences of each option.*
- *They may have the ability to be systems thinkers - seeing patterns and connections - and want to build sustainable systems that achieve ongoing success.*
- *They may be compassionate and empathise with many living things - which leads to them wanting to care for people and the planet.*
- *They may feel humble when appreciating the vastness of the universe and want to do their best during their time on the planet.*

## *The Five Seasons Of Life Approach*

There are many models regarding the stages that people go through in life and how they develop perspective. Here is one approach that is based on the Five Seasons.



### *Spring And Summer*

Childhood is your first spring. The fields are green, the sky is blue and you can wander forever. Providing you are given encouragement, every day is an adventure. You can explore the world, discover your talents and follow your dreams.

Summer is a time for travelling, sitting in cafes and discussing how to change the world. Teenage years throb with idealism. Providing you receive guidance, you may be able to discover your vocation and what you can give to the world.

Looking back, what do you recall of these times? What were the positive things? What were the challenges? One woman said:

*"I had a wonderful childhood. This was despite having an illness that meant I had difficulty walking for several years. Even when I was in a wheelchair, my parents focused on what I could do.*

*"When I began walking again it was hard for me to do sports. So my parents spent time and money on us learning to sail together. This helped me to grow in confidence.*

*"My teenage years were a bit more difficult, because some people tried to bully me. But I found several close friends with whom I spent time.*

*"This was when I became interested in how technology could help people. I started by creating a chat room, which turned into a support network. The experience helped me later when creating my social media company. Nowadays we work with big companies and social enterprises. We help people to share knowledge and do good."*

## *Autumn And Winter*

Autumn is the time when a person may begin worrying about security. Perhaps idealism doesn't work after all; perhaps they had better get a proper job. Some people look for a life-partner, forget their life-passion and begin saving for a life-pension.

They get a mortgage, work hard and try to establish security. Providing they hit the company targets, they gain promotion and climb the corporate ladder.

At the same time, however, some people may gather more debts. Winter arrives. Sitting in a traffic jam one day, the person may say:

*"I am successful, but I am not happy. What can I do about it?"*

Failing to see an immediate answer, they may numb themselves and work to gain another promotion. One day another wake-up call

arrives. They hear about a school friend who has died. Reflecting, they embark on the existential journey travelled by many people over the years. They ask:

*"What do I want to do with the rest of my life? How can I follow this path? When do I want to begin?"*

A savvy person may stay in their job but also begin pursuing a parallel strategy. They explore how they can build on their strengths, do satisfying work and get a reasonable salary.

They learn how to channel their personality rather than change their personality. People develop, they don't change. A rose can become a better rose, it cannot become a daffodil. The message is:

*"Be who you are, only more so."*

The person says 'Yes,' to spending time with positive people and 'No,' to negative people. They do more of the things they love. Winter is tough, but it can also be beautiful. Here comes the sun.

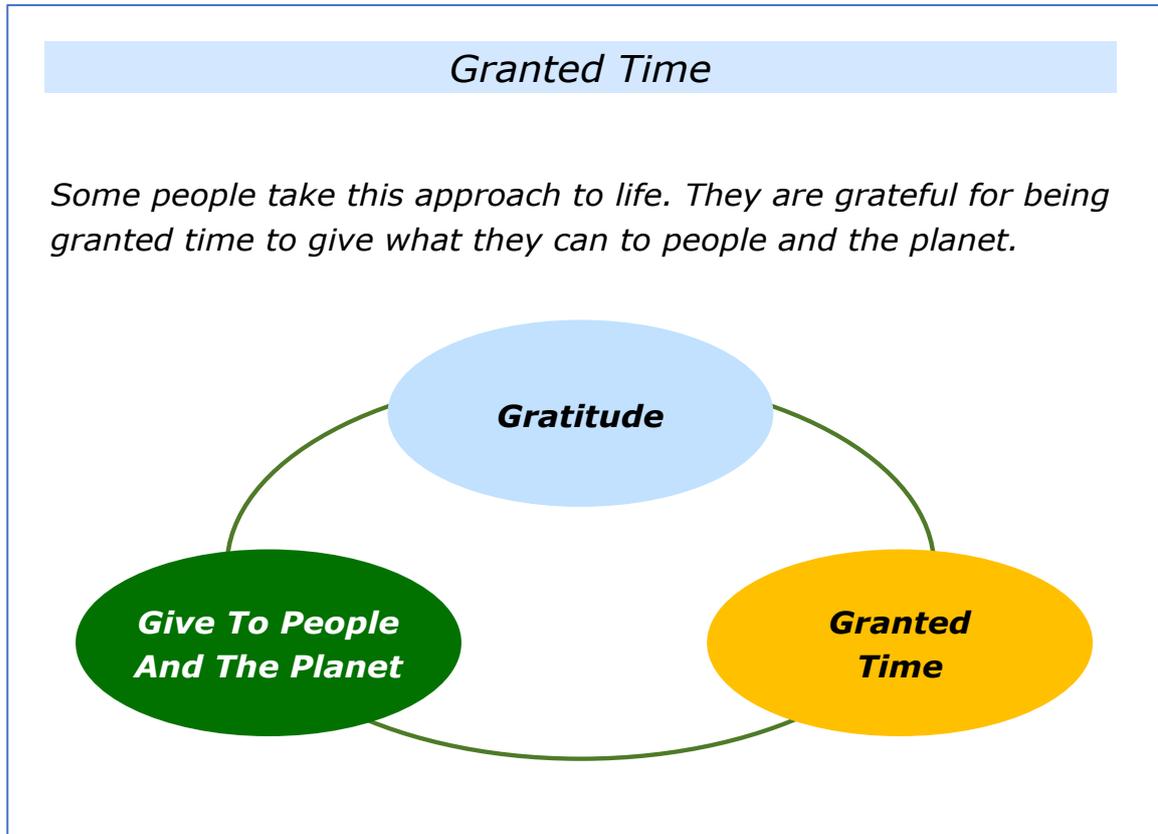
### *Second Spring*

Choosing to live life, a person may decide to make the most of their Second Spring. They recapture their zest and feel alive. They do what they want, dress the way they want and spend time with the people they want. Life is for living and they enjoy every day. That doesn't mean everything is rosy.

The person has stronger control needs but accepts there are some things they can't control. They do good work in their chosen garden - the things they can influence - whilst contributing toward building a better world.

The Second Spring is a time to plant seeds that encourage present and future generations. A person may not see these blossom, but that doesn't matter. Their flowers may grow tomorrow.

## *The Granted Time Approach*

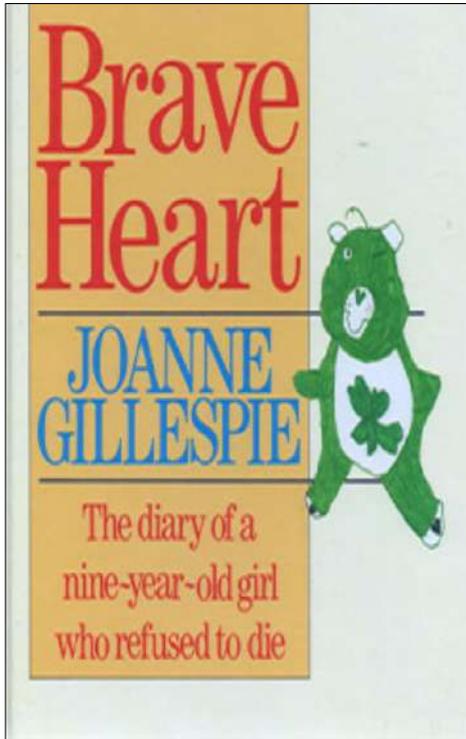


Some people appreciate life and see every day as an opportunity to help others. Many people embrace this approach as they get older. Some learn it much earlier in life.

Such people are grateful for being granted time to give what they can to others. They feel want to encourage people, pass on knowledge and plant seeds of hope during their remaining time on the planet.

Joanne Gillespie embodied this approach when appearing on Terry Wogan's television programme in 1988. She was ten at the time and had just finished writing a book about her experience of cancer. She expressed this in the following way

*I have only one life and I am going to live it as long as I am here. You have got to face the fact that you have got a tumour or cancer, but it is not just you who have it. There are thousands of other people like us who have it.*



*I decided to write this book because when I was frightened and not sure of myself in hospital there was nothing for me to read.*

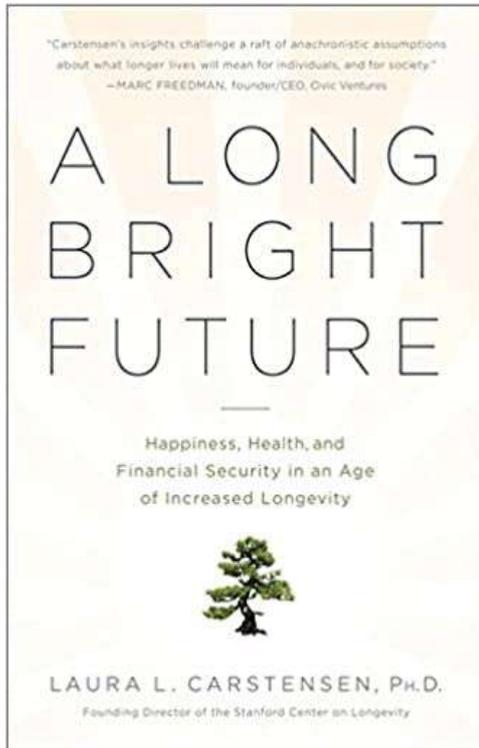
*There were books for grown-ups but there were none for children.*

*So, I decided to write this book for children who are like me feeling frightened and ill.*

*And I hope it will help them to feel a bit more sure of themselves.*

Joanne lived for another five years. She and her family created a fund that raised more than £150,000. This was used to buy medical equipment that helped children around the world.

Many elders focus on what they believe is important in life. This often involves giving to others as well as enjoying the moment. Laura Carstensen, an expert on longevity, explains the reasons for this in her book *A Long Bright Future*.



*When we recognize that we don't have all the time in the world, we see our priorities most clearly.*

*We take less notice of trivial matters; we savour her life.*

*We're more appreciative; we're open to reconciliation.*

*We invest in more emotionally important parts of life, and life gets better.*

Laura has given many interviews about the characteristics demonstrated by people as they get older. The following section includes some of her quotes on this theme.

*The paradox of aging is that recognising that we won't live forever changes our perspective on life in positive ways. When people recognize the fragility of life and they don't have all the time in the world. People see what's good about life.*

*Older people count their blessings because they've had enough life experience to recognize them. They direct their cognitive resources, like attention and memory, to positive information more than negative.*

*Mentally sharp older adults show this positivity the most. Under conditions where it really matters, older people process negative information just as well as the positive information.*

*Increasing positivity with age can be explained by the idea that people's time horizons grow shorter as they approach their later years. Young adults in their 20s tend to see their futures as limitless, whereas older adults perceive more constraints on time.*

*This shortened sense of time makes people focus on goals that can be realized in the here and now. These tend to be about emotion, or what feels good, rather than engaging in activities that may pay off much later.*

*Now it's really too simplistic to say that older people are "happy." In our study, they are more positive. But they're also more likely than younger people to experience mixed emotions - sadness at the same time you experience happiness; you know, that tear in the eye when you're smiling at a friend.*

*And other research has shown that older people seem to engage with sadness more comfortably. They're more accepting of sadness than younger people are.*

*We suspect that this may help to explain why older people are better than younger people at solving hotly charged emotional conflicts and debates. Older people can view injustice with compassion, but not despair.*

*As we age, our time horizons grow shorter and our goals change. When we recognize that we don't have all the time in the world, we see our priorities most clearly. We invest in more emotionally important parts of life, and life gets better, so we're happier day-to-day.*

Different people choose to take this approach at different ages. Joanne was young when she chose to be grateful and help children. Other people choose to be grateful and give to others later in life.

Let's return to your own life. If you wish, how can you continue to follow elements of this approach? Looking ahead, what do you want to give to people during the time you are granted on the planet?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Granted Time*

*The specific things I want to do during the time I have been granted to give to people and the planet are:*

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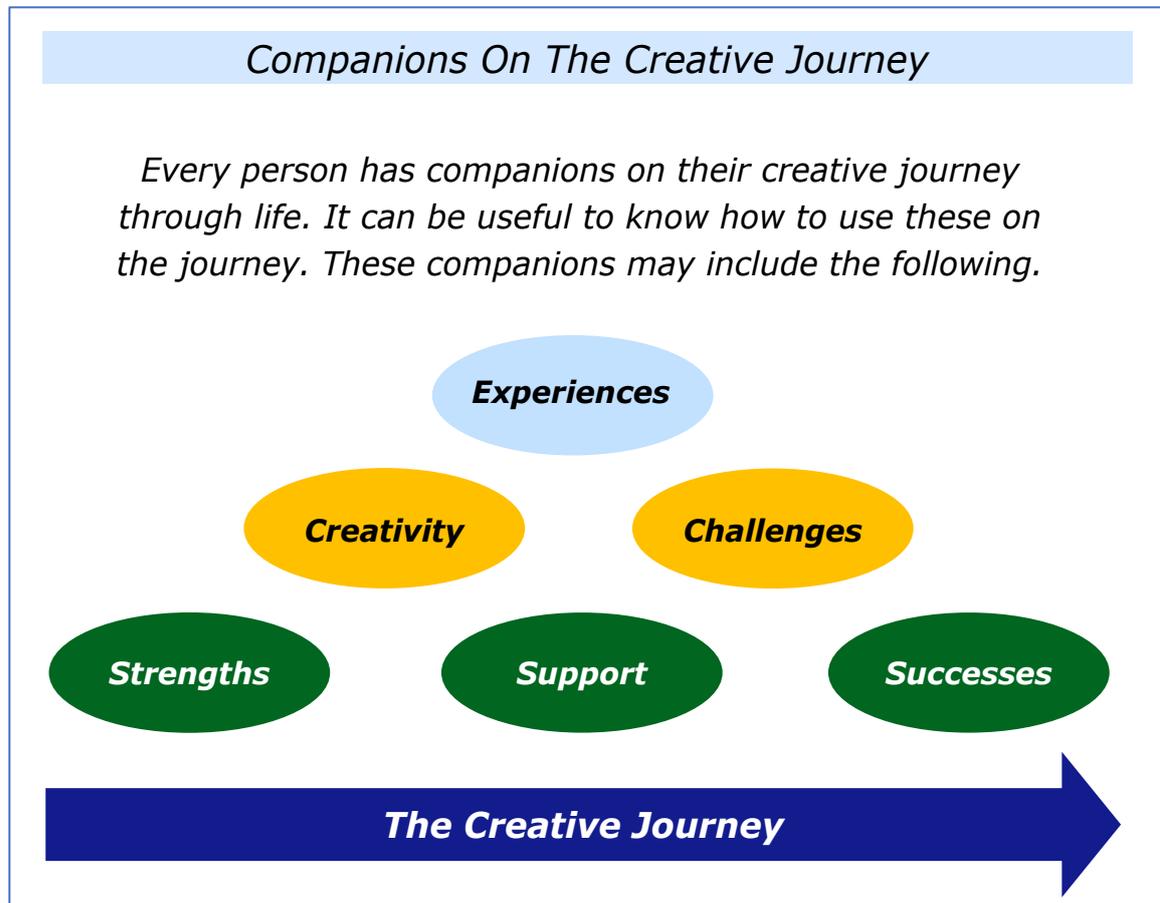
*The specific benefits – both for myself and for other people – of doing these things may be:*

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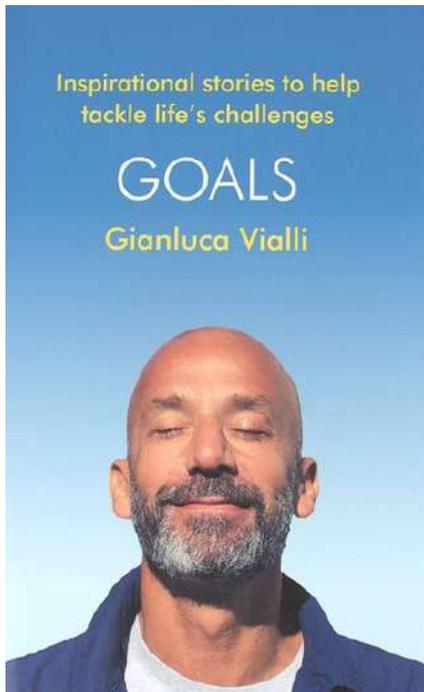
## *The Companions On The Creative Journey Approach*



There are many ways to view our experiences. One approach is to see these as companions we have during our creative journey in life. These may be with us throughout our time on the planet.

This approach is different from seeing events as bringing ups and downs, triumphs and tragedies. It is to see our strengths and experiences as things we can use in a positive way.

Different people apply this approach in different ways. Let's look at one example.



*Gianluca Vialli:*

*"I tell people that I don't see cancer as a fight because the enemy is too powerful to beat.*

*"I see it as a journey with an unwanted travel companion, one that I will eventually outlast.*

*"This is my approach, people may not think the same way but I feel strong about it."*

Gianluca Vialli has known many successes in his footballing life. Since then he has also passed on the lessons he learned during his journey with pancreatic cancer.

This led to him publishing *Goals: Inspirational stories to help tackle life's challenges*. The following sections provides excerpts from an interview he gave to Donald McRae for the Guardian newspaper.

*Vialli is remarkably comfortable in this interview, even when reflecting on the closeness of death and revealing that he now faces tests every three months to check whether he is still clear of the disease.*

*"I found out that pancreatic cancer is one of the worst cancers. So I was shocked, confused, helpless, hopeless. But it helped that I'd been an athlete. For me it was about setting goals. I also know that nothing is permanent and it will all pass."*

*Vialli would learn another brutal truth. Remission can be temporary. His cancer came back in March 2019.*

*"We thought everything was going OK. And then, all of a sudden, you get a temperature. You go for a blood test and they say: 'Let's make sure there's nothing sinister.' I found out then. It was back."*

*"We in sport portray ourselves as tough guys that could deal with anything without showing any weakness. But I now realise the power of vulnerability and that, actually, it can be a powerful tool to get inside people's hearts."*

*"It creates empathy – and empathy is everything. I'm not ashamed of saying we all cry – sometimes because we are scared."*

*"In my case I was crying because I was scared of the unknown. I did not know whether I was going to be fine or not. It's different than if you cry because you've lost a match."*

*"I've learned that gratitude is a very powerful emotion. And I'm very grateful to many wonderful people – my wife and family and all the people who have looked after me. They're not just competent and knowledgeable."*

*"They really feel what you're going through and there's a great deal of empathy. I'm looked after at the Royal Marsden in Chelsea. It's an amazing hospital."*

*"Life is 10 per cent what happens to you, 90 per cent is the way we react. I connected that mantra with a friend of mine, Alex Zanardi, a former formula one driver."*

*"He had an accident, both legs were amputated but he didn't disappear off the map. He planned to become a very successful Paralympian, winning several gold medals. It shows you can turn something negative into something positive, get on with life and be happy."*

*"My friends, people who eventually knew about my condition, said: 'Come on, you're going to win this fight. You can beat cancer.' I always felt I didn't want to fight cancer, because it would be too big and powerful an enemy.*

*"I felt this is a journey. It's about the right therapies and the right doctors. It's about travelling with an unwanted travel companion until hopefully it gets bored and dies before me.*

*"This is my approach, people may not think the same way but I feel strong about it."*

*"I am positive personally. I am also positive about the world. The Covid crisis will pass. What I'd like to see next is that we do not forget these lessons.*

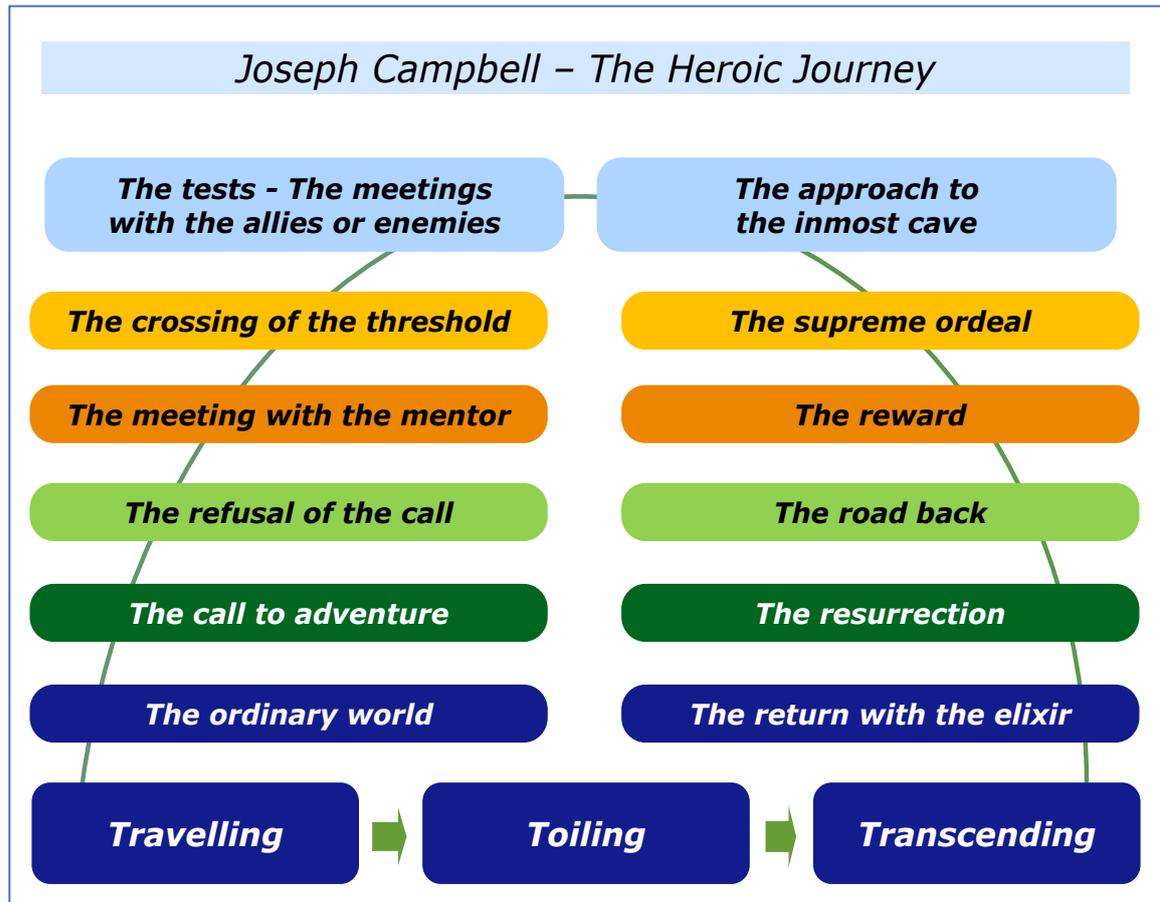
*"If you look at climate change we have a chance to do something about it. We are now saying health is the most important thing.*

*"Why, once the virus is gone, would we go back to living in a place where the air is so polluted? Why don't we prevent people getting sick and dying from pollution?"*

*"Surely we should be prepared to give up a little bit of our wealth, our so-called quality of life, for a safer and healthier planet? I feel very strongly about this kind of future."*

Every person has companions on their journey in life. They have strengths they can use, support from people and successes along the way. They also have creativity they can use to manage the challenges they face.

Every person has many experiences. It is up to them how they use these events and the emotions they encounter. They can choose to use these in a positive or negative way. Let's look at a well-known example of this approach.



Many people now know about Joseph Campbell's work on the heroic journey. It is still worth revisiting, however, because it describes some of the companions we may meet when pursuing our chosen journeys.

People have always wanted to follow their dreams. Sometimes the odyssey involves an outer journey, sometimes an inner journey, sometimes a combination of both. Reaching the goal produces a sense of peace. They rest for a while - then embark on another journey.

Pursuing such journeys often involves building on your strengths and being tested on your weaknesses. There are many psychological models for understanding this journey. But insights can be also gained from Joseph's work.

Studying myths and legends from many civilisations, he found they often followed a similar structure. He described this in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

His writings were popularised by Christopher Vogler in his book *The Writer's Journey*. This became a set text for budding writers across the world. George Lucas brought Campbell's work to an even wider audience, however, when paying homage to it as the director of Star Wars.

The heroic journey involves many stages. But let's explore three overall steps that people take when pursuing their chosen journey.

### *Travelling – setting-out on the journey towards the Grail*

You may be content in your world, but then comes the call to pursue an adventure or tackle a challenge. For example, you may lose your job, get an illness, see an injustice or catch a glimpse of the Holy Grail.

At first you refuse the call but, after repeated asking, you embark on the journey. Now you are in a different world and do not know the rules, so you gather information and search for a compass.

Looking for guidance, you will meet helpers: but are they friends or enemies? Nevertheless, you continue on your chosen path.

### *Toiling – working hard on the journey towards the Grail*

You encounter tests on the journey: toils, trials and tribulations. There are highs, lows, breakthroughs and setbacks, but you try to keep your eyes on the Grail.

Christopher Vogler's book shows how film plots often follow the structure that Joseph Campbell found in myths and legends. He writes:

*"A hero leaves her comfortable, ordinary surroundings to venture into a challenging, unfamiliar world.*

*"It may be an outward journey to an actual place: a labyrinth, forest or cave, a strange city or country, a new locale that becomes the arena for her conflict with antagonistic, challenging forces..."*

*"But there are many stories that take the hero on an inward journey, one of the mind, the heart, the spirit.*

*"In any good story the hero grows and changes, making a journey from one way of being to the next: from despair to hope, weakness to strength, folly to wisdom, love to hate, and back again.*

*"It's these emotional journeys that hook an audience and make a story worth watching."*

(The Heroine's Journey is similar to The Hero's Journey, but with one vital difference. Women gather knowledge and wisdom from the tribe earlier. Men only ask for help at the last moment. Even then they may see it as a sign of weakness.)

Overcoming challenges, you finally stand on the edge of victory. You venture into what Campbell calls the inmost cave and face the supreme ordeal.

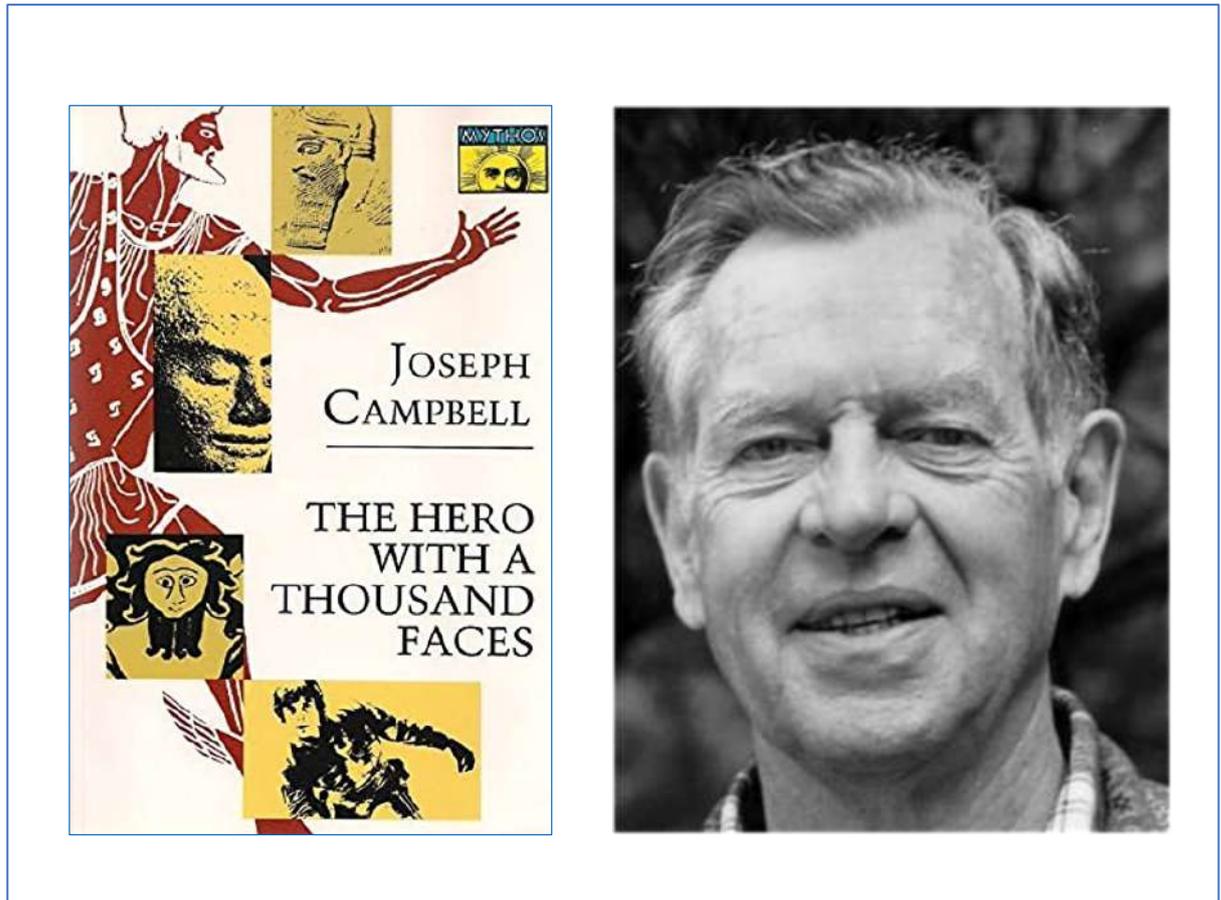
How will you behave in this moment of truth? For example, will you be generous or will you submit to greed? Will you fight, flee or flow?

### *Transcending – lifting the Grail and gathering wisdom from the journey*

You can only do your best, so you do the right thing. Sometimes you will lift the prize; sometimes you will simply gather wisdom for a future journey. You may enjoy a moment of transcendence - an epiphany - and see the world as if for the first time.

The Hero/Heroine sometimes returns with the prize, but first there is the journey home. This is the return to the ordinary world.

How can you make sense of what you have learned? Will people be able to understand? That is when the wisdom begins to seep into your bones and you are changed forever.



Joseph Campbell says people take one of three routes after returning to the world.

*They may share their vision, but the world does not want to know, so they retreat back to the woods, with a dog and a pipe.*

*They may meet resistance, become disheartened, and revert to the world's way.*

*They may make a living by becoming, in the broadest sense, a teacher and pass-on their message to people who are receptive.*

Days, weeks and months pass. You rest for a while, but then you become restless. There is another mountain to climb, another adventure to pursue. So you embark on your next chosen journey. Or does the journey choose you?

Let's return to you own life and work. What may be the different kinds of companions you have on your creative journey? How can you, as far as possible, use these in a positive way? What may happen as result of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences

## *The Companions On The Creative Journey*

*The companions I may have on the creative journey I take through life may be:*

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*The specific things I can do to – as far possible, use these in a positive way are:*

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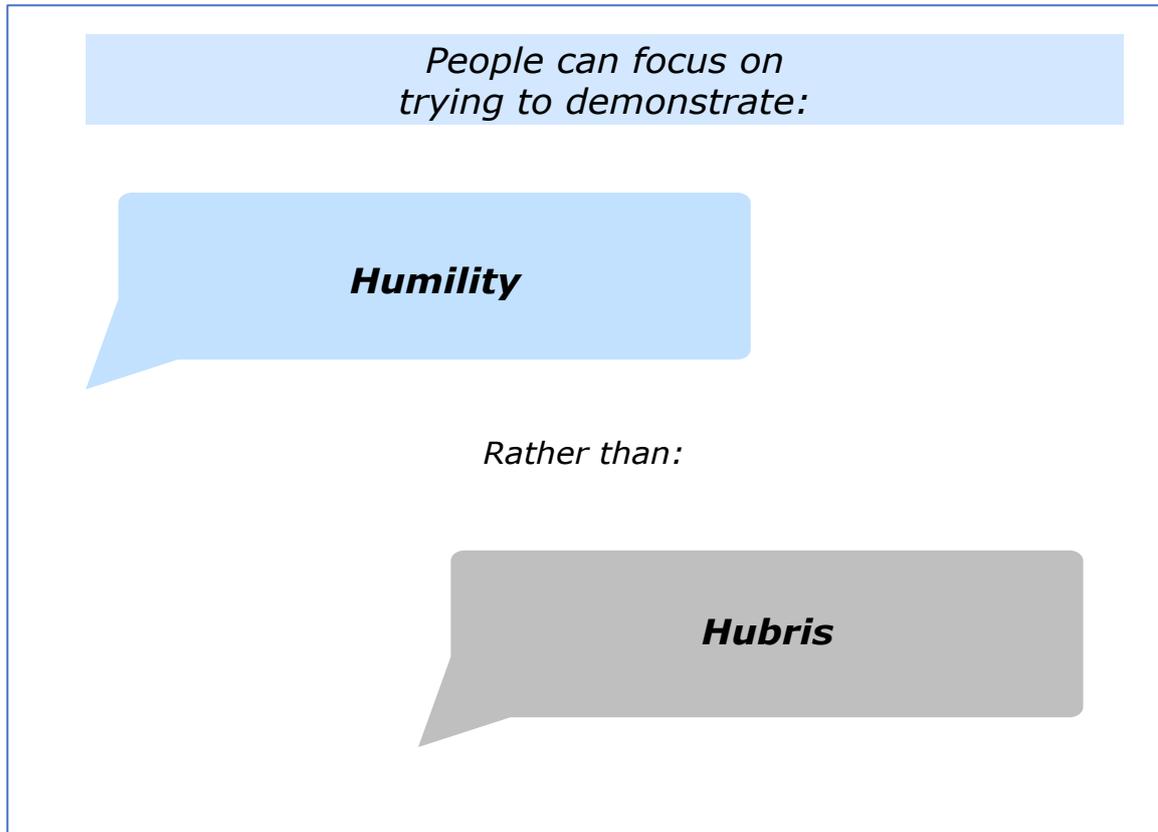
*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking this approach may be:*

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## *The Humility Rather Than Hubris Approach*



People make choices every minute. One of the choices they make is to demonstrate humility rather than hubris. Humility is a lifelong quest. Like wisdom, as soon as you think you have got it, you haven't.

Humble people want to serve others and serve life. They want to help others to succeed. On the other hand, some people present themselves with hubris. They aim to be superior, saying they are market leaders or inflating their efforts.

Looking back, can you think of a situation where you aimed to be humble? You may have aimed to serve others or serve life.

Maybe you were humble or maybe there were things you could do better next time. Overall, however, you tried to contribute in a humble way. Humble people often subscribe to the following view.

*Life Is Something Beautiful*

*Before you were born, you were part of the universe.  
After you die, you will be part of the universe.  
Life is something beautiful, that happens in-between.*

Looking ahead, how do you think you can demonstrate humility?  
How can you try to avoid hubris? Here are some themes that  
individuals explore when answering these questions.

*Humility. The things I can do to  
try to demonstrate humility are:*

*To be kind ... To be grateful for life each day ... To serve something  
greater than myself ... To use my strengths to help other people ...  
To maintain a sense of humour and not take myself seriously –  
even though the work I do may be serious.*

*Hubris. The things I can do  
to try to avoid hubris are:*

*To not take credit for the things I do ... To learn from my mistakes  
... To credit other people for the work they do ... To recognise that I  
am small in the great scheme of things ... To balance the paradox of  
accepting myself but also keep improving.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you  
to complete the following sentences.

## *The Humility Rather Than Hubris Approach*

*Humility. The specific things I can do try to demonstrate humility in the future are:*

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*Hubris. The specific things I can do try to avoid hubris in the future are:*

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## *The Facilitator Rather Than Fame Approach*

### *The Facilitator Rather Than Fame Approach*

*Different people choose to follow different routes in their work. There are pluses and minuses to each route.*

- *Some people want to be facilitators.*
- *Some people want to be famous.*
- *Some people do work which they and others contribute to that, as a by-product, becomes famous.*

There are many ways to do fine work. Some people choose to be facilitators rather than seek fame. Some strive to become famous. Some do work which they and other contribute to that, as a by-product, becomes famous.

Some people go through these stages. They start by choosing to do work they love and help other people. At some point, however, they may aim to gain fame.

Some people stay at that stage. They become addicted to getting applause or winning prizes. This sounds good, but it can come at a cost.

Some people move on from this stage. They have had enough of fame and return to being facilitators. They love doing work which

contributes to helping others succeed. Sometimes this work becomes respected and well-known.

Let's explore each of these routes. There are, of course, pluses and minuses to each route.

### *People who want to be facilitators*

There are several definitions of facilitation. Here we are looking at facilitators who help people to bring something into being, solve problems or achieve success.

There are also many kinds of facilitators. The approach a person takes often involves them building on their strengths and helping people to achieve success.

One approach is to act as a classic facilitator. This involves drawing things out of people and clarifying their aims. It then involves helping them to channel their efforts to achieve their goals.

There are many other ways to act as a facilitator. A person may demonstrate the characteristics of a midwife, counsellor, educator, coach, coordinator, orchestrator, producer, director, mentor, leader or play another role.

Different facilitators behave in different ways, but many take the following steps. Bearing in mind their strengths, they use their skills:

*To help people to feel at ease and formulate their goals.*

*To provide a framework that enables people to work towards their goals.*

*To help people to achieve their goals and gain a sense of fulfilment.*

People who take this route often use their strengths to help others to achieve success. Sometimes it can take years before they find their preferred way of working.

Some people choose to apply their skills in face-to-face situations. They may provide counselling, therapy, coaching, mentoring or working sessions.

Some people apply their skills by using several different vehicles. Good educators, for example, may help others through individual sessions, workshops or doing keynote speeches.

Such people may also produce models, articles and books that people can use to facilitate their own growth. They pass on knowledge that others can apply in their own ways to achieve success.

Some people apply their facilitation skills by acting as sports coaches, producers, orchestrators or in other roles. They then encourage people to follow a framework that enables them to channel their talents and achieve fulfilment.

People who want to be facilitators love their work. There are, of course, both pluses and minuses to this route.

The potential pluses include the following. Serving something greater than themselves; following their philosophy or vocation; using their strengths; going into a safe but satisfying role; helping people to succeed; continuing to learn; being on a life-long journey of continuous improvement.

The potential minuses include the following. Sometimes not getting recognition; sometimes working with unmotivated people; sometimes not seeing a positive result.

## *People who want to be famous*

Some people are driven to be famous. This is understandable when working in a competitive area such as music, the arts, sports or other fields. Sometimes gaining fame is the passport to paying the mortgage as well as pursuing their mission.

Some people want to gain fame in other fields, such as coaching, consultancy or education. They focus on developing what they call their personal brand or aim to win prizes.

Such an approach can have both upsides and downside. This is even the case in fields where fame is a passport to riches. One singer I worked with expressed this in the following way.

*"I spent five years living with friends when I was writing songs and also doing grunt work in the music industry. Then two things happened.*

*"First, one of my songs was recorded by a top artist and sold millions. Second, I recorded a song and it also became a huge hit. It took a while for the money to come in, but then I was a multi-millionaire.*

*"This was great for a while. I did the usual things, buying a house for my parents, getting cars and being the centre of attention at musical events. But then things went downhill.*

*"I did not get into drugs or things like that, but I no longer felt a sense of purpose. My aim had been to make hit records. Whilst I could still do that, I wanted to do something more.*

*"Even though I seem outgoing on stage, I actually go into role. I am really an introvert and find it difficult with people expecting me to live up to my image.*

*"Eventually I found a new mission, donating a percentage of my new record sales to feeding the homeless in my home city. This also spurs me to write new songs.*

*"I now spend a lot of time writing and recording songs in my studio. I am almost back to what I was doing ten years ago, but now I have the money to do it in my own way."*

People who strive to be famous may or may not achieve feel fulfilled. There are both pluses and minuses to this route.

The potential pluses include the following. Gaining fame; being seen as a success; making money; getting affirmation; getting other fringe benefits.

The potential minuses include the following. Sometimes paying a heavy price; sometimes being untrue to themselves; sometimes striving to stay at the top; sometimes fearing it will all go away; sometimes giving up their privacy; sometimes falling into seeking affirmation, whatever the cost.

*People who do work which they  
and others contribute to that,  
as a by-product, becomes famous*

Some of the sages I have met found their careers took this route. These have included educators, therapists, medical consultants, peace workers and people in other fields. Their careers sometimes shared the following characteristics.

*They built on their strengths and loved helping people to learn, become healthy or achieve certain goals.*

*They provided frameworks that facilitated people's development and helped them to achieve their goals.*

*They passed on their knowledge to students and professionals so that these people could then help others to achieve their goals.*

Success was another key factor. The work they did became well-known through books – written by themselves or others – radio, television or other media.

Such people often had an ambivalent feeling towards this happening. They experienced both pluses and minuses.

The pluses included the following. The work became well-known, reached many people and benefited people they would never meet personally. This led to more work opportunities and sometimes more funding.

The people with whom they collaborated gained recognition and improved their career prospects. The work also inspired many others who adapted the approach to help people across the world.

The minuses included the following. They found themselves in the limelight, which was not always a comfortable position. The work was sometimes unfairly criticised by others.

Imagine that you want to follow the facilitator rather than fame approach. What is the specific activity in which you would like to pursue this route?

How could you do this in your own way? How could you build on the pluses and manage any potential minuses? What may happen as a result?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Facilitator Rather Than Fame Approach*

*The specific activity in which I would like to follow this route is:*

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*The specific things I can do to follow this route are:*

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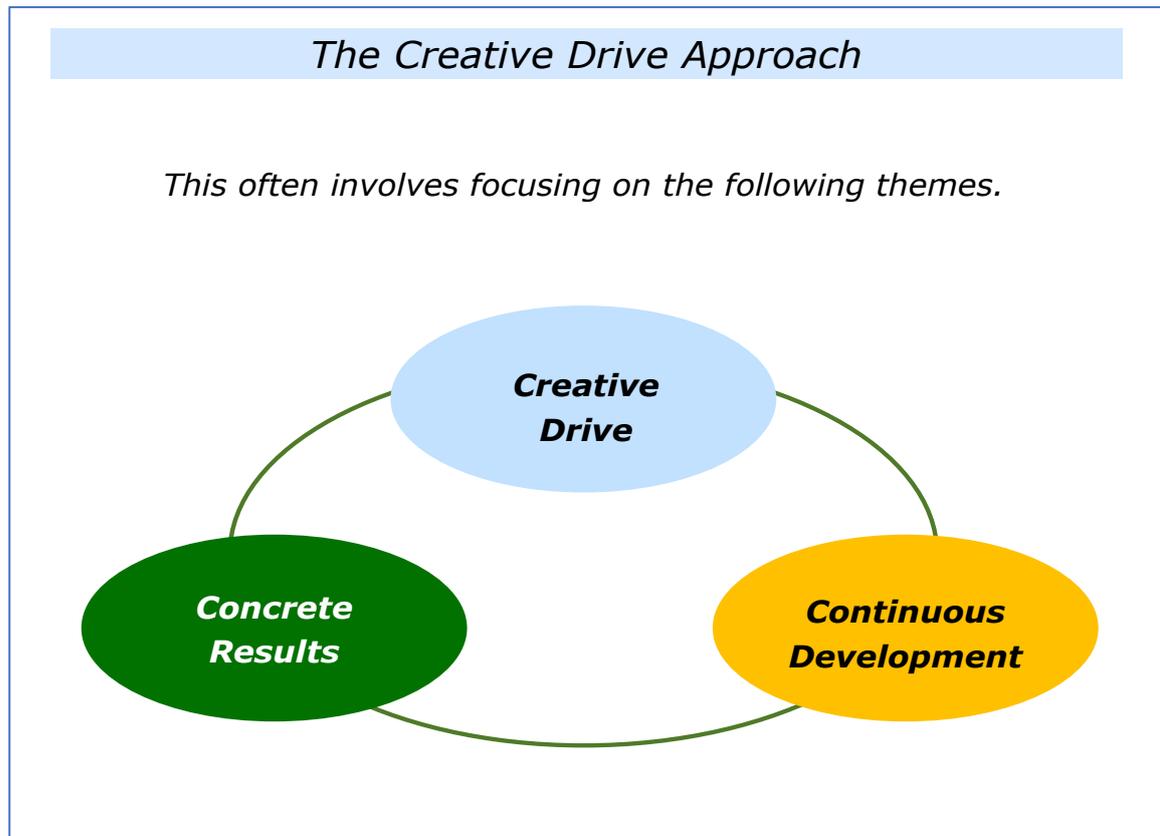
*The specific things I can do to build on the pluses and manage the minuses are:*

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## The Creative Drive Approach



What is the creative drive you love to follow? You may love to encourage people, cook, nurture your garden, to write stories or to do other activities. How can you continue to pursue this drive?

Some people seem are very creative in their Second Spring. Maggie Kuhn, for example, created the Gray Panther. The National Women's Hall Of Fame describe her work in the following way.

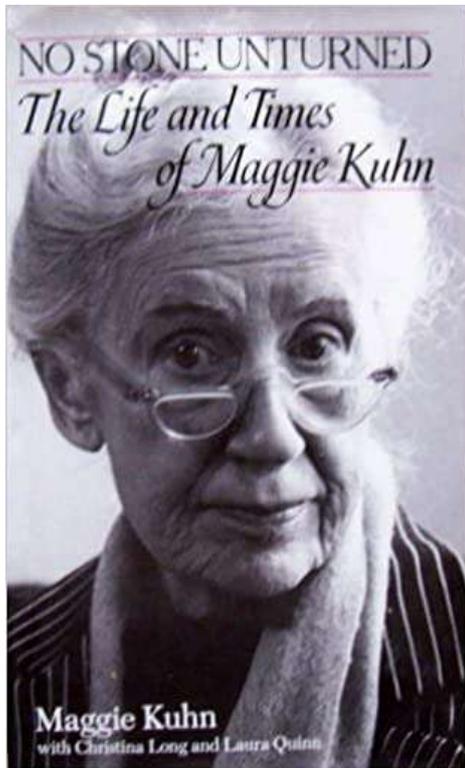
*In 1970, forced to retire from her career with the Presbyterian Church at age 65, Kuhn and a group of her friends in similar circumstances organized and founded an organization which became the Gray Panthers.*

*The organization was created to work on issues of concern to the elderly, such as pension rights and age discrimination, but also to concern itself with larger public issues, such as the Vietnam War and other social concerns.*

*Kuhn's candor, charisma and lively approach to the needs and problems of the old drew major media attention, and the group was successfully launched, coming to represent in the public mind that power and energy that the elderly can represent.*

*She is considered by many to have started nothing less than a contemporary cultural revolution, both in terms of redefining the meaning of age and through her insistence on 'young and old together.'*

Maggie continued to be outspoken. some of her best-known quotes.



*I'm an old woman. I have gray hair, many wrinkles, and arthritis in both hands.*

*And I celebrate my freedom from bureaucratic restraints that once held me.*

*Stand before the people you fear and speak your mind - even if your voice shakes.*

*There must be a goal at every stage of life! There must be a goal!*

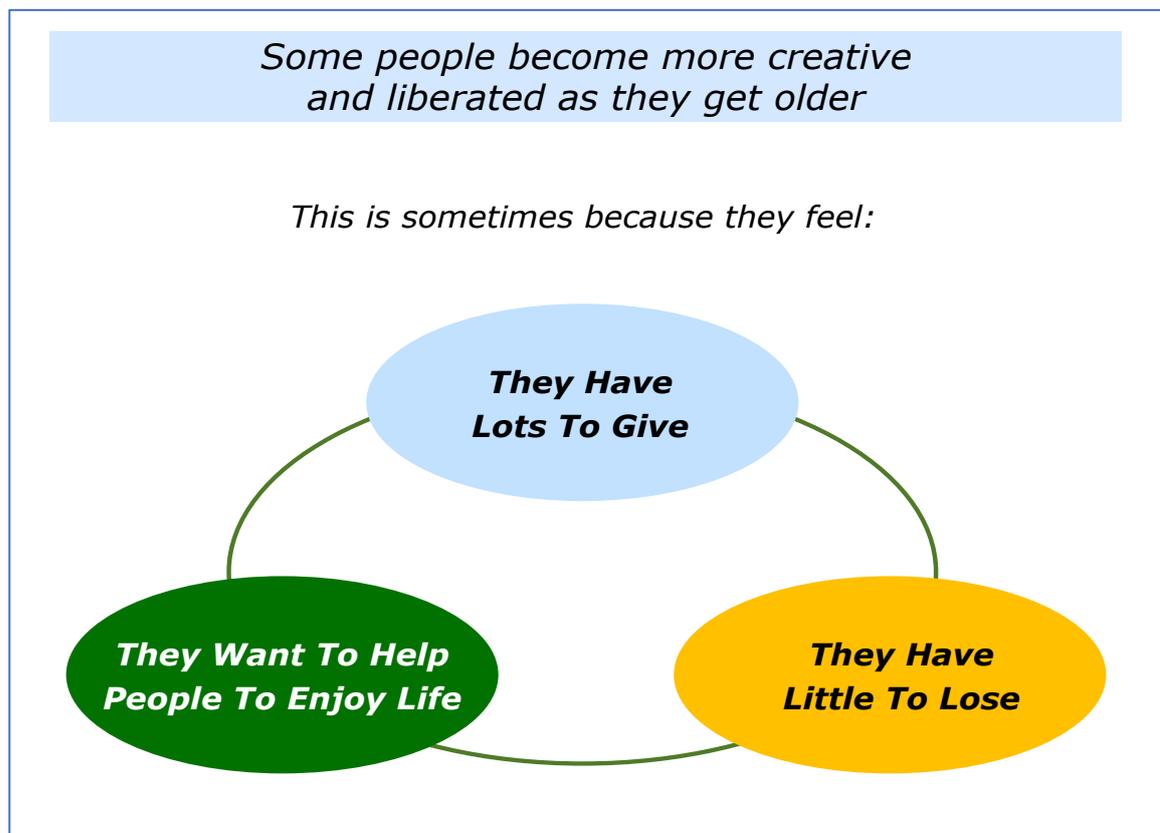
*"Old age is not a disease - it is strength and survivorship, triumph over all kinds of vicissitudes and disappointments, trials and illnesses.*

*"What I dream of and yearn for is that the Gray Panthers will continue to be on the cutting edge of social change, and that the*

*young and old together will continue to work for a just, humane and peaceful world.*

*"What I want on my tombstone: 'Here lies Maggie Kuhn under the only stone she left unturned.'"*

Some people seem to become more liberated as they get older. They feel they have a lot to give and little to lose. They also want to pass on knowledge and help people to enjoy life.



Looking ahead, what is the creative drive you want to follow? How can you continue to develop this drive? How do you want to deliver concrete results?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *My Creative Drive In The Future*

*The creative drive I want  
to follow in the future is:*

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*The specific things I want to do to follow  
and develop this creative drive are:*

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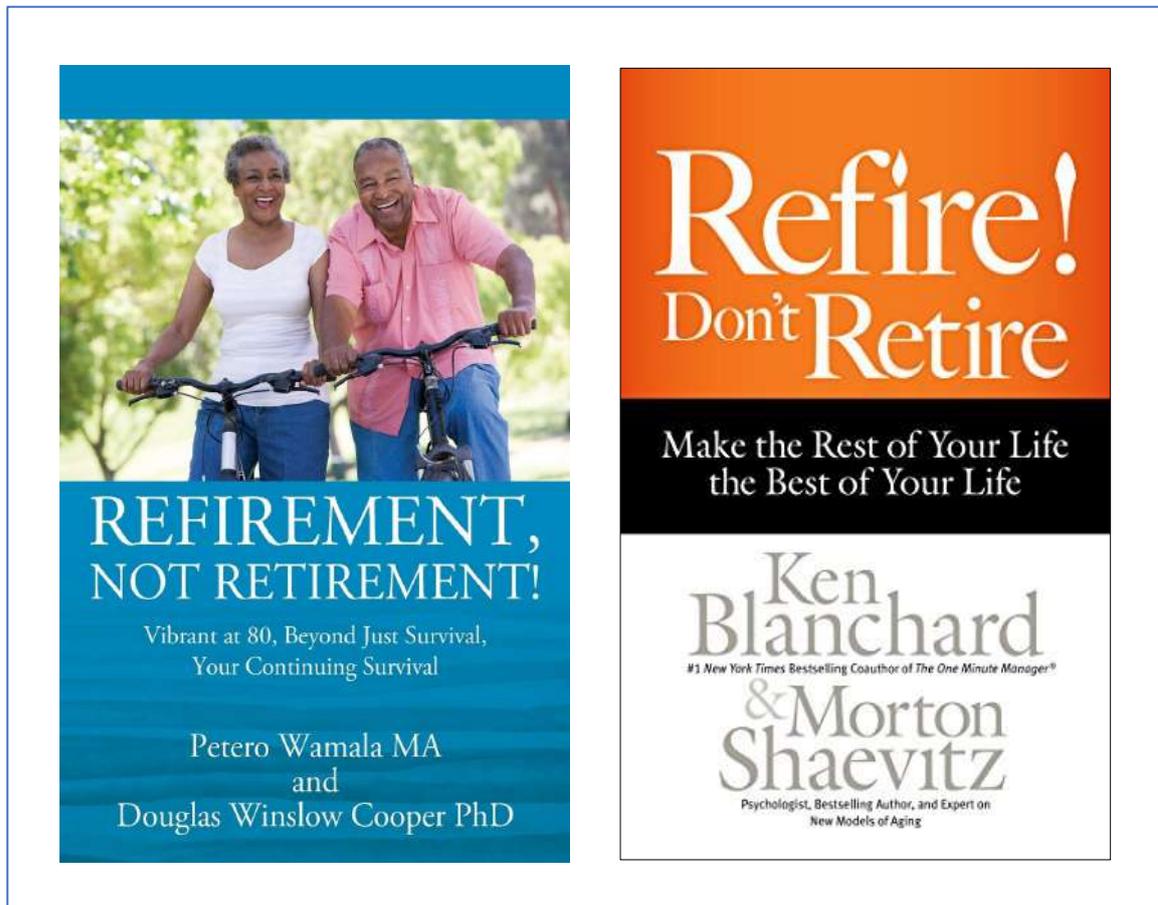
*The specific concrete results I  
would like to deliver when  
following this creative drive are:*

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## *The Refirement Rather Than Retirement Approach*



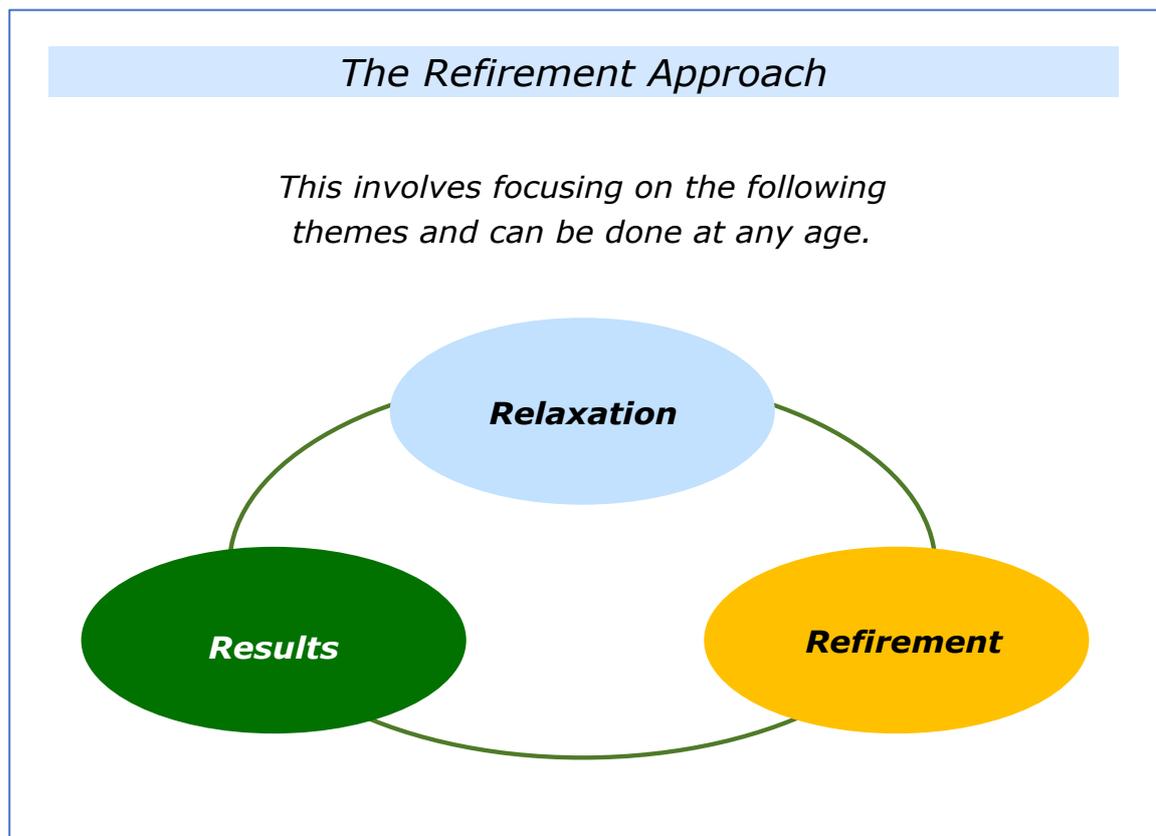
This is an approach that can be used by people at any age. It has gained popularity by focusing on seniors, but I have seen it applied by people at other stages of their lives. Here are some examples.

*The person who has just retired and wants to maintain a sense of purpose in their life.*

*The person who has reached a stage in their career where they feel disillusioned by working in certain kinds of organisations.*

*The person who feels tired, has given their all and is unsure about how they can shape their future life.*

Different people refire their lives in different ways. One approach is for them to focus on the following themes.



## ***Relaxation***

A person who has been going at full pelt may find it hard to relax. They may have been doing a regular commute and long hours spent working for an institution. Sometimes they may even need to give themselves permission to rest and reflect.

One person I worked with was released by his company one December and given enough money to last a year. Despite having a good financial runway, he found it hard to slow down. He said:

*"For the past thirty years I have always had a sales target to it. This will be the first Christmas when I have not been doing the sales plan for the year."*

People like to feel in control. This calls for being clear on their plan and then translating it into action. Those who have been going helter-skelter, however, may confuse activity with results.

A person may need to tackle some things urgently, of course, particularly if they must manage immediate challenges. At a certain point, however, it can be useful for them slow down, breathe deeply and recentre. They can then focus on their longer-term goals.

## *Refirement*

Different people choose different ways to revitalise themselves. One person may potter around and let their mind drift. This can lead to them exploring random thoughts and, paradoxically, discovering an idea that leads to them developing a new sense of purpose.

Another person may do things that give them positive energy. They may find these get their creative juices going and result in them choosing to pursue a certain project.

Another person do something they feel passionately about and aim to achieve a specific goal. They may then apply their professional skills to perform superb work and achieve peak performance.

## *Results*

Different people aim for different results. One person may want to regain their zest for life, develop a sense of gratitude and enjoy a sense of peace.

Another person may aim to do a project that helps people in their personal or professional lives. They may choose to follow a certain routine and keep going until they have achieved the desired results.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to focus on the themes of relaxation, refirement and results? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Refirement In The Future*

*The specific situation when I may want to focus on relaxation, refirement and results may be:*

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*The specific things I can do then to focus on these themes are:*

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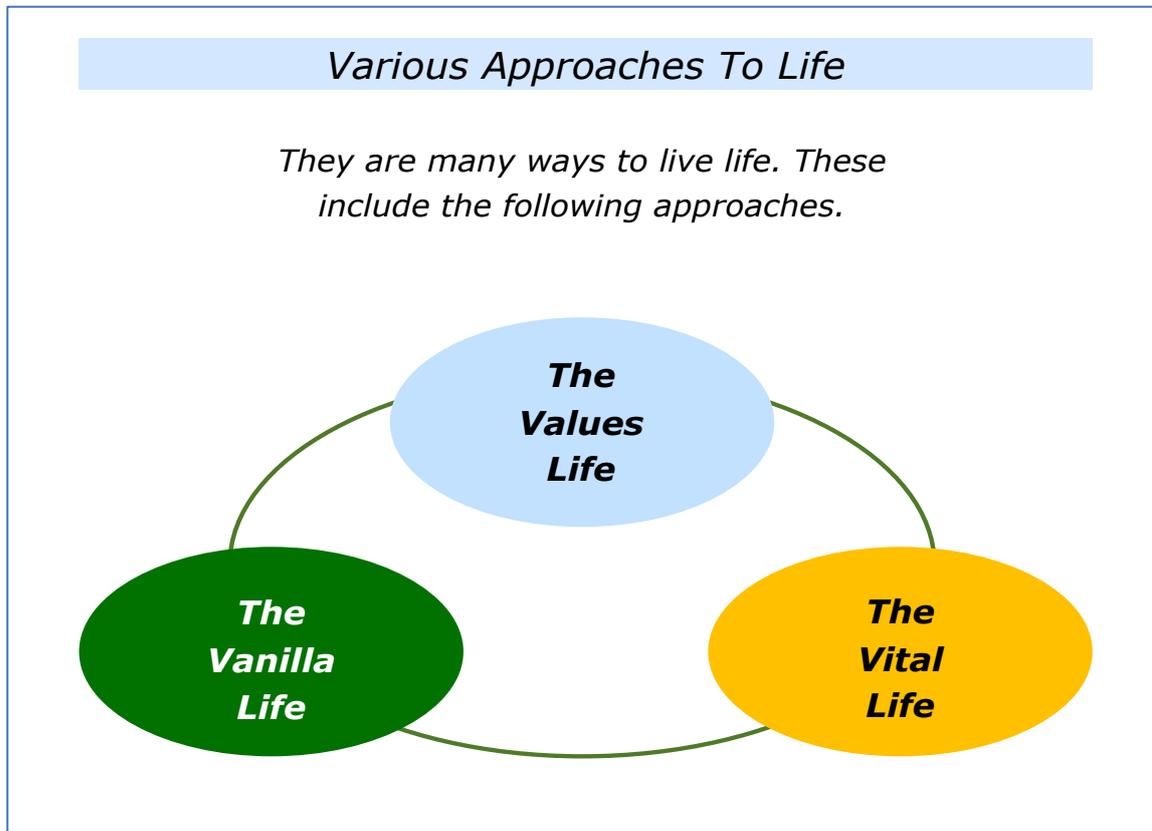
*The specific things that may happen as a result may be:*

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## *The Values Life, Vital Life And Vanilla Life Approaches*



There are many ways to live life. Some people experience the following stages in their lives. Some then choose to find a blend these ways. Let's explore these approaches.

### *The Values Life*

Some people aim to focus on their values and translate these into action. This is an approach that many young people aim to do when focusing on the eternal questions.

*Who am I? What do I believe in? What are my strengths? What do I want to do in my life? How can I do what I believe in and build a better world?*

Some people also return to this approach at various stages of their lives. They may do so after experiencing a crisis or taking time to reflect on what they want to do with the rest of their lives.

### *The Vital Life*

People often work best when they generate their creative juices. This often comes from living the vital life. Imagine that you want to take this approach. One person wrote:

*The vital life for me is:*

*Doing creative work ... Cooking fresh food ... Listening to jazz ...  
Mountain biking ... Skiing ... Walking by the sea ... Meeting friends ...  
Getting enough sleep ... Driving with the roof down.*

What is the vital life for you? How can you do more of these things in the future? What will be the benefits of doing these things?

### *The Vanilla Life*

Different people have different versions of this life. Sometimes living the vanilla life can be beneficial. Sometimes it can be boring and even disheartening.

Some people like to follow a predictable pattern and then, when appropriate, do something special. Some people who like excitement, however, can find such a life to be debilitating.

This was the case with one person with whom I worked. They wrote:

*The vanilla life for me is:*

*Sitting in boring meetings ... Staying in soulless hotels ... Eating tasteless hotel food ... Spending more than 3 nights a week away from home ... Listening to negative people ... Flying on business trips ... Spending a day without music.*

Exploring this together, we looked at how they could shift to do more of the things that gave them enjoyment. They said:

*"I am fed up with plain vanilla. Providing it doesn't hurt anybody, now and again I want to add a bit of Tutti Frutti."*

As mentioned earlier, sometimes vanilla is just fine. We all need stability and predictability in our lives.

As people get older, they sometimes move to getting the right blend. They then enjoy living the values, vital and vanilla lives.

## *The Sense Of Play Approach*

### *Retaining A Sense Of Play*

***Sometimes people can find it helpful to relearn to play. They can then learn on both the primary and secondary levels.***

***Sometimes they can learn from doing activities that involve deep play. They can then develop on many levels.***

This is an approach that some people return to later in life. It is also an approach that I sometime used during creativity workshops. The aims were to help people:

*To recapture the joy of exploring, learning and developing;*

*To clarify the learning on both a primary and secondary level;*

*To apply the learning to tackling challenges, setting goals and achieving success.*

People often enjoy a sense of play when they are doing things that give them positive energy. They may be pursuing their hobbies, painting, playing music, dancing, rebuilding cars or doing other activities.

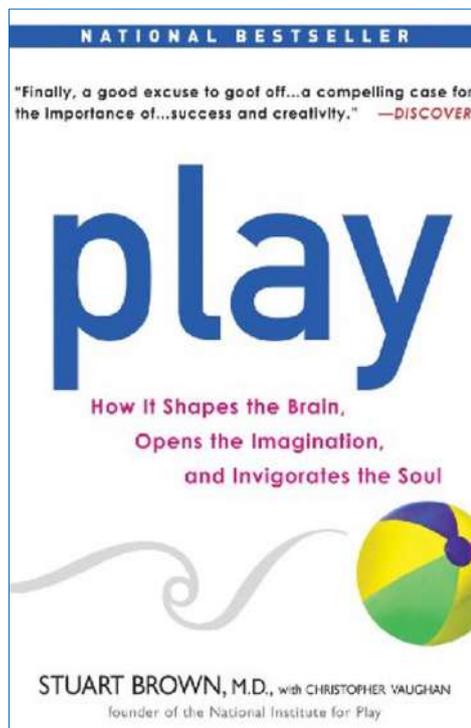
Play powers our imagination and help us to move forwards. Creative people retain this quality throughout their lives. As George Bernard Shaw wrote:

*"We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing."*

Sometimes there is nothing more serious than play. Great workers often translate this feeling into a pursuing a clear purpose, following their chosen principles and delivering peak performances.

### *The Benefits Of Play*

Many people recognise the link between creativity and play. Stuart Brown and Christopher Vaughan underlined this point in their book *Play: How it shapes the brain, opens the imagination and invigorates the soul*. They express this in the following way.



*Serious play is not an oxymoron. It is the essence of innovation.*

*The opposite of play is not work. It is depression.*

*Play helps to revitalise our soul. It helps us to explore, discover new things and develop.*

Here are some steps the authors recommend to keep this flame alive and sometimes get involved in deep play.

*Be active*

Move. This is one of the keys to play. Translate this to your work by going for a walk, moving around, holding seminars in places that delight the senses. You will find that more ideas emerge.

*Nourish your mode of play and  
be with people who nourish it, too*

Find the play that feeds your soul. Build an environment where people understand your need and get out there and make it a priority to stay play-nourished.

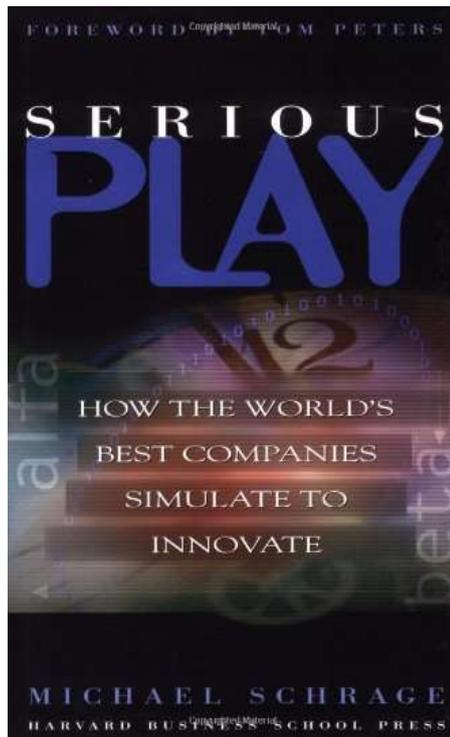
*Fun is your North Star, but you  
don't always have to head North*

The aim is to have fun. But along the way you will find many deviations. It is good to pursue those paths, because that is where play can take you. Sometimes you are discovering things that you did not know existed.

Michael Schrage also shows the importance of play in the work done at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Lab. He described this approach in his book *Serious Play: How the world's best companies simulate to innovate*.

He and his colleagues often worked with companies on building prototypes. This often involved people focusing on specific challenges and playing with ideas.

Taking this route often led to breakthrough and innovation. In the preface to his book he explains this in the following way.



*One constant is the role of prototypes and play.*

*The Lab's unofficial credo Demo or Die! captures the prevailing belief that it is not enough to have brilliant ideas; you have to be able to demonstrate them.*

*You have to get people to want to play with them.*

Great organisations often began by people pursuing their passion, translating it into serious play and then becoming profitable. As they grow middle-aged, however, some just become serious and forget what made them great. They become grim and overweight.

They can revisit their passion by doing some serious play – probably through prototyping - and helping their customers to succeed. This can rejuvenate their people and their business.

Scott Eberle is an intellectual historian of play and a Vice President at the Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York. He believes it is vital to encourage people of all ages to play. He describes this in the following way.

*Once we were all experts at play; as children it was our preoccupation and our main mode of learning. Play was the way we built our muscles, and it was through play that we knitted our friendships.*

*Through play we learned to navigate the social world. We learned the rules. And play helped us imagine our future. Even if we did not grow up to be Jedi knights, or beautiful princesses we learned to envision adult power and responsibility. But imaginative play and rough and tumble play, because they are the work of children, tend to slip beneath our notice as adults.*

Barbara Brannen encourages people to relearn to play in her book *The Gift Of Play*. She describes the importance of what she calls heart play. These are the activities that make our heart sing.

Play can help us to experience joy, wonderment and curiosity. They enable us to feel relaxed and able to use our imagination. This can help to nourish our souls and shape a positive future.

### *Play Can Help Us Develop On Both The Primary And Secondary Levels*

*People Develop On Both The Primary and Secondary Levels*

*People sometimes find that real development begins on the primary level. They can then make sense of their experience on the secondary level.*

<b>Secondary Level</b>	<b>Intellectualising</b>	<b>Thinking</b>	<b>Talking</b>
<b>Primary Level</b>	<b>Playing</b>	<b>Doing</b>	<b>Feeling</b>

People often develop on two levels. These are the primary level and the secondary level.

The primary level is that of playing, doing and feeling. When we are children we often learn on the primary level. Creative people often retain this sense of play. They frequently do so by going through the process of absorption, adventure and achievement.

Some of our successful and self-defeating patterns are set on the primary level. Such patterns can affect the way we behave. We revert back to them time and again.

Living on the primary level can be exciting. We learn with our heart and our hands, but it is also vital to make sense of experience. So it is important learn with our head.

This is the secondary level of learning. It is the level of intellectualising, thinking and talking. Looking for patterns, we begin to build models.

Testing these in reality, we see what works and what can be improved. Developing models enables us to feel more in control of our lives.

So far, so good. But some people hit a problem. They may spend too much of their lives on the secondary level.

Instead of doing, they think about doing. Instead of playing - taking initiatives - they replace it with intellectualising. Instead of feeling, they talk about feelings.

Between the two levels they then put a series of blocks. Some people can find they get cut off from their feelings.

Real growth, however, often involves doing things on the primary level. People who retake control of their lives after a setback, for example, often do so by acting on this level.

They start exercising rather than just talk about exercising. They do activities in which they feel creative rather than sit complaining.

Sometimes it can be useful to do something on a primary level and then clarify the learning on a secondary level. This can be more effective than simply intellectualising about a topic. It can also sometimes led to creative breakthroughs.

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that you want to continue to maintain your sense of play. How can you do this in the future? What would be the benefits of taking this approach?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Play In The Future*

*The specific things I can do to continue to play and develop in the future are:*

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*The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Sense Of Wonder Approach*

### *A Sense Of Wonder*

*Sometimes a person experiences a sense of wonder. These moments can lead to them choosing to do certain things in life. It can therefore be useful to explore the following themes.*

*When do you experience a sense of wonder?*

*What do you learn or relearn during those moments of a sense of wonder?*

*How can you pass on what you learn in those moments of a sense of wonder?*

During the early 1970s I visited some of the sages well-known for their work in helping young people. These included people such as George Lyward, David Wills and Henry Pluckrose. During the sessions we explored the following themes.

*How can we help young people to experience a sense of wonder?  
How can we help them to clarify what they learn during such times?  
How can we help them to apply these lessons in their future lives?*

Some people retain the ability to enjoy a sense of wonder. Some seem to regain it as they get older. Such people appreciate life and aim to enjoy each day.

There are many views about what constitutes wonder. Neel Burton provides some excellent insights in an essay he wrote for his website and Psychology Today. Here are excerpts from the piece.

## *The Psychology and Philosophy of Wonder*

*Wonder is the feeling of a philosopher,  
and philosophy beings in wonder. Plato*

*Wonder is a complex emotion involving elements of surprise,  
curiosity, contemplation, and joy.*

*It is perhaps best defined as a heightened state of consciousness  
and emotion brought about by something singularly beautiful, rare,  
or unexpected - that is, by a marvel.*

*Aquinas speaks of philosophers and poets as one because both are  
moved by marvels, with the purpose of poetry being, broadly, to  
record and in some sense recreate marvels, to inspire wonder.*

*Wonder is most similar to awe. But awe is more explicitly directed  
at something that is much greater or stronger than ourselves.  
Wonder involves important elements of surprise and curiosity, both  
of which are forms of interest.*

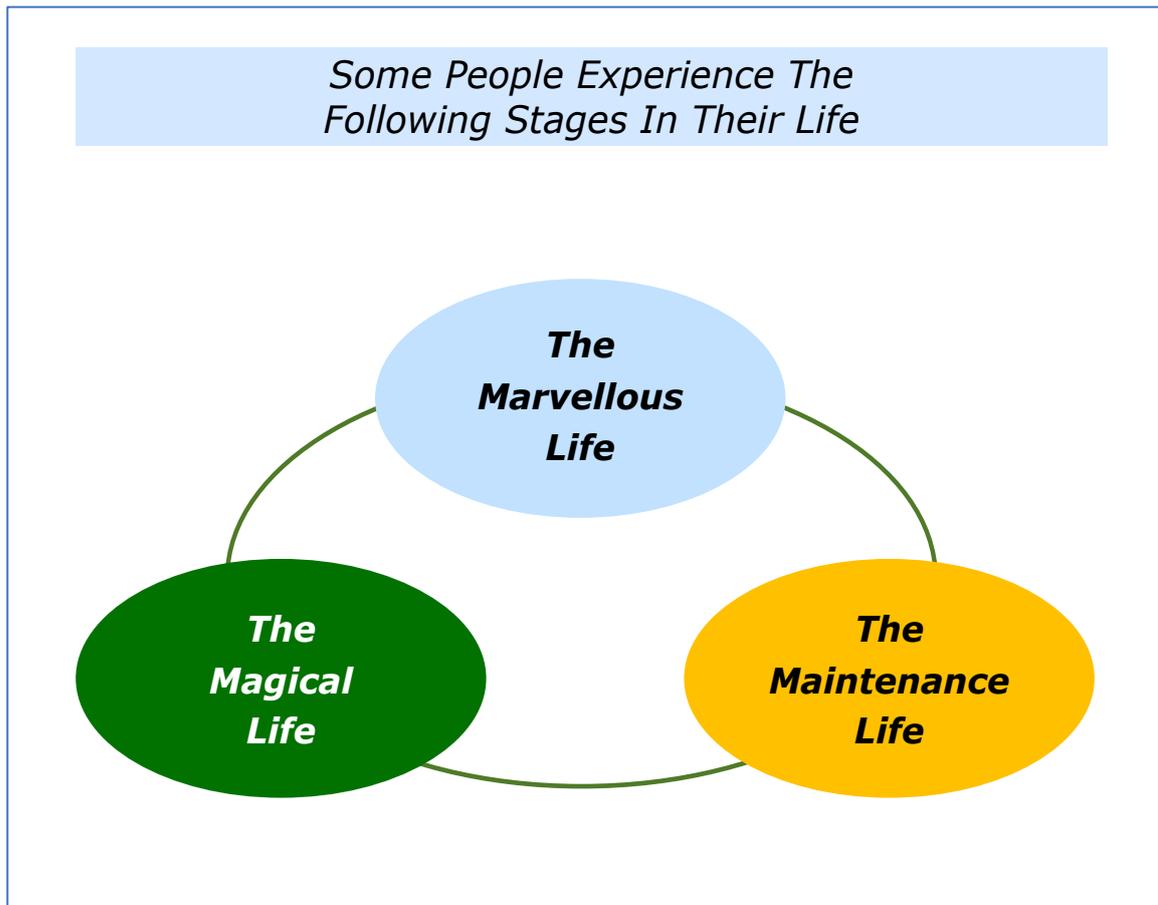
*Wonder can be excited by grand vistas, natural phenomena, human  
intellectual and physical achievement, and extraordinary facts and  
figures, among others.*

*By drawing us out of ourselves, wonder reconnects us with  
something much greater than our daily grind.*

*It is the ultimate homecoming, returning us to the world that we  
came from and were in danger of taking for granted.*

Neel describes the value of retaining a sense of wonder and the capacity to marvel throughout our lives. Some people retain this ability or regain it at certain points of life. This can lead to continuing to seeing life as magical.

Some people go through certain stages to reach this point. Let's consider these steps.



### *The Marvellous Life*

Some people experience this stage as children. Much depends on their circumstances, of course. Providing they are given love and support, however, they can explore each day. They can then feel that life is marvellous.

### *The Maintenance Life*

Many people move on to aiming to achieve and maintain a certain lifestyle. Some achieve this in a way that also enables them to maintain their wellbeing. Some find that maintaining their chosen lifestyle comes at a cost which can lead to other issues.

Some people get to a point where they take stock. This can sometimes involve getting the right balance between their mission and mortgage. A person may ask themselves the following questions.

*"What do I want to do with the rest of my life? What can I do to maintain or recapture a sense of meaning? How can I use my life experience to help other people? How can I pass on a positive legacy?"*

Some people decide to focus on pursuing a certain purpose or following certain principles. This gives them a sense of meaning in life.

### *The Magical Life*

Some people recapture a sense of wonder. They enjoy life and want to encourage both present and future generations. They believe it important to care for people and the planet. They encourage people to appreciate and protect what can be a marvellous life.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a time when you experienced a sense of wonder? What did you learn or relearn from the experience? How can you pass on the lessons you learned from the sense of wonder?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *A Sense Of Wonder*

*The specific time in my life when I experienced a sense of wonder was:*

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*The specific things I learned or relearned from the experience were:*

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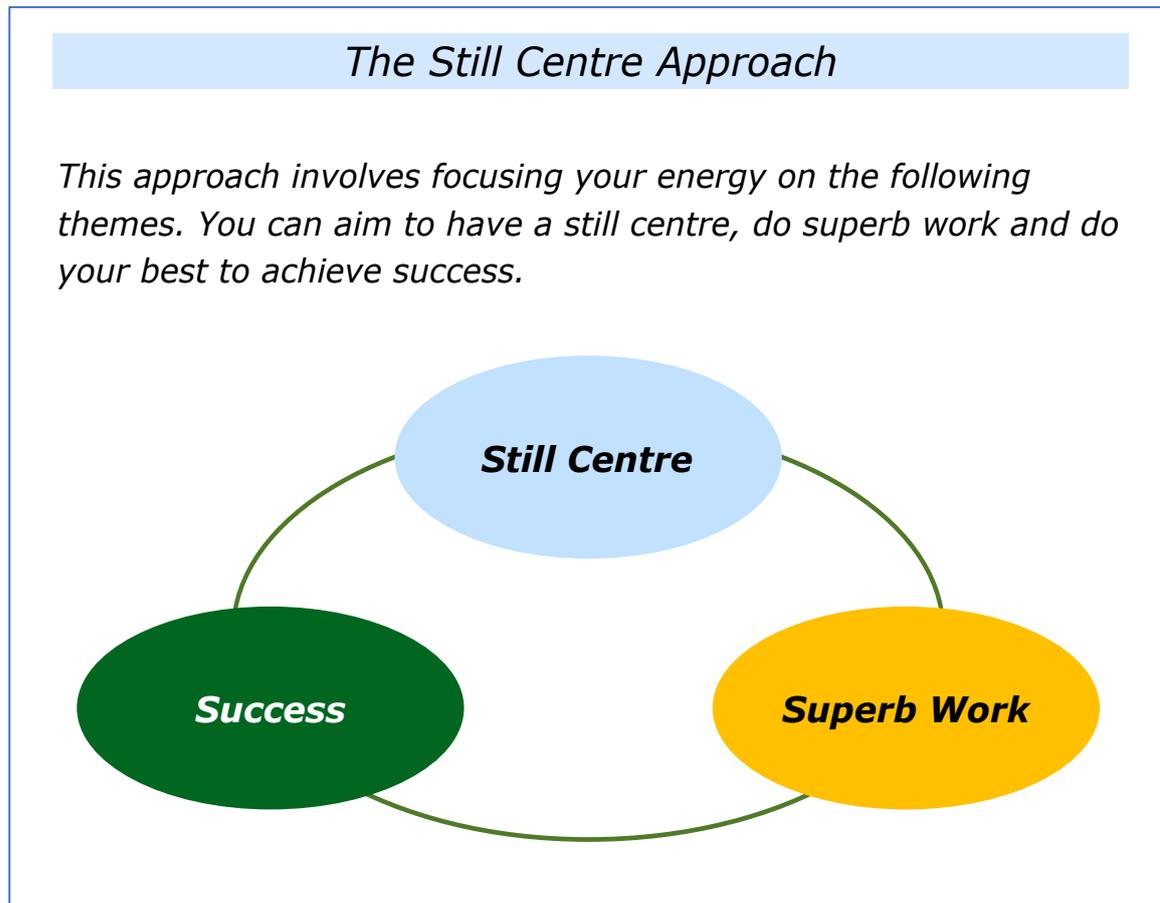
*The specific things I can do to pass on what I learned from the experience are:*

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## *The Still Centre Approach*



This is an approach that is used by people in many situations. They may aim to serve something great than themselves, show caring for other people or deliver peak performances.

The approach begins by them aiming to slow down, be still and focusing on what they want to do. They then aim to move into action, do superb work and achieve their definition of success.

Different people follow these steps in their own way. A nurse may follow them when caring for a patient. A teacher may follow them when passing on knowledge. An athlete may follow them when doing their best in an Olympic Final.

Looking back, can you think of when followed some of these steps? What did you do to try to have a still centre? How did you then aim to do superb work and achieve your definition of success?

## *The Still Centre Approach In The Past*

*The specific situation when I followed some elements of the still centre approach was:*

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*The specific things I did then to follow some elements of the still centre approach were:*

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*The specific things that happened as a result of taking these steps were:*

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Different people choose to take this approach for different reasons. Some may want to find what T.S. Eliot described in his poem *Four Quartets* - the still point of a turning world.

The Shmoop website described this in the following way.

*The "still point of the turning world" is a place of neither body nor spirit, "flesh nor fleshless."*

*It doesn't move from anything or toward anything. It isn't goal-oriented.*

*It's a place where our souls can find a sense of stillness and peace, even as the world continues to change.*

*The world indeed is ever turning. The art in life is to discover the still point of the turning world. This is not empty or a void. There the dance is.*

Bruce Gatward-Cook expanded on theme on The School Of Philosophy website. Here is an excerpt from what he wrote.

*In stillness the power of thought is clear, well-ordered and intelligent.*

*Likewise in stillness the power of decision is reasonable, true and certain. To help this it is possible to cultivate tranquillity of mind.*

*The world indeed is ever turning. The art in life is to discover the still point of the turning world. This is not empty or a void. There the dance is.*

*In the same work there is also the following passage:*

*We shall not cease from exploration.  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.*

*When the mind does become completely still it is like coming back to ourselves, and knowing ourselves for the first time.*

Some people may want to refocus on their spiritual beliefs. Some may want to maintain a sense of perspective. Some may want to stay calm and plan ahead before embarking on a task.

Different people choose different ways to take these steps. The following sections give an introduction to some of these, several of which are explained in more detail elsewhere in the book.



### *Slowing Down*

Some people aim to slow down. They may rest, breathe deeply or take time to reflect. The key is to do what works for you.

The Psych Central Newsletter provided many practical tips on this topic. Here are some excerpts from the following article.

## *The Power In Being Still And How To Practice Stillness*

*The key is to create an intention of stillness - to have some intentionality about how we're carrying ourselves in a given moment - and to focus on what is within our control, she said.*

*For instance, you might physically slow down by sitting, slowly walking or even lying down, she said. You might reduce external stimuli in your environment by lowering the lights and turning down the music.*

The article goes on to quote Karin Lawson, a Doctor of Psychology and formerly the clinical director of Embrace, a binge eating recovery programme. Here is a summary of some of her suggestions.

***Breathe.*** *Taking slow, deep breaths induces the parasympathetic system and slows your heart rate.*

***Practice when you need it.*** *Lawson practices stillness anywhere, "when the moment hits me regardless of where I am."*

***Schedule stillness.*** *If you aren't creating stillness spontaneously, schedule it and keep this time sacred.*

***Find a favourite spot.*** *Again, you can experience stillness anywhere. But it can help to start at a favourite place. This might be outdoors, such as a park or bench, or at home, in complete silence, she said.*

***Listen to soft music.*** *Sometimes, people are afraid of being alone with their thoughts, Lawson said. This is when creating more structure is helpful. One way is by listening to soft, slow music. Music also is great when silence becomes deafening.*

***Repeat calming phrases.*** *This also gives your stillness structure. Lawson shared these examples: "I am calm and still," or "I can create stillness."*

Different people choose different ways to slow down. Sometimes this also involves them taking the next step.

### *Seeing Things In Perspective*

Some people use the stillness to maintain perspective in challenging situations. This takes different forms in different situations.

A person who loves life may also see themselves as small in the great scheme of things. They recognise that what they do may be important but there may be many more important things in life.

A person who deals with crises may develop a different kind of perspective. A medical worker in Accident & Emergency, for example, must make decisions about the order in which injured patients can be treated.

A person who experiences a setback may begin to see this in perspective. Maintaining a sense of gratitude, they may focus on their assets rather than any angst. They may then make plans for taking the next step in their life or work.

### *Saying Their Chosen Mantra*

This is an approach used by people who want to follow their principles in certain situations. Such people often take the following steps.

*They clarify the principles they want to follow in their life and rehearse how they can follow these in certain situations.*

*They translate these principles into a positive mantra they can say to themselves in certain situations.*

*They keep saying this mantra to themselves to translate their principles into action in certain situations.*

Every person is different, so it is vital they create a mantra that works for them. An athlete may prepare properly for a competition, for example, and then keep saying something like:

*"Be calm and do your best."*

### *Settling On Their Chosen Way Forward*

Stillness can bring many benefits. These include calmness, clarify and sometimes being a well-spring for creativity.

Some people use it as a springboard for planning ahead. They clarify and rehearse their strategies for doing superb work. They then settle on their plan for doing their best to achieve their definition of success.

Mental rehearsal and visualisation is now common practice. It is done by actors, athletes, Formula 1 drivers and other people who aim to achieve peak performance.

Let's return to your life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you want to follow elements of the still centre approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

How can you achieve a still centre? How can you settle on your chosen strategy? How can you move into action and do superb work? How can you do your best to achieve your definition of success?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *The Still Centre Approach In The Future*

*The specific situation when I may want to follow some elements of the still centre approach may be:*

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*The specific things I can do then to follow some elements of this approach are:*

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*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

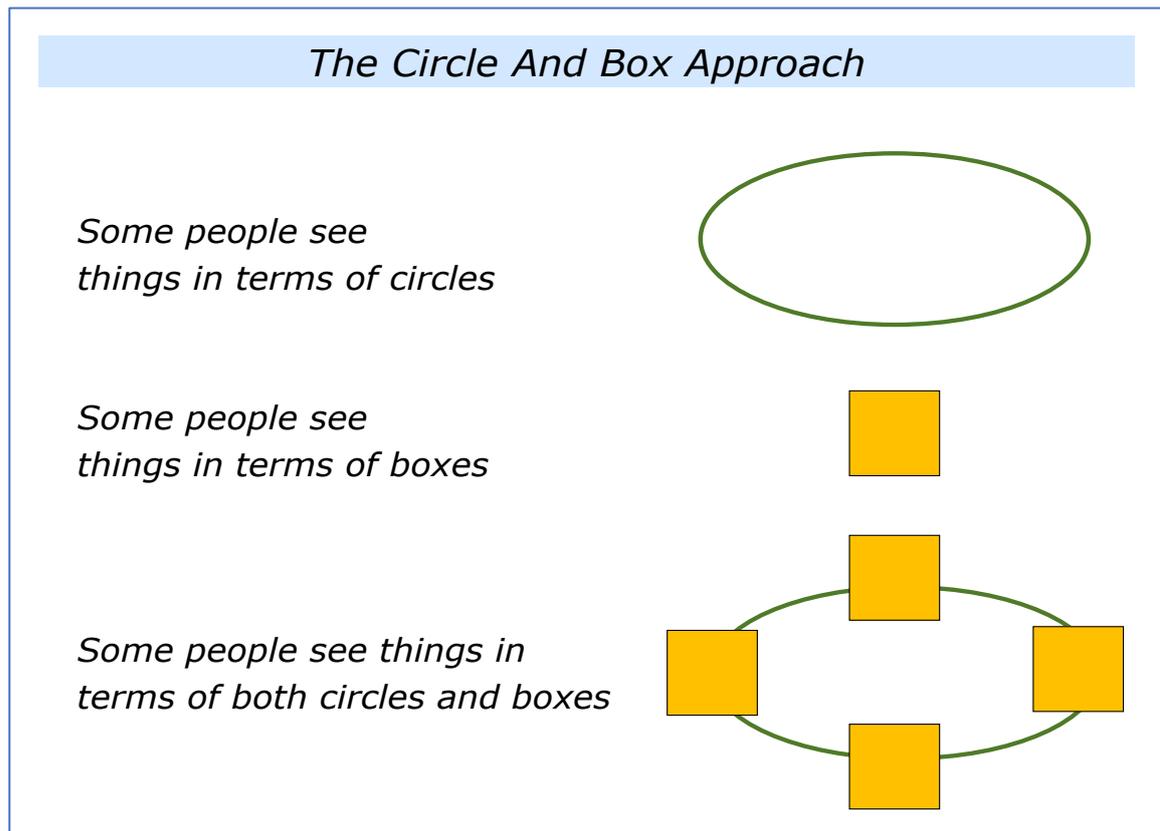
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## *The Circle And Box Approaches*

Different people see things in different ways as they develop during their lives. Here are some ways that people perceive events or aim to achieve certain goals.



### *Circle People*

They see things in terms of circles. They are often good at seeing how things are connected and influence each other. They often focus on the process when looking at relationships, actions or systems.

### *Box People*

They see things in terms of boxes. They are often good at going into a certain box and delivering results. They may be doing a role,

fixing a problem or tackling a challenge. They love to work towards a compelling goal.

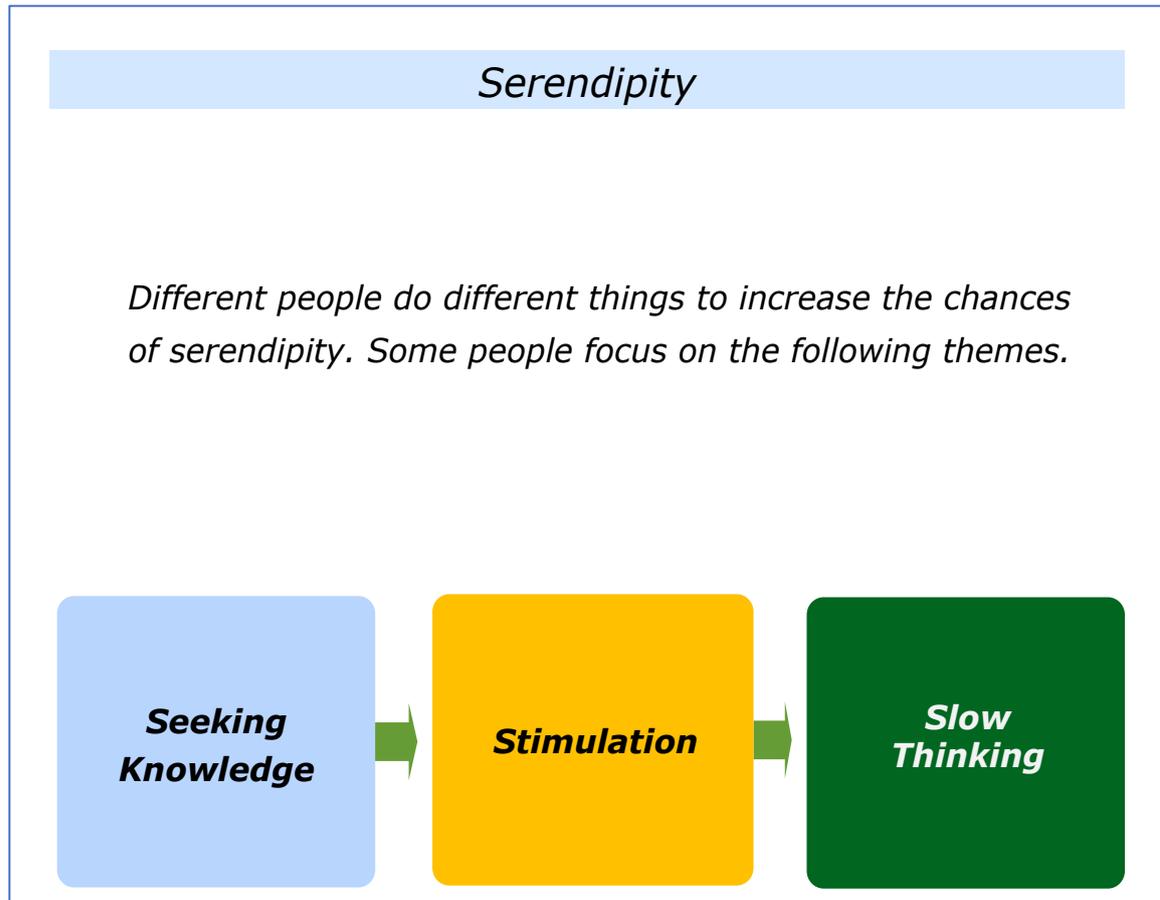
### *Circle And Box People*

They are good at seeing how things are connected. They are also good at then choosing to create or go into a box and deliver certain goals. They are able to see the system, do a specific piece of work and deliver success.

Such people are good at seeing things in perspective. They then, when appropriate, channel their energies towards producing positive results.

Some people make breakthroughs in other ways. Sometimes this can happen by chance. Let's look at one way this can happen.

## *The Serendipity Approach*



The definitions for serendipity include making desirable discoveries by accident or finding interesting or valuable things by chance.

There are many examples of serendipity. These describe a chance meeting, words remembered from a conversation, a flash of inspiration, a failed experiment or other event.

Some people aim to create the Holy Grail of serendipity but it can remain elusive. There are some things that people can do, however, to increase the chances of creating such moments.

### *Seeking Knowledge*

This involves continuing to seek knowledge. It is to adopt a beginner's mind, be curious and explore various fields. Sometimes

serendipity happens when you make connections and see a possible way forwards.

### *Stimulation*

This involves doing things you find stimulating. These include playing, exercising, listening to music, problem solving or doing things that give you positive energy. These can activate your senses and lead to making discoveries.

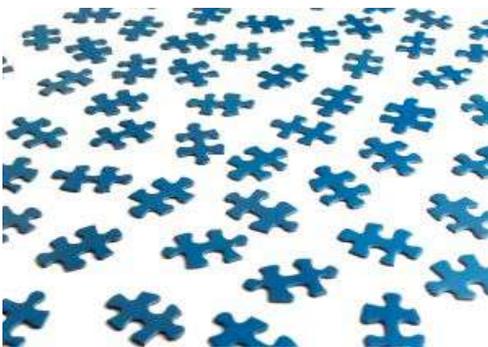
### *Slow Thinking*

This involves taking time to slow down. Carl Honoré explained that fast thinking often generates the pieces of the jigsaw. Sometimes slow thinking may be needed to make sense of the whole picture.

Taking these steps is no guarantee of creating breakthroughs, but they can increase the chances of serendipity. The next step is to translate the insight into action.

#### ***Fast Thinking***

*is sometimes needed  
to generate the  
pieces of the jigsaw*



#### ***Slow Thinking***

*is sometimes needed  
to make sense of  
the whole picture*



## *The Sense Of Peace Approach*

### *A Sense Of Peace*

*The times when I enjoy  
a sense of peace are:*

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Many people want similar things in life. They want to be loved, happy, successful and have a sense of peace. When do you enjoy a sense of peace? Here are some answers that people give when exploring this theme.

*I enjoy a sense of peace:*

*When I breathe deeply ... When I am doing something I believe in ...  
When I am giving to people ... When I am gardening ... When I am  
walking ... When I am passing on knowledge to people ... When I  
experience a sense of wonder ... When I feel I have done my best.*

There are many views about what constitutes peace. Thich Nhat Hanh, the Zen philosopher, described how it can sometimes be about simple things. Here is what he wrote:

*If in our daily life we can smile, if we can be peaceful and happy, not only we, but everyone will profit from it. This is the most basic kind of peace work.*

Imagine that you are looking back at the end of your life. What are the things you want to have done or achieved by then that – if you have done them – will mean you are more likely to feel at peace?

There are many exercises on this theme. One approach is to write their obituary or to focus on your life goals. It is then to do something each day to work towards achieving these aims.

Another approach is to imagine that you are attending your own memorial service. How do you want to be remembered? What do you want people to be saying about you? What do you want to have passed on to people during your time on the planet?

Some people reflect on what they want to say on their death bed. Here are some examples of what they may want to say.

*Looking back on my life, I want:*

*To have been kind ... To have raised a happy family ... To have been a good friend ... To have been grateful ... To have given people hope ... To have made the most of my talents ... To have done practical things to build a better world ... To have passed on a positive legacy.*

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *A Sense Of Peace*

*The specific things I want to have done  
or achieved by the end of my life  
that may lead to a sense of peace are:*

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*The specific things I can do to work  
towards doing some of these things are:*

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*The specific things that may happen as  
a results of taking these steps may be:*

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## *The Encouragement Approach Sometimes Involves Being Tough*



Encouragers sometimes act as both the creators and custodians of a culture. They are caring but that does not mean they are a soft touch.

Such people often combine elements that, at first sight, may seem contradictory. They balance encouragement, education, enablement and enforcement.

Encouragers are like good gardeners. They like to create an environment that enables people to grow. They do this when acting as parents, teachers, coaches, leaders or in another role

They focus on encouragement first but, when appropriate, they are prepared to enforce certain agreed standards. They do this if people do not respect the environment or hurt other people.

Encouragers then act as custodians of a culture. Let's explore one model they follow when, for example, leading an organisation.

### *Explaining The Approach*

Good leaders start by explaining the culture to people before they join. They outline the following themes.

*They explain the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success.*

*They explain the reasons for the principles and also the benefits – to all the various stakeholders – of achieving the picture of success.*

*They explain how people can follow the principles – together with examples to bring these to life – and do their best to achieve the picture of success.*

The person is invited to reflect and decide if they want to opt into contributing to the culture. If so, they then make clear contracts about their best contribution towards achieving the goals.

Encouragers often pursue the following guidelines for creating and maintaining a positive environment.

### *Encouragement*

They provide encouragement. They also aim to create a stimulating and supportive environment in which people can grow.

### *Education*

They provide – in its widest sense – education. This includes providing knowledge, wisdom and models that people can use to achieve positive results.

## *Enablement*

They make clear contracts with people about their contributions towards achieving the goals. They manage outcomes rather than tasks and enable people to deliver the goods.

## *Enforcement*

They are custodians of the culture and protect the environment from those who want to spoil it for others. When acting as custodians, they meet with a person who is causing difficulties. They may then say something along the following lines.

*"Let's go back to the original contract regarding the standards that are required to deliver success.*

*"The organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success is ...  
The reasons for the principles are ...*

*"Let me know if you would like to follow these principles and make a positive contribution to achieving the picture of success."*

Good leaders make it clear about the required standards. It is then up to the person to decide if they want to contribute. If not, that is their choice and there are consequences.

Imagine you lead a team. How would you rate yourself in areas of being an encourager, educator, enabler and enforcer?

## *Being An Encourager*

How good are you at creating a positive environment? How good are you at helping people to build on their strengths?

How good are you at coordinating people's strengths to do superb work and deliver success? You may have a coordinator who makes this happen, but you are still accountable for ensuring it does.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Being An Encourager*

*The rating I would give myself for being an encourager for my team is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *Being An Educator*

Different leaders educate people in different ways. They may act as good models, coaches or trusted advisors. What is your preferred way of educating the people in your team?

How good are you at explaining the team's purpose, principles and picture of success? How good are you at sharing success stories that show how people are following the principles?

How good are you at encouraging people to focus on their self-development? How good are you at ensuring they keep focusing on:

a) what they are doing well; b) what they can do better and how?  
How good are you at passing on practical tools that they can use to keep developing?

## *Being An Educator*

*The rating I would give myself for being an educator for the people in my team is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

- \*
- \*
- \*

## *Being An Enabler*

Good leaders enable people to make their best contributions. One approach is to manage by outcomes rather than by tasks. This sometimes involves the leader taking the following steps.

*They explain the big picture, the piece of work to be done and the specific outcomes to achieve.*

*They make clear contracts with the person about the outcomes they will deliver and the support they need.*

*They then give the person freedom – within parameters – regarding how they deliver the outcomes.*

If you wish, try completing the following sentences.

## *Being An Enabler*

*The rating I would give myself for being an enabler for the people in my team is:*

*\_\_\_\_\_ / 10*

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

- \**
- \**
- \**

## *Being An Enforcer*

This can be the tricky part. Some leaders are happy to encourage and educate others, but they may find it hard to deal with people who step over the line. One person expressed this in the following way.

*"I score highly in the other areas, probably around 8/10 on each of these. But I have difficulty with the enforcement part, where I score 6/10."*

Good leaders see themselves as custodians of the culture rather than as bad cops. As mentioned earlier, they continually explain the purpose, principles and picture of success.

They are prepared to act to safeguard the environment, however, if some people want to spoil it for others. One leader said they actually welcomes such situations. They explained this in the following way.

*"My job is to maintain high standards in the organisation. Sometimes this involves sharing success stories to show those we want to uphold.*

*"Sometimes it involves taking action to make sure the standards do not slip. This is something I am happy to do.*

*"My approach is to explain the professional standards we want people to follow to achieve the goals. It is also to explain the reasons for these standards.*

*"It is then up to the person whether they want to follow these standards. If not, then I find people who are prepared to contribute towards achieving the goals."*

Bearing this in mind, how would you rate yourself as an enforcer in terms of protecting the culture in your team? Rate yourself on a scale 0-10.

## *Being An Enforcer*

*The rating I would give myself for, when appropriate, being an enforcer who protects the culture in the team is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:*

- \*
- \*
- \*

There are many ways to help people. Sometimes this involves balancing encouraging, educating, enabling and, when appropriate, enforcing certain standards.

There are also many ways to pass on knowledge. Let's look at one approach that some people follow in their lives.

## *The Sage's Approach*

*Some sages seem to be skipping  
with joy and yet can also be serious*



Sages are often seen as wise but they do not see themselves this way. They see themselves as lifetime students. They learn from eternal wisdom and also study humanity at its best.

Such people see the big picture yet are also practical. They are soul-wise and savvy. They move from the concept to the concrete and give examples that bring things to life.

Some sages seem to be skipping with joy and yet can also be serious. They can sometimes be a bit mischievous and have a generous sense of humour.

Sages often have a sense of perspective. There have been billions of people before them and there will be billions after them. All they can do is try to contribute to life during their time on the planet.

Such people often balance characteristics that appear to be opposites. They balance serenity with steel. They can be calm yet also display massive commitment.

Maya Angelou demonstrated many of these qualities - wisdom, charm and mischievousness. Here are some things she said.

*"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."*

*"Life is pure adventure, and the sooner we realize that, the quicker we will be able to treat life as art."*

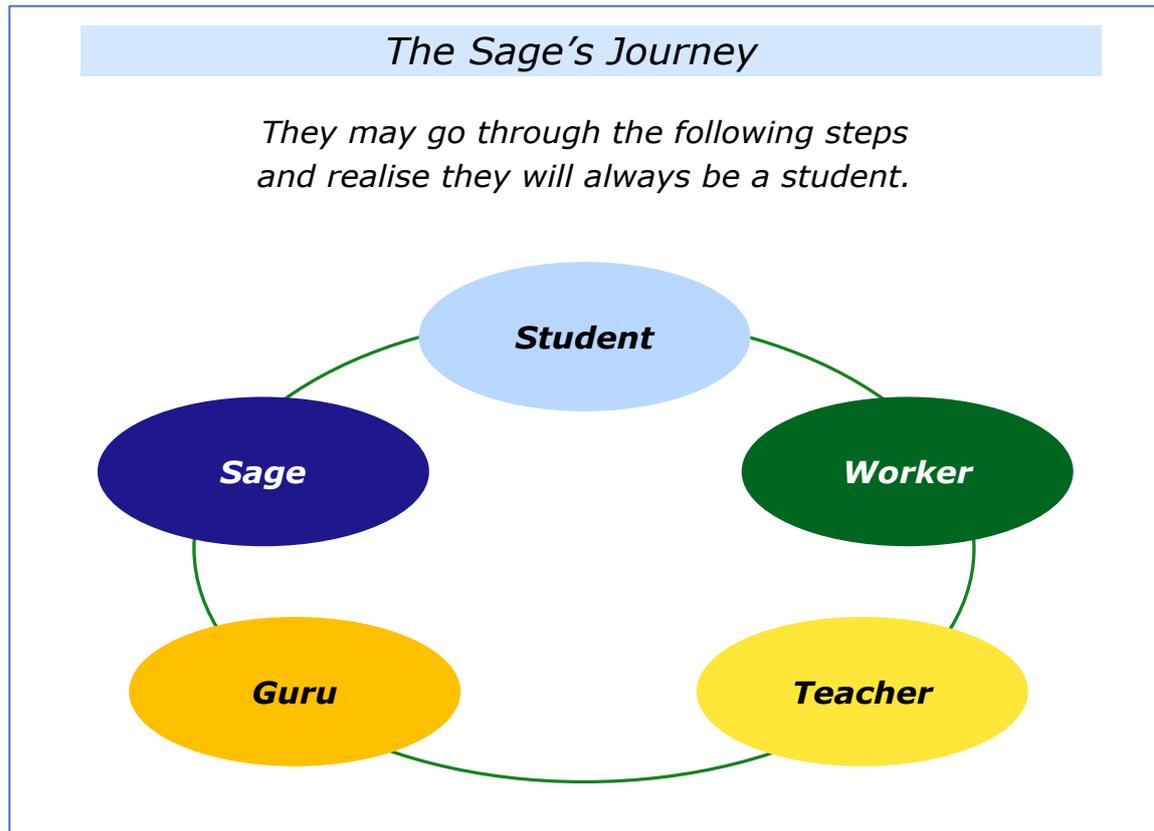
*"Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope."*

*"You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them."*

*"My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style."*

*"Hate, it has caused a lot of problems in the world, but has not solved one yet."*

Different people take different journeys towards becoming sage-like. Some go through some of the following stages.



They start off by being a student and then a worker. Aiming to pass on knowledge, they may become a teacher. Then comes the most dangerous phase. They may want to become a guru. Sometimes they move on, however, and become a sage.

Some people go through these stages, some skip from one to another, some take a different route. Let's explore these steps.

### *Student*

Sages often start as students. They focus on something they want to learn and become fascinated by the subject. They may want to learn about people, spiritual faiths, science, art or another topic.

Such people throw themselves into the learning process. Gathering as much information as possible, they look for patterns and begin to make sense of what they are learning. They may also begin to develop their own models for understanding experience.

A person may try many different kinds of work, visit various cultures

or test themselves by tackling specific challenges. They learn from the experiences and begin to settle on specific activity.

### *Worker*

A person may then concentrate on an activity that gives them positive energy. They may still want to explore many fields, but they decide to focus on a deeply satisfying activity.

They may do many jobs in their chosen activity but then develop their specialism. They may become a subject matter expert, project director, coordinator, leader, prototype builder or develop another role. This can lead to them aiming to make a specific contribution.

### *Teacher*

Some people move into the role of being an educator, teacher, coach or mentor. Some take this step in a proactive way.

Some find themselves being asked to share their knowledge with other people. Different people choose different ways to take this step. Some choose to build on their strengths and aim:

*To clarify the specific knowledge they want to pass on to people;*

*To clarify the kinds of people who might be open to such knowledge;*

*To clarify the best ways for them to pass on this knowledge.*

They share the knowledge in a way that plays to their strengths. This may involve working face-to-face with people, writing, making films or using another media. Some people remain humble when taking this route. Some choose to take another role.

### *Guru*

A person may be seen as a guru, but this can be a dangerous phase. They may think they have mastered something. Some talk about

what they see as their personal brand rather than on serving others. Some people choose to follow another route.

## *Sage*

Gurus want followers but a sage wants to give things away. They have wisdom in their bones and make complicated things simple. As mentioned earlier, the sage's journey is full of paradoxes.

Once somebody thinks they are wise, they automatically aren't. Once they think they are a sage, they are in dangerous territory. It is vital to remind themselves that they will always be a student.

Sages are sometimes approached by people who want to explore certain themes. When appropriate, sages then pass on knowledge that people can use in their own ways. Here is an introduction to one approach that sages take in such situations. This mirrors some of the principles followed by mentors.

### *The Sage's Approach To Helping People To Achieve Success*

*They create a stimulating sanctuary in which a person feels at ease and able to clarify their goals. They then provide support and share knowledge in a way that helps the person to achieve their picture of success.*



Sages start by creating a stimulating sanctuary in which a person feels at ease. They make the person feel welcome and clarify what they want to explore.

Focusing on the first theme the person wants to explore, they clarify the real results the person wants to achieve. They clarify the person's picture of success.

They aim to support the person. Different sages do this in different ways. Then, at some point, they will ask if it is okay for them to share some ideas.

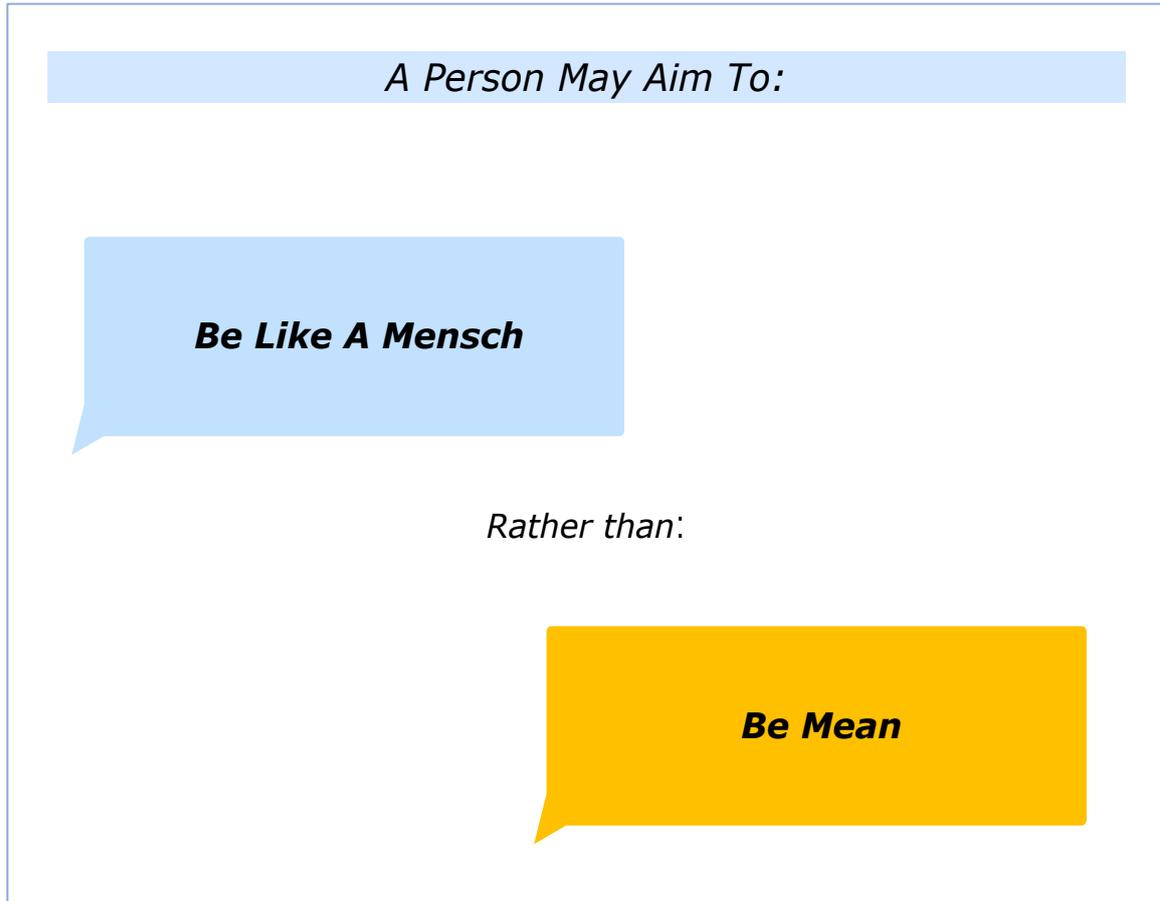
Sages then share knowledge, positive models and practical tools that the person can use in their own way. They bring the ideas to life by giving practical examples that resonate with the person.

Checking which ideas resonate with the person, they explore these further. If appropriate, they move on to how the person wants to apply these to achieve their picture of success.

Sages return to the person's agenda and the next theme the person wants to explore. They repeat the process and share knowledge that the person can use in their own way.

They may conclude the session by giving the person chance to reflect on what they have learned or relearned. When appropriate, sages continue to provide support and help the person to achieve their picture of success.

## The Mensch Approach



Some people aim to be like a mensch rather than to be mean. They aim to be warm and generous. Some also aim to work towards becoming wise.

There are now many articles on how to be a mensch. Here is a summary of some themes they mention.

*Mensch is a Yiddish word meaning a person of integrity and honour. It can apply to both men and women.*

*A mensch is considerate to others. They are guided by generosity, kindness and honesty and passing on and They aim to do the right thing towards family, friends, strangers and society.*

*A mensch treats everybody with respect. They may act as peacemakers and aim to find solutions to problems. They know that*

*actions have consequences. They have a respect for resources and recognised our responsibility towards posterity.*

Simon Rocker highlighted these qualities in an article for the Jewish Chronicle called *What Is A Mensch?* Here are excerpts from the piece.

*There are few higher Jewish compliments to pay someone than to call them a mensch, though, of course, a true mensch would be too modest to want to be complimented.*

*It sounds like a male term, but it comes from the German word for 'human being'.*

*A mensch is a person who can be relied on to act with honour and integrity. But the Yiddish term means more than that: it also suggests someone who is kind and considerate.*

Rabbi Neil Kurshan, author of the book ***Raising Your Child to be a Mensch***, characterises it as:

*"Responsibility fused with compassion, a sense that one's own personal needs and desires are limited by the needs and desires of other people. A mensch acts with self-restraint and humility, always sensitive to the feelings and thoughts of others".*

*A mensch is driven by an innate decency, motivated perhaps by a sense of values to live up to but not out of regard for recognition. They will act as a mensch at times when it may be hard to be one.*

*Mensches may be people who have achieved high office, but they are just as likely to be largely unsung heroes or heroines, admired within the small circle who know them well.*

*Mensches are people we look up to, but they are never too good to be true.*

## *The Generous Approach*

### *Generosity*

- *Who have been the generous people you have met in your life?*
- *How did they demonstrate generosity in their lives and work?*
- *What happened as a result of them being generous?*

Generous people are like good gardeners. They create an environment that encourages people and things to grow. They want to help people to fulfil their potential and succeed.

How do we learn generosity? Some people learn it from spiritual or religious traditions. Some learn it from their parents being nurturing.

Some learn from friends, teachers, leaders and others who embodied the spirit of generosity. Some people talk about experiencing a certain culture – a school, a team or a workplace – that encouraged people to give to others.

Some people talk about critical points in their lives when they chose to be generous rather than - in its widest sense - greedy. They found that being caring led to both themselves and others feeling better.

The University of Notre Dame website provides a summary regarding how the word generosity has developed over the ages. The present English word derived from Latin and originally meant of Noble Birth.

During the Middle Ages this evolved into meaning a nobility of *spirit* thought to be associated with high birth. The University's site adds:

*"In this way generosity increasingly came in the 17th Century to signify a variety of traits of character and action historically associated (whether accurately or not) with the ideals of actual nobility: gallantry, courage, strength, richness, gentleness, and fairness."*

Since then the word has become increasingly associated with people who demonstrate generosity of spirit.

Generous people often believe that we are here to serve. Such people often believe in the circle of life approach. They believe that being kind to others, for example, can increase the chances of kindness being spread around the world.

Such people love to give to others, but they may also follow certain guidelines to ensure they do not become victims. This sounds tough, but they need to encourage themselves whilst helping others.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe three generous people that you have met in your life. It invites you to complete the follow sentences.

## *Generosity In The Past*

*The generous people I have known in my life have been:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that some of them did to demonstrate were:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that happened as a result of them being generous were:*

\*

\*

\*

Different people choose to be generous in different ways. Some people ask themselves the following questions. They then aim to translate their answers into action.

### *The Generous Approach - What Can I Give Today?*

- *What is happening in people's lives? What are the challenges they face? What may be their pictures of success?*
- *What can I give to help people to tackle these challenges? How can I give these things in a way that helps them to succeed?*
- *How can I keep encouraging both present and future generations? What else can I do to help people to achieve their pictures of success?*

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that you want to continue to be generous.

How can you do this in your own way? How can you continue to give to people? How can you give your best to both present and future generations?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Generosity In The Future*

*The specific ways in which I would like to be generous in the future are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to translate this into action are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:*

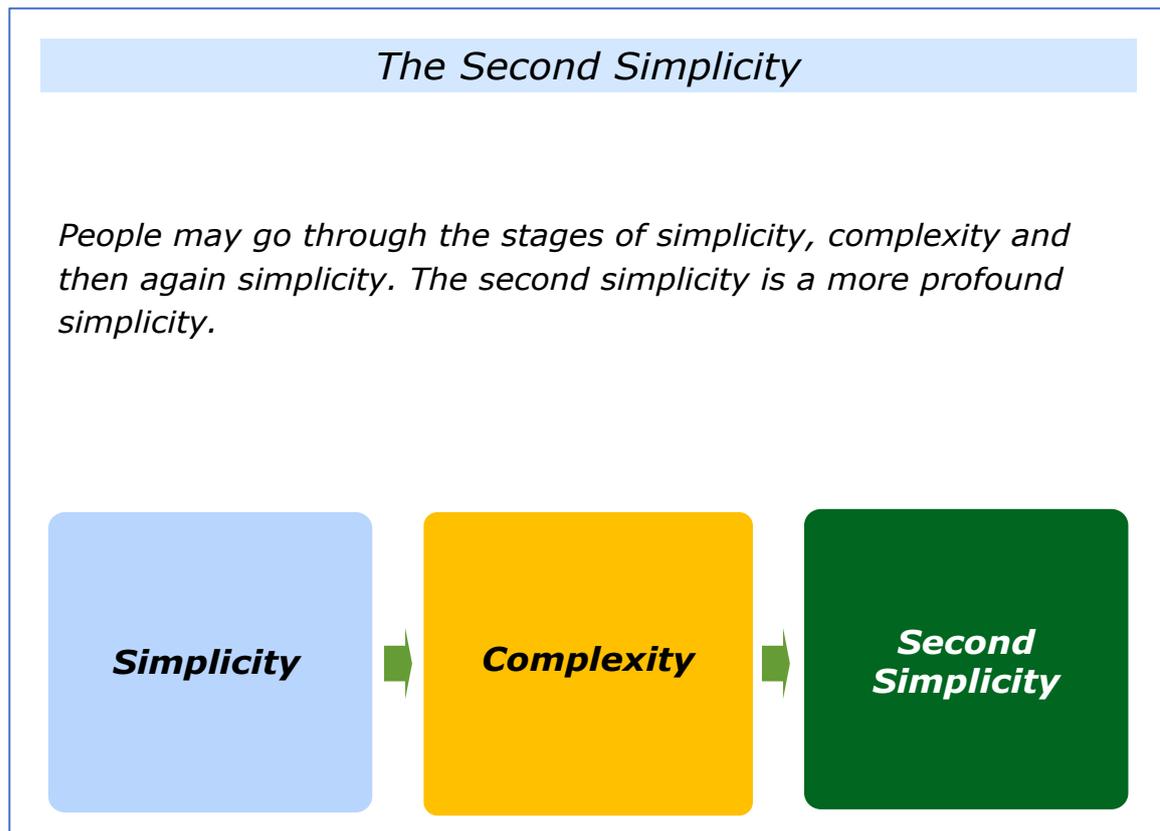
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## *The Second Simplicity Approach*

Wise people sometimes pass on a legacy that embodies the second simplicity. They get to the heart of the matter and explain things in a way that is simple yet profound. It can take years of experience, however, before people can reach this stage.



### *Simplicity*

One person explained the route they took in life. This began with them recalling the first simplicity.

*"Life appeared simple when I was young. As a teenager I believed in love, peace, beauty and building a better world. Powered by idealism, I threw myself into voluntary work, protested against racism and studied the great philosophies.*

*"Many thinkers reinforced my beliefs. There seemed obvious answers to solving the world's problems. My ideals kept me going into my early twenties."*

## *Complexity*

Then comes complexity. People go to work, enter university and graduate into the professions. They become experts, speak in strange languages and write in long sentences.

They join big companies and get lost in matrix organisations. They get married, incur debts, suffer setbacks, make compromises and bury their dreams. They say:

*"Life is not that simple."*

At some stage, however, life can bring different wake up calls. Those who are faced by life threatening illnesses, for example, quickly reassess their priorities. They rise above the daily habits and focus on what is really important in life.

## *Second Simplicity*

The second simplicity is a profound simplicity. A person may return to their original philosophy but now experience brings wisdom.

The pains and pleasures of life bring an extra timbre to their voice. Speaking from the depths of their being, their words resonate more deeply.

Such people often demonstrate humility rather than hubris. They focus on eternal themes and try to pass these on in a way that people can use in their lives and work.

Great performers often get to the heart of the matter. They also develop skills that embody the following approach.

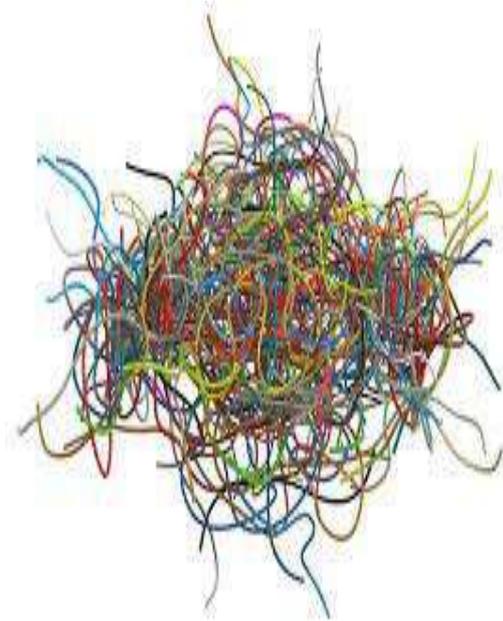
## *The Making Complicated Things Simple Approach*

### *Making Complicated Things Simple*

**Step 1**

**Step 2**

**Step 3**



Some people make complicated things appear simple. Going into the situation in which they excel, they see patterns quickly. They then pursue the right strategies and deliver success.

Great educators share their knowledge in a way that is simple yet profound. Great athletes demonstrate grace under pressure. Great inventors produce breakthroughs that afterwards appear obvious.

Such people often demonstrate what appear to be paradoxes. They see the big picture and the small details. They do things slowly yet also swiftly. They appear to do things easily yet also effectively.

How do high performers make things appear so natural? The usual answer is: "Because they work at it."

This is true, but they are also using their top talents. They are in their element – at ease yet able to excel. Some people overlook their strengths because they find some things easy to do. It can be years before realising they have a gift.

Betty Edwards, for example, has helped millions of people to learn how to draw with her book *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*. As a child she got praised for her special gift of being able to draw.

At first she found it hard to understand her talent. She described this feeling in the following way.

*"But in the back of my mind, I felt that the praise was misplaced. I knew that drawing was easy and that all anyone had to do was to look at things in that certain way."*

Looking at your own life, what is the specific activity where you make complicated things simple? How do you take these steps?

You may put yourself into situations where you feel calm, clear and able to get concrete results. You may gather information, see patterns and clarify the real results to achieve.

You may choose the strategy most likely to succeed. You may reach into your repertoire, apply the appropriate tools and keep doing what works. You then do whatever is required to achieve success.

How can you pass on knowledge about the activity in which you make complicated things simple? This may be a challenge - because what you do may seem natural - but have a go.

What would be the best vehicle for making this happen? You may prefer to run coaching sessions, lead workshops, give presentations, write articles, create a website, publish a blog or whatever.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Making Complicated Things Simple*

*The specific activity where I have the ability to make complicated things simple is:*

\*

*The specific things I do to make complicated things simple are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific things I can do to pass on knowledge about the activity in which I make complicated things simple are:*

\*

\*

\*

## *People Who Choose To Be Encouragers*

### *The Encourager's Evolution*

*Different people develop into being encouragers in different ways.*

- *Some seem to be natural encouragers.*
- *Some learn from positive models or gradually develop into being encouragers.*
- *Some have an epiphany when they realise they want to be encouragers.*

Some people seem to be natural encouragers. They seem to be naturally loving, kind and want the best for other people. They often find this rewarding and sometimes experience the helper's high.

Some people learn from positive models. They may have had a parent, teacher, coach or other significant person who made them feel the centre of the world. They choose to pursue this approach in their own way and enjoy helping other people.

Some people gradually develop into being encouragers over the years. They may translate this into doing work as an educator, coach, trusted advisor or in another professional role.

Some people make a conscious decision to encourage other people. They may do this for a variety of reasons. They may take this step because they find it produces wins for both other people and themselves.

Some people have an epiphany moment. They may be about to meet a person, run a workshop, make a presentation or do another activity.

Leading up to the session they may feel nervous or have the desire to impress others. Then, in a moment of enlightenment, they realise:

*"It is about them, it is not about me. It is about encouraging them, providing great service and helping them to succeed."*

Some people find this to be a liberating moment. It is about inspiring others rather than trying to impress. They then use their strengths to help other people to succeed.

Encouragers often focus on the human spirit. Recognising what most people want in life, they pass on knowledge in ways that people can use in their daily lives.

Different people choose to follow this approach at different stages of their lives. Some continue to do so during their later years. Let's explore this approach.

## *The Positive Later Years Approach*

### *The Positive Later Years*

*There are many ways to approach our later years. One approach is to take the following steps.*

***To have a positive attitude***

***To build on the positives  
and manage the negatives***

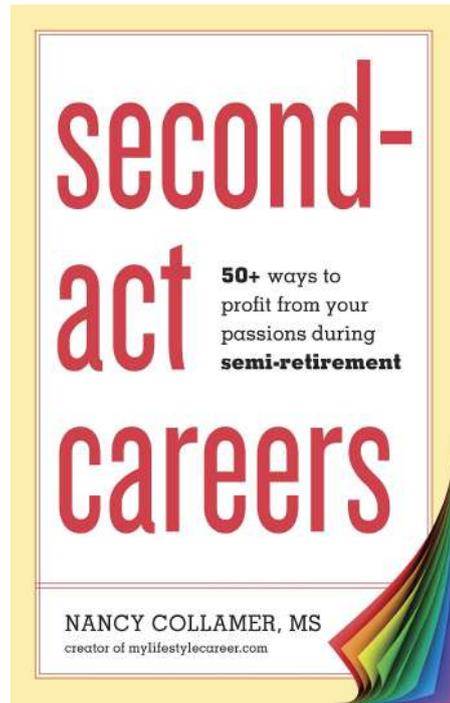
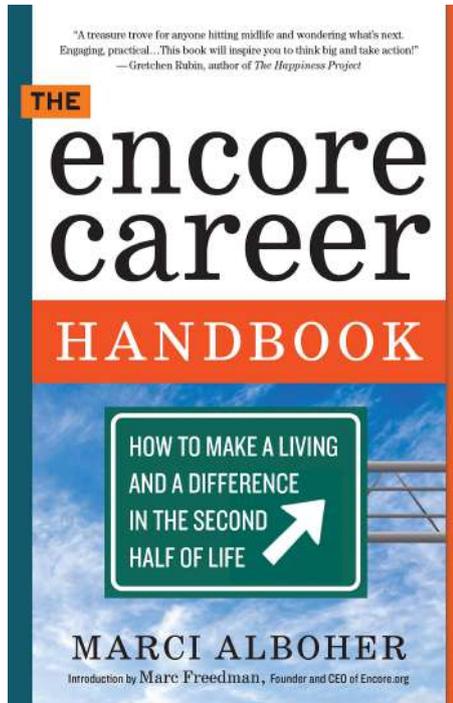
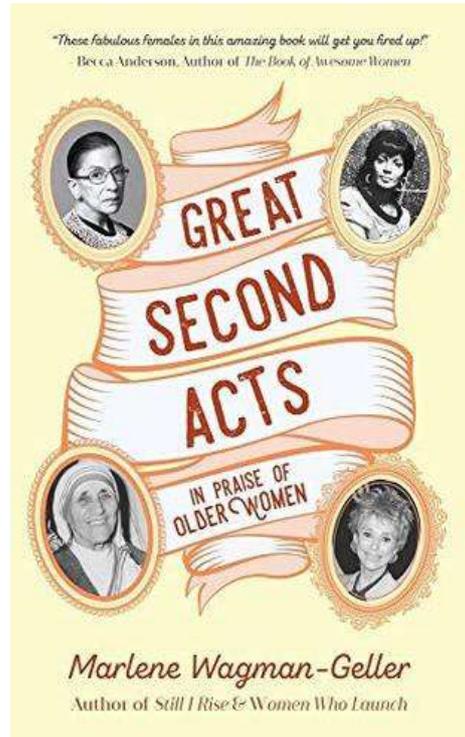
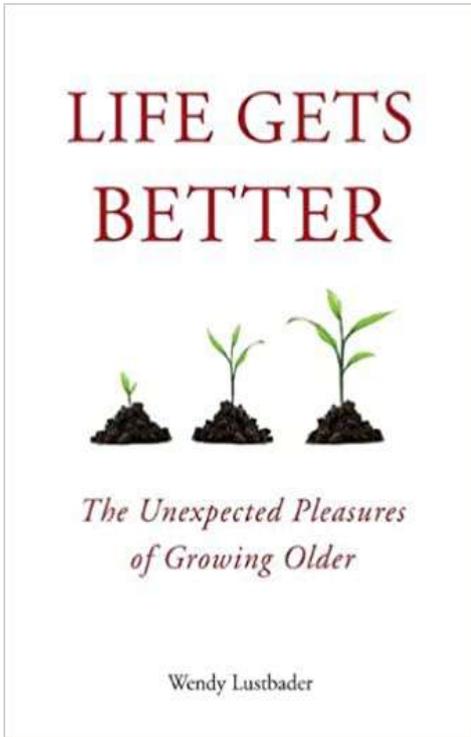
***To pass on a positive legacy***

There are many ways to approach our later years. Today there are many books that provides tools that people can use:

*To have a positive attitude ... To build on the positive things and manage the potential negative things ... To pass on a positive legacy.*

Some books describe how people may get happier as they get older. Such people feel more able to be themselves. They follow their principles, focus on what they can control and appreciate each day. Some also relearn to play.

Some books describe the concept of encores – how people develop second careers in their later years. They offer practical tips that individuals can use to follow their passions, do positive work and pass on knowledge as mentors. Here are some of these books.



Many people aim to continue to enjoy life as they get older. Some follow the themes described by Jenny Joseph in her much-quoted poem *Warning*. Here are some of the well-known lines.

*When I am an old woman I shall wear purple  
With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me.  
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer gloves ...*

*I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm tired  
And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells  
And run my stick along the public railings  
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.*

*But maybe I ought to practise a little now?  
So people who know me are not too shocked and surprised  
When suddenly I am old, and start to wear purple.*

Jenny described the poem as embodying a woman who has a twinkle in her eye but her words also resonated with many people. Below is an excerpt from an article she wrote about the poem in *The Lancet*.

*Although older people do enjoy the poem, perhaps because an older person is portrayed as an interesting and likeable individual, not as a member of a separate species.*

*Children like it "because it's funny and the woman in it reminds me of my Gran", it is the ones in the middle – not so old yet, but ... who have felt the poem speak especially to them. They have all said that what they liked was the spirit and happiness of the old woman.*

*All sorts of people have laughed, been enlivened, brightened up, "been moved by" the poem, have felt a real live encounter with something zestful and comforting, and occupied it in their own way.*

Many women live zestful lives as they get older. Many men take a similar approach, but some find it harder. This can sometimes be

the case if they have spent much of their lives working for an organisation.

George Vaillant has studied the paths that men take in their lives. A psychiatrist and professor at the Harvard Medical School, he is also known for writing *Triumphs of Experiences*. Here is an excerpt from the official description of the book.

*Begun in 1938, the Grant Study of Adult Development charted the physical and emotional health of over 200 men, starting with their undergraduate days. The now-classic **Adaptation to Life** reported on the men's lives up to age 55 and helped us understand adult maturation.*

*Now George Vaillant follows the men into their nineties, documenting for the first time what it is like to flourish far beyond conventional retirement.*

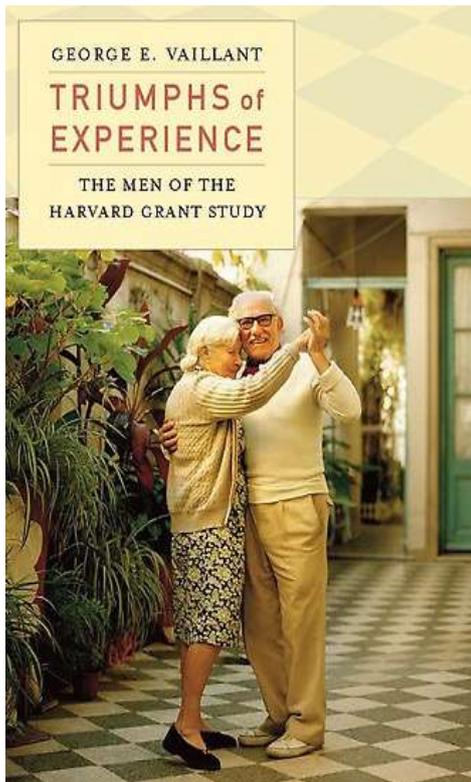
*Reporting on all aspects of male life, including relationships, politics and religion, coping strategies, and alcohol use **Triumphs of Experience** shares a number of surprising findings.*

*For example, the people who do well in old age did not necessarily do so well in midlife, and vice versa. While the study confirms that recovery from a lousy childhood is possible, memories of a happy childhood are a lifelong source of strength.*

*Marriages bring much more contentment after age 70, and physical aging after 80 is determined less by heredity than by habits formed prior to age 50. The credit for growing old with grace and vitality, it seems, goes more to ourselves than to our stellar genetic makeup.*

*George has studied health and happiness in both women and men. So what advice can we give young people about shaping their futures?*

*Here are some of the common factors that people who are happy seem to demonstrate.*



*A good marriage before age 50 ...  
Ingenuity to cope with difficult  
situations ... Altruistic behavior.*

*Stop smoking ... Do not use alcohol  
to the point where your behavior  
shames you or your family.*

*Stay physically active ... Walk, run,  
mow your own grass, play tennis or  
golf ... Keep your weight down.*

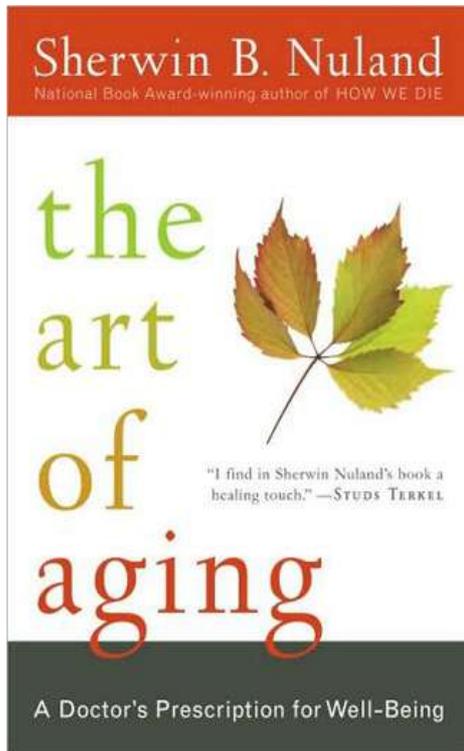
*Pursue education as far as your  
intelligence permits ... After  
retirement, stay creative, do new  
things, learn how to play again.*

## *The Art Of Aging*

There are many books written on the art of aging. The following section looks at two of these.

Sherwin Nuland, a professor at Yale University's Medical School, wrote *The Art of Aging: A Doctor's Prescription for Well-Being*. He believes it is important to focus on three things for healthy aging.

These are to work on your physical fitness, to hold onto close relationships and to use your creativity. Here are some ideas from his book.



*Aging can be the gift that establishes the boundaries of our lives, which previously knew far fewer confines and brooked far fewer restrictions.*

*Everything within those boundaries becomes thus more precious than it was before: love, learning, family, work, health, and even the lessened time itself.*

*We cherish them more, as the urgency increases to use them well.*

*Many are the uses of the newly recognized limits. Among their advantages is that our welcoming acceptance of them adds to the value, adds to our appreciation, adds to our ability to savor - adds to every pleasure that falls within them.*

*The good is easier now to see; it is closer to the touch and the taking, if we are only willing to look truthfully at it there and gather it up from amid the cares that may surround it.*

*There is much to savor during this time, magnified and given more meaning and intensity by the very finitude within which it is granted to us.*

*Aging has the power to concentrate not only our minds but our energies, too, because it tells us that all is no longer possible, and the richness must be more fully extracted from the lessened but nevertheless still-abundant store that remains.*

*From here on, we must play only to our strengths. Some of the more meaningful of those strengths may be not at all less than they once were.*

*Even as age licks our joints and lessens our acuities, it brings with it the promise that there can in fact be something more, something good, if we are but willing to reach out and take hold of it.*

*It is in the willingness and the will that the secret lies, not the secret to lengthening a life but to rewarding it for having been well used. For aging is an art.*

*The years between its first intimations and the time of the ultimate letting go of all earthly things can—if the readiness and resolve are there—be the real harvest of our lives.*

*We do this at every stage of life without noticing the new pattern to which we are becoming attuned, whether it be in adolescence, the twenties, or middle age.*

*Though the changes may be more obvious as we approach our sixties and seventies, they are, in fact, only a continuation of everything that has come before.*

*For becoming what is known as elderly is simply entering another developmental phase of life. Like all others, it has its bodily changes, its deep concerns, and its good reasons for hope and optimism.*

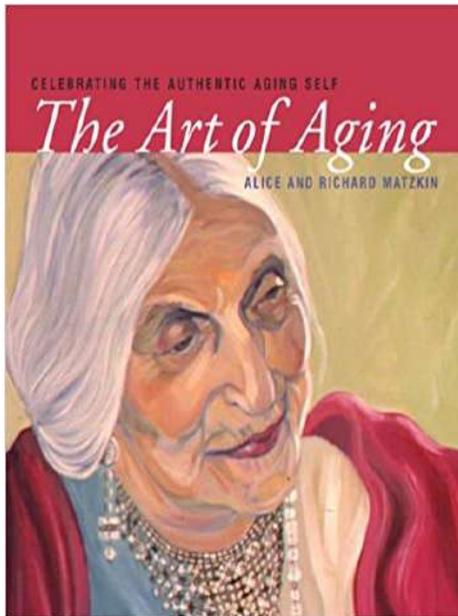
Alice and Richard Matzki are both artists and wrote *The Art Of Aging: Celebrating The Authentic Aging Self*. In it they explore physical changes, sensuality and relationships, aging parents, spirituality and death.

Drawing on their personal experiences and the wisdom of older mentors, they conclude that their elder years can be a time of ripening and harvest rather than stagnation and despair. Here is their mission statement.

*As part of our personal growth and our responsibility as elders, our intention is to share what we have learned about growing older.*

*By exhibiting our art, speaking and writing, we intend to spread the important message that aging is not the end of life, but can be a positive new beginning and the crowning culmination of a lifetime.*

Alice and Richard produced a guide for groups who want to discuss the themes in the book. Here are some topics they invite people to explore.



*The whole of life is your work of art.*

*The point is to utilize your gifts and transform your disabilities to make it the most beautiful artwork you possibly can.*

*Creating a good old age is work that takes a lifetime.*

*What are characteristics of a good old age? What kind of work would it take to achieve it?*

*Elders who are living fruitful, creative lives can serve as inspiring models that help us envision a positive old age. What elder or elders that you know personally, or know through the media do you admire? What qualities they exhibit do you find admirable?*

*A passionate sense of purpose, generosity of spirit, present focus and physical appeal are qualities we found in the vital women we interviewed.*

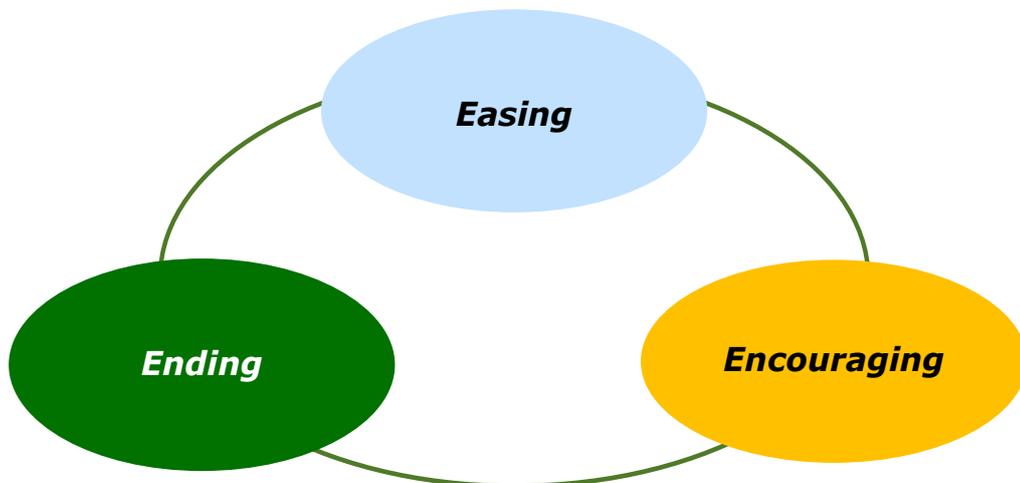
*Do you have a passion that would provide you with a sense of purpose that you can carry through old age? How can generosity of spirit play a role in living a full life?*

*Elders often feel the need and desire to give back to the world in some way in gratitude for what they have received. What would you like your life's legacy to be? What are the things in your life you are thankful for?*

## *The Easing Towards The End Of Life Approach*

### *Moving Towards The End Of Life*

*This approach sometimes involves the following stages as we move towards the end of life.*



Today it is more common for people to talk about dying. There are, of course, many views about how to move on from this life.

One factor that all people agree on is the need to manage pain. Doing this can help a person to deal with the physical and psychological aspects of dying.

People do not necessarily choose when they die, but sometimes they have time to choose how they approach the end of life. The following section looks at the steps that some people take and how they may be supported during this time.

## *Easing*

Some people seem to ease their way towards dying. They say things like:

*"I am ready to move on ... I have had a wonderful life ... I am grateful for what I have been given ... I want to go to sleep."*

Such an approach calls for taking care of any physical pain. Providing this is done, a person may feel more at ease with moving towards the end of their life.

## *Encouraging*

Some people want to encourage others at this time. They say things like:

*"I love you ... Thank you for what you have given me ... Please get on with your lives ... You have so much to give ... Always recognise what is really important in life."*

As we know, some people talk about regrets they have had in life, but many want to encourage both present and future generations. They urge others to focus on what is important. They encourage them to be kind and to live life fully.

## *Ending*

Many books describe the last words that people say before they die. Some people say the names of their loved ones. Some say phrases that are metaphors for journeys.

Some recognise that the end of their life can also mark new beginnings for other people. They therefore want to leave others with words and memories that will give them strength in the future.

People like to feel in control. This is especially so when they are approaching death. Sometimes this is not possible, but there are other times when they can be helped as they reach this stage.

Charles Garfield spent many years working with people who were approaching the final stages of their lives. This has led him to explore how to help people during this time.

He put together some of his findings in an article he wrote for The Greater Good website. Here are some excerpts from the article. Whilst some people may find the title of it challenging, he goes on to explain how we can help people in the later stages of their lives.

### *Seven Keys To A Good Death*

*I've worked with hundreds of dying people and founded Shanti. This is a peer counselling program that provides compassionate, trained listeners to help patients and their families through serious illness and the transition of dying.*

*Shanti volunteers have supported many people facing death to do so with grace through their presence and compassion. What I've learned through my experience is that what people most need on their deathbed is to be heard - to have their wishes considered and, whenever possible, fulfilled.*

*But even with Shanti's success, and the proliferation of palliative care programs and hospices around the nation, there are still many dying Americans who don't get that chance.*

Here are seven ways to help create the conditions for a good death.

## *Charles Garfield*

*Here is a summary of the themes he outlines in his article How To Die Well*

- *Experience as little pain as possible*

*When I talk of being pain-free, I mean physically, psycho-socially, and spiritually pain-free.*

*There are medications that can manage most people's physical pain and make them far more comfortable, and these should not be denied to any patient. Spiritual pain can occur, too. Spiritual issues are common at the end of life, and they need attention.*

- *Recognize and resolve interpersonal conflicts*

*We must also recognize psycho-social pain, the residue of life's unresolved conflicts with other people. Ira Byock wrote in his book, *The Four Things That Matter Most*, that there are four basic messages a person needs to communicate at the end of life:*

*"I love you. Thank you. I forgive you. Please forgive me."*

*A good death creates a space for people to say those words.*

- *Satisfy any remaining wishes that are consistent with their present condition*

*Some people want to live long enough to go to a grandson's graduation, to see a book published, to see a cousin they were close to who lives 3000 miles away.*

*But, be careful that these are the wishes of the patient and not just the patient's significant others.*

- *Review their life to find meaning*

*There are two main ways that people on their deathbeds find meaning: in the recognition of all of the people they have loved and who have loved them, and in the work that they've done that has contributed to the greater good.*

*Helping the dying to articulate what brought meaning to their lives will help them feel more at peace with their death.*

- *Hand over control to a trusted person, someone committed to helping them have the kind of death they desire*

*The whole issue of deathbed conversations—asking a person what he needs or wants—is very important. What does the dying person want? How can they get that? Is it reasonable?*

- *Be protected from needless procedures that serve to only dehumanize and demean without much or any benefit*

*One has to be very persistent and clear to avoid procedures that are unwanted - to insist on palliative or hospice care, instead.*

*It can help to have an advanced directive or a "physician-orders for life sustaining treatment" in writing and communicated to loved ones; but often a person also needs a vocal advocate—a family member, friend, or volunteer caregiver.*

- *Decide how social and how alert they want to be*

*Sometimes a dying person wants solitude; sometimes he or she wants friends and family around. Whatever the case, the dying person should decide.*

*And, though trickier, dying people should be allowed to decide how much consciousness they want. Some people want to sleep all of the time; others want to be alert as much as possible. Once these wishes are known, an advocate can help make that happen.*

*If we know the conditions for a good death, we are more apt to prepare ourselves and the ones we love to die with dignity and the sense of a life well-lived, rather than treating death as a calamity requiring a trip to the hospital.*

- *A good death is no oxymoron. It's within everyone's realm of possibility. We need only realize its potential and prepare ourselves to meet it mindfully, with compassion and courage.*

Let's move on to the theme leaving a positive legacy. Some take this approach early in their life, some come to it at a later stage.

The following pages describe people who pursue this approach in their own ways.

## *Ellen MacArthur's Work On The Circular Economy*



Ellen became famous as a yachtswoman at the age of 28 when she made the fastest ever single-handed circumnavigation around the globe. The journey was thrilling, frightening and illuminating. It also planted the seed of what she could do for the planet.

Ellen later described how being on the yacht called for living on finite resources. She then extrapolated this approach to living on the Earth. Thriving on the planet called for developing a circular economy.

There are fundamental differences between a circular economy and a linear economy. Ellen explained these in an interview she gave to Marcus Fairs for the design website called *dezeen*.

*The linear economy is a straight line, no matter how efficient you make it.*

*If you make a car with less material, if you make a car using less energy, you're still using stuff. You're still consuming materials.*

*Whereas within a circular model, from the outset you design in a way whereby that product comes back into the system.*

*The components are recovered, the materials are recovered, the item itself is perhaps distributed in a different way, via providing mobility, rather than selling a car.*

She did a massive amount of research before setting up the Ellen MacArthur Foundation. This now works with businesses, cities and other organisations that aim to apply the principles of a circular economy.

*The Foundation's mission is:*

*To accelerate the transition to a circular economy.*

Ellen recognises that people are more likely to make changes when they see that these will be beneficial. During her interview with Marcus Fairs she described some of the economic benefits of the circular economy.

*In the early stages, we were looking at the economic value of a circular economy. The first report came out in January 2012.*

*We took five products: cotton, a light commercial vehicle, a washing machine, a mobile phone and a smartphone.*

*We didn't know whether it would be economically viable for any of those to be circular. But in all five cases we found it was better economically to be circular than linear.*

*The figure was \$630 billion [in savings] per year - and that was only based on recycling less than 25 per cent of the components, materials and products. So actually, there's a huge economic value in shifting from linear to circular.*

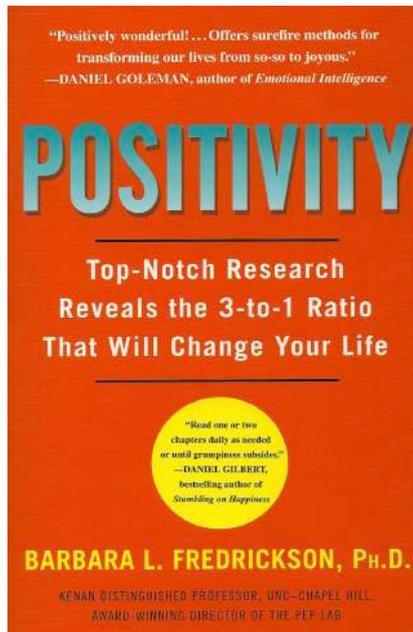
*Then we did a second one on fast-moving consumer goods, which was 700 billion US dollars [of savings], and a third one looking at global supply chains, which was over a trillion US dollars.*

*We really began to prove that circular is an economic benefit.*

Sailing around the world called for courage, strategic thinking and detailed planning. It also called for resilience on the way towards delivering the goods. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation embodies these qualities as it aims to speed up the transition to a circular economy.

## Barbara Fredrickson's Work On Positivity

### Positive Emotions



*Individuals, marriages and business teams that flourish have positivity ratios above 3 to 1.*

*We need a ratio of 3 to 1 to lift us, develop and increase our resilience.*

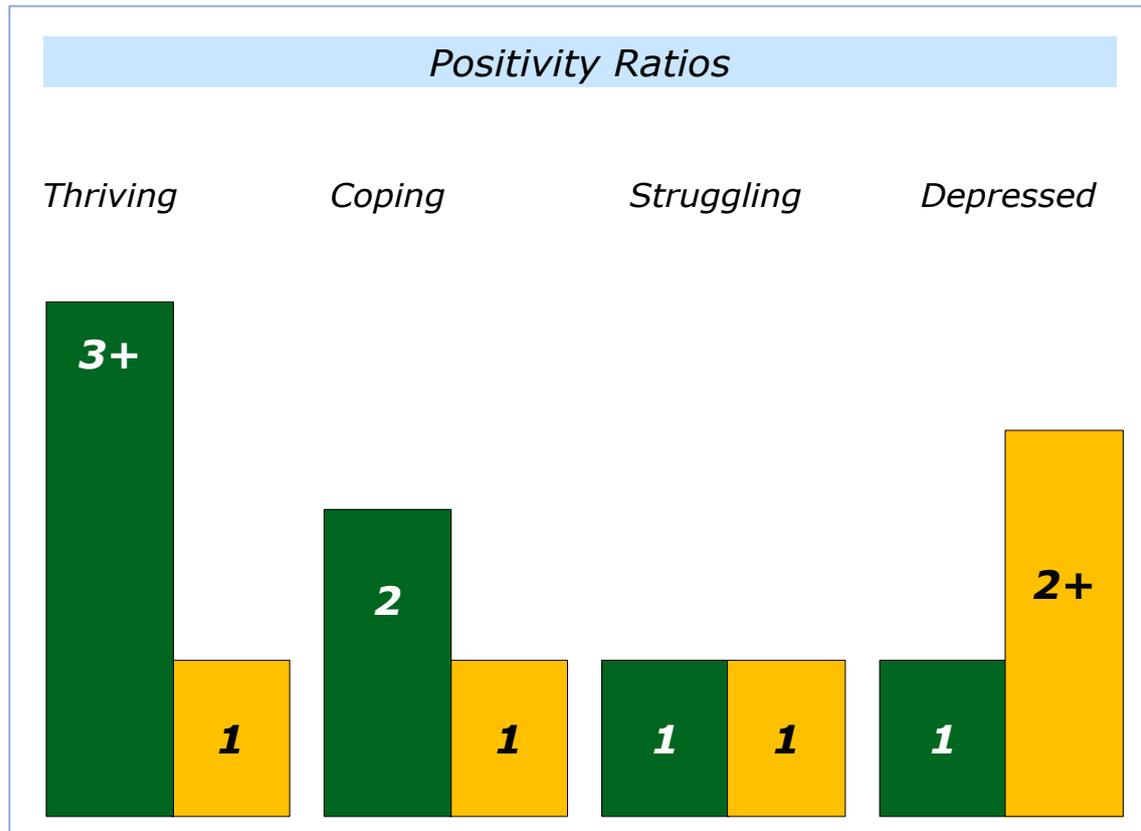
*Individuals who don't overcome their depression, couples who fail in their marriages, and business teams that are unpopular and unprofitable each have ratios in the gutter, below 1 to 1.*

Barbara Fredrickson did pioneering work that demonstrated how positive emotions can improve our lives. Twenty years of research into emotions culminated in her book *Positivity*.

The book was based on solid research but it also captured the imagination. Why? Interviewers and readers focused on a key theme that provided a signpost to the future.

*People who have positive emotions in a ratio of 3:1 in relation to negative emotions are more likely to flourish.*

Barbara saw this pattern repeated in marriages and teams that thrived. People who experienced more negativity were more likely to have difficulties.



Barbara explains that positivity is more than simply being happy. It certainly isn't putting on a smiling face to grin and bear things.

Positivity is based on being true to ourselves. It embodies gratitude, love, playfulness, curiosity and adventure. These emotions trigger each other and create an upward spiral. They 'broaden and build', helping us to make breakthroughs and bring new things into being.

Such emotions provide the basis for creativity, problem solving and even evolution. They enable us to open our hearts and minds. Negativity, on the other hand, closes down our ability to think, create and grow. Barbara explains this in the following way.

*Positivity consists of the whole range of positive emotions – from appreciation to love, from amusement to joy, from hope to gratitude, and then some.*

*The term is purposely broad. It includes the positive meanings and optimistic attitudes that trigger positive emotions as well as the*

*open minds, tender hearts, relaxed limbs, and soft faces they usher in.*

*It even includes the long-term impact that positive emotions have on your character, relationships, communities and environments. And the new scientific discoveries about the importance of positivity are stunning.*

Barbara discovered that people could improve their wellbeing by improving their positivity ratio. She likened this to changing their diet to eat healthier food. They needed maintain this positive diet, however, rather than keep exposing themselves to negativity.

She listed ten forms of positivity that can nourish the soul. People can do both simple and big things that generate the following emotions in themselves and other people.

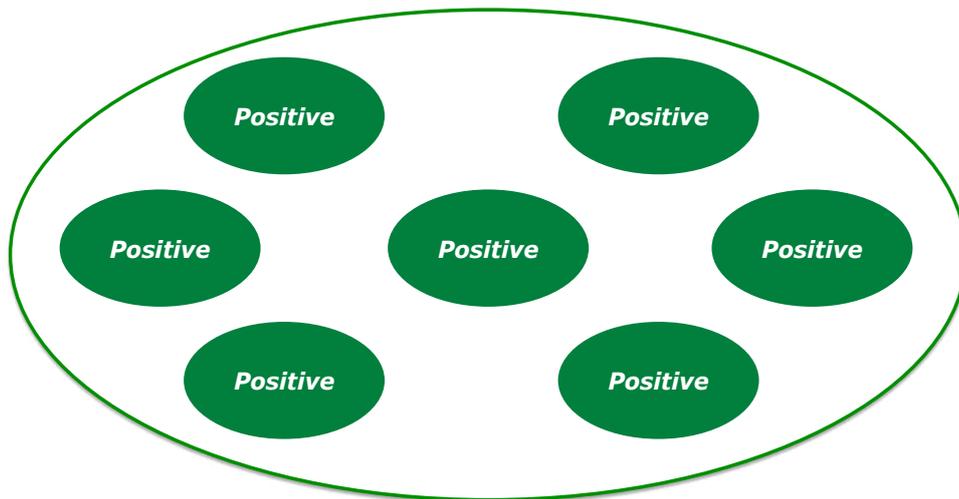
*Gratitude ... Joy ... Love ... Hope ... Inspiration ... Amusement ... Awe ... Interest ... Pride ... Serenity.*

People who maintain these habits will create an upward spiral that takes them beyond the tipping point. They are then more likely to increase the wellbeing of both themselves and other people.

Barbara's work highlights the importance of putting positive things – rather than poisonous things – into a system. This may be their bodies, their relationships or their planet.

### *Putting Positive Things Into Your System*

*This approach involves putting positive things your system each day. These can be small or big things. These can help you to sustain your strength and manage any difficulties you encounter.*



How can you continue to put positive things into your system? You may want to play your favourite music, walk with your dog, cook nourishing food, do creative projects, spend time with encouraging people success, do satisfying work or do other activities.

If you wish try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *Putting Positive Things Into My System*

*The positive things – small things and big things – that I can aim to put into my system each day, week and month are:*

\*

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*The specific benefits of putting these positive things into my system may be:*

\*

\*

\*

Let's move on to encouraging another person. Imagine that somebody has asked you to help them to maintain or build their confidence.

One approach is to invite them to do something like the following exercise called *My Positive Book*. This focuses on the following themes.

### *Positive Things In The Past*

You can encourage the person to describe some of the positive things they have done in the past. They may have raised a child, encouraged people, overcome difficult challenges, performed superb work and done many other things.

If appropriate, encourage them to describe some of these things in detail. This helps to reinforce the positive feelings and brings their story to life.

### *Positive Things In The Present*

You can encourage the person to describe some of the positive things they are doing in the present. They may be taking care of their health, helping other people, immersing themselves in creative projects and doing other things.

### *Positive Things In The Future*

You can encourage the person to describe some of the positive things they aim to do in the future. They may plan to enjoy life, maintain a sense of gratitude, pass on knowledge, encourage both present and future generations and do other things.

This may sound an over-simple approach but many people find it useful. The following pages describe the exercise. You can, of course, adapt it in your own way.

*My Positive Book*

*Positive Things In The Past*

*The positive things I have  
done in the past have been:*

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### *Positive Things In The Present*

*The positive things I am  
doing in the present are:*

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### *Positive Things In The Future*

*The positive things I aim  
to do in the future are:*

\*

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\*

## Roger Fisher's Work On Helping People To Find Solutions

*Roger Fisher - It is vital to focus on basic human needs*



*"The most powerful interests are basic human needs. In searching for the basic interests behind a declared position, look particularly for those bedrock concerns that motivate all people.*

*"Basic human needs include: security, economic well-being, a sense of belonging, recognition and control over one's life.*

*"If you can take care of such basic needs, you increase the chance both of reaching agreement and, if an agreement is reached, of the other side's keeping to it."*

Roger Fisher made a great contribution to peace. Known for his books on negotiation such as *Getting To Yes*, his obituary in the *Economist* described him as a lawyer, teacher and peacemaker.

His approach was different from that of many lawyers. Roger focused on creating alignment, rather than seeing negotiation as an adversarial process. He believed the keys were for people:

*To sit down together side-by-side;*

*To show respect, listen and understand each other's needs;*

*To focus on the job to do - which was to find a solution;*

*To work together to solve the problem;*

*To build the foundations for ongoing peace.*

Roger was invited to help people resolve differences in many parts of the world. He often began by helping people to get to know each other and build rapport.

This involved doing simple things such as eating together, listening actively and focusing on common interests. When appropriate, he would then say:

*"We have a shared concern here. Let's work together. How do you see it?"*

Roger served in the Second World War as a weather reconnaissance officer. But he was strongly affected by the loss of his roommate and many friends.

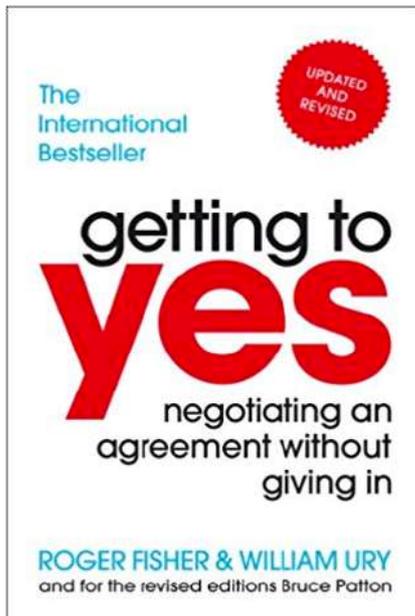
During his service he also flew morning flights over Japan. This was before the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. According to people who knew him, the memory of these flights – and the unnecessary deaths of many people in war – weighed on him.

Although building a great reputation in Academia, he threw himself into applying the ideas in practise. This involved him working in Europe on the Marshall Plan.

Later he contributed to seeking peace in the Middle East. This involved working on President Sadat's trip to Jerusalem and the subsequent summit at Camp David.

Roger played a significant part in helping to release the United States citizens taken hostage in Iran in 1981. He helped to resolve the war between Ecuador and Peru. He also spent considerable time in South Africa, helping to bring together people to end Apartheid.

His work became widely known as a result of the book he co-wrote with William Ury, *Getting To Yes*. Since its publication in 1981 it has sold many millions of copies. This described how people could follow five principles to find solutions.



*It is important:*

*To separate the people from the problem;*

*To focus on interest, not positions;*

*To invent options for mutual gain;*

*To insist on using objective criteria;*

*To know your BATNA (Best Alternative To Negotiated Agreement).*

Roger believed it was important for people to build on what they had in common. He taught law students to focus on alignment. This was uncommon in law, where people often took adversarial positions.

He also believed it was vital for the parties involved to show respect to each other as human beings. Wherever possible, it was important to separate the problem from the people. Providing you looked at what each of the people wanted, it was then often possible to solve the problem.

Roger used his warmth, compassion and skill to help many people find solutions to challenges. He summarised his approach in the following way.

*"Any method of negotiation may be fairly judged by three criteria: It should produce a wise agreement if agreement is possible. It should be efficient. And it should improve or at least not damage the relationship between the parties."*

## *The Ashoka Organization's Work Supporting Social Entrepreneurs*



*The first most obvious test of a true social entrepreneur is:*

*"Are they really possessed by an idea?"*

*The idea is something they are married to in the full sense of the word.*

*What differentiates them from mere idealists is that an idea can bring satisfaction only when it is realised.*

Ashoka is a pioneering organisation that supports social entrepreneurs across the world. These entrepreneurs aim to improve the quality of people's lives.

They may focus on education, medical care, agriculture, housing, broadcasting or any field of human need. Such people have the passion and practical skills to translate their vision into reality.

Bill Drayton, the organisation's founder, explained this in the following way.

*"What differentiates Ashoka Fellows from mere idealists is that, for these rare men and women, an idea can bring satisfaction only when it is realised.*

*"Possessing the same unstoppable drive of a Steve Jobs, they define new issues and create new approaches. Their innovations then set new yardsticks of performance for helping society."*

Ashoka's Fellows have the ability to make ideas stick. Based on research, the organisation's web site explains the results.

*"By the end of their 5-year fellowship, between fifty and sixty per cent of the Fellows have changed national policy in the countries where they have been working, and ninety percent have seen independent institutions copy their innovations."*

### *Why the name Ashoka?*

Bill Drayton started the organisation in 1980. He chose the name in recognition of Ashoka, a great leader who transformed the Indian sub-continent in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BC. (Sometimes his name is also spelt 'Asoka'.)

Emperor Ashoka initially threw himself into waging war against his neighbours but became horrified by the carnage. Converting to Buddhism, he dedicated himself to improving people's lives.

Deeply committed to his own beliefs, Ashoka nevertheless spread religious tolerance. Historians are split over the value of his legacy, but all agree that his reign produced great prosperity. H.G. Wells wrote in his book *Short History of the World*:

*Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history the name of Ashoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star.*

*His reign for eight-and-twenty years was one of the brightest interludes in the troubled history of mankind.*

*He organised a great digging of wells in India and the planting of trees for shade. He founded hospitals and public gardens and gardens for the growing of medicinal herbs.*

*He created a ministry for the care of the aborigines and subject races of India. He made provision for the education of women.*

*"Such was Ashoka, the greatest of kings. He was far in advance of his age."*

### *Bill Drayton and Social Entrepreneurship*

Bill was born in New York City in 1943. He came from a family of practical idealists who, amongst other causes, fought for the abolition of slavery and for women's rights. Speaking to *Good Magazine*, he explained this in the following way.

*"Both my parents showed extraordinary (most would say madly unrealistic!) freedom of spirit at 19. Public service and respect for ideas is a recurrent theme in both the American and Australian sides of my family.*

*"The fact that the Grimke sisters (anti-slavery and women's equality) and Wendell Phillips (abolitionist) lie on different branches of the America family suggest another element of deep-seated cultural values that drew these people to one another and, without a word being said, was another wonderful gift from my family."*

Looking back at his life, Bill recalls his own first encounters with entrepreneurship. Starting a one-page newspaper when at primary school, he soon built it into a large publication supported by adverts. He explained this in the following way.

*"I can't tell you how excited I was to get this mimeograph machine. It's amazing how supportive my parents were.*

*"There were 64 piles of mimeographed paper that had to be collated and stapled, and it never occurred to me this might be inconvenient to my family."*

Moving through schools, he became increasingly conscious of social entrepreneurs. These included people such as:

*Susan Anthony – who fought for Women’s Rights.*

*Mahatma Gandhi – whose spiritual leadership helped to guide India to independence.*

*Florence Nightingale – whose work in the Crimean War helped to found modern nursing.*

Bill went on to study at Harvard, Oxford and Yale Law School. It was during a summer break at Harvard that he became gripped by the power of social change.

Vinoba Bhave, a disciple of Gandhi, was walking across India, persuading individuals and whole villages to legally ‘gift’ their land to him. He then redistributed the land more equitably to support untouchables and other landless people.

Bill was 20 years old at the time and on vacation in Munich. Hearing about Bhave’s work, however, he drove a Volkswagen van from Munich to India to join him.

Returning to the USA, Bill organised Civil Rights sit-ins – an event he later described as one of the more formative experiences of his life.

Pursuing his professional career, he worked at McKinsey, the consulting firm, and as an administrator at the White House during the Carter years. One of his key legacies was the carbon emission trading scheme.

Whilst having a strong academic background himself, Bill believes it is now vital to help young people to develop other skills. These include empathy, problem solving and teamwork. Here he describes some of these qualities.

## *Building Ashoka*

Inspired by social entrepreneurs from the past, Bill decided to found Ashoka. It started with an annual budget of \$50,000. This was seeded by the MacArthur Fellowship he was awarded.

The budget has now grown to more than \$30 million. The first Fellow was elected in India in 1981. Today it supports over 2000 Fellows in more than 60 countries across the world.

It is funded by individuals, foundations and business entrepreneurs. It does not accept funding from government institutions. Ashoka explains its philosophy as founded on the premise that:

*The most effective way to promote positive social change is to invest in social entrepreneurs with innovative solutions that are sustainable and replicable, both nationally and globally.*

Bill disagrees strongly with the notion that 'today there is less leadership in the world.' He believes people are retaking charge of their lives – particularly in the citizen sector. Why? Older institutions no longer serve the emerging needs.

Learning from business entrepreneurs who have dominated the past 30 years, many caring people are becoming what Bill calls changemakers. Speaking to *US News and World Report*, he explained this in the following way.

*"(The social sector) has been generating jobs at 2.5 to three times as fast as the rest of society. The U.S. more than doubled the number of IRS-recognized charities in a decade.*

*"Brazil grew from somewhere between 500 and 3,600 citizen groups in 1980 to an estimated more than 1 million by the year 2000. There are similar statistics from every continent."*

Talent is flocking to the sector, says Bill, because people believe it is where they can make a positive difference. Certainly there is a

place for pressuring old institutions to change, but it can be quicker to build successful prototypes. Let's explore one of the ways that Ashoka helps to make this happen.

### *Ashoka supports social entrepreneurs*

Social entrepreneurs are the engines of social change and role models for the citizen sector, says Ashoka. It provides such people with a living stipend, often for three years.

This allows them to work full-time on implementing their idea. Additionally it provides them with 'entrepreneur-to-entrepreneur' support and access to expert advice.

Ashoka spends a considerable amount of time selecting its Fellows. It looks for five qualities in such people. Let's explore these themes.

#### *Social Entrepreneurs*

*Ashoka looks for five characteristics in social entrepreneurs. These are:*

- *The Knockout Test – A New Idea*
- *Creativity*
- *Entrepreneurial Quality*
- *Social Impact of The Idea*
- *Ethical Fiber*

*They must have a new idea  
– this is The Knockout Test*

The person must be possessed by a new idea. It must be a new approach to a social problem that will make a breakthrough in a particular field.

Joaquín Felipe Leguía Orezzoli, for example, is creating 'Children's Forests' in Peru. The grandson of a former President of Peru, he involves children in managing the community forests. The Ashoka site explains his story.

*As a child, Joaquín's garden was a refuge from the world and a space to explore his imagination.*

*After his mother married a Swedish businessman who worked in the Amazon, Joaquín spent his summer vacations in the jungle, which further inspired his creativity.*

*There, he also became friends with a young Shipibo indigenous boy who shared adventures with him and inspired his early interest in the role of children in the environment.*

*After a failed attempt to please his parents by studying business, the political situation in Peru led Joaquín to finish his studies in the United States, where he earned his bachelor's degree from Cornell University in natural sciences.*

*After returning to Peru and working in a variety of public, private, and non-profit jobs, Joaquín attended Yale University and earned his master's degree in environmental management.*

*He travelled to Bolivia to study the role of indigenous children in community development for his thesis project, an experience that affirmed his conviction to work in youth environmental conservation. Returning to Peru in 1995 he and a friend founded the Association for Children and the Conservation of Their Environment.*

Joaquín's idea passed The Knockout Test. The organisation he leads aims to increase children's appreciation of nature and equip them with practical skills to sustain their environment in the future. Many of these areas go on to be actually managed by the young people.

*They must have creativity*

Creativity is crucial. Ashoka asks some of the following questions regarding candidates.

*Does this candidate have a vision to meet some human need better than it has been met before? Do they have a history of creating other new visions?*

Creativity obviously comes in different forms. Ashoka is looking for people who can move beyond their original idea and find creative solutions on the road to success.

*They must have entrepreneurial quality*

Great entrepreneurs get the right balance between innovation, implementation and impact. They start by having an innovative idea, but this is only the start.

They want to implement the idea and make a positive impact. Ashoka's entrepreneurs are possessed by their vision and want to translate it into reality. They are dreamers who do and deliver.

*They must have an idea that has social impact*

Ashoka focuses on the candidate's idea - not just the candidate. The idea must be able to live beyond the person's involvement.

Marie Haisova, for example, has involved women in reducing pollution in major Czech cities. The Ashoka site describes some of her achievements.

*Marie's program encourages mothers to spearhead the development of a beautiful and healthy urban environment of new parks and green spaces.*

*Her program provides training and leadership-building seminars for women so they can effectively launch their own neighborhood campaigns.*

*By providing women with the opportunity to change the area in which they live, Marie is both improving the poor condition of city environments and empowering women to become active community leaders.*

### *They must have ethical fiber*

Social entrepreneurs must have an internal moral compass. This is called into action on many occasions.

First, when they face setbacks. Can they revisit their inner values and make decisions based on this compass?

Second, when they invite other people to adopt a fresh approach towards tackling a problem. Ashoka says that people will ask: "Do we trust this person absolutely?"

Third, when they experience pressure or personal attacks. The candidate must then be seen to behave ethically in every way.

Ashoka envisions a world where 'Everyone is a Changemaker'. This is a world that responds quickly and effectively to social challenges. It is one where each individual has the freedom, confidence and societal support to address any social problem and drive change.

This is the organisation's vision – so what is the reality? Between 50% and 60% of the Fellows change national policy in their respective countries. Ninety percent see independent institutions copy their ideas. This is a remarkable bottom-line in any language.

Bill Drayton is optimistic about the future. Outlining his view of the part Ashoka can play in history, he gave the following view to the *US News and World Report*.

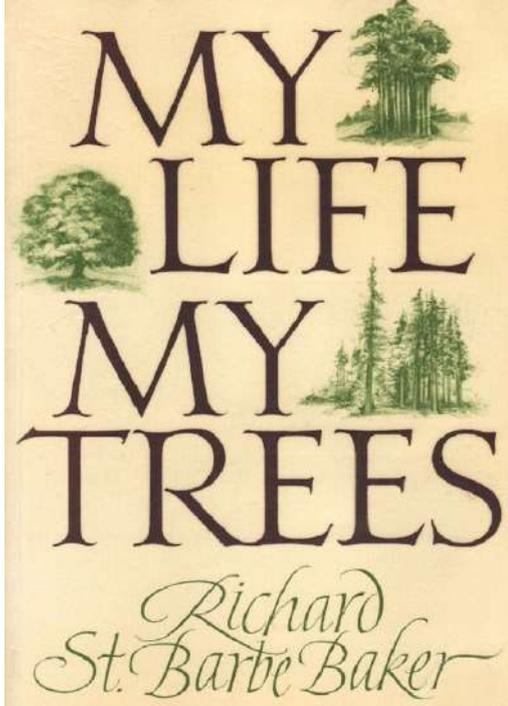
*I have never doubted that we are serving the most powerful and most hopeful historical force of our era. Or that we are positioned to play a truly important role. We are, after all, a community of most of the world's leading social entrepreneurs.*

*How could any entrepreneur, confronted by such amazing opportunities to help transform the world and to do so with such extraordinary colleagues, be tempted to lose focus?*

*In the world ten years from now, it will not be possible to be a citizen without being a change-maker. Anyone who is not will feel themselves to be enormously vulnerable.*

*More important, they will not be able to participate in the giving and receiving of love and respect, the heart of human existence, at its most important level - causing change for the good.*

*Richard St. Barbe Baker -  
Planting Trees As A Legacy*



*This generation may either be the last to exist in any semblance of a civilised world or that it will be the first to have the vision, the bearing and the greatness to say:*

*"I will have nothing to do with this destruction of life, I will play no part in this devastation of the land, I am determined to live and work for peaceful construction for I am morally responsible for the world of today and the generations of tomorrow."*

Richard St. Barbe Baker dedicated his life to showing people the value of planting trees. This epiphany came about at a young age.

Writing in his book *My Life My Trees*, he describes how in 1894, at the age of five, he had an unforgettable experience that charted his future path. After much coaxing, his nurse allowed him to explore the woods by himself. He described what happened in the following way.

*No explorer of space probing the secrets of other planets could have felt more exultation than I did at that moment.*

*Soon I was completely isolated in the luxuriant, tangled growth of ferns which were well above my head. In my infant mind I seemed to have entered a fairyland of my dreams.*

*I wandered on as in a dream, all sense of time and space lost. I became intoxicated with the beauty all around me, immersed in the joyousness and exultation of feeling part of it all.*

*I had entered the temple of the wood. I sank to the ground in a state of ecstasy; everything was intensely vivid – the call of a distant cuckoo seemed just for me. The overpowering beauty of it all entered my very being.*

*At that moment my heart brimmed over with a sense of unspeakable thankfulness which has followed me through the years since that woodland re-birth. I was in love with life: I was indeed born again, although I could not have explained what had happened to me then.*

Richard was a changed person. Returning from his walk in the woods, he found the commonplace things in life had a new beauty.

The bread he ate tasted crustier and more delicious. The grumpy old gardener looked like a favourite uncle. His parents gave him even more affection than they had done the previous day. At least, that was how it seemed. Twenty-six years later he translated this passion into his life's work.

He visited Kenya in 1920. Enlisting the backing of chiefs and elders, he started a programme that led to planting over one million trees. He then co-founded The Men of Trees and was invited to speak around the world.

After helping President Roosevelt to establish the Civil Conservation Corp, he instigated the Save The Redwoods campaign in California. When seeing the trees for the first time in 1931, he wrote:

*It was here that I came upon superb trees representing the supreme achievement of tree growth in the world today. Here it seemed that my search for the beautiful had ended.*

*This, I decided must be known as the 'Grove of Understanding'. It was here that I visualised international plays and youth gatherings. What better setting could there be in which to plan the better world of tomorrow?*

Richard then set three goals that he worked towards during the rest of his life. These were the following.

*To save the trees for posterity ... To provide a magnificent backdrop where young people could meet and marvel at the beauty of the Redwoods and the planet ... To inspire young people to work together to hand over this legacy to future generations.*

He kept pursuing this sense of purpose and made a positive contribution. Richard personally planted more than a million trees and inspired many people to care for the planet.

## *Clarifying Your Positive Contribution*

Let's return to your own life and work. What are the positive things you want to give to people during your time on the planet?

How can you build on your strengths? How can you do satisfying work? How can you help people to achieve success?

How can you maintain a sense of purpose? How can you keep following your principles? How can you plant seeds of hope?

How can you continue to be a giver? How can you encourage both present and future generations? How can you pass on knowledge that helps other people? How can you make a positive contribution?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

## *My Positive Contribution*

*The positive things I want to give to people during my time on the planet are:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific benefits of giving these positive things to people will be:*

\*

\*

\*

*The specific steps I can take to give these positive things to people are:*

\*

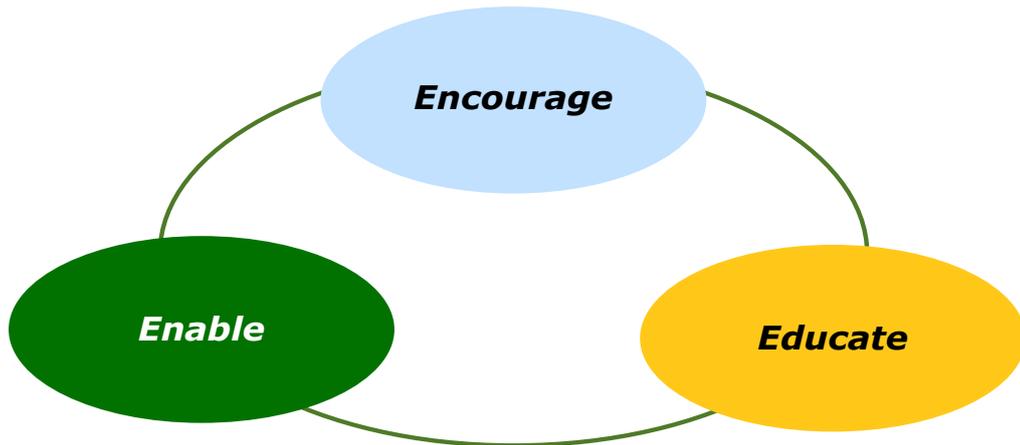
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## Conclusion

### *Positive Encouragers*

*They have a positive attitude and aim to encourage people. They may also, but only when appropriate, educate and enable people to shape a positive future.*



Encouragers aim to help people in their daily lives and work. Different people do this in different ways. Here is a summary of some of the principles they aim to follow.

Such people are often positive realists. They have a positive attitude but are also good at reading reality. They love to help people to succeed. They sometimes take the following approach.

### *They Encourage People*

Some do this by aiming to provide people with the basic materials for life. They may also help people to develop skills they can use to shape their futures.

Encouragers often have positive eyes. They look for when a person comes alive, overcomes challenges or does superb work. They look for what a person does right then and, if appropriate, encourages them to follow similar principles in the future.

They aim to empower people. Some do this by helping people to build on their strengths and follow successful strategies. They then help the people to work towards achieving their picture of success.

Encouragers may help people to increase both their will power and way power. They may do this by helping people to add to their repertoire of options. People then have more choices and hence more freedom to shape their futures.

### *They Educate People*

They sometimes follow the paths taken by good educators. They only do this when appropriate, however, and when helping people who want to develop.

Encouragers follow the maxim that the learner learns what the learner wants to learn. Bearing this in mind, they sometimes take the following steps:

*They make sure that the person wants to develop and work towards achieving their goals;*

*They clarify the real results the person wants to achieve - their picture of success;*

*They make clear contracts that it is okay to share ideas that the person can use in their own way to achieve their goals.*

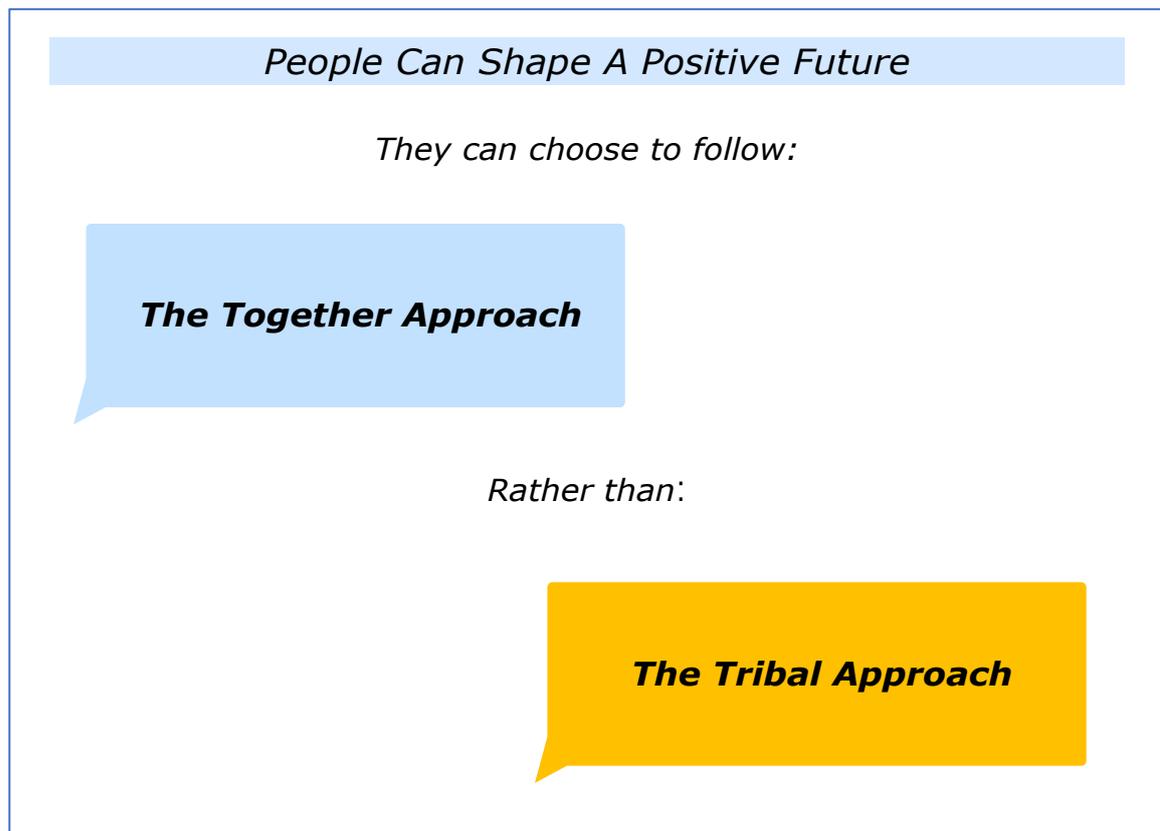
Encouragers then aim to pass on knowledge, models and practical tools that work. The person can take the ideas they like and use these in their own way.

### *They Enable People*

Encouragers aim to enable people to shape their futures. They sometimes do this by following the educational model of inspiration, implementation and integration.

They start by aiming to create an inspiring environment. They clarify people's goals and provide implementation tools that work. They then enable people to integrate the learning in their daily lives and work.

Encouragers help people to take control of their lives. They aim to pass on knowledge and practical tools that work. People can then use these ideas in their own ways to shape a positive future.



There are many ways to live life. This book has focused on how to plant seeds of encouragement in our lives and work. Each person will do this in their own way.

Encouragers often aim to shape a positive future. They take the together view of life rather than the tribal view of life.

*The Together Approach  
Rather Than The Tribal Approach*

People who take the together view believe that most people want similar things in life. They aim to build a world where everybody has the opportunity to be healthy, hopeful and happy.

*They believe in building on what people have in common – rather than continually seeking conflicts - to achieve concrete results.*

*They believe that people can combine their strengths to tackle the challenges we face across the world.*

*They believe that people can work together to create sustainable systems that deliver ongoing success for people and the planet.*

They want to encourage others to live fulfilling lives, providing they don't hurt other people. Faced by challenges that may cause difficulties, they build on what people have in common. They then try to, as far as possible, find win-win solutions.

People who take the tribal view identify only with those who appear to be in the same tribe. They have little respect for those who are different and see this as a call to arms. They then try to make sure that they win and other people lose.

Robert Muller, the former Assistant General Secretary of the United Nations, believed we can apply the together view to care for the planet. He wrote in his book *A Planet Of Hope*:

*This is a good planet for humans: it provides endless room for human curiosity and for participation in the process of continued creation and evolution.*

*The greatest task confronting us is to determine what the right future should be. This planet must be managed so that each individual life can be a work of art.*

Encouragers see the big picture and how things are connected. Some see the world as a whole system. They recognise that the actions we take in one part of the world can affect the living system in another part of the world.

Kevin Kelly's book *The Home Planet* mirrors this view. He collected the views of astronauts who had seen the Earth from afar. Here is one quote from Sultan bin Salman Al Saud.

*"The first day or so we all pointed to our countries. The third or fourth day we were pointing to our continents. By the fifth day we were aware of only one Earth."*

The positive planet is a beautiful place. It is one where we can encourage both present and future generations. It is one where we can create win-wins for people and the planet. It is one where we can continue to build a positive planet.



# ***The Positive Encourager's Book***

*How we can encourage people  
during our time on the planet*

This free eBook is packed with knowledge and practical tools.  
Based on what works, it shares practical ideas that people can use:

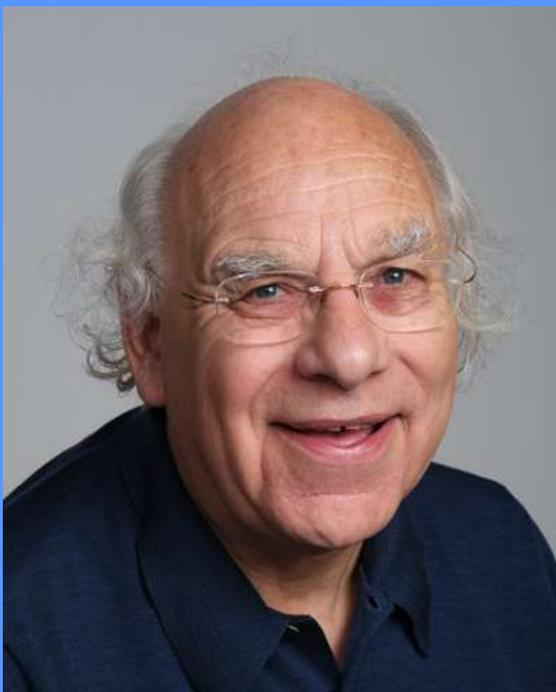
*To encourage people in their personal and professional lives;*

*To build on their strengths and do satisfying work;*

*To build positive teams that deliver peak performances;*

*To focus on their purpose, follow their principles and achieve their  
picture of success;*

*To make a positive contribution during their time on the planet.*



Mike has been working with people for more than fifty years. He has focused on helping individuals, teams and organisations to build on their strengths and achieve their pictures of success.

His many books include *The Art of Mentoring* and *The Art of Strengths Coaching*. You can reach him at: [mikepegg@me.com](mailto:mikepegg@me.com)