

The Positive Encourager's Book

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

Mike Pegg

The Positive Encourager's Book

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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Introduction

There are many ways to live life. This book explores the positive encourager's way. It looks at 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 strategies that work 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.

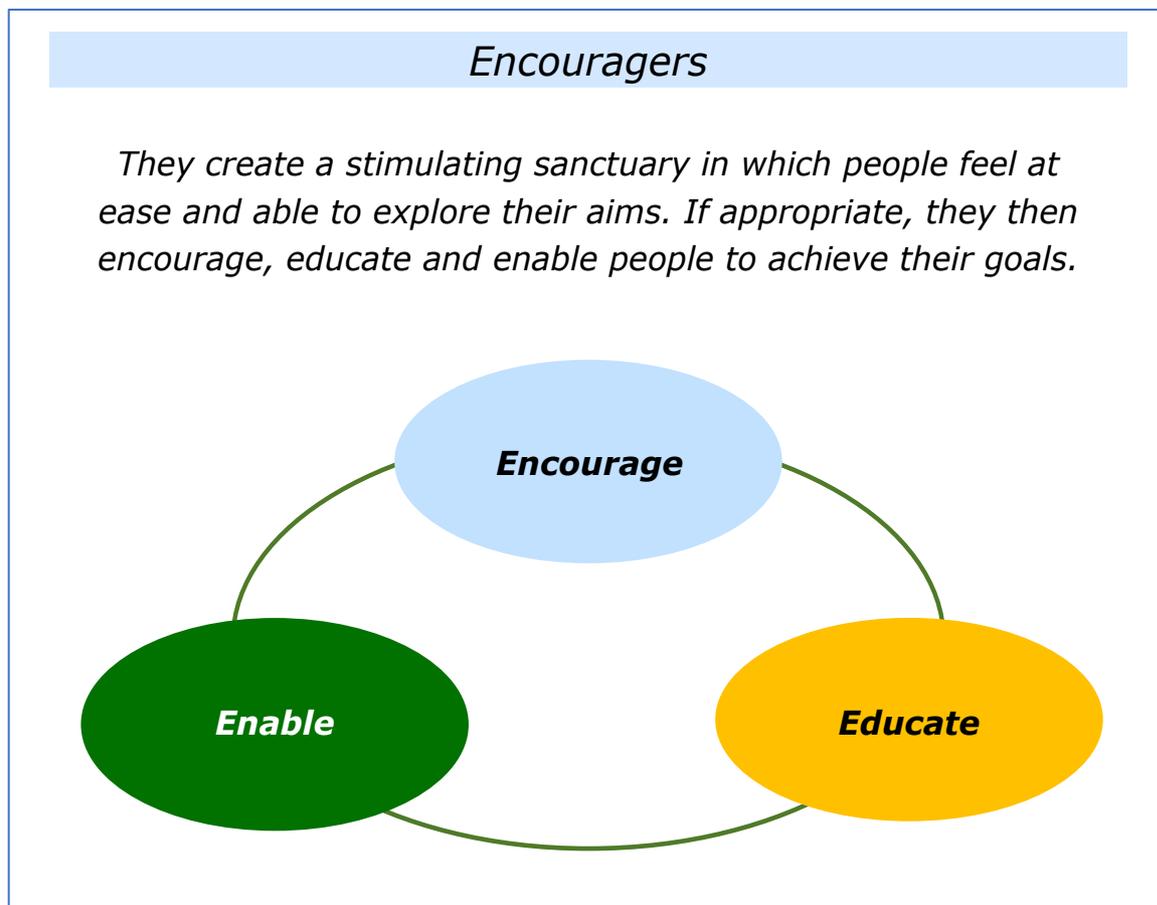
Positive Encouragement

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.

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.



The Strengths Approach

There are many ways to help people. This book describes how you can use the strengths approach to help individuals, teams and organisations.

The approach starts by clarifying their picture of success. It then offers practical tools that they can use to build on their strengths, follow strategies that work and achieve success.

The following pages offer many tools that you can use to help people. You can then apply these in your own way.



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.

Good Educators

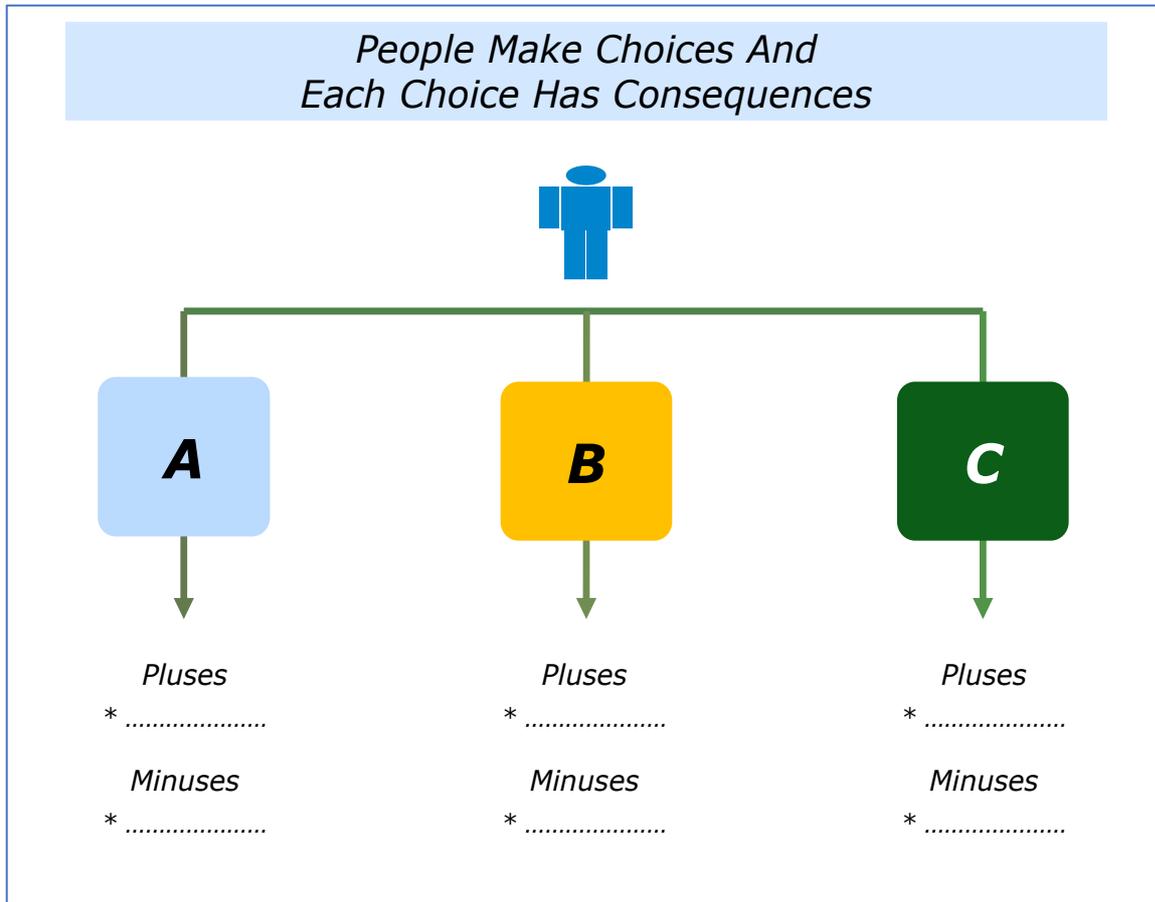
They start by clarifying what the person wants to learn. They then aim to make the learning personal, practical and profitable.

- *Personal – It relates to the person’s agenda and goals.*
- *Practical – It provides practical tools that the person can use to achieve their goals.*
- *Profitable – It aims to be, 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 you can encourage both present and future generations.



Many 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.

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.

The following pages provide many practical tools that you can use in your own way. Here are some points about 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.

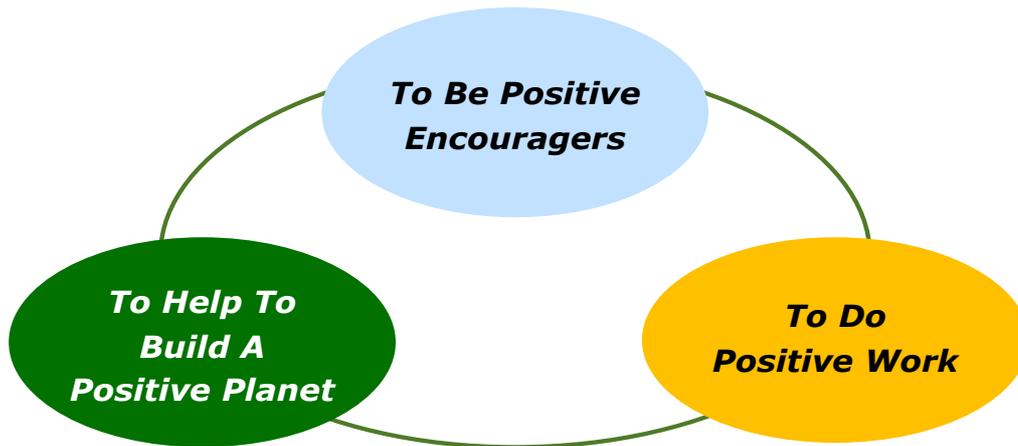
Parts of the book are laid out in short sections to make it easier for the reader to copy and use. Take the ideas you like and use these in your own way to encourage people.

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. Hopefully the following pages show there is some depth behind the ideas.

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

The Positive Encourager's Approach

They 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

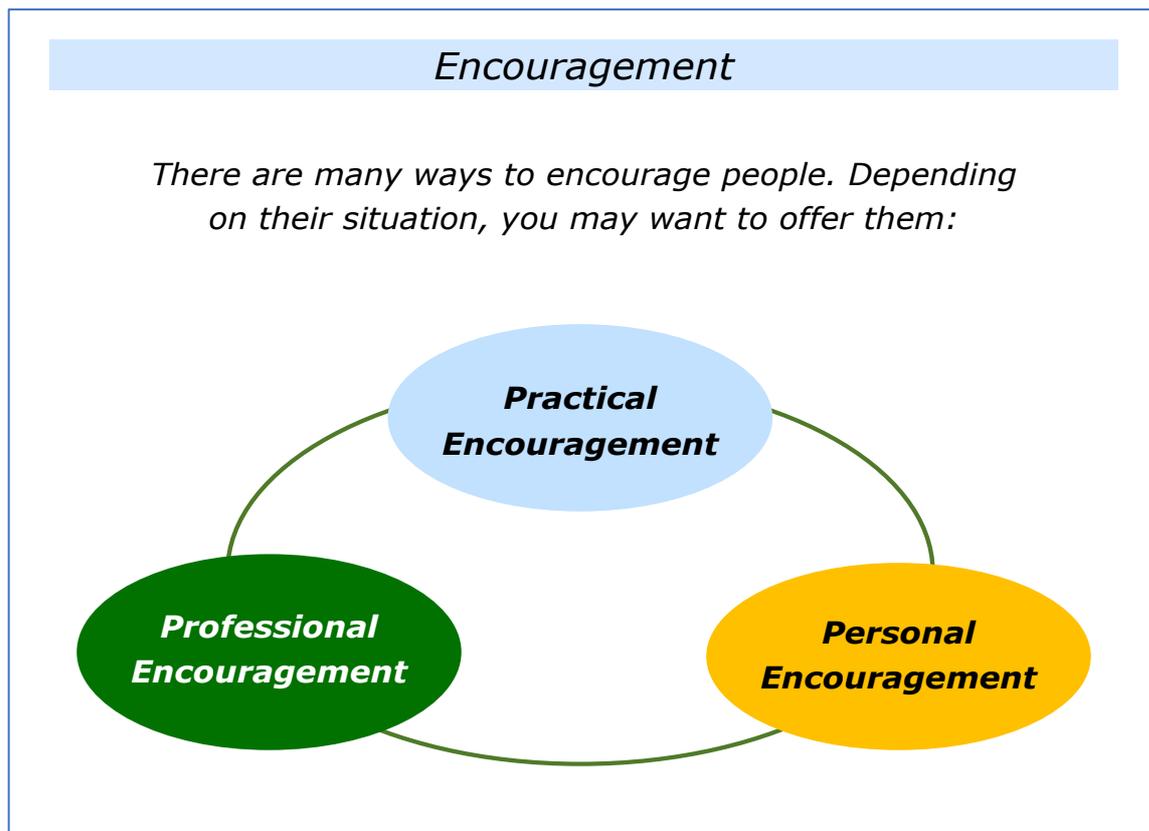
This can involve providing people with the basic materials for life. It can mean making sure they have the food, shelter and other resources needed to maintain their health, happiness and hope.

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.

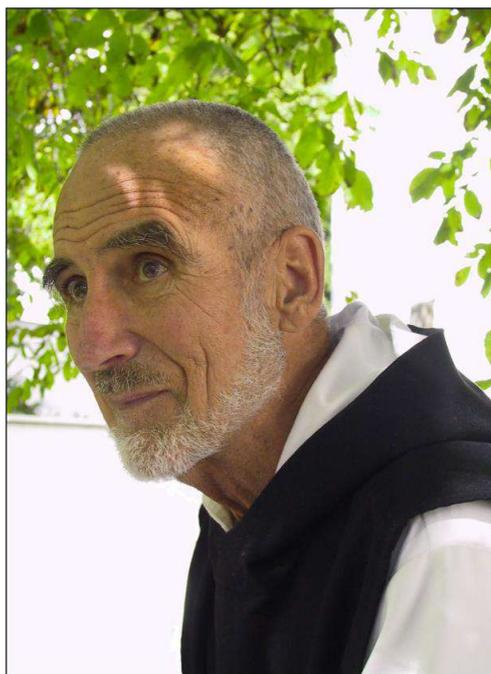
"Gratefulness is the key to a happy life that we hold in our hands, because if we are not grateful, then no matter how much we have we will not be happy - because we will always want to have something else or something more."

"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:*

*

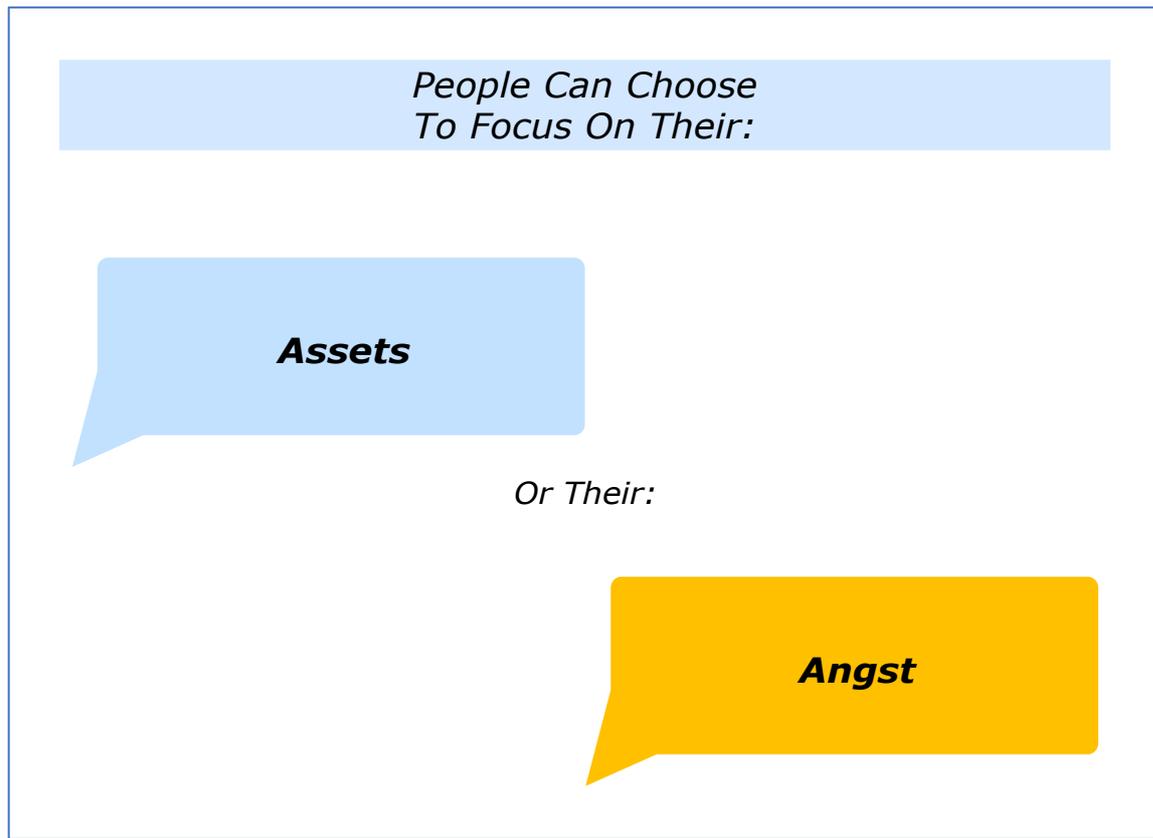
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The Assets Approach



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.

Building On Your Assets When Tackling Adversity

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:

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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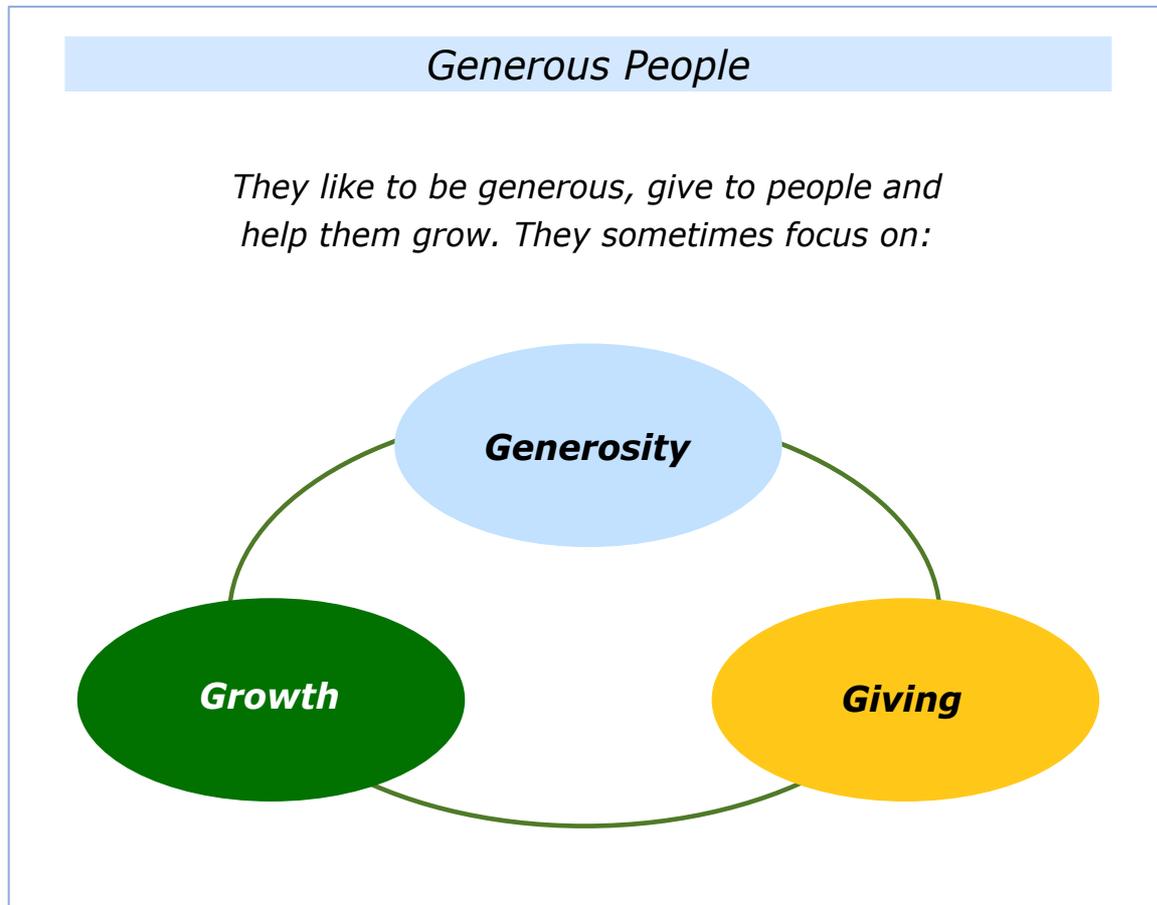
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

The Generous Approach



There are many models for encouraging people. One approach is to be generous, to give to people and to help them grow. Let's explore these themes.

Generosity

Generous people are often grateful for what they have been given. They remember the love, encouragement and chances they have been given by other people. Experiencing a sense of gratitude, they want to pass on similar experiences to other people.

Different people learn about generosity in different ways. Some learn it from spiritual or religious traditions. Some spiritual faiths, for example, encourage people:

To be grateful for what they have been given – whether this be life, food, love or other experiences;

To pass on gratitude by sharing food, being hospitable to strangers or showing compassion in their daily lives.

Some people learn from friends, teachers, leaders and others who embody the spirit of generosity. Some describe experiencing a certain culture – a school, team or 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 greedy. They found that being caring led to both themselves and others feeling better.

Some people who had difficult childhoods talk about the importance of an encouraging grandparent, teacher, coach or other significant person. They had somebody who helped them to believe in themselves during difficult times.

This highlights the importance of what the psychoanalyst Harry Stack Sullivan called Significant Others. He coined this term in the 1950s before it was used to indicate a spouse or partner.

The Significant Other theme is also present in many stories, books and films about people making transitions in life. Virtually every rite of passage story has such a character who helps the protagonist on their journey.

The question is: Why do such people take the time to encourage certain people? When asked, the significant other may say things like:

"I saw something in the person ... Everybody deserves the chance to be listened to ... It didn't cost anything and hopefully it helped ... I was encouraged by somebody when I was younger."

Many generous people like to give to others but they are not gullible. They err on the side of giving people opportunities but they do not choose to become victims.

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.

Let's return to your own life. Looking back, who have been the people who have been generous to you? You may have had parents, teachers, friends, coaches, managers, mentors or other people who encouraged you.

What did they do to be generous? They may have given you time, encouragement, practical help, knowledge or other things that helped you to grow. What happened as a result of them being generous to you?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences. We will then explore different ways to express generosity.

Generosity In The Past

The people who have been generous to me in my life have been:

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*

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The specific things they did to be generous towards me were:

*

*

*

The specific things that happened as a result of them being generous were:

*

*

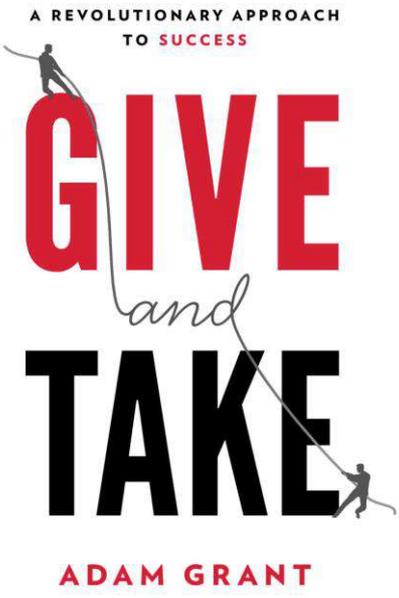
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Giving

Generous people like to give to others. Such people often believe in the circle of life. They believe that being kind to others, for example, can increase the chances of kindness being spread around the world.

One approach is to be a giver rather than a taker. Adam Grant described how some people take this approach 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.

The main reason for being a giver is to help other people but there may be other by-products. 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.

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.

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Based on national research that Allan did 20 years ago, he introduced the term 'Helper's High' - the powerful physical feelings people experience

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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.*

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 individuals help others directly – such as when working as a nurse, teacher, hospitality worker or in the caring professions. Some may do so more indirectly – such as when working as a software developer, scientist, researcher, architect or another profession.

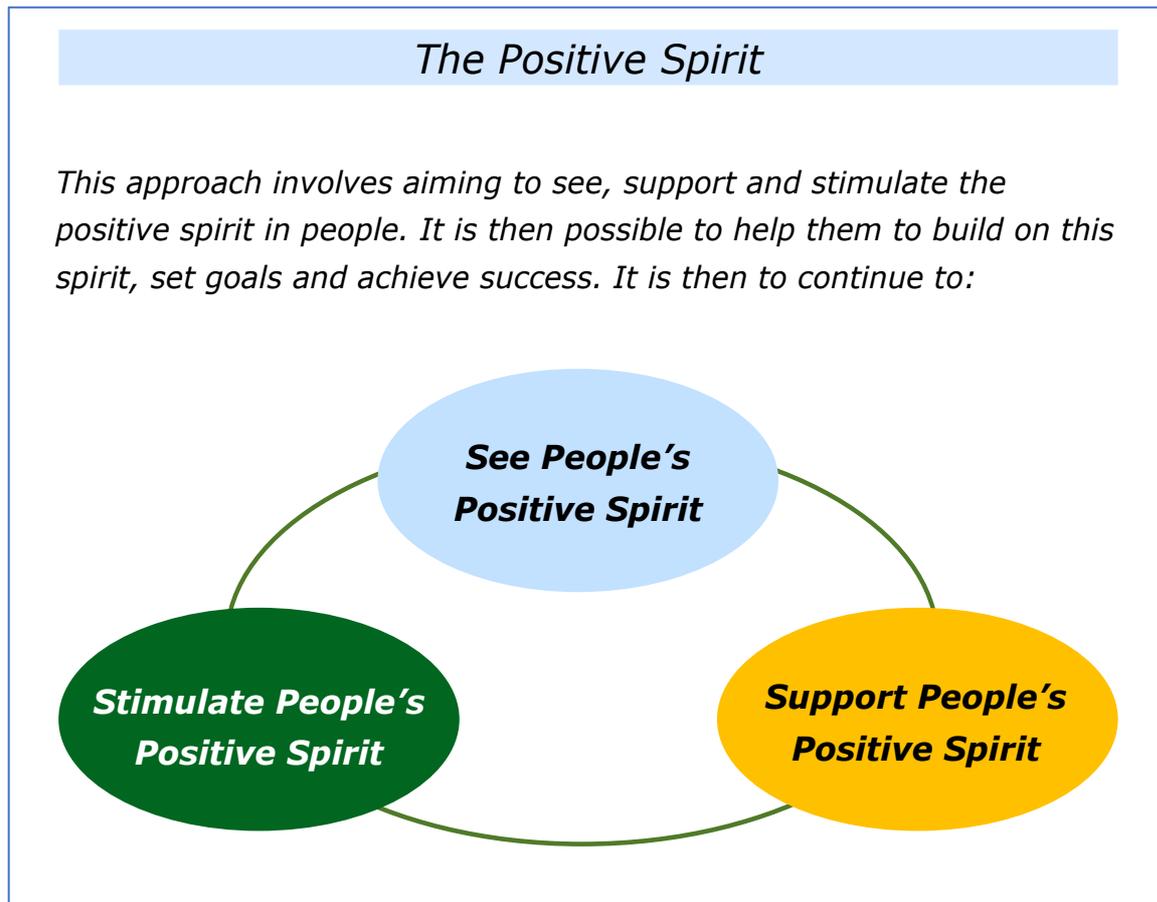
Different people give to others in different ways. Some keep asking themselves the following questions.

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?*

Different people focus on different things when giving to others. Some people focus on the following theme.

The Positive Spirit Approach



There are many ways to encourage people. One approach is to see, support and stimulate their positive spirit. This is an approach that can be used to help individuals, teams and organisations to achieve success.

It is also possible to help people to build on their positive spirit. They can be helped to set goals, follow strategies that work and achieve success. This can strengthen and sustain their spirit.

This approach may seem rather vague but, when done properly, it is extremely practical. It builds on people strengths and offers them practical strategies they can use to achieve success.

There are many ways to help people to follow this approach. Let's explore how these can be translated into action.

Seeing People's Positive Spirit

There several definitions for a person's spirit. These include the following.

The spirit of a person is characterised by their personality - their attitude, abilities and actions. The way a person then behaves can create a certain atmosphere and have a certain effect on other people.

The spirit of a person is something that other people pick up on. On one level it is intangible but on another level it has a tangible effect on people.

Sometimes this can be hard to define but there are exercises that can help. One of these is to invite somebody to focus on a person and ask them following question.

What are the three words you would use to describe the person's spirit?

A person will, of course, merge their own feelings about somebody with any other considerations. But their answers can be interesting.

Imagine that they are looking at three different people. Here are some of the words they may use to describe each person's spirit – their attitude and actions.

Person A - Positive ... Encouraging ... Uplifting

Person B - Mean ... Cruel ... Selfish.

Person C – Alive ... Creative ... Exciting.

The spirit approach can also be applied to the cultures in organisations. Imagine that you are looking at a particular organisation.

What are the three words you would use to describe the organisation?

These can help to describe the spirit - the attitudes, abilities and actions – that are embodied in the organisation. If appropriate, it is also possible to

ask people to describe the qualities they would like to see an organisation embody in the future.

Let's return to the concept of seeing the positive spirit in people. One approach is to focus on when a person, team or organisation performs at its best. It is then to explore the following themes.

Seeing People's Positive Spirit

One approach is to explore the following themes.

- *When do they come alive? When are they in their element – at ease and able to excel? When do they flow, focus and finish? When do they emit positive energy?*
- *What are their strengths? What is their successful style of working? What are they doing right then? What are the principles they are following? How do they translate these into action?*
- *When do they behave in a way that helps people? What do they do right then? What are the principles they follow? What are the positive effects they have on other people?*

Supporting People's Positive Spirit

There are many ways to support the positive spirit in people. Let's explore some of the main approaches.

You can create an encouraging environment

One approach is simply to create an environment where people feel safe and able to grow. You can also give people the message:

"You can be yourself. You can feel safe, explore and develop. You can do all these things and many more. You can also aim to help other people."

*You can give people
specific encouragement*

Good coaches sometimes take this approach. They watch a person in action or see an example of their work. Bearing in mind the results the person may want to achieve, they then take the following steps.

They clarify the specific things the person may be doing right that will help them to reach their goals.

They clarify the specific messages they want to give the person regarding what they are doing right and aim to bring this to life by giving examples.

They choose an appropriate time to tell the person about the specific things they are doing well and how they can do more of these things in the future.

*You can, when appropriate, encourage
people to work towards their specific goals*

This is an approach that we will explore in the next section on stimulating the positive spirit. When appropriate, however, it can be useful to explore some of the following themes.

How can I support their positive spirit? How can I encourage them to follow it more in the future? How can I help them to build on it and work towards their goals?

What may they want to do in their lives? If appropriate, how can I give them the opportunity to talk about their aims? How can I help them to focus on their personal or professional goals?

Stimulating People's Positive Spirit

Many people love to learn, explore and develop. Bearing this in mind, one approach is to focus on the following themes when building on their positive spirit.

You can encourage people to do things they find stimulating

This is one of the most enjoyable and effective ways to help people to maintain their spirit. It is to encourage them to clarify and do more of the things that give them positive energy. Here is an exercise on this theme.

Positive Energy

Personal Life – The things that give me positive energy in my personal life are:

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*
*

Professional Life – The things that give me positive energy in my professional life are:

- *
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*

You can share knowledge that people may find stimulating

This is a path taken by educators, mentors and others who want to help people to achieve success. They do lots of preparation before meeting a person or a group of people. They explore the following questions.

Who is the person or group of people I am going to meet? What may be their interests? What may be the topics or challenges they may like to explore? What may be their personal or professional goals?

What are the ideas I can share that may help them to achieve their goals? What are the models, frameworks and practical tools I can pass on? How can I share this knowledge in a way that resonates with them?

What are the actual words I would like them to be saying after the meeting? How can I do my best to increase the likelihood of them saying these things? What else can I do to make the session stimulating?

You can, when appropriate, help people to work towards goals they may find stimulating

Success

When appropriate, people can be helped to build on their positive spirit and take the following steps.

- *They can set a stimulating goal;*
- *They can follow strategies that work;*
- *They can do their best to achieve success.*

This is a route that can help people to continue to feel positive and develop. They can be encouraged to build their positive spirit – the things that give them positive energy – and take the following steps. They can be helped:

To set a stimulating goal;

To follow strategies that work;

To do their best to achieve success.

Many people set goals but one of the keys is to follow strategies that increase the likelihood of achieving success. This is where they can get help from people who provide practical models and tools that work.

Such a person can pass on this knowledge in a way that people can accept and use. People can then do their best to achieve their picture of success.

The positive spirit approach is one that I have seen work with individuals, teams and organisations. It has been used to help people to set and achieve stimulating goals.

There are many ways to encourage people. One approach is to see, support and stimulate their positive spirit. When appropriate, people can be helped to do this in their personal or professional lives.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific 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 Spirit Approach

The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of the positive spirit approach may be:

*

The specific things I can do then to follow elements of this approach are:

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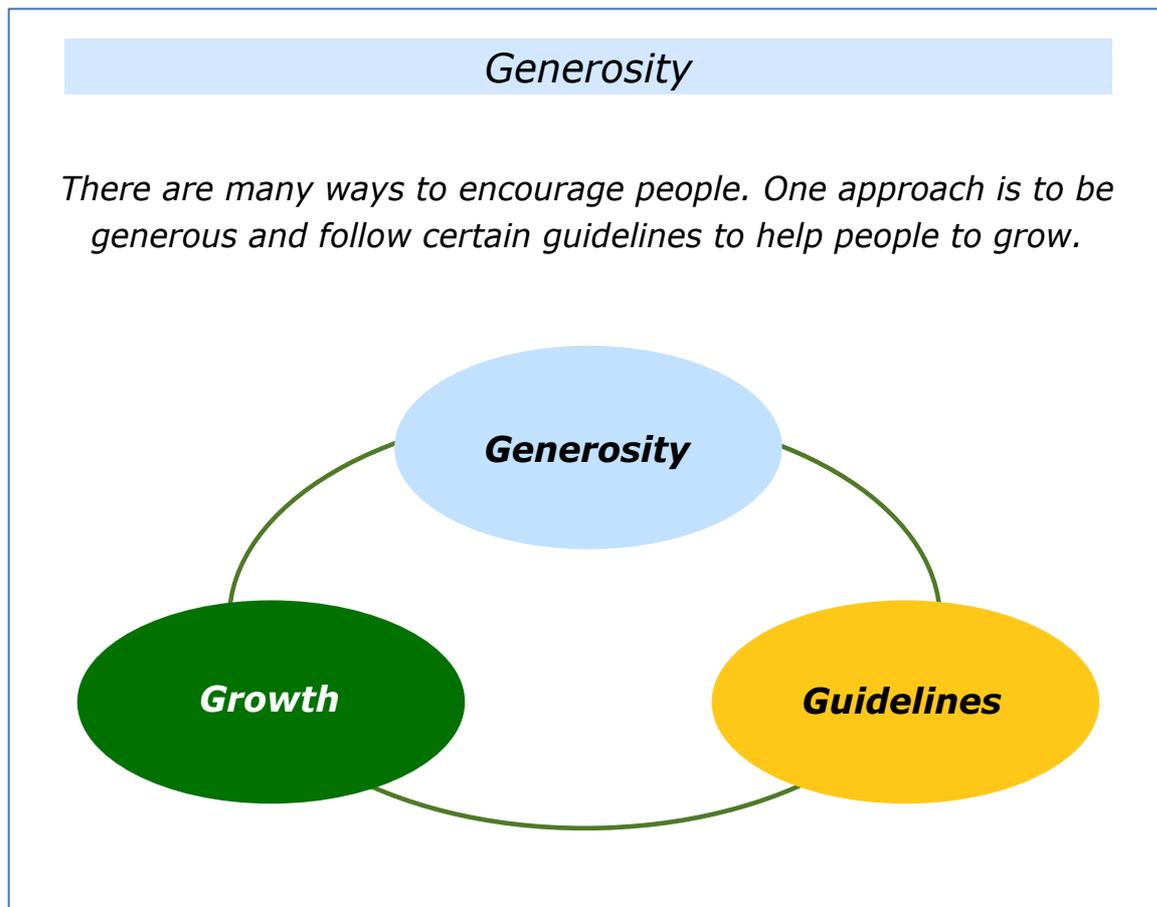
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Generosity, Guidelines And Growth Approach



There are many ways to encourage people. One approach is to be generous, follow certain guidelines and help people to grow. Let's explore these themes.

Generosity

Generous people are often grateful for what they have been given. They remember the love, encouragement and chances they have been given by other people. Experiencing a sense of gratitude, they want to pass on similar experiences to other people

Some people seem to have a generous gene. They love to give to others and help them succeed. Sometimes this gene gets stronger as they get older. They want to do their best for both present and future generations.

Different people learn about generosity in different ways. Some learn it from their parents who were loving and kind. Some learn it from spiritual or religious traditions. Some spiritual faiths, for example, encourage people:

To be grateful for what they have been given – whether this be life, food, love or other experiences;

To pass on gratitude by sharing food, being hospitable to strangers or showing compassion in their daily lives.

Some people learn from friends, teachers, leaders and others who embody the spirit of generosity. Some describe experiencing a certain culture – a school, team or 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 greedy. They found that being caring led to both themselves and others feeling better.

Some people who had difficult childhoods talk about the importance of an encouraging grandparent, teacher, coach or other significant person. They had somebody who helped them to believe in themselves during difficult times.

This highlights the importance of what the psychoanalyst Harry Stack Sullivan called Significant Others. He coined this term in the 1950s before it was used to indicate a spouse or partner.

The Significant Other theme is also present in many stories, books and films about people making transitions in life. Virtually every rite of passage story has such a character who helps the protagonist on their journey.

The question is: Why do such people take the time to encourage certain people? When asked, the significant other may say things like:

"I saw something in the person ... Everybody deserves the chance to be listened to ... It didn't cost anything and hopefully it helped ... I was encouraged by somebody when I was younger."

Many generous people like to give to others but they are not gullible. They err on the side of giving people opportunities but they do not choose to become victims.

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.

Let's return to your own life. Looking back, who have been the people who have been generous to you? You may have had parents, teachers, friends, coaches, managers, mentors or other people who encouraged you.

What did they do to be generous? They may have given you time, encouragement, practical help, knowledge or other things that helped you to grow. What happened as a result of them being generous to you?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences. We will then explore different ways to express generosity.

Generosity In The Past

The people who have been generous to me in my life have been:

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The specific things they did to be generous towards me were:

*

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The specific things that happened as a result of them being generous were:

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Guidelines

Generous people sometimes follow certain guidelines when giving to others. They may aim, for example:

To be encouraging and kind;

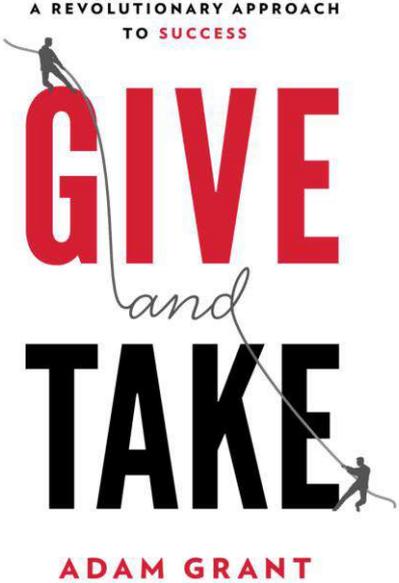
To give to others and help them to succeed;

To follow their moral compass but also recognise if others try to take unfair advantage of their giving.

Such people often believe in the circle of life. They believe that being kind to others, for example, can increase the chances of kindness being spread around the world.

One approach is to be a giver rather than a taker. Adam Grant described how some people take this approach 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.

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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.*
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Some individuals help others directly – such as when working as a nurse, teacher, hospitality worker or in the caring professions. Some may do so more indirectly – such as when working as a software developer, scientist, researcher, architect or another profession.

Different people follow different guidelines to help people. Some keep asking themselves the following questions.



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?*

Different people also focus on different things when giving to others. Some people focus on the following theme.

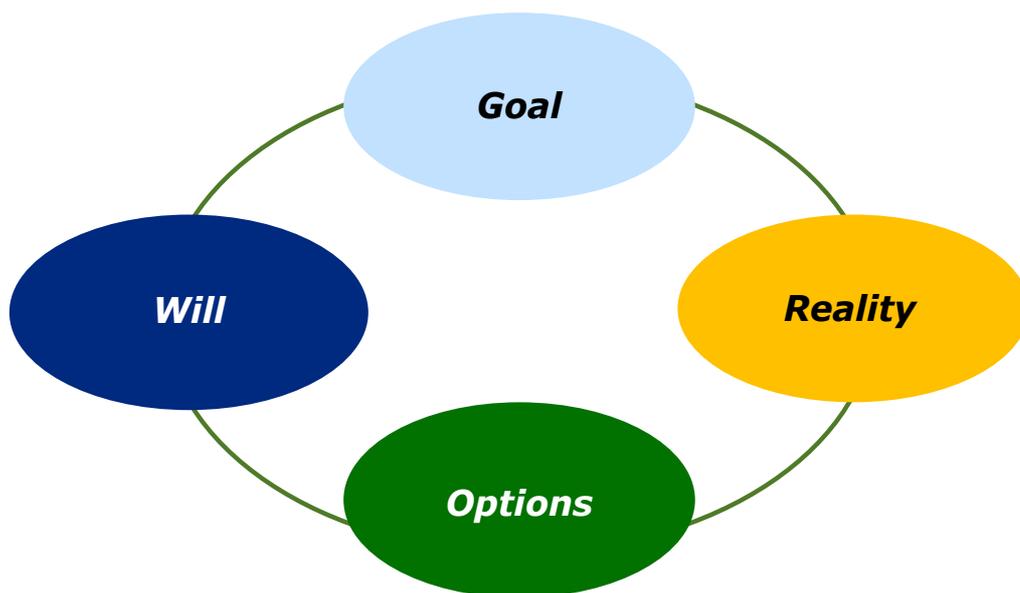
Growth

There are many models for helping people to grow. This section describes some of the most basic models. You will, of course, have your own approach to helping people to develop.

Some people follow aspects of the classic GROW model which was pioneered by Graham Alexander, Alan Fine and Sir John Whitmore. Many practitioners see the acronym as standing for the following steps that they invite a person to follow on the route to achieving success.

The GROW Model

This involves inviting a person to focus on the following themes.



Goal

What do you want to achieve? What is your goal? What are the real results you want to achieve? What is your picture of success? What will be happening that will show you have reached the goal?

Reality

What is your current reality? What is happening in your world? Can you give specific examples, especially those that relate to the goal you want to achieve? Looking at this reality, what are the things you can control?

Options

What can you do to reach the goal? What are the potential options? What are the consequences of each option? Are there any other creative solutions?

Will

What will you do to reach the goal? Which is the route – or routes – you want to take towards achieving the goal? On a scale 0 – 10, how committed are you to taking this route?

What is your action plan for moving forward? What are the specific measures that will show you have achieved the goal?

You will have your own set of guidelines for helping a person to develop. Looking at my own work, these sometimes involve using the following models.

The Strengths Approach

This starts by clarifying the person's goals. It then involves helping them to build on their strengths, following strategies that work and achieve their picture of success.

The Creative Problem Solving Approach

This starts by establishing clarity - the real results the person wants to achieve. It then involves being creative, finding solutions to challenges and then helping the person to achieve concrete results.

The Purpose Approach

This starts by helping the person to focus on a sense of purpose. It then involves helping them to follow their principles on the way towards achieving their picture of success.

Let's return to the theme of generosity. 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.

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. Bearing this in mind, they may explore the following themes.

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 translate your ideas 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.

Generosity In The Future

The specific ways in which I would like to be generous towards people in the future are:

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The specific things I can do to translate these ideas into action are:

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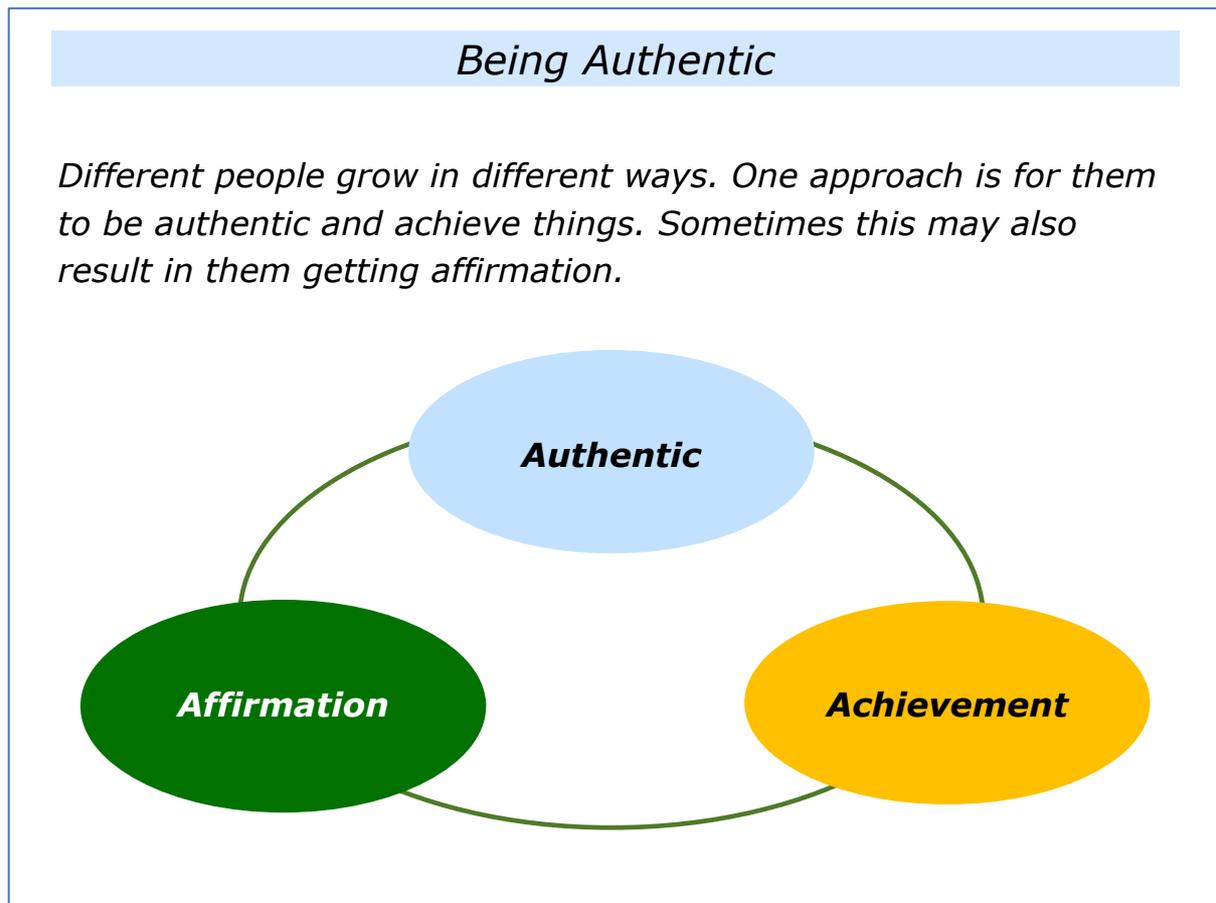
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Authenticity, Achievement And Affirmation Approach



Different people grow in different ways. Many learn by doing activities where they go through the steps of being authentic, achieving things and getting affirmation.

Imagine that a person has asked for you to help them to develop. Let's explore how you may be able to do this by focusing on the following themes.

Authentic

A person is more likely to grow when they operate from their core. This approach can take many forms. A person may aim, for example:

To do what they believe in, do the basics and aim to do brilliant work;

To do things that give them positive energy, follow their principles and work towards their picture of success;

To do things where they build on their strengths, follow strategies that work and achieve success.

Achievement

A person is more likely to grow when they achieve their aims. Sometimes they may do this quickly, sometimes they may need to overcome challenges.

They may follow this path when doing an activity, performing a project or working towards achieving a specific goal. Reaching their goal helps to build confidence and provides a sense of success.

Affirmation

People are more likely to grow when they get affirmation. This comes with a reality check, however, because they are not always in charge of whether they get affirmation.

Sometimes the affirmation comes from themselves. A person may feel they have been true themselves, done what they believe in and also achieved their aims.

Sometimes affirmation comes from outside. A person may do good work and get positive feedback. This can help to lift a person's soul.

There may be many situations, however, where this feedback is not forthcoming. This does not necessarily mean the person has not done good work. It may simply mean that other people are not in the habit of giving positive feedback.

Different people grow in different ways. Whatever approach they use, it can also be useful for them:

To clarify what they have done well and how they can follow these principles in the future;

To clarify what they could do better and how they can apply this learning in the future.

Imagine that a person has asked you to help them to develop. How can you help them to be authentic and achieve things? How can you help to be realistic about the kinds of affirmation they can and cannot expect? What may happen as a result of them taking these steps?

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

The Authenticity, Achievement And Affirmation 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 then to
follow this approach in my own way are:*

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*

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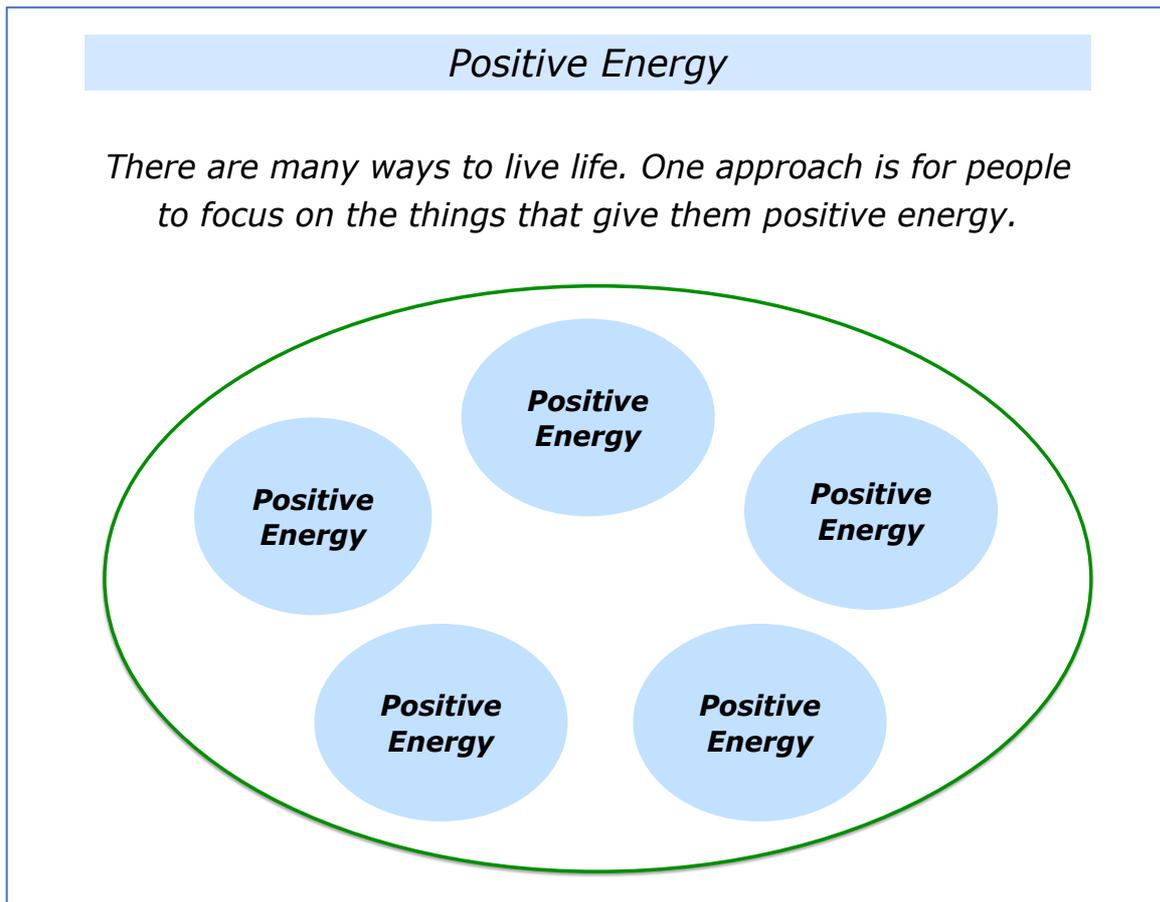
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Positive Energy Approach



There are many ways to live life. One approach is for people to focus on the things that give them positive energy.

This approach involves focusing on things that give you positive energy rather than negative energy. It is also to encourage other people to do things that give them positive energy. The approach is related to the idea that:

What you focus on you become.

If you focus on positive things, you are more likely to feel positive. If you focus on possible solutions, you are more likely to feel optimistic.

If you focus on negative things – without exploring solutions - you are more likely to feel negative. This is a topic we will explore later.

There are many ways to follow the positive energy approach. The following section looks at some ideas you can follow in your own way.

You Can Do Things That Give You Positive Energy

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 when exploring these themes.

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 I often used in workshops for individuals and groups. Each person wrote their lists on flip charts. They then formed pairs and shared what they had written. This often set a positive tone for the sessions.

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:

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*

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

*

*

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

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*

You Can Encourage Other People To Focus On What Gives Them Positive Energy

This is an approach that I have used many times with individuals, teams and organisations. The aim may be to encourage people:

To do activities that give them positive energy ... To spend time with people who give them positive energy ... To study topics that give them positive energy ... To do projects that give them positive energy.

To do work that gives them positive energy ... To work with customers who give them positive energy ... To follow principles they believe in that give them positive energy.

This is an approach that can be used in many situations. When appropriate, the aim is to provide people with practical tools they can use:

To feel positive;

To do positive work;

To get positive results.

This approach can also help people to generate strength to find solutions to challenges. They are then more able to shape a positive future.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to encourage a person to focus on what gives them positive energy?

What may be the specific situation? How can you encourage the person do what gives them positive energy? 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.

Encouraging People To Focus On What Gives Them Positive Energy

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

*

The specific things I can do then to encourage a person to focus on what gives them positive energy are:

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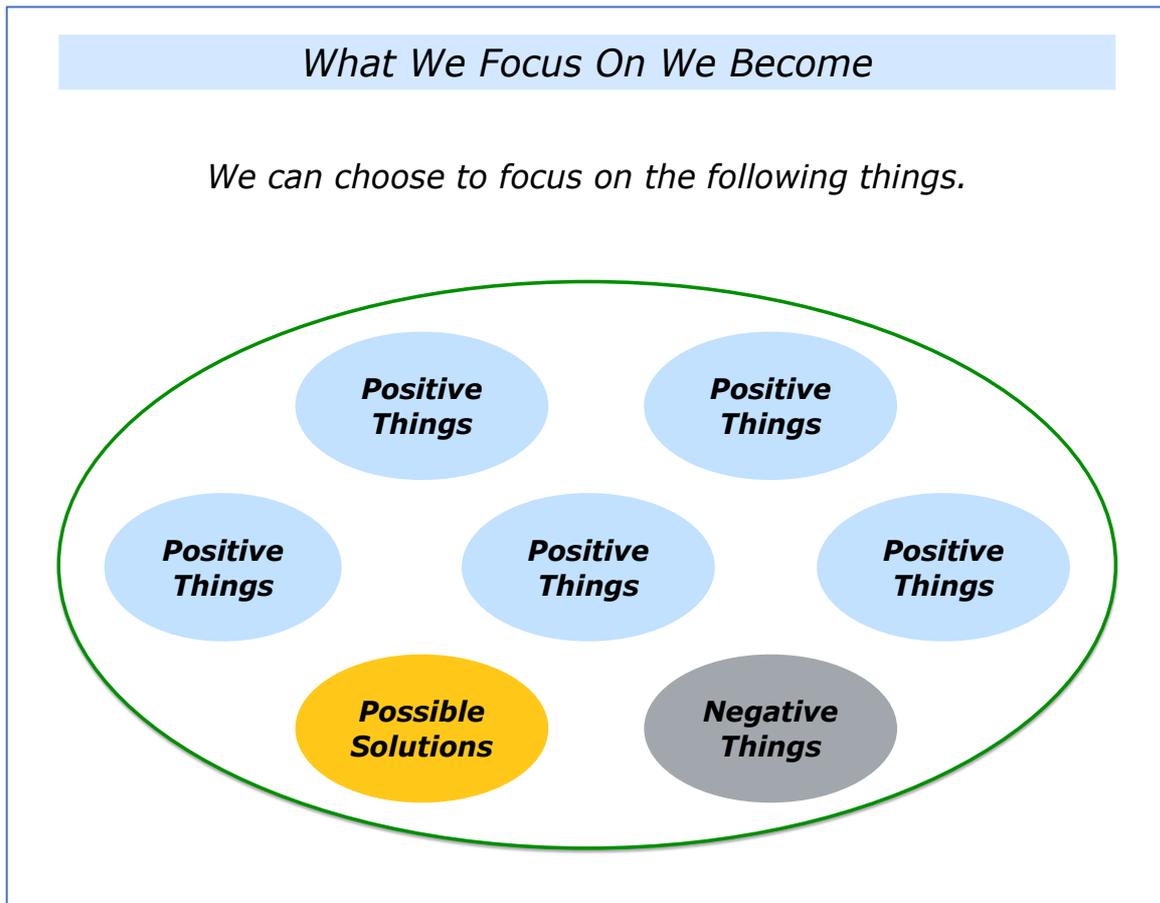
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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You Can Recognise That 'What You Focus On You Become'



As mentioned earlier, the things we focus on can affect the way we feel and what we do. This can have implications for ourselves and other people.

One approach is to focus on the positive things in life. You may do this by having a sense of gratitude, studying success or doing things that lift your spirit.

If appropriate, you can also encourage others to focus on what gives them positive energy. This can sometimes help people to feel alive and creative. It can also help them to shape their future lives.

Another approach is to focus on possible solutions to challenges. You may do this by exploring the potential ways forwards and then, if appropriate, taking steps to achieve success.

Some people focus on negative things without exploring solutions. They may then become paralysed by taking poison into their system. This does not help anyone. People should not ignore reality, of course, but it helps if they also study solutions.

Let's explore how you can focus on what you want to become.

Positive Things

What are the positive things you focus on now? You may focus on encouraging your loved ones, appreciating your assets and doing things that give you energy.

Looking ahead, what are the positive things you want to focus on the future? You may want to appreciate life, play inspiring music, pass on knowledge, help others to succeed or do other things that lift your spirits.

What will be the benefits of taking these steps? What are you more likely to feel? What may be the feelings that you transmit to other people? What are you more likely to become?

Possible Solutions

How do you use your energy to find possible solutions to challenges? What are some of the challenges you may face? How do you buy time to reflect, explore the potential options and then take steps to tackle these issues successfully?

Do you spend time learning about how other people find solutions in various fields? You may do this when exploring the topics you find interesting.

You may be interested in wellbeing, education, personal development, sport, business, conflict resolution, climate change or other activities. What do you do to explore how people find solutions to challenges in these areas?

Looking ahead, what do you want to do to focus on possible solutions in the future? What will be the benefits of taking these approach – both for yourself and for other people?

Negative Things

What are some of the negative things you focus on now? How does this affect you? What do you do to try to manage some of the feelings that you may experience?

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 expressed 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. This was also embodied in the mood of despair I sometimes expressed when friends came round for dinner.

"Suddenly I took notice. I wanted to build a happier world, but I was poisoning my own home.

"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."

Looking ahead, how do you want to deal with some of the potential negative things you notice? Different people do this in different ways. Here are some possibilities you may want to consider.

You can, when appropriate, avoid exposing yourself to negative things. There is little point listening to complainers who do not want to talk about solutions.

Much of the news media is still addicted to the old notion that 'if it bleeds it leads'. Some outlets now specialise in solutions journalism. This goes beyond describing the problem and provides solutions that have achieved success.

You may also want to learn how to manage triggers lead to you feeling depressed or behaving in ways that depress others. As described elsewhere in the book, it is important:

To recognise that the potential triggers that could lead to you going into negative spiral;

To avoid exposing yourself to such triggers;

To learn how to manage the triggers if, despite your best efforts, they do happen.

What we focus on we become. Looking ahead, how do you want to continue: a) to focus on the positive things; b) to focus on possible solutions; 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 What You Focus On You Become Approach

*Positive Things. The specific steps I
can take to focus on positive things are:*

*

*

*

*Possible Solutions. The specific steps I
can take to focus on possible solutions are:*

*

*

*

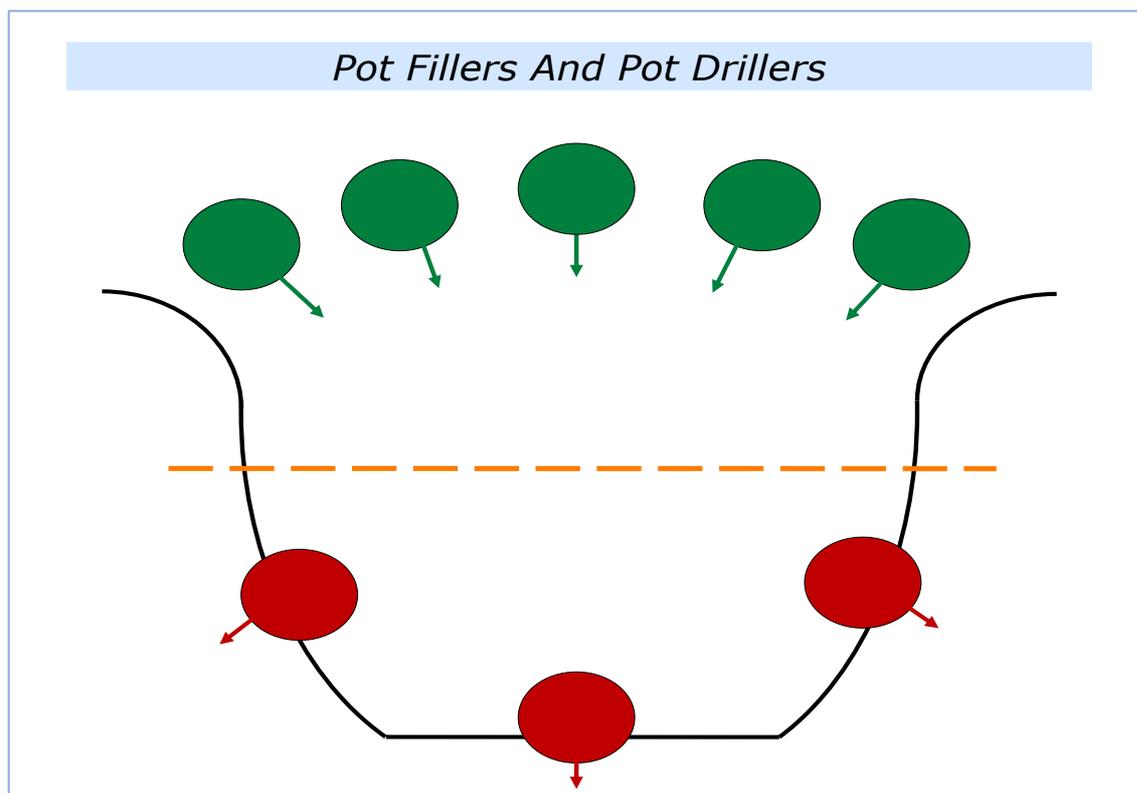
*The specific benefits of taking these steps
– for myself and other people – may be:*

*

*

*

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*.

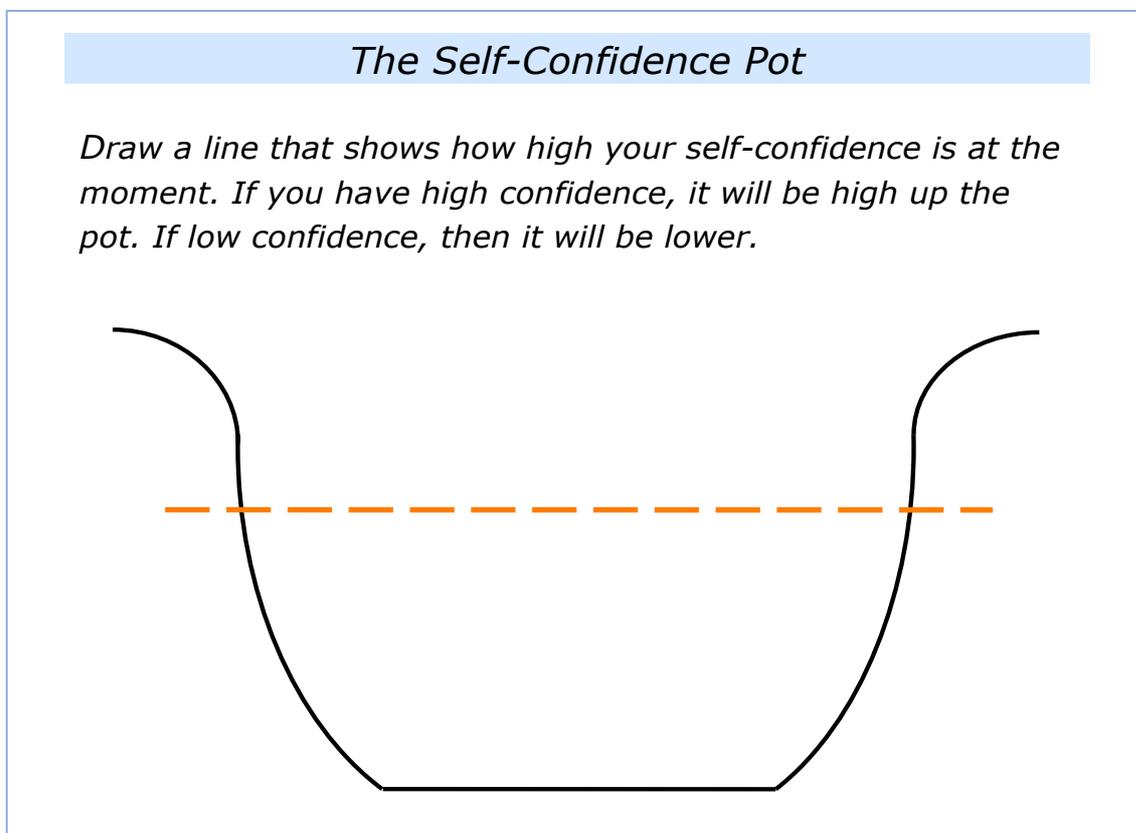
If you wish, it can be worthwhile doing this exercise yourself. You can then focus on how to be a pot filler and, if appropriate, invite other people to do the exercise. They can focus on how to spend more time with fillers rather than drillers.

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.



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

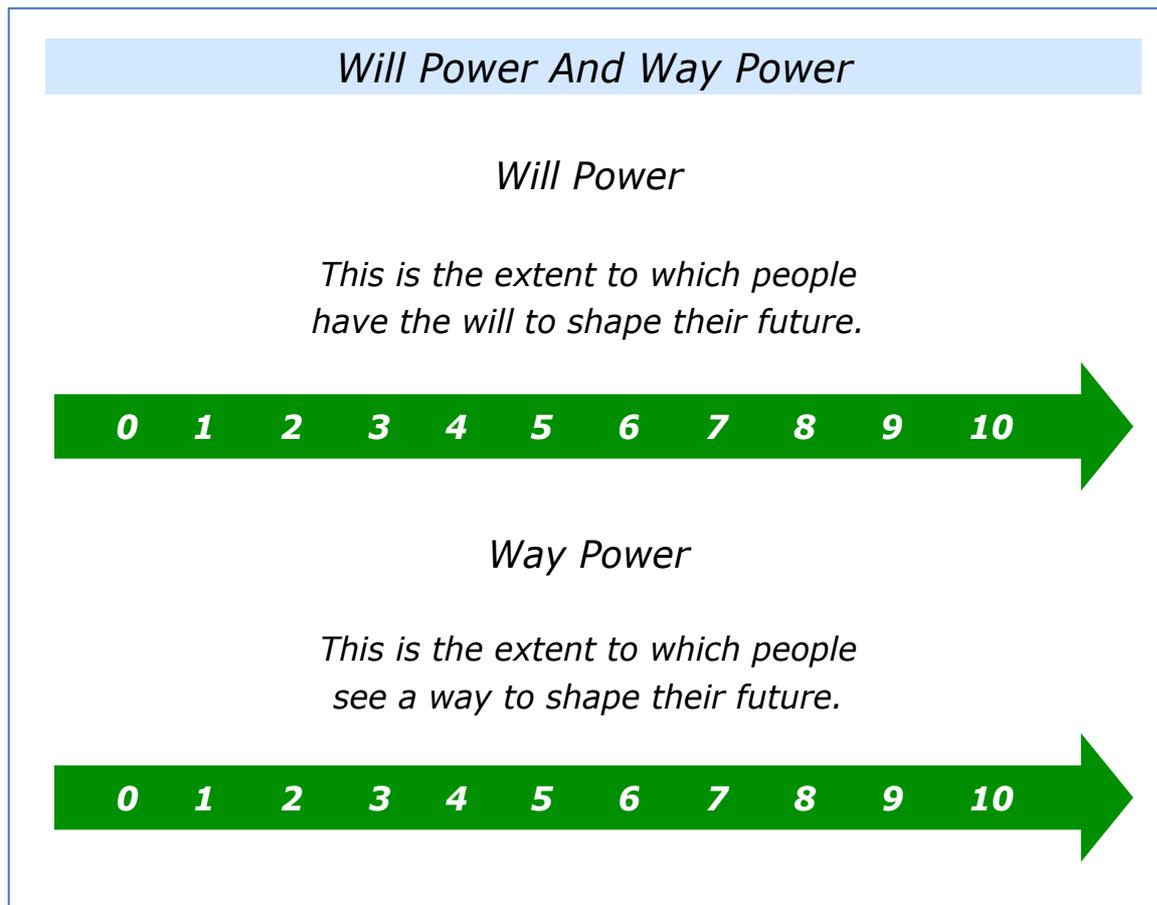
You can do your best to encourage people. Keep giving but don't become a victim. Do not stay around to have your pot drilled by people who choose to be miserable or who are observer critics. When in doubt, ask yourself:

"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



There are many ways to encourage people. One approach is to help them to increase their way power. This involves adding to their repertoire of options for reaching their goals.

Rick Snyder described this approach in his book *The Psychology Of Hope*. Here is one of the key messages he gave in the book.

People feel more able to shape their futures when they score highly on both will power and way power.

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

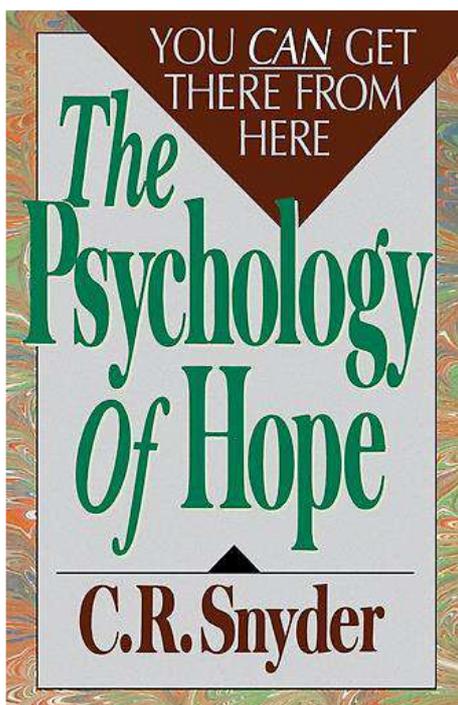
They score 8+/10 in terms of their will to solve the challenge;

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. Their will power to solve the problem is 9+/10 but their present ability to see a way to solve it is perhaps 3/10.

Once the person sees a way to solve the problem, however, the cloud evaporates. Their way power goes up to 8+/10. Their sense of hope returns and they feel reinvigorated to tackle the challenge. Here are some of the key messages in *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.

Helping People To Increase Their Way Power

Many people use this approach to encourage, educate and enable people in their daily lives and work. They pass on knowledge that helps others to increase their way power.

Good educators, for example, believe that education is the ultimate democratic activity. It offers people more choices – and therefore more freedom – to shape their future lives.

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.

Let’s return to your own life and work. Imagine that person has asked for your help in reaching a goal. The person has the will to succeed. But they may need to add to their repertoire of options for working towards the goal.

What may be the situation where the person may ask for help? What may be the person’s goal? What may be the real results they want to achieve? What may be their picture of success?

What may be the person’s options for tackling the challenge? What may be the pluses and minuses of each option? What may be the other potential creative solutions?

Looking back, when has the person tackled a similar challenge successfully? What did they do right then? What were the principles they followed? How did they translate these into action?

When have other people tackled similar challenges successfully? What were the principles they followed? How can the person follow some of these principles in their own way?

What can you do to increase the person's way power? What are the positive models and practical tools you can pass on that may help them to tackle the challenge? How can you share this knowledge in a way the person can receive and use?

Let's move on to the person's action plan. 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 likelihood of achieving success?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe a situation where you may be able to increase a person's way power. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

Way Power In The Future

The specific situation where a person may ask for help in reaching a goal may be:

*

The specific things I can do to help them to increase their way power – their options – for reaching the goal are:

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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.

Some Approaches For Helping People To Achieve Success

These include the following:

- *The Supportive Approach*
- *The Strengths Approach*
- *The Strategic Approach*
- *The Solutions Approach*
- *The Sharing Knowledge Approach*

The Supportive Approach

The Supportive Approach

This is one of the most basic but effective ways of helping people. The aims are to provide them with support, focus on their specific goals and help them to achieve success.



This is one of the most basic models for helping people but it can also be one of the most effective. This involves taking following steps when working with a person or a group of people. The aims are:

To provide people with support ... To focus on people's specific goals ... To help people to achieve success.

Imagine you want to follow this approach to help a person or a group of people. If appropriate, you can focus on the following steps.

*You can provide
people with support*

Different people provide others with support in different ways. Sometimes this involves providing them with the basic materials for life. These

include food, safety, 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 may then do practical things to help people 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.

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.

The supportive approach can be used over the long-term but sometimes there is also the need for immediate action. This can be the case when helping people who are in deep distress.

Such people may be fleeing persecution, be in pain or be suffering in other ways. It can then be important to ask the question:

"What are your top priorities right now?"

Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach when helping a person or a group of people. You can then do your best to provide the support they need. This can sometimes lead to the next step.

You can clarify people's specific goals

This involves focusing on people's short, medium or long-term goals. These can differ depending on what is happening their lives. A person may say, for example:

I want ...

To feel more in control of my life ... To feel happier ... To encourage my children ... To manage my anger ... To do satisfying work ... To deal with my micromanaging boss ... To turnaround a failing team ... To lead the company through challenging times.

You will have your own approach to helping a person to clarify their specific goal. If appropriate, you may also begin to explore the strategies they can follow to achieve their aims. Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to explore some of the following themes.

What is the person's goal? What are the real results they want to achieve? What is their picture of success? What will be the benefits of achieving the goal?

What are the things they can control in the situation? What are the things they can't control? How can they build on what they can control and manage what they can't?

What are the key strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success? How can they follow these strategies in their own way? How can they get some quick successes?

Imagine that you have helped a person to clarify their specific goal. You may also have begun to clarify some of the strategies they can follow to achieve their aims. It will then be time to move on to the next step.

You can help people to achieve success

There are many ways to help people to reach their goals. Depending on what they person wants to achieve, one approach is to pursue the following guidelines

You can help the person to set achievable goals

Bearing in mind what they can control, you can help them to work towards goals that they have a good chance of achieving. You can also encourage them to get some early successes.

You can help the person to follow strategies that work

One approach is to revisit the person's positive history. When have they tackled similar challenges successfully in the past. What did they do right then? How can they follow similar principles – plus maybe add other skills – to tackle the present challenge successfully?

Another approach is to learn from other people who have tackled similar challenges successfully. What did those people do right? How can the person follow some of these principles in their own way?

The key is to focus on what works. It is then to help the person to follow the strategies that will give them the greatest chance of success. They must, of course, follow these in their own way.

*You can help the person to
follow a structure that works*

People like to follow a structure towards achieving their specific goal. A person who wants to feel happy rather than depressed, for example, may need to follow positive habits.

These can include getting up at the same time each day, eating healthy food, exercising, listening to their favourite music, getting an early success and doing satisfying work. They can also do things that give them positive energy and spend time with positive people.

One key point to bear in mind: It is important for a person to create their own structure. They are then more likely to follow this discipline rather than trying to follow one that is imposed on them.

Caring professionals encourage individuals to follow positive habits. They help them to follow a daily structure that encourages both themselves and other people.

*You can help the
person to achieve success*

You can encourage the person to do their best to achieve their goals and achieve success. This can help to build confidence. Some therapists, for example, 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 is an approach that 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. They can then do their best to achieve their picture of success.

There are many ways to help people. One approach is to follow the support, specific goals and success approach. This is an approach that we will be expanding up throughout the book.

Let's look at another model for helping people take charge of shaping their futures.

The Strengths Approach

The Strengths Approach

This approach starts by clarifying the real results a person wants to achieve – their picture of success.

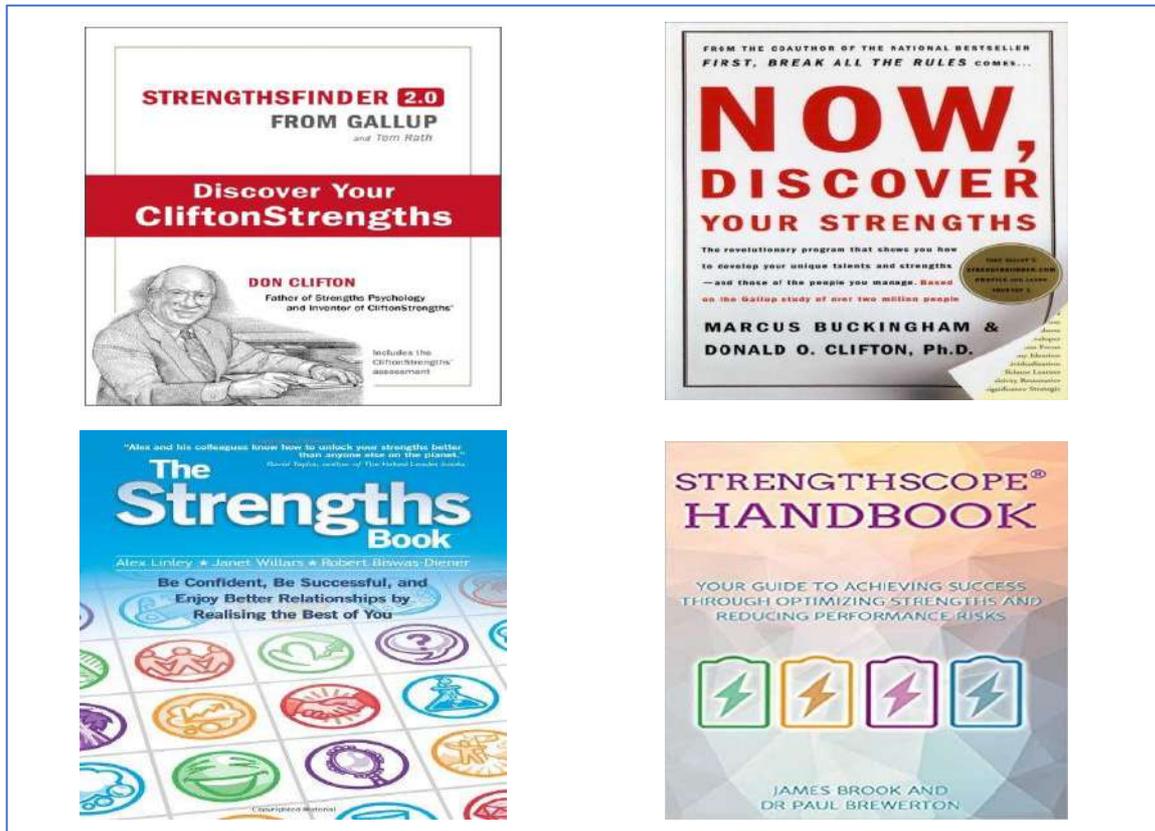
It then involves helping them to build on their strengths, follow strategies that work and do their best to achieve success.



There are many ways to help people to achieve their goals. The strengths approach starts by clarifying the real results a person want to achieve and translating these into a clear picture of success.

It then involves helping them to build on their strengths, follow strategies that work and do their best to achieve success. This section explores how to translate this into action. Before then, however, a little background on the strengths approach.

Bernard Haldane, Don Clifton and Tom Rath were some of the many practitioners who 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 practice. We will explore this approach in more depth later in the book in the section on mentoring.

Clarifying The Picture Of Success

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 then invite them to describe the specific topics they would like to explore. 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. It can be useful to translate this into a clear picture of success.

Sometimes you may immediately help a person to focus on solutions to a challenge. If appropriate, you may be able to offer some practical tools they can use to get some early successes.

On other occasions it can be useful to go through the following stages. You can help the person:

To build on their strengths;

To follow strategies that work;

To achieve their picture of success.

Let's explore how you can go focus on these themes. You will, of course, do this in your own way.

Strengths

Every person has strengths. Bearing this in mind, you can clarify how the person can use these to achieve their goal. Here are some themes it can be useful to explore.

What are the person's strengths? When do they deliver As rather than Bs or Cs? What are their potential weaknesses? How can they build on their strengths to work towards their goals? How can they manage the consequences of any weaknesses?

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

Strategies

The next step to help the person to follow strategies that work. This can involve helping them to learn from both their own and other people's successes.

Every person has a positive history. They have overcome challenges and worked to achieve specific goals. Bearing in mind what the person wants to achieve, you may want to explore the following themes.

Looking back, when has the person tackled a similar challenge successfully? What did they do right then? What were the principles they followed? How can they follow some of these principles in the future?

When have other people tackled similar challenges successfully? What did they do right then? What were the principles they followed? How can the person follow some of these principles in their own way?

Every person may also benefit by adding certain skills to their repertoire. Bearing this in mind, you may want to explore some of the following themes.

What is the person's goal? What are the strategies that work in these situations? What are the other skills that the person can add? How can I help the person to follow these strategies and use these skills to achieve their goals?

Imagine that you have explored these themes. It can then be time to move on to the next stage.

Success

You can help the person to do their best to achieve their picture of 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 building on their strengths and following their successful style? How can they follow strategies that work? How can they get some early successes?

How can they do superb work? How can they encourage themselves on the journey? How can they anticipate and manage potential challenges? How can they do their best to achieve the picture of success?

There are many ways to help people to reach their goals. The strengths approach helps a person to build on their assets and add to their repertoire. It then enables them to do their best to achieve success. You will, of course, apply this approach in your own way.

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.

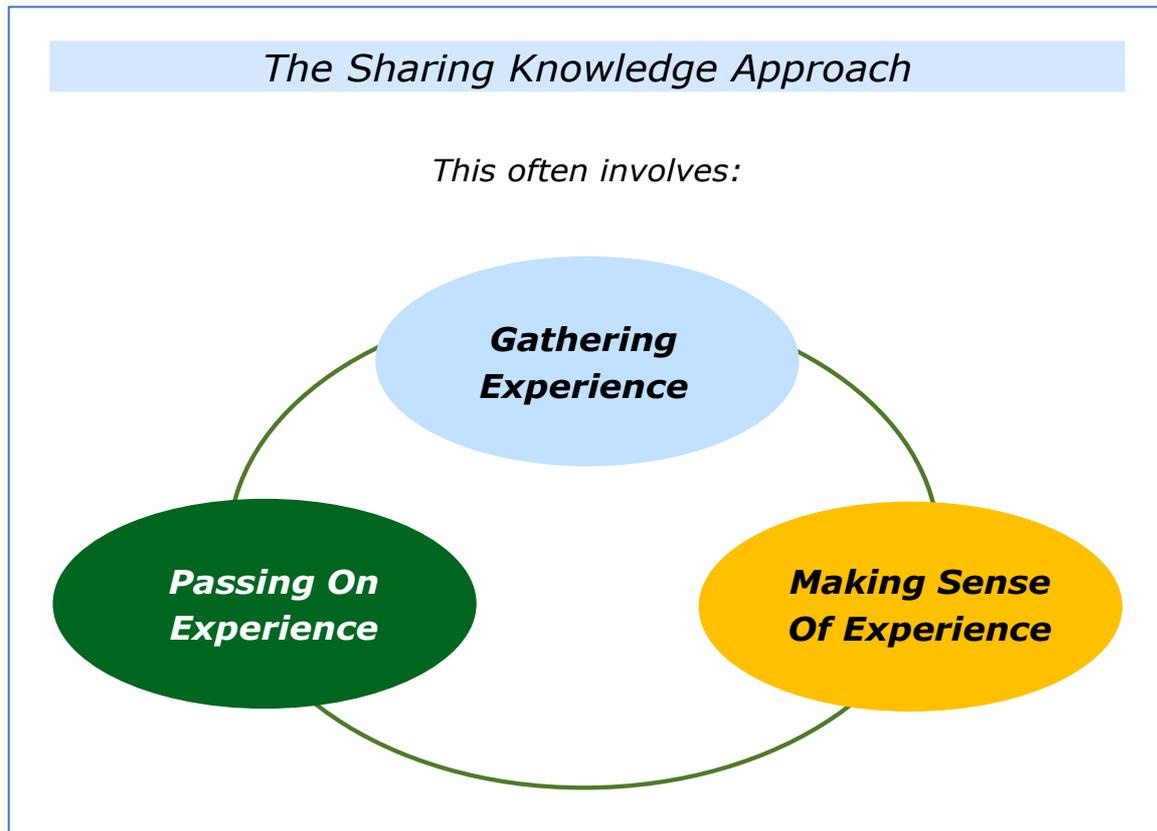
Good Leaders

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."

Some people continue to have the desire to learn even in their later years. Such people often focus on the following themes.

Sharing Knowledge – The Learning About Life Approach

Gathering Experience

What did I learn today? What were the experiences I had today?

Making Sense Of Experience

What did I learn from the experiences? What did I learn about what worked? What did I learn about what could be better?

Passing On Experience

How can I apply what I learned? How can I pass on what I learned in a way that can help other 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 ...

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 aim to do this in a positive way. Here is an overview of this approach.

*The Positive Approach To
Helping A Person To Improve*

This involves watching the person in action or seeing a piece of their work. It then involves exploring the following themes.

- *The Person's Goals*

What are the real results the person wants to achieve? What will be the benefits of achieving these goals? What will be happening that will show they have achieved these goals?

- *The Person's Present Performance*

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?

- *The Positive Approach To Helping The Person To Achieve Their Goals*

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 Successful Style Approach

Successful Style

There are many ways to help a person to build on their strengths. This approach explores how they translate their strengths into action. It enables them:

- *To find their successful style;*
- *To follow their successful style;*
- *To focus on how they can develop their successful style.*

There are many ways to help a person to build on their strengths. One approach is to help them to find their successful style. They can then follow these principles do to superb work in the future.

This approach goes beyond helping a person to find their strengths. It looks at how they translate these strengths into action. They can then be helped to build on these to shape a positive future.

Imagine that a person has asked for your help in finding their strengths. One approach is to work through the following steps.

You can help a person to find their successful style

Everybody has a positive history. They have performed great work, tackled challenges and overcome crises. They also have a successful style

of working. Clarifying this style is often the clue to their real strengths. It can also help them to find and follow their vocation.

How to help them to take these steps? If appropriate, you can invite them to do the exercise called *My Successful Style*. Here is one way you may wish to introduce this to the person.

My Successful Style

Looking back on your life, describe what for you have been two satisfying projects. Here we are using the term project in the broadest sense.

You may have got great satisfaction from designing a website, launching a product, organising a charity fun run, leading a team, helping somebody to master a skill or whatever.

Exploring each project in turn, describe the specific things that made each one satisfying.

The person may describe when they studied for a degree, wrote a book, gave a keynote speech, revitalised a team or whatever. Sometimes the person may describe projects they have done in their personal life. This can also be okay.

Here are the exercises on this theme. You can encourage them to complete the following sentences.

My Successful Style

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:

*

*

*

Imagine that the person has described their satisfying projects. When appropriate, you can move on to the next stage.

*You can clarify the principles
the person followed to
pursue their successful style*

The next step is to clarify the principles and practical steps they took to achieve success. How to uncover this information? One approach is to explore each project in detail. You may want to ask some of the following questions.

Let's start with your motivation. How did the project come about? Did you set the goal yourself or did somebody else offer you the opportunity?

Was it something you felt passionately about or something that matched your values? What was the trigger that made you really want to do the project?

Let's move on to the actual goal. How early did you clarify the 'What' - the picture of success? Did it come straight away or later? If other people were involved, how much input did you have in setting the goal? What were the real results you wanted to achieve?

How did you settle on the 'How' – the key strategies for achieving success? Did you have freedom, within parameters, regarding how you achieved the goal? How did you map out the journey towards achieving the goal?

Let's move on to how you performed the work. Did you mainly work by yourself? Or did you work with other people? If you worked with others, what were the characteristics of these people?

Did you work for a manager? If so, what were the qualities the manager demonstrated? What went well when working with the colleagues or the manager?

Looking at the work, how did you organise your time? Did you follow a certain daily rhythm? What did you actually do to perform superb work? Did you get some early successes?

How did you check what was working and what could be improved? How did you get support? How did you encourage yourself on the journey? How did you find creative solutions to challenges? How did you keep your manager informed?

Let's move on to the actual result. How did you keep working hard to reach the goal? Was there a specific deliverable you had to achieve? Was there a deadline or some element of performance? How did you know when you had achieved the picture of success?

What was the satisfaction you got from reaching the goal? Looking at the project, what were the most fulfilling things? What did you do well on the project? What could you do better in the future if you were to tackle this kind of project again? Are there any other things you would like to say about the project?

You can go through each project in turn and then explore the following themes with the person

Looking back on each of these examples, can you see any recurring patterns? Bearing these in mind, describe what you believe to be the principles you follow when pursuing your preferred way of working?

You may, of course, have several different successful styles. For example, one when working alone; another when working with other people. If appropriate, we can explore each approach.

This kind of exercise takes some time but it is often worthwhile. You may also need to help the person to clarify the specific things that made the projects satisfying.

Imagine that you explored these themes. You can then invite the person to complete the following exercise.

My Successful Style

Looking at the patterns that have emerged, I believe my successful style – my preferred way of working – is:

- * *To ...*

Different people will describe different principles they like to follow when doing satisfying work. One person explained their approach in the following way.

"My pattern is clear. I love building prototypes, but several characteristics stand out.

"First, I must believe the project will improve people's lives. Second, I want to have lots of input into clarifying the 'What' – the goal to achieve.

"Third, I like to have lots of autonomy. Fourth, I prefer to be aiming for a specific deadline. Finally, I love to see the prototype having a positive impact on people's lives."

Each person will have their own approach to doing satisfying work. When appropriate, you can move on to the next stage.

You can help a person to follow their successful style

Imagine that you have helped the person to find the principles they like to follow when pursuing their successful style of working. You can then help them to follow this style in the future.

Why take this approach? People develop, they seldom change. A person's successful style seems to get more pronounced as they get older. So it can be helpful for them to find and follow their preferred way of working. Let's look at one example.

Alison, a chief executive, is somebody who expresses a recurring theme in her life. Looking at the work she finds most satisfying:

She loves to create stimulating environments in which people can achieve peak performance.

"That sounds a common theme," somebody may say. Yes it is, but different people will use their strengths to translate a theme into action in different ways.

Alison expresses her successful style by doing certain kinds of projects. During her life she has run arts festivals, led marketing campaigns and built great teams. She is a superb orchestrator. This often involves her taking the following steps.

She finds something she feels passionately about and sets a stimulating goal

Alison's chosen projects must score at least 8/10 on the passion rating. She also likes to do activities which have a clear deadline and a stimulating goal

She does a reality check before embarking on the project

Alison does her due diligence to check if it is possible to achieve the goal. She has a set of trusted people with whom she bounces ideas about the project. Sometimes this can result in her actually creating a bigger goal. Alternatively, she might say 'No,' to the project.

She takes time to plan and make a clear road map towards achieving the goal

Alison make an initial project plan, complete with milestones, plus ensures she will get the resources required to achieve the goal. Alison then double-checks that the project is stretching and stimulating. If so, she commits to reaching the goal.

She gathers talented people who want to embark on the adventure

Alison often draws on her network to recruit people who want to contribute. Sometimes she also builds on the positive people already in the organisation. She gives these a sense of ownership and makes clear contracts about their contributions towards achieving the goal.

She creates an environment that encourages people to do fine work that contributes towards achieving the goal

Alison provides a stimulating atmosphere with lots of inspiration and encouragement. If she inherits an existing team, she gives any reluctant people several chances but then draws a line. People leave if they don't deliver the required professional standards.

She encourages people to stay on track and do exceptional work

Alison is good at reminding people of the goal, updating them on progress and encouraging them to raise their game. She encourages people to keep focusing on the issues that are in the Green, Amber and Red Zones and the actions they need to take.

She delivers the goods and achieves the goal

Alison's projects often have a sense of performance - something brilliant that must be delivered by a certain deadline. Whilst calm on the surface, she is adrenaline-driven. The difference between her and some others is that she is happy for her people to get the glory.

Alison's follows this path when pursuing her vocation. As mentioned earlier, the red thread in many of her projects is:

To create stimulating environments in which people can achieve peak performance.

Whilst she sometimes loves doing creative work alone – such as photography – she gets an even greater kick from enabling people to produce something special. She continues to follow this theme in her work.

Imagine you have helped the person to clarify their successful style. How to help them to follow this in the future? One approach is to start by

inviting them to brainstorm ideas on the following theme. We will then focus on one particular approach they may want to take.

My Successful Style - Following It In The Future

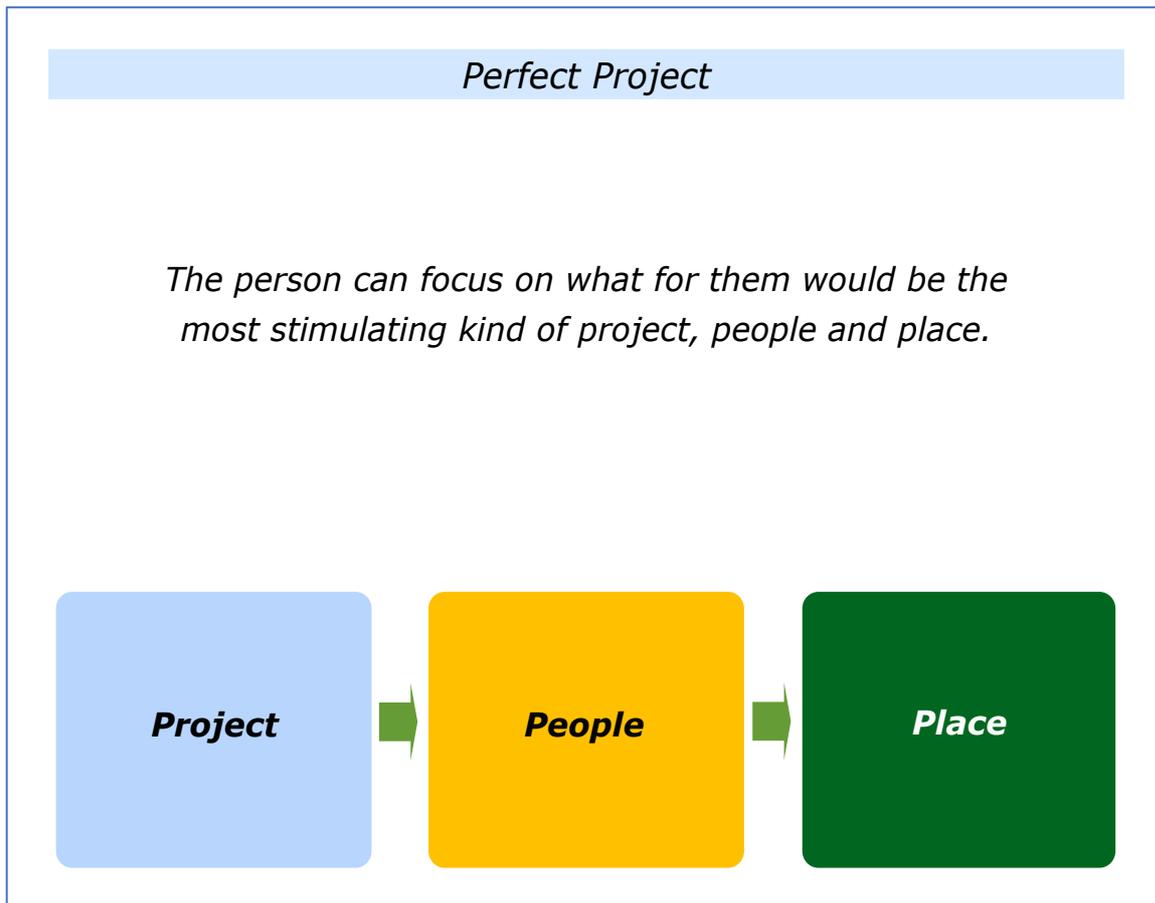
*The things I can do to follow
these principles in the future are:*

- * *To ...*

Imagine that the person has generated some ideas regarding how they can follow their successful style. They may, for example, have explored how to do this in their present role, moving another role or starting their own business.

If appropriate, however, you may want to help them to explore another option. Let's focus on this approach.

You can explore how the person may be able to follow their successful style by finding or creating their perfect project



We are all freelancers now. There are no jobs for life but there are many potential projects. You can explore how the person may do satisfying work by pursuing this path. If appropriate, you may say something along the following lines.

Let's explore how you can express your successful style in the future. One way to do this is by finding or creating stimulating projects. We can do this by focusing on the following themes.

Project

What would be the kind of project you would find stimulating? Are there any potential projects in the pipeline that might fit your pattern? If so, what are these projects?

If not, would it be possible to mould another project to fit your style whilst, at the same time, satisfying the key stakeholders? If there are none on the horizon, how could you find or create such a project?

People

Who are the kinds of people you find stimulating? What are the characteristics of your ideal manager? What are the qualities of your ideal colleagues? How can you find such characters or build a team of such people?

Place

What is the kind of place – culture or environment - you find stimulating? What are the characteristics of your preferred culture? What is your preferred environment?

What is your preferred working style? For example, do you prefer to spend all week in the office, on the road or some time working from home? What else would be important regarding the culture and environment?

Crafting Your Perfect Project – Making It Happen

Bearing in mind what you have written, what would be your perfect project? What are the specific results you could deliver to a potential employer or customer by doing this kind of project? What would be the specific benefits to the employer or customer?

How can you find or create your perfect project? What are the specific things you can do to make it happen?

Imagine that you have taken some of these steps with the person. If appropriate, you can invite them to explore the following exercise.

My Perfect Project

*My perfect project would
be one where I am able:*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

*The specific things I can do to
find or create such a project are:*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

Imagine that you have helped the person to work through some of these exercises. You can help them to summarise what they have learned so far and how they want to translate this into action.

If appropriate, they can then clarify the specific steps they want to take to follow their successful style in the future. Here is the exercise on this theme.

My Successful Style – My Action Plan

The specific things I want to do to follow my successful style in the future are:

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

Let's assume that the person has worked through these exercises. They may well have done enough thinking and planning for the moment. If appropriate, however, at some point you may want to help them to explore the following theme.

You can help the person to develop their successful style in the future

Imagine that the person knows how they want to follow their successful style in the future. Bearing this in mind, you can help them to explore how they can aim:

To continue to build on the strengths of their style and manage the consequences of any weaknesses;

To continue to add to their repertoire of strategies, skills and tools that they can use to follow their successful style and do superb work;

To continue to find or create satisfying projects where they help their employers, customers or other stakeholders to achieve success.

There are many ways to help people to build on their strengths. One approach is to help them to find and follow their successful style. If you wish, you can invite the person to do the final exercise on this theme.

My Successful Style

The specific things I can do to continue to develop my successful style in future are:

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

The Principles Approach To Achieving The Picture Of Success

The Principles Approach

This is an approach that can be used in many situations. It starts by helping people – a person or a group of people - to clarify their picture of success.

It then involves encouraging them to follow their principles, translate these into practice and do their best to achieve their picture of success.



This is an approach that can be used in many situations to help individuals, teams and organisations. It starts by helping them to clarify the real results they want to achieve – their picture of success. It then involves helping them:

To clarify the principles they want to follow to achieve their aims;

To translate these principles into practice;

To do their best to achieve the desired picture of success.

The principles approach provides people with an internal compass they can keep focusing on. They can keep returning to this centre and following certain guidelines to achieve their aims. This can help them to achieve sustainable success.

There are many ways to take this approach. A person may choose to clarify the principles they want to follow in their life. They may aim, for example:

To be positive and encourage people;

To use their strengths to do superb work that helps people;

To keep doing their best and experience a sense of peace.

Such a person may then focus on how to translate these principles into practice in their daily life and work. Taking these steps may help them to feel true to themselves and gain a sense of peace.

One leader I worked with chose to the principles approach after a conversation we had about shaping the team's future. They positioned the challenge in the following way.

"I would like to develop the culture in our team. At the moment we have fine professionals who provide analytical information to leaders and manager in our company.

"I would like us to build the team's reputation so we can make a bigger contribution to the business. We have lots of knowledge that both our internal and external customers could use when making strategic and other decisions.

"We are now hiring young people who need to learn how we work but also add their energy and ambition. Have you any ideas about how we can keep developing?"

The leaders and I explored various options. After some discussion, they decided to go the principles route. We worked together on the steps they would take and how to position this approach with people. This involved them taking the following steps.

Step One

The leader began by brainstorming and then settling on some provisional principles they believed it was important for the team to follow. They also explored the practical steps that could be taken to translate these into action.

Step Two

The leader shared these principles with their five direct reports. They began by talking with each of them individually before then meeting together in a group. The leader explained the approach in the following way.

"As you know, for some time we have been talking about the kind of culture we need to build to enable us to thrive in the future.

"There are several ways to shape this culture. One approach that can be effective is to focus on the principles we would like people to follow.

"Bearing this in mind, I have come up with some provisional principles. These are based on the times when people in our team have done superb work.

"I would like your individual input in adding to these guidelines. Then I would like us to meet and agree on the principles.

"At a suitable point, we can share these with all our people. We can do this in a way that also involves them in focusing on how we can translate the principles into practice."

Taking this step, the leader found that each of the direct reports agreed with the main principles they had outlined. Each person also added their own suggestions.

The leadership team settled on three main principles they believed it was important for the team to follow. These were backed up with specific ways that people could translate the principles into action.

Step Three

The leadership team gathered the whole team together and shared the principles. Mirroring some of the themes they had mentioned when introducing the principles to their direct reports, the leader positioned the session in the following way.

"As you know, for some time we have been talking about clarifying the kind of culture we want to build that will enable us to thrive in the future. Bearing this in mind, we have come up with some provisional principles. I want to share these with you and do the following things.

"First, to explain how the principles are based on when people have performed at their best and I want to bring these to life by giving specific examples.

"Second, to give you the chance to describe when you have seen us following these principles in the past – plus add any other ideas that you think we can add to the principles.

"Third, to focus on how we can translate these principles into practice in the future – plus any support you may need to be able to follow the principles.

"We will then aim: a) to finalise the principles; b) to keep focusing on how we can follow the principles in our work; c) to keep producing success stories that show how people are following the principles and delivering success."

People then did the exercises where they focused on the principles and how to translate these into action. Being diligent people, they tackled these in a collegiate and serious way.

The leadership team incorporated some of the ideas into the final version of the principles. These may seem generic but people added specific bullet points under each one. These related to how they could translate the principles into action deliver success.

The Principles

*The principles we want
to follow in our work are:*

To always act in a professional way

For example:

** To ...*

** To ...*

** To ...*

*To provide great service to both
our internal and external customers*

For example:

** To ...*

** To ...*

** To ...*

*To continue to develop in ways that help our company,
our customers and ourselves to achieve ongoing success*

For example:

** To ...*

** To ...*

** To ...*

There are many ways to help people, teams and organisations to achieve their aims. One approach involves helping them to clarify the principles they want to follow to achieve their picture of success.

These principles provide a framework that people can return to in their daily life or work. They can use these:

To keep doing what they believe in and being true to themselves;

To keep making decisions based on their chosen principles and translating these into action;

To keep developing as people and as professionals.

Looking ahead, can you think of a specific situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach? You may want to do this when focusing on your own life or when helping a person, team or organisation.

How can you clarify the chosen principles? How can you translate these into practice? How can you focus on how to achieve the desired picture of success?

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

The Principles Approach To Achieving The Picture Of Success

The specific situation where 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 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 People Who Act As Positive Models

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 be able to apply in my career and life."

Learning From Positive Models That Make Sense Of Things

Individuals sometimes learn from positive models - philosophies or frameworks - that help them to understand and navigate life. They may learn these from teachers, writers, scientists or other people. A person may say such frameworks help them to learn:

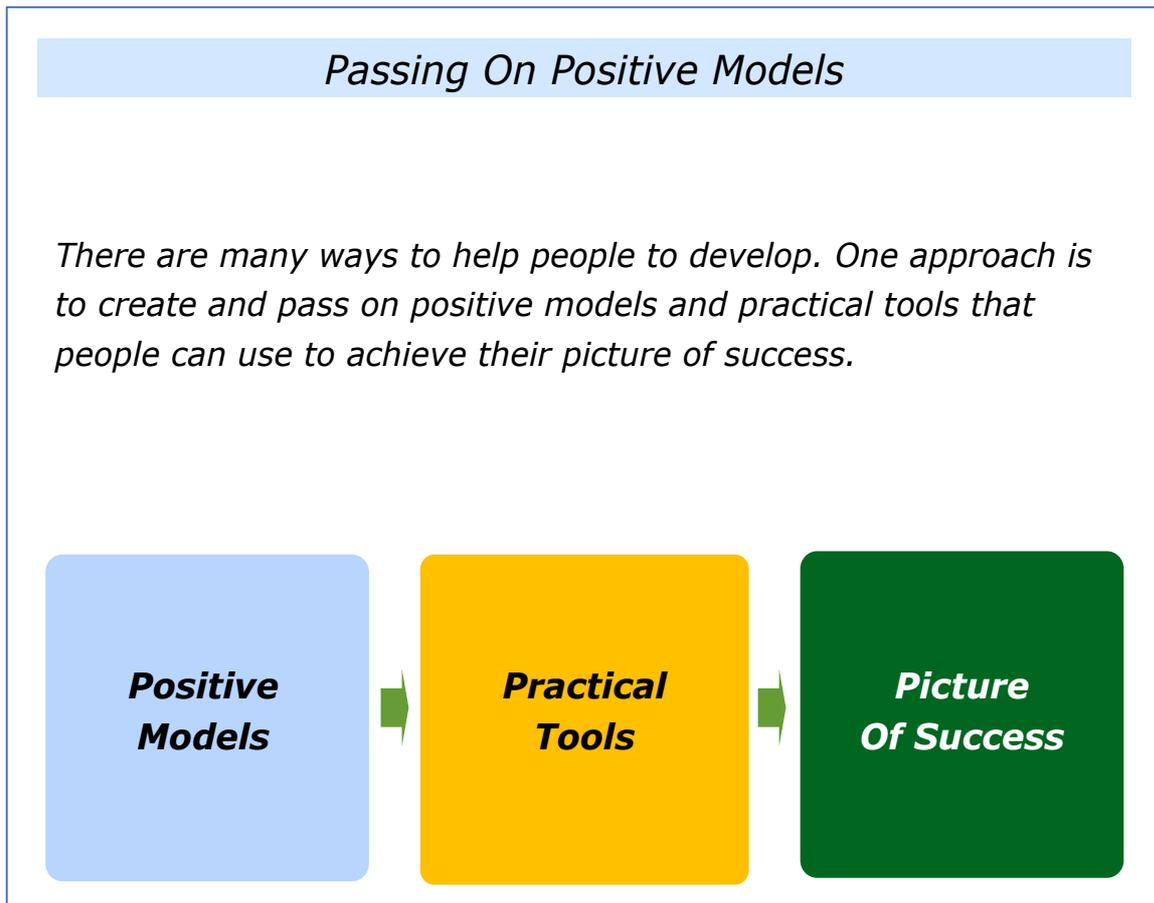
How to make sense of things ... How to manage emotions ... How to understand certain kinds of people ... How to do satisfying work ... How to work towards achieving their life goals ... How to develop as a person.

Good educators often create and pass on positive models that can help people to succeed. Such people often go through the following steps.

They focus on a specific theme that they believe people may want to pursue to achieve success;

They study what works in this area and then translate this into positive models and practical tools that people can use to achieve success;

They then aim to pass on this knowledge in ways that people can use to achieve their pictures of success.



Looking ahead, can you think a situation where you may aim to act as a positive model or pass on a positive model. 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 model may be:*

*

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

*

*

*

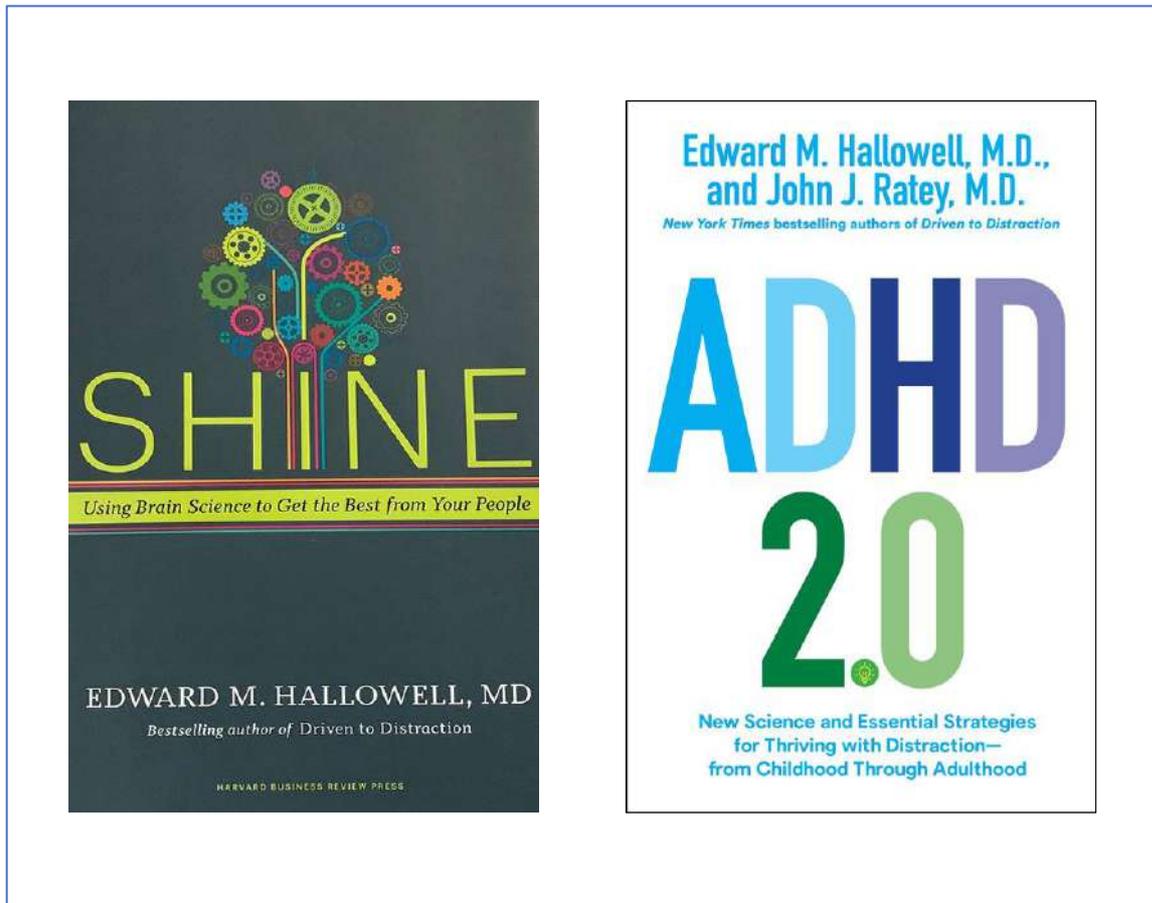
*The specific benefits of
taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

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 your 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.

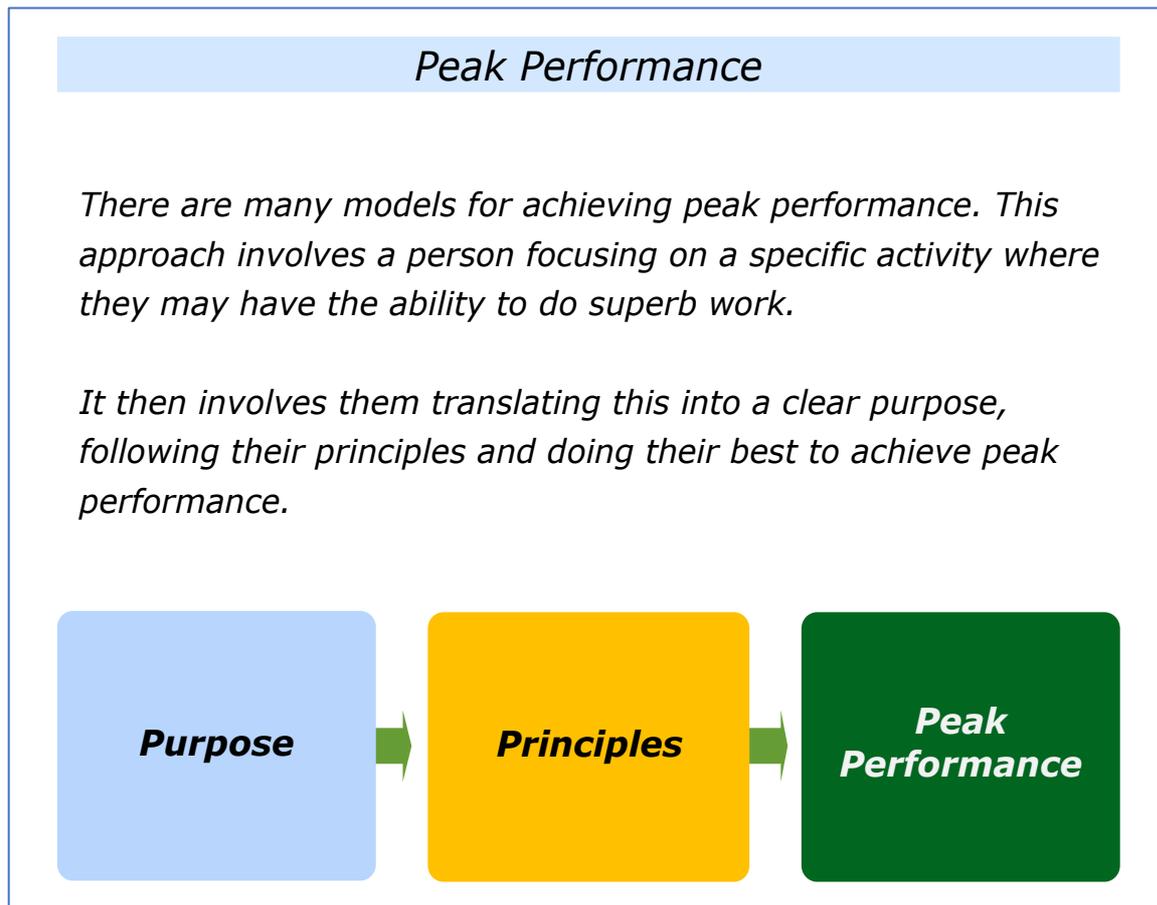
- *Grapple And Grow*

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 Peak Performance Approach



This approach involves a person focusing on a specific activity where they may have the ability to do superb work. It then involves them translating this into a clear purpose, following their principles and doing their best to achieve peak performance.

There are many definitions for peak performance. The one we are using here is:

A person focusing on a specific activity and becoming the best they can be.

Such a person may focus on an activity where they deliver As rather than Bs or Cs. It may be one that gives them positive energy. They may then translate this into a specific project and aim to achieve their picture of success.

They may focus on an activity where they feel in their element - at ease and yet able to excel. They may then aim to do work that is effective, excellent and maybe even extraordinary.

Such a person may aim to build on their strengths, follow strategies that work and achieve success. They may aim to make a positive contribution, pass on knowledge and sometimes experience a sense of peace.

Let's explore one approach that a person may take to following these steps during their time on the planet.

Purpose

People love to have a sense of purpose. One approach is for them to follow a passion, translate this into a clear purpose and work towards their picture of success. Let's explore these themes.

Passion

Some career coaches advise people to follow their passion. Others say this is not good advice. They suggest that people should focus on the things they do best.

Great workers often combine these elements. They pursue a passion where they have the ability to do superb work. They may feel passionately about encouraging people, doing creative projects, finding a medical cure or doing another activity.

Imagine that you want to follow this path. What are the things you feel passionately about? What are those where you may have the ability to deliver peak performances?

Purpose

People love to have a sense of purpose. This can bring meaning and structure to their days.

Great workers may translate their passion into a clear purpose and focus on a specific thing they want to do. Different people do this in different ways.

Some people focus on a long-term purpose. They may aim to follow a spiritual faith, a vocation or a sense of mission. They then aim to express this in various ways in their life and work.

Some people focus on a short-term 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.

Different people describe different things regarding their purpose. Here are some that they may mention.

My Purpose

The specific thing I want to do is:

I want to encourage people ... I want build a happy family ... I want to help people to live healthy lives ... I want to help people to become the architects of their own lives.

I want to help dyslexic people to build on their strengths ... I want to write articles that inspire people ... I want to create enriching environments that enable people to grow.

I want to find a specific medical cure ... I want to create technology that simplifies people's lives ... I want to give people practical hope ... I want to pass on knowledge that helps people to build a positive world.

Imagine that you have begun to translate your passion into a purpose. This can lead to the next stage.

Picture Of Success

Great workers realise that, whilst they may aim to follow a purpose, they may need to express this in various ways in the life and work. Bearing

this in mind, they may aim to do a specific project or work to achieve a specific goal.

Imagine that you want to follow this path in your own way. When doing so, you may explore some of the classic questions. These include the following.

What is the specific project I want to do or the specific goal I want to reach? What are the real results I want to achieve? What is the picture of success? What will be happening that will show I have achieved the goal?

What will be the benefits of achieving the goal? What will be the pluses and minuses involved in working to achieve the goal? How can I build on the pluses and manage the minuses?

Bearing in mind what is involved, on a scale 0-10 how high would I rate my motivation to do the work? How can I maintain or improve the rating? Make sure the rating is at least 8+/10.

Imagine that you have worked through these themes. If appropriate, one approach is to complete the following framework.

My Picture Of Success

*The specific project I want to do or
the specific goal I want to reach is:*

To ...

The real results I want to achieve are:

To ...

To ...

To ...

*The specific benefits of
achieving these results will be:*

To ...

To ...

To ...

This purpose section has focused on 'What' a person wants to do and 'Why' they want to do it. The next step involves focusing on the 'How'.

Principles

Great workers often follow their chosen principles when aiming to reach a goal. They aim to be super professional and, when necessary, find solutions to problems. Let's explore these themes.

Principles

Imagine you have chosen to focus on achieving a specific goal. What are the principles you want to follow when doing the work? How can you translate these into action?

Different people follow different principles and much depends on the work they are doing. Here are some they may mention

My Principles

*The principles I want to
follow when doing the work are:*

To be caring and compassionate in my work in the hospice ... To be a good educator who enables people to shape their futures ... To help people to build on their strengths, follow strategies that work and achieve success.

To make natural history programmes that encourage people to take care of the planet ... To create a positive culture in which people can do positive work and get positive results ... To create wins for our company, wins for our customers and wins for our colleagues.

Bearing in mind the principles they want to follow, some people then focus on how to translate these into action. Some do this by exploring the following questions.

What is the specific goal I want to achieve? What are the principles I want to follow when working to achieve the goal? What are the reasons why I believe in following these principles?

How can I translate these principles into action? What are the key strategies I can follow to increase the likelihood of achieving success? How can I encourage myself and other people on the journey?

Imagine that you have clarified the principles you want to follow. The next step involves the following theme.

Professionalism

Great workers aim to be super professional and deliver consistently high standards. They aim to do this whether counselling people, coaching a sports team, leading a business or doing other kinds of work. Such people often take the following steps.

They prepare properly. They look ahead, clarify the results to achieve and rehearse following their chosen strategies to achieve the goal. They then click into action.

They are super professional and encourage other people. They aim to get some early wins, perform superb work and provide great service. They do their best to achieve success.

They focus on continuous improvement. They keep doing reality checks to clarify what is working, what they can do better and how. They then implement these ideas to keep improving.

Such workers may also aim to act as positive models for other people. The way they behave can set the tone. It can also encourage other people - especially when times get tough.

Imagine that you are delivering high professional standards when doing a piece of work. It can then be time to explore the next theme.

Problem Solving

Great workers find solutions to challenges. Some even use setbacks as a springboard to success. You will do this in your own way, but it can be useful to ask some of the following questions.

Looking ahead, what may be some of the difficulties I may face on the journey? What can I do to prevent some of these difficulties happening? How can I manage these difficulties if, despite my best efforts, they do happen?

What can I do to stay calm during a crisis? How can I buy time to think and explore the options for going forwards? How can I find creative solutions to challenges? How can I then pursue my chosen option and do my best to achieve success?

Imagine that you are delivering consistently high standards. Sometimes this can be enough to reach the goal. But there may be times when you want to move on to the following theme.

Peak Performance

Great workers do their best to deliver the goods and achieve peak performance. Some go further and aim to pass on knowledge to other people. Sometimes this can lead to a sense of peace. Let's explore these themes.

Peak Performance

Great workers often rise to the occasion and, when appropriate, deliver peak performances. They may do this when playing a sport, performing a

song, conducting an operation, tackling a challenge or doing another activity.

They use their radar to gather information, see patterns and predict what may happen. Reaching into their repertoire of skills, they then apply their knowledge to deliver the desired results.

Such workers seem to go into another dimension. They seem to act slowly but swiftly. They then do something special to deliver peak performances and achieve the picture of success.

Imagine you are following this approach in your own way. Sometimes it can be useful to explore the following themes.

How can I be a good finisher? Looking back, what is my successful pattern for finishing? How can I follow those principles in this situation? How can I flow, focus and finish?

How can I keep doing the basics and, when appropriate, add the brilliance? How can I add that touch of class? How can I do my best to achieve peak performance?

Imagine that you have completed the piece of work. You may simply want to rest, reflect and re-energise yourself. At some point you may also wish to consider the following theme.

Passing On Knowledge

Great workers sometimes want to go beyond doing fine work. They want to share what they have learned with other people. How can you do this in your own way? It can be useful to start by focusing on the *What, Why, Who, How* and *When*.

The What

What is the knowledge you want to pass on? This may depend on the project or other activity you have been pursuing.

You may have learned lessons from gardening, counselling, building houses, managing crises, coding, leading teams, solving particular problems or whatever.

The Why

Why would you like to pass on this knowledge? What would be the benefits for people? What are the practical tools they could take away and use in their daily lives and work? How could these things help them to succeed?

The Who

Who would you like to reach with the knowledge? Would they be young people, those with learning difficulties, budding entrepreneurs, athletes, leaders, scientists, social entrepreneurs, therapists or other people?

What would be the characteristics of these people? Would they be motivated and wanting to learn? What other qualities would you like to see in your ideal students?

The How

How would you like to share your knowledge with people? Different people prefer different methods for sharing know how. They may prefer, for example:

To act a positive model and show what good looks like on a daily basis by, for example, running a business;

To act as a mentor, coach, trusted advisor or to run teaching sessions, seminars, workshops or other forms of education;

To write articles, create websites, write blogs, produce learning materials, make videos, make television programmes or whatever.

The When

When do you want to share the ideas with people? What would be your preferred setting? Would you like to run a seminar, produce a blog, run a coaching session or whatever?

Peace

Great workers love to do their best. This can lead to them enjoying a sense of peace. This can take different forms.

A person who is adrenaline-driven may enjoy stretching themselves and reaching a specific goal. This may be followed by a rush of satisfaction and feeling high.

Such a person may then enjoy a sense of peace but this may only last for a short while. They will then move on to planning the next mountain they want to climb.

Another person may pause and feel content in a positive way. They may take time to reflect, recentre and re-energise themselves. They may then begin to explore the next thing they want to do to make a positive contribution.

There are many models for doing superb work. This piece has explored how a person can translate their passion into a clear purpose, follow their principles and do their best to achieve peak performance.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a specific activity where you may like to follow elements of this approach? How can you do this in your own way?

You may want to follow some of these steps in your own work. Alternatively, you may want to help another person to achieve peak performance.

Here is a summary of the themes we have explored. It is an approach that can be followed by individuals but it can also be adapted to helping

teams and organisations to do superb work. You will, of course, follow this approach in your own way.

The Peak Performance Approach

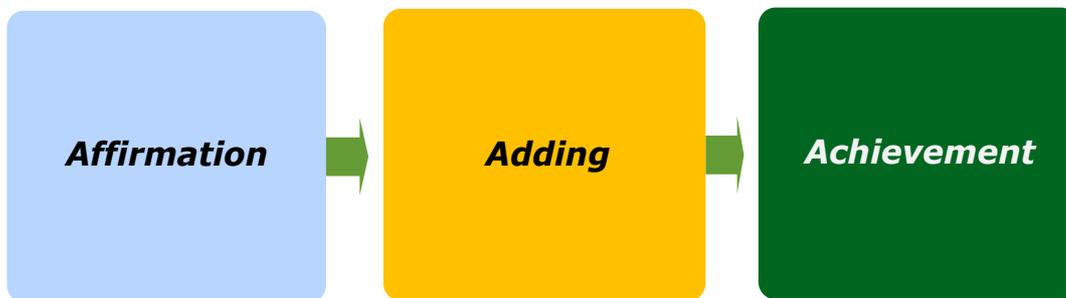
There are many models for achieving peak performance. One approach is for a person to focus on a specific activity where they have the ability to perform superb work. It then involves them focusing on the following themes.



The Adding To A Person's Repertoire Approach

Adding To A Person's Repertoire

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 goals.



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, happiness and hope.

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?

There are many ways to add to a person's repertoire. One approach is to watch them in action or see an example of their work. It is then to ask yourself the following questions. Then, when appropriate, it is pass on knowledge in a way they can receive.

Adding To A Person's Repertoire Of Skills

One approach is to watch the person in action or see an example of their work. It is then to explore the following questions.

- What are the person's goals? What are the real results they want to achieve? What is their picture of success?*

- What are the specific things they are doing well? How can they keep following these principles in the future? What are the specific things they can do better and how?*

- What are the skills, models and practical tools that I can pass on to help them to achieve their goals? How can I share this knowledge in a way they can receive?*

The My Ideal Life Approach

*My Ideal Life
Would Be:*

- *To ...*

- *To ...*

- *To ...*

This is an exercise that I used to give people during workshops where they focused on how to shape their futures. Here are the instructions that were given to people. You can, of course, adapt this in your own way.

This exercise takes an hour. It focuses on how you can take steps towards living your ideal life.

Take a big flip chart, lots of coloured pens and find a space where you can do the exercise. Take around half an hour to do the following things.

Start by brainstorming your ideal life. For example:

My Ideal Life Would Be:

To ...

To ...

To ...

Describe what your ideal life would look like. This can describe both personal and professional aspects of your ideal life. Don't worry about how you can achieve that at the moment.

When you are ready, do the following things on the flip chart.

Describe your ideal life.

Draw a picture of you in your ideal life.

Then move on to the next stage. Find a partner from the group. Put your flip chart on the wall and describe your ideal life.

The partner's role is to listen and, when appropriate, ask questions where you can give more detail or examples.

After fifteen minutes change role and repeat the process.

Finally, if you wish, describe some of the steps you may want to take towards living your ideal life.

We will see you all back here in an hour. Over to you.

Many people found this exercise useful. Some kept their flip charts for years and, on occasions, showed these to other people.

Here is the exercise. You will, of course, have your own approach to focusing on your ideal life.

*My Ideal Life
Would Be:*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

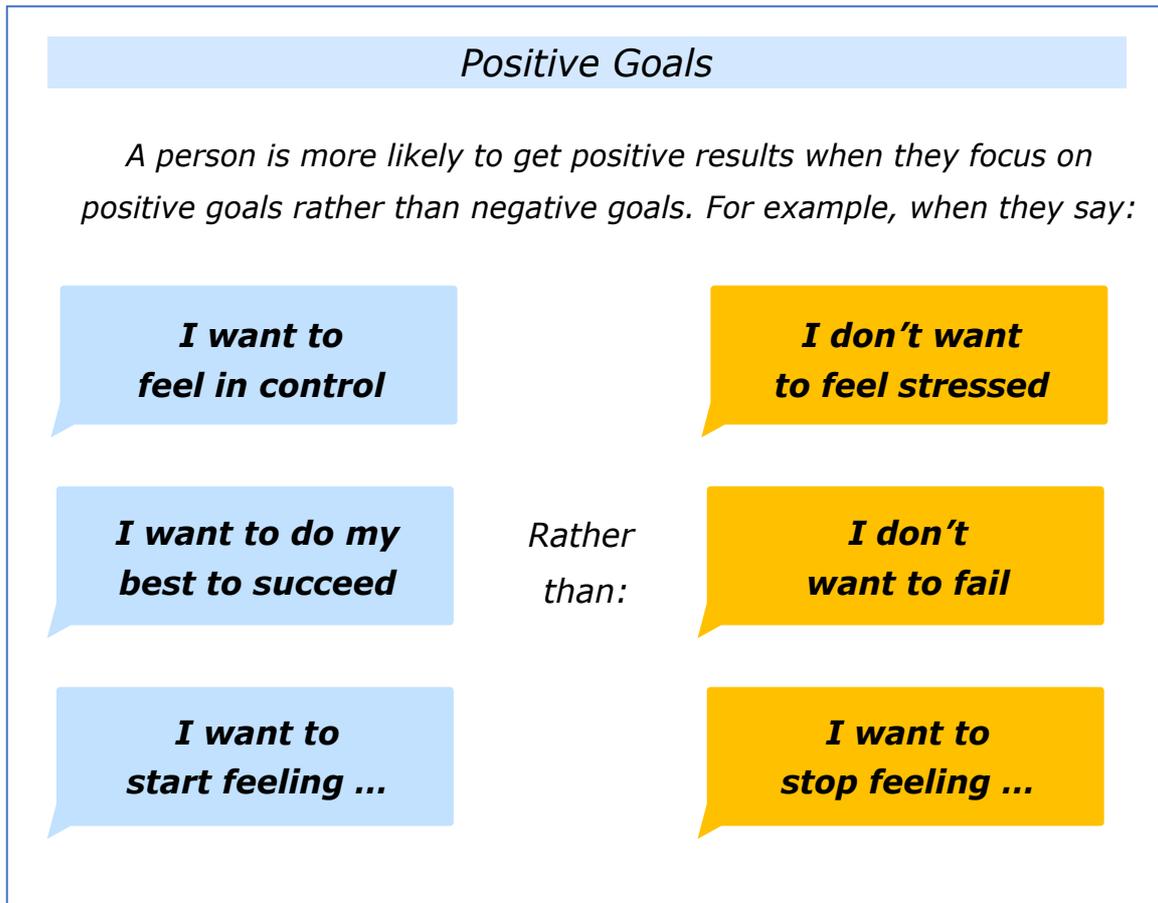
*The specific things I can do to
work toward living my ideal life are:*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

The Positive Goals Rather Than Negative Goals Approach



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 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 follow 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 be explore these themes in greater depth later in the book. These are in the sections called *The Managing Pressure Situations 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:

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

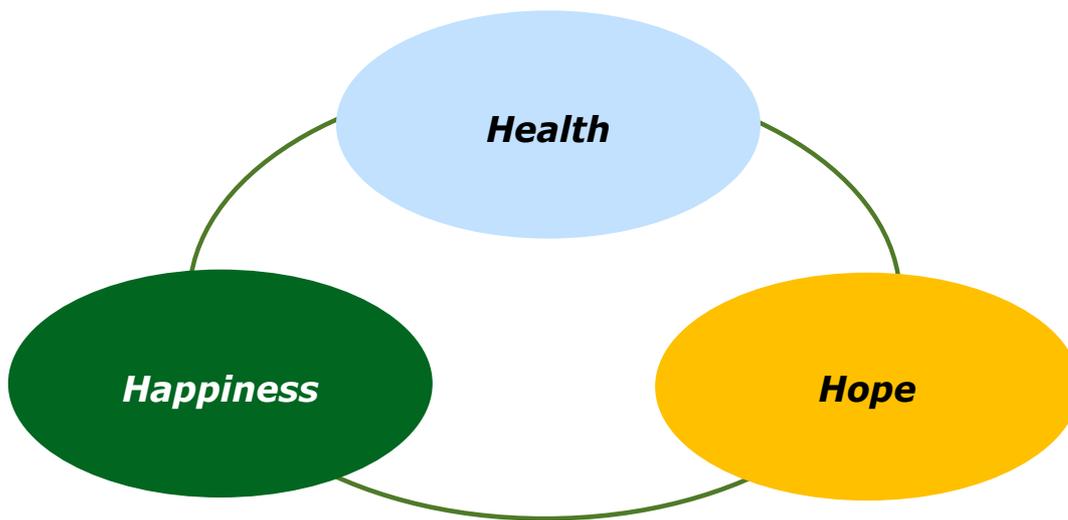
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The Health, Hope And Happiness Approach

The Health, Hope And Happiness Approach

There are many ways to help people. One approach is to focus on the following themes. This is a circular approach. Helping a person in one area can have a beneficial effect in the other areas.



There are many ways to help people to shape their futures. One approach is to help them to focus on the following themes.

Health – to do things that help themselves and other people to be healthy;

Hope – to do things that help themselves and other people to be hopeful.

Happiness – to do things that help themselves and other people to be happy;

This is a circular approach. Helping a person in one area can have a beneficial effect in the other areas.

Imagine you are facilitating a session where a person wants to explore these areas. Let's consider these themes.

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.

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?"

Ricky Snyder helped people to increase their sense of hope and expanding their way power. You can pass on knowledge and practical tools that the person can use to take this step. Bearing this in mind, you can invite them to tackle the following exercise.

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:

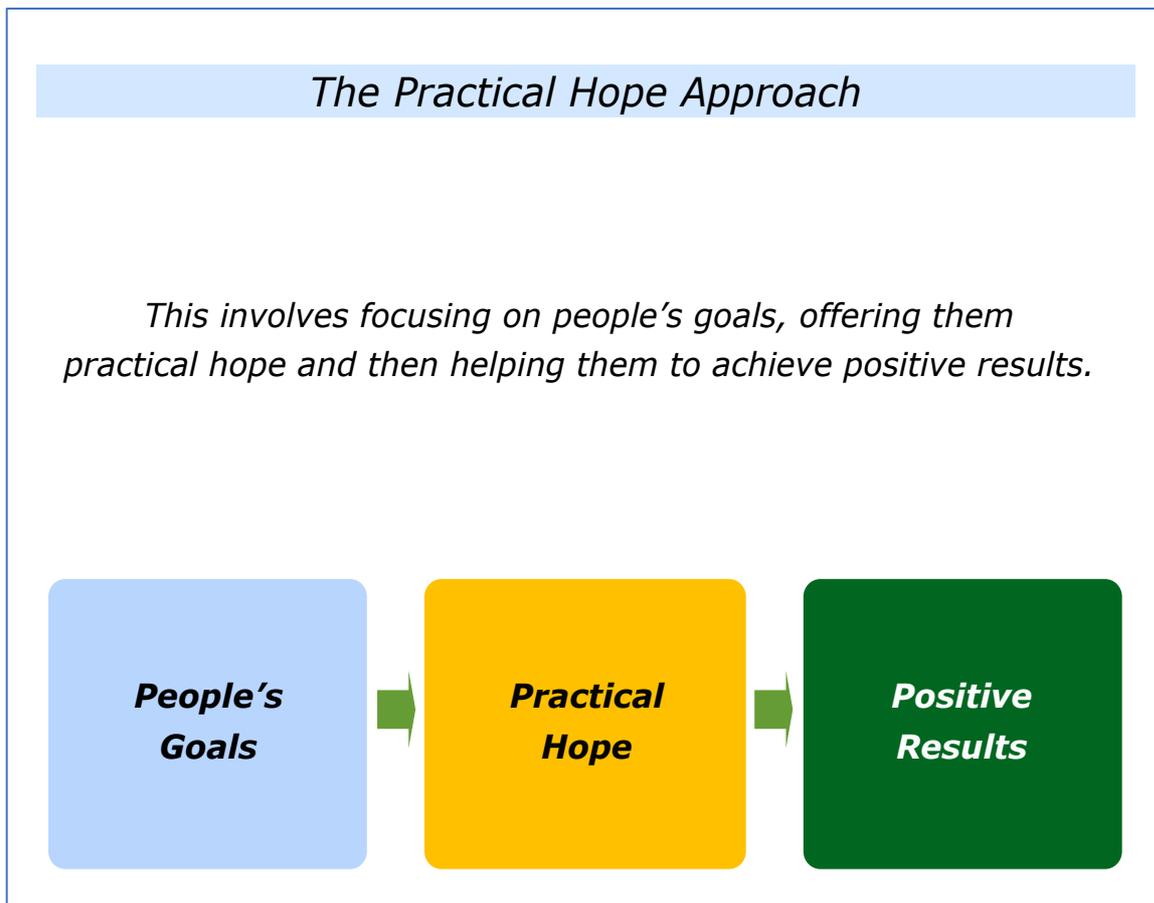
Imagine that you have clarified the extent to which a person feels hopeful. If appropriate, you can encourage them by following elements of the practical hope approach. You can aim:

To create an encouraging environment in which the person or group of people feel at ease and clarify their goals - their picture of success;

To study success – what works in the area they want to explore – and offer strategies and practical tools that people can use to do their best to achieve their picture of success;

To provide ongoing support, find solutions to challenges and do your best to encourage, educate and enable people to achieve their picture of success.

Here is an overview of this approach. You will, of course, adapt this in your own way.



- *People's Goals*

This involves creating an encouraging environment in which the person or the group of people feel at ease and clarifying the real results they want to achieve – their picture of success.

- *Practical Hope*

This involves studying success – what works – and offering strategies and practical tools that people can use to do their best to achieve their picture of success.

- *Positive Results*

This involves providing ongoing support, finding solutions to challenges and doing your best to encourage, educate and enable people to achieve their picture of success.

Different people follow this approach in different ways. Sometimes this involves helping people to focus on the next theme.

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.

Again, if appropriate, you can then pass on knowledge and practical tools they can use in their own ways. They can then continue to maintain their health, hope and happiness.

Happiness

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

_____ / 10

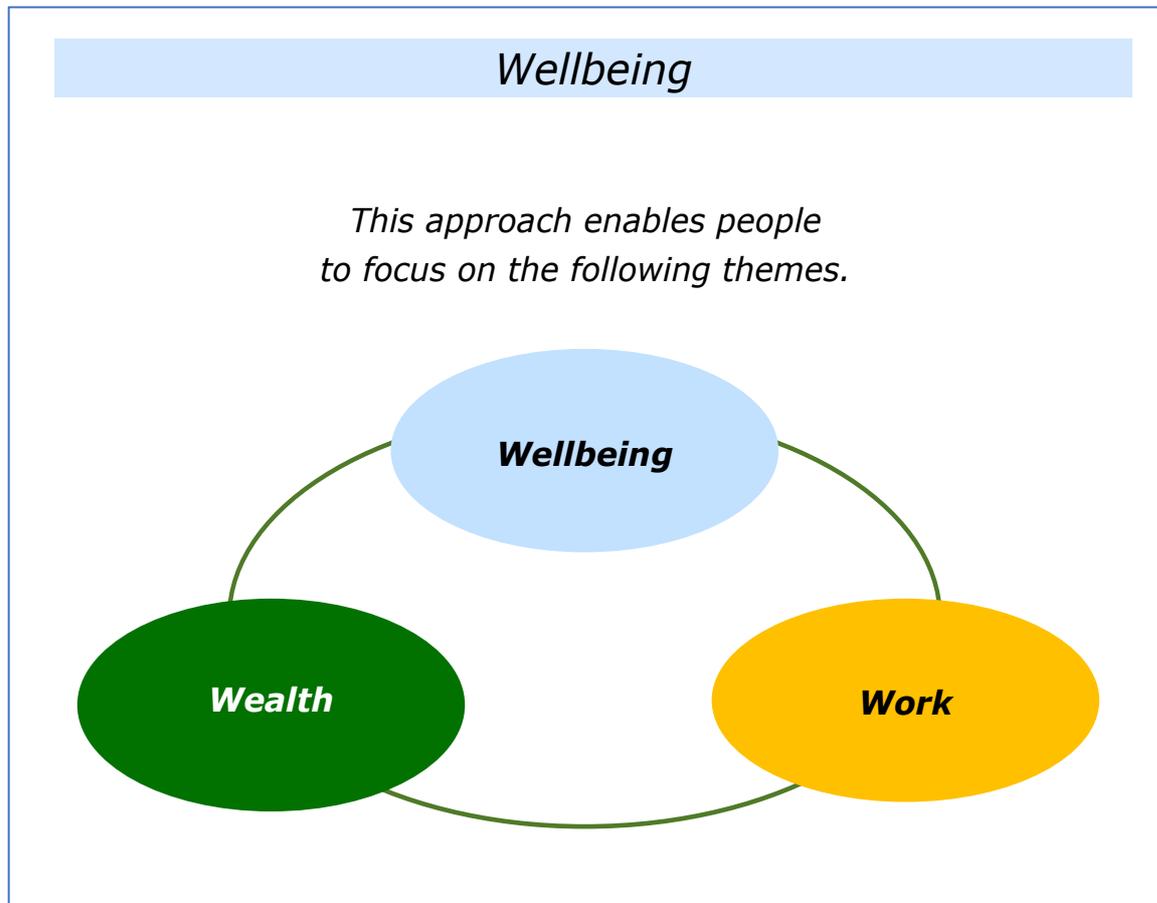
*The specific things I can do to
maintain or improve this rating are:*

*

*

*

The Wellbeing, 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, 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.

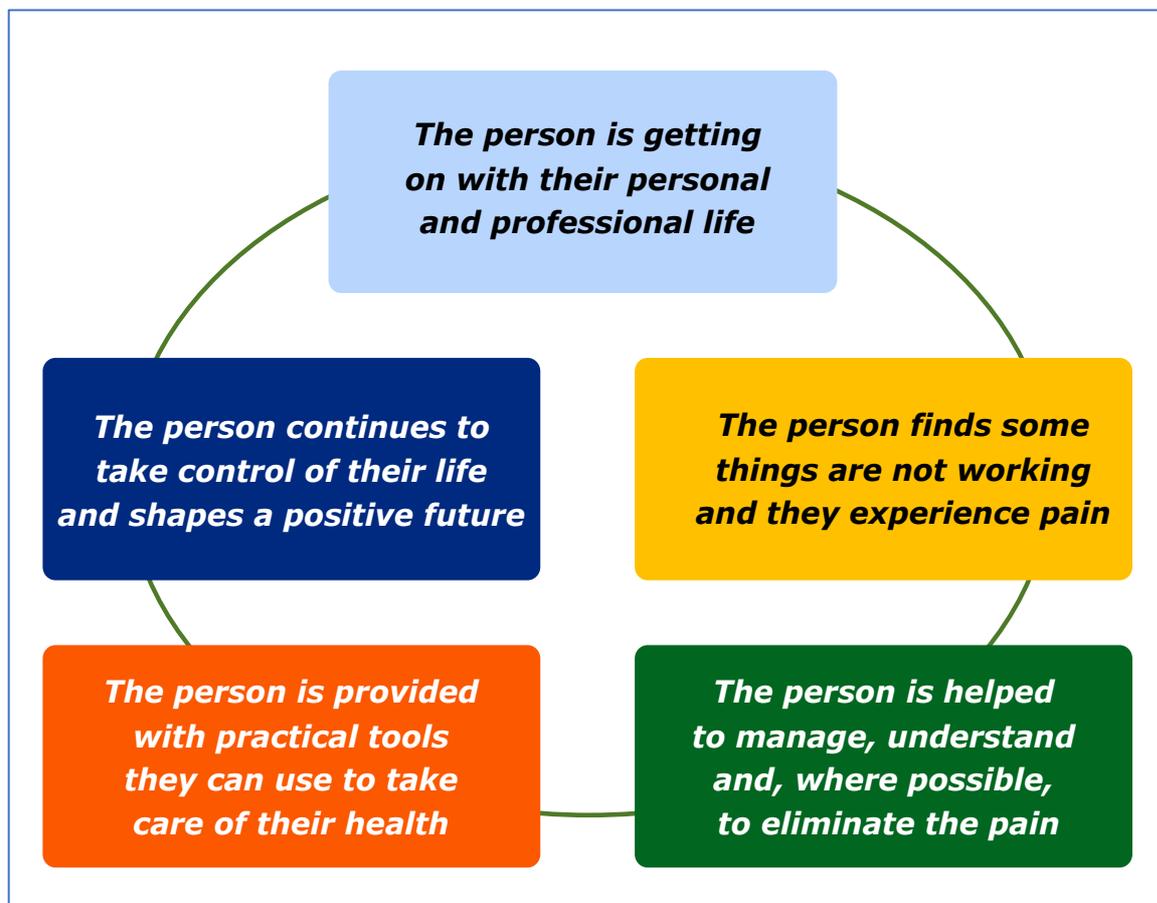
Richmond has his own approach, which will be outlined in his forthcoming book. The key is that many people who consult with him find they are more able to live healthy lives.

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.



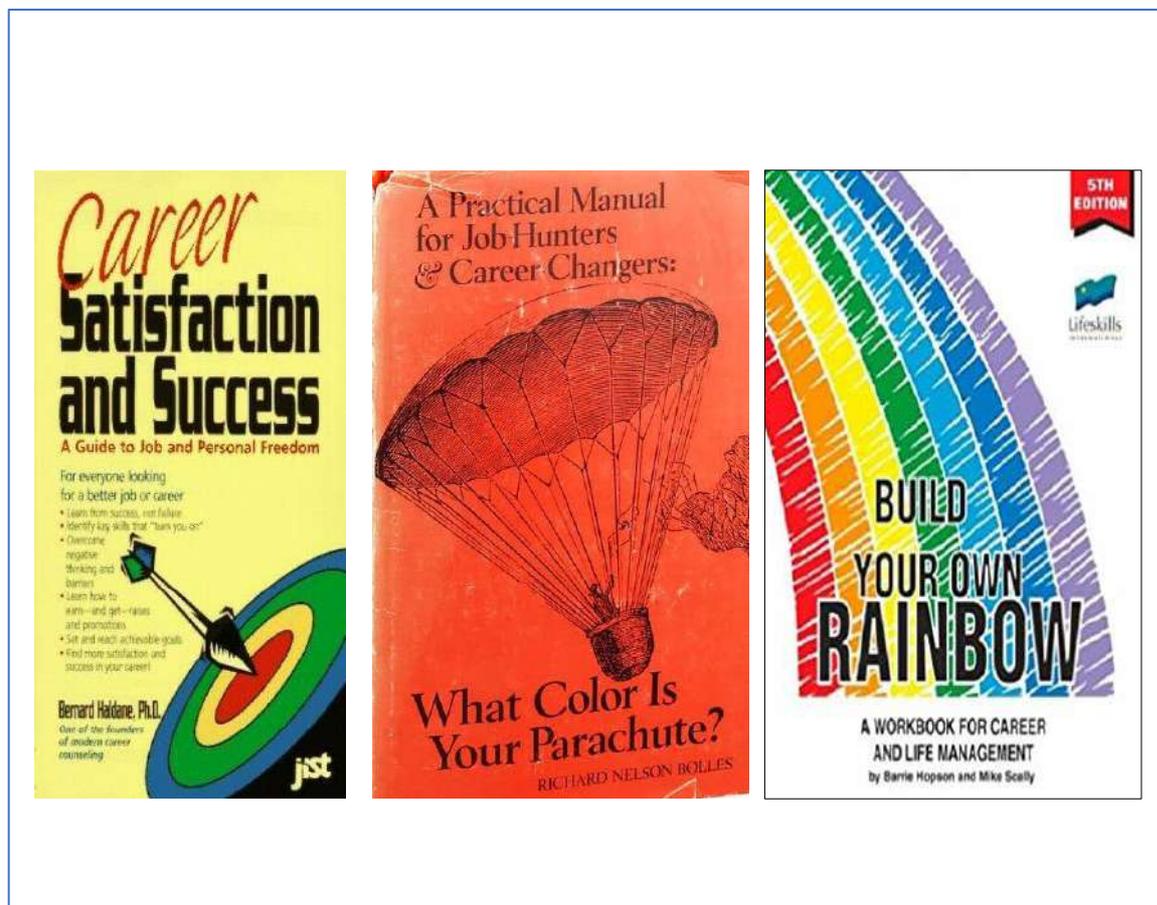
If appropriate, you may use your strengths to help people to maintain or develop their wellbeing. Let's move on to the next theme where it may be possible to help people.

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, Work And Wealth Approach

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

*

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

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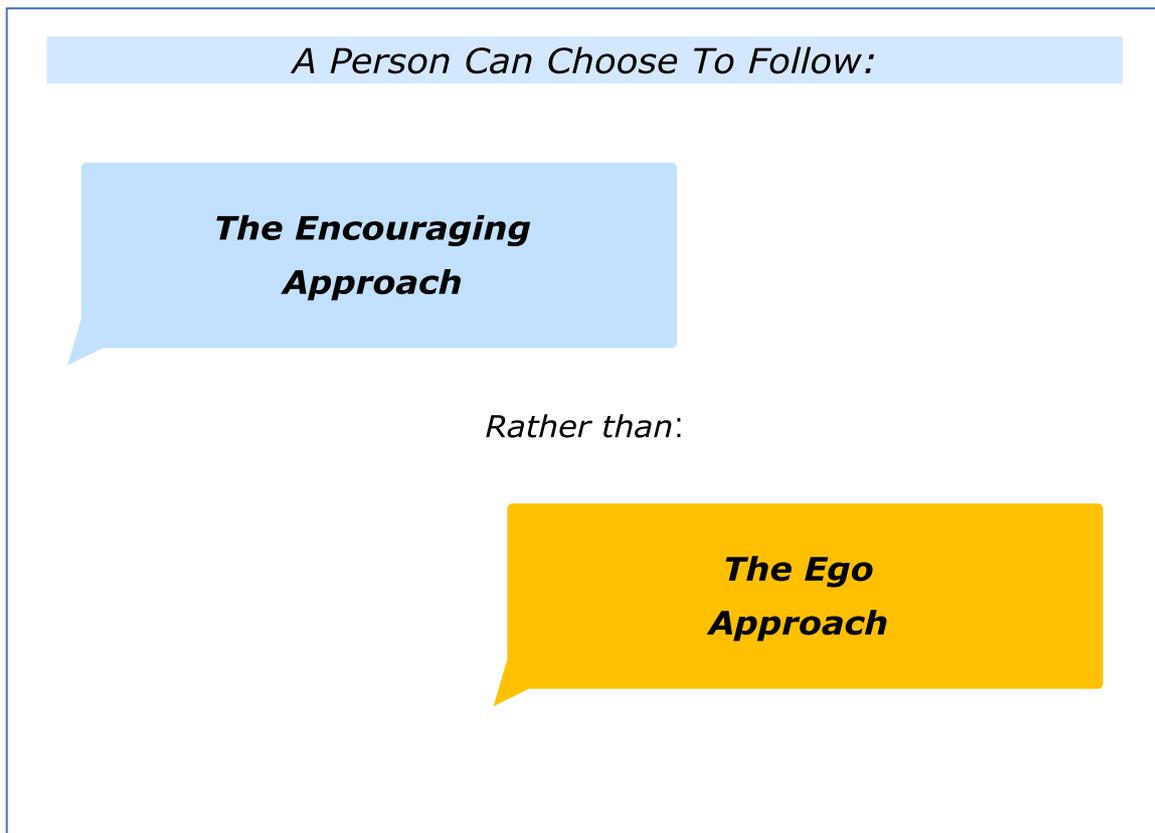
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Encouraging Approach Rather Than The 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 sleight 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 like to develop a feeling 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 Approach Rather Than The Ego Approach

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

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

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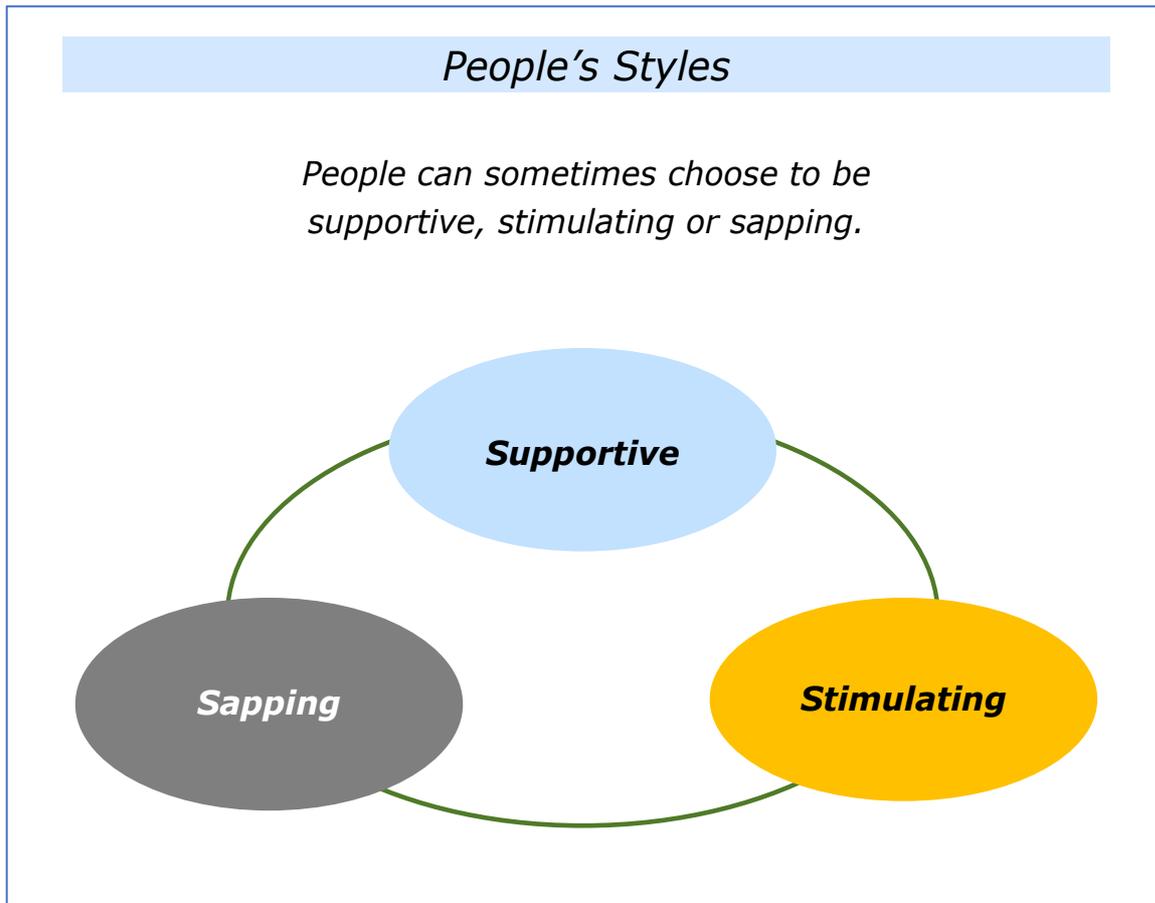
*The specific things that may happen
a result of taking these steps are:*

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The Supportive, Stimulating And Sapping Approaches



People can sometimes choose to be supportive, stimulating or sapping. Their style of operating – the way they interact with others – can have consequences for themselves and other people.

Some people may be valued by organisations because they are supportive and help others to succeed. Some may be asked to leave because their style of operating creates collateral damage.

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

Supportive

Some people behave in ways that are supportive. They are caring, kind and helpful. They help to create an environment in which people feel able to be their real selves. They also provide people with the support they need to succeed.

Stimulating

Some people may behave in ways that are stimulating. They may be positive, energetic or interesting. They act in ways that can be inspiring and help to create a successful environment.

Some people are solutions-focused. They 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.

Some people are sage-like. They are humble, encouraging and like to share knowledge. They see themselves as lifetime students and want to pass on practical tools that help other people to succeed.

Sapping

Some people are sapping. They complain or behave in other ways that saps 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. Different people do this in different ways.

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

Some people imply they are superior to others. They want to be seen as important and successful. They may do this by seeking status, applause and admiration. They may even praise their own efforts in the expectation of getting adulation.

Imagine that you want to behave in ways that are supportive or stimulating. When appropriate, you may also want to apply elements of the solutions or sage-like approach.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to help a person or a group of people? How can you follow elements of the supportive or stimulating approaches in your own way? 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 And Stimulating Approaches

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

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The specific things I can do then to follow elements of the supportive or stimulating approaches are:

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*

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

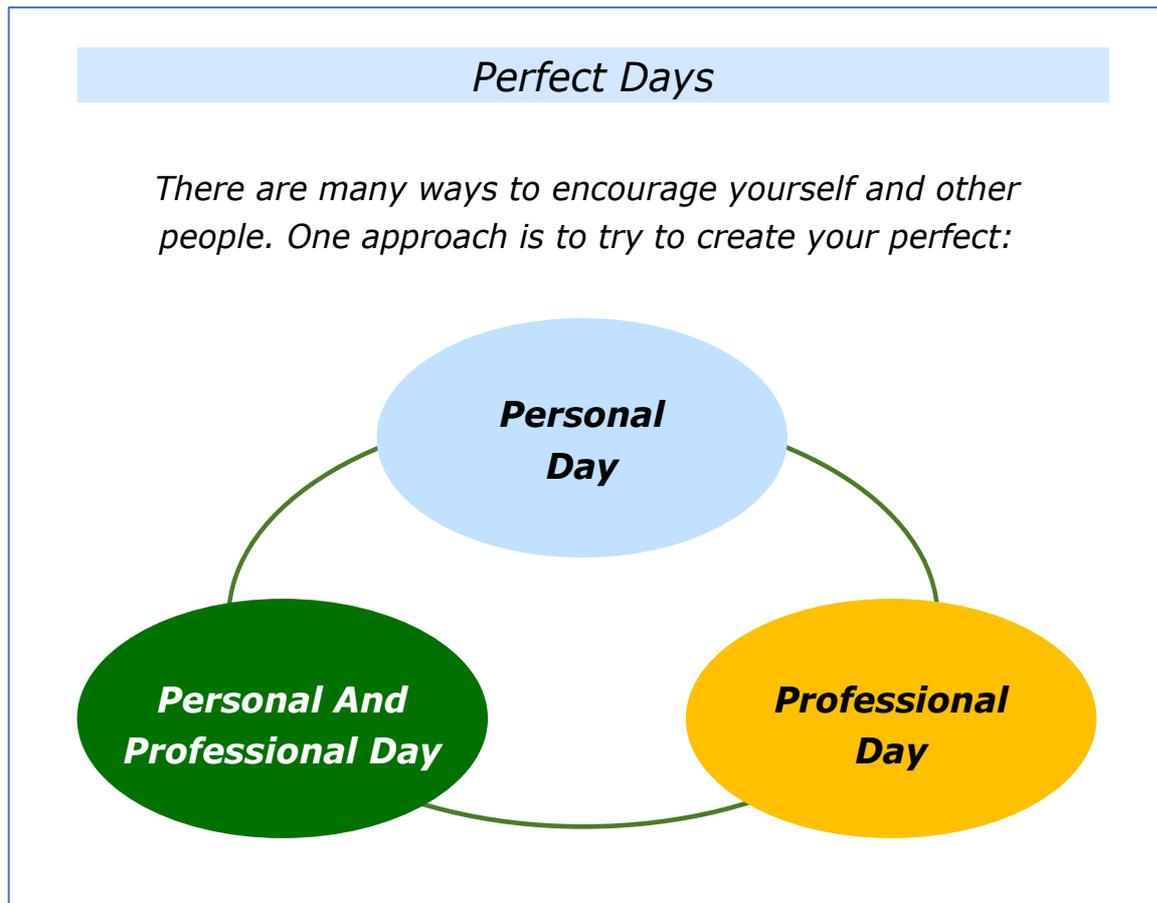
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Let's return to your own life and work. Here some things you can do to encourage yourself and other people.

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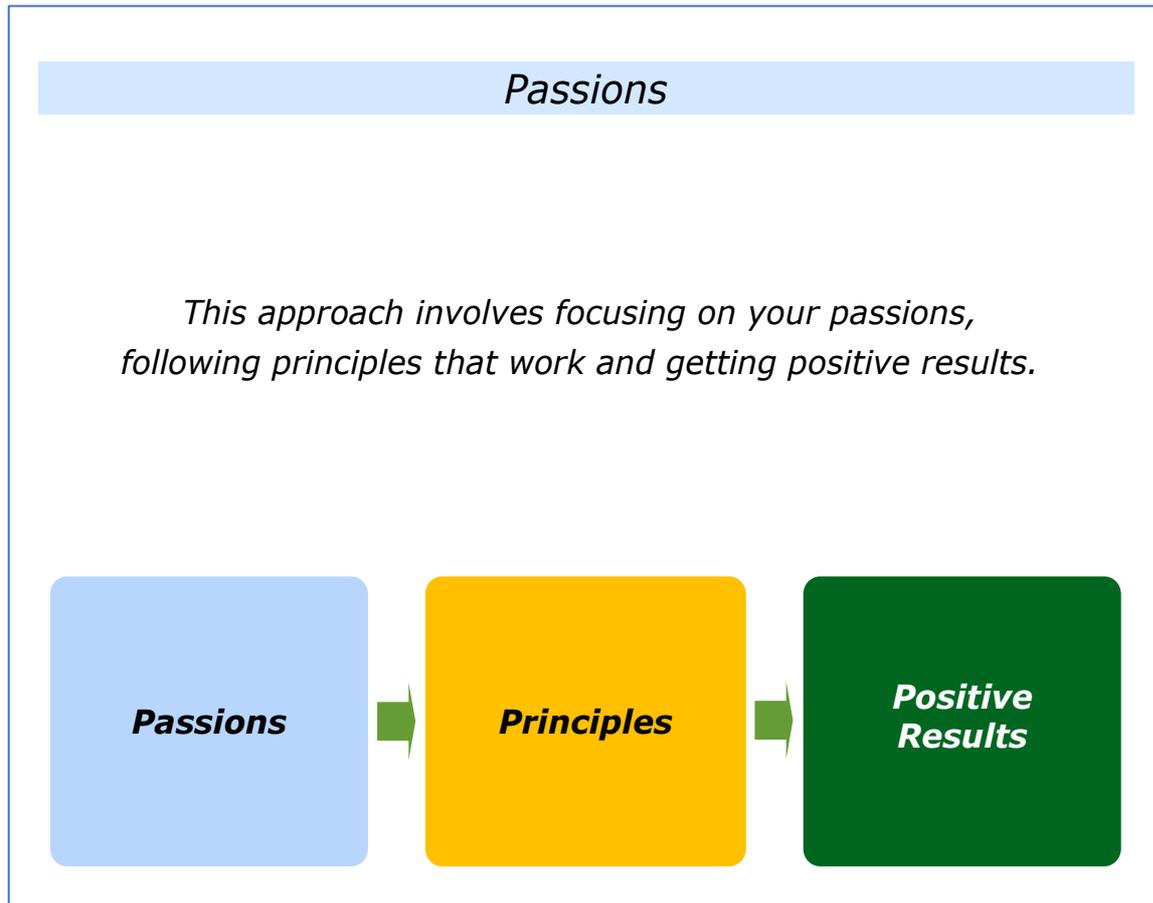
*The specific benefits of
doing these things will be:*

*

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*

The 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.

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 what works.

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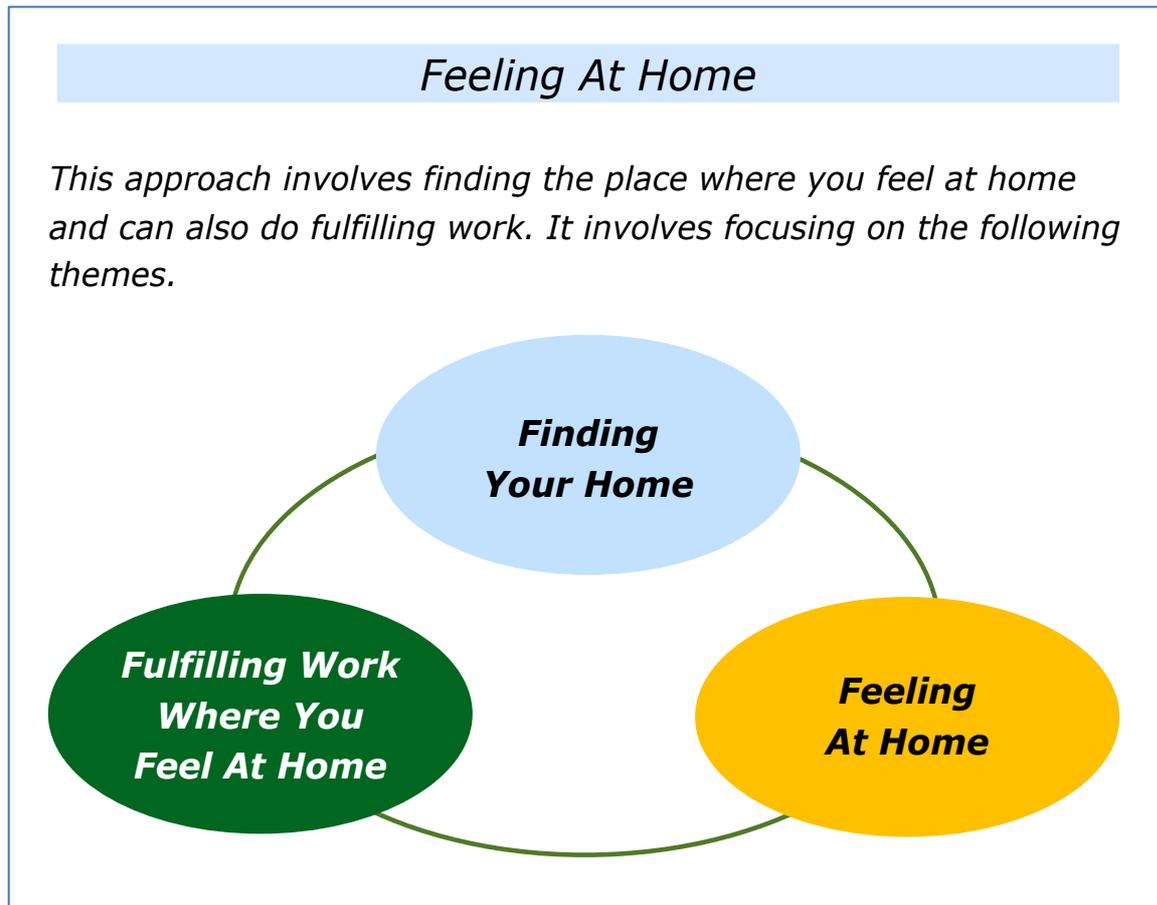
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Feeling At Home Approach



This approach involves finding the place where you feel at home. This could be a certain kind of activity, project, environment or other situation. It then involves doing fulfilling work in the place where you feel at home. Let's explore these themes.

Finding Your Home

Different people take different routes on the way towards finding where they feel at home. Here is how one person summarised his journey.

John – Helping Military Veterans To Transition To Civilian Work

I come from an army family but I was always more attracted to the medical and support sides of the military. These were topics I chose to specialise in at Sandhurst.

Maybe this was because, whilst believing in the importance of the military, I saw the effects of combat on people I came into contact with when growing up.

After Sandhurst I went into the Medical Support Service. This was both rewarding and challenging. During this time I also studied for counselling and HR qualifications, which proved useful later in my career.

After leaving the military I worked in a couple of big organisations but missed the camaraderie. I also wanted a greater sense of purpose in my work. It was then that I got lucky.

My wife is American and we were visiting her parents. My father-in-law said there were several US organisations that helped veterans to find rewarding work. He wondered if there was something similar in the UK.

Returning home I found an entrepreneur who had set-up such a social enterprise. It was mainly staffed by volunteers, but they wanted somebody to lead the organisation on a full-time basis.

The pay was not great but, after talking with my wife, I applied for the role of CEO. The other two main candidates were older than me but I got the role. The co-founder said that it was my hunger to do the role, plus my HR background, that were key factors.

That was three years ago. Since then we have managed to find roles for hundreds of veterans. Many of these have been in large projects that benefit the nation. Such roles suit military veterans who have transferable skills. They like to have a clear goal and apply their skills to deliver a mission that serves the nation.

I love my job. It matches my desire to serve and also to help others do satisfying work. Who knows what the future will bring, but for the moment I feel really happy in this role.

Looking at your own life, what are the activities you have explored to find the place where you can do fulfilling work? What did you learn from these experiences? At a certain point you may have taken the next step.

Feeling At Home

What are the places where you feel at home? What are the activities, projects or situations where you feel you were meant to be? Here are some of the things that people describe.

I feel at home when:

I am working in Accident & Emergency ... I am singing on stage ... I am facilitating a counselling session ... I am playing in my favourite position on the football pitch ... I am sailing on the high seas.

I am working in my garden ... I am teaching a class at University ... I am making a pitch for business ... I am doing live TV news reports ... I am helping leaders to clarify their future strategy.

How do you know when you may feel at home? Here are some of the characteristics.

You look forward to what you will be doing that day ... You feel in your element - at ease and yet able to excel ... You breathe more easily ... You helicopter above the situation whilst also being hands-on.

You feel in control and able to shape the situation ... You can see patterns quickly and predict what will happen ... You feel things are going slowly even though they may be going swiftly.

Imagine that you feel at home when doing a specific activity. You may then sometimes experience the next step.

Fulfilling Work Where You Feel At Home

Looking back, when have you done fulfilling work in a place where you felt at home? You may have done this when encouraging a person, teaching a class, refurbishing a house, leading a team or doing another activity.

What was the purpose of the work? What were the principles you followed? How did you translate these into action? What happened as a result? What did you learn by doing the fulfilling work?

Different people learn different things when exploring these questions. One senior leader in a company I worked with gave the following explanation.

"Looking back, I learned that I feel most at home when leading pioneering projects in a business. I love leading a team of people who are passionate about doing something that will improve life for their colleagues or customers."

"Bearing this in mind, I decided to step down from the leadership team in our business. I was fed up with the ongoing meetings and managing stakeholders who had conflicting agendas."

"I chose to lead a project on the tablet side of our business. The aim was to make the equipment more user friendly. Suddenly I felt more at ease."

"I was in a place where, within certain limits, we could invent the rules. The project proved successful and our tablet became the go-to choice for one of our national sports teams."

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a place – an activity, project or situation – where you will feel at home? How can you apply yourself in that situation and do fulfilling work?

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

Feeling At Home

The specific place – the activity, project or other situation – where I feel at home is:

*

The specific things I can do to fulfilling work in the place where I feel at home are:

*

*

*

The specific benefits of taking these steps will be:

*

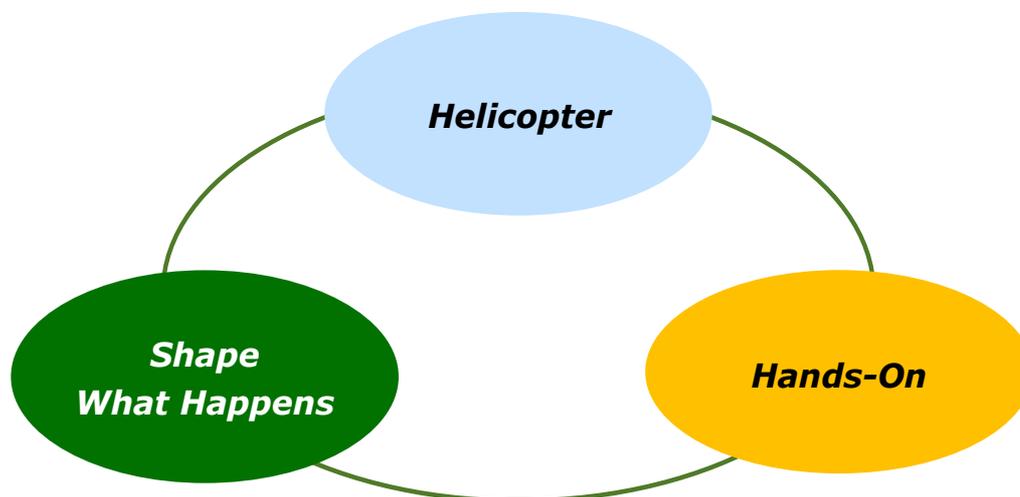
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The Helicopter And Hands-On Approach

Helicopter And Hands-On

Great workers sometimes focus on the specific activities where they are simultaneously able: a) to helicopter above the situation; b) to be hands-on; c) to shape what happens.



There are many ways to build on your strengths. One approach is to focus on the specific activities where you are simultaneously able:

To helicopter above the situation;

To be hands-on;

To then, when appropriate, shape what happens.

Great workers sometimes follow this path. They put themselves into situations where they see what is happening from above and, at the same time, they are fully engaged in the moment. They then focus on how to shape the situation to achieve success.

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."

Exceptions sports players report similar experiences. Seeming to hover above the situation, they take pictures of what is happening and see patterns. They then apply their skills to follow their chosen strategies and achieve success.

Where does something similar happen for you? You may do this when counselling a person, playing a sport or doing another activity. You may do it when solving a technical problem, managing a specific type of crisis or tackling a particular challenge.

Looking ahead, how can you put yourself into more of these situations in the future? How can you then use your skills to make certain things happen and achieve success? What will be the benefits of taking these step?

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

The Helicopter And Hands-On Approach

*The specific activity where I am
able to helicopter above the
situation and also be hand-on is:*

*

*The specific things I can do to pursue
this activity more in the future are:*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Creative Drive Approach

Creative Drive

*There are many ways to follow your creative drive.
One approach is to go through the following steps.*

- *You Can Find Your Creative Drive;*
- *You Can Follow Your Creative Drive;*
- *You Can Fulfil Your Creative Drive.*

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

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.

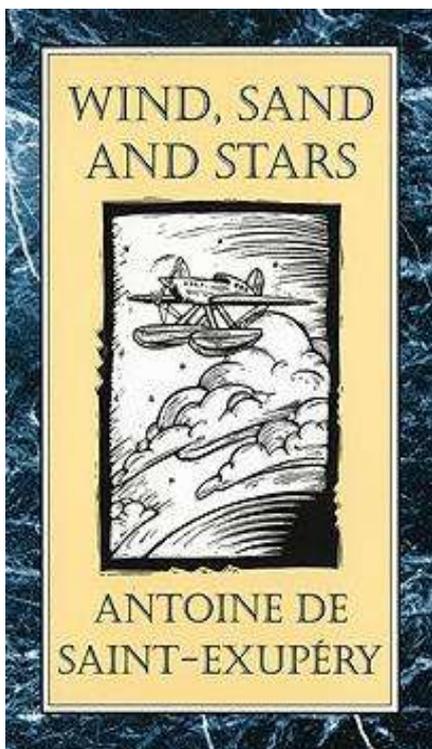
Everybody is an artist, everybody is creative, everybody has something special to give to the world. People can be encouraged to channel these gifts to help other people.

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.

You Can Find 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 find and feed your creative drive? 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 find and feed your creative drive? How can you do what works for you? How can you give your creative ideas time to incubate?

You Can Follow Your Creative Drive

There are many ways to be creative. One approach is to do something you care about and then focus on the following themes.

Clarity

This involves clarifying the real results you want to achieve.

Creativity

This involves following your chosen methods for being creative.

Concrete Results

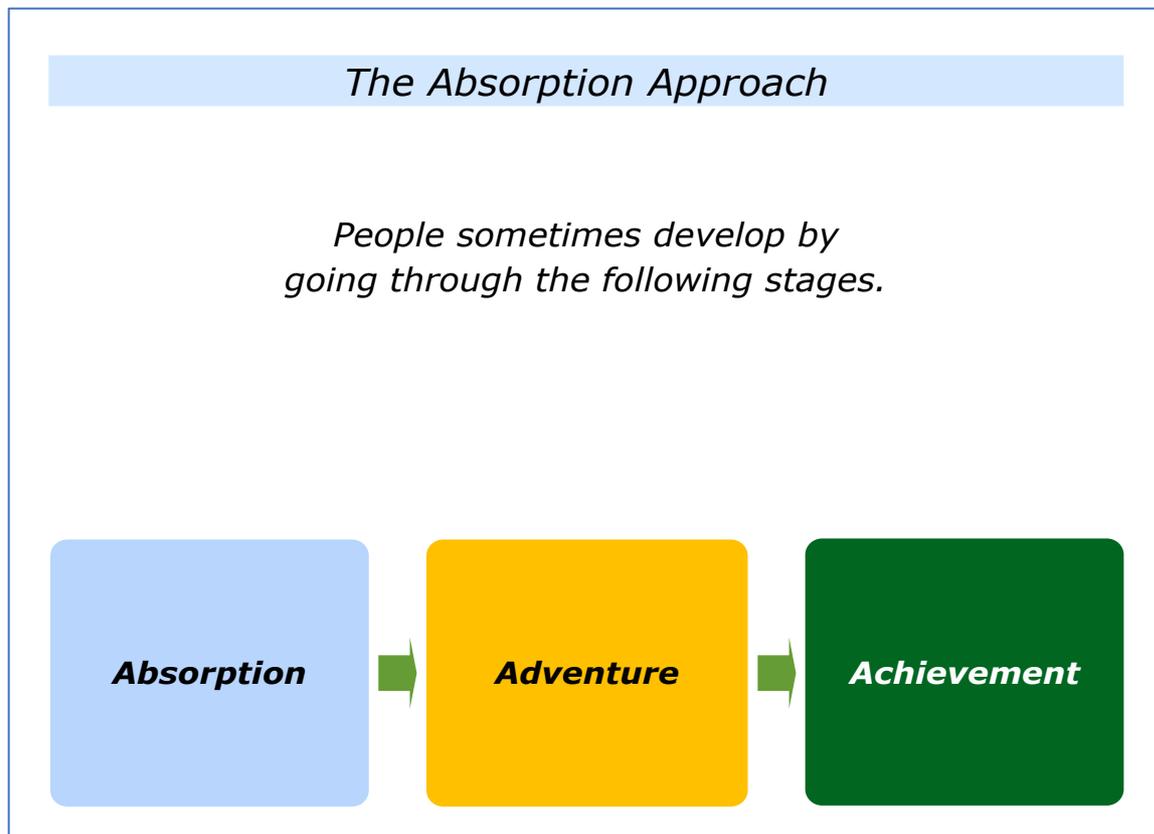
This involves doing your best to achieve the desired concrete results.

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. Let's start with one that people often follow when pursuing their passions or interests.



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?

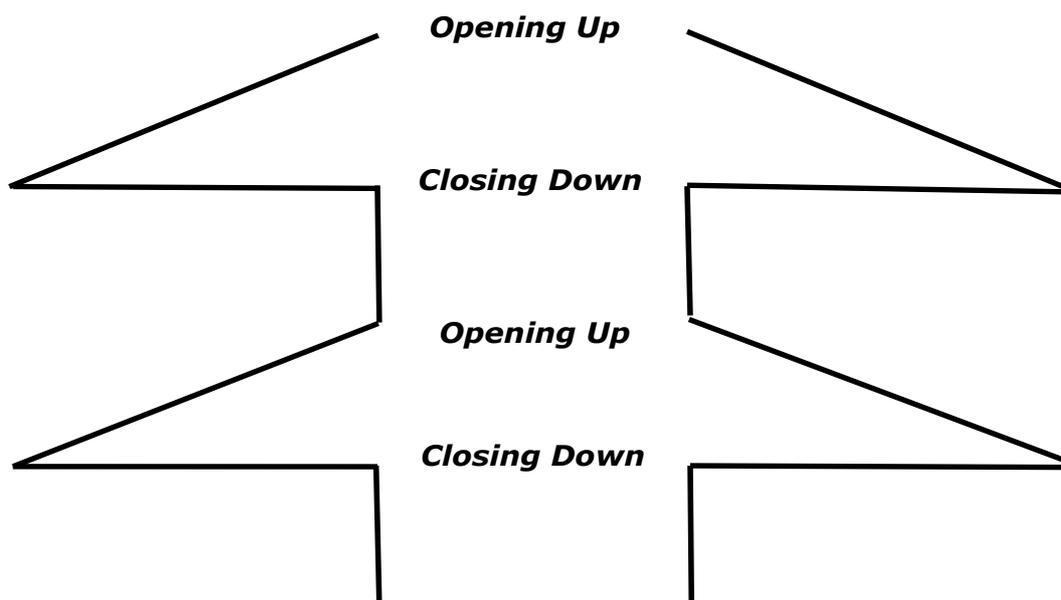
Many people love to explore, learn and adventure. Sometimes this can involve pursuing the following aspects of the creative process.

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.*

*You choose a theme you want to explore
and go through the following stages:*



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 ...

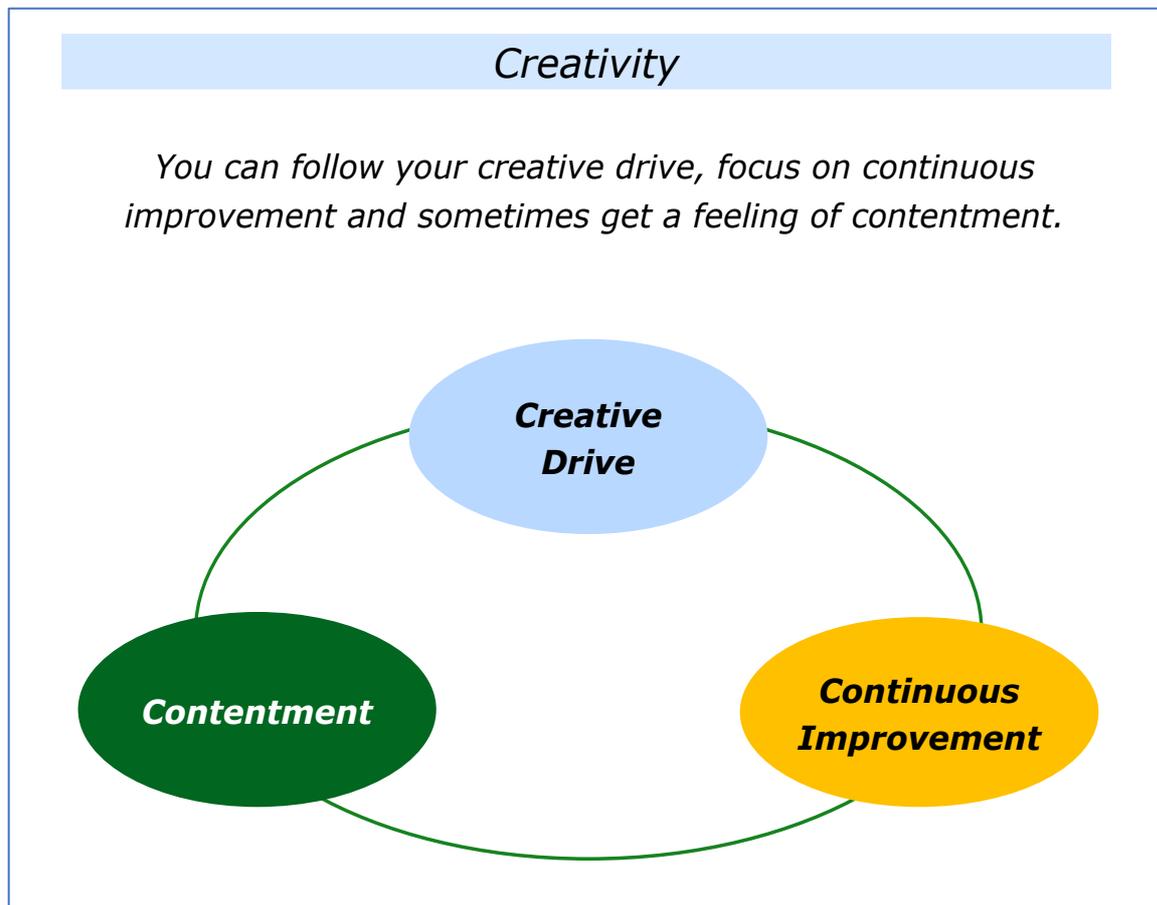
To produce three players every year who move from the Academy to the First Team ... To make television films that encourage people to care for animals ... To create a successful social enterprise ... To build and sell a pioneering company.

You Can Fulfil 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.

Different people take these steps in different ways. Some people follow their creative drive, focus on continuous improvement and sometimes get a sense of contentment.

Such people may pause for a while but then follow these steps again. They feel alive and find it fulfilling to keep following this circle. The journey is the goal and the goal is the journey.



How to take these steps? You will organise your time in your own way, but one model is similar to designing your perfect day. Let's explore this approach.

The My Creative Day Approach

Imagine you wanted to design your perfect creative day. What would it look like? Let's consider some of the themes it can be useful to explore when designing such a day.

When do you feel most creative? What are your prime times – the times of the day when you have most creative energy? How can you organise your day around these times?

What is the physical place where you feel most creative? This could be a certain part of the house or another place. How can you continue putting yourself in these places?

What are things that can trigger your creativity? You may get ideas when walking, exercising, listening to music or other situations. How can you continue doing some of these things?

You will have your own way of doing creative work, but here are some suggestions. You may wish:

To follow your chosen way to start the day – such as when to get up and do any practical tasks – and also focus on what you want to achieve that day;

To make good use of your prime times – the times of the day when you have most creative energy – and organise blocks of time when you can work during those times;

To follow your ritual for starting the work, follow your chosen rhythm and achieve small goals on the road to achieving the bigger goal;

To, when appropriate, rest and recharge your batteries – such as by going for a walk or doing other things - and then focus on what you want to do next;

To follow your successful pattern for finishing – such as one you have followed before to finish properly – then to flow, focus, finish and find fulfilment.

Let's return to your own life and work. 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 find my creative drive are:*

*

*

*

*The specific things I can do
to follow my creative drive are:*

*

*

*

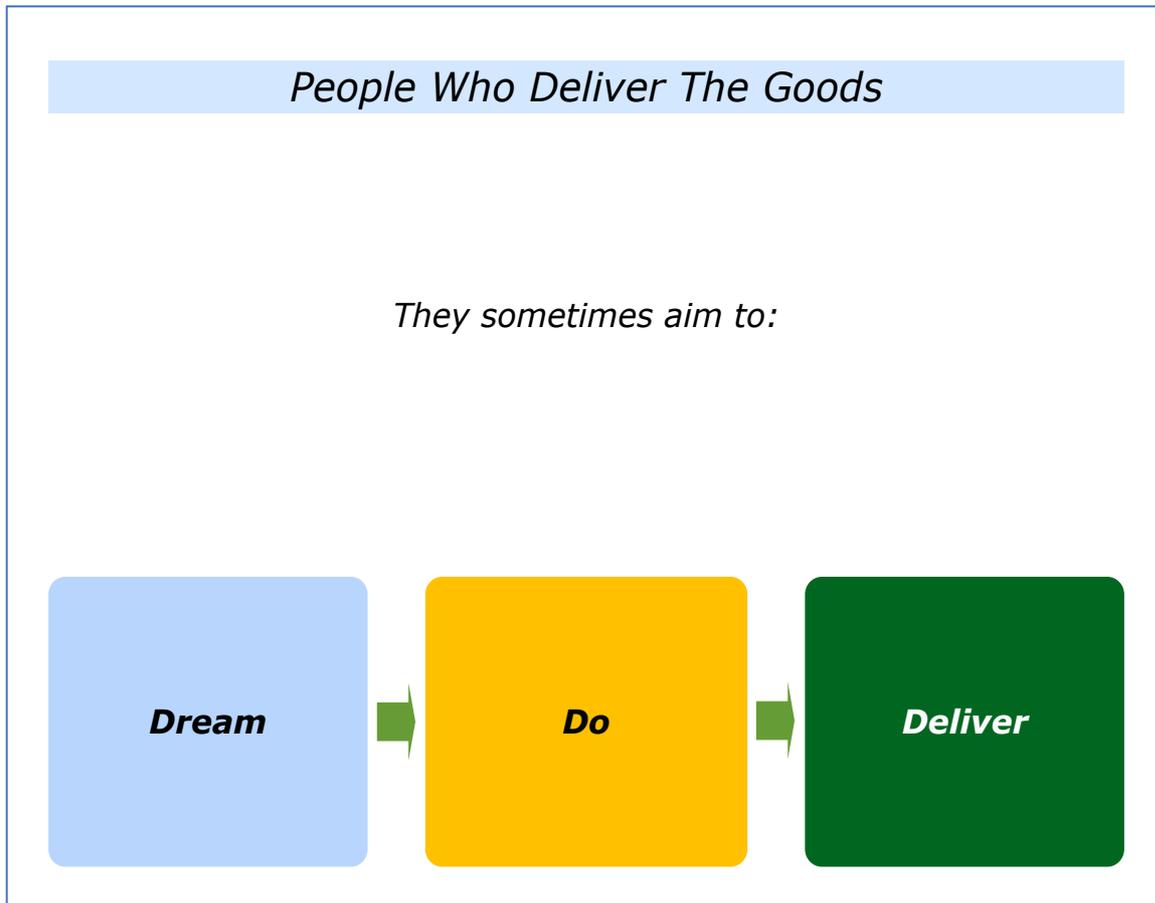
*The specific things I can do
to fulfil my creative drive are:*

*

*

*

The Dream, Do And Deliver Approach



Many people have dreams and some translate these into reality. Such people sometimes go through the stages of aiming to dream, do and deliver.

Looking back on your life, when have you focused on achieving a deliverable dream? You may have been aiming to climb a mountain, get a job, publish a book, complete a project or do another activity.

What research did you do before starting the journey? What did you do to increase the chances of success? How did you do your best to achieve the goal? What happened as a result of taking these steps?

People have dreams all the time. They may dream of winning the lottery, being happy, doing rewarding work, being famous or reaching another goal.

Some people explore many options and then focus on achieving a deliverable dream. Let's explore this theme.

Dream

Imagine that there are several goals you want to achieve. You may want to be a caring parent, improve your wellbeing, pursue a stimulating project or do another activity.

Considering all the things you want to do, you may want to focus on one specific goal. Bearing in mind what you can control, you may then aim to take the following steps:

To clarify the real results you want to achieve – this is the dream;

To rate the chance of success and how you can improve the chances of achieving the dream;

To clarify the results you believe it is possible to achieve and how you can do your best to achieve the dream.

It can be useful vital to the potential challenges. Bearing these things in mind, clarify the results you believe it is possible to achieve. You can then settle on the key strategies you can follow to achieve the picture of success.

Different people do such due diligence in different ways. Some use the following framework.

The Dream

The specific thing I want to do is:

*

The Dream

The real results I want to achieve are:

*

*

*

The Success Rating

Bearing in mind the things I can control and the potential challenges, the rating I would give regarding the chances of achieving success is:

_____ / 10

The specific things I can do to increase the chances of success are:

*

*

*

The Deliverable Dream

The specific results I believe it is possible to achieve are:

*

*

*

The specific strategies I can follow to do my best to deliver these results are:

*

*

*

Do

Imagine that you have done all your planning. You will then swing into action. When doing this it can be useful:

To keep following your chosen strategies and get some early successes – this helps to build confidence and momentum;

To keep maintaining high standards – this involves following good habits and doing the right things in the right way every day;

To keep reading reality and seeing what is happening – this involves building on what is working and focusing on areas for improvement.

You can aim to keep doing your best each day and encourage yourself on the journey. Different people do this in different ways. One approach is:

To clarify the successes you have achieved that day;

To clarify the specific things you want to do the next day and the successes you want to achieve;

To clarify how doing these will contribute towards achieving the long-term picture of success.

Different people work towards different goals. They may aim to help themselves, help other people or do both. They may do this as individuals or when working with other people. Let's look at one example.

The Action For Happiness movement aims to increase the amount of happiness in the world. Here is an introduction to its work.

Action For Happiness

Action For Happiness is a movement of people committed to building a happier and more caring society.

Many of our members form local groups to take action together. We have no religious, political or commercial affiliations and welcome people of all faiths (or none) and all parts of society.

We were founded in 2010 by Richard Layard, Geoff Mulgan and Anthony Seldon. Our patron is the Dalai Lama

We want to see a fundamentally different way of life - where people care less about what they can get just for themselves and more about the happiness of others.

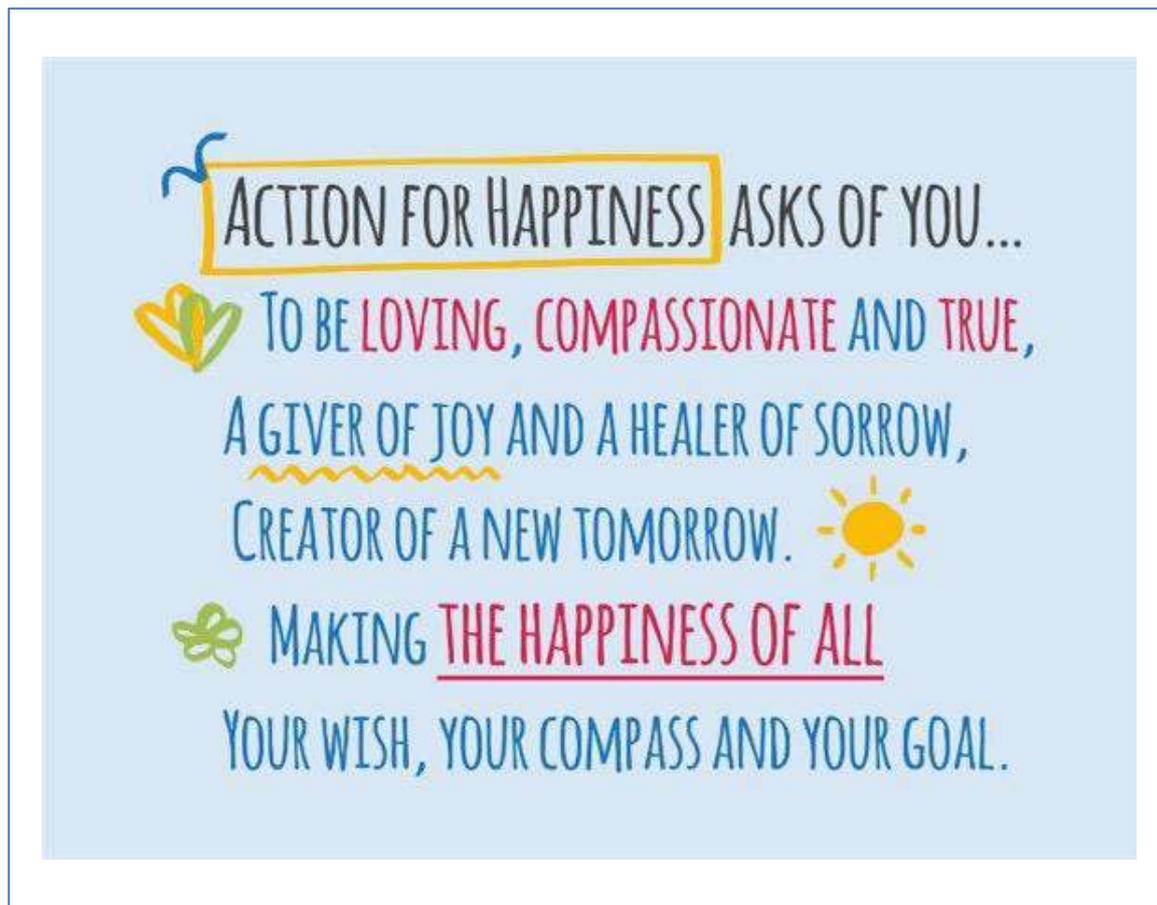
We bring together like-minded people from all walks of life and help them take practical action, drawing on the latest scientific research.

We are backed by leading experts from diverse fields including psychology, education, economics and social innovation.

Members of the movement make a simple pledge: to try to create more happiness in the world around them.

We provide ideas and resources to enable people to take action at home, at work or in their community.

Many of our members form local groups to take action together.



Deliver

Imagine that you are working towards your chosen goal. Bearing in mind what you can control, you can keep doing your best. You can maintain perspective and aim:

To recognise your achievements so far and then focus on the next steps towards achieving the goal;

To, when facing certain issues, buy time to think, explore your options and find solutions to challenges;

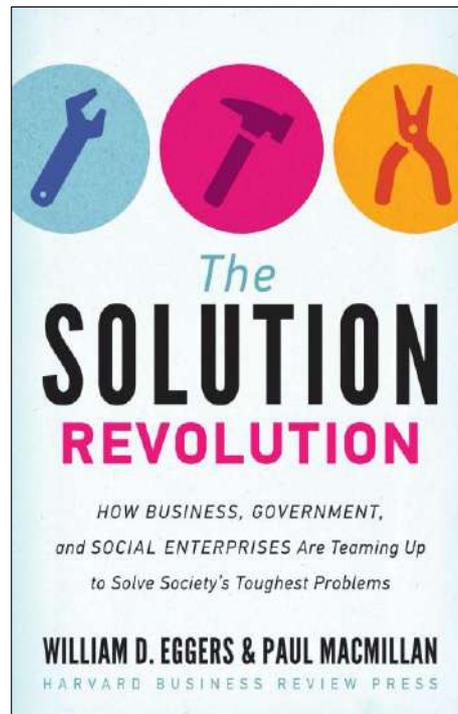
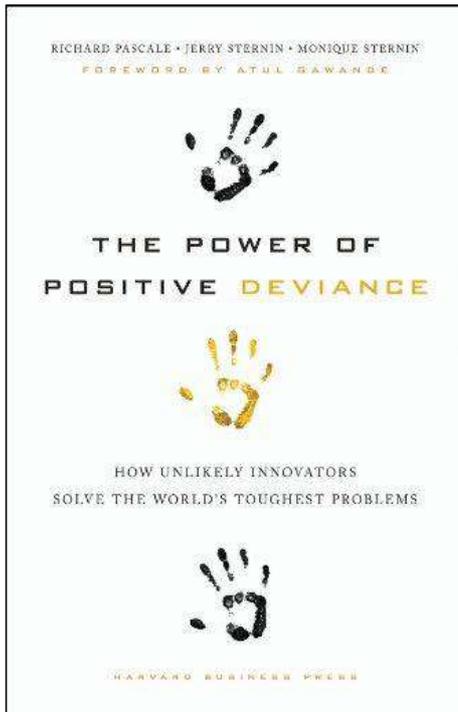
To follow your successful pattern for finishing and do your best to achieve the deliverable dream.

Different people work towards achieving different dreams. Today there are many websites, articles and books that describe the specific steps that people have taken to deliver certain dreams. Here is a selection of such resources.



About Pioneers Post: the global network for impact pioneers

Pioneers Post is the independent news network for the global impact community. We are the essential source of intelligence and insight for pioneers across the impact economy, from social entrepreneurs and impact investors, to changemakers working across business, civil society, philanthropy, government and public services.



Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to do your best to achieve a deliverable dream?

What may be the goal you want to achieve? How can you do to increase the chances of success? How can you then do your best to achieve the goal? 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 Dream, Do And Deliver Approach

*The specific situation where
I may want to follow this
approach in my own way may be:*

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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:

*

The specific things I do then – the principles I follow - to serve something greater than myself are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to follow these principles in the future are:

*

*

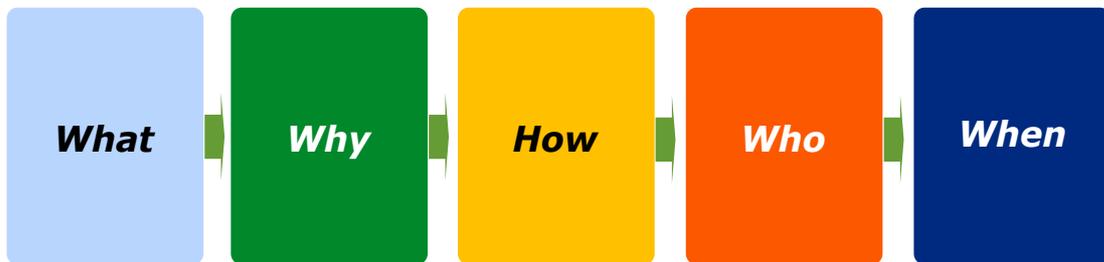
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The Strategic Questions Approach

Strategic Questions

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 Builder Rather Than Blamer Approach

<i>People Can Choose To Be Builders Or Blamers</i>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Builders</p> <p><i>They try to be builders.</i></p> <p><i>They take responsibility.</i></p> <p><i>They use positive language.</i></p> <p><i>They aim to behave in a balanced way.</i></p> <p><i>They put themselves in the background and want to help people to deliver brilliance.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Blamers</p> <p><i>They fall into being blamers.</i></p> <p><i>They don't take responsibility.</i></p> <p><i>They use negative language.</i></p> <p><i>They sometimes behave in a bipolar way.</i></p> <p><i>They put themselves in the foreground and want to be seen as brilliant.</i></p>

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:*

*

*The specific things I did then
to aim to be a builder were:*

*

*

*

*The specific things that happened
as a result of taking these steps were:*

*

*

*

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.



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.

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.

<i>Jim Collins – The Yin And Yang Of Level 5 Leaders</i>	
<p><i>Personal Humility</i></p> <p><i>They demonstrate modesty.</i></p> <p><i>They act as positive models and demonstrate high standards to inspire people</i></p> <p><i>They channel ambition into creating success for others rather than for themselves.</i></p> <p><i>They look in the mirror and their responsibility to improve when things go wrong.</i></p>	<p><i>Professional Will</i></p> <p><i>They create superb results.</i></p> <p><i>They show an unwavering resolve to do what is required to deliver long-term results.</i></p> <p><i>They focus on building an enduring great company and will settle for nothing less.</i></p> <p><i>They look out of the window – focusing on other people’s work – to apportion success.</i></p>

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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*

*

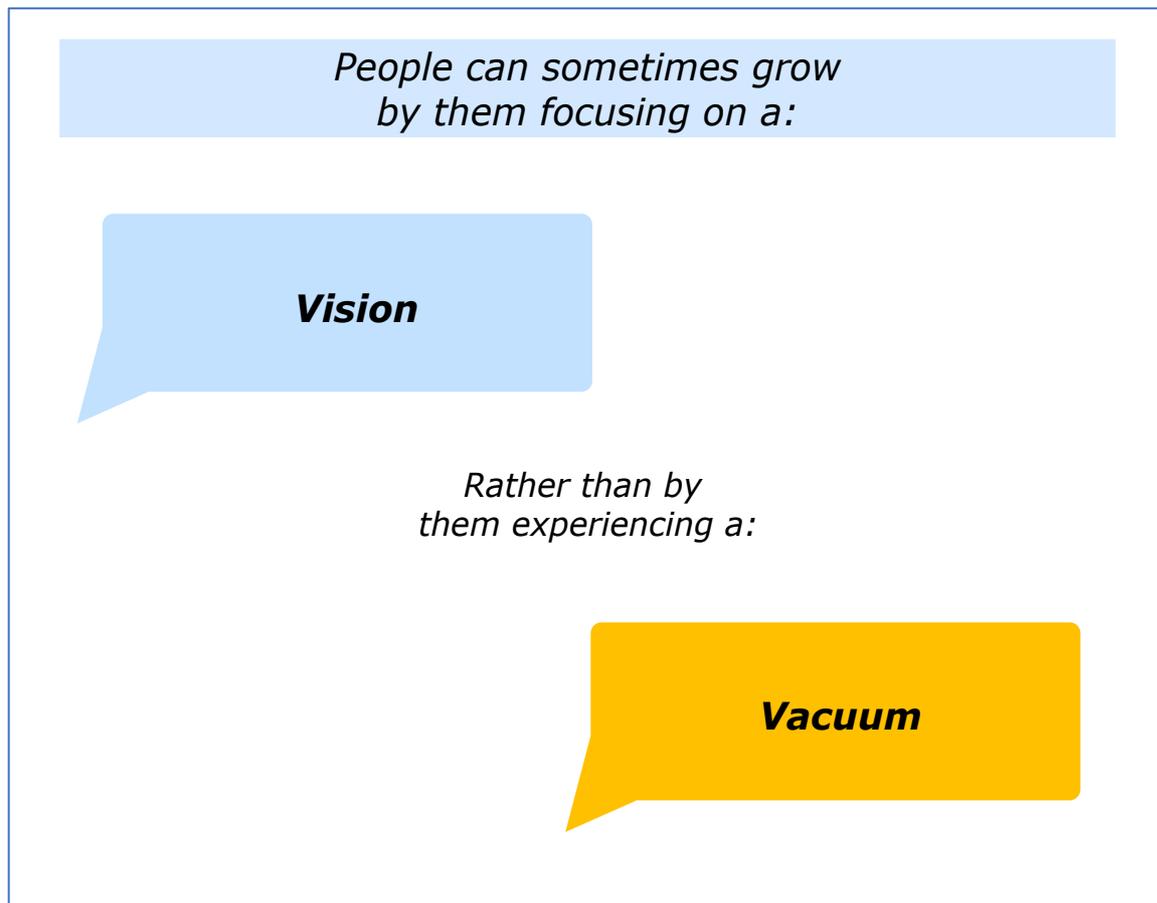
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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*

*

The Positive 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:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to help them to work towards the positive vision are:

*

*

*

The Support 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 Support 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 Support Contract

Can Do. The specific things I can do to help the person to achieve their goals are:

*

*

*

Can't Do. The specific things I can't do to help the person to achieve their goals are:

*

*

*

My Responsibilities. The specific things I see as my responsibilities in helping the person to achieve their goals are:

*

*

*

Their Responsibilities. The specific things I see as their responsibilities in working to achieve their goals are:

*

*

*

Clear Contracting. The specific things I can do to make clear contracts about working together to achieve their goals are:

*

*

*

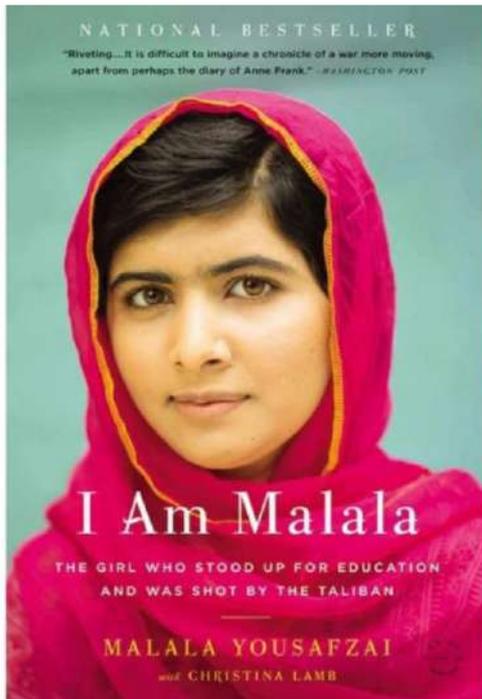
The specific things I can then do to do my best to help them to achieve their goals are:

*

*

*

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.

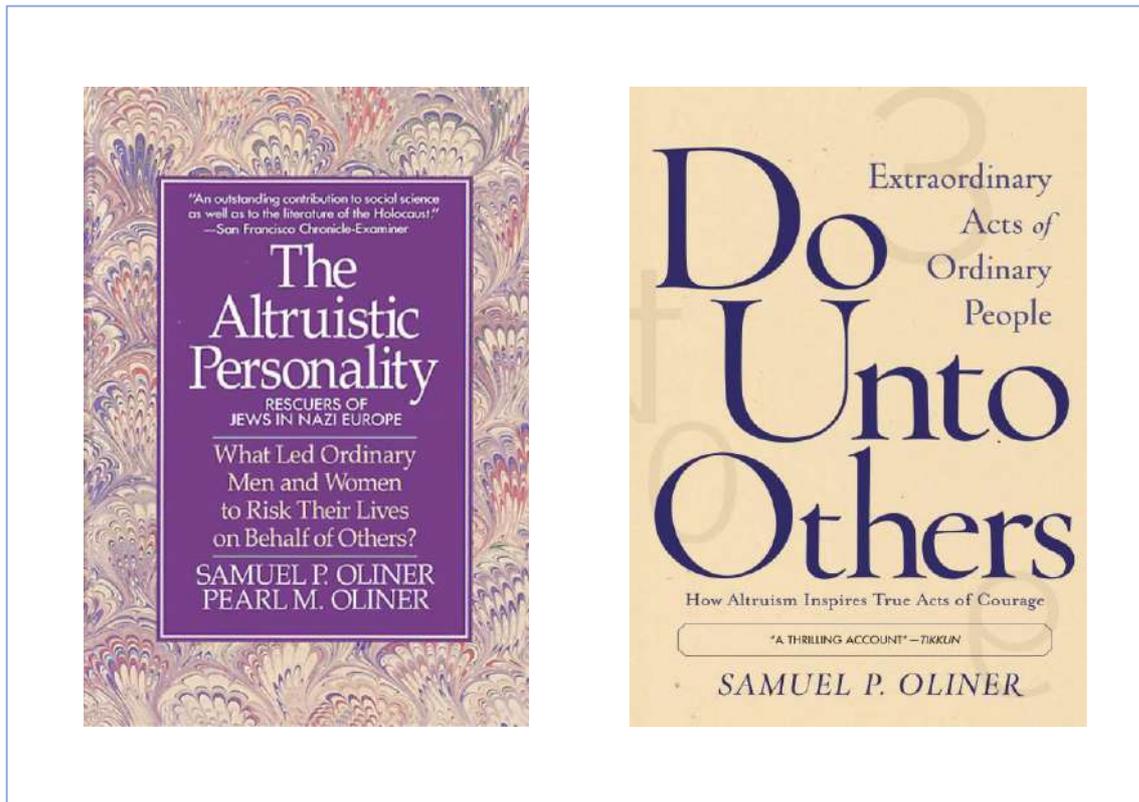
"I don't want to be thought of as the 'girl who was shot by the Taliban' but the 'girl who fought for education.' This is the cause to which I want to devote my life."

"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.

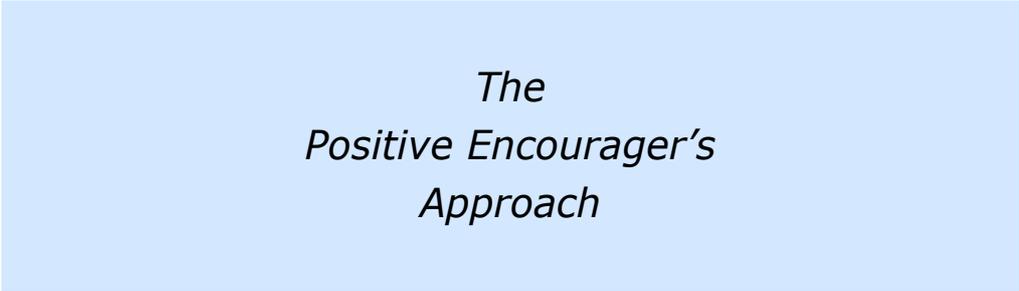
The Positive Encourager's Approach

There are many ways to help people. One approach is to be a positive encourager. This section has explored some of the ways it is possible to take this approach.

Looking at your own life, how would you rate yourself in terms of being a positive encourager? How would you rate yourself on scale 0-10? What can you do to maintain or improve the rating?

Different people focus on different themes when encouraging other people. These often depend on the situation where they are aiming to help them.

The following pages describe some of the questions that a professional may explore before meeting a person. You will, of course, have your own approach.



The Positive Encourager's 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 they may explore before the session. 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?*

Let's return to your own life and work. Here are some of the questions we explored earlier in this section.

On a scale 0-10, how would you rate yourself in terms of being a positive encourager? What can you do to maintain or improve the rating? 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 Positive Encourager's Approach

The rating I would give myself in terms of being a positive encourager is:

___ / 10

The specific things I can do maintain or improve the rating are:

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

*Continuing To
Do Positive Work*

Introduction

The Positive Approach

This approach starts by people clarifying their picture of success. It then involves them having a positive attitude, following their principles and working to achieve their picture of success.



There are many ways to live and work. This part of the book explores how people may follow the positive approach. Later we will look at how people can pursue this to do positive work that helps people or the planet.

The approach starts by people clarifying their picture of success. It then involves them having a positive attitude, following their principles and working to achieve their picture of success.

The approach can be followed by individuals, teams and organisations. Let's explore how some people translate it into action.

They Clarify Their Picture Of Success

The approach starts by people clarifying their goals. A person may do this by asking the following questions.

What are my goals? What are the real results I want to achieve? What is the picture of success? What will be the benefits of achieving these goals? What will be happening that will show I have achieved the goals.

A team or organisation will ask similar questions but translate these into achieving their specific aims. They may say, for example:

What are our goals? What are the real results we want to achieve? What is our picture of success? What will be the benefits – for all the various stakeholders - of achieving these goals? What will be happening that will show we have achieved the goals?

Imagine that a person, team or organisation has clarified their picture of success. They may then focus on how to achieve their aims. This sometimes involves them focusing on the following themes.

They Have A Positive Attitude

People can choose their attitude in situations. They can choose to be positive or negative, to take responsibility or avoid responsibility, to be creators or complainers.

Great workers sometimes choose to be positive realists. They have a positive attitude but are also good at reading reality. They also aim to build on what they can control and manage what they can't.

Such people sometimes ask themselves the following questions. They then do their best to achieve their picture of success.

How can I continue to have a positive attitude? How can I build on what I can control? How can I encourage other people? How can I perform superb work? How can I do my best to achieve the picture of success?

Good leaders are often positive and predictable. They aim to create an encouraging environment in which self-motivated people can perform at their best.

Such leaders aim to follow the right strategy with the right people in the right way. They sometimes ask the following questions.

What are the kinds of people I want in the team? What are the attitudes I want them to demonstrate? How can I make sure they are positive, professional and want to achieve peak performance?

How can I communicate the purpose, principles and picture of success? How can I give people the chance to decide if they want to opt in? How can I put the right people in the right places?

How can I build on their strengths? How can I make clear contracts about their best contributions? How can I make sure they understand their part in working to achieve the picture of success?

Imagine that a person, team or organisation has a positive attitude and then move into action. This sometimes involves them focusing on the following theme.

They Follow Their Principles

Great workers often aim to follow certain principles in their work. Different people may follow different principles. Here are some that people may mention when describing their approach.

Principles – The principles I aim to follow in my work are:

To build on my strengths, follow strategies that work and help people to achieve success ... To encourage, educate and enable people to achieve their goals ... To do work that helps people to improve their health, hope and happiness.

To do work that is enjoyable, excellent and sometimes even extraordinary ... To do work that I believe in, keep doing the basics and, when appropriate, add the brilliance ... To follow my passion, be professional and deliver peak performances.

To provide great service, find solutions to challenges and pass on knowledge that helps people to achieve their goals ... To help people to, as far as possible, find win-win solutions ... To be positive, do positive work and help to build a positive planet.

Good leaders communicate the work place's purpose, principles and picture of success. Many organisations have the same purpose. They may describe this in different language, but their main purpose is often:

To use their strengths to do superb work that helps all its stakeholders to achieve success.

Good leaders communicate the principles they want people to follow to achieve the purpose. They believe in building a principles driven – rather than personality driven - work place. People can then keep referring to these principles when making decisions.

The principles that companies may follow, for example, may vary but they often focus on the three Ps. These are Performances (including profits), Products (including services) and People. They may therefore encourage people to aim:

To deliver great performances ... To provide great products ... To create a great work place for our people.

Different leaders may express these principles in different ways. One company leader, for example, encouraged it people to do superb work that aimed to produce:

Wins for our company, wins for our customers and wins for our people.

Different leaders also communicate the principles in different ways. Some take the following approach. They gather people together and, in their own way, give people the following messages.

The Purpose

*The purpose of our organisation –
the specific thing we want to do – is:*

** To ...*

The Principles

*The principles we aim to follow to pursue our
purpose – and the reasons for these - are:*

** To ...*

For example ...

** To ...*

For example ...

** To ...*

For example ...

The Picture Of Success

The specific things we want to achieve by ... are:

* *To ...*

For example ...

* *To ...*

For example ...

* *To ...*

For example ...

The Positive Benefits

*The benefits of achieving these results
– for all the various stakeholders – will be:*

* *To ...*

For example ...

* *To ...*

For example ...

* *To ...*

For example ...

The Practice

Finally, it will be important to keep focusing on the principles.

The way you translate these principles into practice 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 practice supports the principles and contributes toward achieving the purpose.

Bearing this in mind, 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.

Imagine that a person, team or organisation is following their principles. This sometimes involves them then focusing on the following theme.

They Work To Achieve Their Picture Of Success

Different people follow different ways to work towards their goals. Some individuals take the following routes. They may aim:

To follow their chosen strategies, do superb work and do their best to achieve success;

To follow their rhythm, demonstrate relaxed relentlessness and deliver the desired results;

To be positive, do positive work - that helps people or the planet - and deliver positive results

To aim to flow, focus, do fine work, finish and – as a by-product – find fulfilment;

To maintain consistently high standards, deliver the desired concrete results and add that touch of class.

Good leaders are often positive, predictable and enable people to achieve peak performance. They create an encouraging environment and make clear contracts with people about their contributions towards achieving the goals.

Such leaders then manage by outcomes rather than by tasks. They keep encouraging their people to focus on the outcomes and give them the support to do the job. Different leaders do this in different ways. They may aim;

To keep reminding people of the purpose, principles and picture of success.

To put people in the places where they play to their strengths, perform superb work and make their best contributions to achieving the goals;

To encourage people to keep focusing on the principles when making decisions and doing the daily work;

To produce success stories that show when people have followed the principles and done superb work;

To focus on continuous improvement by building on what people are doing well and tackling areas for improvement to achieve the goals.

There are many ways to live life. One approach is for people to be positive, follow their principles and aim to achieve the picture of 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 Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

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

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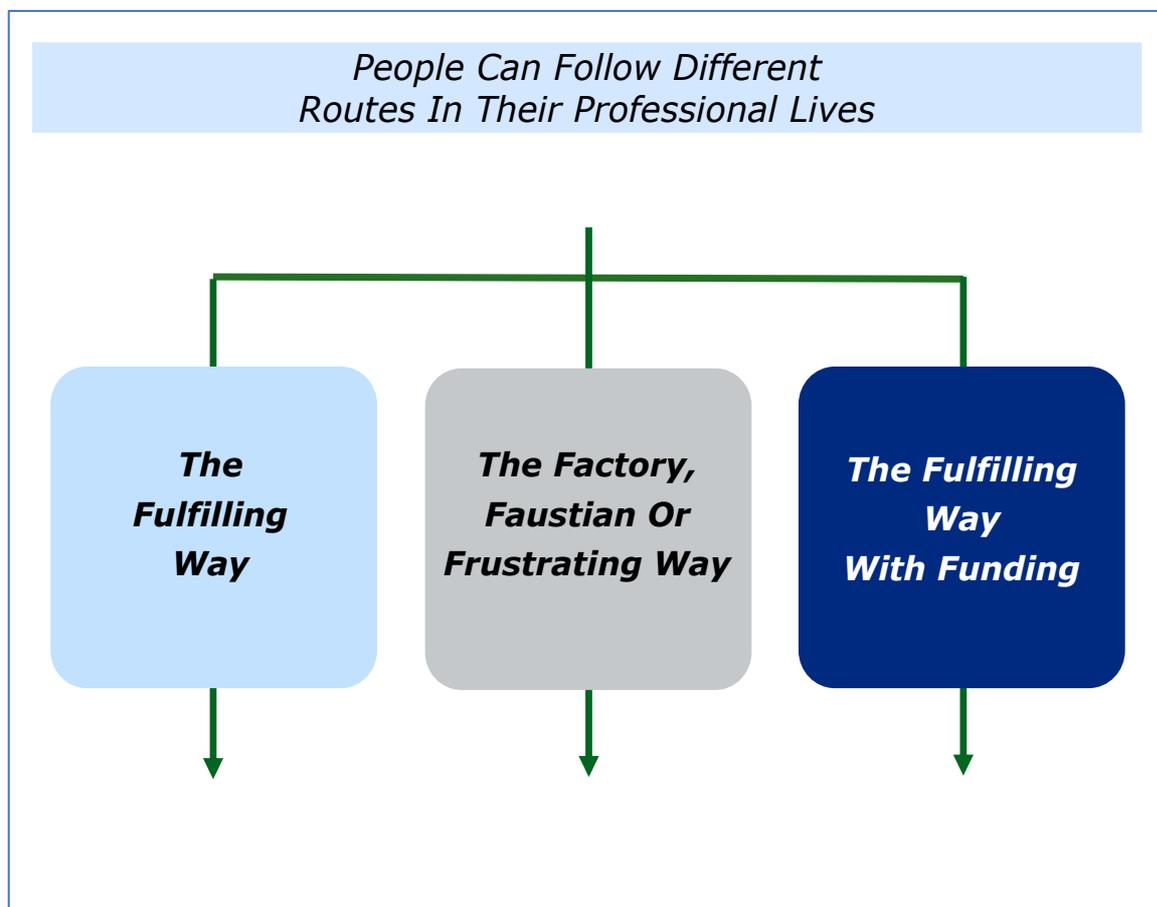
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The following pages explore many ways that people may do positive work. They also describe positive models and practical tools you can use to follow this approach in your own way. Let's explore these themes.

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, Faustian Or Frustrating Way

Some people follow The Factory Way 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.

Some people follow The Faustian Way. They 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.

Some people follow The Frustrating Way. They 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.

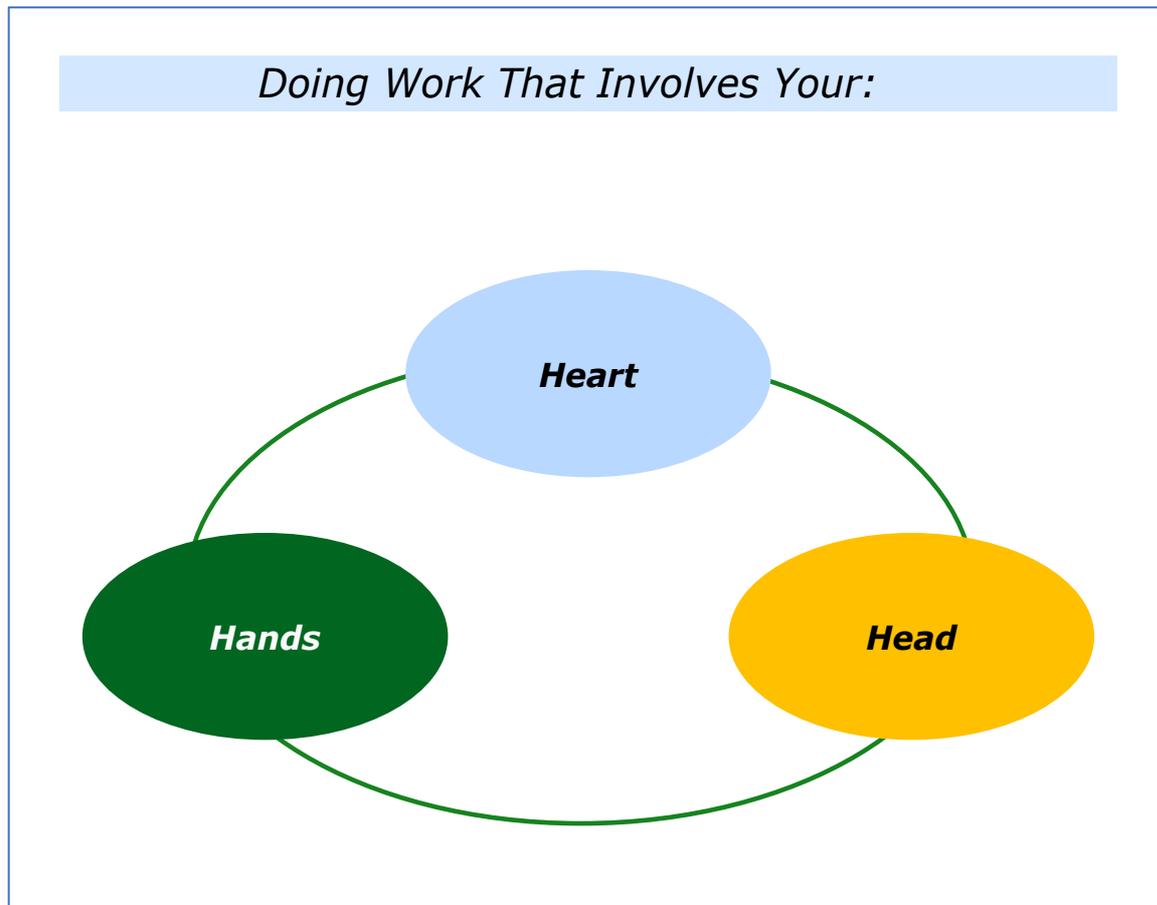
Some people find their own way to do more fulfilling work. Sometimes this may be an activity they do to the side of their day job. This can feed their soul, but they long for something more.

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 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."

The heart, head and hands approach can also be used when making decisions about the road you want to take in the future. When looking ahead, you can ask yourself the following questions.

Heart

What does my heart want to do? What is the route it wants me to take in the future? What may be the pluses and minuses of pursuing this route? How could I build on the pluses and manage the minuses?

Head

What does my head tell me about the key strategies I could follow to achieve success? Bearing in mind what I can control, on a scale 0-10, how would I rate the chances of success?

Hands

What is the kind of work I will need to do to achieve the goals? What are the strategies I will need to pursue? What are the skills I may need to demonstrate myself? What are those that I may need to buy in?

Bearing all these things in mind, on a scale 0-10 how motivated do I feel to pursue this route?

Let's return to your own life and work. What may be specific activity where you feel you are using your heart, head and hands? How can you pursue this activity in the future? What will be the benefits of taking this route?

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

*

*

*

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:*

*

*

*Builder. The specific activities
where I enjoy being a builder are:*

*

*

*Craftsman. The specific activities
where I enjoy being a craftsman are:*

*

*

*Architect, Building And Craftsman. The
specific activities where I sometimes
enjoy combining all these approaches are:*

*

*

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.

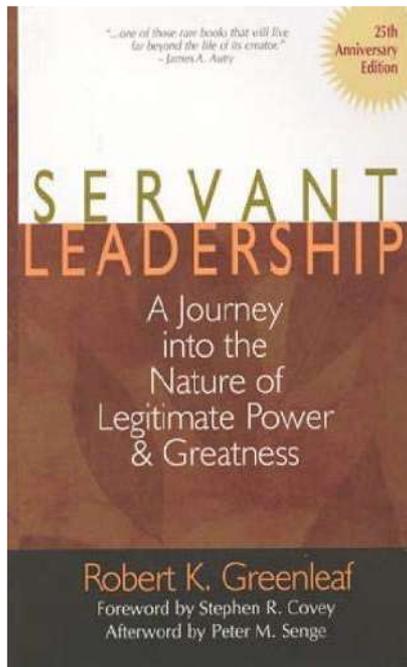
I was barely 17 years old. Though there were clear similarities between my recent experience in a public school boarding-house and life with 50 delinquents in a secure unit, my sense of panic was held at bay only by my sense of shock.

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.

This approach sometimes involves serving something greater than yourself. Different people aim to serve in different ways. Robert Greenleaf's work, for example, had a profound effect on helping people to see the leader's role as that of servant. He said that:

Servant leadership begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.



Such leaders focus on serving a mission rather than their own self-interest. Some go the following route.

They serve something greater themselves - such as a cause;

They attract people who also want to serve the cause;

They serve the people who want to serve the cause and do their best to help them succeed.

Great leaders often see themselves as serving a purpose, cause or other kind of mission. This approach stretches into many fields. Donovan Campbell, author of *The Leader's Code*, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran wrote:

So what does the military really teach about leadership? Put simply, it teaches a servant-leadership model.

In simplest terms, servant-leadership teaches that a leader exists to serve a mission first, their teams second, and themselves a distant third. Leaders understand what they are doing and why they are doing it.

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 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:*

*

*

*

*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:

*

*

*

The specific reasons why I feel on dangerous ground in these situations are:

*

*

*

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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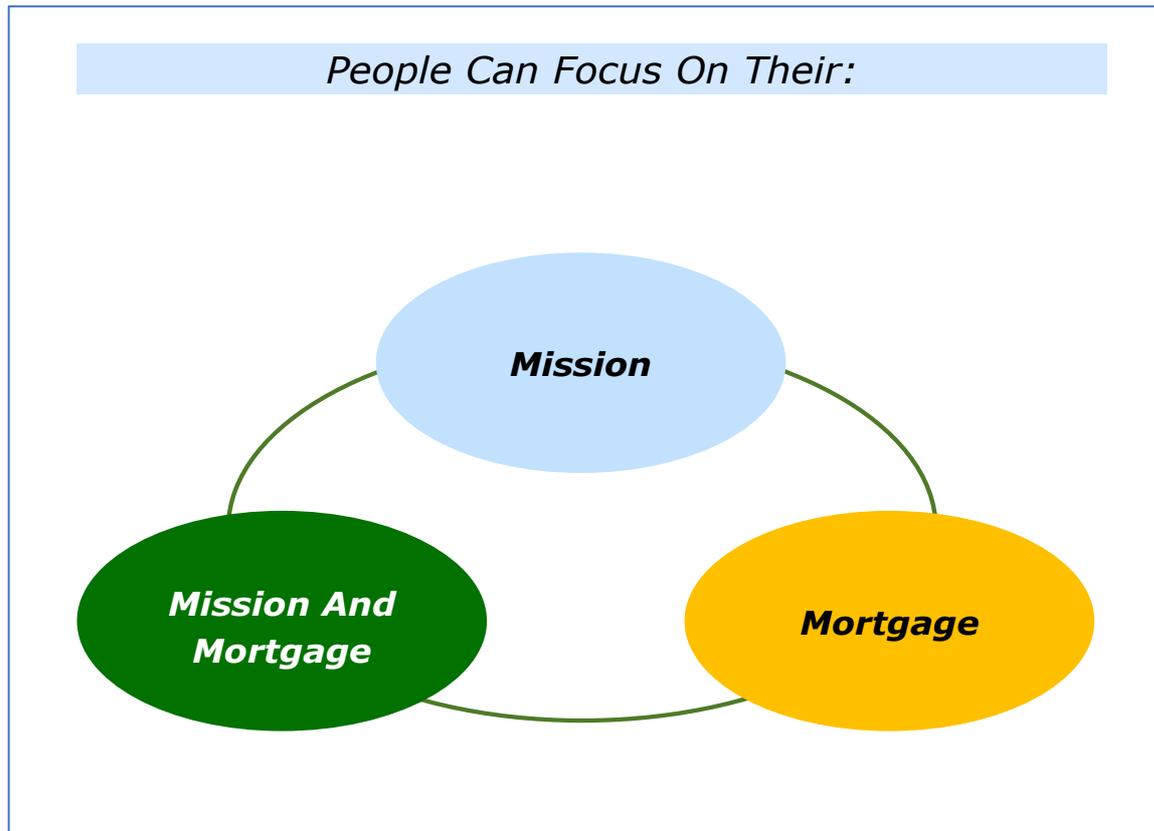
*The specific things I can do to deal
with any dangerous ground are:*

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The 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:*

*

*

*

*The specific steps I can take towards
doing some of those things now are:*

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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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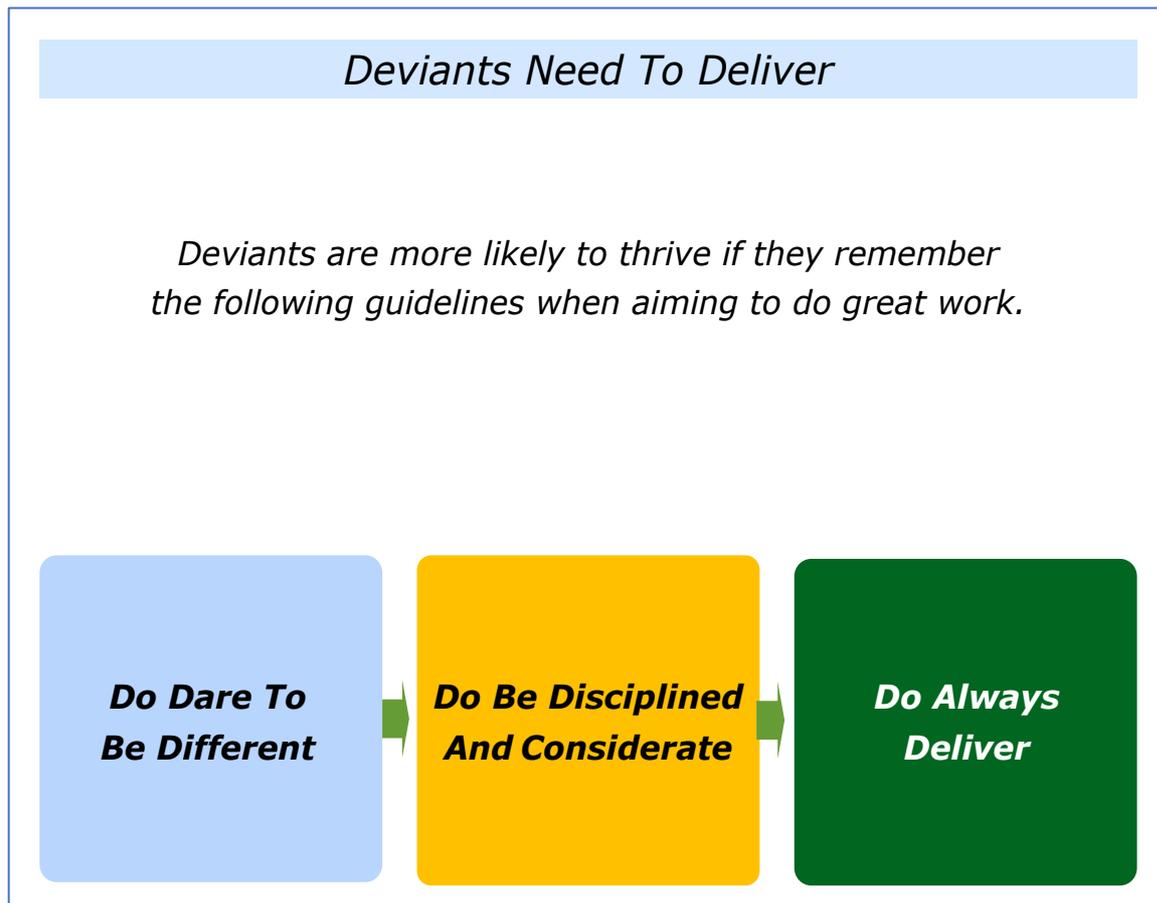
The specific things I can do to get the right balance between pursuing my mission and paying my mortgage are:

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*

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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 Approach

*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:*

*

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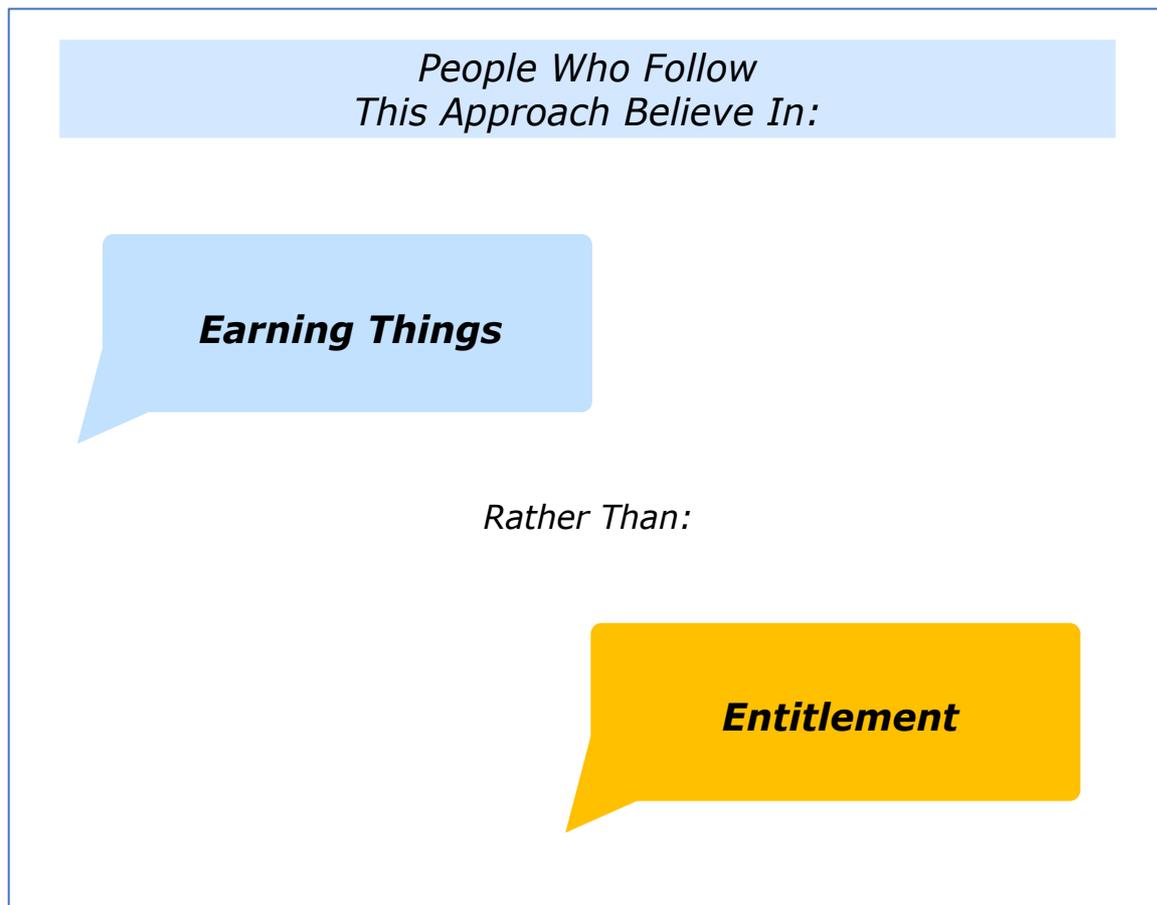
*The specific things that may
happen as a result may be:*

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The Earning Things Rather Than Entitlement Approach



Great workers believe in earning things rather than being entitled to things. They believe in following this ethic whilst also realising they may not always reap the rewards.

Different people follow this approach in different ways. One model is to focus on a specific activity where they have the ability to deliver excellence. They aim to earn things, apply their expertise and continue to evolve. They then do their best to deliver excellence.

Such workers keep returning to the theme of earning things. This is at the heart of what they do. They love to throw themselves into the work and apply their knowledge to deliver success. They don't like to get something for nothing.

They may spurn the idea of earning money from shares, for example, because they prefer to earn it through their own efforts. They have the ethic of earning things on the way to delivering excellence. Let's explore some of the steps they take along the way.

Enjoyment

Great workers focus on the specific activities that give them positive energy and where they can also perform superb work. They focus on those where:

They are in their element – at ease and yet able to excel ... They see the destination quickly – they go 'A, B ... and then leap to Z' ... They have a track record of finishing.

Such workers look forward to doing the work. They often enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal. They also get a creative high from doing their best and achieving their picture of success.

Earning Things

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 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.

Such workers have an almost spiritual view of the importance of earning things. They believe it is vital to put in the hours required to develop their craft. They see themselves as lifetime apprentices who will never become masters.

Such people believe in the importance of applying their gifts in practise to earn money. They do not believe in earning money from shares or other

people's labours. They want to apply their gifts to help people in real-life situations and enable them to achieve success.

Expertise

Great workers often have natural expertise in the activities in which they excel. They have a feeling 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.

They do things that seem simple to them but to others seem difficult. Sometimes they do not realise they have such a gift. One person 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."

Evolution

Great workers want to keep evolving and adding to expertise. This is a habit that many of them have developed over the years.

Such workers have often chosen to start at ground level. Somebody who wants to learn about helping people, for example, may work as a volunteer at a homeless shelter, children's home, hospice or a hospital.

They want to get the experiences into their body and bones rather than just into their brain. They want to do work that involves the heart, head and hands. They believe in getting the grounding right before aiming to do great work.

Such workers love to expand their expertise. They then aim to apply it by going through the stages of awareness, application and achievement. They want to keep evolving and 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; c) maybe even extraordinary. Sometimes they do work that goes into another dimension and gives people a positive memory for life.

Some organisations bear these things in mind when recruiting people. They look for people who have a track record of believing in earning things rather than in entitlement. They then encourage these people to use their expertise to help the team to achieve excellence.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a specific activity where you want to follow the earning rather than entitlement approach? How can you follow this in your own way?

How can you focus on the specific activity you enjoy? How can you go through the process of earning things, applying your expertise and continuing to evolve? How can you do your best to deliver excellence?

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

The Earning Things Approach

The specific activity where I want to follow this approach in my own way is:

*

The specific things I can do then to focus on doing what I enjoy, earning things, applying expertise, evolving and delivering excellence 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 Principles Approach Rather Than The 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.

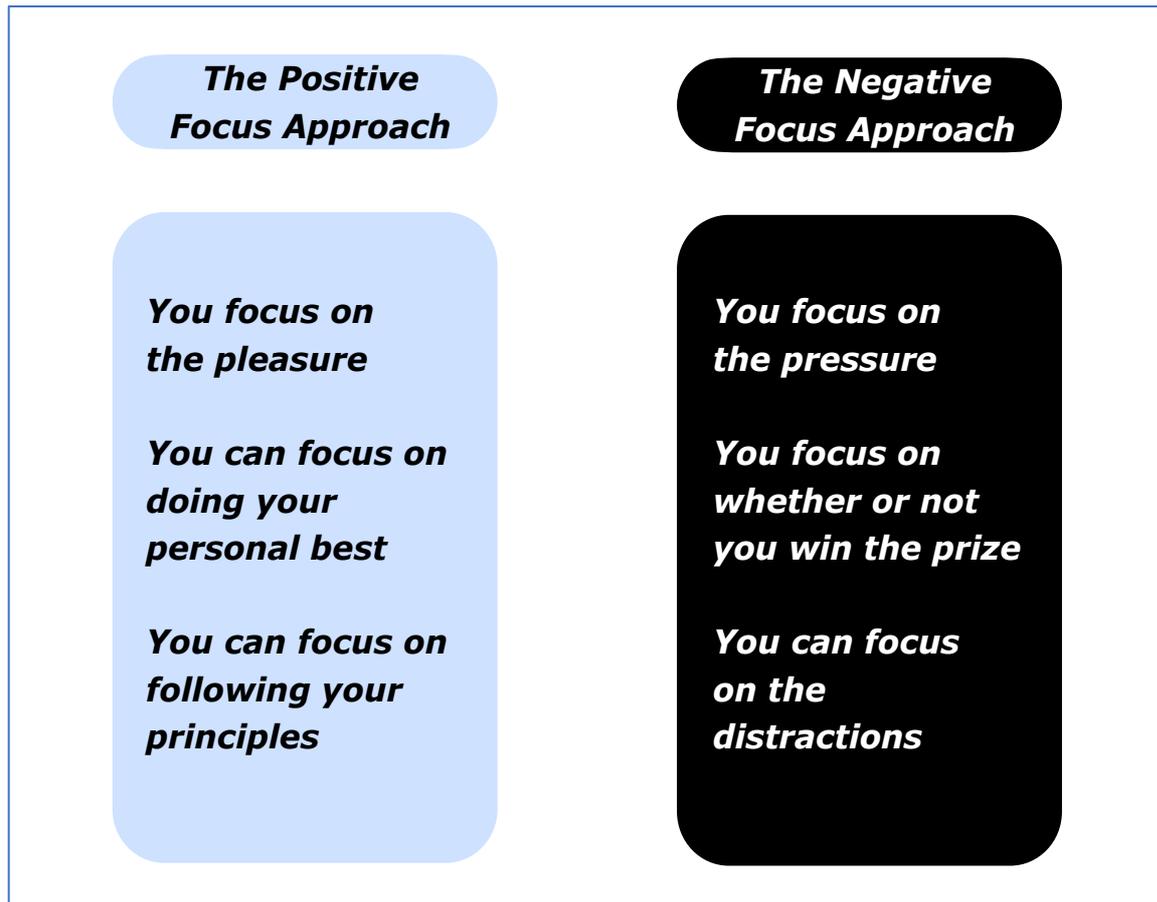
Some people spend a lot of time worrying about getting prizes. They worry about whether or not they will get promotion, gain status or be seen as successful.

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.

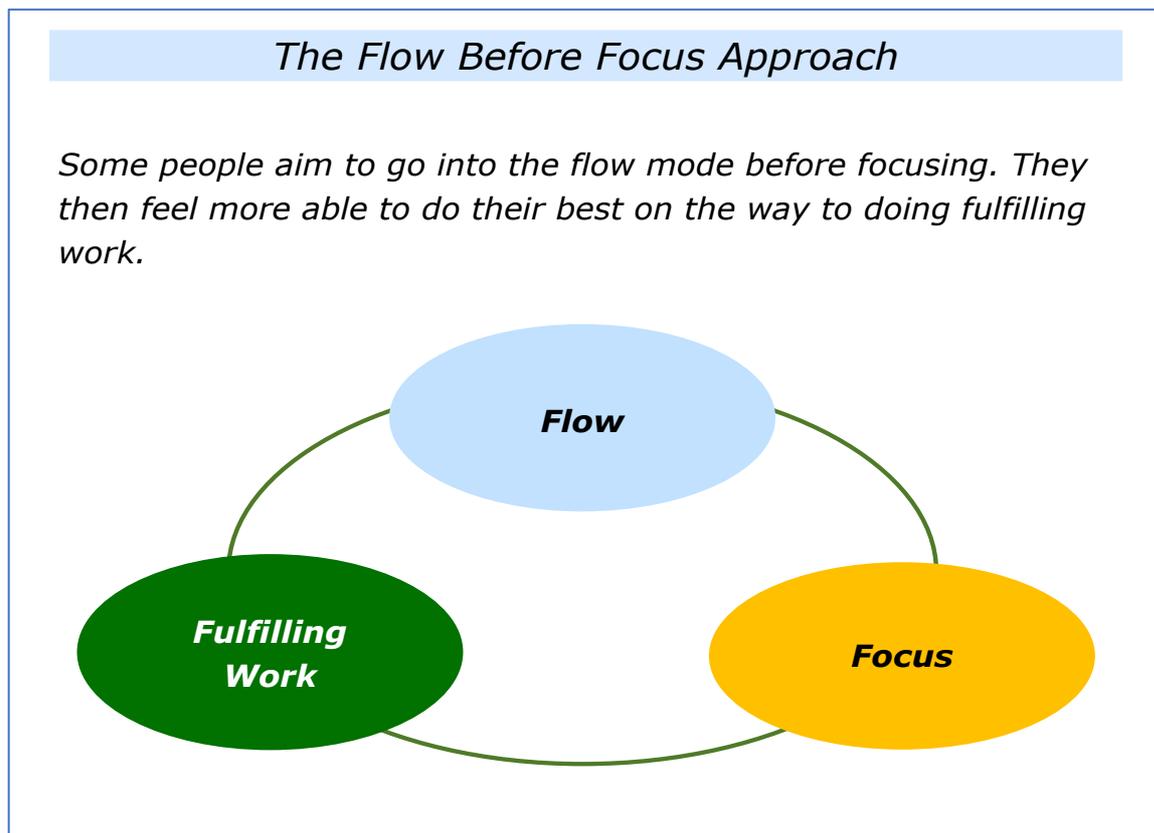
Matthew had previously followed this approach. During a key game, however, he began dissecting his strokes and became distracted. He describes this in the following way.

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.



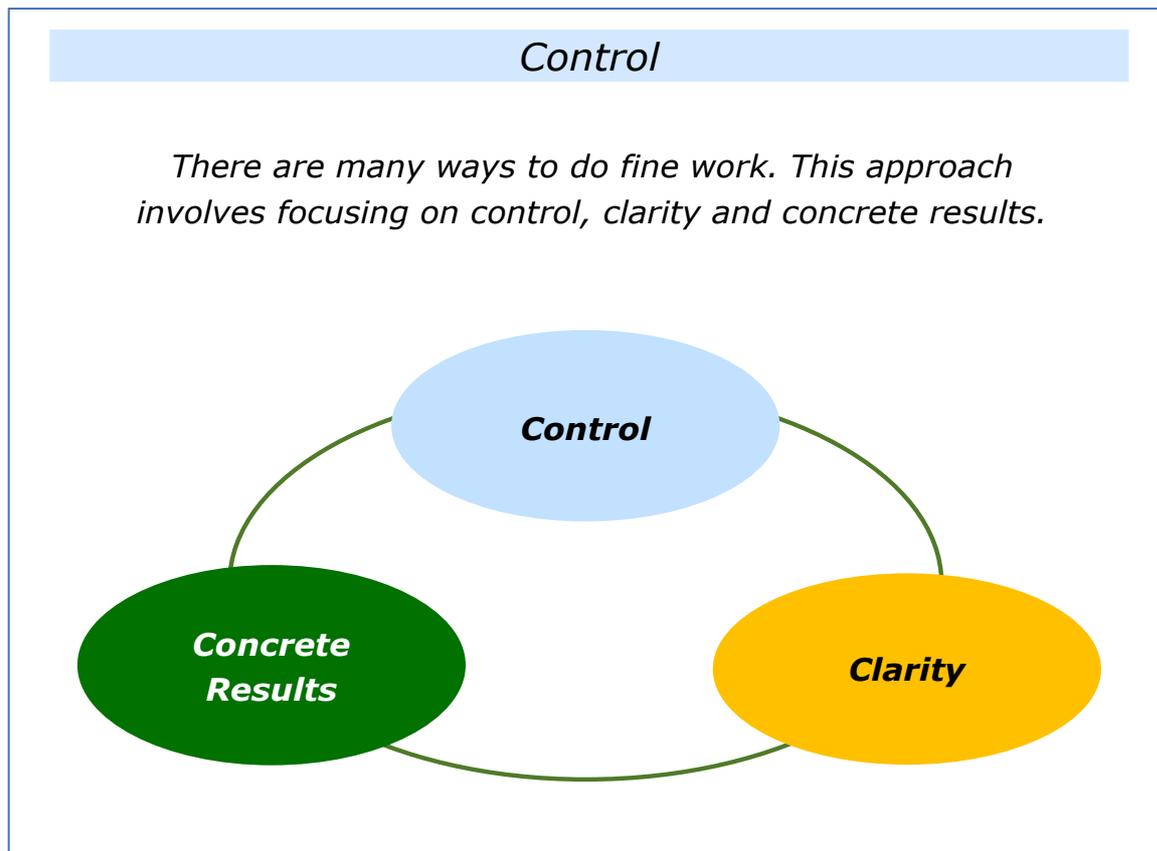
Some people aim to go into flow mode before focusing on the strategies to pursue. Different people do this in different ways.

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 Control Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to focus on control, clarity and concrete results. It can be used by individuals, teams and organisations.

It is an approach that can be used in daily life, education, sports, business and many other fields. 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. 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. You can then translate these into a clear action plan.

Concrete Results

This involves focusing on several themes on the way to achieving the desired results. You will, of course, follow these in your own way.

Consistency

The first step is to deliver consistently high standards and perform superb work. When working in teams, it involves implementing the right strategies with the right people in the right way.

Creativity

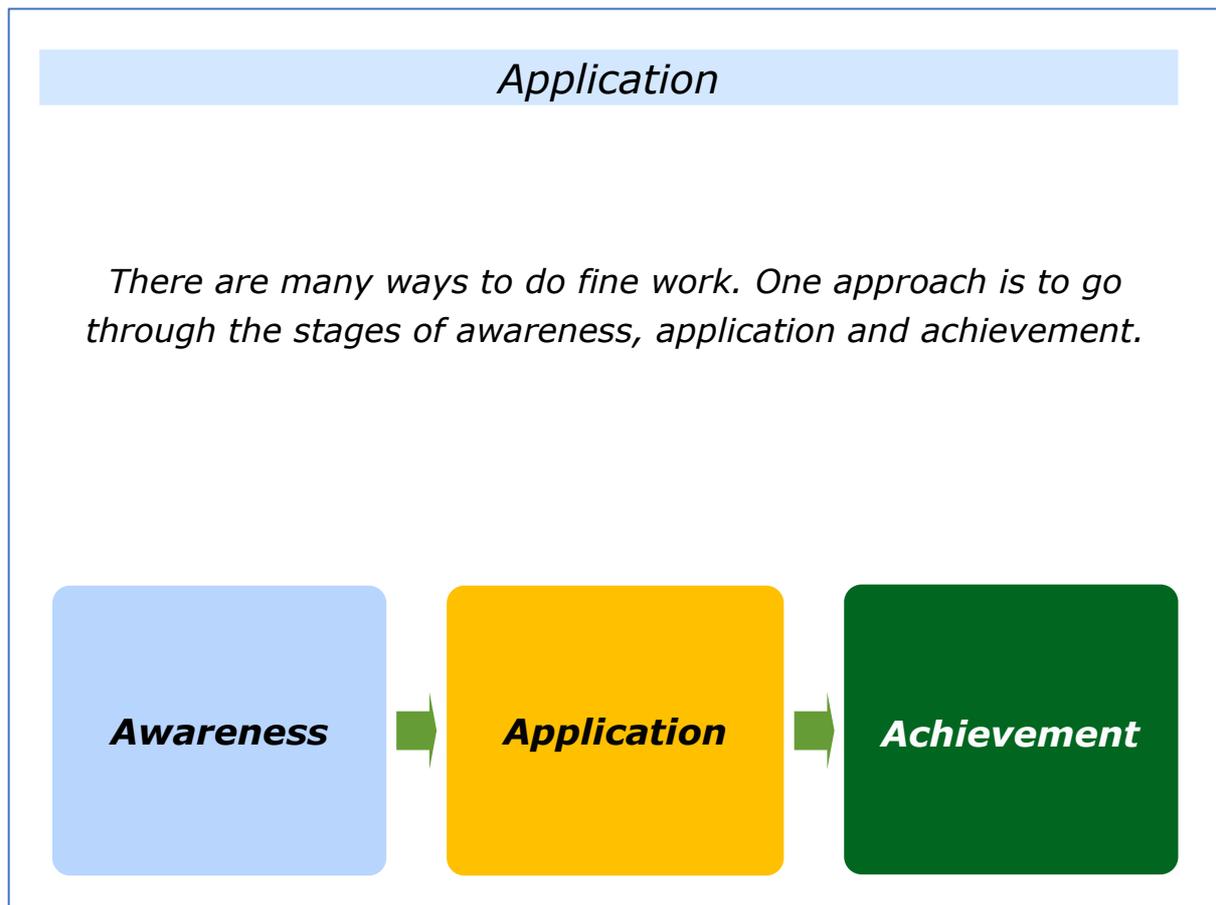
The next step is to, when appropriate, add creativity. Sometimes it involves taking time to think, make good decisions and find creative solutions to challenges.

Concrete Results

The final step is to deliver the desired 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.

Different people apply this approach in different ways. Some do it by focusing on strengths. Let's explore this approach.

The Awareness, Application And Achievement Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to go 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.

Some people become awareness junkies. They simply want to collect more ideas but seldom translate these into action. This can lead to frustration, both for themselves and other people. Application is crucial in order to achieve the goals.

Looking back on your own life, can you think of a time when you went through the stages of awareness, application and achievement? You may have wanted to improve your health, develop a skill or reach a specific goal.

What was the specific situation? How did you increase your awareness of the topic? How did you apply this knowledge? How did you do your best to achieve your goal?

Different people follow these principles in different ways. Let's consider these themes.

Awareness

Imagine that you want to explore a topic or tackle a challenge. Your first step may be to gather knowledge and develop your awareness about the theme. One person described their approach in the following way.

"Every year I had a regular health check. During one of these I got news about warning signs of a particular illness.

"At first this was a bit of a shock but then I went into research mode. Like many people do in this situation, I searched the web for information.

"This led to me finding one of the world's leading authorities in the field. Eventually I managed to get treated by him. I could not have been in more capable hands.

"He did the application part - the operations - rather than me! These were successful and hopefully I am now clear of the illness."

Good leaders also often focus on developing their people's awareness. Bearing in mind the team's strengths, they sometimes take the following steps when communicating with their people.

They describe what is happening in market, the team's future opportunities and the picture of success;

They describe the strategies the team can follow to give itself the greatest chance of success;

They describe the steps that people can take to translate the team's strategies into action and do their best to achieve success.

As mentioned earlier, awareness is a good starting point. This can then lead to the next step.

Application

Imagine that you have gathered enough information. Bearing in mind your goal, you may then aim: a) to clarify the strategies you want to follow; b) to translate these into a clear action plan. The next stage will be to apply yourself to the task.

Different people do this in different ways. One approach is to pursue their chosen strategies and take the following steps:

They follow their daily disciplines – they keep doing the right things in the right way to get the right results;

They focus on continuous improvement – they build on what is working and tackle areas for improvement;

They deal with any dramas along the way – they find solutions to challenges and work towards achieving their goals.

This final point is crucial. One person described their approach in the following way.

"I am good at following daily disciplines but it took time for me to learn how not to be distracted by dramas. Some events needed immediate attention but others could be dealt with at an appropriate time.

"Working as a leader, I aimed to anticipate potential situations that could throw us off course – such as crises in the market, staff issues or other challenges. It was possible to prevent some of these events happening.

"Sometimes we met unexpected challenges, however, which came out of the blue. After a while I learned how to buy time when faced by such events.

"My approach involved aiming: a) to keep focusing on the end goal; b) to understand the drama and explore the possible solutions; c) to implement the chosen solution and return to working towards the end goal."

Great workers continue to apply themselves to their chosen task. This can lead to the next step.

Achievement

Different people have different views regarding what constitutes achievement. Much depends on their approach to life and picture of success. Here are some things that people mention when exploring this theme.

Achievement For Me Is:

Being true to myself ... Being a good parent ... Staying sober each day ... Enabling my students to shape their futures ... Sharing knowledge that helps people.

Doing satisfying work ... Caring for people in Accident and Emergency ... Delivering peak performances in my sport ... Getting recognition ... Giving everything and having a sense of peace.

There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to work through the stages of awareness, application and achievement. You will, of course, have your own definition of achievement in your personal and professional life.

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? 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.

Awareness, Application And Achievement In The Future

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

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Strengths Based Approach



The following section describes some models that people can use to do fine work. Normally I follow the rule of three when making models but this framework mirrors some of the classic seven step models. It 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.

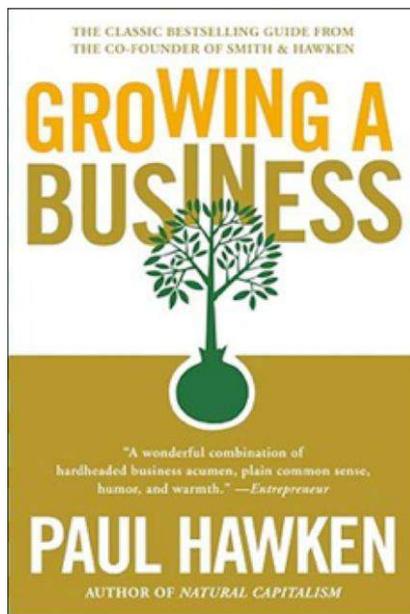
The aim is to enable people to live well with and beyond cancer. This includes providing a combination of physical, emotional and spiritual support. It comprises a range of complementary therapies, lifestyle information and self-help techniques.

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. 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.

There are many ways to do positive work. The following pages provide many models that you can follow in your own way.

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 Enjoyment, Effectiveness
And Excellence Approach*

- *The Craft Approach*
- *The Picture Of Success Approach*
- *The Pacesetter's Approach*
- *The Class Act Approach*
- *The Flowing Approach*

- *The Positive Teams Approach*
- *The Values Driven Organisation Approach*
- *The Mission, Maintenance And Magic Approach*
- *The Beliefs, Basics And Brilliance Approach*
- *The Right Strategy Approach*

- *The Coordination Approach*
- *The Positive Leadership Approach*
- *The Shapers, Spine And Specialists Approach*
- *The Taking Over A Team Approach*
- *The Communication 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 Positive Possibilities 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 Principles Approach Rather Than The Pressures Approach*
- *The Performing To Your Potential Approach*
- *The Decisive Moments Approach*

- *The Organic Development Approach*
- *The Foundations, Framework And 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*

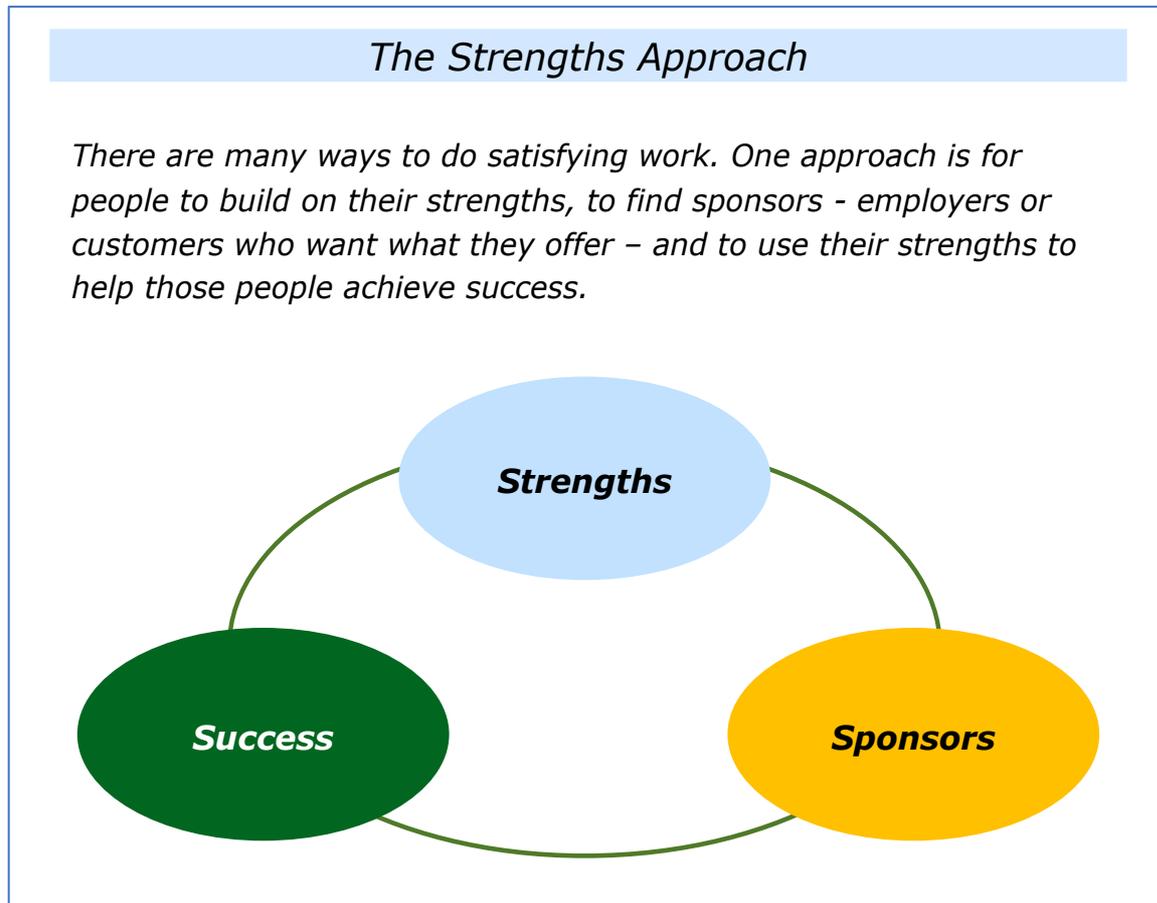
- *The Talent Development Approach*
- *The Warrior Wizard Approach*
- *The Stimulating Project Approach*
- *The Rewarding Role Approach*
- *The Relaxed Relentlessness Approach*

- *The Money, Meaning And Magic Approach*
- *The Managing Emotions Approach*
- *The Radar, Repertoire And Results Approach*
- *The Pleasurable Work Approach*
- *The Positive Dimension Approach*

- *The Culture Handbook Approach*
- *The Managing Your Obsessions Approach*
- *The Gumption Approach*
- *The Great Days, Good Days And Grunt Days Approach*
- *The Setbacks As A Springboard To Success Approach*

- *The Generous Guide Approach*
- *The Enlightenment, Enterprise And Excellence Approach*
- *The Professional Success Approach*
- *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:

*

*

*

The specific challenges these people face and the goals they want to achieve are:

*

*

*

Success

Bearing in mind my strengths, the specific things I can deliver to help these people to achieve success are:

*

*

*

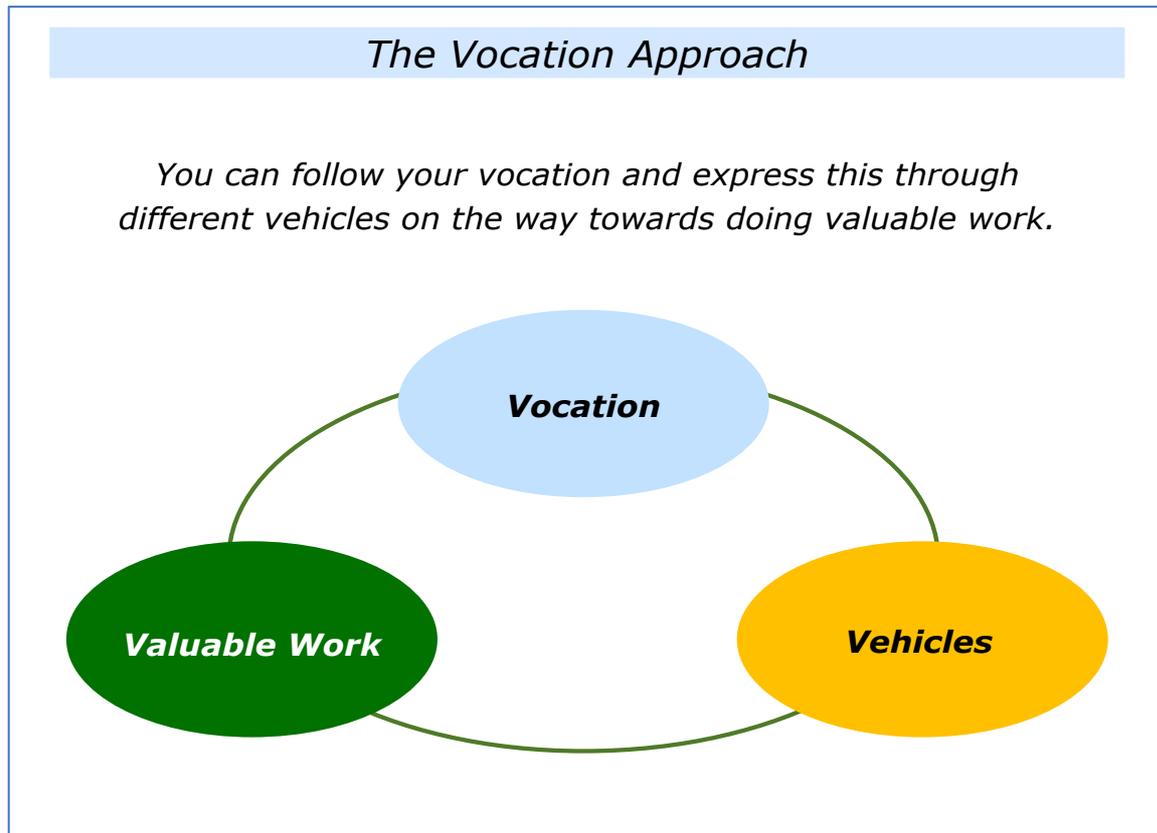
The specific benefits of delivering these things and helping them to achieve success will be:

*

*

*

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.

A person never retires from their vocation. They just find more ways to express it during their life. 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 make the world a better place.

There are many other approaches to clarifying your vocation. The following pages provide background to some of these approaches.

If you wish, however, you may want to skip these and move directly onto the next step. This focuses 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 Artist Theme*
They like to create things and share a vision.
- *The Architect Theme*
They like to shape and build things.
- *The Altruist Theme*
They like to give to people and help them to succeed.
- *The Adviser Theme*
They like to help people and pass on knowledge.

- *The Appreciator Theme*
They like to appreciate and enjoy things.
- *The Artisan Theme*
They like to use their talents to make things.
- *The Arranger Theme*
They like to arrange, organise or fix things.
- *The Analyst Theme*
They like to make sense of things and make models.

- *The Adventurer*
They like to explore, learn and develop.
- *The Achiever Theme*
They like to do stimulating things and achieve success.
- *The Advocate Theme*
They like to advocate a particular cause or theme.
- *The Activist Theme*
They like to translate their ideas into action.

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 these steps.

You Can Focus On Your Chosen Field Of Activity

There are several ways to find the field in which you may feel at 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;

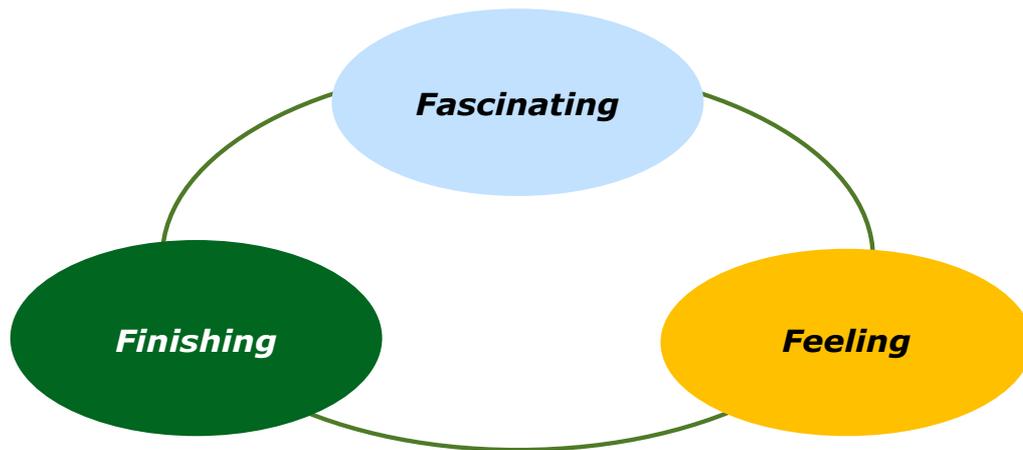
To focus on the specific activity where you have the equivalent of a photographic memory;

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:

*

*

*

The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

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 being able to helicopter 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

Positive Realists

- *They have a positive attitude but are also good at reading reality;*
- *They are good at seeing patterns – both successful and unsuccessful patterns - and staying ahead of the game;*
- *They are proactive and have a strong internal locus of control – rather than an external locus of control - and say:*

"I can make things happen," rather than, "Things happen to me."

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 patterns. They see: a) the successful patterns; b) the unsuccessful patterns; c) the potential consequences. They then aim to clarify the possible picture of success.

Such people are proactive. They have an internal locus of control - rather than an external locus of control – and aim to make things happen. Bearing in mind what they can control, they then aim:

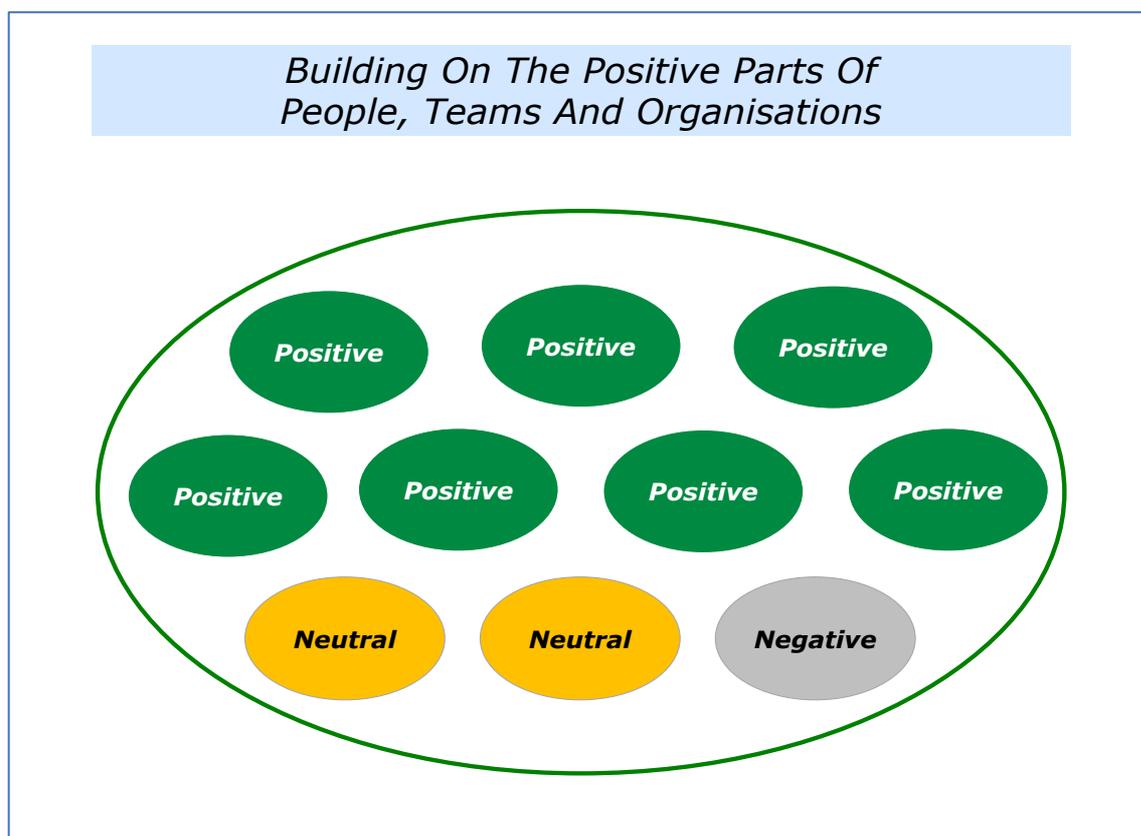
To set positive goals;

To build on the positive parts of people, teams and organisations whilst also dealing with any negative parts;

To do their best to achieve positive results.

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.

We will then look at how you can follow elements of the positive realist's approach when working as a leader.

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:*

*

*

*

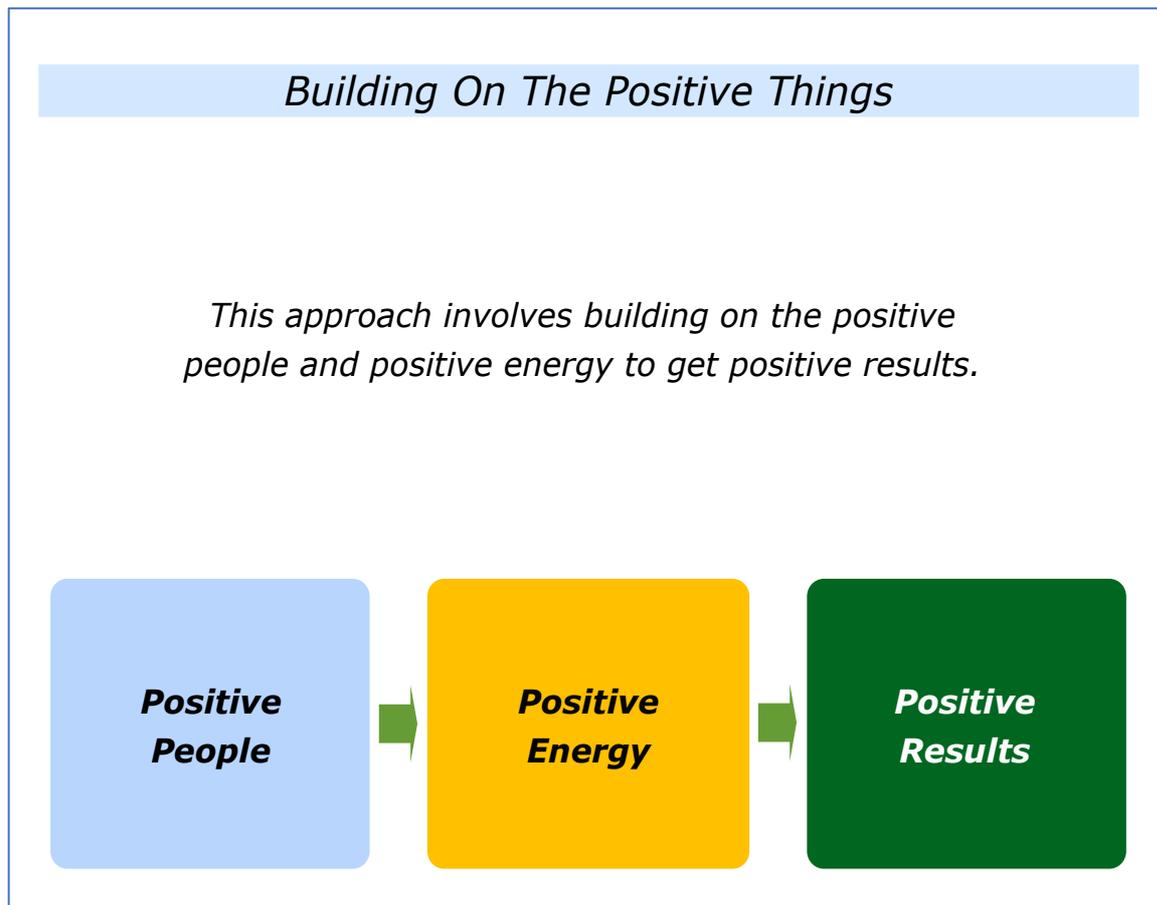
*The specific things that happened as
a result of taking these steps were:*

*

*

*

Building On The Positive Things In An Organisation



Imagine that you have been invited to lead an organisation that has hit difficulties. There are many ways to tackle such a challenge. The following pages describe one approach.

Positive realists often aim to build on the positive things in an organisation. They take this approach rather than putting people through a change programme.

Before taking a role, however, they do their due diligence to clarify the possibilities of success. Providing they are happy with the prospects they then take the following steps.

They communicate the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success.

They build on the positive people and positive energy in the organisation.

They encourage people to do superb work, keep producing success stories and do their best to ensure the organisation achieves its picture of success.

They encourage people to do superb work and keep improving on the way towards achieving the picture of success.

They sometimes take these steps in the order described above. There may be times, however, when they find it appropriate to change the order.

Imagine you want to follow elements of this approach. Here are some steps you may want to take.

You can do your due diligence before going into an organisation

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.

You can communicate the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success

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. They therefore communicate the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success.

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.

Here is an overview of these themes. The Road Map just refers to the next year, but you can give a longer time frame if you wish.

The Organisation's Purpose

The purpose of our organisation - 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:

*

*

*

The Organisation'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 ...*

- * *Do ...*

- * *Do ...*

- * *Do ...*

- * *Do ...*

The Don'ts

- * *Don't ...*

- * *Don't ...*

- * *Don't ...*

- * *Don't ...*

- * *Don't ...*

The Organisation'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 organisation

** 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 managers' responsibilities in working to achieve the goals are:

* *To ...*

* *To ..*

* *To ...*

The colleagues' responsibilities in working to achieve the goals are:

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

*The When - The Road Map
Towards Achieving The
Organisation's Picture Of Success*

*The 'one line' specific goal our organisation
wants to achieve by the end of the year is:*

* To

Q4	<i>Milestones. The specific things that we will have achieved by then will be:</i>	<i>Quotes. The words we want to hear people saying then are:</i>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Profits</i></p> <p>* * *</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Products</i></p> <p>* * *</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>People</i></p> <p>* * *</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">" _____ "</p>

Q3		<i>Profits</i>	" _____ "
	*		
	*		" _____ "
	*		
		<i>Products</i>	" _____ "
	*		
	*		" _____ "
	*		
		<i>People</i>	" _____ "
*			
*		" _____ "	
*			

Q2		<i>Profits</i>	" _____ "
	*		
	*		" _____ "
	*		
		<i>Products</i>	" _____ "
	*		
	*		" _____ "
	*		
		<i>People</i>	" _____ "
*			
*		" _____ "	
*			

Q1		<i>Profits</i>	" _____ "
	*		
	*		" _____ "
	*		
		<i>Products</i>	" _____ "
	*		
	*		" _____ "
	*		
		<i>People</i>	" _____ "
*			
*		" _____ "	
*			

Imagine that you have communicated the purpose, principles and picture of success. (You may or may not want to give a detailed road map, but that is up to you.)

You can then, if appropriate, give people chance to get into groups and compile any questions they have regarding what you have presented. Later in the book there are exercises you can use to facilitate people's responses.

Good leaders then 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.*

You can build on the positive people and energy in the organisation

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.

Imagine that you have chosen to build on the people who aim to positive and professional. You may then move on to the next steps for building a successful organisation.

You can enable people to do superb work, keep producing success stories and do your best to ensure the organisation achieves its picture of success

Great leaders encourage people to build on their strengths and make clear contracts about their best contributions. They then manage by outcomes and enable people to perform superb work on the way towards achieving the organisation's goals.

They keep showing what good looks like. One approach is to keep publishing success stories that highlight how people are following the principles. They then encourage people to follow these principles, keep improving and delivering success.

Such leaders sometimes need to make key decisions about the strategy and people. They clarify the results to achieve, clarify the options and settle on the way forward. They then do their best to ensure the organisation achieves its picture of success.

Let's return to your own situation. Imagine that you want to follow some elements of the positive realist's approach. 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 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 Building On What People Can Do Approach

Building On What People Can Do

This approach helps people to develop by focusing on the following steps.

- *Step One: Can Do And Creativity*
- *Step Two: Clarity And Commitment*
- *Step Three: Consistently High Standards And Class*

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.

*Step One:
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.

*Step Two:
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.

*Step Three:
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:*

*

Step One: 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:

*

*

*

Step Two: 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.

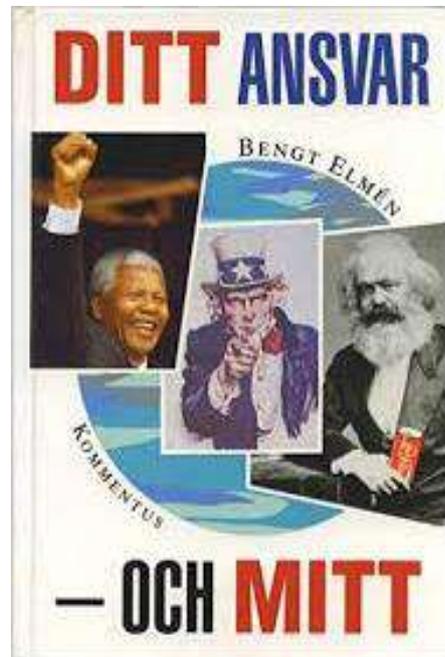
Since then death has been a reality to me. Life is short and it's no use hiding from the fact that we all are going to die someday.

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 Achieve - 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.

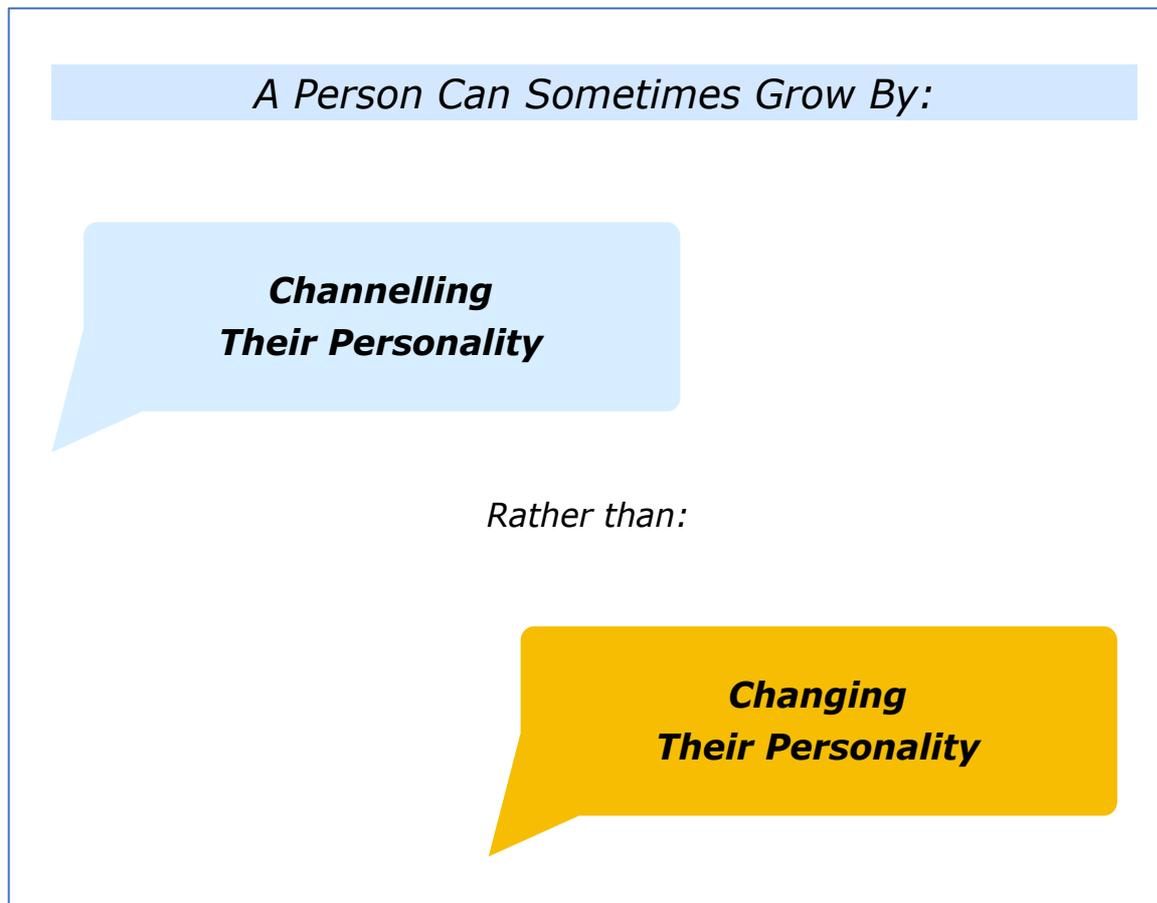
My passion is to help achievers to find their purpose, possibilities and peace in life. Why?

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.

The Channelling Your Personality Rather Than Changing Your Personality Approach



There are many models for helping a person to develop. One approach focuses on helping them to grow by channelling their personality rather than changing their personality. People develop, they seldom change. Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to help them:

To clarify the real results they want to achieve in a situation – their picture of success;

To clarify their personality style – including both the potential pluses and minuses of their style;

To channel their personality style in ways that help them to achieve their picture of success.

This is an approach I have found useful when working with people who demonstrate certain characteristics. Here is one example.

Max is an energetic and highly driven leader. Being positive and results focused, he can be inspirational and has a track record of building pacesetting teams. He also loves working with certain kinds of leading edge clients. He helps them to develop strategies that enable them to stay ahead in their field.

The pluses of his style include the following. He generates positive energy and gives people a compelling picture of the future. He is also good at helping certain kinds of clients to solve problems and achieve success.

The potential minuses of his style include the following. He gives lots of ideas and can overload people with information. He only works best with self-motivated achievers and can be impatient with other kinds of people. Max explained one piece of advice that he had been given.

"I have been told to slow down in order to take my people with me. Whilst I understand part of that logic, I find it difficult to follow.

"My mind keeps focusing on how to solve both the present and future challenges. Plus I get lots of ideas about how to create products that will help our customers to achieve success.

"The problem is that I can sometimes dive into the daily running of our business. If I see something that could be done better, I immediately try to fix it. Maybe I should try to be patient, but I am not sure that will work. Have you any suggestions?"

Max and I looked at how he could channel his personality rather than change his personality. His brain would continue to be in over-drive. Bearing this in mind, it was important for him to spend most of his time with pacesetting customers.

Max could help them to solve challenges and build prototypes that enabled them to achieve future success. This could create wins for them and also wins for his company.

At the same time, I suggested that Max follow the rule of three when sharing ideas with people. This involved him crafting his messages so that, when appropriate, he could aim:

To give the big picture – the context – and to describe the three outcomes to achieve;

To give the reasons for achieving these outcomes;

To check with people whether: a) they understood the outcomes to achieve; b) they would be happy to contribute toward achieving these; c) they had the support required to achieve the outcomes.

Max then moved on to the next stage. How to channel his personality in a way that delivered positive results? After some discussion he chose to take the following steps.

First, Max appointed a managing director who had the ability to run the business. This was somebody who Max had worked with in the past. They had the ability:

To keep focusing on the company's principles and translate these into action;

To build a positive environment in which motivated people could flourish and deliver good results;

To manage Max's interventions and integrate his ideas into continuing to build a successful business.

Second, Max applied his strengths to working with certain customers and also aiming to become a thought leader in his chosen field. This involved him taking the following steps. He chose:

To work with three leading edge customers and do superb work that enabled them to stay ahead of the game;

To produce success stories about this work which helped to build their reputations and also that of his own company;

To produce a series of short videos in which Max described pacesetting ideas that companies could implement to achieve future success.

Third, Max continued to share inspiring ideas with the people in his business but he did this through certain channels. He and the managing director ran sessions every two months where they aimed:

To give Max the opportunity to share his latest thinking and, when appropriate, how people could add some of these ideas to their present way of running the business;

To learn from what some of the company's leading edge customers were doing well and how to adapt these ideas when working with some of their other customers;

To focus on how the company could continue to following its principles, translate these into action and deliver positive results.

Max, the managing director and I continued to work on these themes over the next years. This helped to create an environment in which people applied strengths to help the company to achieve ongoing success.

Every person is different but many can learn how to channel their personalities rather than change their personalities. When working with introverts, for example, it is possible to help them:

To build on their ability to reflect, make sense of ideas and make their best contributions to a client, team or organisation;

To rehearse what they want to do or say and then share their knowledge in ways that increase the likelihood of them getting heard;

To be true to themselves and learn how to take a positive role in situations they find challenging – such as meetings, brainstorming sessions or social events.

There are many ways to help a person to channel their personality. Here are some guidelines that it can be helpful to bear in mind. You will, of course, apply these in your own way.

Helping A Person To Channel Their Personality

This approach involves exploring the following themes.

- *Who is the person? What are their goals? 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 aims?*

- *What is their personality style? What are the words you would use to describe their personality style? What are the potential pluses and minuses of their style? How can they build on the pluses and manage any minuses?*

- *How can they channel their personality to achieve their goals? How can I help them to take these steps? What are the practical tools I can pass on to help them to achieve their picture of success?*

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:*

*

*

*

Step Three: 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.

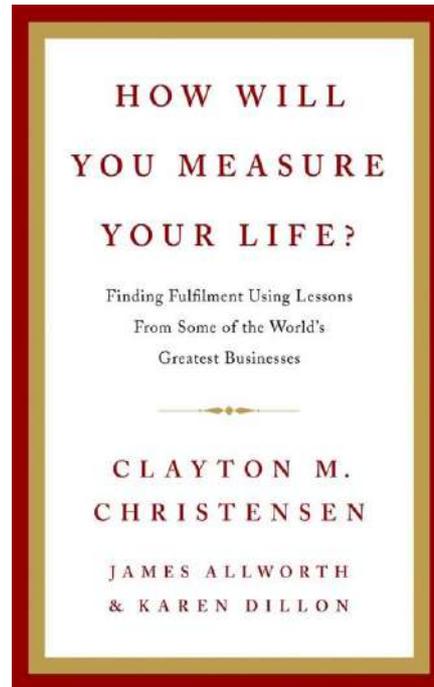
How Will You Measure Your Life?

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

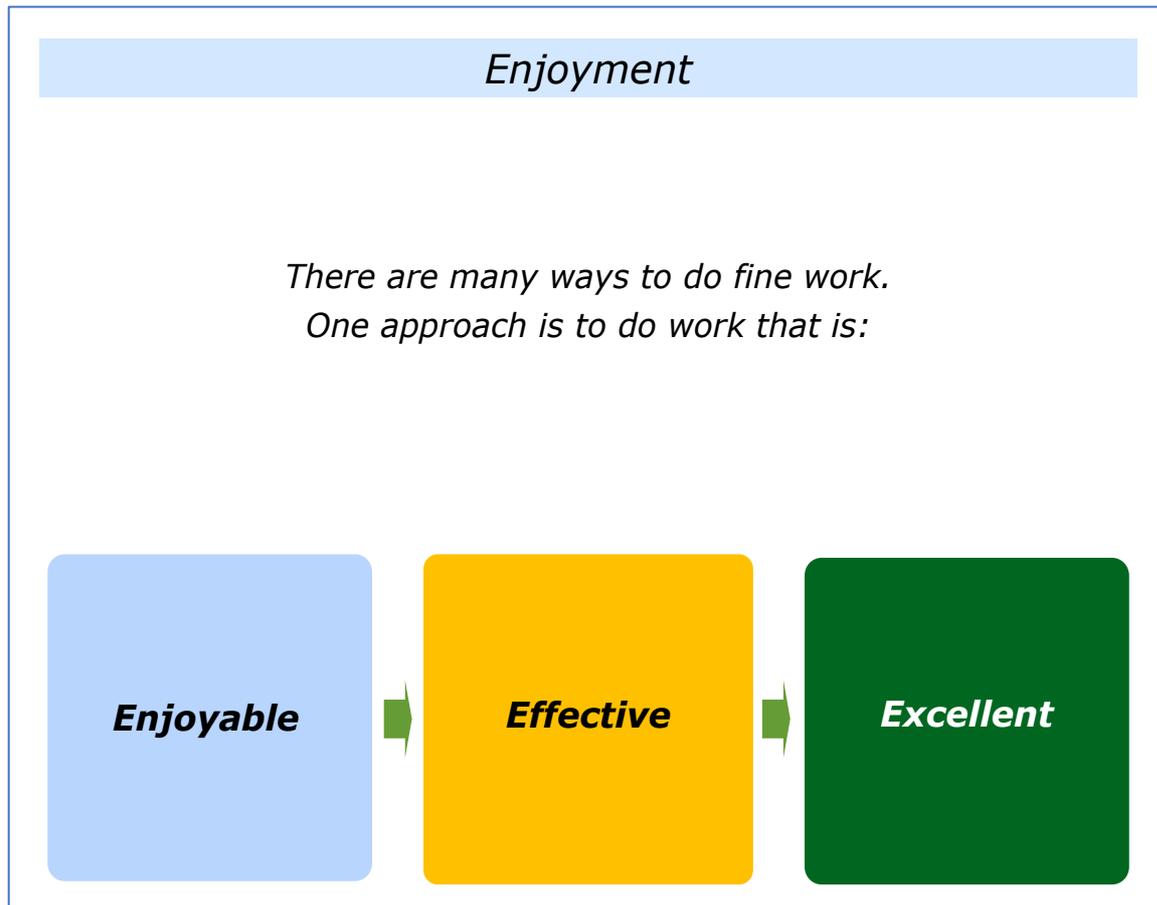
*The specific things I can do to encourage
the person to add that touch of class are:*

*

*

*

The Enjoyment, Effectiveness And Excellence Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to do work that is enjoyable, effective and excellent. Sometimes it may also involve going into another dimension and doing work that is extraordinary.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach. Let's explore how you can do this in your own way.

You Can Do Work That Is Enjoyable

What are the kinds of work you enjoy doing? What are those where you enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal? What are those you can be effective and maybe also encourage other people? What are those where you may be able to deliver excellence?

Some individuals do their best work where they feel in their element – at ease and yet able to excel. They feel confident and in control. They say to themselves:

"This is where I was meant to be."

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 their goals.

What are the activities where you enjoy the journey – even though parts of it may be exhausting? 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.

Many people feel alive when doing stimulating work. Some people stop doing this and feel clogged up. Sometimes they can regain their zest for life by refocusing on the kinds of work they find stimulating.

Let's return to your own life and work. What is a specific activity where you enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal? What are the reasons why you enjoy this activity? What are the specific things you can do to pursue this activity in the future?

Enjoyable Work

The specific activity where I enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal is:

*

The specific reasons why I enjoy doing this activity are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to pursue this activity in the future are:

*

*

*

You Can Do Work That Is Effective

Great workers believe in doing work that is effective. When doing a particular project or tackling a challenge, they focus on what works. Some may also aim to do work that encourages people. T

hey aim to build on their strengths, follow strategies that work and deliver success. They may work as a teacher, medical worker, sports coach or crisis manager. They may work as a scientist, specialist, leader, trusted advisor or in another professional role.

They may aim to create beautiful things, write inspiring articles or raise money for charity. They may run a social enterprise, improve people's quality of life, pass on practical knowledge or do another activity.

Imagine that you want to do work that is effective. One approach is to start by exploring the following themes.

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?*

Different people follow this approach in different ways. As mentioned, some aim to do work that encourages people. Let's look at one such approach.

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.

Looking back, can you think of a specific situation when you did enjoyable work that was also effective? What did you do right then? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

Effective Work

The specific situation when I did enjoyable work that was also effective was:

*

The specific things I did then to do enjoyable work that was effective were:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to follow some of these principles in the future are:

*

*

*

You Can Do Work That Is Excellent

Imagine that you aim to do enjoyable work that is effective. You can then take the next step and aim to deliver excellence. Sometimes it can also lead to doing something extraordinary. Let's explore how you can take these steps.

Being Effective Creates The Platform For Delivering Excellence

There are many models for doing fine work. One approach is to do effective work to get to 7+/10. It is then to do something extra to get to 10/10.

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 excellence.

Doing work you enjoy 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 such work - even in so-called pressure situations. It is important to retain your sense of joy because otherwise things can go awry. One athlete explained this in the following way.

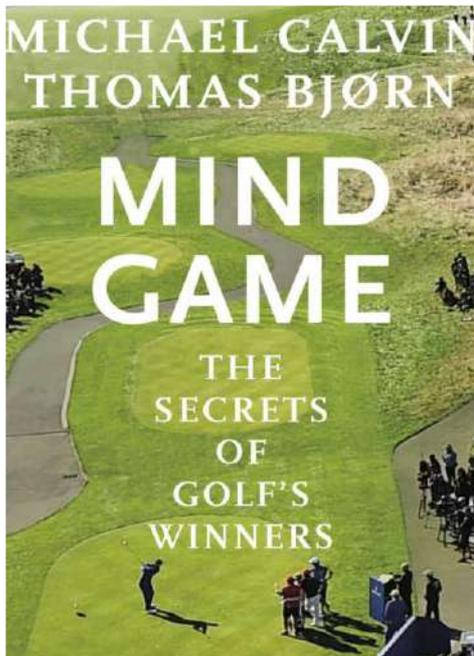
"I had to rediscover my love for the sport. I had become caught up with the whirlwind of chasing money and comparing myself to others. This led to negative self-talk and frustration."

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."

The Entertainment Approach

Some people use their talents to focus on providing entertainment. This sounds far removed from doing effective work but the people who take this route often start by mastering the basics.

There are many definitions for the word entertainment. Here is one that covers some activities in the arts, music, sports and other fields.

Entertainment consists of performances that give people pleasure.

Different kinds of performers will have different views on the nature of their work. Much depends on their philosophy and the principles they aim to follow.

Some football managers, for example, say they are only interested in the business of winning. Some great football managers – such as Matt Busby, Bobby Robson and others – also saw it as their job as to provide entertainment.

Justin Hayward, a lead singer in the Moody Blues, said that the band saw it as important to entertain the fans who attended their concerts. The Moodies continued to evolve by doing experimental work in the studio and on their albums.

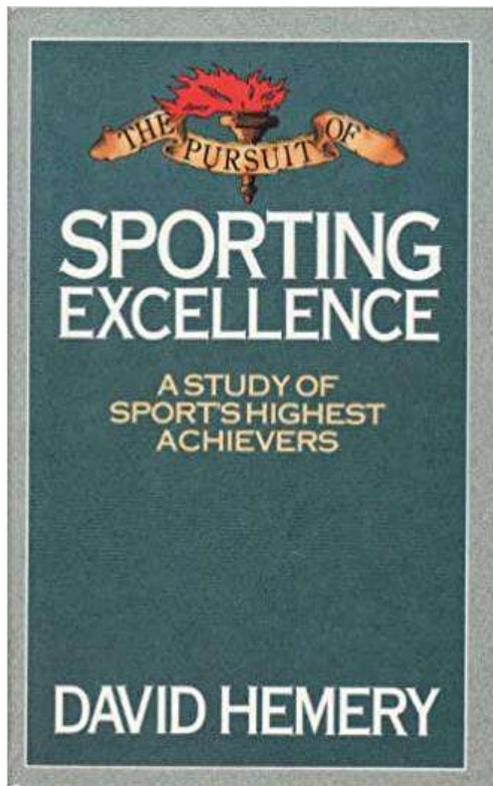
The band had a certain philosophy when it came to live shows, however, and focused on its audience. Here is a summary of how Justin described this approach.

"Many fans have followed us for decades. They may be interested in some of our new work but they really want to hear the songs that give them pleasure. We aim to honour this and give them a great experience."

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

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? Let's explore how it is possible to make this happen.

<i>Excellence Culture</i>	<i>Excuse Culture</i>
<i>The characteristics of people in an excellence culture are:</i>	<i>The characteristics of people in an excuse culture are:</i>
<i>They ...</i>	<i>They ...</i>

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.

***Never walk past a quality problem –
because otherwise you 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."

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

*

*

*

You Can Sometimes Aim To Do Work That Is Extraordinary

Some people may go into another dimension and do work that is extraordinary. Let's look at some examples.

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.

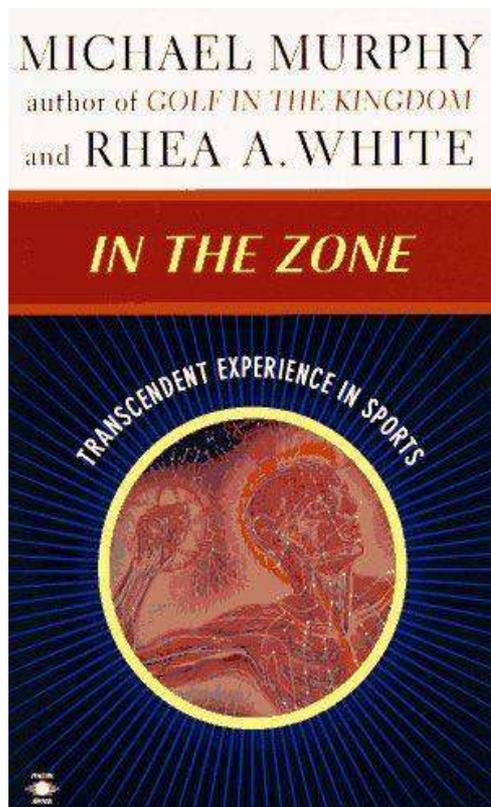
The Stuttgart Ballet's Richard Cragun can turn three times in a blur of motion. But Baryshnikov did it in slow motion. And it was unbelievable.

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, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the enjoyment, effectiveness and excellence 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 Enjoyment, Effectiveness And Excellence Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

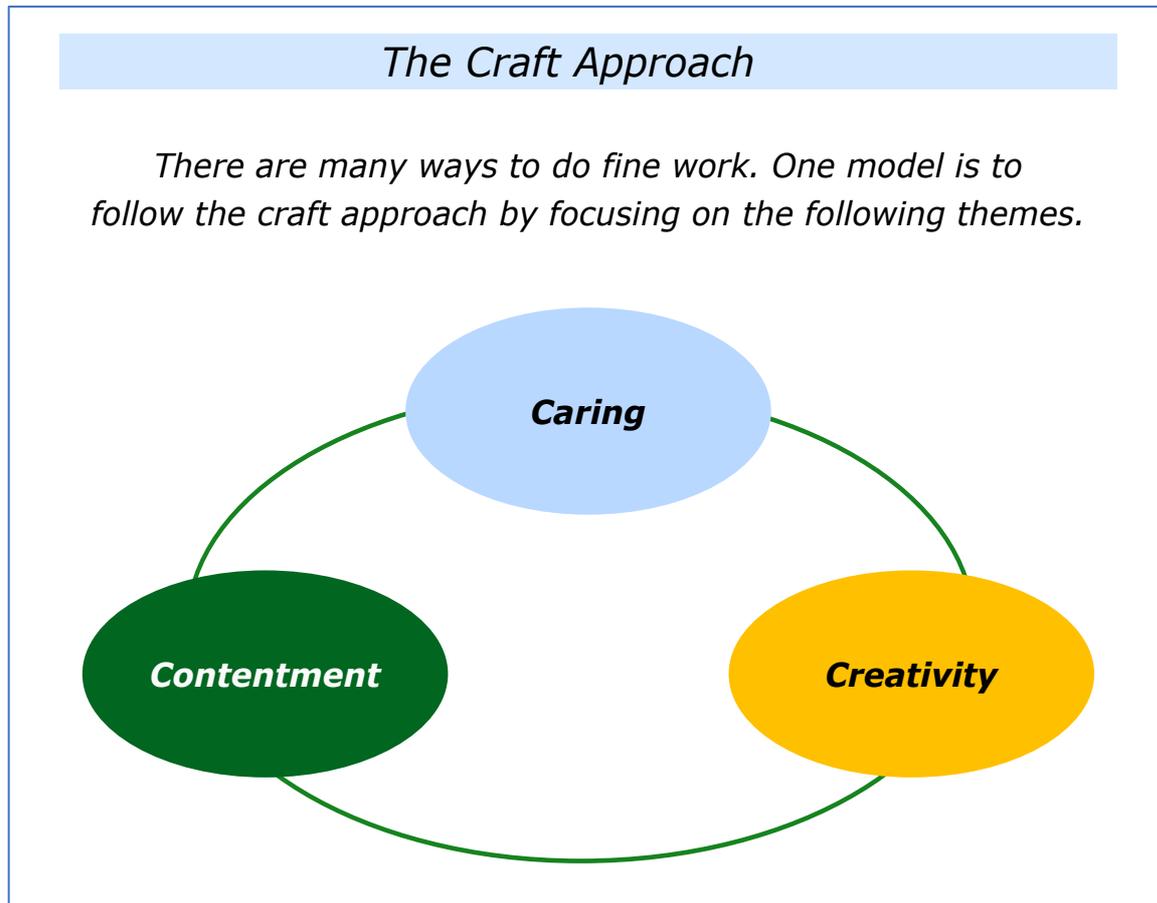
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

The Craft Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One model is to follow the craft approach by focusing on caring, creativity and contentment. Let's explore these themes.

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 do creative work when pursuing 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:*

*

*

*

Creativity

Imagine that you have clarified what you want to do. You may then aim to do creative work when pursuing your 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.

Creativity

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:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to do creative work and keep improving 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.

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:

*

*

*

The Picture Of Success Approach

The Picture Of Success Approach

This approach involves helping individuals, teams and organisations:

- *To clarify the picture of success;*
- *To follow the key strategies for achieving the picture of success;*
- *To deliver the picture of success.*

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.

Imagine that you want to follow this approach in your own way. You may be aiming to help a person, team or organisation to achieve their goals. This involves focusing on the following themes. Whatever the situation, you can help people:

To clarify the picture of success;

To follow the key strategies for achieving the picture of success;

To achieve the picture of success.

Bearing these things in mind, it can be useful to get some background before moving on to helping people to achieve their aims. This can involve focusing on the following themes.

The Present Situation

What is happening in their world? What may be the challenges they face? What may be the goals they want to achieve? What is the first topic they want to explore? What is actually happening in the situation? Can they give some specific examples?

The Picture Of Success

Looking at the topic they want to explore, what are the real results they want to achieve? What is the picture of success? What would be the benefits of achieving these goals? What would be the specific things that would be happening that would show they have achieved the goals?

The Possible Ways Forward

What are the things they can and can't control in the situation? Bearing these in mind, what are the possible options for moving forwards? What are the pluses and minuses of each option? Are there any other potential creative solutions?

What is the route they want to follow? What are the key strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success? How can they get some quick wins? What else can they do to increase the chances of achieving the picture of success?

When appropriate, the approach also involves you passing on knowledge and practical tools they can use to achieve their goals. You will, of course, do this in your own way.

Looking back, can you think of a situation you followed some elements of the picture of success approach? You may have been encouraging a person, facilitating a workshop, leading a team or doing another activity.

How did you clarify the real results they wanted to achieve? How did you clarify the strategies they could follow? How did you pass on knowledge and practical tools they could use? 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:*

*

*

*

There are many ways to clarify the picture of success. The following pages explore some of these approaches.

The Goals Approach

My Goals

The goals I want to achieve in my life or work are:

- *To ...*

For example ...

- *To ...*

For example ...

- *To ...*

For example ...

This is one of the most basic approaches to working with people. It focuses on helping them to clarify and achieve their personal or professional goals.

The first time I came across it was when practicing Reality Therapy. This encouraged people to take responsibility for shaping their futures.

There are many ways to use the goals approach. These include variations such as the classic GROW model. This encourages a person to focus on their goals, reality, options and their will to work towards achieving the goals.

Whatever approach is used, these often involve using the keywords What, How and When. Different people use different questions when using this approach. They may, for example, invite somebody to explore the following themes.

What

What do you want to do in your life? What do you want to do in your personal or professional life? What are your specific goals? What will be the benefits of achieving those goals?

How

How can you do your best to achieve the goals? What are the key strategies you can follow to give yourself the greatest chance of success? How can you translate these into action?

When

When do you want to work towards achieving your goals? How can you get some quick successes? What will be happening that will show you have achieved your goals?

There are many ways to apply this approach. The following pages explore some of the most common ways to help people, teams and organisations to achieve their aims.

The Real Results Approach

The Real Results Approach

This approach goes deeper than focusing on the goals a person says they want to achieve. Bearing in mind their aims, it involves exploring with them:

- *What are the **real results** you want to achieve?*
- *What will be the benefits of achieving these results?*
- *What is the picture of success?*

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 has 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 for 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 this 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, they 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?"

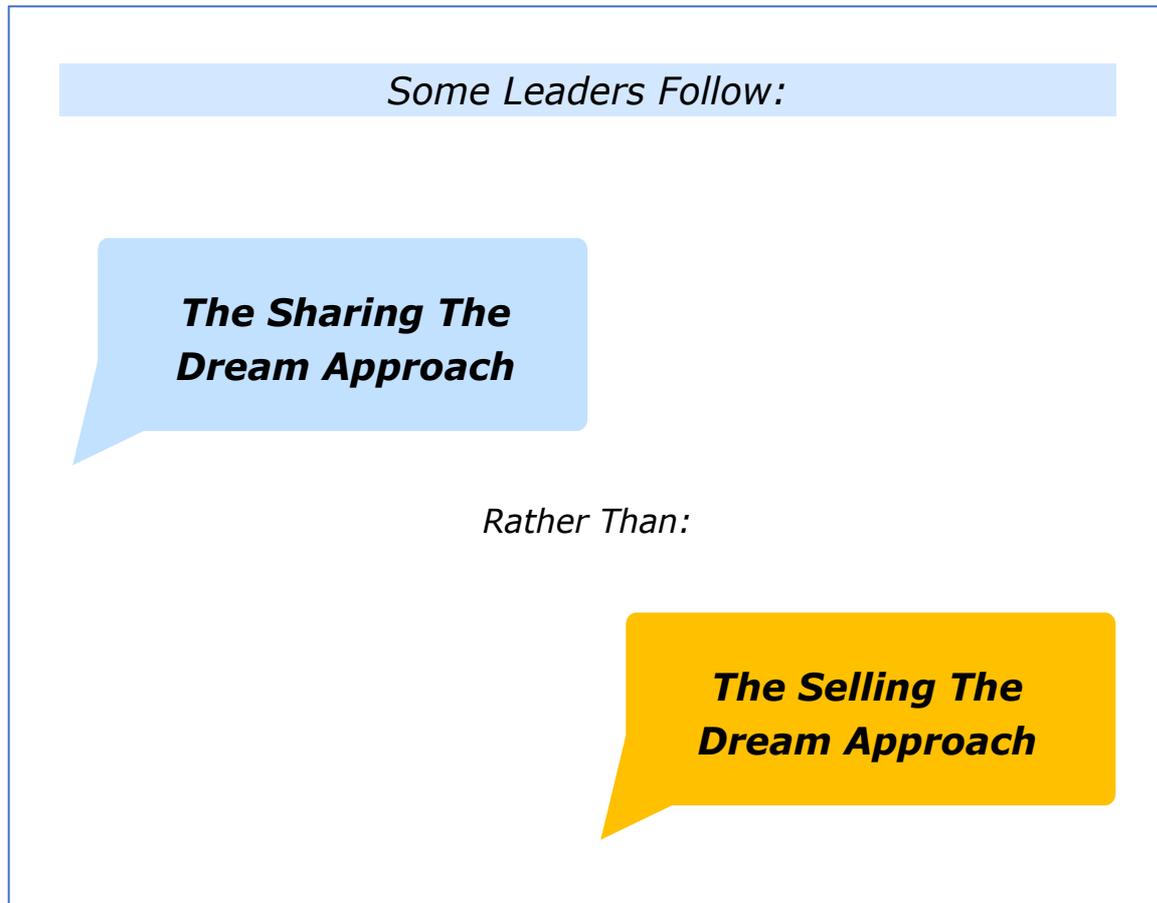
The leader and staff member clarified the real results to achieve. They then explored the possible options for going forwards – together with the pluses and minuses of each option.

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 Sharing The Dream Approach Rather Than The Selling The Dream Approach



Good leaders sometimes follow the sharing the dream approach rather than the selling the dream approach. This highlights a paradox.

This is because some people are more likely to buy into a dream that is being shared rather than being sold. Such people then feel more freedom to decide if they want to support it. This is because:

Sharing the dream is about describing something and showing the benefits to people;

Selling the dream is about trying to do something to people.

Different leaders share the dream in different ways. This can depend on the aims they are sharing with people. Whatever the goals, however, some leaders take the following approach.

Sharing The Dream

This sometimes involves:

- *Showing the dream;*
- *Showing the benefits of achieving the dream;*
- *Showing the strategies for achieving the dream.*

Showing The Dream

This involves describing the picture of success. It is important to bring this to life by giving concrete examples that resonate with people. It is also important to describe some of the specific things that may be happening when people have delivered the dream.

Showing The Benefits Of Achieving The Dream

This involves describing the benefits – for all the various stakeholders – of achieving the picture of success. People buy success but it is important to be honest with people. It is vital to describe the potential pluses - and how to manage any potential minuses - involved in delivering the dream.

Showing The Strategies For Achieving The Dream

This involves describing the strategies for achieving the picture of success. It is to show people: a) the strategies most likely to achieve success; b) the potential early successes; c) the ways to deal with any challenges. It is to show people a practical plan for delivering the dream.

Some leaders go through these steps. If appropriate, they may then invite people to decide if they want to contribute towards achieving the goals. If so, they make clear contracts about how people can use their strengths to help the deliver the dream.

The sharing the dream approach is about people being motivated to achieve the picture of success. It is not about people being briefly motivated by charisma or an inspiring speech. These can be helpful. But people must be motivated by wanting to do the work.

The sharing the dream approach may sound counter intuitive. But the paradox is that, when done properly, it can be more attractive than trying to sell a dream.

People are more likely to opt in when they are treated like adults and given the full picture. They can then decide whether they want to contribute and do their best to deliver the dream.

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? 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 Sharing The Dream 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 then to follow this approach in my own way are:

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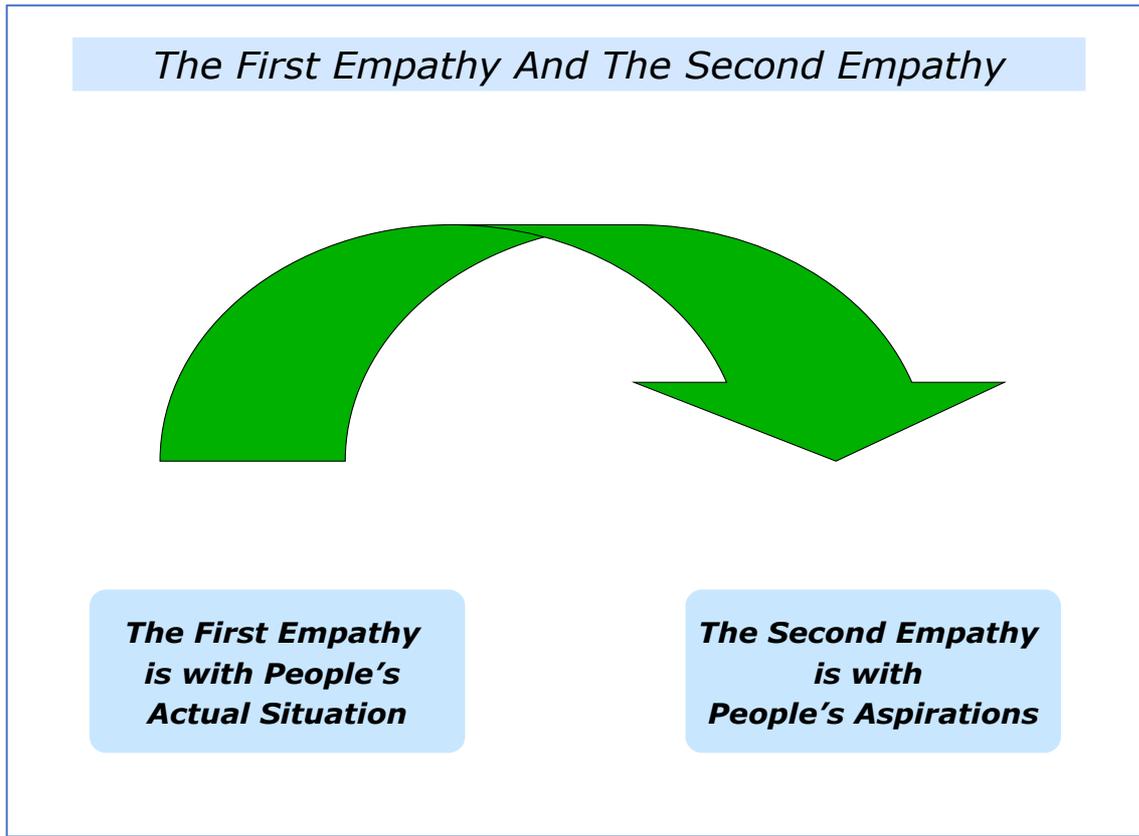
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Second Empathy Approach



Good mentors often use both the first and second empathy. The latter approach calls for being able:

To connect with people's aspirations ... To establish clarity about what they want to achieve ... To help them to achieve concrete results.

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 Second Empathy Involves Understanding Different Worlds

People who use this approach often have the ability:

- 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.*

People who use the second empathy approach are often good at understanding the challenges that different individuals may be 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 help them to manage challenges.

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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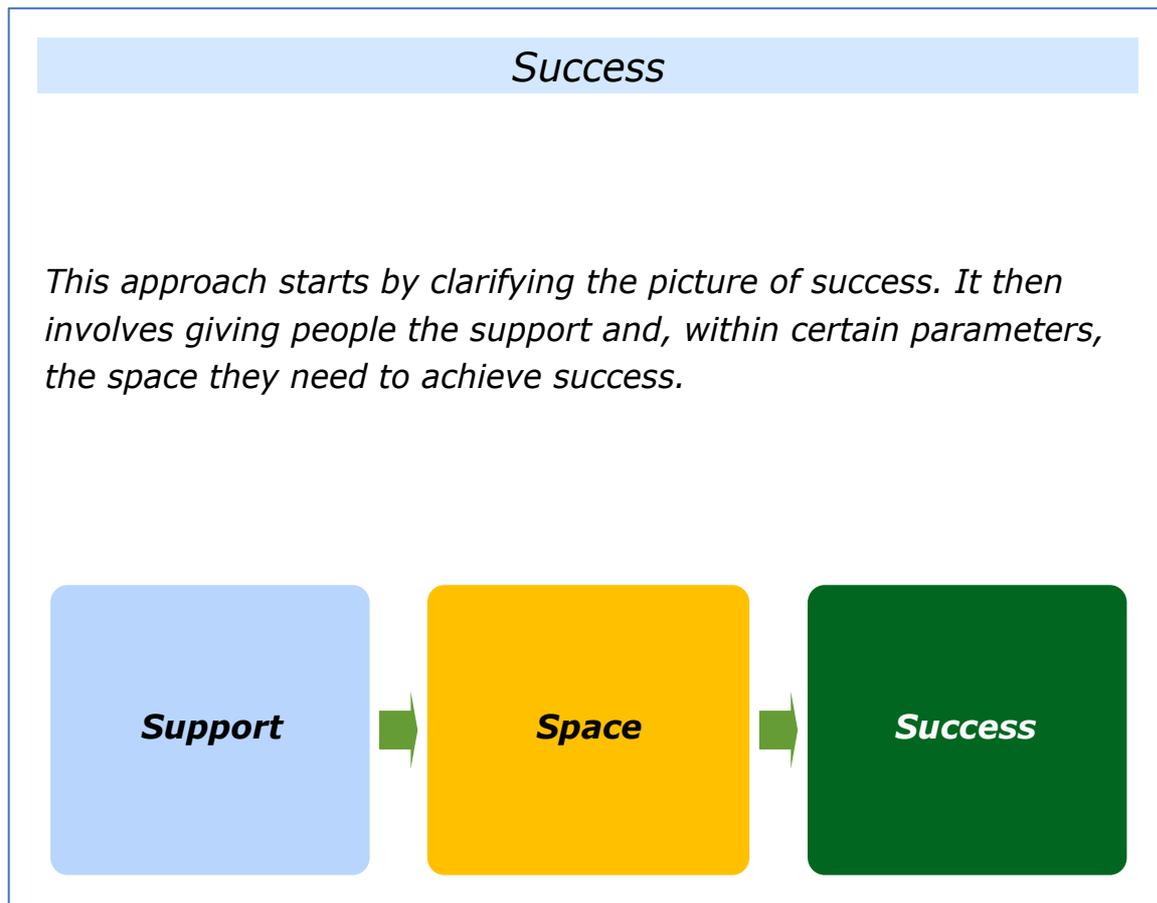
The specific things I sometimes do to apply this knowledge in my life and work are:

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The Support And Space Approach To Helping People To Achieve Success



There are many models for helping people to develop. This is an approach that can be used with individuals, teams and organisations.

The approach starts by clarifying their picture of success. It then involves giving them the support and, within certain parameters, the space they need to achieve success. Let's explore these themes.

Success

Imagine that you are helping a person to develop. After making them feel welcome, you will clarify their aims. The way you do this will depend on the situation. Let's consider some scenarios.

Personal Goals

Imagine that a person has asked for your help with their personal development. You may begin by inviting them to describe the themes or challenges they want to explore. Looking at the first topic they want to tackle, you may aim:

To clarify the real results they want to achieve – the picture of success;

To clarify the key strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success;

To clarify their responsibilities and the support they would like from you to achieve the picture of success.

Bearing these things in mind, the person may then make a clear action plan. The next step may be for them to get some quick successes on the way towards achieving their goals.

Professional Goals

Imagine that you helping a person to make their best contribution towards an organisation. Much will depend on your role, but one approach is go through the following steps:

To focus on the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success;

To, bearing in mind their strengths, clarify their best contribution towards achieving the picture of success;

To make clear contracts about the outcomes they will deliver, the support they need and how they will proactively keep people informed about their progress towards delivering their part of the picture of success.

Bearing these things in mind, the person may then pursue their action plan. If appropriate, you can meet with them regularly to enable them to achieve the goals. This highlights the next stage.

Support

Many people are self-motivating but it can also be useful to offer them support. This can take many different forms. If appropriate, you may be able:

To offer them encouragement and emotional support;

To offer them positive strategies and practical tools they can use in their own ways;

To offer them other kinds of support that they can use to achieve their goals.

Bearing these things in mind, it can be useful to have a conversation with them about:

The specific things they see as their responsibilities in working to achieve the goals;

The specific kinds of support they would like from you or from others to help them to achieve the goals.

You will do your best to help the person to succeed, but it is important to be clear on the kinds of support you can and can't offer. You may be able to provide encouragement and practical tools, but they may need to continue to motivate themselves.

Imagine that you have made clear contracts about the person's responsibilities and the support you can provide. It may then be time to move on to the next step.

Space

People like to have space to pursue their chosen strategies. This means them having the emotional, physical or other kinds of space to use their knowledge to achieve the goals.

People need space to develop and grow but, in some cases, this can involve operating within certain parameters. They may be encouraged:

To follow certain principles or professional standards;

To operate within other parameters on the way towards achieving the picture of success.

Good leaders, for example, make clear contracts with a person on the specific goals to achieve. They also explain the principles that the organisation wants people to follow, plus the reasons for these principles.

Such leaders manage by outcomes rather than by tasks. They encourage people to use their knowledge and skills within certain parameters to deliver the goods.

Imagine that you have made clear contracts with a person about their aims and the support they would like to achieve their goals. You can then encourage the person:

To be true to themselves and, when appropriate, use their emotions in a positive way;

To build on their personal or professional strengths and follow their successful style;

To find their way of following certain principles or professional standards on the way towards achieving the picture of success.

You can encourage the person to feel that they have the freedom, within certain parameters, to use their strengths to achieve their goals. This can lead to the next step.

Success

Imagine the person is pursuing their chosen strategies towards achieving their aims. How can you encourage them on the journey?

This may depend on whether they are working toward personal or professional goals, but some common themes can be worth bearing in mind. When meeting with the person, it can be useful to help them:

To refocus on the real results they want to achieve – the picture of success;

To clarify what they are doing well and what they can do better on the road towards achieving the picture of success;

To, when appropriate, offer them positive models and practical tools they can use to achieve the picture of success.

You can continue to provide encouragement and pass on knowledge. The person can use this in their own way to achieve their picture of success.

There are many ways to help people to grow. One approach is to give the support and space they need to achieve their goals.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to use elements of this approach? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

The Support And Space Approach To Helping People To Achieve Success

*The specific situation where 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 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 say 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:

*

*

*

The specific things that happened as a result of using this approach were:

*

*

*

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.*

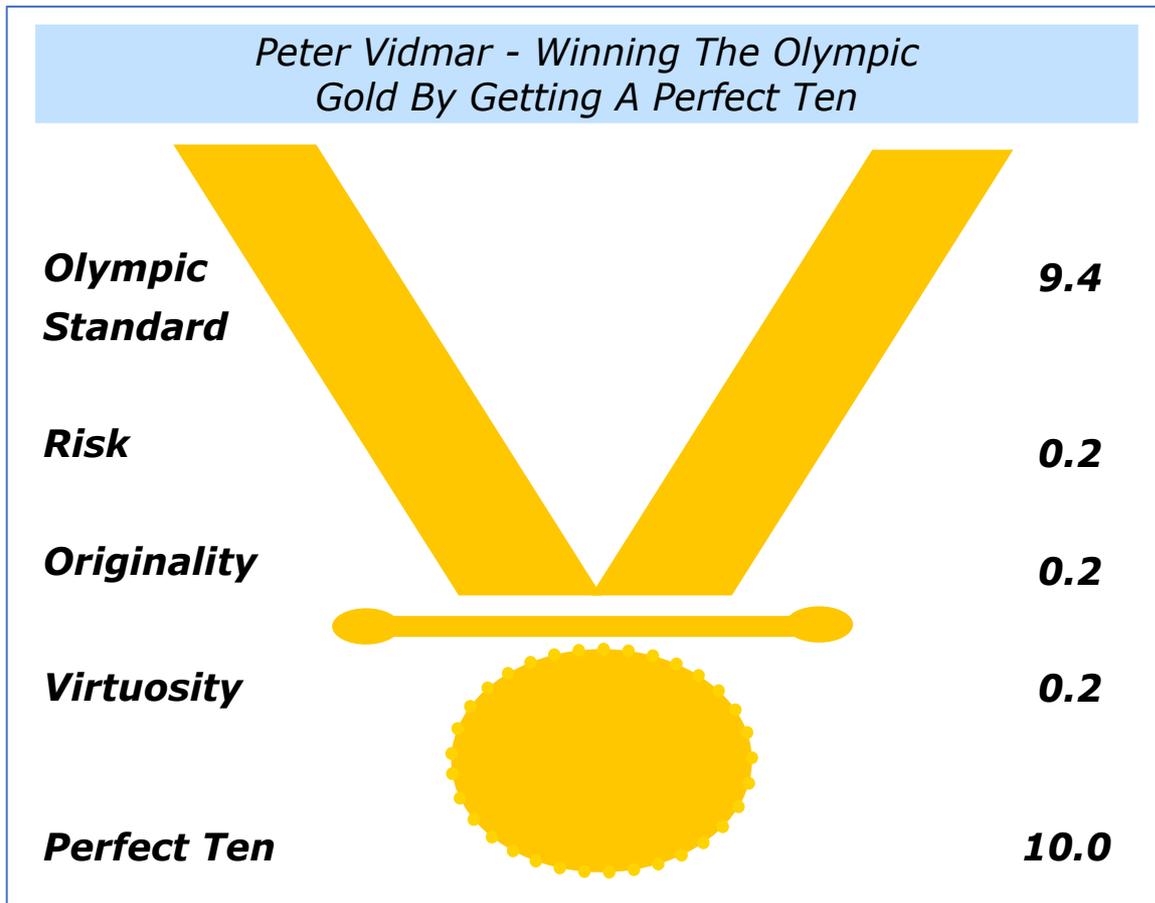
This approach is explained in greater depth later in the book in the section called *The Three Waves Approach*. It describes how to shift a culture by building prototypes and sharing success stories.

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:

*

*

*

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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*

The Positive Pictures Approach

The Positive Pictures Approach

This is a positive approach to helping people. It involves being able:

- *To study positive pictures;*
- *To share positive pictures;*
- *To support people and help them to achieve their positive pictures.*

This approach is based on studying success in many areas of life. It is to study what works, share what works and support people to do what works on the way to achieving success.

One key point is worth mentioning at this stage. Whilst this piece uses the word pictures, some people will have other ways of learning from positive models. They may learn through listening, talking, thinking and then making sense of experiences. Bearing this in mind, let's explore the following themes.

Studying Positive Pictures

Imagine you want to study what works in a specific area of interest. You may want to learn about how people live fulfilling lives, do rewarding work, manage traumatic events, build successful teams or do another activity.

One approach is to study positive models. It is to learn from people, teams or organisations that have done these things successfully. It is to study what they did right – the principles they followed. It is then to build a picture of how they achieved success.

This is an approach that my mentors encouraged me to follow. The first step was to study what worked in the role I had at the time - running therapeutic communities for young people. As my work evolved, however, it involved studying the principles that people followed:

To build on their strengths, follow strategies that worked and achieve success;

To do positive work and, when appropriate, build positive teams and organisations;

To manage setbacks and find solutions to challenges and go on to achieve success;

To manage traumatic events and, as far as possible, go on to live fulfilling lives;

To manage differences and to find, as far as possible, win-win solutions;

To do pioneering work, build successful prototypes and help to shape a positive future;

To focus on their purpose, follow their principles and achieve their picture of success.

You will have your own approach to learning about what works in your specific areas of interest. Sometimes this can lead to the next step.

Sharing Positive Pictures

Different people apply what they have learned from positive models in different ways. They may apply the lessons in their own lives or, when appropriate, pass on the knowledge to other people.

There are many ways to share positive pictures. Depending on their strengths, a person may pass on the principles that work through:

Writing, speeches, films or other media;

Offering therapy, education, workshops or other learning media;

Sharing stories that show people how it is possible to achieve success.

This is an approach that can be used to encourage people. It can help them to learn from positive models and, if appropriate, begin thinking about how they can apply the ideas in their own lives.

Different people do this in different ways. Looking at my own work, this has sometimes involved aiming:

To understand people's situations and clarify what they achieve – their picture of success;

To share what works in these situations – such as the principles that other people have followed to achieve success;

To learn from their positive history – such as the principles they followed in similar situations to achieve success.

There are many ways to build on what works. Sometimes this can involve the next step.

Supporting People And Helping Them To Achieve Their Positive Pictures

This is an approach that I was encouraged to follow early in my career. When meeting a young person who came for an interview at our community, for example, I said something along the following lines:

"Welcome to our community. What do you want to do in your life? If you wish, we can help you to achieve your life goals."

"We do have certain community guidelines. We expect people to take responsibility, encourage other people and work towards their aims.

"It is your choice, of course, so take time to decide if you would like to come here and follow these guidelines. If so, we can provide tools that you can use to achieve your life goals."

The aim was to encourage people to channel their energy in a positive way. Some wanted us to treat them as patients but we did not take that approach. We immediately focused on the carrot – their life goals – and then helped them to work towards their picture of success.

This is an approach that I adapted when working with schools, sports teams, businesses and organisations. After clarifying what the key stakeholders wanted to achieve, I would begin the actual session by saying something along the following lines.

"Welcome to the session. As far as I understand, you want to continue to build on your strengths and work towards your picture of success.

As far as I understand, the specific results you want to achieve are:

To ...

To ...

To ...

"We can focus on these and any other things you want to achieve.

"My role is to provide encouragement and practical tools that you can use to achieve your goals. Your role is to encourage each other, take the ideas you like and use these in your own way.

"Bearing this in mind, are there any other topics you would like to add to the agenda? We can then start working towards the picture of success."

Inspiring speakers sometimes adapt this approach in their own way. They take people to a positive place by describing an inspiring but believable vision. They may say things like:

"I have a dream ... Imagine a place where ... We can get to the moon and back ..."

Such speakers describe more than a positive vision – they also have a plan. They move from the concept to the concrete by giving concrete examples of what the vision may look like in practice.

Mentors also help people to work towards positive pictures. They start by making the person feel welcome and the centre of their world. They then aim:

To clarify the results the person wants to achieve – their picture of success;

To pass on knowledge that the person can use to achieve their picture of success;

To, when appropriate, provide ongoing support to help the person 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 use 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 Pictures Approach

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 in my own way are:

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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.

This is an approach that can be when interviewing people for a role or helping them to set goals in a new job. You can introduce the exercise in the following way.

“There are many ways to set goals. One approach I would like you to explore is to look into the future and do an exercise called *Positive Legacy*.

“The exercise invites you to describe the three things you want to have achieved or to have passed on by the time you move on from the role. We can then explore how it may be possible to pass on this positive legacy. Here is the exercise.”

Positive Legacy

The three things I want to have achieved or to have passed on by the time I move on from the role are:

- * *To have ...*
For example ...

- * *To have ...*
For example ...

- * *To have ...*
For example ...

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:*

*

*

*

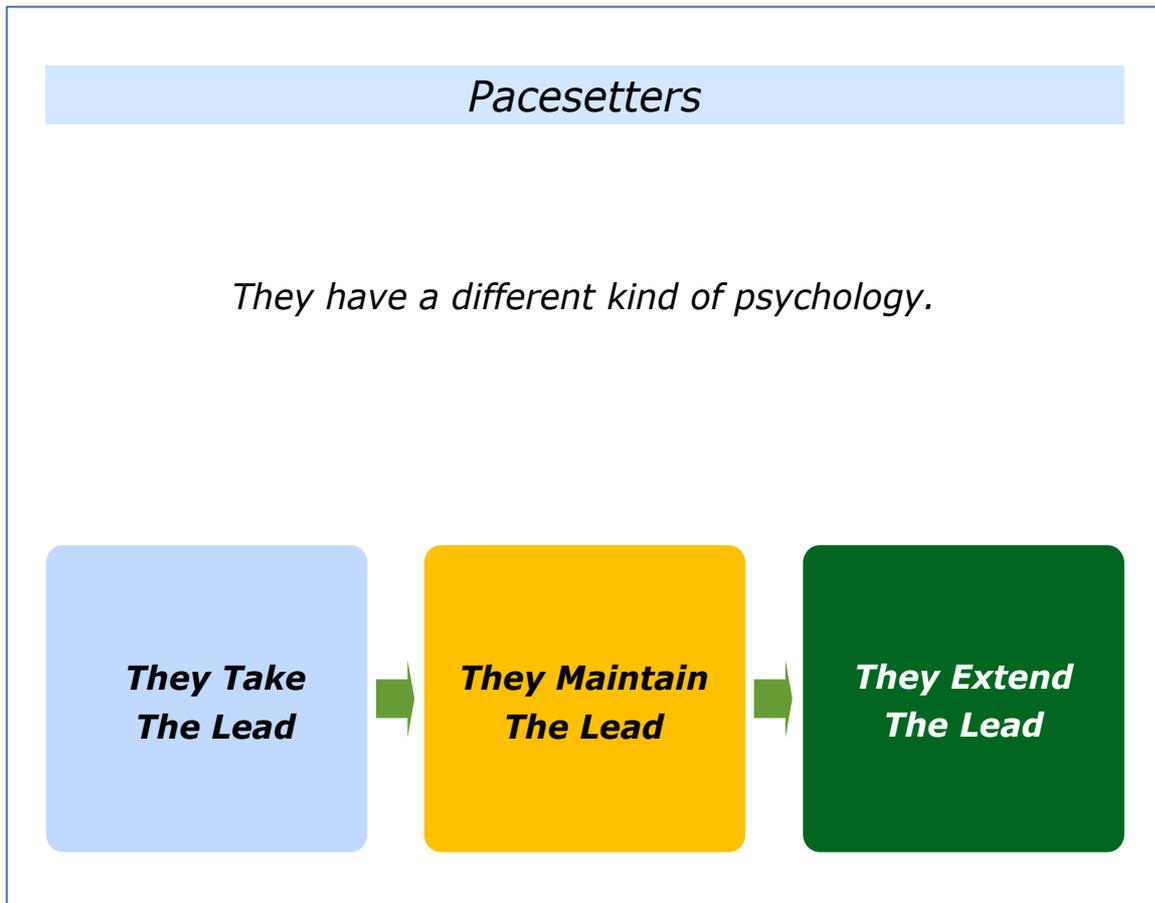
*The specific things that may happen as
a result to using this approach may be:*

*

*

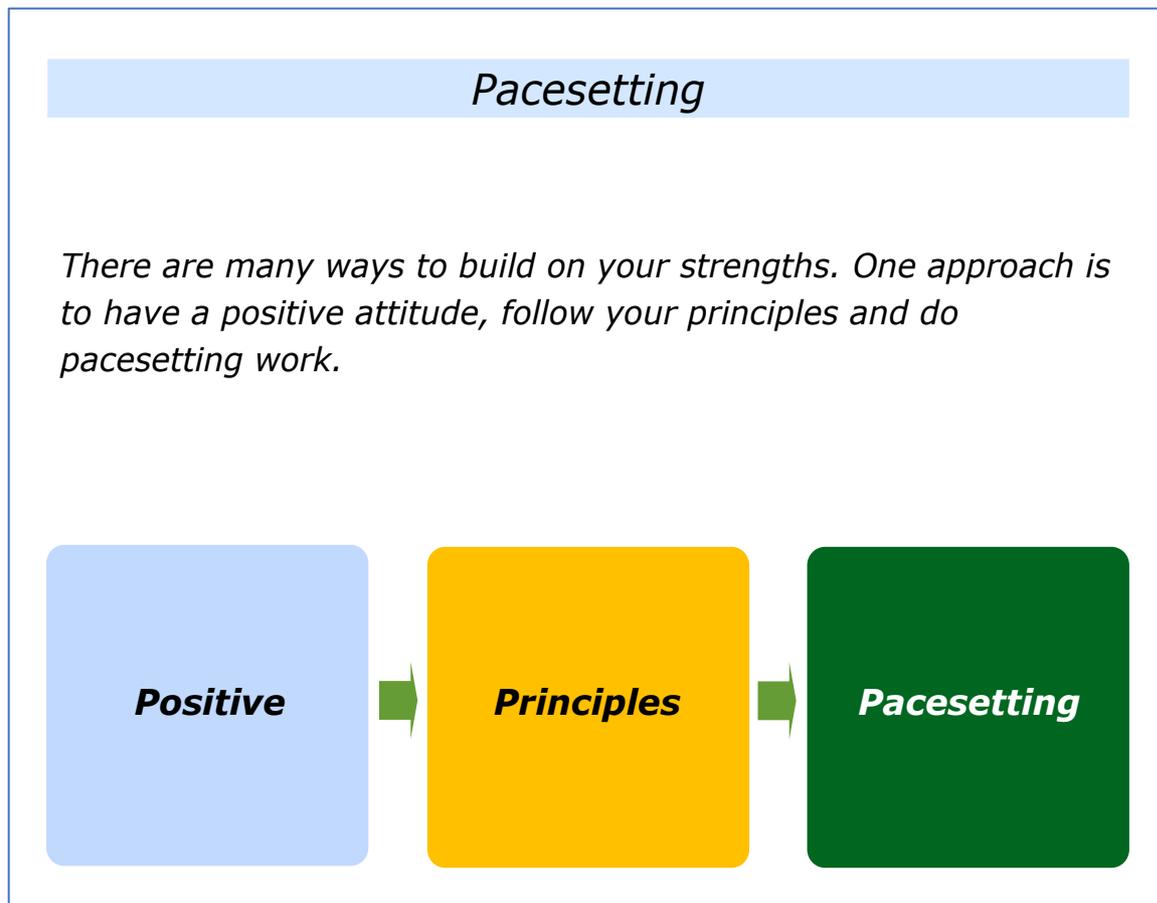
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The Pacesetter's Approach



Pacesetters have a different kind of psychology. They take the lead, maintain the lead and extend the lead. They often develop by surfing several sigmoid curves. They may also create a paradigm that shows people another way of achieving success.

There are many ways to build on your strengths and do pacesetting work in your chosen field. Some people do this by focusing on the following steps.



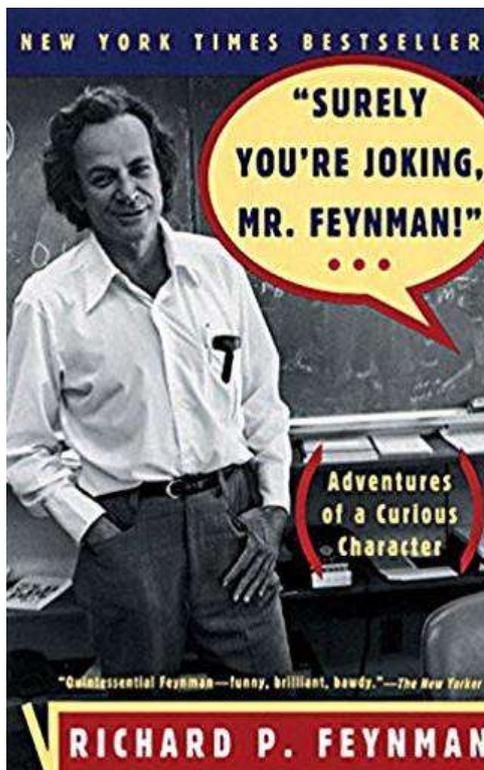
Positive

Pacesetters have a positive attitude to their work. They often follow a passion where they have the ability to do great work. They love to explore positive possibilities for the future.

Such people 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.

Pacesetters often see patterns and extrapolate what may happen in the future. They visualise how things can be and 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.

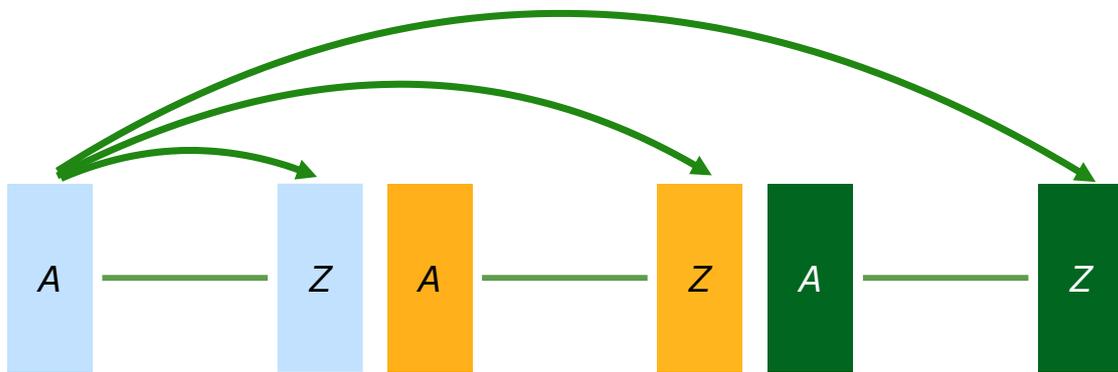
The architect walks onto a site and visualises the finished house. The innovator sees how a piece of technology can transform the world. The mediator imagines a win-win solution for people who are stuck in conflict.

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.

The Third Alphabet

People who are good at a certain activity often see the destination quickly. They go A, B ... and then leap to ... Z.

Some people go beyond Z. They are already onto the second alphabet. Some people go even further. They go into another dimension and go onto the third alphabet.



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.

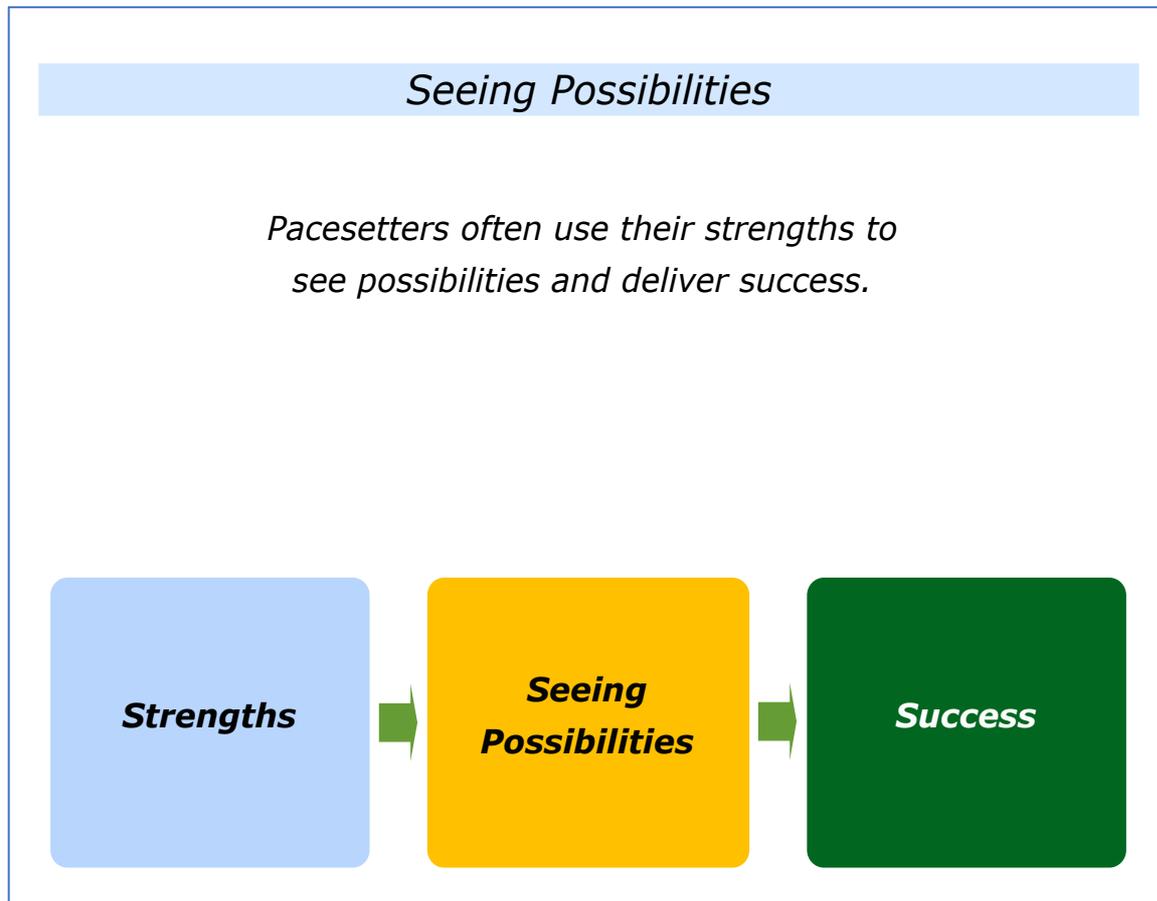
"It is as if he is actually there. He can see, feel and experience what is happening. He can also describe the steps that have been taken to get to this place.

"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 others 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."

Pacesetters See Possibilities



Pacesetters often use their strengths to see possibilities and deliver success. Sometimes they do this in positive situations. Sometimes they do it when faced by challenges. They then 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?

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.

People who see possibilities aim see the big picture. They look for patterns and connections. They then do deep work on the way towards achieving a compelling goal.

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?"

Pacesetters sometimes have what Arie de Geus, the author of *The Living Company*, called a memory of the future. Such workers anticipate challenges and find potential solutions.

Developing A Memory Of The Future

Great workers continually look ahead to envisage what will happen and develop a memory of the future.



Looking ahead, 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 these rehearsals help 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.

Such people sometimes go beyond having positive visions. They want to translate these into action. They then focus the next step.

Principles

Pacesetters often follow their chosen principles. The next section looks at people who have done this in different fields.

John Wooden, the legendary American College basketball coach, was a pacesetter who influenced many coaches in sports. 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:

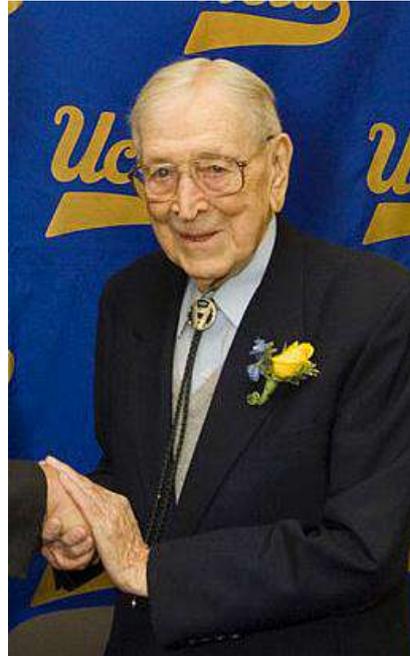
"Perform at your best when your best is required. Your best is required each day."

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."

Maria Montessori was a pioneering educator who followed certain principles to help children to develop. She began her career by qualifying 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. Many people have enjoyed learning in Montessori schools. Some of the famous names include the following.

Anne Frank, the diarist; Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the novelist; Katherine Graham, the former owner-editor of The Washington Post; George Clooney, the actor; Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon; Sergey Brin and Larry Page, the co-founders of Google; Jimmy Wales, the founder of Wikipedia.

Many others have supported or taught at such schools. These include: Helen Keller, Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, Buckminster Fuller, Jean Piaget, the Dalai Lama, Erik Erikson and Nigel Kennedy. Here are some of the themes she followed in her approach to education.

Maria believed in following certain principles to help children to learn. She developed her own philosophy which is allied to the concepts of deep learning and deep work. She expressed this later in the following quotations.



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.

"Our aim is not only to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his innermost core.

"The essential thing is for the task to arouse such an interest that it engages the child's whole personality.

"It is necessary for the teacher to guide the child without letting him feel her presence too much, so that she may always be ready to supply the desired help, but may never be the obstacle between the child and his experience."

"The first essential for the child's development is concentration. The child who concentrates is immensely happy. The first dawning of real discipline comes through work. Every action of the teacher can become a call and an invitation to the children.

"The more the capacity to concentrate is developed, the more often the profound tranquillity in work is achieved, then the clearer will be the

manifestation of discipline within the child. Childhood passes from conquest to conquest in a rhythm that constitutes its joy and happiness."

Pacesetters Can Learn To Channel Their Personalities

Pacesetters sometimes have personalities that are seen as different. They may be considered to be introverted, highly sensitive, dyslexic or slow learners at school.

Such people can learn to channel their personalities rather than change their personalities. They can learn strategies to survive but these may be different from those needed to succeed when following a conventional route.

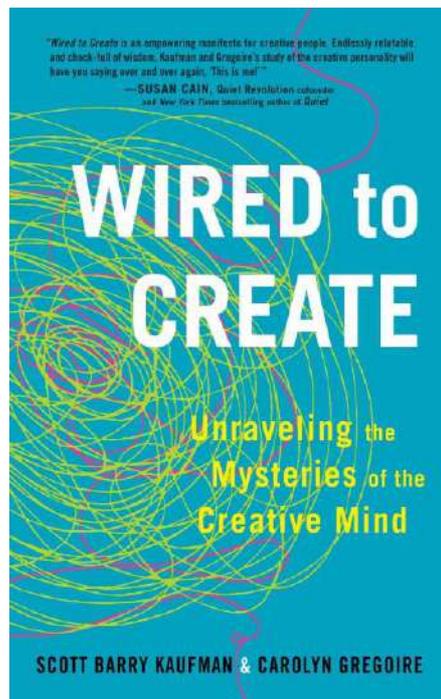
Some people who have such qualities are encouraged but others have a more difficult time at school. They may be labelled as dyslexic, having Attention Deficit Disorder or other challenges.

Some find their niche when moving into work. One successful trader I know had synaesthesia, the joining up of senses that are normally separate. They talked about their ability to actually 'smell a deal'. They followed their nose and delivered the good.

Some people are inventive and 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 thrive and perform at their best in this new field.

There are many books on the subject of how creative people can learn to develop. The following section describes some 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.

Pacesetters Follow Their Own Creative Principles

Pacesetters enjoy being creative. Some 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:

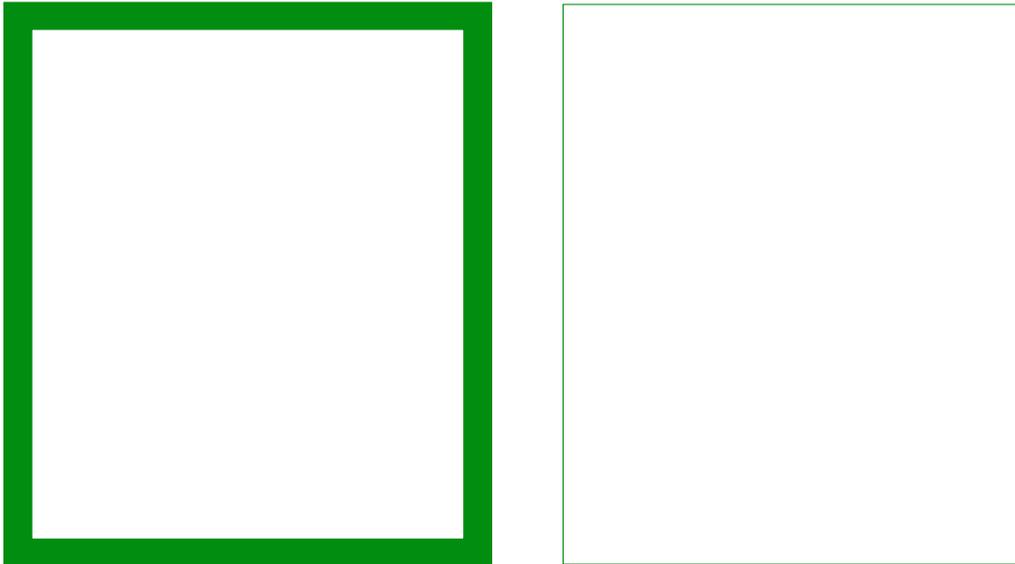
"Creativity is driven by constraints. When we have limited resources — even when the limits are artificial — creative thinking is enhanced.

"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.



Different pacesetters 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.

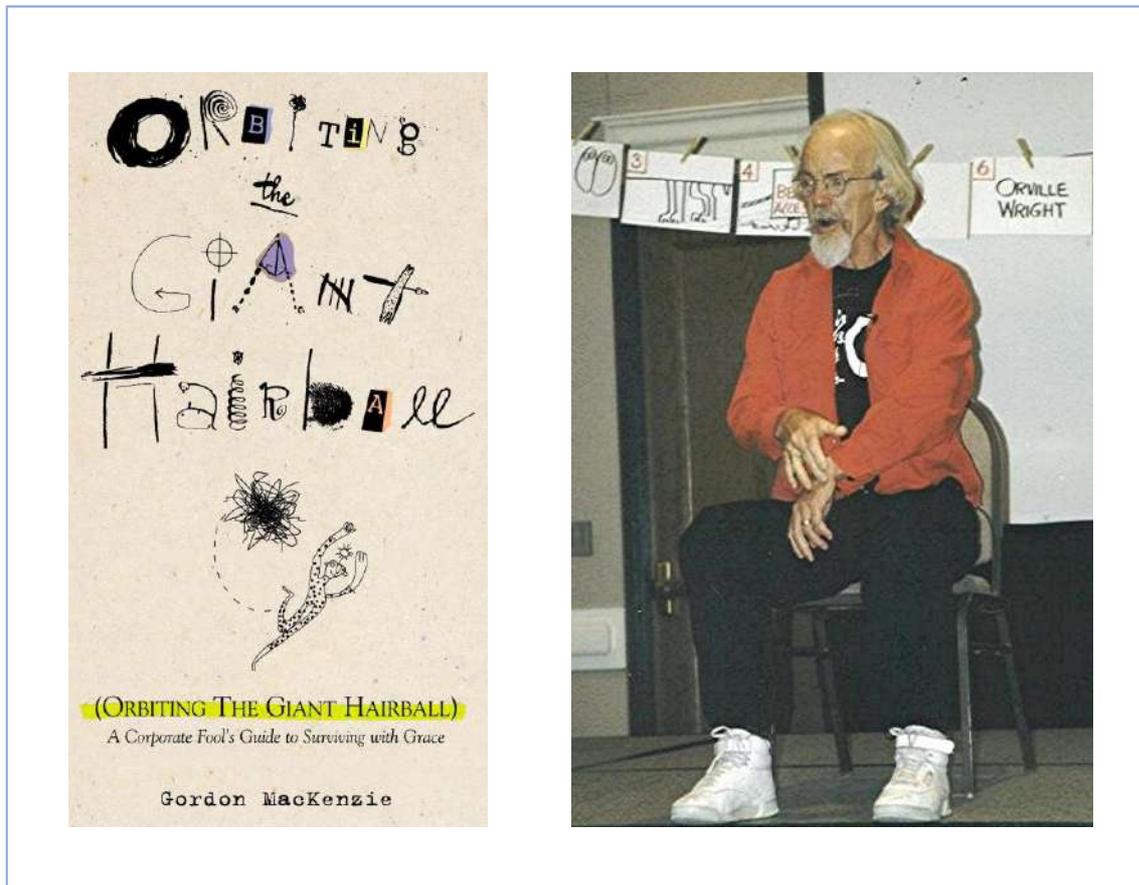
"Systems sometimes drive out the creativity they need to survive. So I found other ways to develop new ideas."

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."

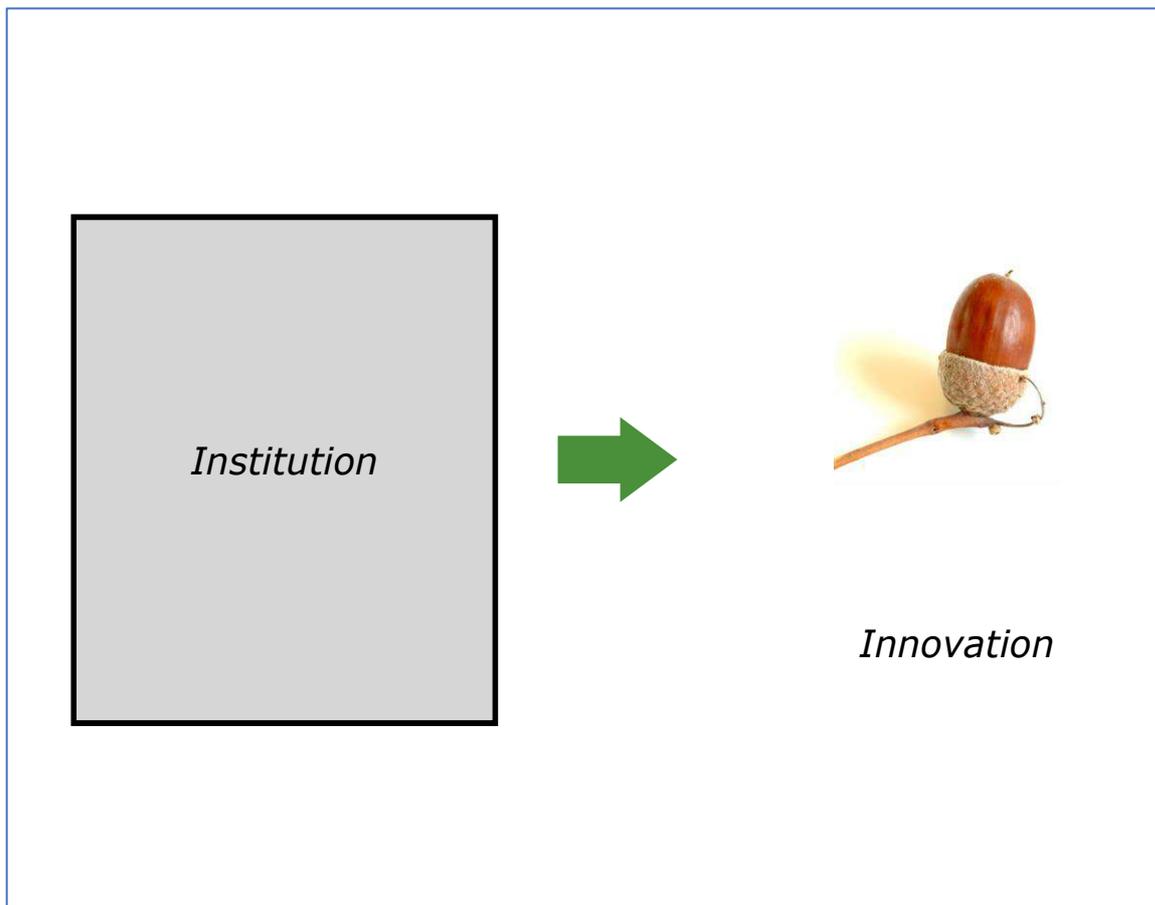
"The message is: If you stay in the lines your life will be a masterpiece. That's a lie. You have to constantly battle to be nobody but yourself."

"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."

Some people find ways to do creative work in organisations but others choose another route. Let's explore this path.

*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

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:*

*

*

*

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

*

*

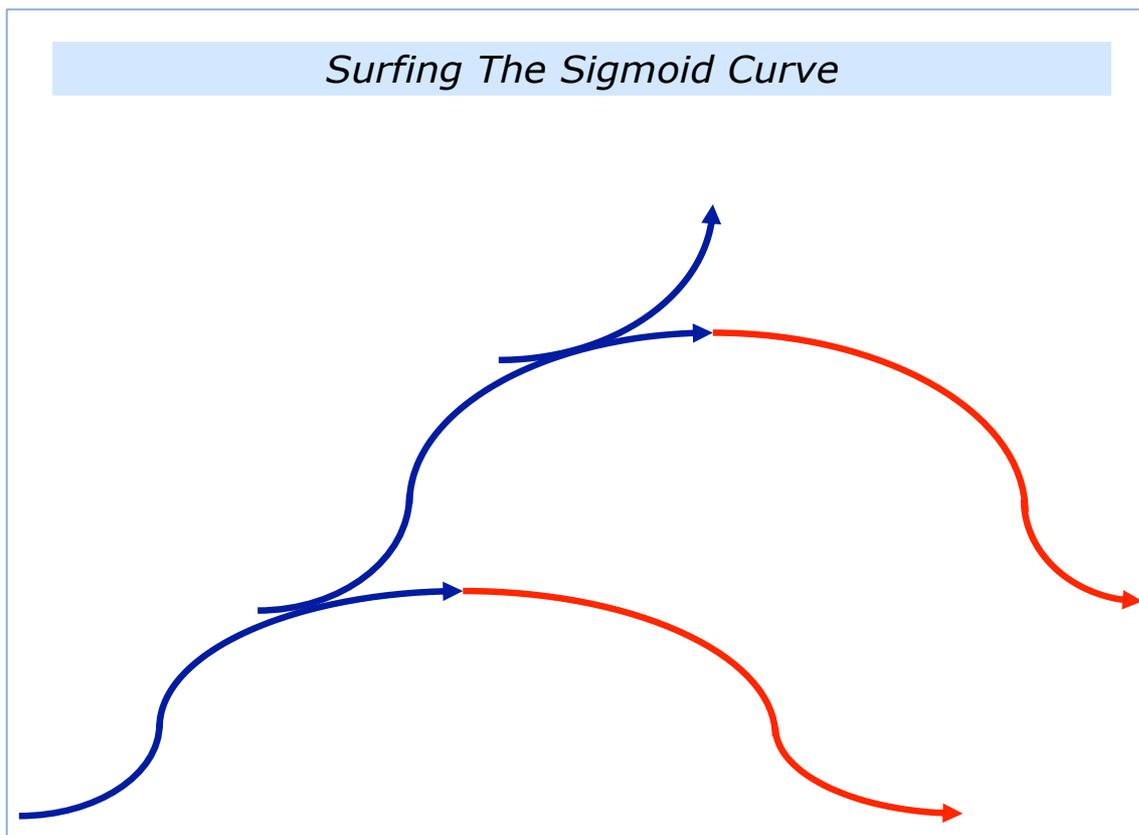
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Imagine that you want to do a piece of work. You may want to do a creative project, build a successful prototype, shift a culture or do another activity. You may also want to do work that embodies the following qualities.

Pacesetters Often Surf The Sigmoid Curve

Pacesetters often 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 pacesetting customers and others to succeed? How can I create or surf onto the next sigmoid curve?

Pacesetters Aim To Deliver Positive Results

Different pacesetters 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.

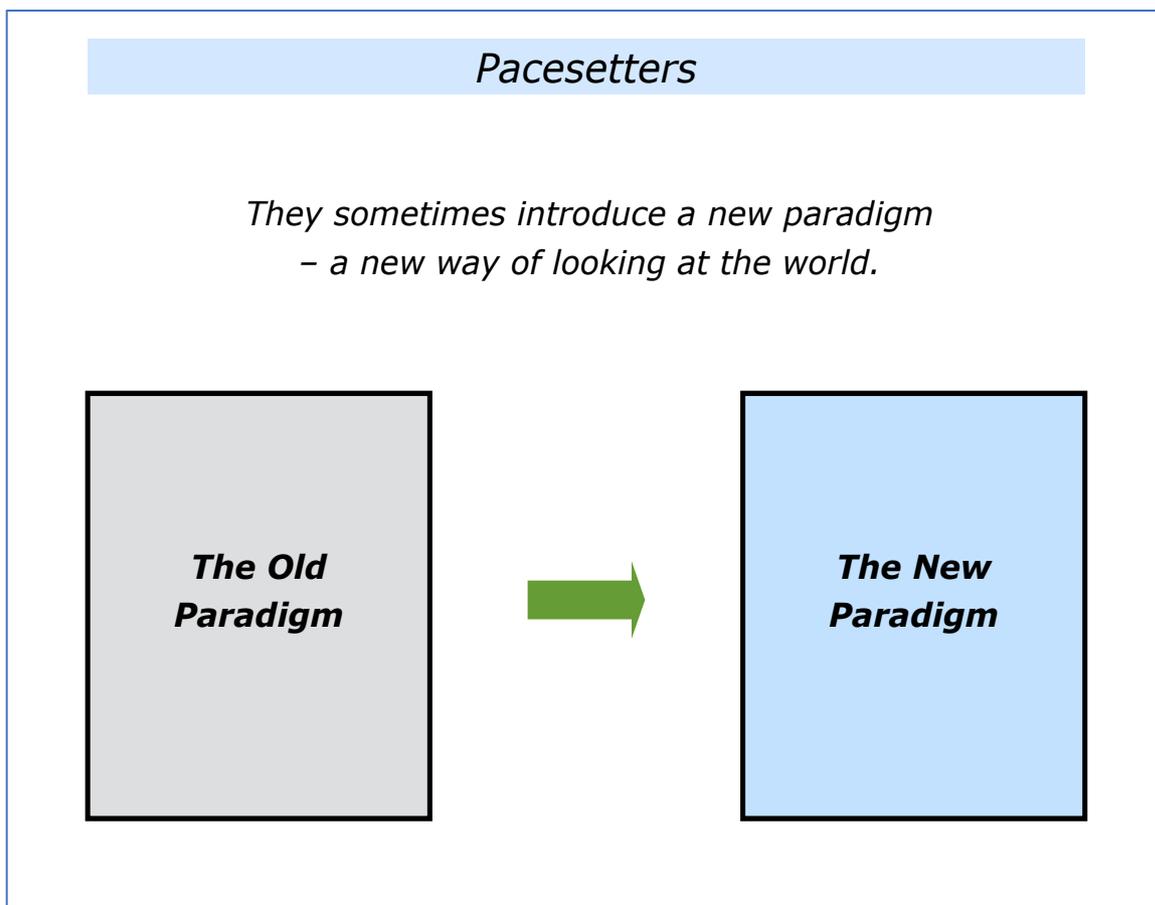
"When I opened the doors, I was not thinking about changing the world. I simply had to take £1000 in the first week to feed the baby and pay the bills."

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."



Pacesetters sometimes introduce a new paradigm – a way of looking at the world – that shifts things in a profound way. Such ideas can be transformational and change the rules of the game.

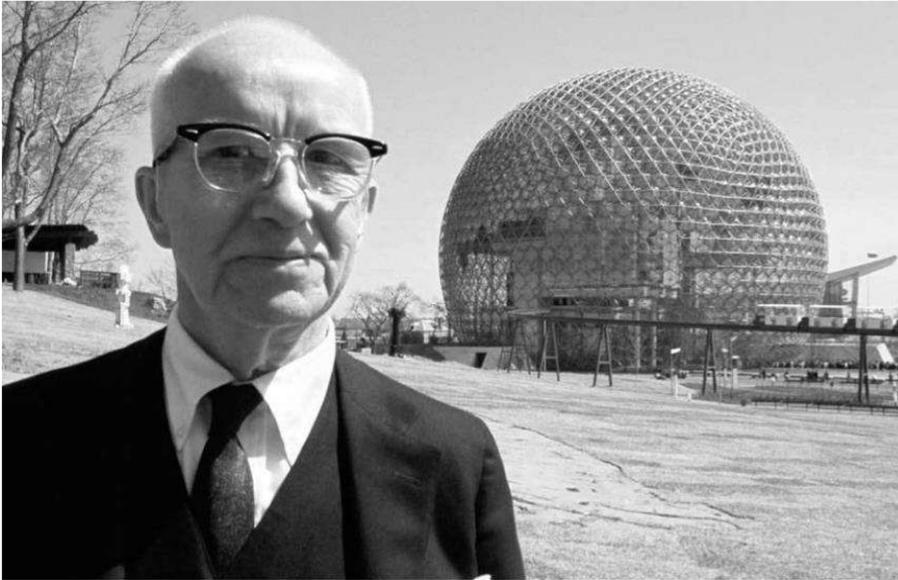
Dick Fosbury created a revolutionary method of high jumping. Sony invented the Walkman. The internet had a profound effect on the way people live, work and do business.

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.

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.

This was an approach taken by Buckminster Fuller, the author of *Operating Manual For Spaceship Earth*. He believed it was vital to show people another way of living, working and sustaining Planet Earth. Bucky believed in the following approach.



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

Pacesetters sometimes seem to go into a different dimension to deliver the desired results. They may be playing a sport, performing a song, solving a problem, tackling a challenging or aiming to achieve a specific goal.

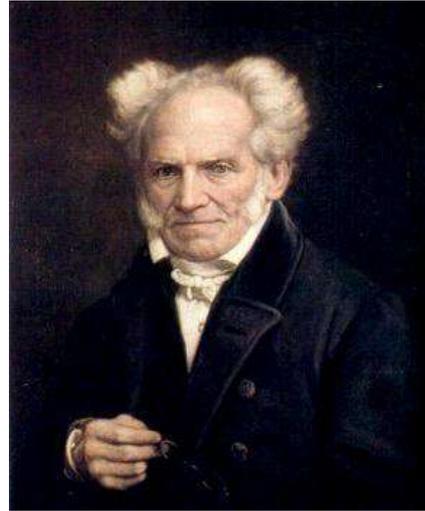
They do things that go beyond what others can imagine. They seem to focus on something that only they can see. They then translate this into reality and do something special to deliver the goods.

People who do such things may demonstrate a touch of genius. They then bring to life the often cited quote by Arthur Schopenhauer.

Genius

*Talent hits a target
no one else can hit;*

*Genius hits a target
no one else can see.*



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

You may want to do this in the field of counselling, education, health care, business or another activity. You may want to do it when working an individual, a leader or when building a successful prototype.

What may be the piece of work you want to do? How can you deliver this successfully? What will be the benefits of doing such a piece of work – both for yourself and for other stakeholders?

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

Pacesetting Work In The Future

*The specific piece of pacesetting
work that I may like to do is:*

*

*The specific things I can do to do
this piece of pacesetting work are:*

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*

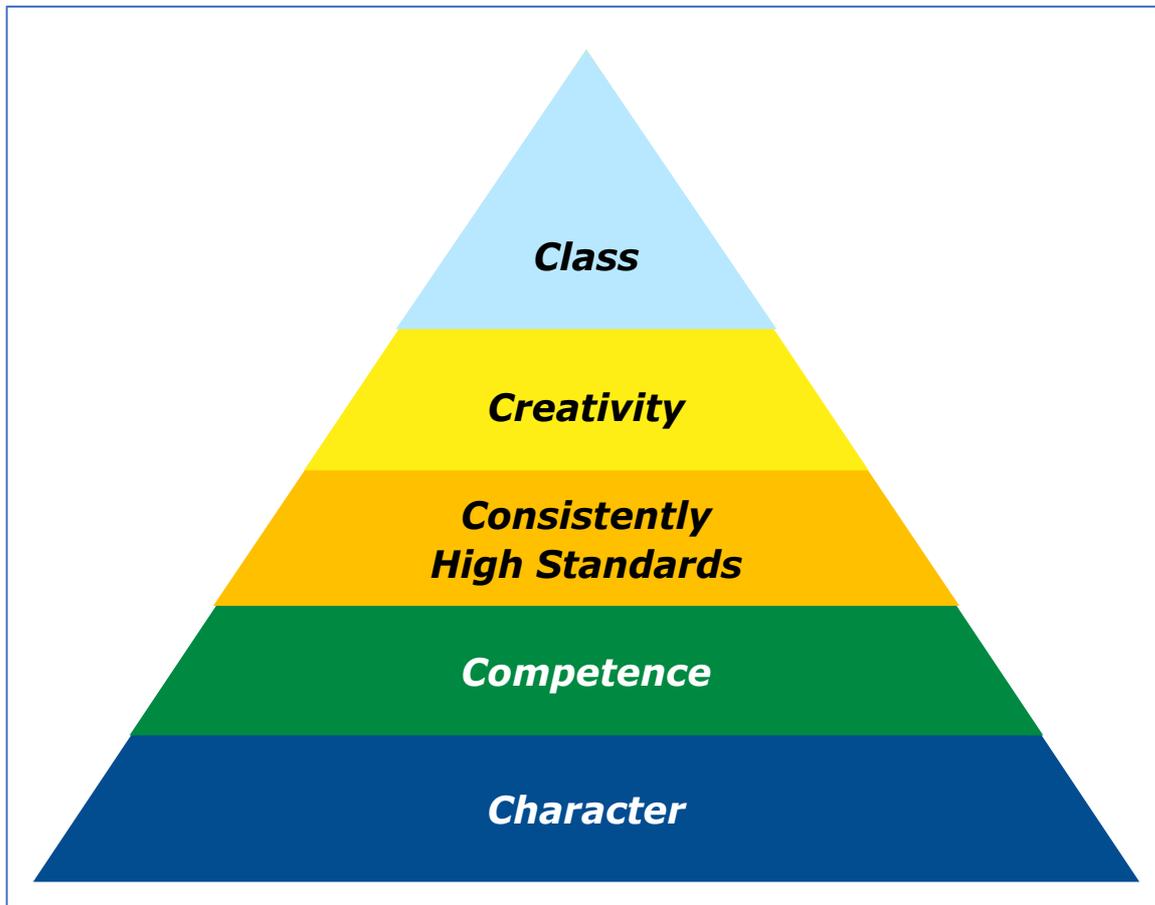
*The specific benefits of doing this
piece of pacesetting work may be:*

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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. You are able to both helicopter above the situation and be 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:

*

*

*

Competence

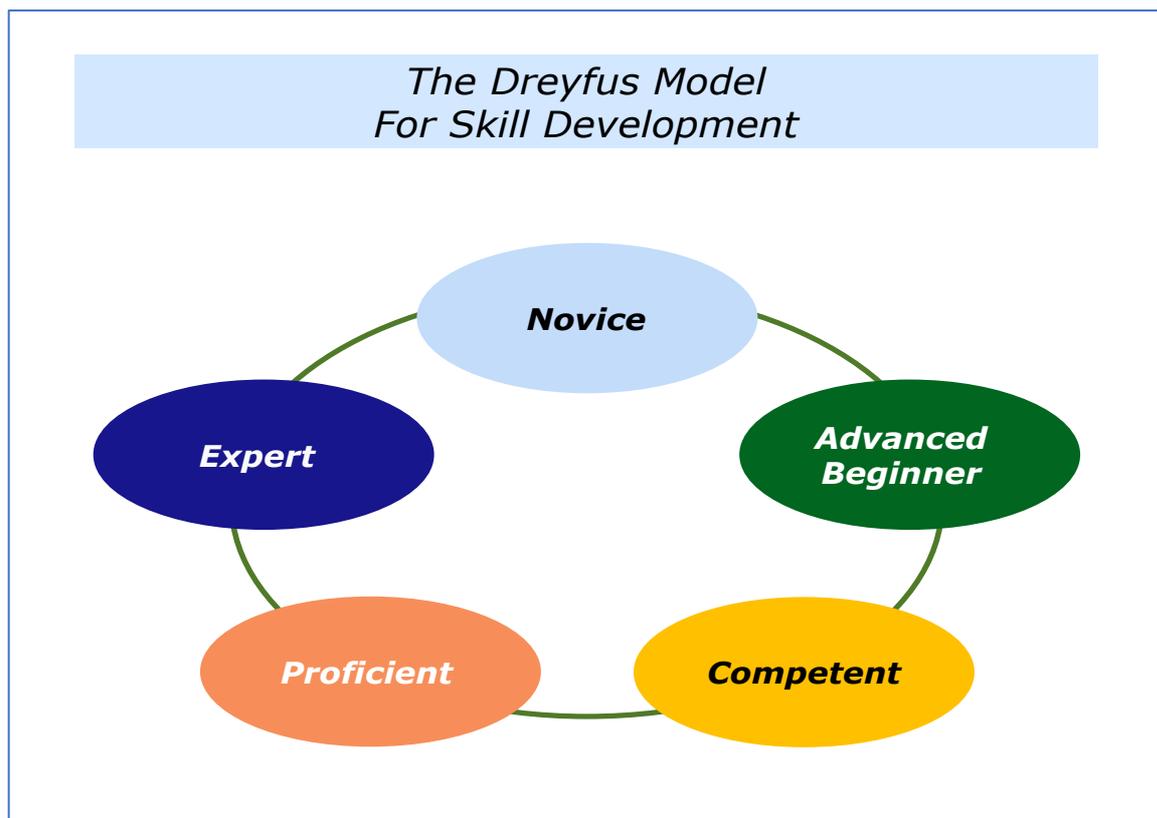
Character is a good starting point but a person must also have the required competence. This calls for having the right combination of strengths, strategic thinking and skills.

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.

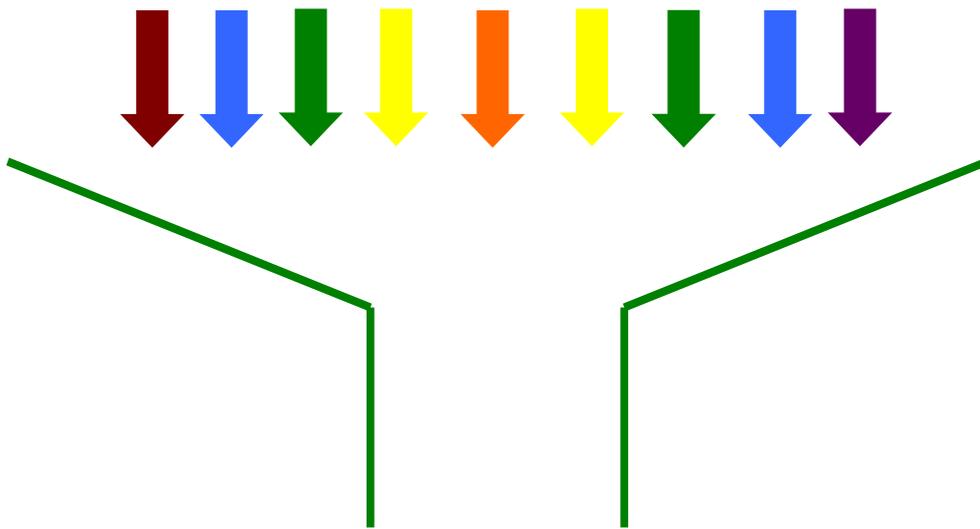
Expert

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.

Crowdedness

People can sometimes experience crowdedness - many things happening at once in a specific activity. They can then feel out of control and overwhelmed when doing this activity.



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;

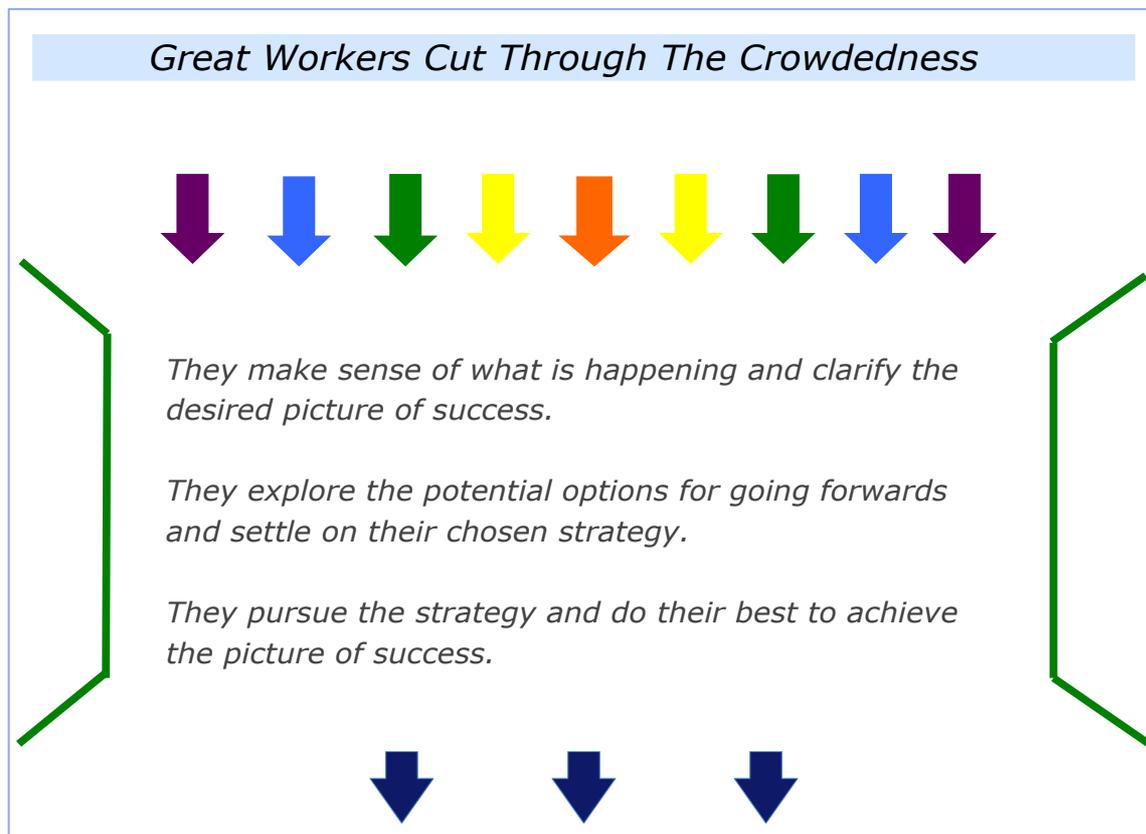
Some people may be able to add to their repertoire of skills for managing crowdedness in a particular activity;

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:

*

*

*

Consistently High Standards

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?

Consistently High Standards – 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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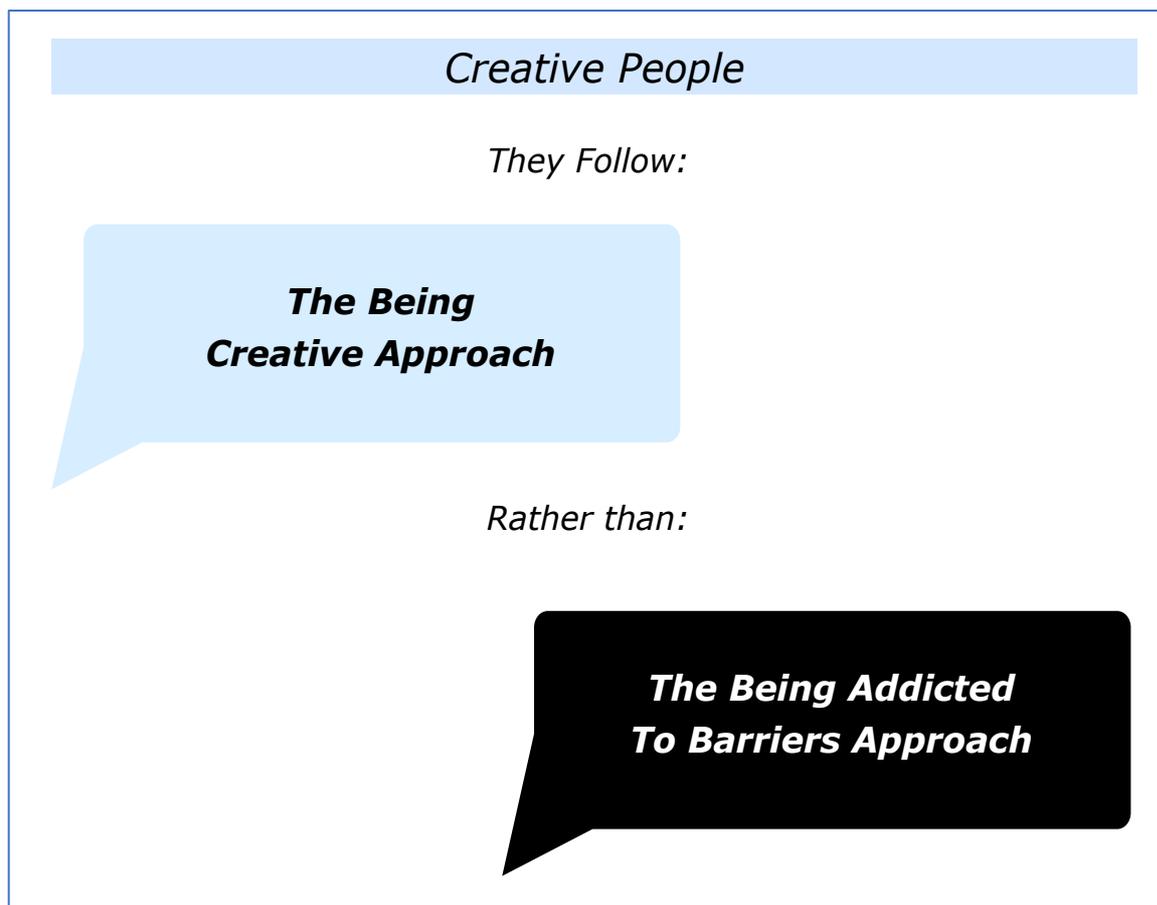
Creativity

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.



Different people follow this approach in different ways. Some people explore the following themes.

They Clarify The Goals By Asking:

What are the goals? What are the real results we want to achieve? What will be the benefits? What will be happening that will show we have achieved the goals?

They Clarify How They Can Reach The Goals By Asking:

What are the things we can control? What are our strengths? What are our assets? How can we use these to reach the goals? How can we find creative ways to go around any obstacles to reach the goals?

Creative people recognise that sometimes there are barriers that it can be good to remove. But it is important not to become addicted to focusing on barriers.

One organisation, for example, told its people to spend lots of time focusing on removing blockers and barriers. It worked for a while but then people paralysed themselves by talking endlessly about barriers.

This led to people becoming institutionalized. They fell into the habit of waiting for the organisation to make life perfect before they could be creative. We eventually helped people to revive their creative muscle and develop new ways to reach their goals.

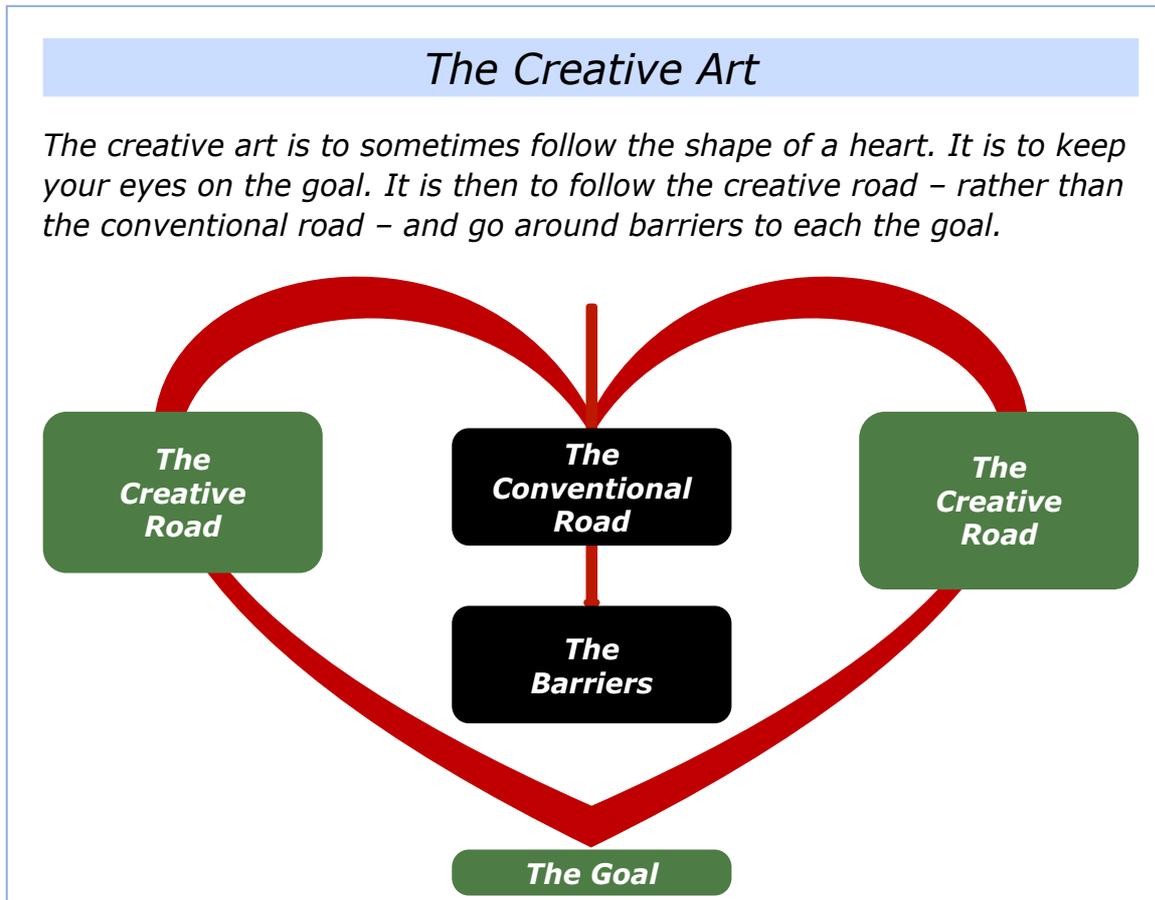
Many creative people follow the creative art. They go around barriers to reach the goal. A teacher described this model during a lecture I attended in the early 1970s. He gave the following description.

"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 barriers. 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 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:

*

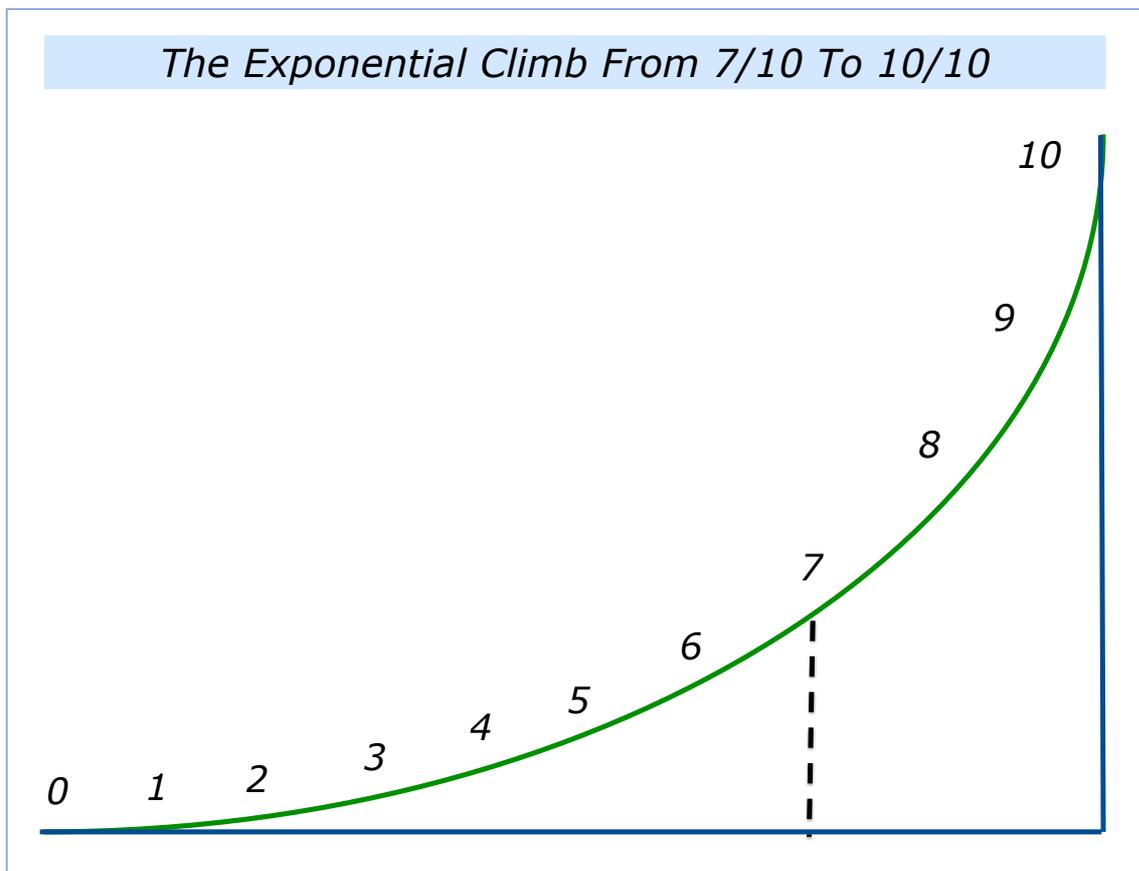
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Class

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

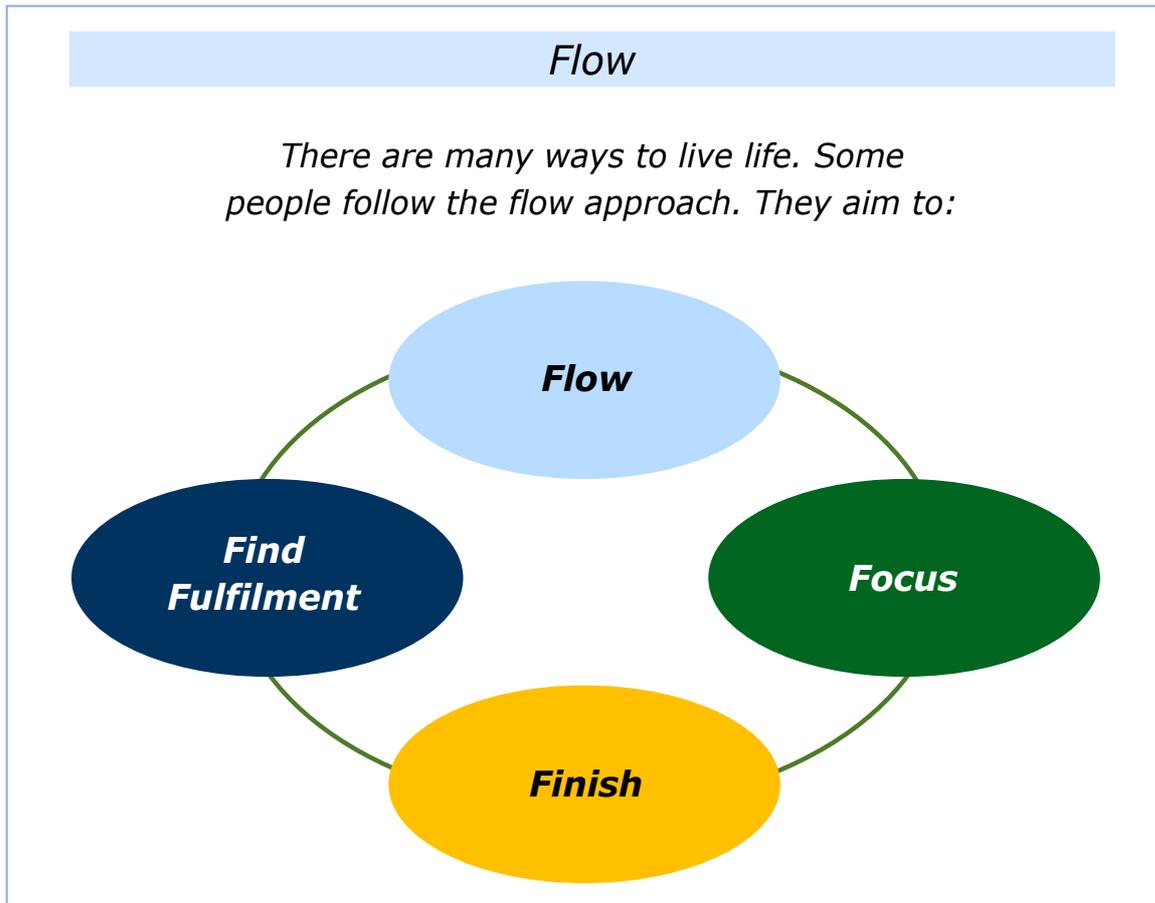
The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:

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The Flow Approach



There are many ways to live life. Some people aim to follow the flow approach. They aim to flow, focus, finish and sometimes find fulfilment.

Different people pursue this approach in different ways. They may follow it when encouraging people, doing creative work, playing a sport or doing another activity.

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.

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.

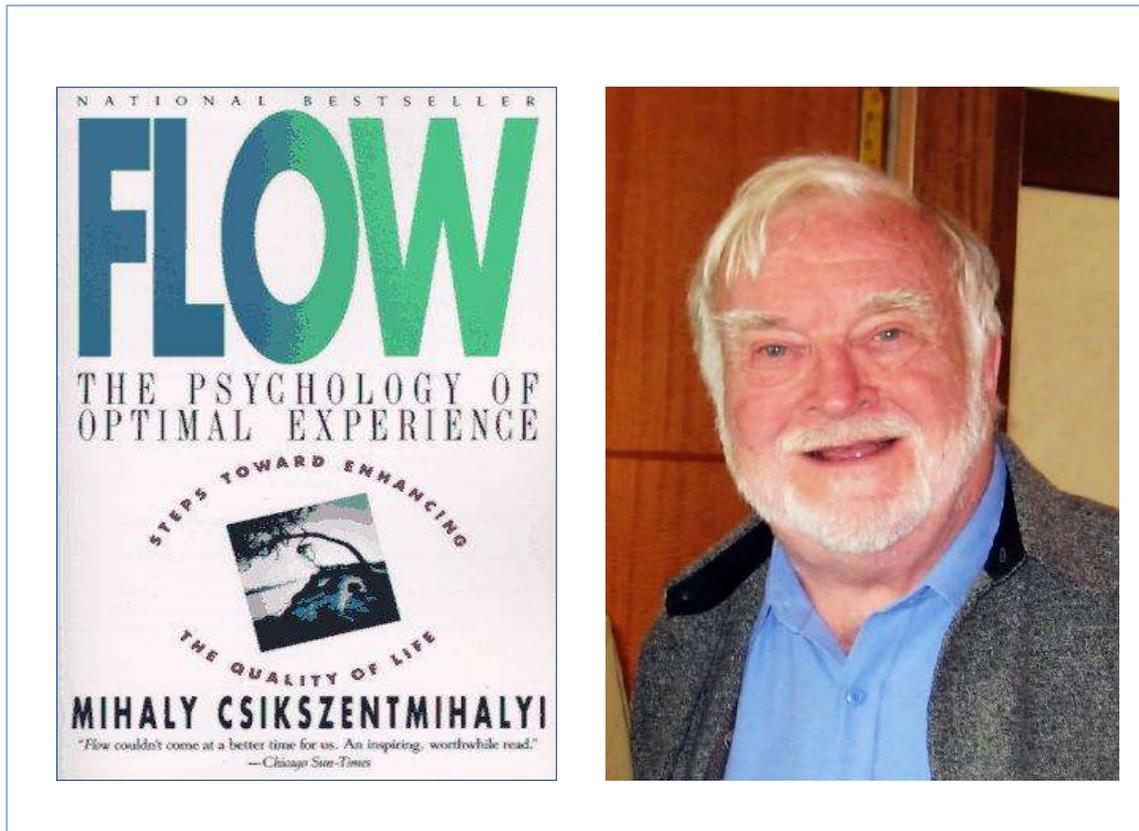
Your sense of self disappears when doing the task but afterwards you emerge stronger. Mihaly explains this in the following way in his writing.

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, finish 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.

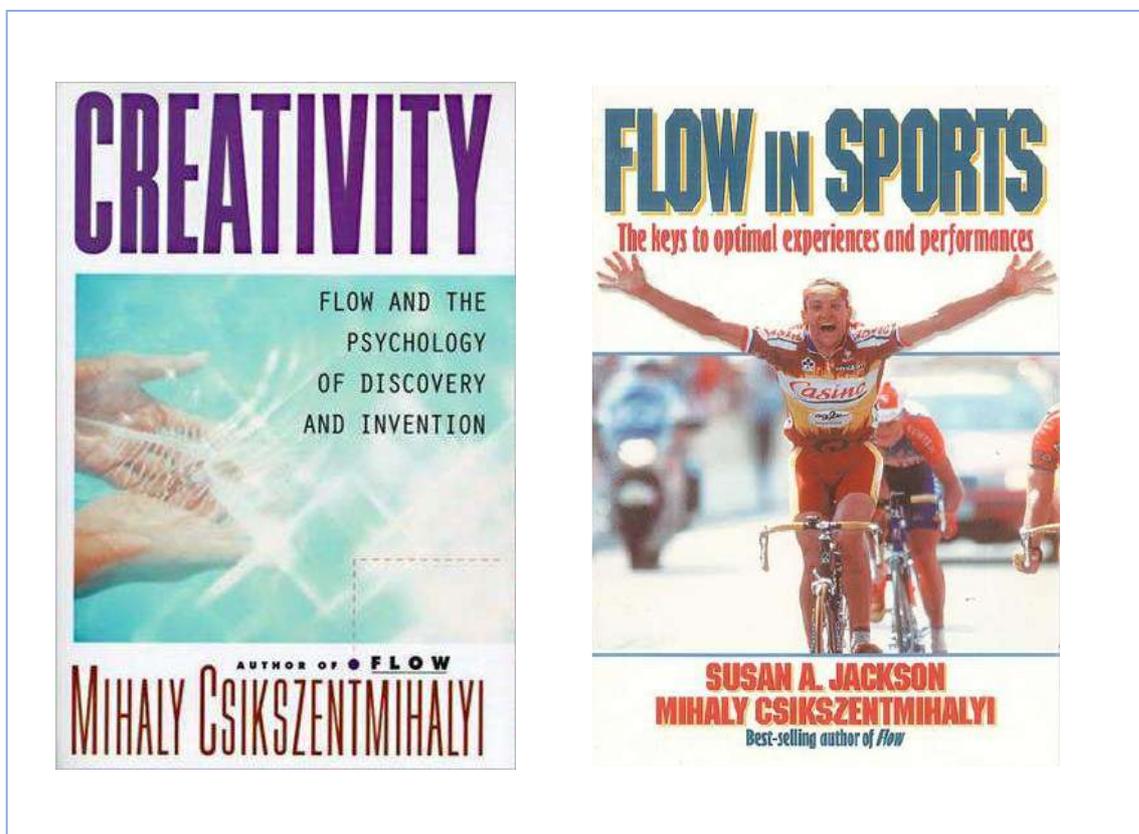
"One thing that I noticed - and I knew also from my own experience - is that when they started painting, they almost fell into a trance.

"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 in his writing.

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;

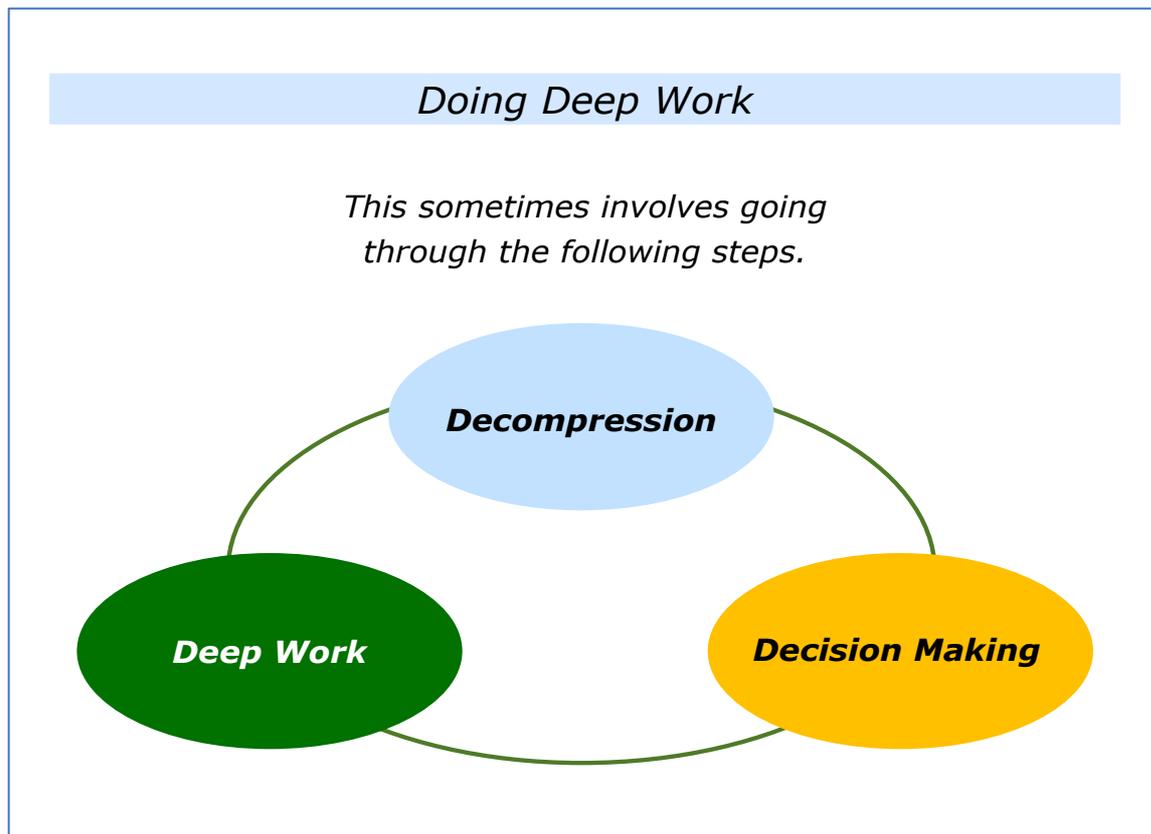
They clarify the pluses and minuses involved in working to achieve the goals;

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

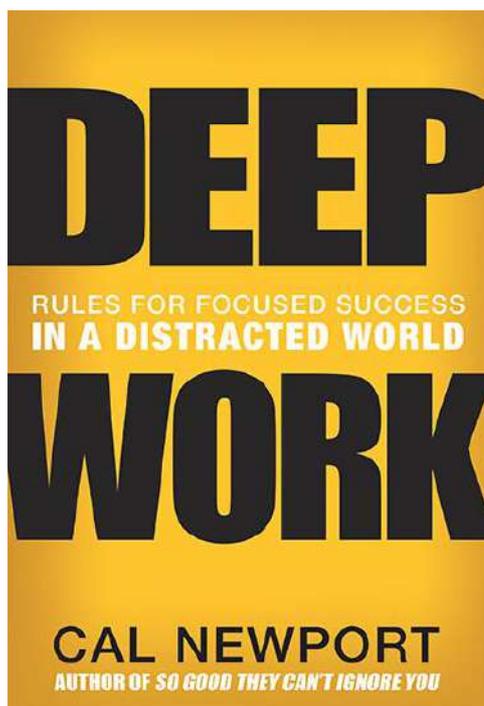
Different people choose different ways to decide on their course of action. Some let their minds drift, some sleep on things, some focus on the things that give them positive energy.

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.

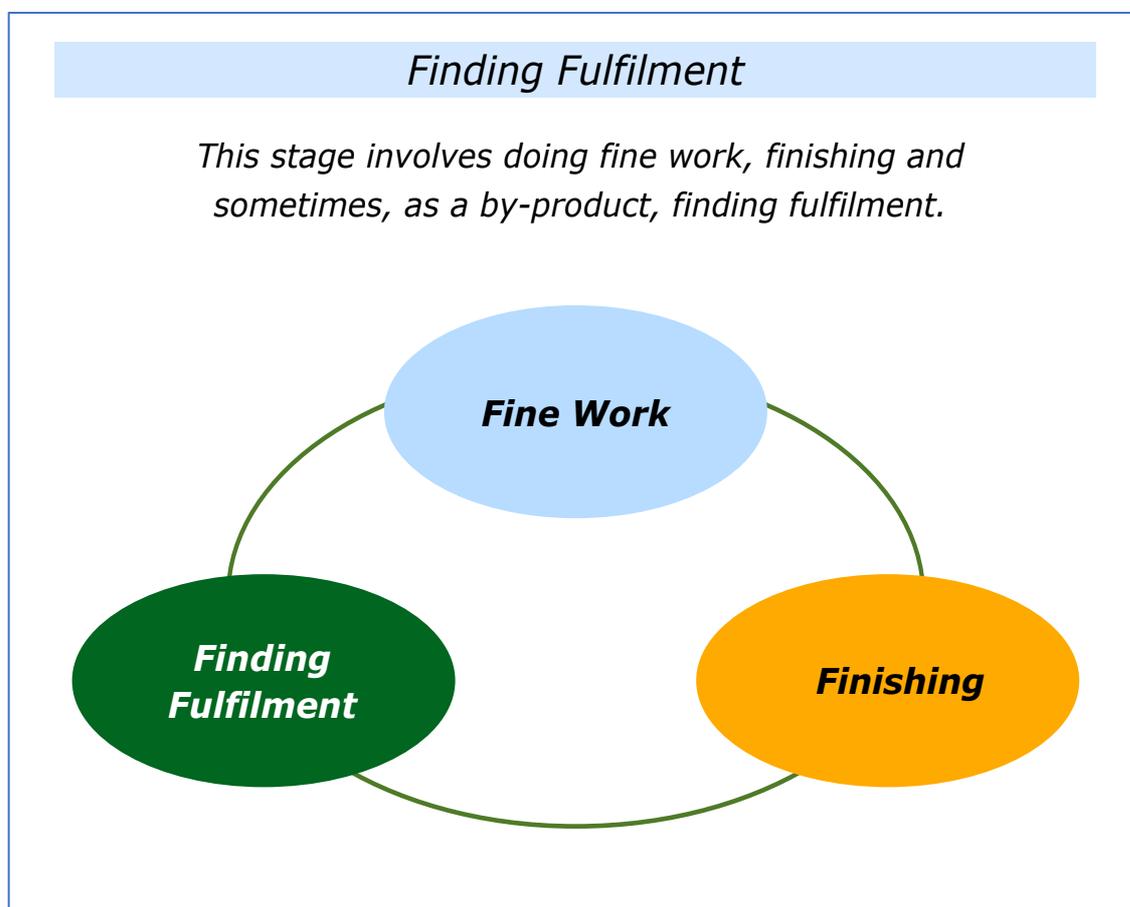
Deep work will make you better at what you do and provide the sense of true fulfilment that comes from craftsmanship.

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.

Finish

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.

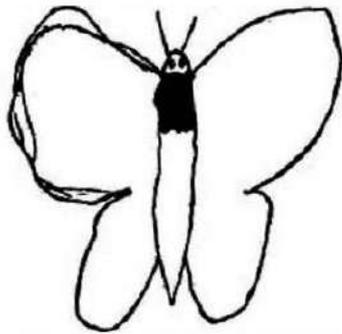
I want them all to be craftsmen. Some may take a little longer; some may need to use extra strategies and resources. In the end, they need to be proud of their work, and their work needs to be worthy of pride.

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*.

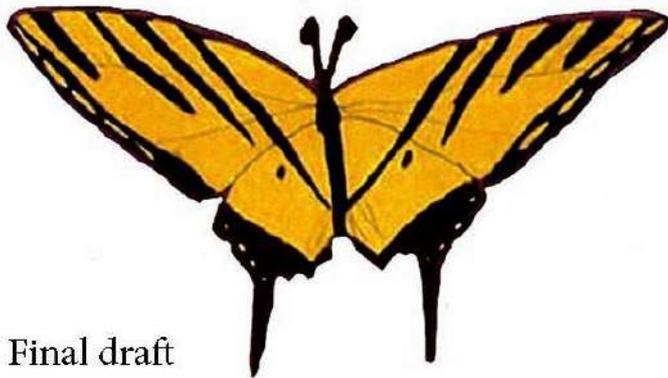
This showed how Austin, a first-grader, developed his original drawing of a butterfly. Below is a picture of his first version. This is followed by one where he had made improvements and finished properly.

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:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to follow these principles – plus add other skills – to finish things properly in the future are:

*

*

*

Find 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 Flow Approach In Action

The flow approach 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.

They aim 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 everything 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.

Some people also aim to flow and show fighting spirit on the way to fulfilment. They take this approach rather going straight into fighting mode.

One person described how they learned to follow this approach rather than immediately getting into the boxing ring.

"Most of my life has been spent in fight mode. I have run companies where the emphasis was on selling, beating the opposition and growing every year.

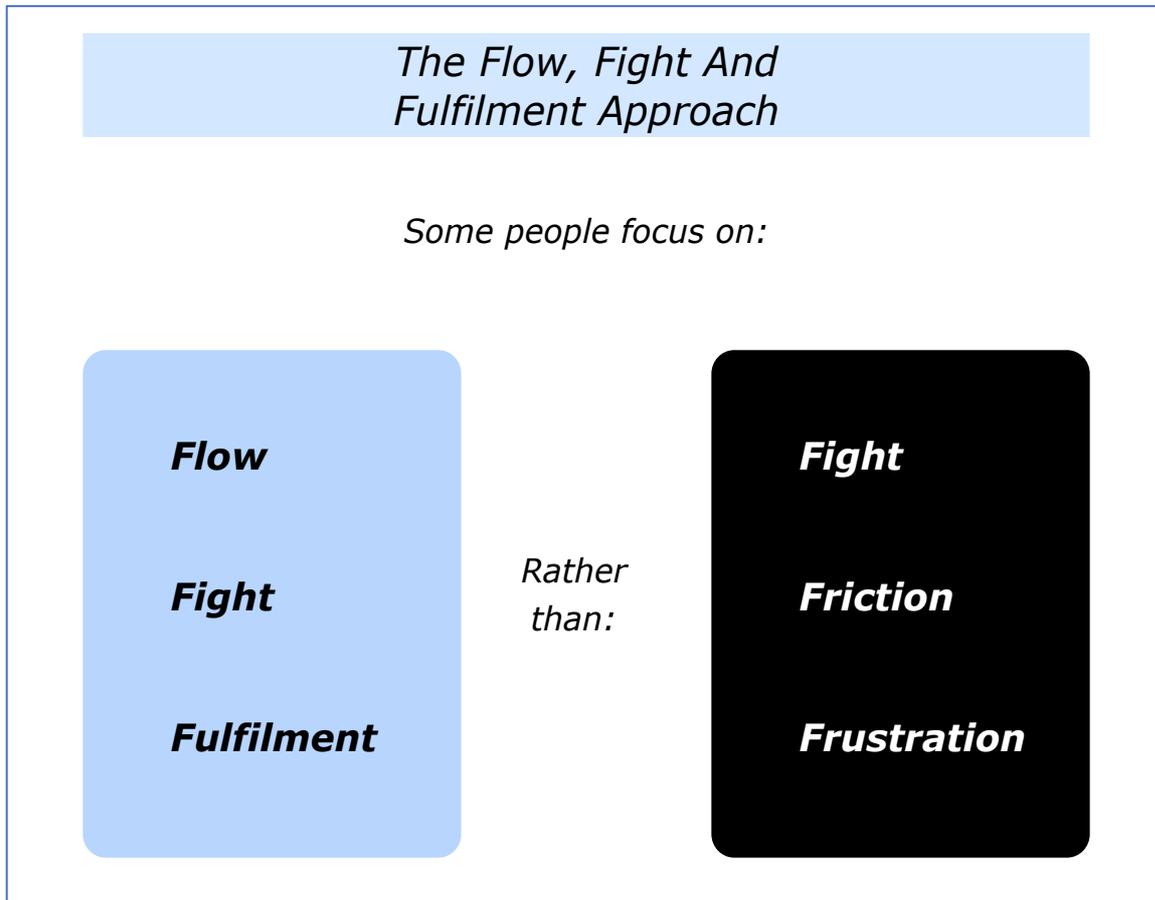
"I have actually been good at fighting but there has been a price to pay. Every day was a battle and I sometimes passed this on to my family.

"One breakthrough came when helping my son who is dyslexic. At first I tried to force him to fight it but then I had a realisation.

"My son and I related best when we did activities where he was in flow. This was when we went cycling, swimming and doing other activities. At those times I relaxed and supported him.

"Bearing this in mind, I experimented by aiming to go into flow at work. I did this before channelling my fighting spirit. This worked and I am much happier for it.

"Of course, sometimes I go straight into the boxing ring but then I remind myself to slow down and flow. This is both more effective and makes everybody happier."



Looking ahead, can you think of a specific activity where you may want to follow the flowing approach? 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.

The Flow Approach

The specific activity where I may want to follow the flow approach may be:

*

The specific things I can do then to flow, focus, finish and maybe find fulfilment are:

*

*

*

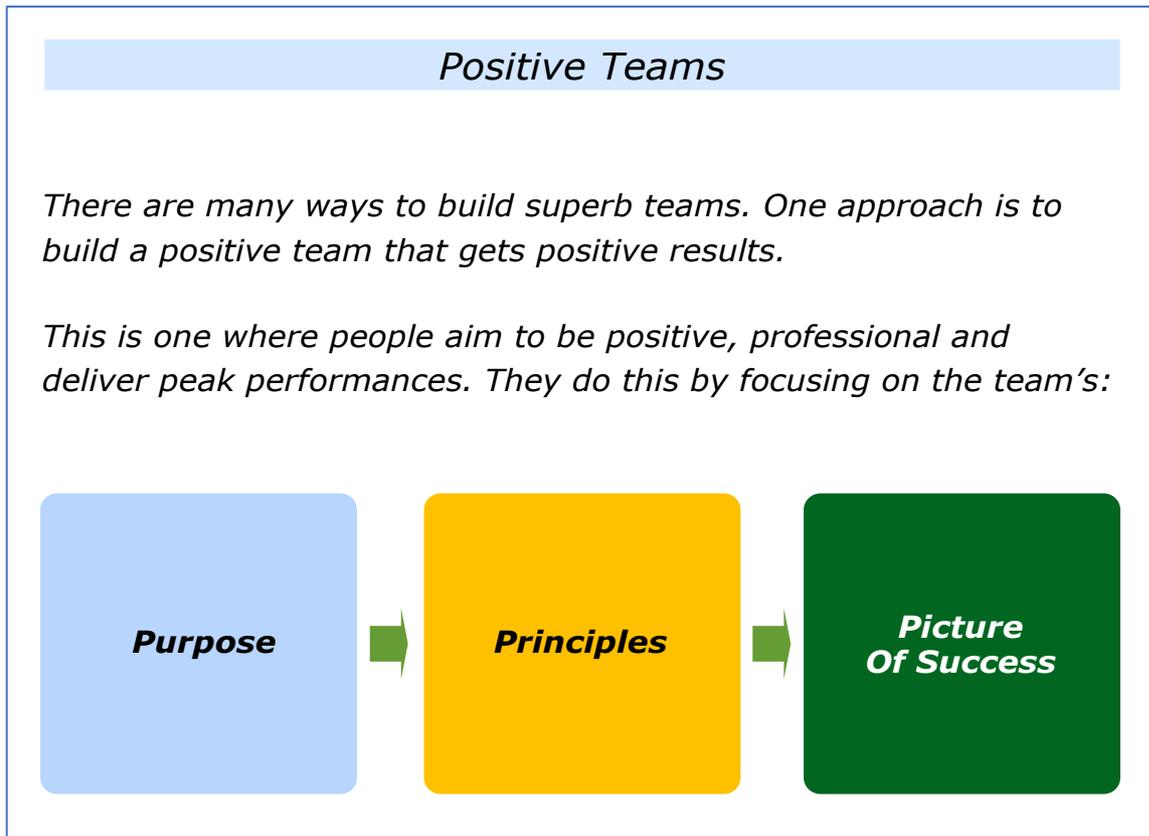
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

The Positive Teams Approach



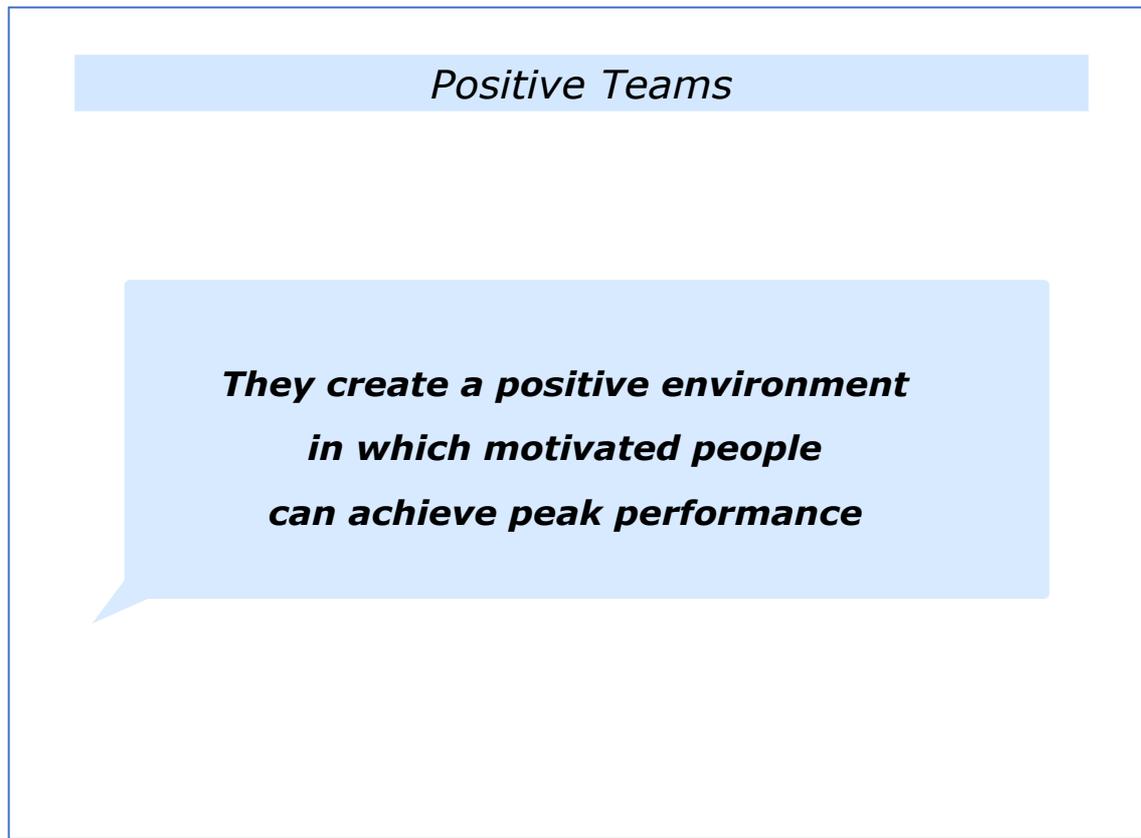
This section looks at one approach to building superb teams. It is based on a model that I have seen work in many fields during the past fifty years.

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



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.

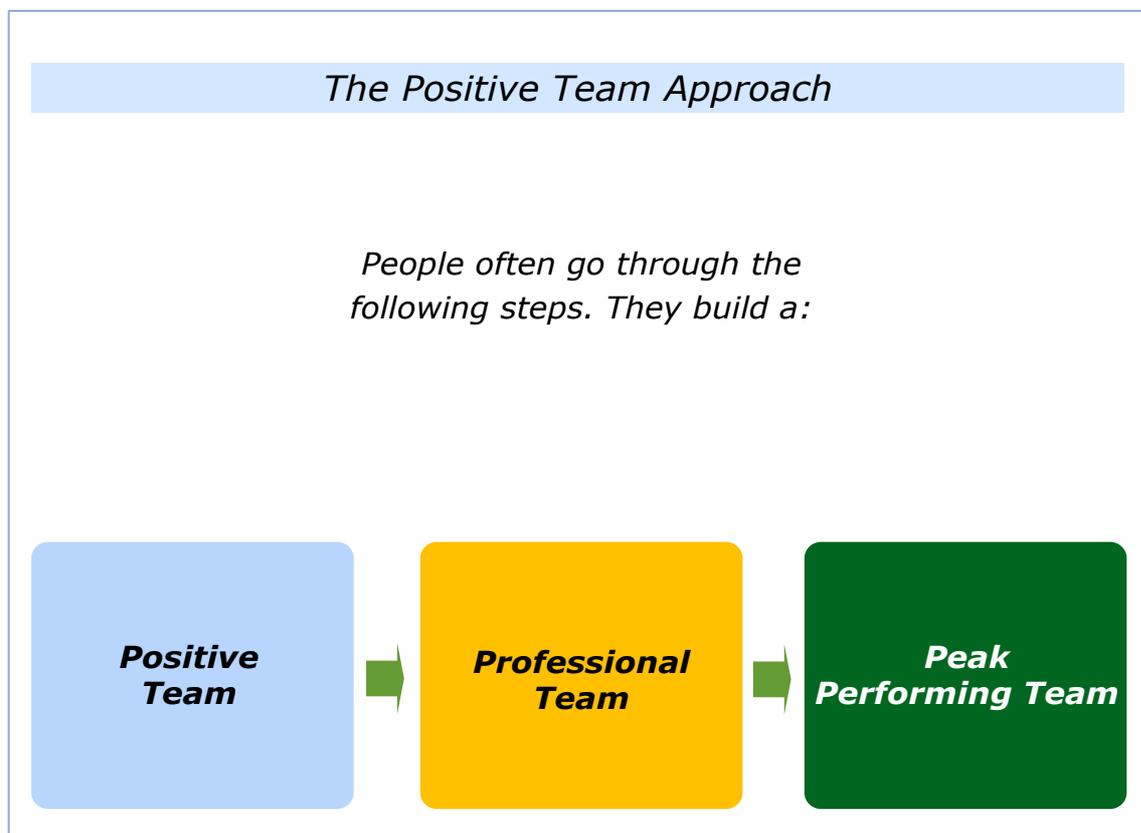
They then give people the chance to reflect and decide if they want to contribute. If so, they encourage people to build on their strengths and clarify their best contributions.

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 ...*

- * *Do ...*

- * *Do ...*

- * *Do ...*

- * *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.

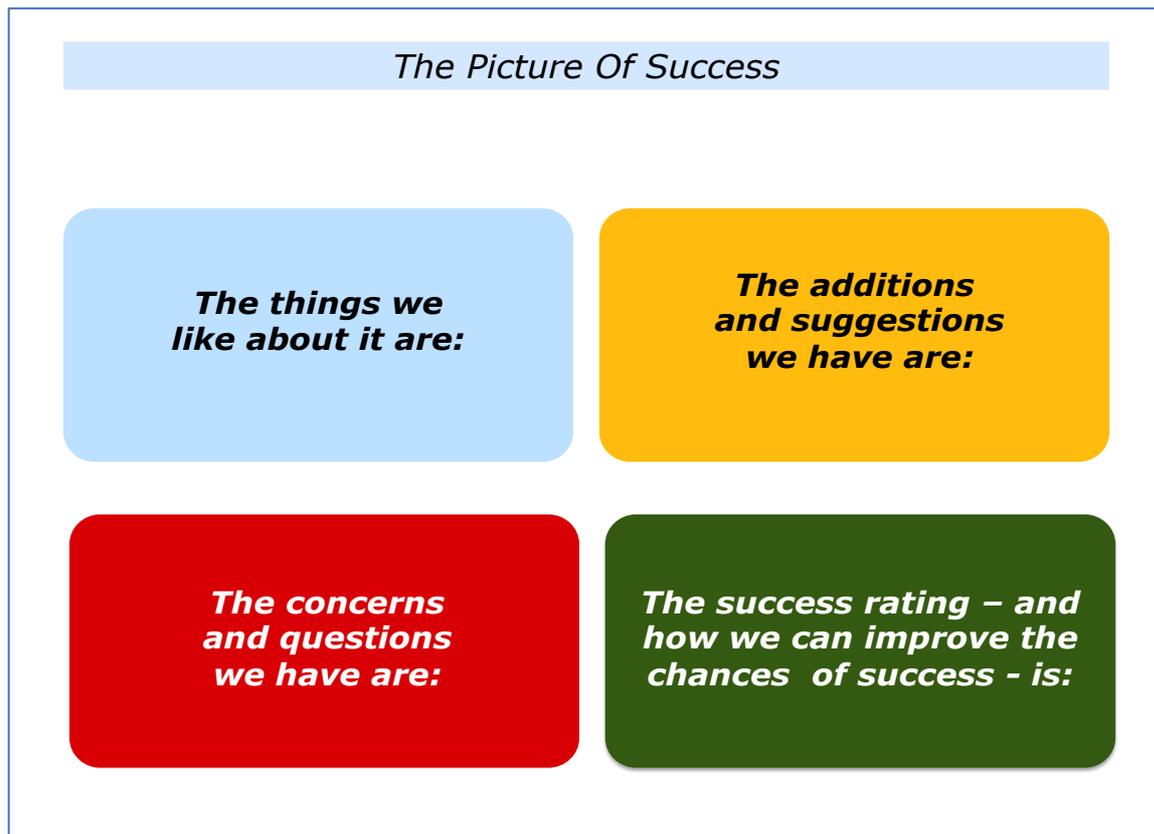
Getting Responses To The Picture Of Success

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*

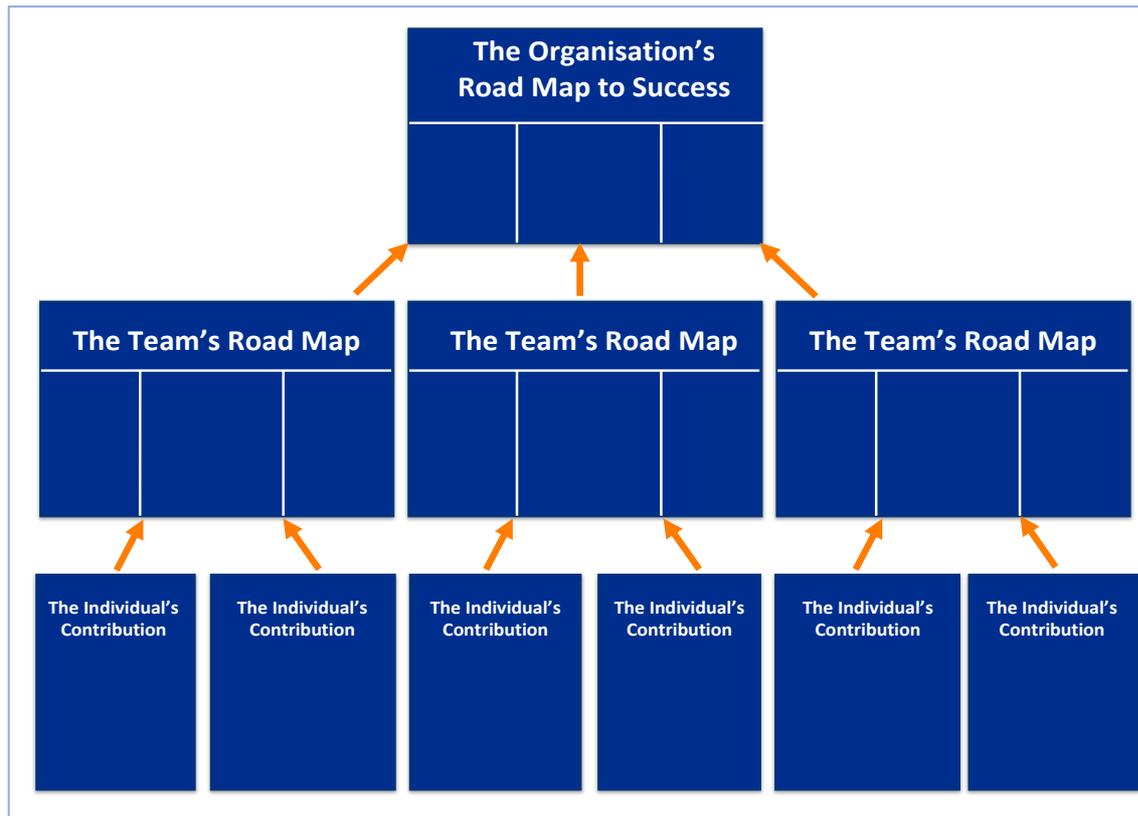
For example:

- *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

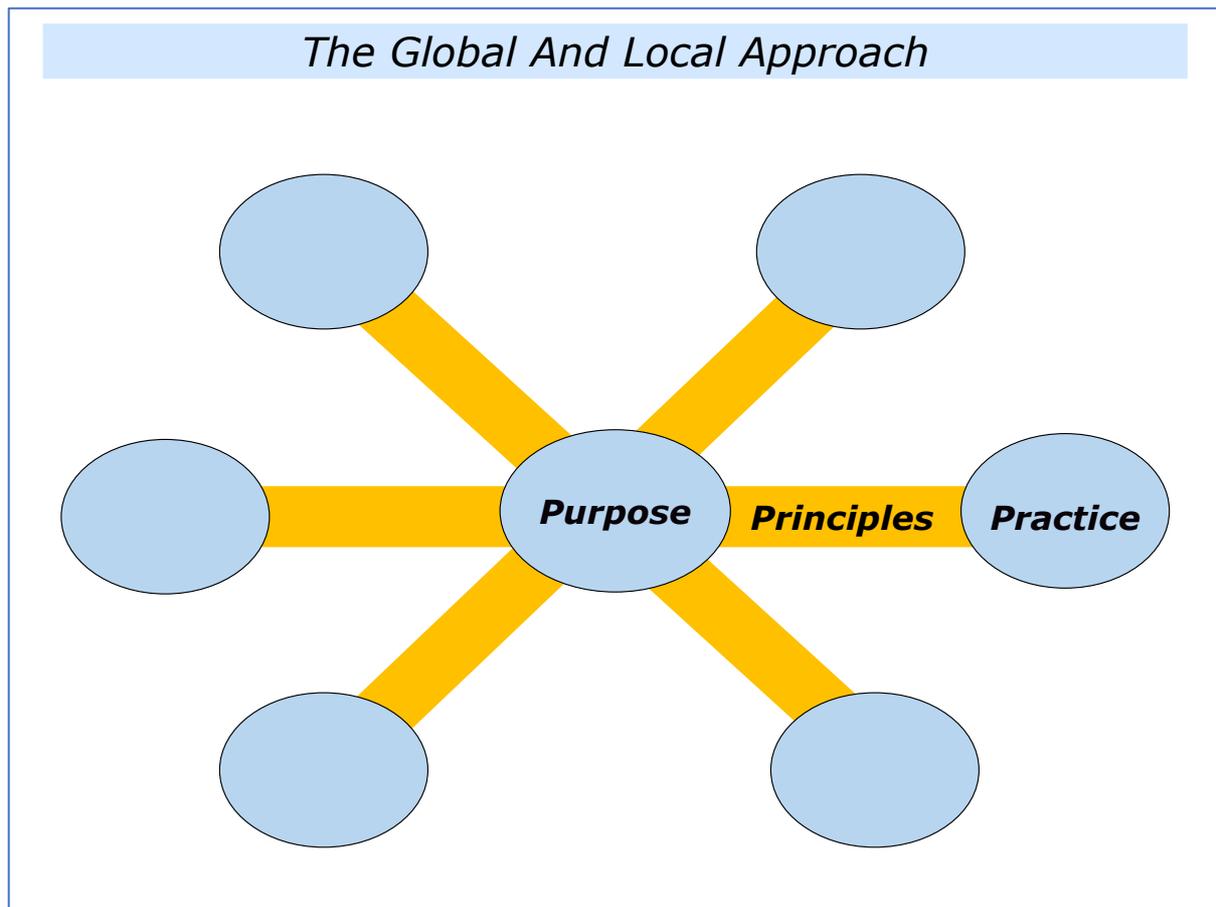
We would now like you to reflect and then let us know any questions you have. We will try to answer these here or, if more appropriate, discuss these with you individually or in your small teams. So let us know your questions.

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.



Great organisations get the right balance between the global purpose and the local practice. 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 practice 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 practice.

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 Practice

The way you translate these principles into practice 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 practice 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.

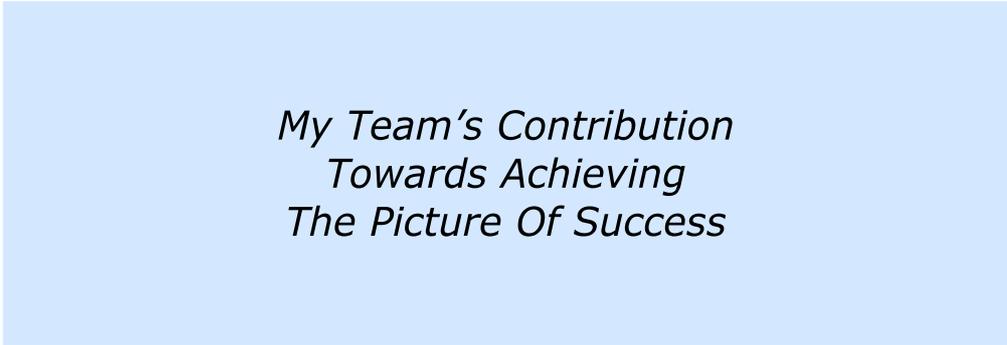
Managing By Outcomes

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 Team's Contribution
Towards Achieving
The Picture Of Success*

*The results we want to have delivered by the end of the
FY in terms of profitability, products and people are these.*

Profitability

By the end of the financial year, we want:

- To have ensured our team beats its financial targets and makes a profit of ...*
- To have achieved this by providing 80% of our standard products and 20% of our newer products.*
- To have achieved it by continuing to work with our existing clients and also adding 3 new clients.*

We want to achieve these goals in order to pay our people and also to invest in shaping a positive future.

Products

By the end of the financial year, we want:

- To have ensured that more than 90%+ of our customers say they are extremely satisfied with our work.*
- To have produced 12 success stories that show how we have helped our customers to achieve their goals.*
- To have simplified 2 of our complex processes to ensure these are more user-friendly for both our customers and colleagues.*

We want to achieve these goals in order to help our customers and our colleagues to achieve success.

People

By the end of the financial year, we want:

- *To have achieved an internal morale rating where more than 85% of our people say they enjoy working here.*
- *To have maintained a culture where people translate the company's principles into practice and get positive results.*
- *To have provided the team members with practical tools they can use to shape their future careers.*

We want to achieve these goals in order to help our colleagues to achieve success.

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:

- *Mission Driven*

You can aim to make the goals mission driven and focus on the specific outcomes to achieve.

- *Magical Or Memorable*

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?"

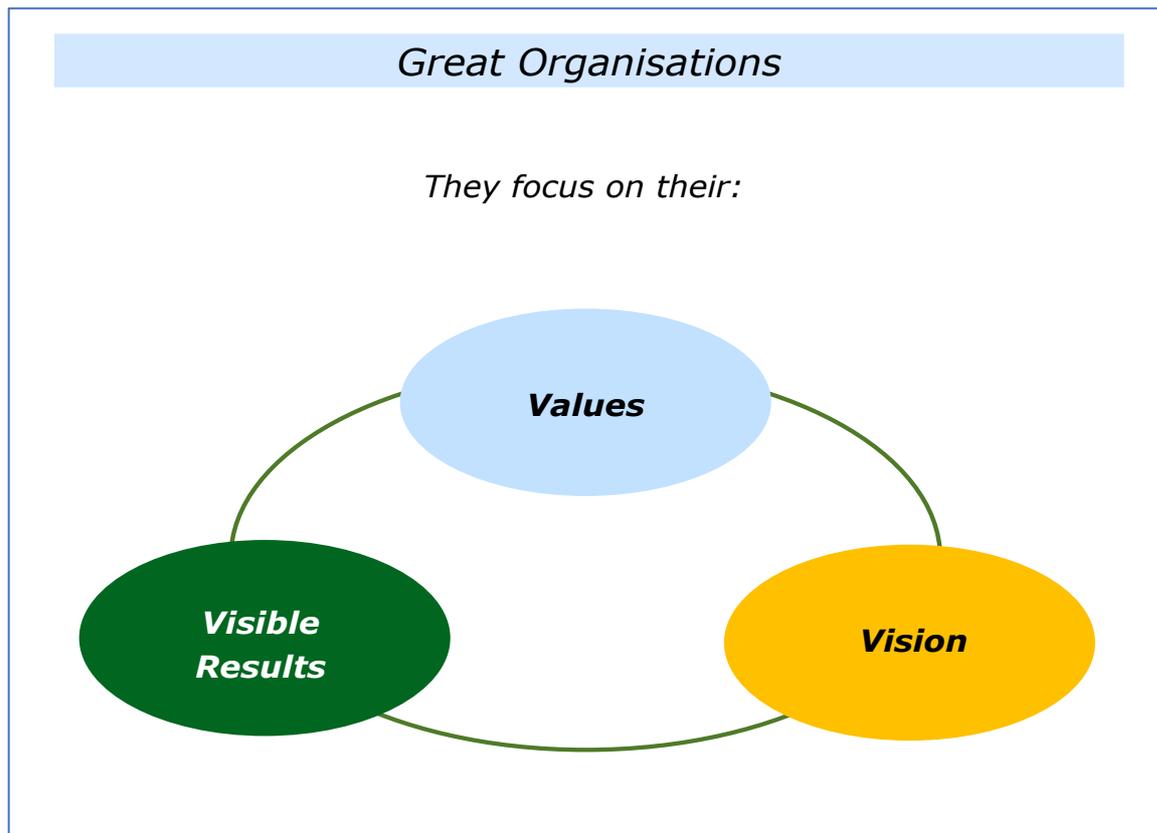
"Are there any other things we want to achieve? Bearing these things in mind, let's explore the key things we can do to achieve these outcomes."

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, adventures or working together on other projects. They start by clarifying their purpose, principles and picture of success. They then aim:

To focus on the key principles they can follow to increase the chances of achieving the picture of success;

To summarise these in a positive mantra that they can keep focusing on when working towards the picture of success;

To keep doing the maintenance – the things that must be done – and then add the magic on the way towards achieving the picture of success.

Creating such a mantra 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 words 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.

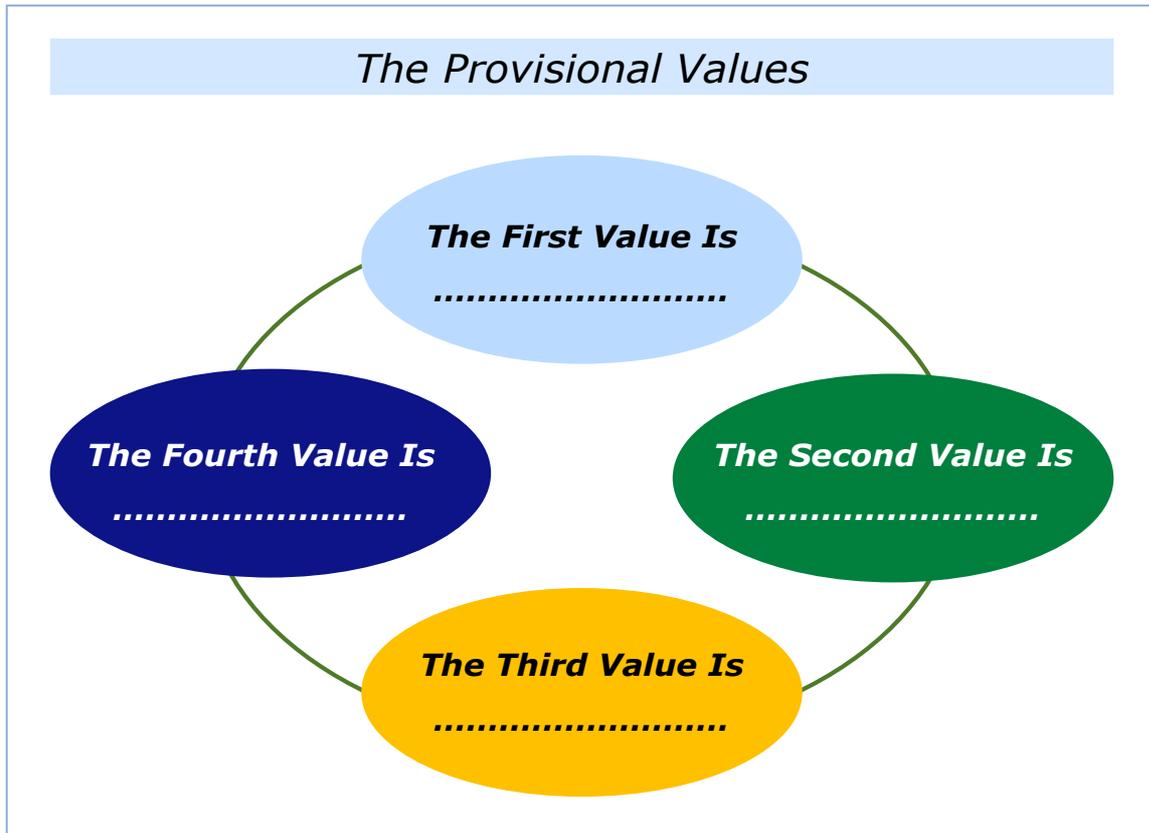
You can draw interrelated circles on a flip chart and aim to fill these with the agreed values. You can then ask people:

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 focus on a common purpose ... To follow 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, Maintenance And Magic Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. This is an approach that can be followed by individuals, teams and organisations.

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, Maintenance And Magic 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. You may want to do this as an individual or when leading a team. Let's explore how to make this happen.

The Mission

The approach starts by defining the mission. This may be philosophical, practical or focus on delivering positive results. Some missions combine all these elements. Here are some missions that people may aim to achieve.

The Mission

I want to follow my spiritual faith ... I want to use my strengths to help people to succeed ... We want to ensure that every child has access to a laptop ... We want to pioneer a new way of doing business in our field ... We want to create a vaccine for Covid.

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.

Sometimes it means knowing how to manage the moving parts. These can include: a) the predictable things that you know will be moving and developing; b) the potential unpredictable things that may be moving. It is to manage these and, if possible, aim to make magic.

Imagine that you lead a team and want to encourage your people to take these steps. 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.

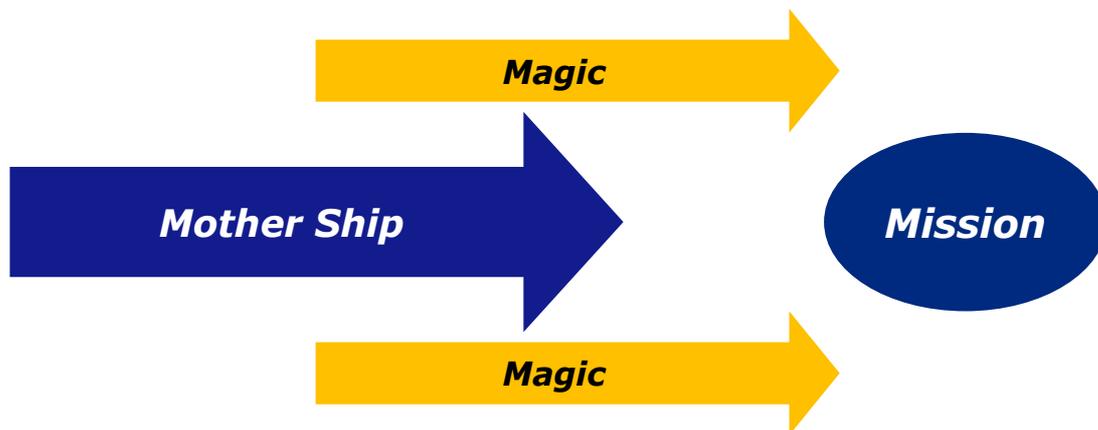
To work with pacesetting customers – those who are tackling challenge that others will face in the future - and help them to find solutions to these challenges ... To use this knowledge to produce our own future products and services.

To keep focusing on how we can follow the mission, do the maintenance and add the magic ... To do superb marketing that shows how we can help people to achieve success ... To do this in a way that embodies our principles and delivers positive results.

There is another approach to encouraging people to focus on the mission. Let's explore this theme.

The Mission, Mother Ship And Magical Work Approach

The first step is to clarify the mission. The second step is for people in the Mother Ship to implement the key strategies for achieving the mission. The third step is to ensure that other people – who may be able to add magical work - 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 your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow the mission, maintenance and magic approach?

What may be the mission you want to achieve? How can you do the necessary maintenance? How can you, when appropriate, add the magic? 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.

The Mission, Maintenance And Magic Approach 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 this approach in my own way are:

*

*

*

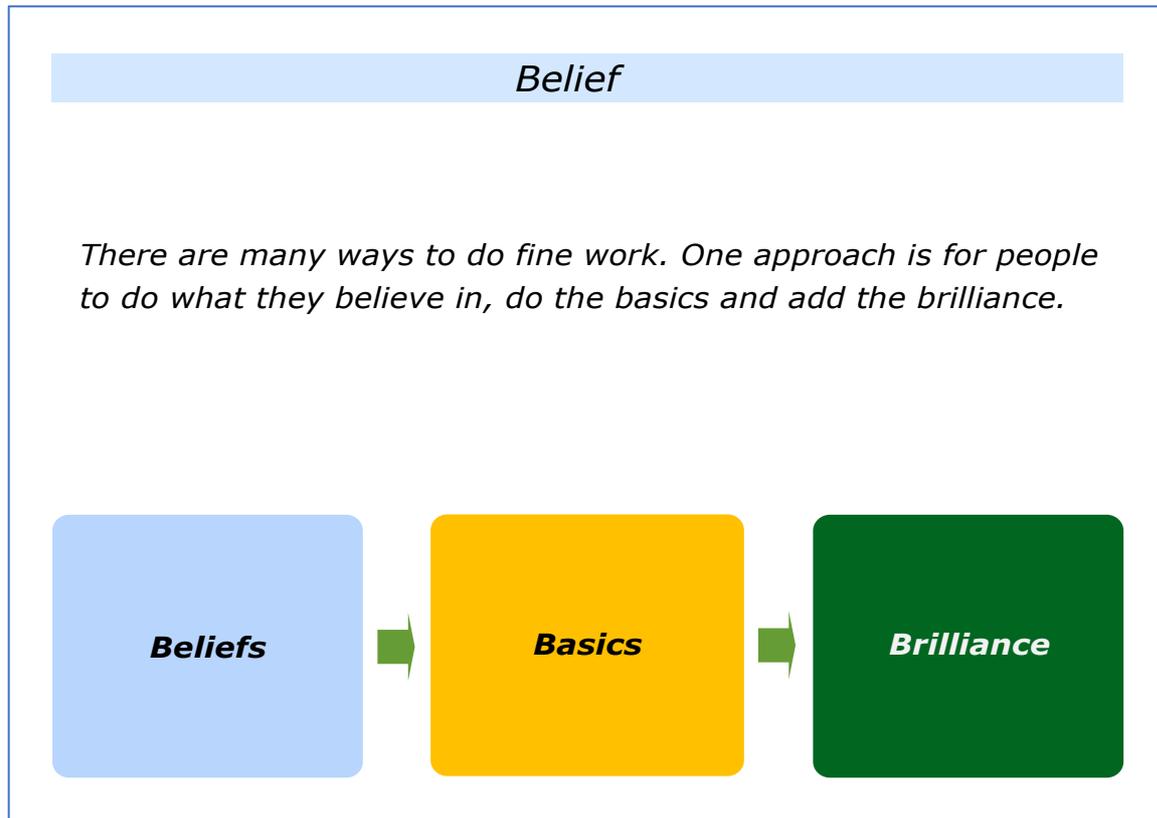
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

The Beliefs, Basics And Brilliance Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is for people to do what they believe in, do the basics and then, when appropriate, add the brilliance.

This is an approach that can be followed by individuals, teams and organisations. It often involves focusing on the following themes.

Beliefs

This involves people doing what they do best, doing what they believe in and aiming to do brilliant work.

Basics

This involves people doing the basics and, when appropriate, showing battling qualities.

Brilliance

This involves people adding the brilliance and, when appropriate, also adding the beauty.

The following piece describes how this approach can be applied to building teams. As mentioned, however, the themes can be adapted to working with individuals, groups and organisations.

Beliefs

Belief is crucial. 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.

One approach is for people to focus on doing what they do best and doing what they believe in. It is then to translate this into aiming to do brilliant work. Let's explore how to take these steps.

Doing What You Do Best

Imagine that you lead a team. You can start by inviting people to focus on the team's strengths and what it does best. Here are two exercises you can use.

The Team's Positive History

People are more likely to believe they can do something when they build on their successful patterns. Bearing this in mind, you can invite them:

To clarify the specific situations in the past when they have done superb work;

To clarify what they did right then – the principles they followed and how they translated these into action – to do superb work;

To clarify how they can follow these principles in the future – plus add other skills – to do superb work.

The Team Performing Superbly

*The specific situation in the past
when the team did superb work was:*

*

*The specific things people did right then
– the principles they followed and how
they translated these into action – were:*

*

*

*

*The specific things people can do to follow
these principles in the future – plus maybe
add other skills – to do superb work are:*

*

*

*

The Team's Strengths

Imagine that you have explored elements of the team's positive history. This provides clues to the team's strengths and how it has translated these into action.

Bearing this in mind, you may want to be more specific about these strengths. If appropriate, you can invite people to focus on the following themes.

Strengths

People can clarify the specific activities in which the team can deliver As rather than Bs or Cs. These may be the specific services, products, projects or other activities in which the team can perform superb work.

Specific Customers

People can clarify the specific kinds of customers with whom the team works best. These may be customers who are in a certain sector, have certain personality characteristics or who are at a certain stage of their development.

Success

People can clarify the specific ways in which the team can use its strengths to help these customers achieve success. They may, for example, be able to help customers to improve their profits, product quality, processes, people management or other areas.

If you wish, invite people to do the following exercise. This will provide the basis for moving on to the next step.

The Team's Strengths

The specific activities in which the team has the ability to deliver As rather than Bs or Cs are:

*

*

*

The specific kinds of customers with whom the team works best are:

*

*

*

The specific ways the team can use its strengths to help these customers achieve success are:

*

*

*

Doing What You Believe In

Imagine that you have clarified the team's strengths. Bearing these in mind, it will be important for people to do what you believe in. Belief works best when people are able:

To follow their successful patterns – such as the principles they have followed before to achieve success;

To focus on what they can control – such as having a positive attitude and being professional - and manage what they can't control;

To set specific goals where they believe – providing they do their best – they have a good chance of achieving success.

Great teams take a specific approach to setting goals. They focus on what they can control and believe they can achieve. They then translate this into a clear picture of success.

Here is an exercise on this theme. 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 you will build on what people have in common and set the future direction. For the moment, invite each person to do this 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:

To recruit more people who can help us to achieve the goal;

To be more selective and focus on fewer things that we believe we can achieve;

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, do a reality check. When doing so, it can be useful to explore 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.

Battling Qualities

Great workers may also sometimes need to show battling qualities. They may need to show fighting spirit, drive and resilience on the way towards achieving their goals.

Different people do this in different ways. Let's look at two approaches to showing battling qualities – the spiritual approach and the soldier approach.

Some people behave in an almost spiritual way when aiming to do their best. They often have a core set of beliefs that they apply in a calm and clear way when tackling challenges.

Such people sometimes go into flow mode – rather than fight or flight mode – when dealing with tough situations. Buying time to think, they aim:

To clarify the real results they want to achieve;

To clarify the potential options for going forward – together with the pluses and minuses of each option;

To clarify the option they want to pursue and how they can do this in, as far as possible, in a positive way.

Such people often rehearse pursuing their chosen option. They rehearse what they plan to do and, when appropriate, what they plan to say in the situation. They then move into action and do their best to achieve positive results.

Some people behave in a more soldier-like way. They may summon all their energy, be belligerent and move into action. This approach can have pluses and minuses.

Sometimes it is necessary to act quickly to deal with threatening crises. It may be vital to stop the haemorrhaging, pull the plane out of a dive or take other drastic action. There are times, however, when acting in an impulsive soldier-like way can cause even more problems.

Some people may also combine elements of being spiritual and soldier-like. They are calm, clear but also act decisively when necessary. The key is for people to harness their spirit in a way that is required to deliver the desired results.

You will have your own method for helping a team to focus on doing the basics and demonstrating battling qualities. 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 and demonstrate battling qualities. Here is the exercise.

The Team's Basics

The specific things we can do to always deliver the basics and, when necessary, demonstrate battling qualities 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."

Paul Landau followed some of these principles when creating the company called Careology. Here is their story.



When my wife was diagnosed with cancer, I watched her go through six months of gruelling chemo, consume thousands of pills (and often struggle to remember if she had taken them), contend with two neutropenic infections, and endless blood transfusions, biopsies, scans, and appointments ... the list goes on!

I was struck that despite being seriously unwell, she didn't want to be a nuisance. She became so sick of being sick that we would regularly hold debates over whether she really had to let her nurses know about the side effects she was suffering, because she didn't want to go back to hospital for more prodding.

Fifteen years of consumer health-tech experience meant I couldn't help but spot the clear opportunity to support people going through treatment by creating great software and wearable tech, providing greater control and useful tools to help deal with the raft of things that need managing.

I wanted to connect people with a cancer diagnosis to their family and friends, and to their clinicians, to give peace of mind that if something needs attention, the people that matter know about it quickly and can act proactively, before things become more severe. Careology was born.

Careology empowers people living and dealing with cancer to feel in control of their care

The technology is designed to help patients stay on top of every aspect of treatment, with a complete record of symptoms, medications, side effects, appointments and general notes - all in one place.

Virtual support is provided whenever needed, with patients able to check symptoms in real-time, receiving personalised content from our charity partners, which is pulled through an API.

When symptoms may require medical attention, the technology prompts the patient to contact their healthcare provider. Patients can also nominate family and friends to receive status updates, allowing caregivers to give the required support.

Beauty

Great workers sometimes go beyond doing brilliant work. They may also aim to make it beautiful. Beauty can lift the spirit and the soul. Beauty can show what people can do when they perform at their best.

Different people create beauty in different ways. Some follow the principles of great design. They aim to create something that is simple, satisfying and successful.

It is simple but in a profound way. It is satisfying on both an aesthetic and practical level. It is successful. It works and helps people to get positive results.

Imagine you lead a team. How can you encourage people to add the brilliance and, when appropriate, the beauty? How can they add that touch of class and maybe make people's hearts sing?

There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is for people to do what they believe in, do the basics and then add the brilliance. You will, of course, follow this approach in your own way.

If you wish, invite the people in your team to tackle the final exercise on these themes. Invite them to describe the specific things they can do to add the brilliance and maybe even the beauty. You can then encourage people to keep doing brilliant work.

The Team's Brilliance

The specific things we can do to, when appropriate, add the brilliance and maybe even the beauty are:

* *To ...*

For example:

To ...

* *To ...*

For example:

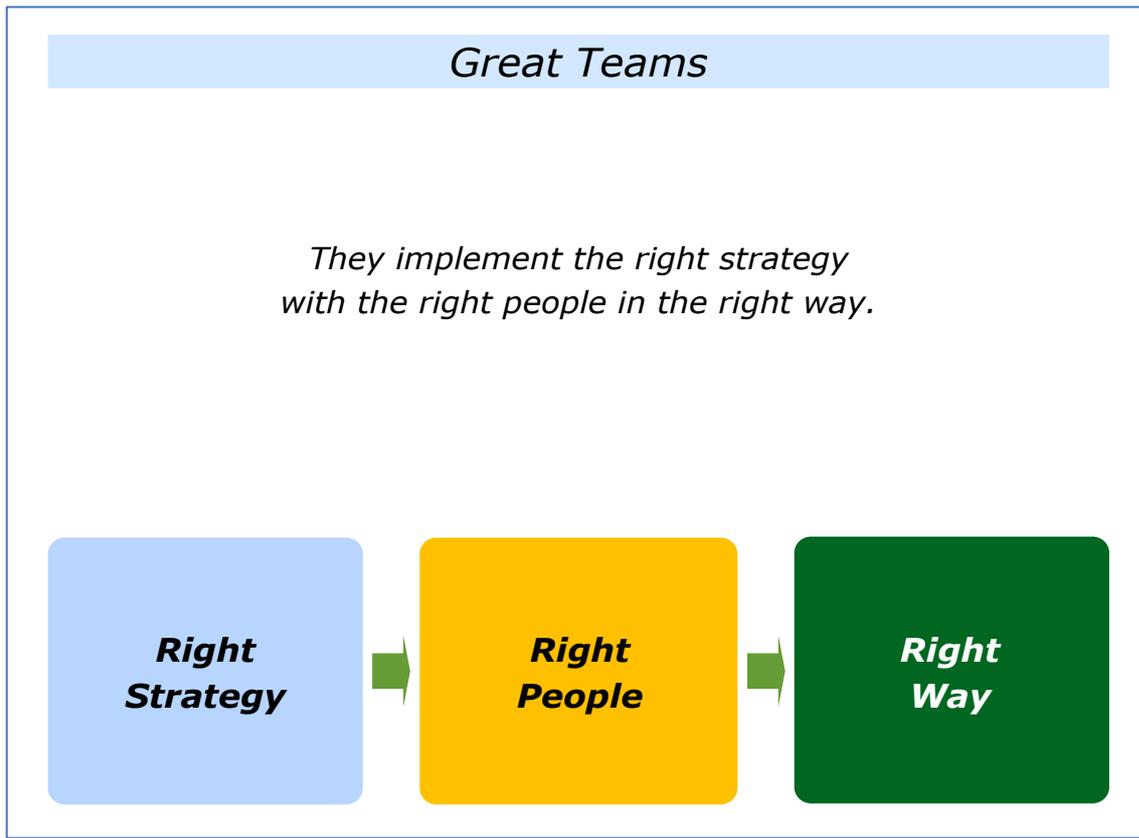
To ...

* *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.

(In this case I am using the word 'right' to denote something that works and gets the desired results rather using it in a judgemental way.)

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.

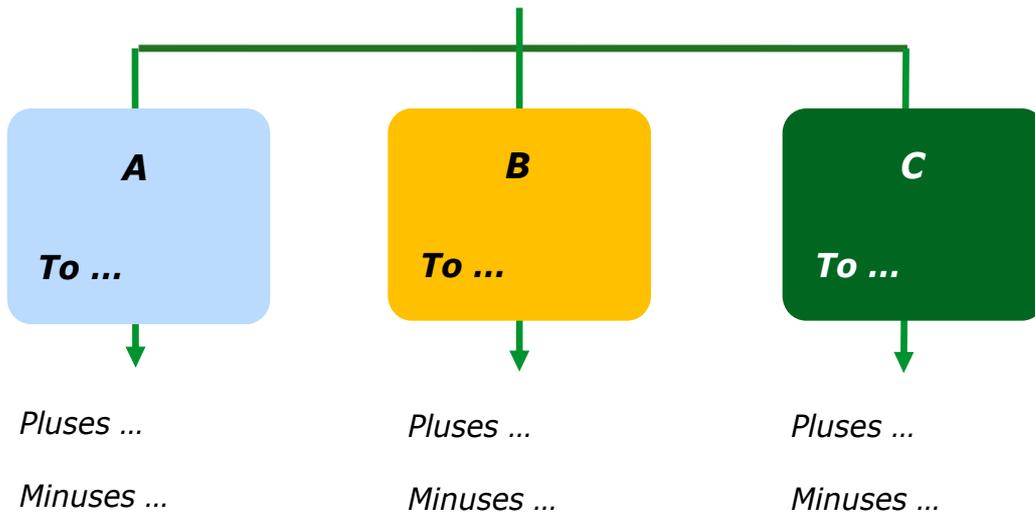
Great teams clarify the possible strategies – the routes forward – they can pursue in the future. They clarify the pluses and minuses of each route together with the attractiveness of each option.

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:*

*

*

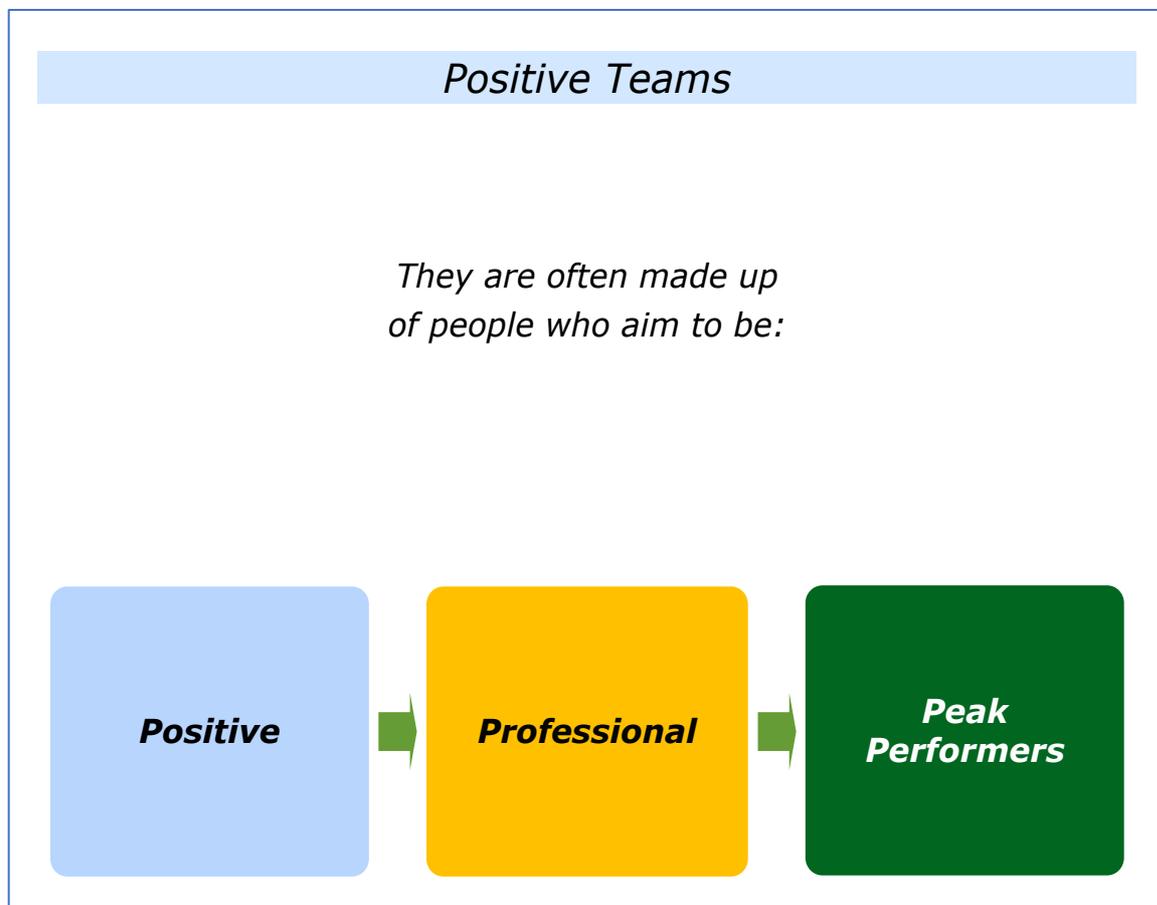
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The Right People

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, when appropriate, deliver peak performances.

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 to, when appropriate, 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, when appropriate,
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.

Great leaders often follow this approach in their own ways. The Fast Company magazine published an article that described how film directors apply this approach.

The director sets the direction – such as the purpose, principles and picture of success. But they then make sure they have the right people in the right places. Here is an excerpt from the article.

Directing Is 90% Casting

Hollywood film industry veterans will sometimes tell you that "directing is 90% casting."

The secret of being a great Director is fielding a team of talented people who don't really need much coaching to deliver a solid performance.

Great directors have the ability to bring out the best in their teams, often with a contagious enthusiasm that spurs individuals and project groups to extraordinary achievements.

Directors in business and in film have the mantle of authority. But the best ones are content to let others take center-stage.

They are confident in the knowledge that their behind-the-scenes work will make the whole production come together.

Let's return to your own work. 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 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;

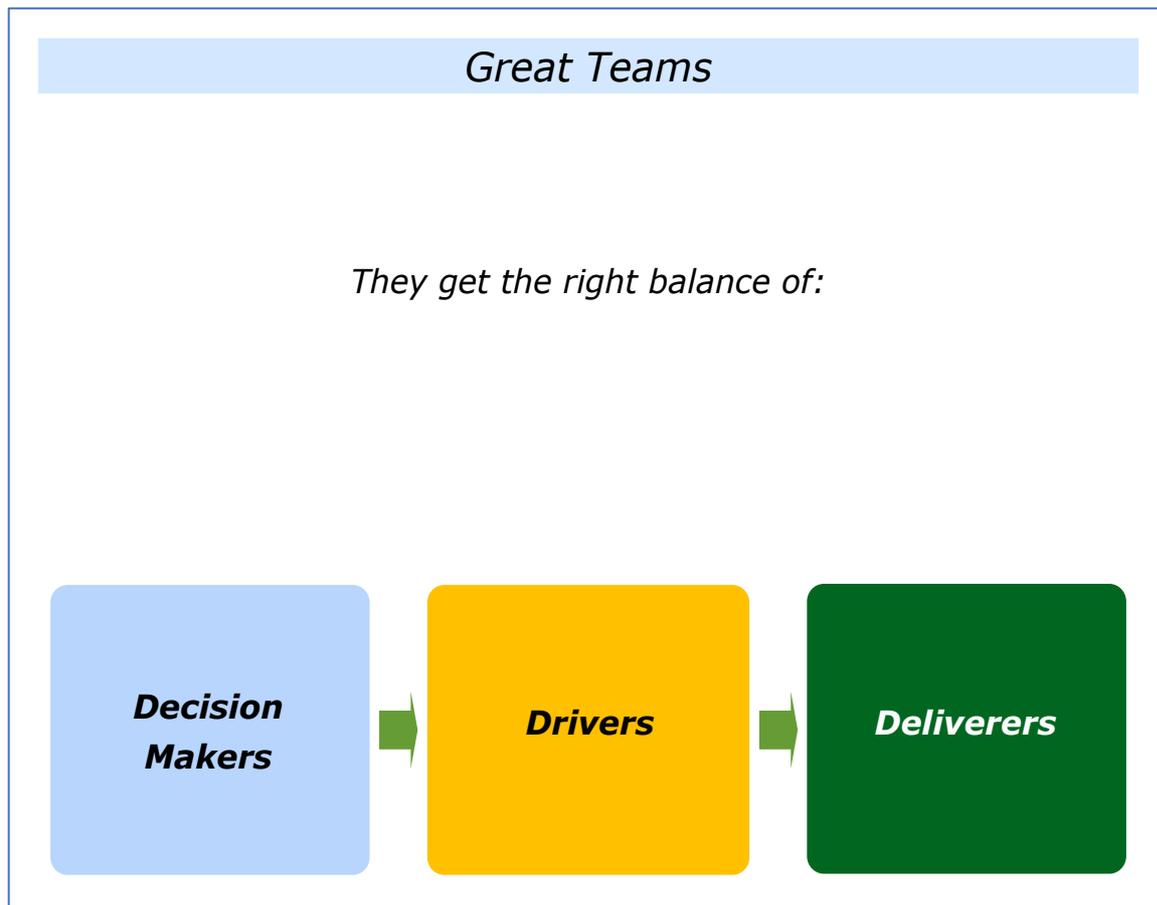
To help other people – such as customers and colleagues - to succeed;

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:*

*

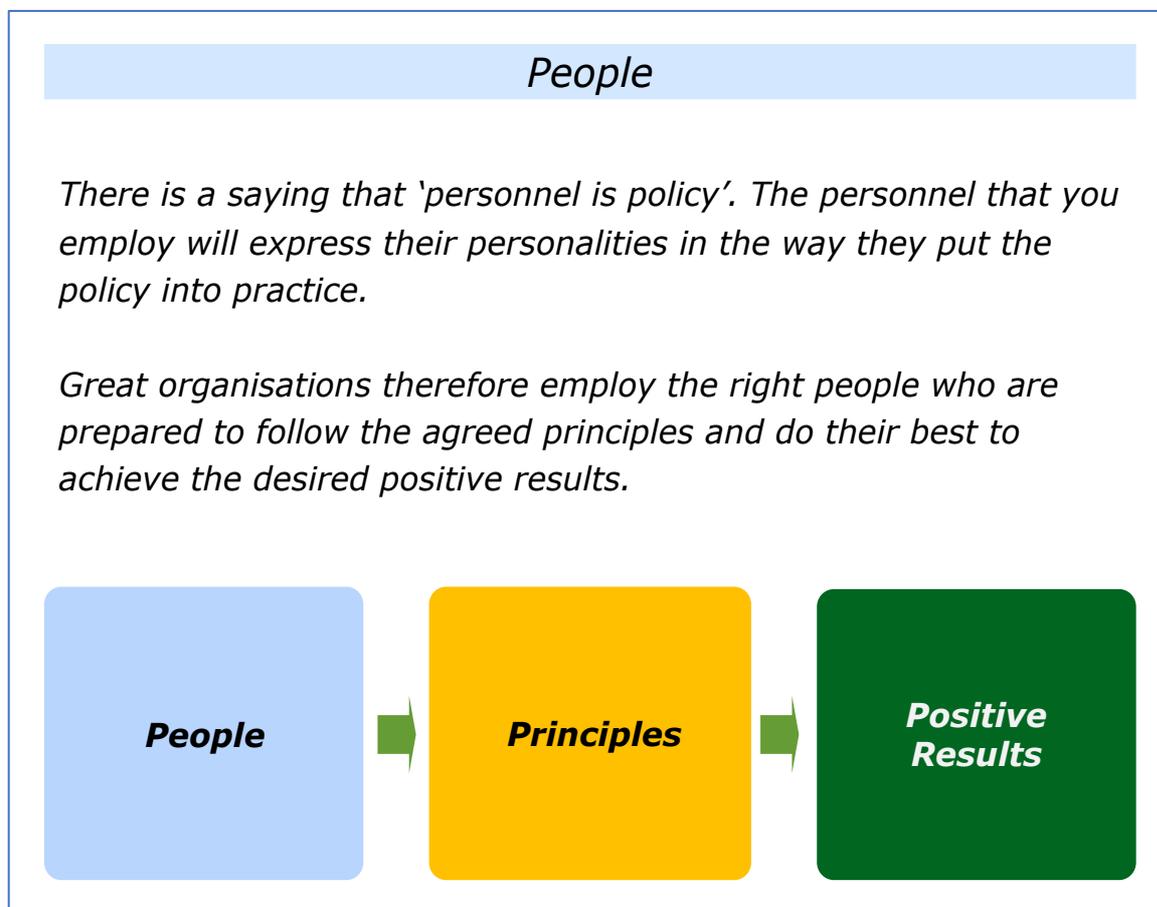
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*

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:*

*

*

*

*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.

The Interviewing Approach

There are many models for advertising roles and interviewing people. There are different ways of posting such a role.

Some organisations still list all the tasks that the person should be good at doing. Another approach is to focus on the qualities you want people to demonstrate and the outcomes you want them to deliver.

There are many ways to advertise such a role. Here is one approach that can be used when, for example, looking for a HR Manager. The wording can obviously be changed when posting other roles.

HR Manager

We are looking for a positive and professional HR Manager who believes in helping people to build on their strengths and do superb work. Are you somebody:

Who would love to work in a pacesetting company that has a clear purpose;

Who wants follow our principles of building partnerships, providing great service and helping people to achieve success;

Who has experience of recruiting and helping knowledge workers to perform at their best;

Who can work with key stakeholders and help them to achieve success;

Who has the required qualifications and the other qualities needed to build and maintain a superb HR function in a pacesetting company?

If so, please contact us. We can then give you more details about the results we would like somebody in this role to deliver.

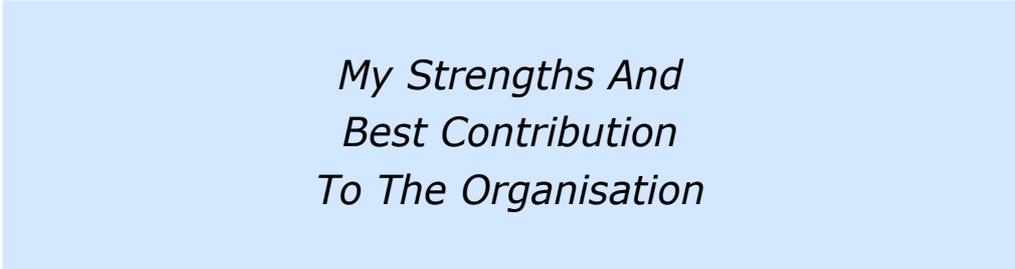
Imagine that several candidates have applied for a role. There are many ways to interview people. Let's consider one approach.

The Prewrite Approach

This involves inviting a person to do some prework before the interview. When taking this approach, it can be useful to send the person some information on: a) the organisation's goals; b) the organisation's values.

You can then ask them to do the following exercises. (These are similar to those described elsewhere in the book.)

This is an approach that I have used many times. The way that the person tackles the exercises can provide clues about their character. Here are the exercises. You can, of course, adapt these in your own way.



*My Strengths And
Best Contribution
To The Organisation*

Introduction

The following slides invite you to clarify your best contribution towards achieving the organisation's goals.

We appreciate that it will take you some time to do this exercise but it can be useful to do this before the interview. When doing it, bear in mind the organisation's goals – we can explain more about these if you wish.

Also bear in mind the values we try to follow in our work. You will find more information about these in the organisation's cultural handbook that we have sent to you.

Two points are worth bearing in mind when doing the exercise.

First, try to be honest as possible when doing it. Second, do the exercise to the extent to which you feel able with the information that you have available.

Describe your strengths – the activities in which you have the ability to deliver As.

Describe the deeply satisfying activities in which you have the ability to deliver As rather than Bs or Cs. These may be particular kinds of tasks, activities or projects. Try to be as specific as possible and give concrete examples.

Describe the activities in which you may deliver Bs or Cs.

The B activities are probably those that you do reasonably well. They are not your As. The C activities are those in which you have little aptitude.

Describe your best contribution towards achieving the organisation's goals.

Bearing in mind the organisation's goals and your strengths, the exercise then invites you to describe the following things.

Describe the specific results you aim to deliver towards achieving the organisation'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. As mentioned earlier, we can give you more information about the goals and the values we aim to follow when doing our work.

Describe the specific benefits - to the various stakeholders - of delivering these results.

Describe the specific things you will do to proactively update people about your progress towards achieving the results.

Describe the specific support you would like to help you to achieve the results.

Describe specific early successes you will aim to deliver.

Some Background

We aim to build a strengths-based organisation and coordinate these strengths to reach the goal.

We must, however, deliver the organisation's goals. These are the mandatory things that people must contribute towards delivering. 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

My Strengths

The specific activities in which I have the ability to 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:

*My Best Contribution
Towards Achieving
The Organisation's Goals*

My Specific Contribution

Bearing in mind the organisation's goals and my strengths, the specific results I want to deliver towards achieving the goals are:

1) *To ...*

For example:

To ...

To ...

To ...

2) *To ...*

For example:

To ...

To ...

To ...

3) To

For example:

To ...

To ...

To ...

Specific Benefits

The specific benefits of making this contribution - for the organisation, customers, colleagues and other stakeholders - will be:

1) To ...

For example:

2) To ...

For example:

3) To ...

For example:

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:

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:

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 Stakeholders

The actual words - the actual phrases - I would like my key stakeholders to be saying about my contribution after my first three months at the organisation.

Introduction

This is an old exercise that you may have done many times in service organisations but it can still be useful to do before the interview. It invites you:

To write the names of your key stakeholders both inside and outside the organisation – let us know if you want more information about whom these may be;

To describe the actual words or phrases you would like each of these stakeholders to be saying after three months about your work and what you are delivering for the organisation.

We can then explore some of the practical steps you may want to take to increase the chances of these stakeholders saying some of these things. Here is the exercise.

The CEO (only if you are reporting directly to them)

The actual words - the actual phrases - I would like them to be saying about the work I am delivering and the contribution I am making to the organisation are:

"....."

"....."

"....."

My Manager

The actual words - the actual phrases - I would like them to be saying about the work I am delivering and the contribution I am making to the organisation are:

"....."

"....."

"....."

My Colleagues

The actual words - the actual phrases - I would like them to be saying about the way I am working with them and the contribution I am making to the organisation are:

"....."

"....."

"....."

The Clients

The actual words - the actual phrases - I would like the clients to be saying about the service I am giving to them in my work for the organisation are:

"....."

"....."

"....."

Myself

The actual words - the actual phrases - I would like to be saying about my own contribution to the organisation after the first three months are:

"....."

"....."

"....."

Clarifying The Results To Achieve In A Role

Let's look at a final theme regarding agreeing with a person on the results they will achieve in a particular role. Before meeting with them it can be useful to think through the following points. You may aim:

To clarify the specific results the person will need to deliver in a particular role;

To clarify whether you think the person may have the attitude and ability required to deliver these results;

To clarify whether the person may want to do the role and how it fits into them achieving their long-term career goals.

Looking at this final point, bear mind the person's overall career goals. Clarify whether they may think the role will fit with them working towards these long-term goals.

If appropriate, you can then have a conversation with the person around the following themes. Here are some of the things you may say in your own way.

The Potential Role Is ...

Results

"These are the results that somebody in this role will need to deliver. They will need:

1) To ...

2) To ...

3) To ...

Responsibilities

"These are the responsibilities the person will need to make sure get covered when delivering those results.

"You may have strengths in certain areas but not necessarily in others. Bearing this in mind, we will encourage you to build on these strengths.

"If appropriate, we can get somebody who has complementary strengths to work alongside you to cover the other areas.

"At the same time, you will of course still be accountable for ensuring the overall results are delivered."

Role

"Bearing in mind your career goals, is this a role you would like to take for the next (time frame)?"

"If so, let's make clear contracts about how we can set things up so that you can succeed in the role.

You will, of course, go through these steps in your own way. You can then make clear contracts regarding the results the person will deliver in the role.

Let return to the theme of making sure you have 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:

*

*

*

The specific benefits of taking these steps will be:

*

*

*

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;

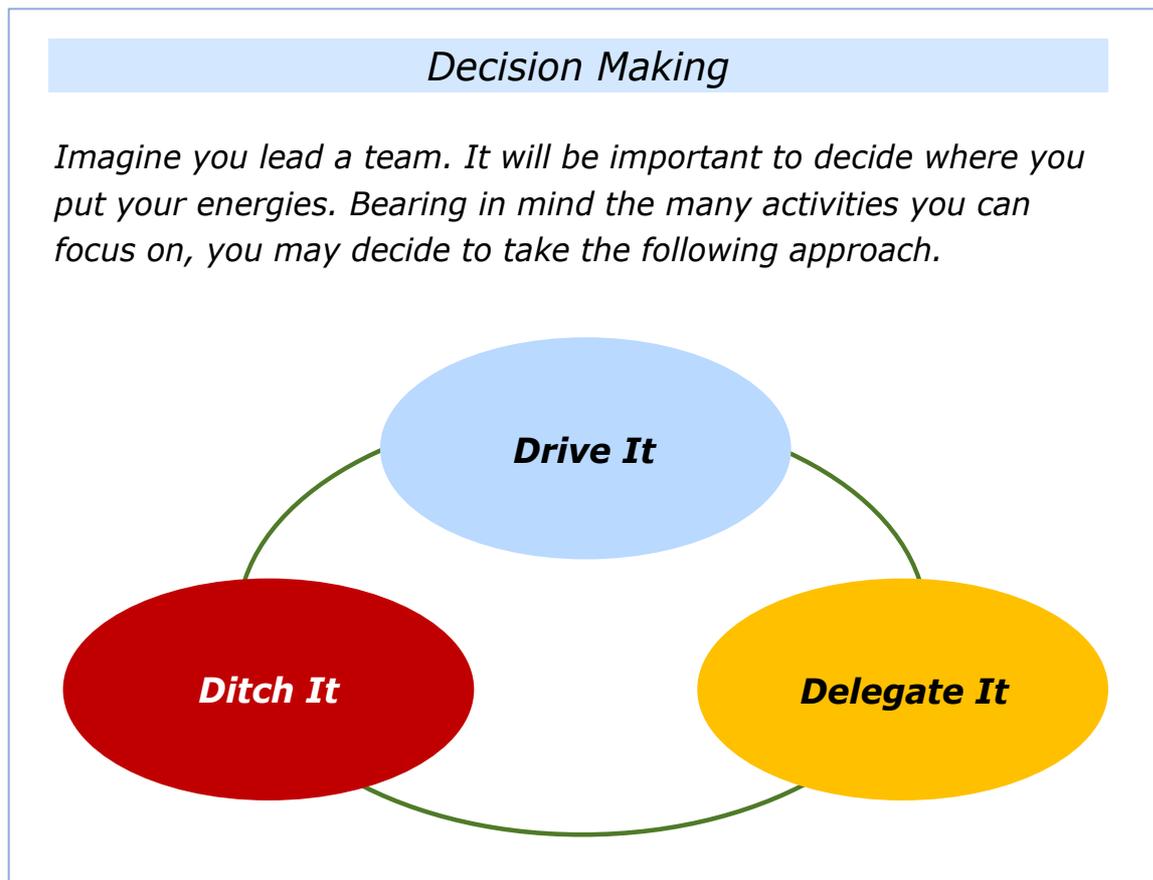
c) the challenges they face, their strategies for tackling these challenges and the support they need to reach the goals;

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.

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:

*

*

*

The specific steps I can take to drive these things are:

*

*

*

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:*

*

*

*

*The specific steps I can take to
delegate these things properly are:*

*

*

*

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:

*

*

*

The specific steps I and we can take to ditch these things and manage the consequences are:

*

*

*

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

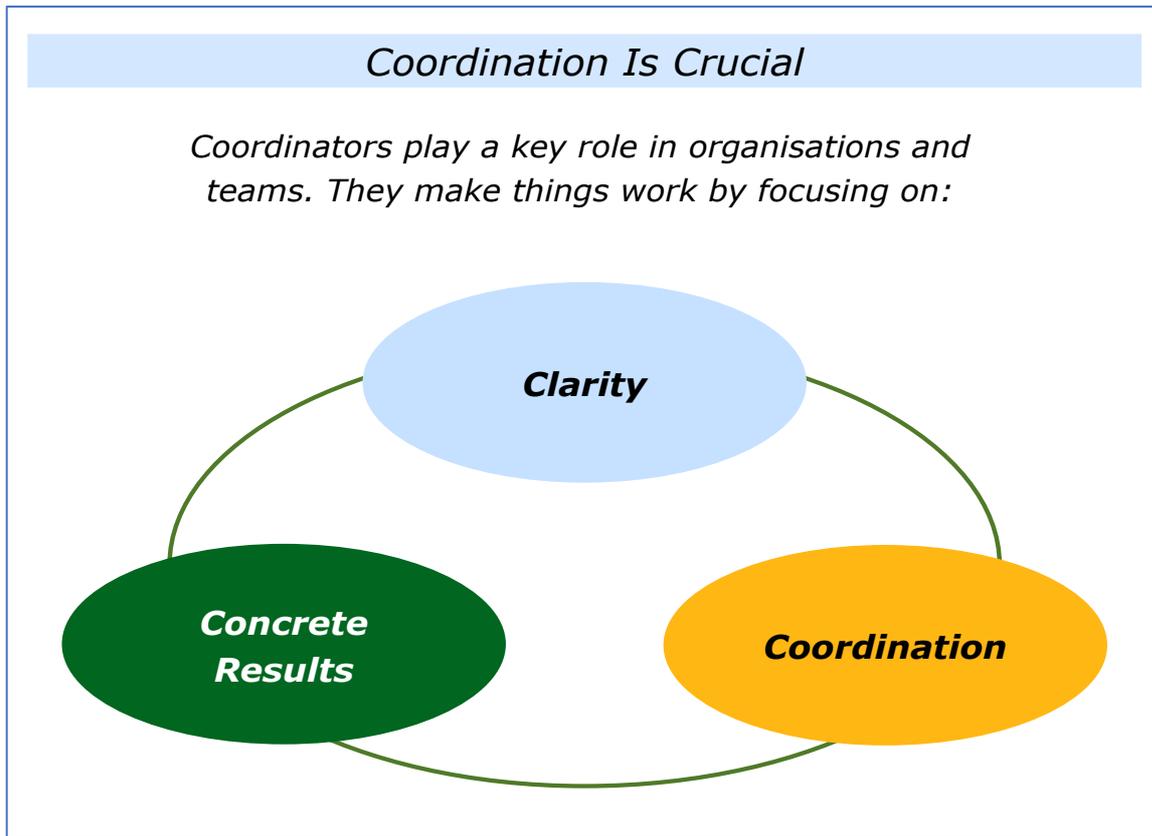
The extent to which I believe the people in the team implement the right things in the right way is:

___ / 10

The specific things we can do to maintain or improve the rating are:

The specific benefits of taking these steps will be:

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.

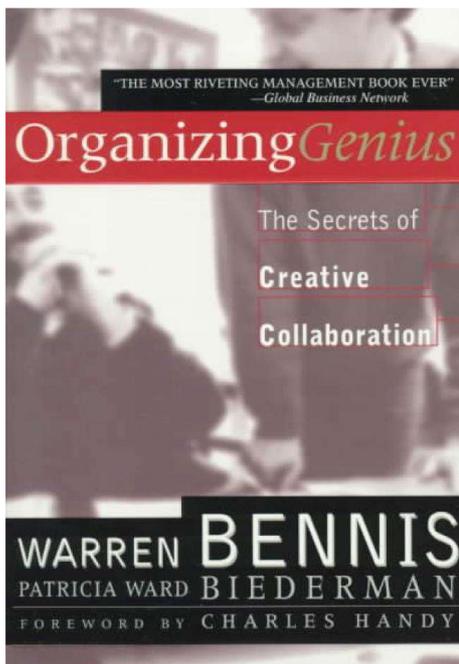
Great leadership and coordination plays a key role in all teams. Warren Bennis and Patricia Ward Bierdeman underlined these themes in their book *Organizing Genius – The Secrets Of Creative Collaboration*. Here is an excerpt from one summary of the book.

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?

Coordinators sometimes need to orchestrate a constellation of stars - 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."

Great leaders often employ a good orchestrator who can coordinate people's efforts to achieve a compelling goal. Let's consider what makes a good orchestrator.



Good Orchestrators

They choose to be orchestrators. This is a vital step. They are then good at being able to get an overview and orchestrate people's strengths to achieve the desired outcomes. They often aim:

- *To make clear contracts with their key stakeholders about the specific outcomes to achieve and to agree on the picture of success;*
- *To communicate these outcomes to their people and make clear contracts about their contributions towards achieving the picture of success;*
- *To manage by outcomes, coordinate people's contributions and ensure they deliver high standards on the ways towards achieving the picture of success.*

Such people must want to be orchestrators. This is a vital step because it can be both a rewarding and taxing role.

They are often good at being able to get an overview of the situation. They are then good at orchestrating people's strengths to achieve outstanding results.

Sometime ago I was asked to interview a person who had applied for a role as Chief Operating Officer in a knowledge organisation. Whilst the person was good operator, they needed to develop their skills as an orchestrator.

Here is an excerpt from the report I wrote for the company about the person's fit for the role. It gives some context regarding the role of the COO in a modern knowledge company.

Candidate for the Chief Operating Officer Role

Thanks for the opportunity to talk with ... The headline is this:

His suitability for the role: 7+/10.

This rating could improve as he shows a willingness to develop into being more of an orchestrator as well as doing some of the operational work.

Here is some background regarding the rating.

The Outcomes

The COO's role in a modern knowledge based firm is somewhat different from that in a traditional company. They need to be a good orchestrator who can coordinate people's talents to achieve the company's goals.

In your company it is important for a person in this role to be a custodian of the culture. They need to embody the company's principles. They also need to demonstrate the following characteristics:

To clarify and agree with the CEO on the goals for the business and, when appropriate, to add ideas to this picture of success;

To clarify and coordinate the key strategies for achieving this picture of success;

To connect with the people in the company and make clear contracts about their best contributions;

To coordinate people's strengths, manage by outcomes and enable them to achieve the company's goals;

To ensure that the company maintains high standards in delivering today's business and also shapes tomorrow's business to achieve ongoing success.

One key point is worth underlining. Whilst many potential COOs may be operators, they may not necessarily be good orchestrators.

Those who are will be worth their weight in gold. They will orchestrate your people's talents and ensure they deliver high standards on the way toward achieve the desired goals.

Let's return to your own work. 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.

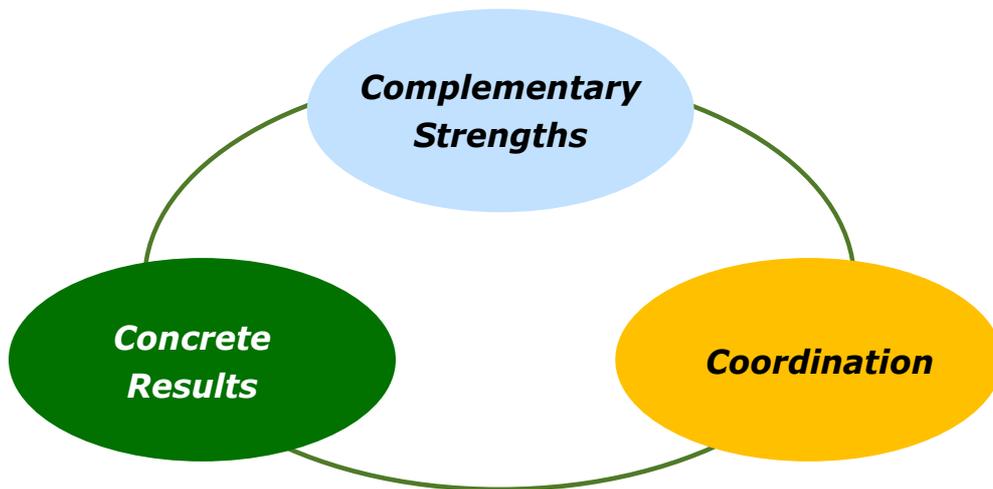
- *"This is the purpose, these are the principles and this is the picture of success.*
- *"Take time to reflect to decide if this is something you want to contribute towards achieving?"*
- *"If so, let's make clear contracts about your best contribution."*

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

The Complementary Strengths Approach

This approach starts by establishing clarity – the results to achieve. It then involves focusing on the following themes.



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

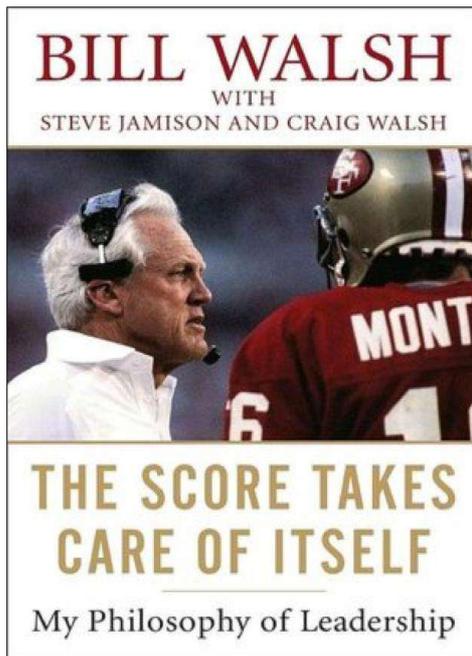
Coordinators encourage people to deliver consistently high standards. They make clear contracts with the teams and individuals about:

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.



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 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.

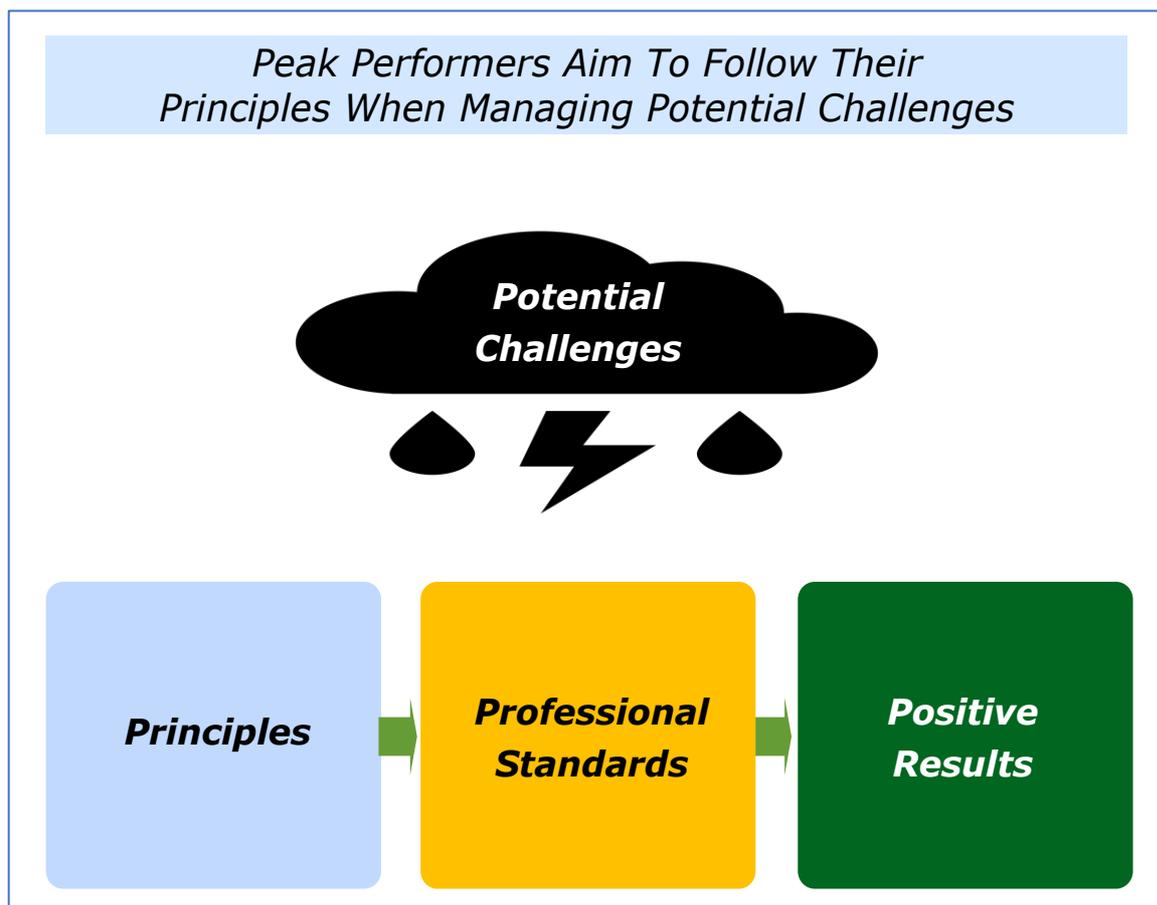
Looking back at his time at the 49ers, Bill said the turnaround took time. Some people chose not to meet these standards, so they were moved on. Despite setbacks, people began to deliver the required standards. He explained this in the following way.

"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 encouraged people to follow the agreed principles and translate these into action. This called for them continuing to deliver consistently high professional standards when managing potential challenges. Let's consider this approach.



Many people can follow their 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.

Good leaders sometimes use the following framework when encouraging their people to rehearse how to manage potentially challenging situations.

Principles

What are the principles we want to follow? What may be a challenging situation that we may face in the future? Bearing in mind what we can control, what are the positive results we want to achieve in the situation?

Professional Standards

How can we follow our principles in the specific situation? How can translate these into action? How can we deliver high professional standards?

Positive Results

How can we keep doing reality checks? How can we build on what is working and tackle areas for improvement? How can we do our best to achieve the desired positive results?

Bill Walsh embodied elements of this approach. He saw himself as a teacher as well as a coach. He educated motivated people to consistently deliver the basics. They could then add the brilliance. This is an approach I have seen mirrored by other organisations that achieve success.

Successful sports teams, for example, 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 – controlling players, consistent players and creative players.

Controllers

Such people have strong personalities and operate down the spine of the team. They also have the skills to control the game.

Consistent Players

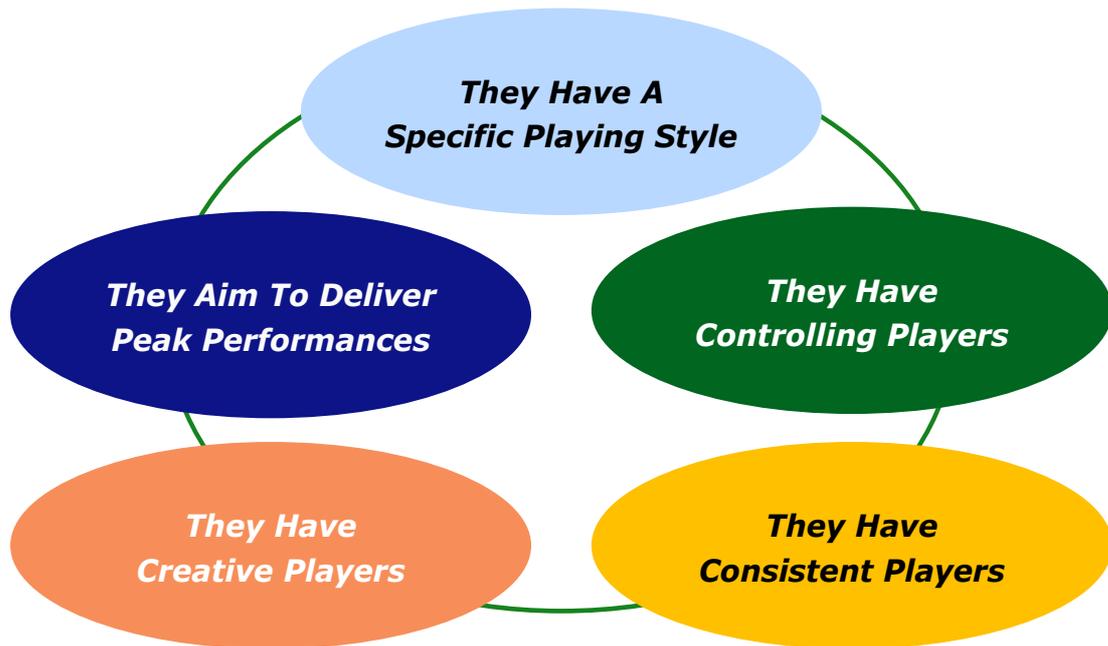
Such people consistently deliver high professional standards. They ensure the team always delivers 8+/10.

Creatives

Such people demonstrate both consistency and creativity. They add that touch of magic that enables the team to achieve its goals.

Successful Sports Teams

They aim to translate their principles into practice during matches by focusing on the following themes.



Great organisations also encourage their people to deliver high professional standards. Here is an example of how one organisation described this approach to new joiners.

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:

*

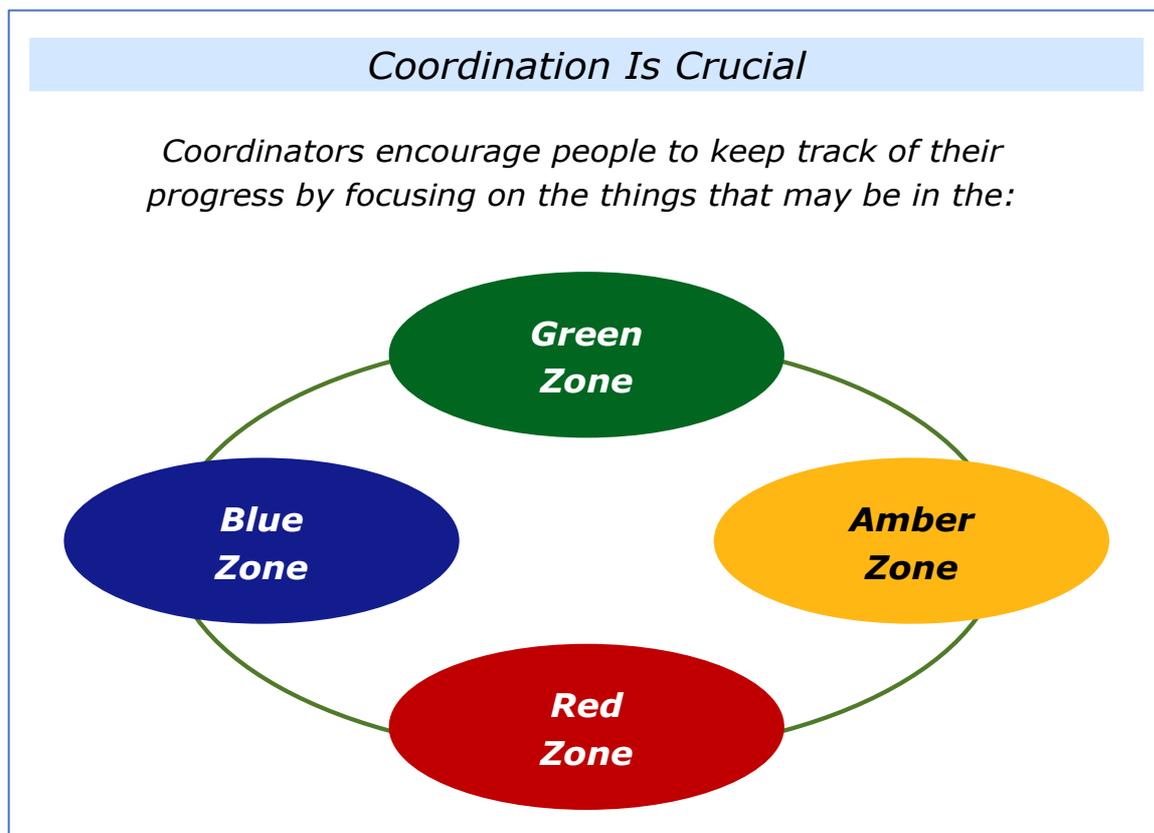
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Some coordinators take another approach to making sure things are on track. They have a dedicated room or other place that shows the state of play regarding pursuing the various strategies.

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.



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:

*

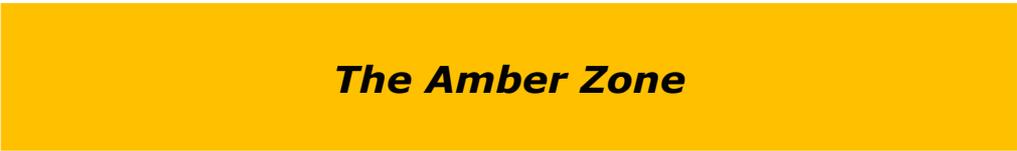
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The Amber Zone

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*

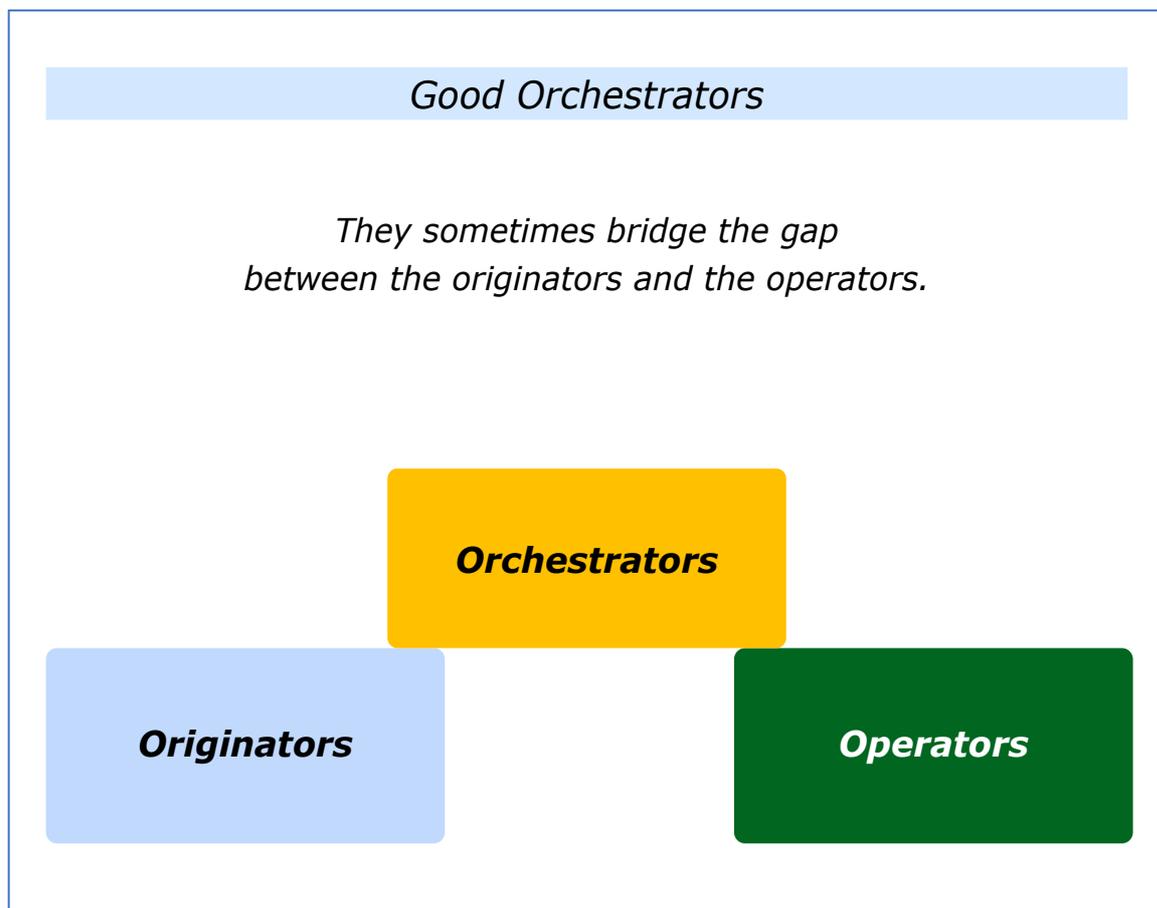
***The specific ideas and suggestions that it may be worth
considering to help us to shape a successful future are:***

*

*

*

Good Orchestrators Sometimes Bridge The Gap Between The Originators And The Operators



As mentioned earlier, orchestrators play a key role in organisations. They often start by clarifying the outcomes to achieve. They then orchestrate the available resources to achieve the desired outcomes.

One area in which they do this is by bridging the gap between originators and operators. Originators want to create new ideas; operators want to translate ideas into action. The only problem is that sometimes these two groups speak different languages and find it hard to work together.

Orchestrators start by clarifying the outcomes that the operators want to achieve. They then go to the originators and, through various means, encourage them to deliver these requirements.

Such orchestrators coordinate people's efforts. They make things happen and produce the required results for the organisation.

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

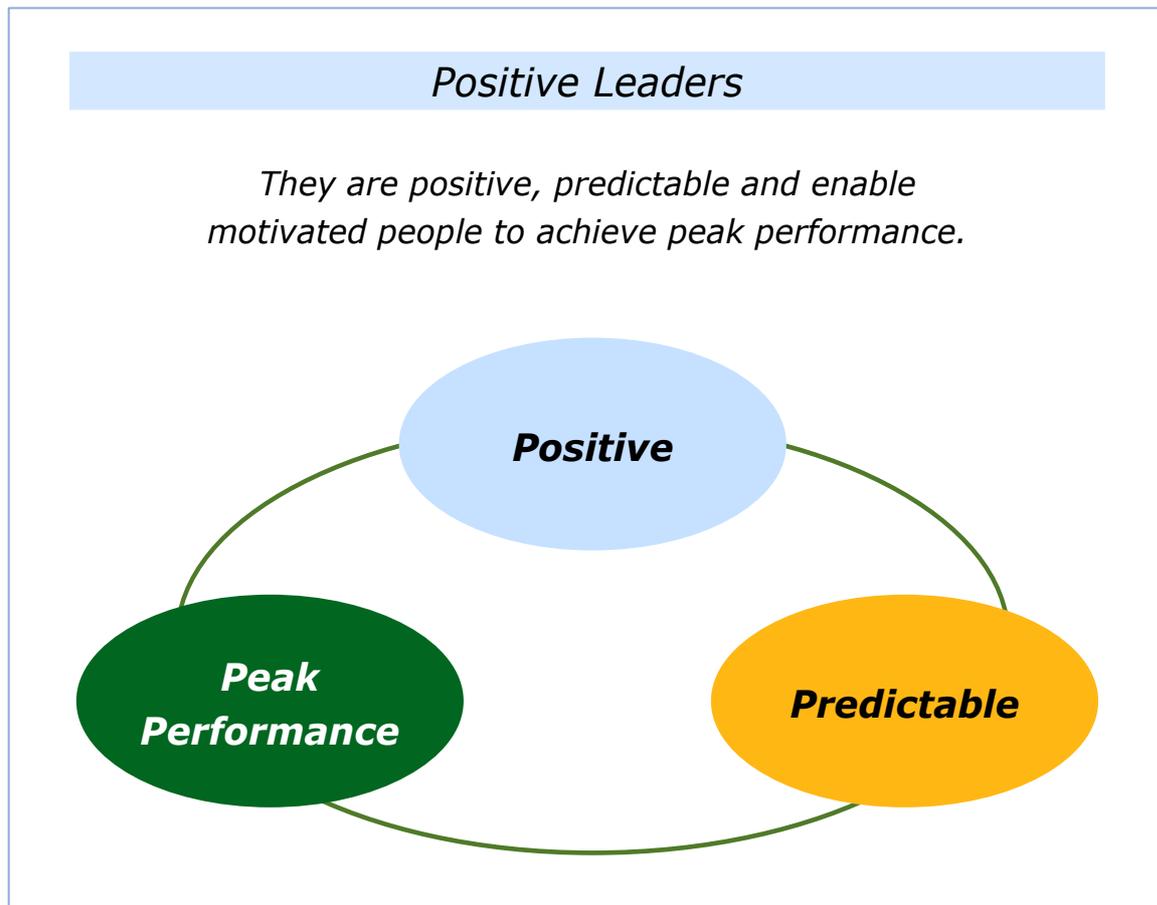
The specific things we can do to keep building on our strengths and also tackling the areas for improvement when doing similar pieces of work in the future are:

*

*

*

The Positive Leadership Approach



There are many models for leadership. Let's consider one of these approaches.

Good leaders are positive and predictable. They also enable motivated people to achieve peak performance. Poor leaders 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 encouraging people to perform at 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 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:*

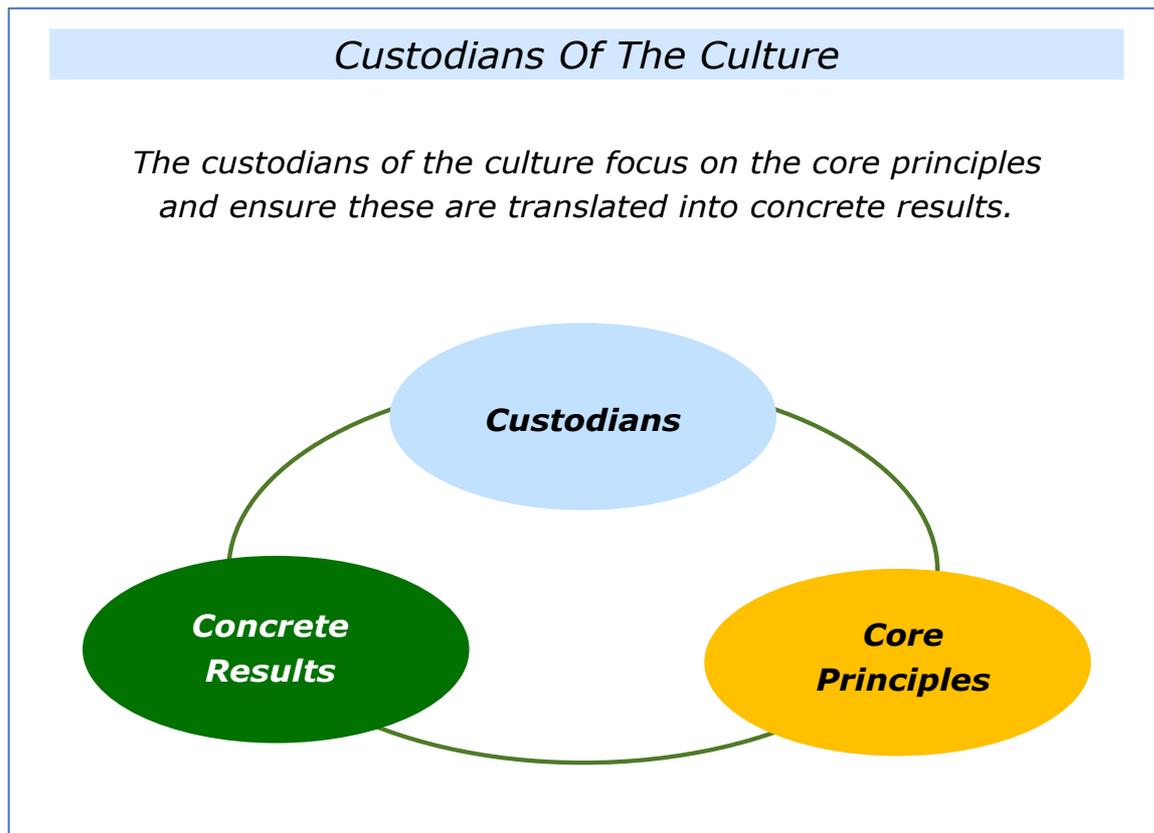
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*

*

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 pursue their potential and 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 they are judged by the performance of their people rather than just by their own performance. This is 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."

Giving People Empowerment Within Parameters

Good leaders clarify the outcomes the team must deliver. They then clarify the strategies people can follow to achieve the picture of success.

They may involve their people in adding ideas. When doing this, they communicate the parameters within which people can make suggestions. They incorporate some of these in the plans for achieve the goals.

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.

The Making A Clear Contract With Your Team Approach

<i>The Team's Contract</i>	
<i>The Leader's Responsibilities Are:</i>	<i>The Team Members' Responsibilities Are:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To ...

Imagine you are a team leader. One of your first jobs will be to make a clear working contract with the team.

People must be clear on the responsibilities of both the leader and the team members. Such a contract can cover both the psychological and practical responsibilities of working together.

Here is one approach to making an overall working contract. You can, of course, also make clear contracts about other aspects of working in the team. Gather people together and invite them to focus on the following themes.

Clarify the leader's responsibilities in the team

Prepare two flip charts. One is to be headed *The Leader's Responsibilities* and the other is to be headed *The Team Members' Responsibilities*.

Give each person a set of Post-it Notes and invite them to describe what they see as the leader's role in ensuring the team reaches its goals. Each person is to write one idea per Post-it but they can write as many ideas as they wish.

There are many approaches to leadership. People may consider, however, that the leader's role includes some of the following themes.

To keep communicating the team's purpose, principles and picture of success;

To create a positive environment in which motivated people can do good work;

To make clear contracts about each person's contribution towards achieving the team's goals;

To manage by outcomes rather than by tasks;

To manage upwards, provide air cover and protect people from interference;

To coordinate people's strengths to achieve the goals;

To make tough decisions and do whatever is necessary to guide the team to success.

There will be a chance to discuss these ideas later. But at this stage invite each person to go up in turn and put their Post-it Notes regarding what they see as the leader's responsibility.

It is also good if they can explain their reasons and give examples for each idea. They can then move onto the next stage.

The Leader's Responsibilities Are:

- * *To ...*

- * *To ...*

- * *To ...*

- * *To ...*

- * *To ...*

Clarify the team members' responsibilities in the team

Invite people to describe what they see as the team members' responsibilities in ensuring the team reaches its goals. For example:

To be positive and professional;

To understand the team's picture of success;

To make clear contracts about their contribution towards achieving the goal;

To perform good work, find solutions to challenges and deliver on their promises;

To help their colleagues and customers to achieve success.

Again, invite each person to go up in turn and place their Post-its under what they see as the team members' responsibilities. It is also good if they can give their reasons and examples for each idea.

The Team Members' Responsibilities Are:

* *To ...*

*Clarify and agree on the
team's working contract*

Looking at the ideas under the respective responsibilities, invite people to arrange these under themes and discuss the topics. When you feel people are ready, invite the team members to agree on the team's working contract.

As the leader, you will have the final say, but team members often produce an excellent agreement. Conclude by writing the contract and, if appropriate, putting it in a place where people can see it each day.

How can you use the contract? There are two main ways.

It can provide a constant reminder of people's respective responsibilities;

It can be used when tackling difficult situations.

If a person behaves unprofessionally, for example, don't get dragged down into arguing about the details. Just go back to the contract. Ask whether the person wants to follow the agreed principles.

Sometimes it may be appropriate to alter the conditions but then make sure the whole team are in agreement. If a person continues to break the rules, however, they are choosing to leave the team.

Clear contracting provides the basis for building a successful team. It provides a framework that people can use follow the agreed guidelines and deliver the picture of success.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach when leading a team. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

Making A Clear Contract With My Team

The specific things I can do to make a contract about my responsibilities as a leader and their responsibilities as team members are:

*

*

*

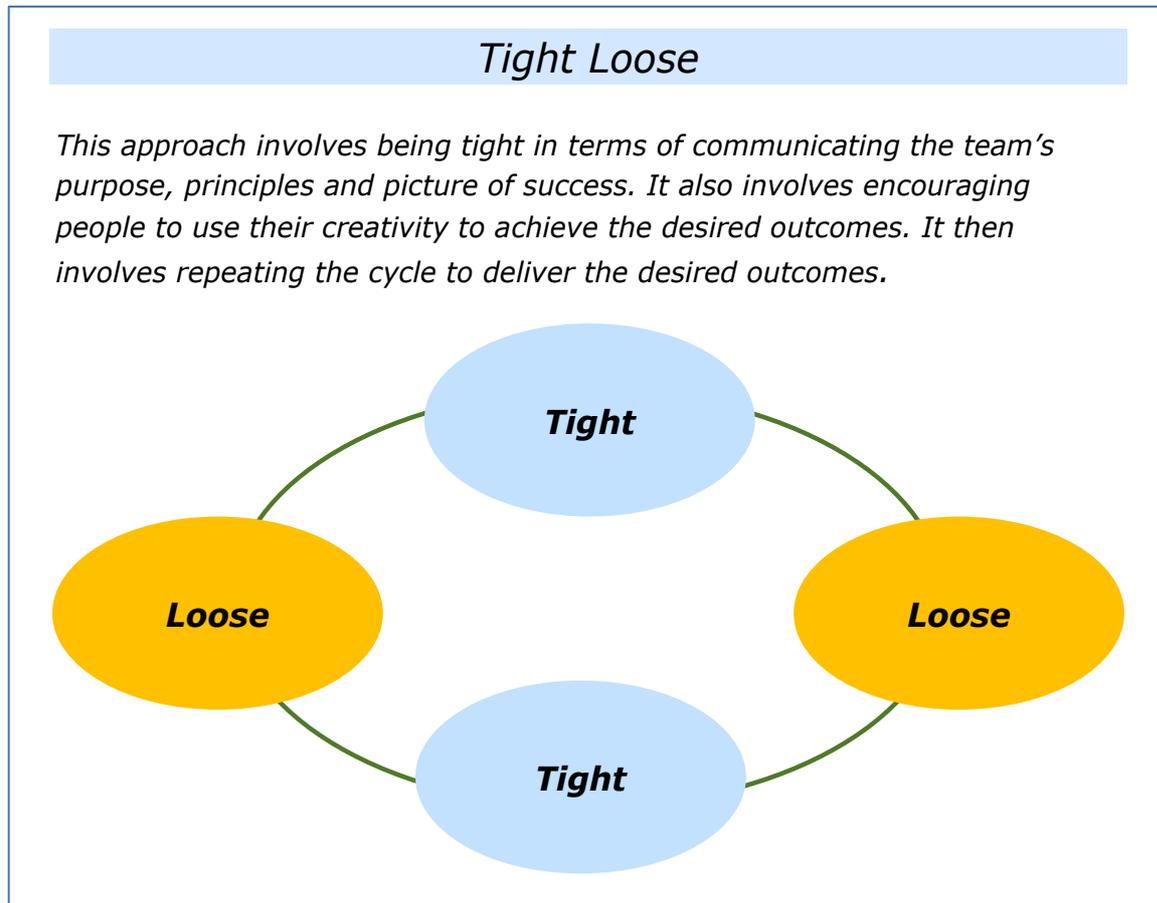
The specific benefits of making a clear contract with my team about these responsibilities are:

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*

*

The Tight Loose Approach



There are many views about how to lead teams and organisations. These sometimes include elements of the tight and loose approaches.

Some leadership styles follow the tight approach. This involves a command and control structure. It provides tight instructions on: a) what people should achieve; b) how they should achieve it; c) when they should achieve it.

Such an approach has advantages. It gives the impression of being in control and supervising people into doing good work. The downsides include people feeling they are micromanaged.

Some leadership styles incorporate the loose approach. This involves a more open and consensual approach to clarifying the goals. It also gives people freedom regarding how they achieve the aims.

This approach has advantages. It comes across as being more humanistic and involving. The downsides include lack of decisiveness and everybody expressing a view about everything.

Some leaders use a tight loose approach. This involves managing by outcomes. It calls for communicating a clear purpose, principles and picture of success. It then gives motivated people freedom, within parameters, to use their talents to achieve the goals.

Different leaders apply this approach in different ways. Some keep working through the tight – loose – tight – loose cycle. This may involve them saying something along the following lines to their people.

Tight

This is the team's purpose, principles and picture of success. These are these outcomes to achieve and these are the benefits. Would you like to contribute towards achieving these goals?

Loose

If so, let's make clear contracts about on your contribution to achieving the goals. The way you achieve these outcomes is, within parameters, up to you.

Tight

Let's return to the outcomes we want to achieve. What is the progress? What is going well and what can we improve? What are the next steps?

Loose

Let's make clear contracts about: a) the ongoing contribution you want to make; b) the support you need; c) the ways you will proactively keep me informed about the progress toward achieving the goals.

Many leaders have adapted this approach to enable their teams to deliver the desired results. The following pages provide excerpts from articles written by Rune Ulvnes.

The Tight Loose Approach

Purpose goals

My experience is that we must work towards what I have called purpose goals. These are fundamental if you work with Tight Loose Tight, a model that I developed about 10 years ago.

Purpose goals say something about what we as an organization want to achieve in the market – such as what effect our work should have. Examples of purpose goals may be:

We want to excite the audience on a deeper level;

We want to help our patients have a more worry-free everyday life;

We want employees not to get annoyed when they use the computer for normal activities.

The purpose of purpose goal is to engage the team in becoming innovative. For agile teams, it is easy to follow whether this happens through a glance at the result.

You as a leader should therefore use the opportunity to strengthen and clarify the purpose at every iteration so that the team understands the goals better.

Most teams that work with purpose goals can quickly find that one goal is better than another as the work progresses.

For example, the goal "We want to excite the audience on a deeper level" might not be understood, and the team might fail to deliver any reasonable results.

You should therefore seize the opportunity at any time to clarify the goal, for example "we want to give our audience two hours free of their worries while visiting our theater".

I do think that the simplicity of the model is its strength. This is the core of TLT:

Tight: As a leader, you give a purpose or direction to your employee or team.

Loose: You trust your employee or team and allow them to self-organize.

Tight: You follow up on your employee or team from time to time for mutual learning.



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 pursue their potential and 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 pursue their potential and 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.

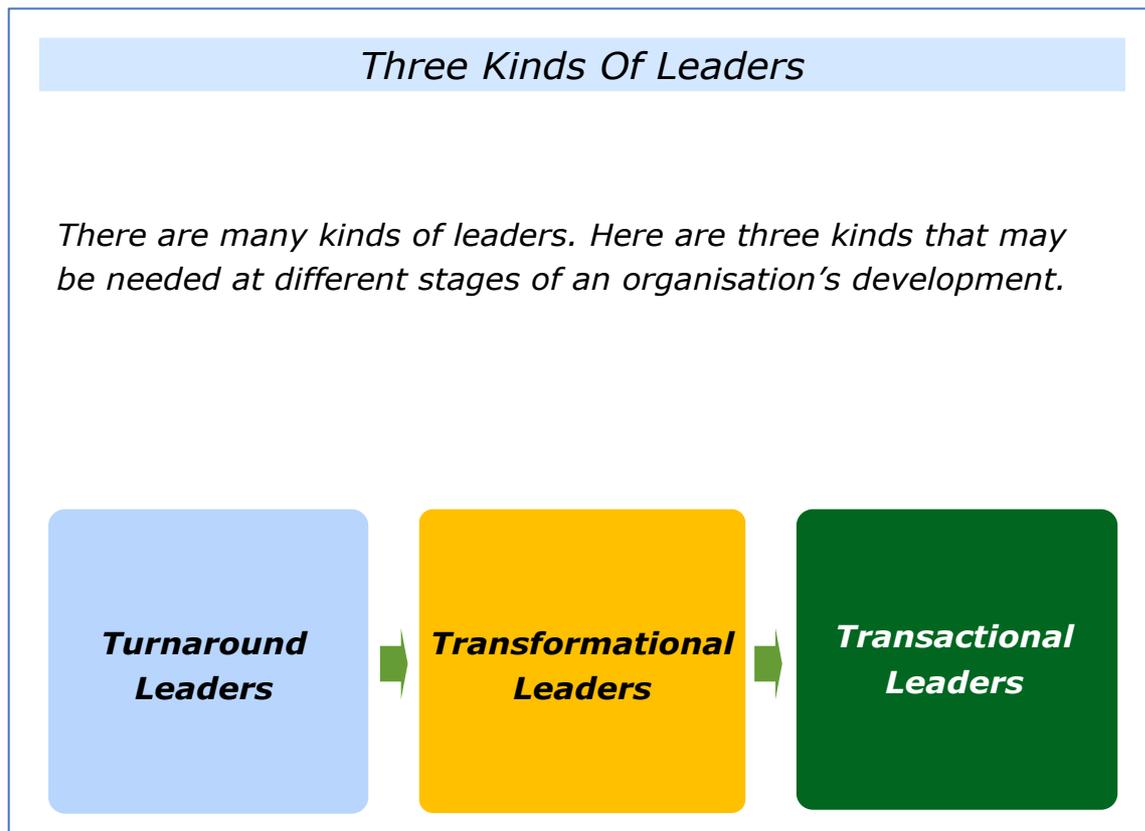
Good leaders play to their strengths. They then surround themselves with people who can compensate for any of their weaknesses.

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.

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:*

*

*

*

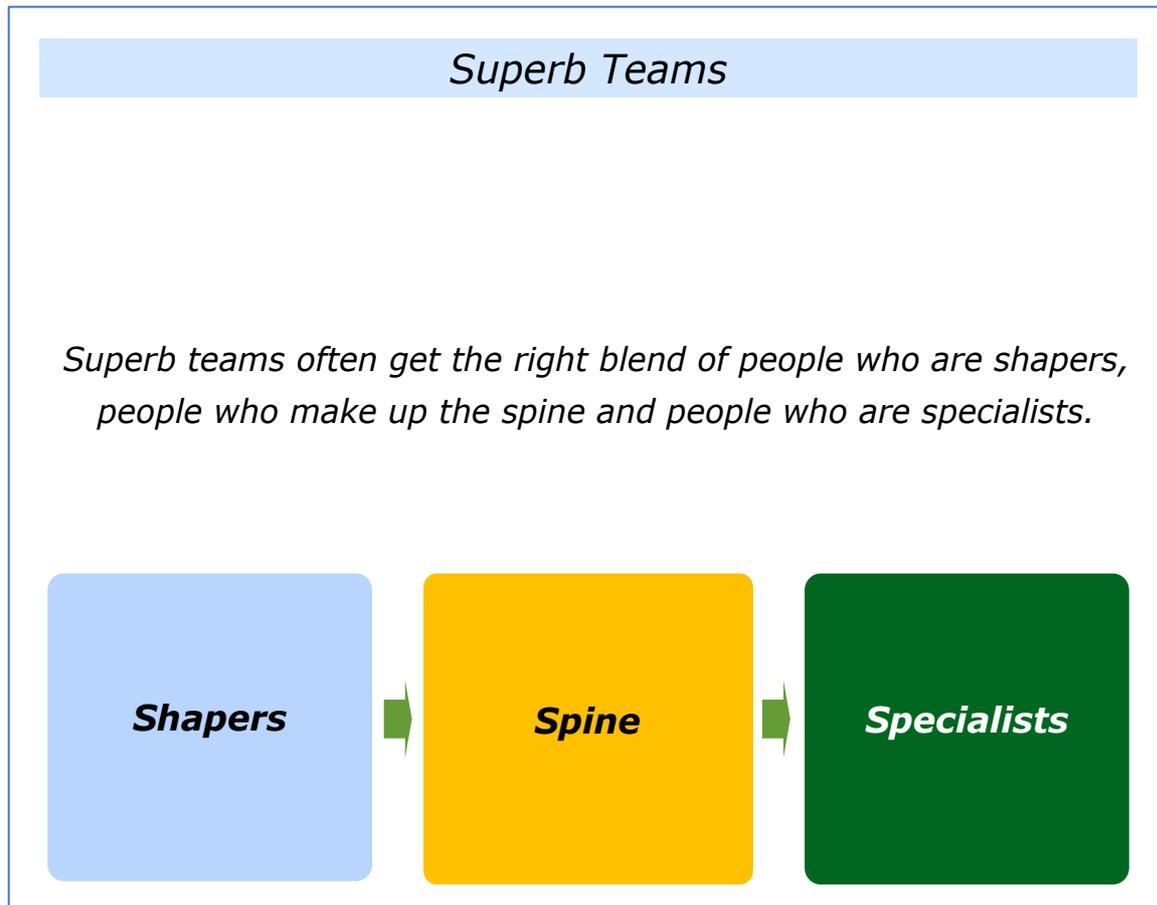
*The specific things that may
happen as a result may be:*

*

*

*

The Shapers, Spine And Specialists Approach



There are many models for building superb teams. You may start by making sure you have people who embody the team's spirit and have certain strengths.

The next step is to get the right blend of people who are shapers, who make up the spine and who are specialists. You can then coordinate their strengths to achieve success. Let's explore these themes.

Shapers

Great teams have people who are shapers. These may be strong personalities who are good at making strategic decisions and setting the team's direction. They aim to ensure that people keep focusing on the team's purpose, principles and picture of success.

Such individuals may also act as positive models when shaping the team's culture. People watch how these individuals behave and see this as 'the way we do things around here'.

Shapers often need to play to their strengths and, when appropriate, have colleagues who compensate for any weaknesses. Many leaders, for example, build a leadership team that covers the areas necessary for helping their people to achieve success.

Spine

Great teams have people who make up the spine. Such individuals are often superb workers who deliver consistently high professional high standards.

Many leaders recognise that they rely on people in the spine to translate the team's strategies into action. The quality of the work done by people in the spine often determines the quality of work done by the team.

Great teams encourage people in the spine. These people are good at implementing strategies, but it is important to give them some ownership of how to achieve the goals. Teams that take their spine for granted do so at their peril.

Specialists

Great teams make good use of specialists. Such people need to embody the spirit of the team and also provide specialist skills in their areas of expertise.

Leader often manage by outcomes when harnessing the talents of specialists. They start by giving people the context. They explain the team's purpose, principles and picture of success.

Bearing in mind the person's strengths, they make clear contracts about each specialist's best contribution. They then encourage and enable them to do superb work on the way towards achieving the team's goals.

*The Role Of Shapers And People
In The Spine Sometimes Changes*

The role that a person plays can sometimes shift depending on their responsibilities. The CEO of the European arm of a US company, for example, will act as a shaper for their people in Europe. The US head office, however, may see them as part of the spine.

A Department Head may be seen as part of the spine. They will act as a shaper, however, for the people in their team. They will have a strong influence on the culture of the team.

Let's return to your own work. Imagine that you are the leader for the team that you work in at the moment. Imagine also that you aim to make sure that you have the right blend of people in the team. If you wish, try exploring the following themes.

The Shapers

Great teams frequently have two or three people at the centre who shape the overall direction. They may involve other key people, however, to ensure that such individuals have a real sense of ownership in terms of setting and implementing the strategy.

Some teams limit themselves to a relatively small number of shapers who set the strategic direction and ensure there is alignment. This is because having many people who consider themselves to be strategic shapers can lead to some individuals pursuing their own agendas.

Great teams involve their people in helping to build the strategy but they do this within certain parameters. They make sure that everybody is committed to focus on the team's purpose, principles and picture of success.

Let's return to your team. Who are the shapers you already have in the team? Write the names of these people.

What are their individual and collective strengths? What do they do well? How can they do more of these things? What can they maybe do better in the future and how?

Looking ahead, will you at any point need more shapers in the team? If so, how can develop or add more shapers? What are the steps you can take to make this happen?

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

Shapers

The names of the shapers in the team are:

*

*

*

Strengths. The specific individual and collective strengths they have are:

*

*

*

The specific things they do well are:

*

*

*

The specific things they can do to play to their strengths and do more of these things in the future are:

*

*

*

The specific things they can maybe do better in the future – and how - are:

*

*

*

Shapers In The Future. The specific things we can do to, if appropriate, develop or add more shapers in the future are:

*

*

*

The Spine

Let's return to your team. Who are the people who make up the spine? These are the people who translate the strategies into action and deliver consistently high standards.

Such people are vital. They may sometimes be taken for granted, however, so it is important to keep close to them. You can provide them with the required support and also give them the opportunity to develop.

Bearing this in mind, how can you encourage such people? How can you spend quality time with them? How can you ensure they have the support needed to do the job? How can you help them to keep developing?

Such people are often duty driven. Whilst they are prepared to implement the strategies, it is important to give them a sense of ownership in how to make things work properly.

As mentioned earlier, ignore such people at your peril. They are the people who make things work. The last thing you want is for them to walk out of the door.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. Write the names of each of the people who make up the spine of the team. Then describe the specific things you can do to clarify:

The specific things they think are going well;

The specific things they think can be done better and how;

The specific support they need to be able to do their jobs well;

The specific ways they would like to develop as professionals.

You can follow up by providing this support and helping them to continue to develop. Finally, if appropriate, describe the specific things you can do to develop and add to the spine in the future.

Spine

*The names of the people who
make up the spine of the team are:*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*The specific things they think
are going well at the moment are:*

*

*

*

*The specific things they think
can be done better and how are:*

*

*

*

*The specific kinds of support
they would like and the ways
they would like to develop are:*

*

*

*

*Spine In The Future. The specific things
we can do to, if appropriate, add to
and develop the spine in the future are:*

*

*

*

The Specialists

Who are the specialists in your team? These are people who have specialist skills and the ability to contribute towards achieving the team's picture of success.

Such people may have specific job titles. They may be knowledge workers or individual contributors. They may be full-time workers, part-time workers or people you hire to do specialist work.

As mentioned earlier, harnessing their specialist skills often calls for managing by outcomes. Bearing in mind the person's strengths, it is important to make clear contracts with the specialist in the following areas.

The What

The specific results you would like the person to deliver towards achieving the team's goals. It is vital to agree on these outcomes.

The How

The specific strategies you would like the person to follow - and the support they need - to achieve the goals. It is also important, however, to give the specialist freedom - within certain parameters - regarding how they use their strengths to deliver the results.

The When

The specific things the person will deliver and by when. Also agree with the specialist about how they will proactively keep others informed about their progress toward achieving the goals.

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

Specialists

The names of the people who have specialist skills that can contribute towards achieving the team's goals are:

*

*

*

*

*

*

The specific things we can do with each person to make clear contracts about the outcomes they will deliver towards the goals are:

*

*

*

The specific things we can do to give them support yet also ensure they keep us informed about their progress are:

*

*

*

The specific things we can do to manage by outcomes and enable the specialist to do so superb work are:

*

*

*

Specialists In The Future. The specific things we can do to decide how we want specialists to contribute to the team in the future are:

*

*

*

The Shapers, Spine And Specialists – The Action Plan

Imagine that you have worked through the previous exercises. It is now time to translate your ideas into action. Bearing this in mind, it can be worth exploring the following themes.

What can you do to ensure the shapers play to their strengths? How can you compensate for any of their weaknesses? How can you make sure that each of them make their best contributions to the team?

What can you do to care for the people in the spine? How can you support and encourage them? How can you clarify what they think is going well and what can be done better? How can you clarify how they want to develop as professionals?

What can you do to harness the skills of the specialists? How can you make clear contracts about their best contributions? How can you keep focusing on the outcomes they are to deliver and enable them to do superb work?

What are the kinds of decisions you may need to take regarding the kinds of specialist skills the team may need in the future? How can you be proactive in taking these steps?

Let's bring this all together. What are the actions you need to take to get the right blend of shapers, people in the spine and specialists? How can you translate these ideas into action? What will be the benefits of taking these steps?

There are many ways to build teams. This section has looked at one approach. If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

The Shapers, Spine And Specialists – Action Plan

The specific things we can do to get the right blend of people who are shapers, people in the spine and people who are specialists are:

*

*

The specific steps we can take to translate these ideas into action are:

*

*

*

The specific benefits of taking these steps will 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

Successful Leadership

One Approach Is:

- *To find your successful leadership style;*
- *To follow your successful leadership style;*
- *To develop 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 ...

Developing Your Successful Leadership Style

There are many ways to develop your style. One approach is to build on your strengths and manage the consequences of any weaknesses.

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.

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

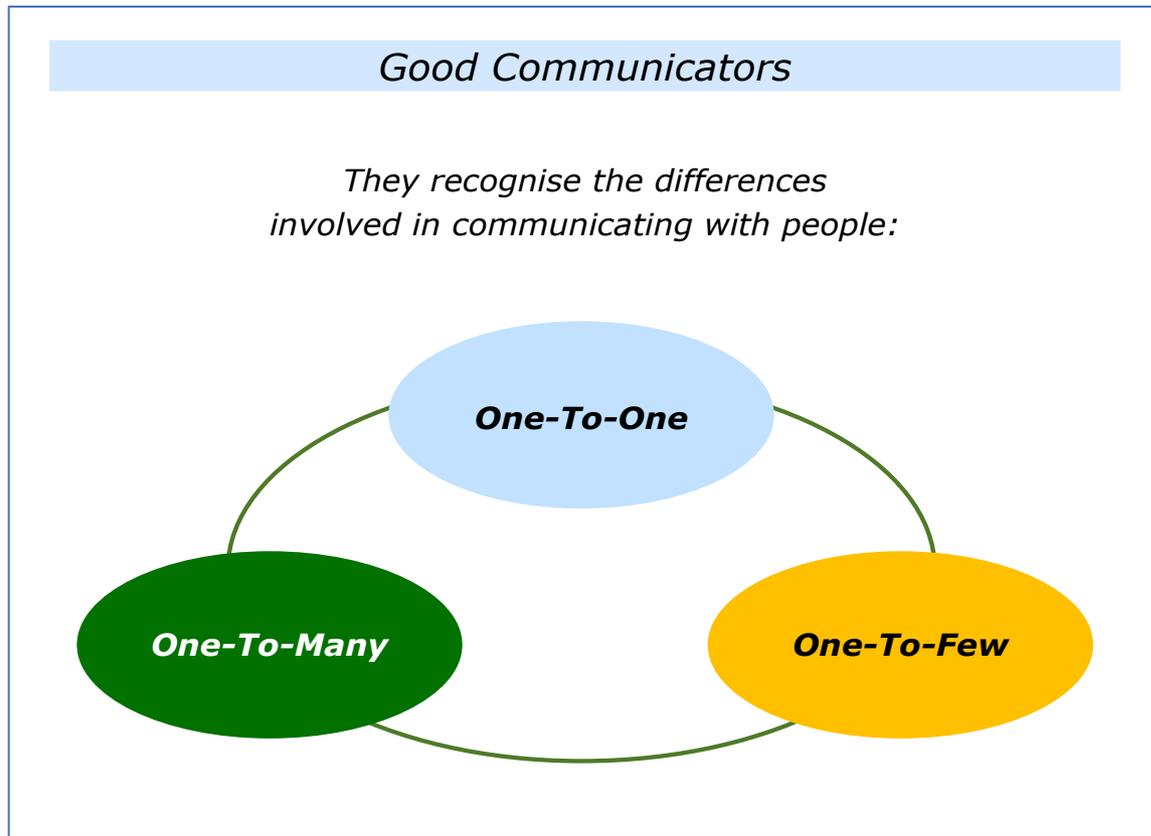
*The specific things we can then do to
coordinate these strengths to do our
best to achieve the picture of success are:*

*

*

*

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:*

*

*

*

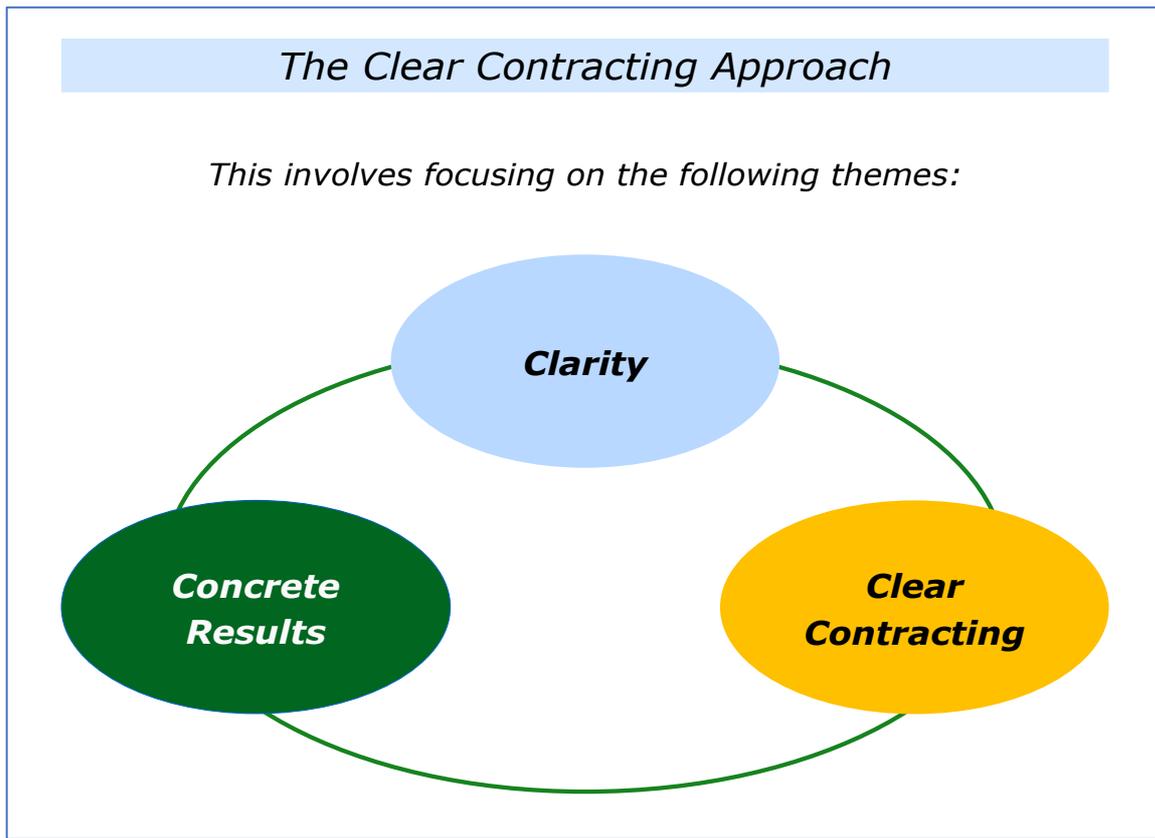
*The specific benefits of
taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

The 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

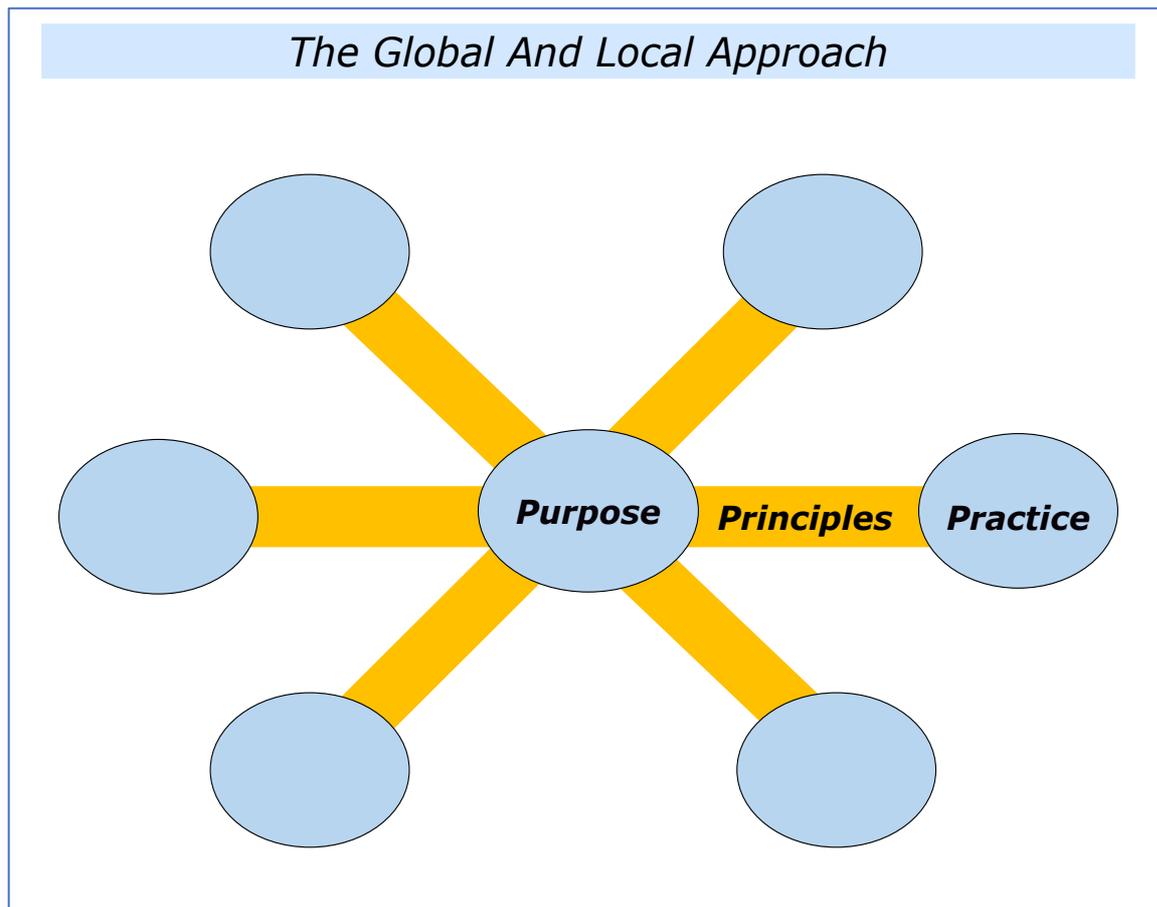
People often enter into a contract when taking up a professional role. Sometimes this is made explicit by them agreeing to follow a certain professional credo. This may require them to sign a formal agreement.

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.

Let's explore how this can work in action. Good leaders, for example, manage by outcomes rather than by tasks. This involves them going through the following steps.

Clear Contracting When Managing By Outcomes



This approach is often used in organisations that get the right balance between the global and the local. 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 practice 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 practice.

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 Practice

The way you translate these principles into practice 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 practice 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 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.

Clear Contracting In Coaching Situations

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 happening in the situation? Bearing in mind what 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.

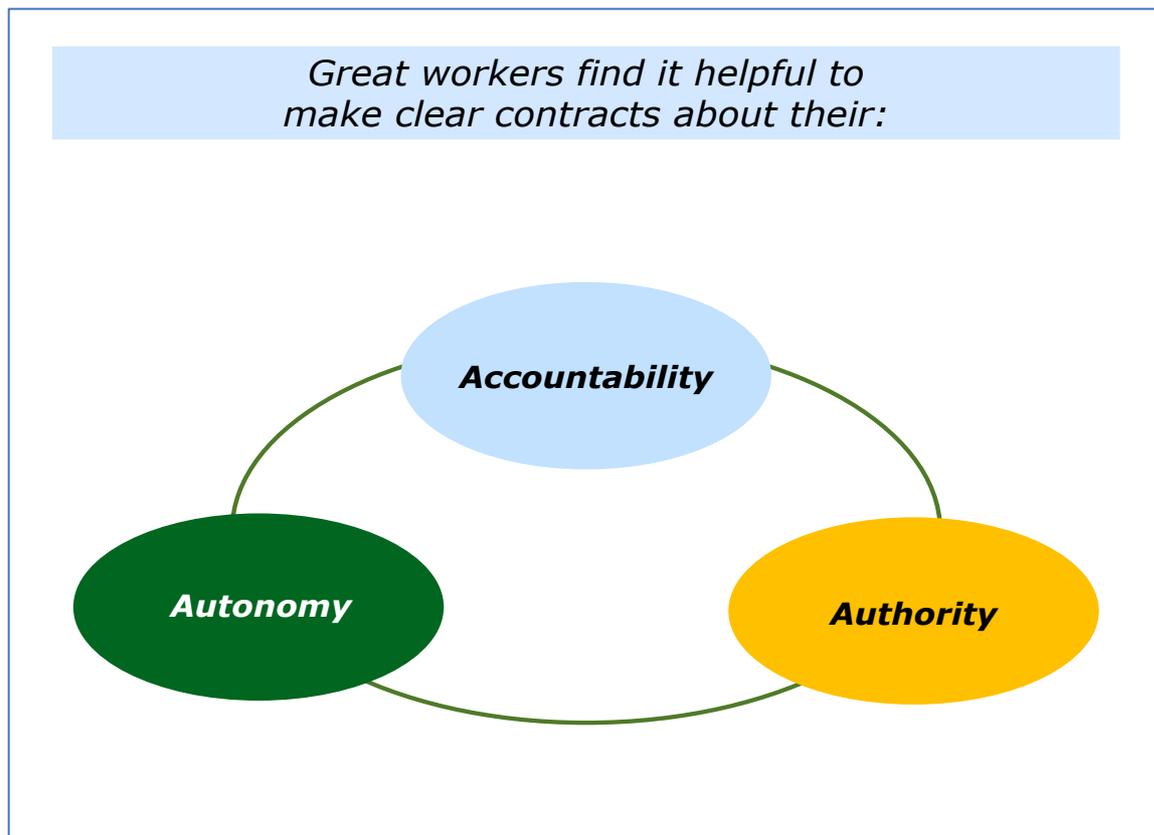
Some people make a contract with themselves to follow a certain mantra. A person may, for example, keep saying the following things to themselves (other people may follow other scripts).

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

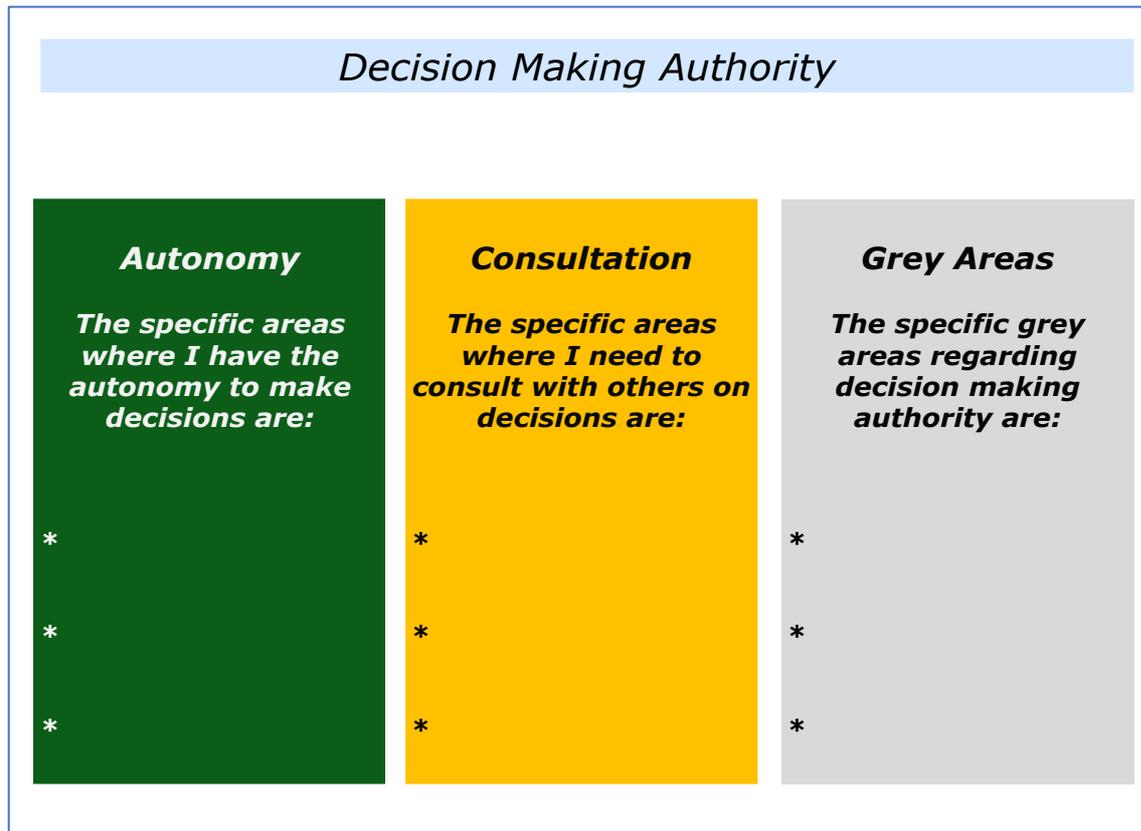
The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:

*

*

*

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:

*

*

*

The specific benefits of taking this approach will be:

*

*

*

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:*

*

*

*

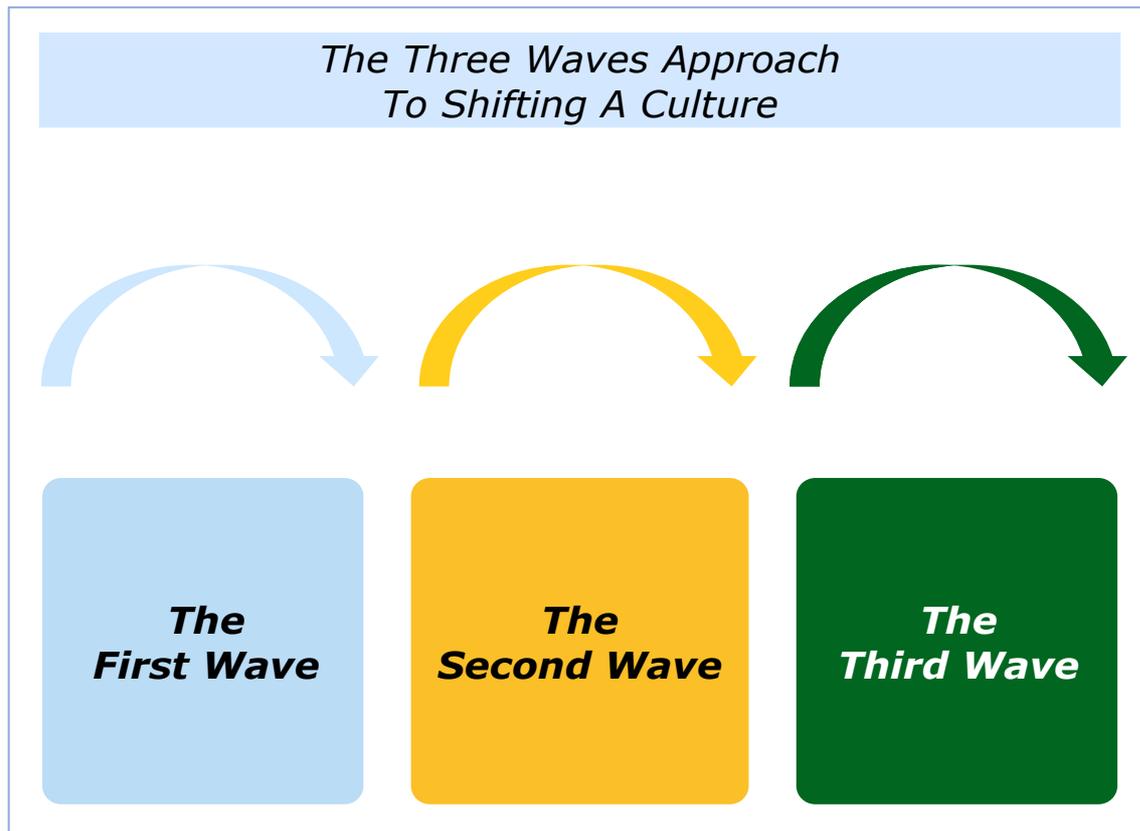
*The specific things I and they can do to
make sure we fulfil the agreed contract are:*

*

*

*

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.

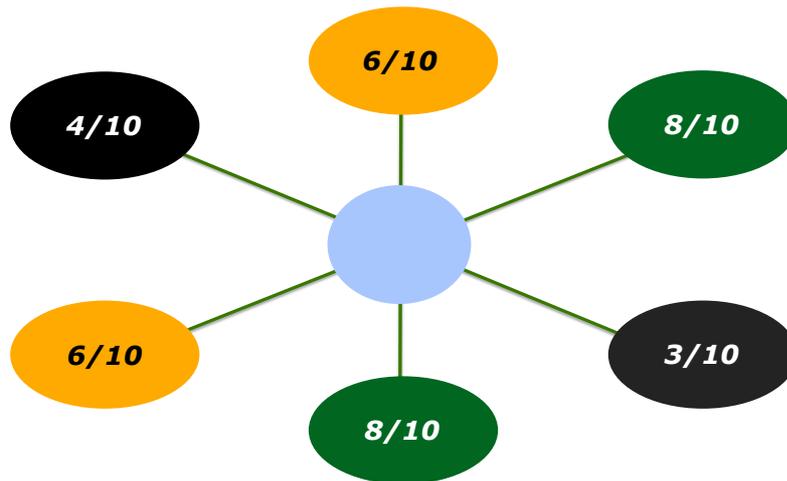
Working backwards, describe the things that must be achieved by the end of each quarter and work back to the present day. That is your road map towards achieving the picture of success. Then move onto the next stage.

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.

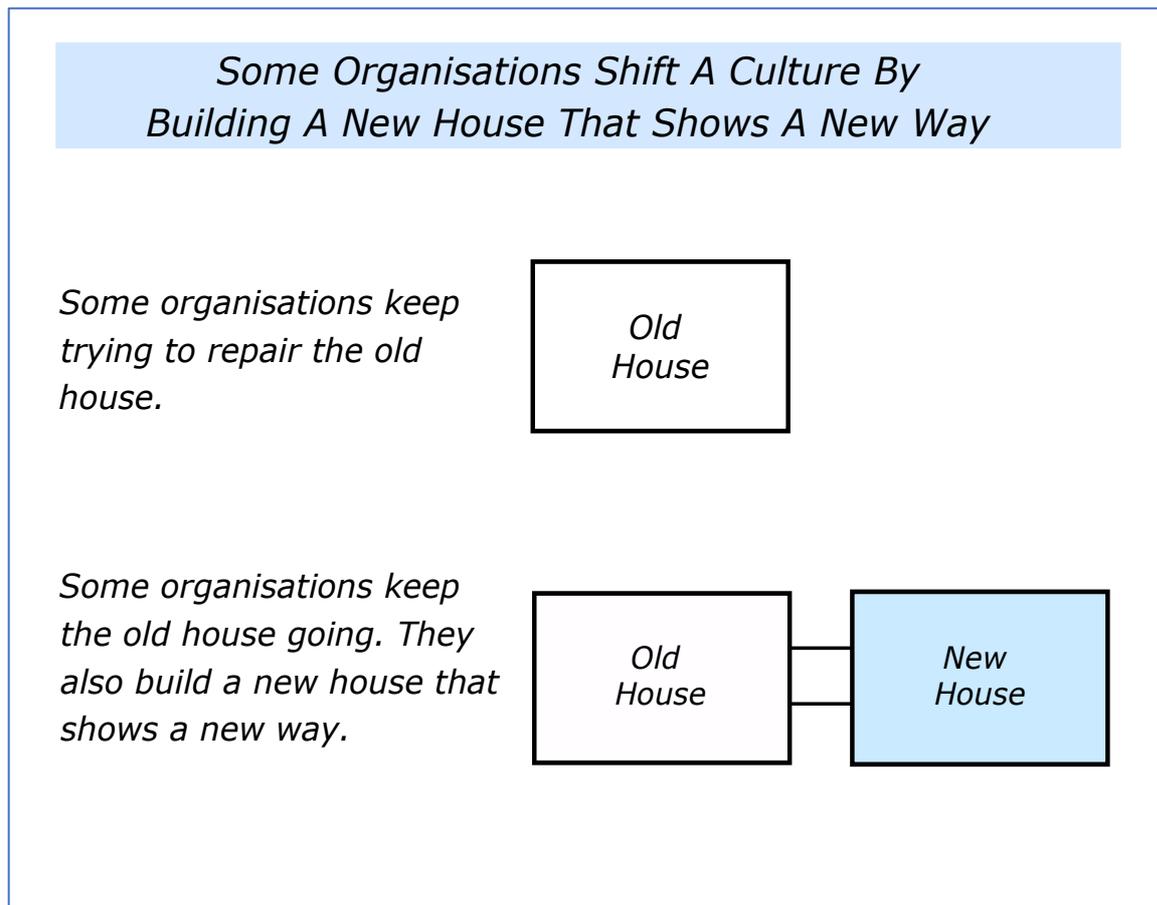
Explain to everybody in the organisation that you are building the future business. You would like volunteers who want to act as models. But make sure you have already earmarked three such places. Others may want to join, but make sure these are prepared to work hard to succeed.

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.

Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to describe the principles people followed to deliver the goods. Let's look at one way to share such guidelines.

Success Stories

People buy success rather than the theory of success. Bearing this in mind, it can be important to encourage people to produce success stories. Such stories can then be published internally or presented at an organisational event.

One key point. It is important to be humble when presenting these stories. It is to give credit to other people – rather than yourself – and to also explain that this describes a way of reaching certain goals.

Here are some guidelines that can be borne in mind when sharing success stories. Later we will offer a framework that people can use to write such stories.

Success Stories Can Generate Ongoing Success

This is an approach that can be used to encourage people, teams and organisations to follow certain principles to deliver success.

- *You can produce success stories that highlight people following certain principles to achieve success.*
- *You can describe the principles that people followed – and how they translated these into action - to achieve success.*
- *You can encourage people to follow these principles in their own ways to achieve success.*

You can keep producing success stories to maintain the momentum and encourage people to achieve ongoing success.

The Second Wave: Working With Volunteers Who Follow The Principles And Deliver Success

People have shown the approach works. If appropriate, you can 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. As mentioned earlier, 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.

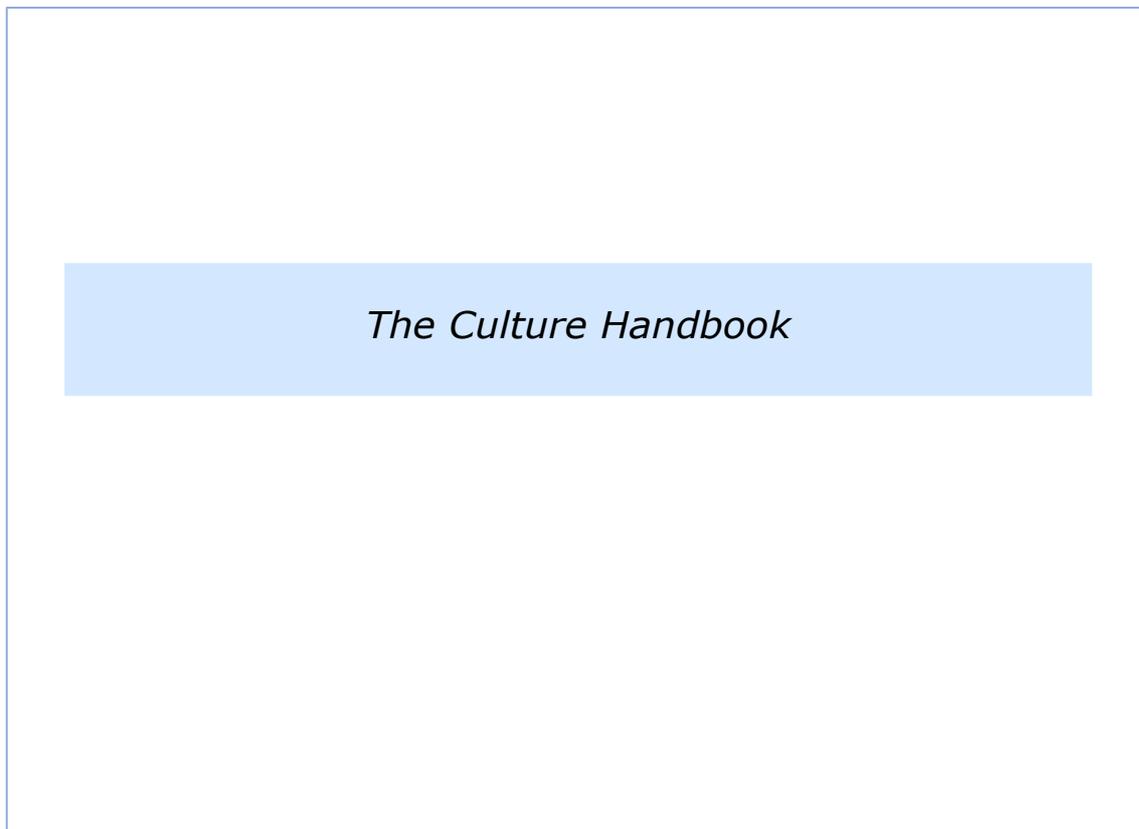
"If so, you encourage them to use their strengths to work towards achieving the picture of success."

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.



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

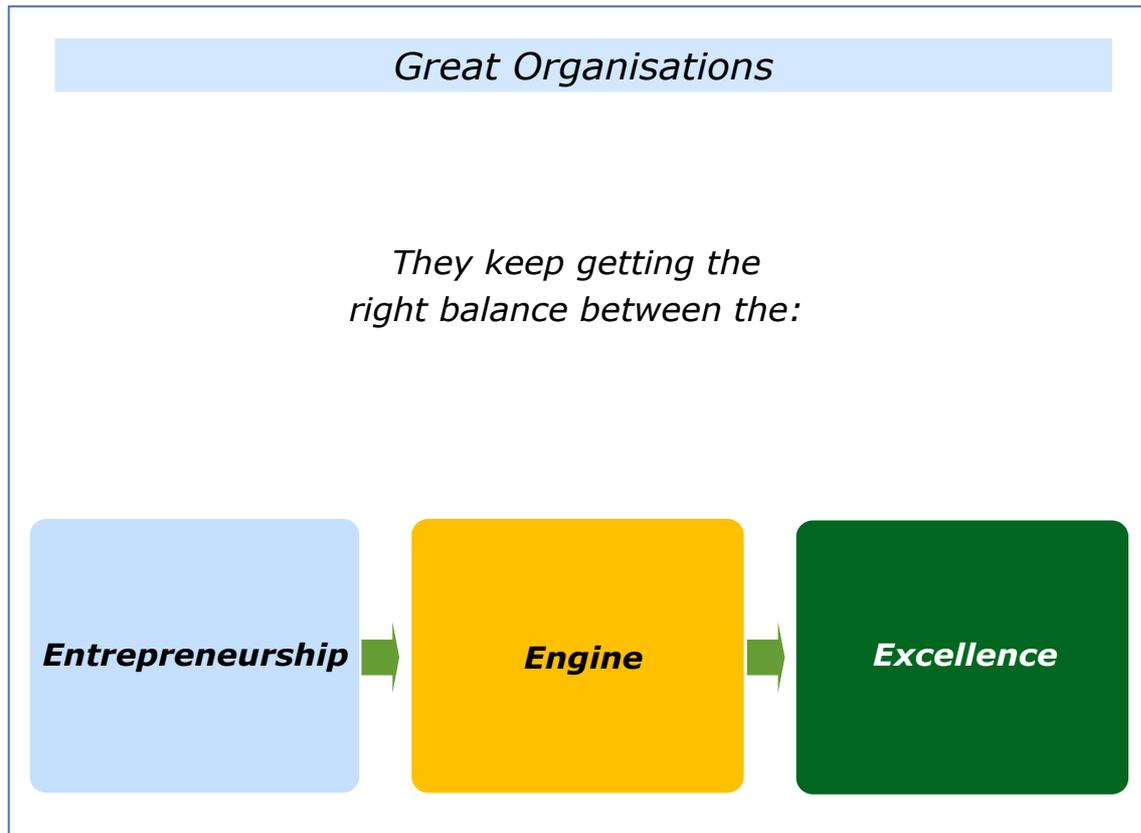
Bearing in mind the goals we want to achieve, the next steps are these.

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:

*

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*

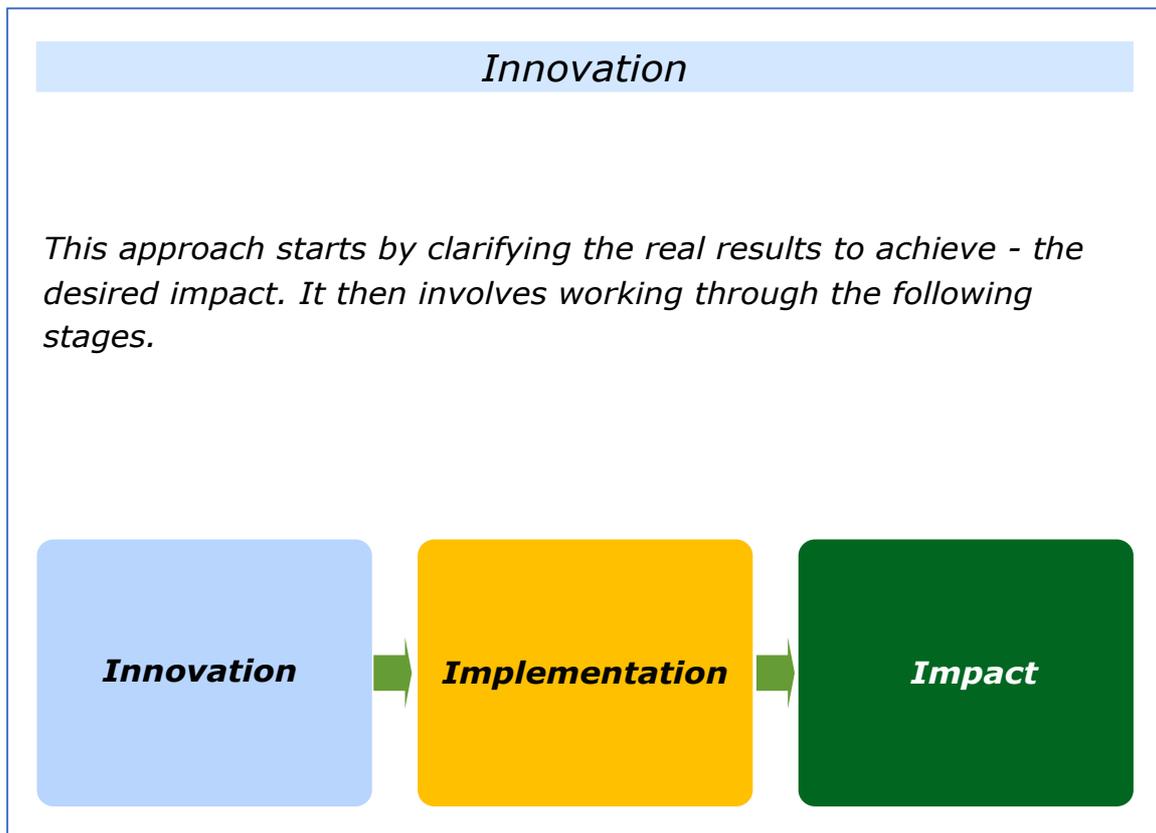
The specific benefits of making sure it continually delivers excellence will be:

*

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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.

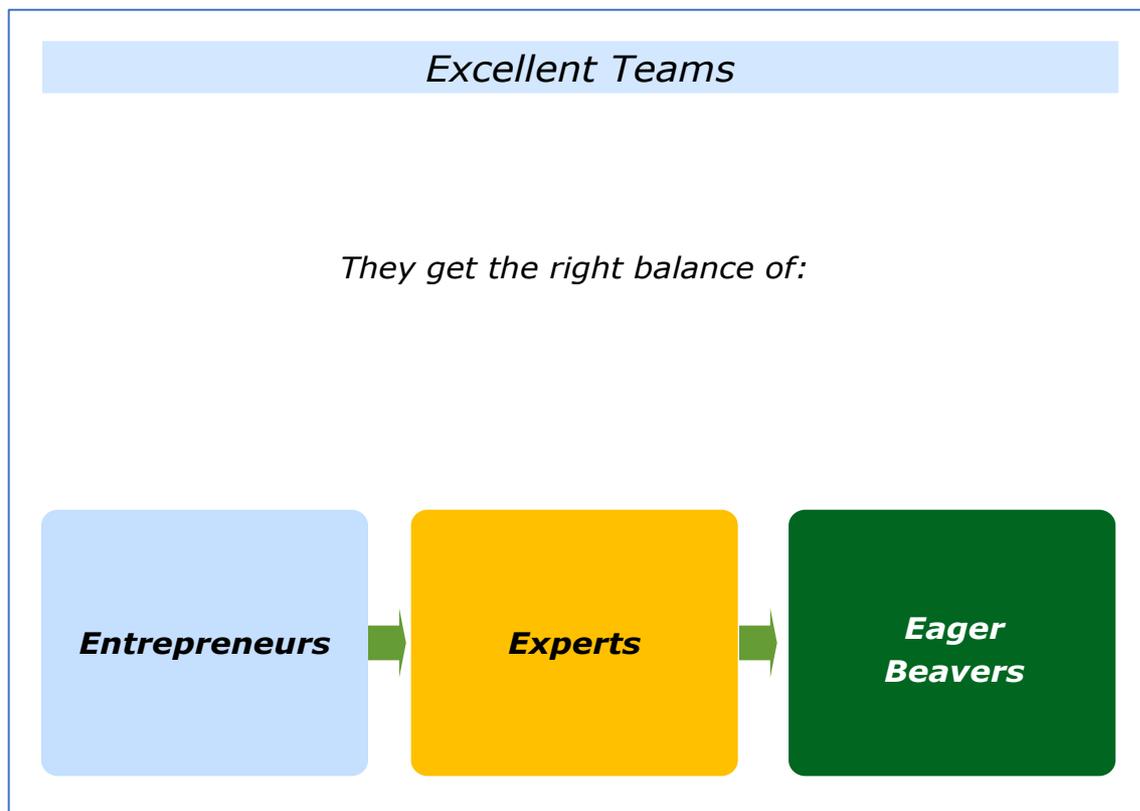
Company B was strong on implementation. Their leaders expressed in the following way.

"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

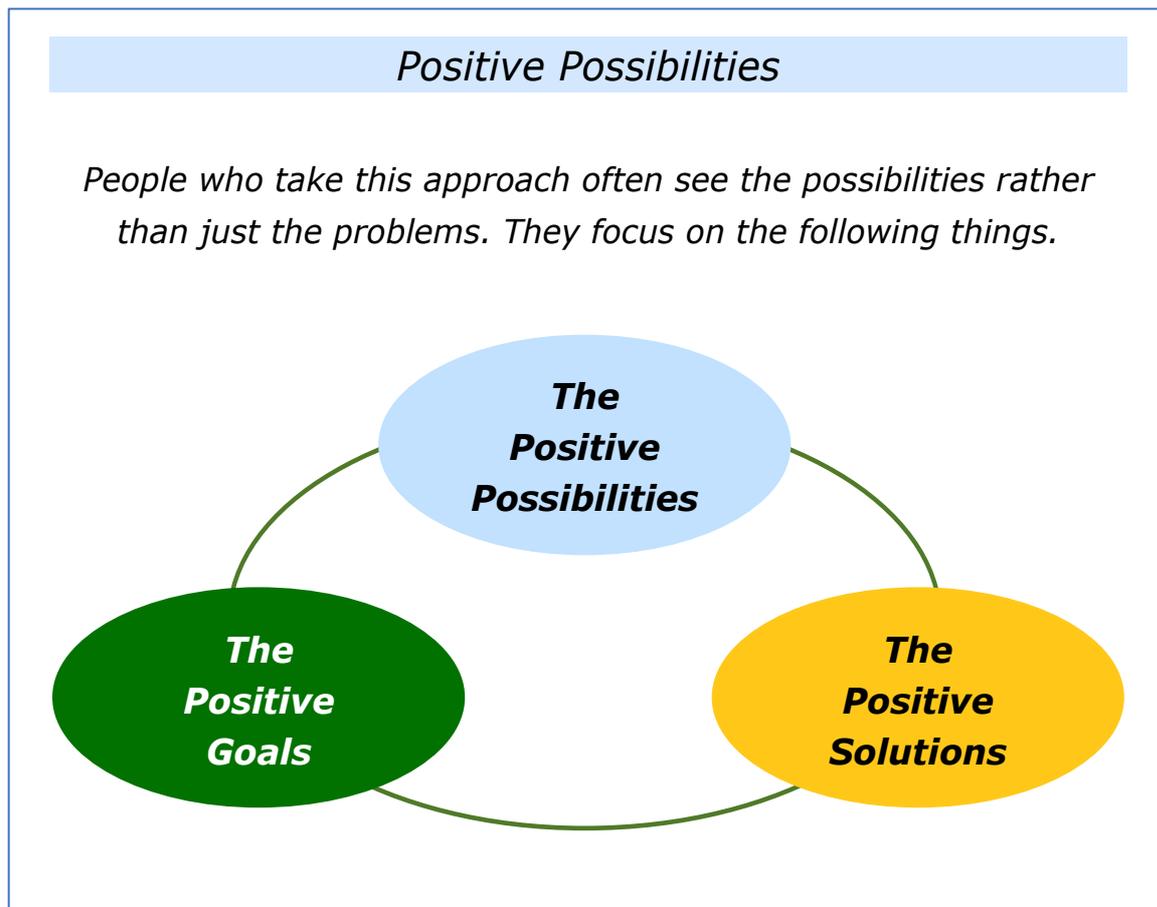
*The specific things we can do to build
on our strengths and increase the
chances of shaping a successful future are:*

*

*

*

The Positive Possibilities Approach



People who take this approach often have a positive approach to life. They continually see possibilities rather than just see problems.

Such people see the possible options for moving forwards, the possible solutions to problems and the possible benefits. They then translate their ideas into setting possible goals. The following sections explore how some people pursue these principles

They See Positive Possibilities

People who have a positive attitude often see possibilities in situations. Thorkil Sonne is somebody who took this approach when founding the Specialist People Foundation. This aims to create one million jobs for people with autism.

Such people have many strengths. They 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.

The following section provides excerpts from the organisation's website. This provides describes how Thorkil focused on possibilities.

The Idea for Specialisterne and Specialist People Foundation Started with Lars

My son Lars was 2½ years old when my wife and I noticed that his development began to differ from that of his older brothers. We arranged with his nursery carers that he would get extra support from a qualified child psychologist, all the while hoping of course that we could learn how best to help him become more like his brothers.

Our Lives Changed

Eventually, we were informed that Lars had infantile autism – a life-long invisible handicap in the category of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Lars would face a life where he would be constantly misunderstood and isolated because it would be difficult for him to interpret what others expected of him. Most likely, Lars would never have a normal working life.

My Fight

I became active in the Danish Autism Association. I also studied the Danish welfare model, and realized that although the model is strong and has many good aspects, there was a lot of room for improvement.

I learned that families with a child with ASD have a high risk of disintegration. This is most often because this handicap is invisible, meaning that the family has to struggle to get the outside world to understand and provide timely support.

Social workers also work under difficult conditions where welfare schemes are available, but the knowledge of how best to help people with

complicated invisible handicaps is thin on the ground. I experienced that both those who need the help and those who provide help are under great and increasing strain.

Specialisterne

With the support of my family I re-mortgaged our home and established Specialisterne (The Specialists) in an attempt to tailor a working environment geared towards people with ASD, enabling them to use their specialist skills to act as consultants to the business sector, at market terms.

My vision is to create new possibilities for people with ASD and to influence society to adopt a more positive attitude towards people with ASD.

One Million Jobs

It is believed that 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, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). 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.

Thorkil Sonne was elected as an Ashoka Fellow in 2009. Here is the citation that was published at the time.

Thorkil changes the way society perceives autism by transforming it from a handicap to a competitive advantage.

His Specialist People Foundation employs autistic people, who have a ten times lower fault rate in software testing and other tasks. Thorkil now plans to go beyond Denmark, empowering people with ASD globally.



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.

Let's move onto another principle followed by people who focus on possibilities.

They See Positive Solutions

Such people are often positive realists. They have a positive attitude but are good at reading reality. They often immediately explore the possible solutions to potential problems.

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?

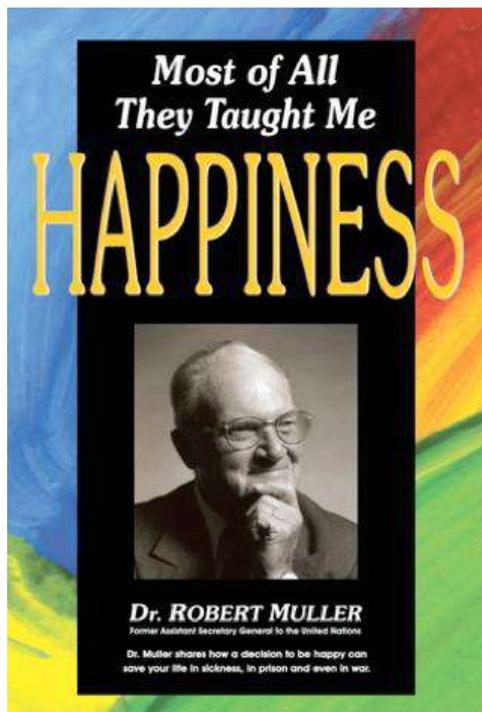
Robert settled on his plan and began translating it into action. This involved making his way down four floors from the attic and walking out onto the street.

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.

Let's look at another principle followed by people who focus on positive possibilities.

They See Positive Goals

Such people love to set positive goals. Jack Sim is such a person. He 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.



Different people see different things in life. Some people see possibilities, some just see problems. One approach is to ask some of the following questions when focusing on these themes.

● *Positive Possibilities*

What is happening in the situation? What are some of the positive things? What are the strengths, assets and resources? How is it possible to build on these? What are the possible positive ways forward? How is it possible to pursue these routes?

● *Positive Solutions*

What are the challenges? Looking at each challenge, what are the real results to achieve? What are the potential options? What are the pluses and minuses of each option? Are there any other creative solutions? If appropriate, how can we get – as far as possible - win-win solutions?

● *Positive Goals*

What do we really want to achieve? What is the picture of success? What are the strategies most likely to achieve the goals? How to translate these into a clear action plan? What will be the benefits of achieving the goals? What will be happening that will show we have achieved 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 positive possibilities approach?

What may be the actual situation? How can you brainstorm and explore the positive possibilities? How can you, if appropriate, find positive solutions? How can you work towards positive goals?

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

The Positive Possibilities Approach

The specific situation when I may want to follow elements of the positive possibilities approach may be:

*

The specific things I can do then to follow elements of this approach may be:

*

*

*

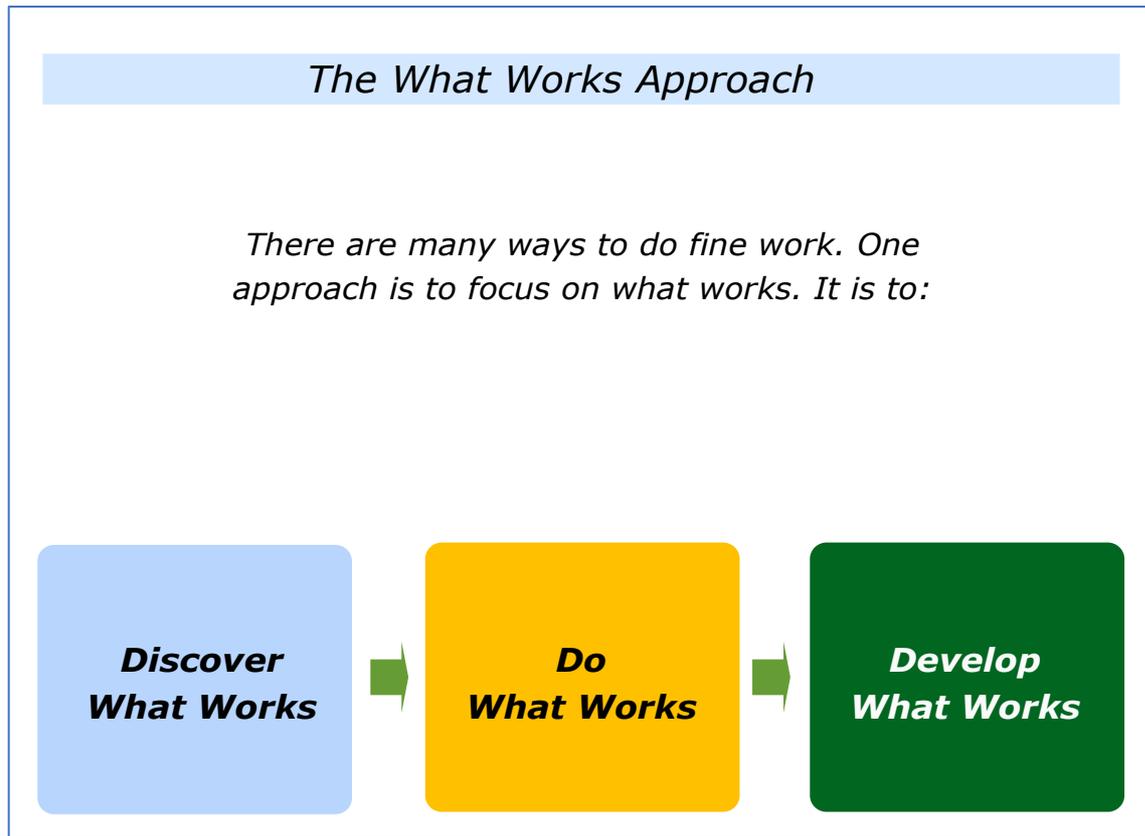
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

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.

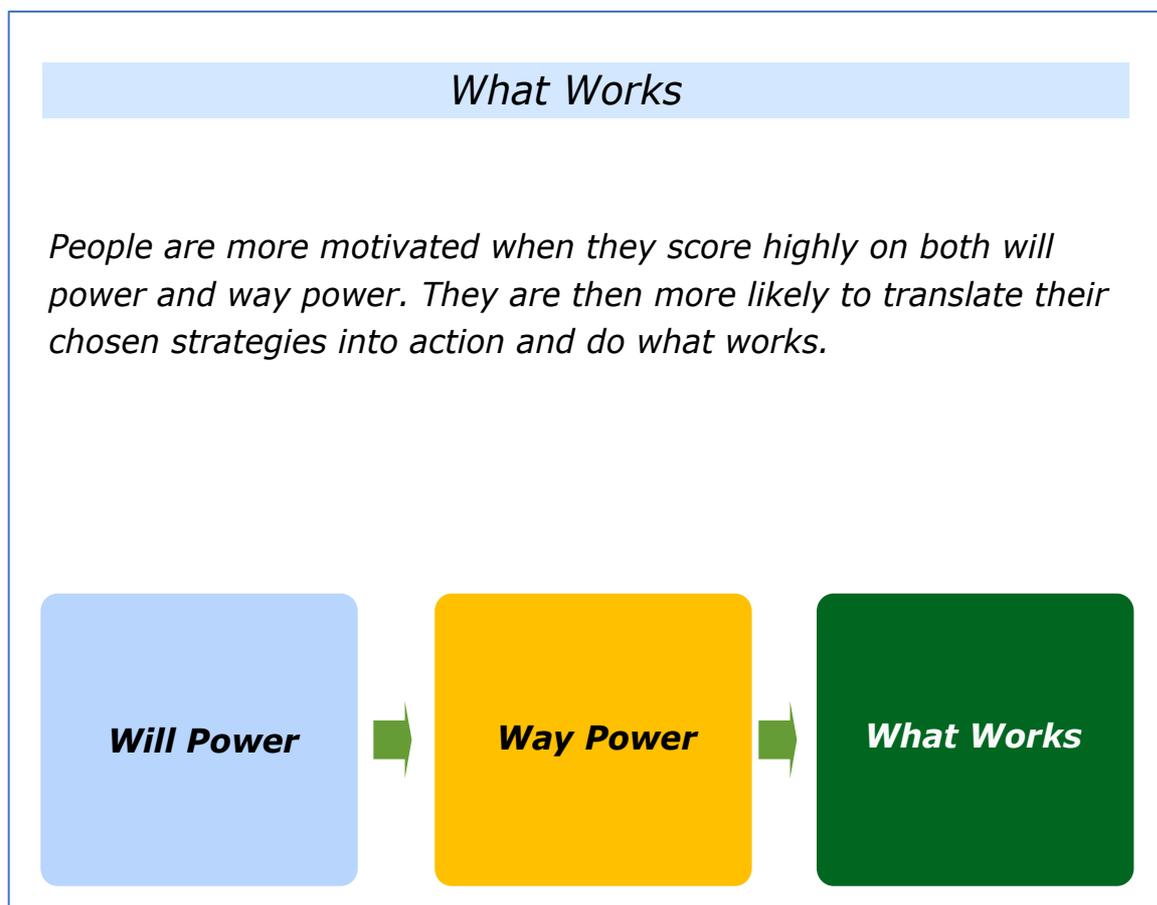
People are more likely to be motivated when:

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. They are then more likely to do what works.



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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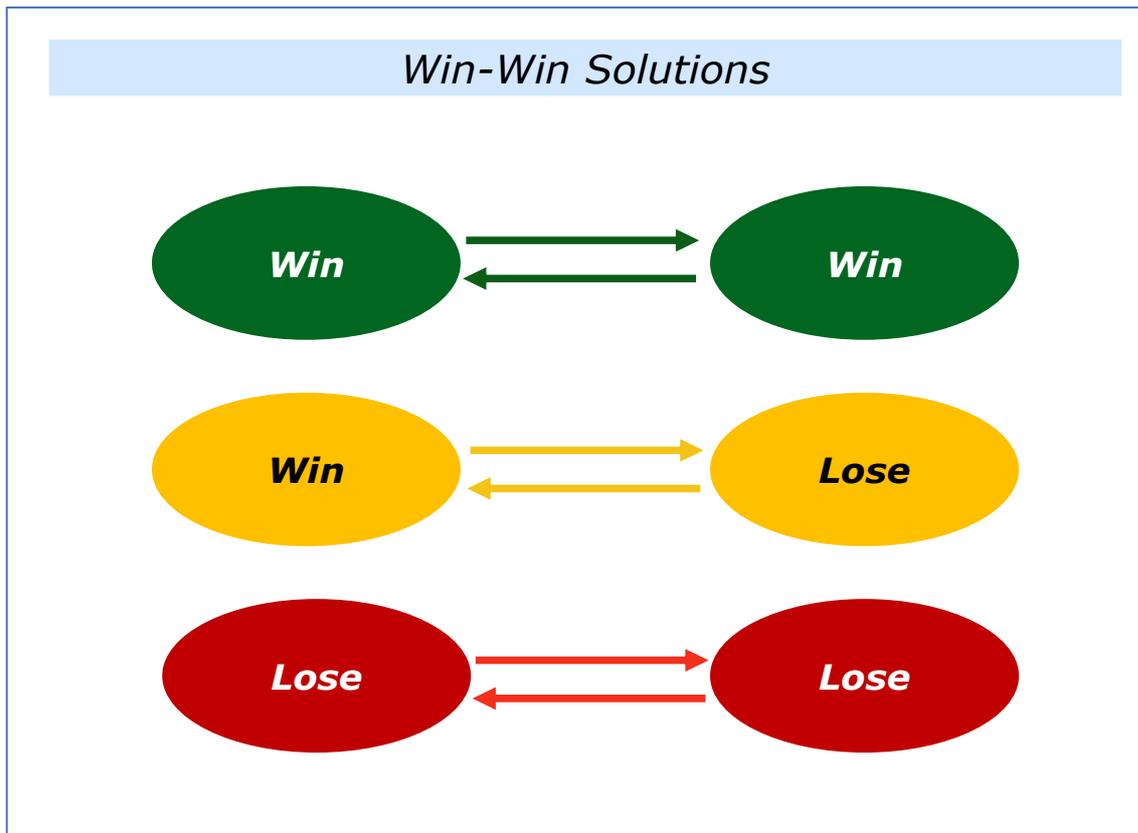
Development. The specific things I can do to build on what works and also tackle the areas for improvement are:

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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. This also calls for people to focus on finding positive solutions rather than scoring points.

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.

Are people willing to focus on finding alignments rather than getting into arguments?

People who work towards win-wins tend to focus on finding positive solutions rather than scoring points. They do this by trying to create alignments rather than by getting into arguments.

They focus on what they have in common and what they all want to achieve. Those who are prepared to take this approach are more likely to achieve positive results.

People Who Work Towards Getting Win-Wins

They aim to do this:

***By Trying To
Find Alignments***

Rather than:

***By Getting
Into Arguments***

Clarifying What Each Party Wants and Building On Common Ground

Imagine the right conditions are in place. You can then move on to 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.

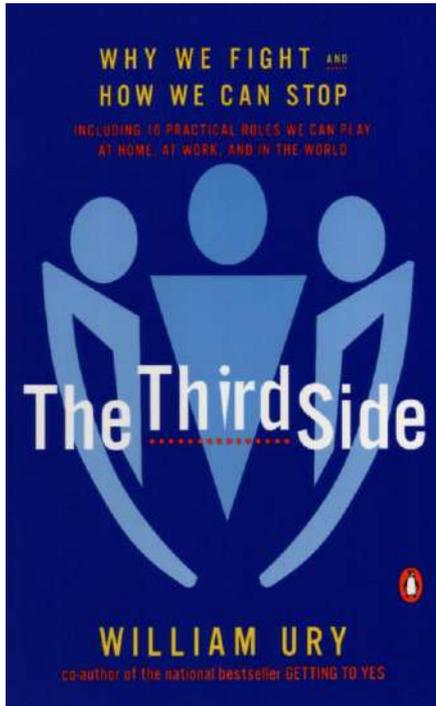
When working with divorcing parents, for example, you will start by focusing on the shared aims they have in common. They may get into arguments, but both will probably say they want the best for their children.

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.'

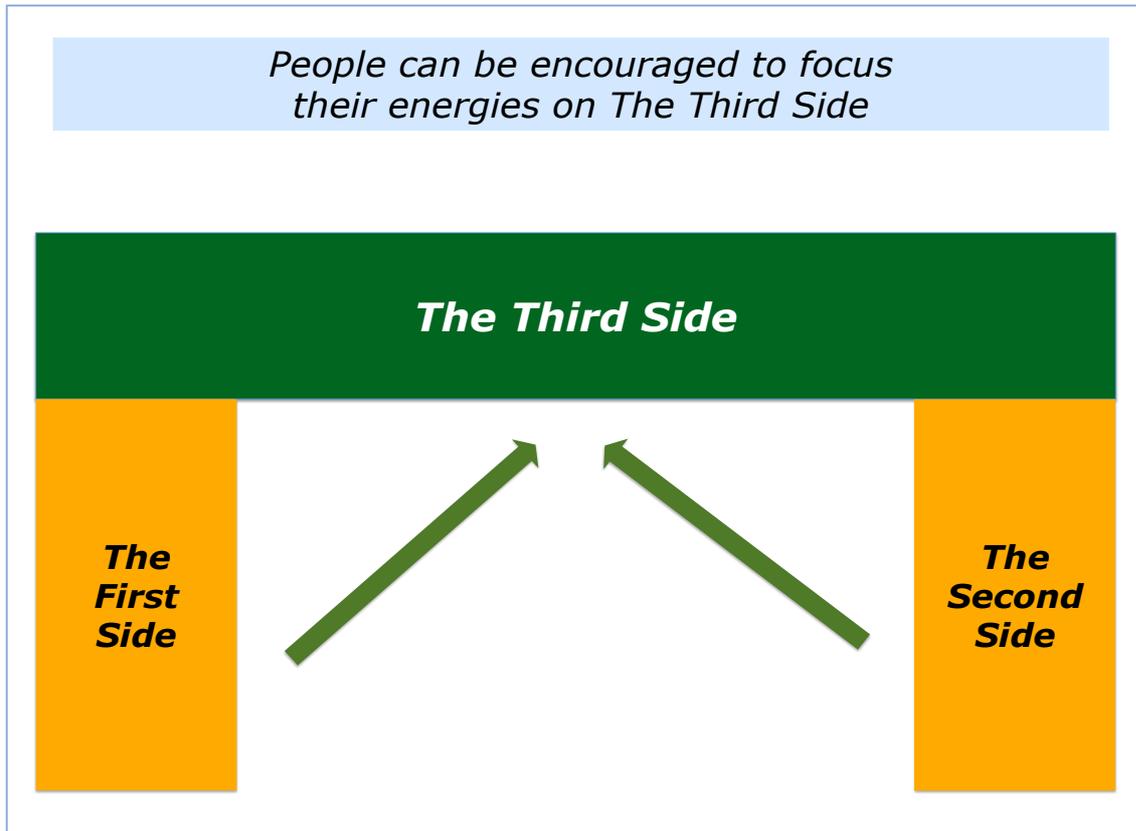
Sometimes it is possible to build on what people have in common and agree on a set of goals, a mission or a company's picture of success. This becomes the Third Side.

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:

*

*

*

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 ...*

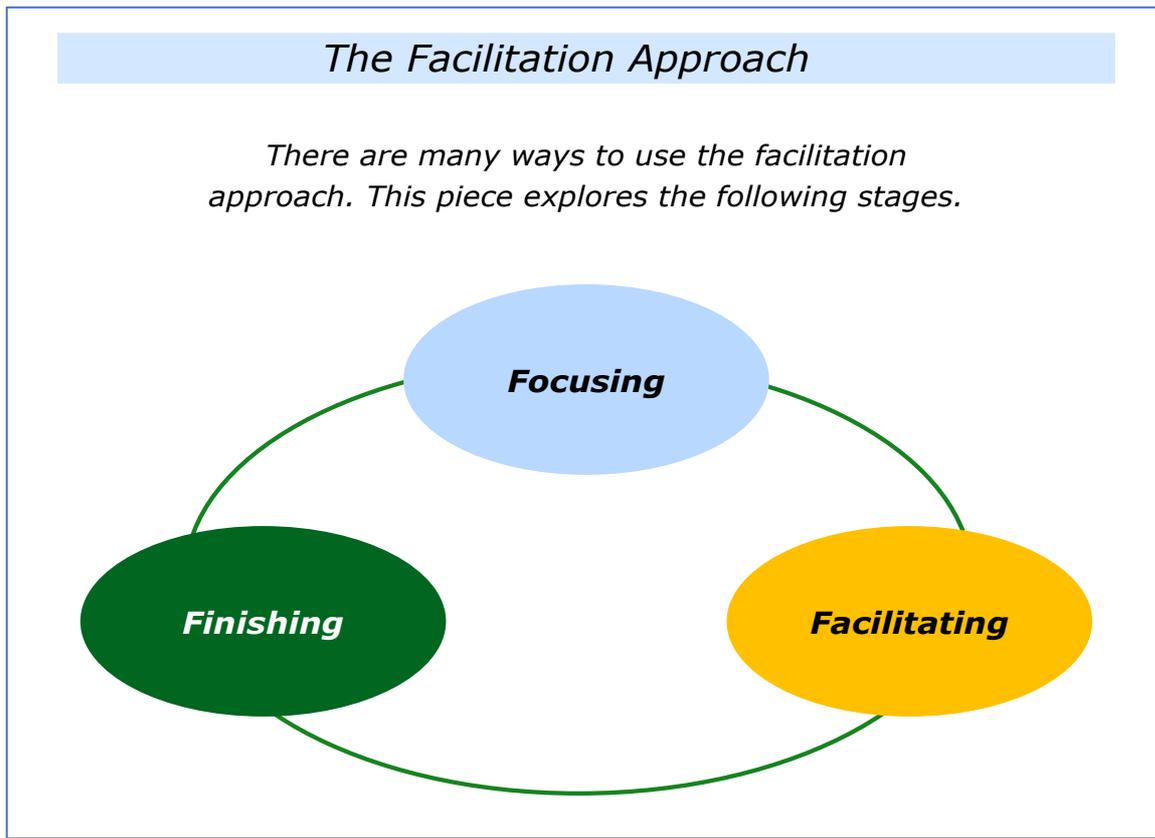
** To ...*

*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;

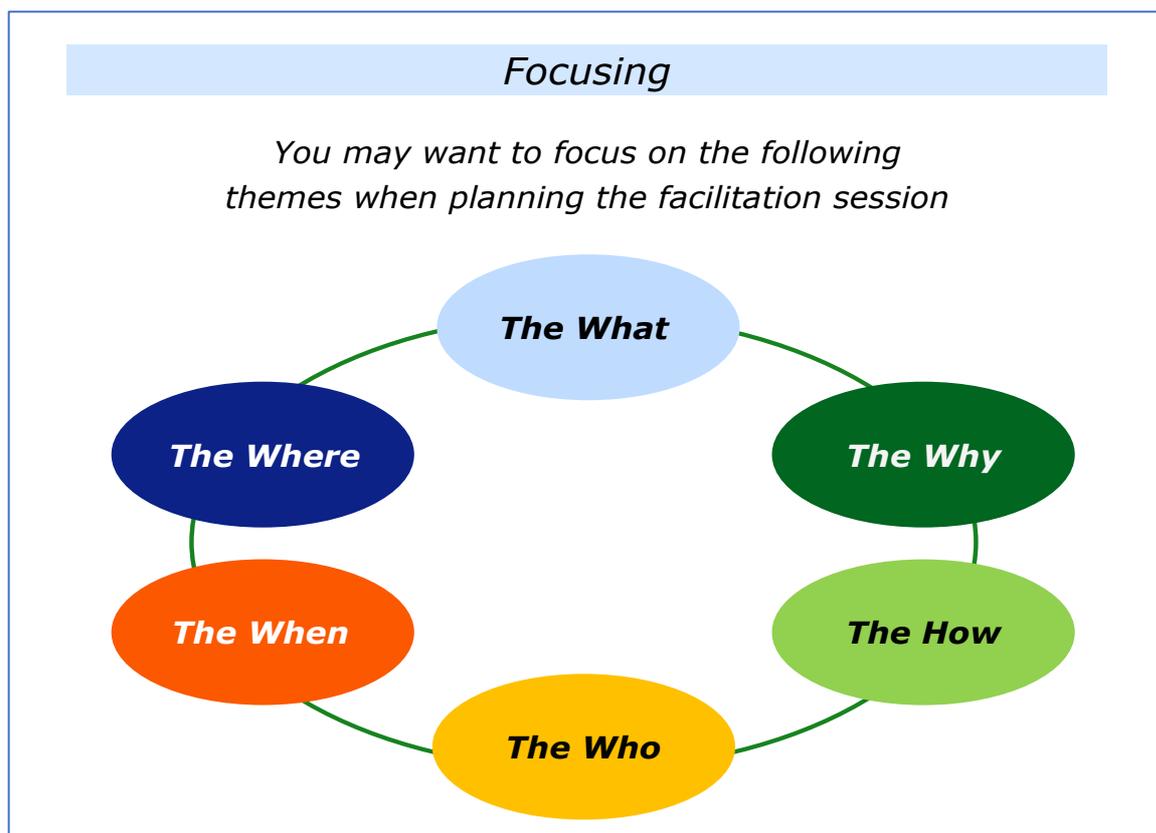
The specific roles of various people in the session;

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 they 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 career goals. You can start by creating an encouraging environment.

If appropriate, you can then focus on the following themes to help the person to achieve peak performance.

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 Work Would Be Where:

*

*

*

"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.

When does the person show positive energy? What are the person's strengths? When do they do satisfying work? What do they do right then? 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, for example, 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?"

Let's return to the person who has asked for your help in shaping their career. 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:

*

The specific goals they may want to achieve are:

*

*

*

Attitude

Imagine that a person wants to achieve certain goals. 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:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to help them to maintain or improve the rating are:

*

*

*

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:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to help them to maintain or improve the rating are:

*

*

*

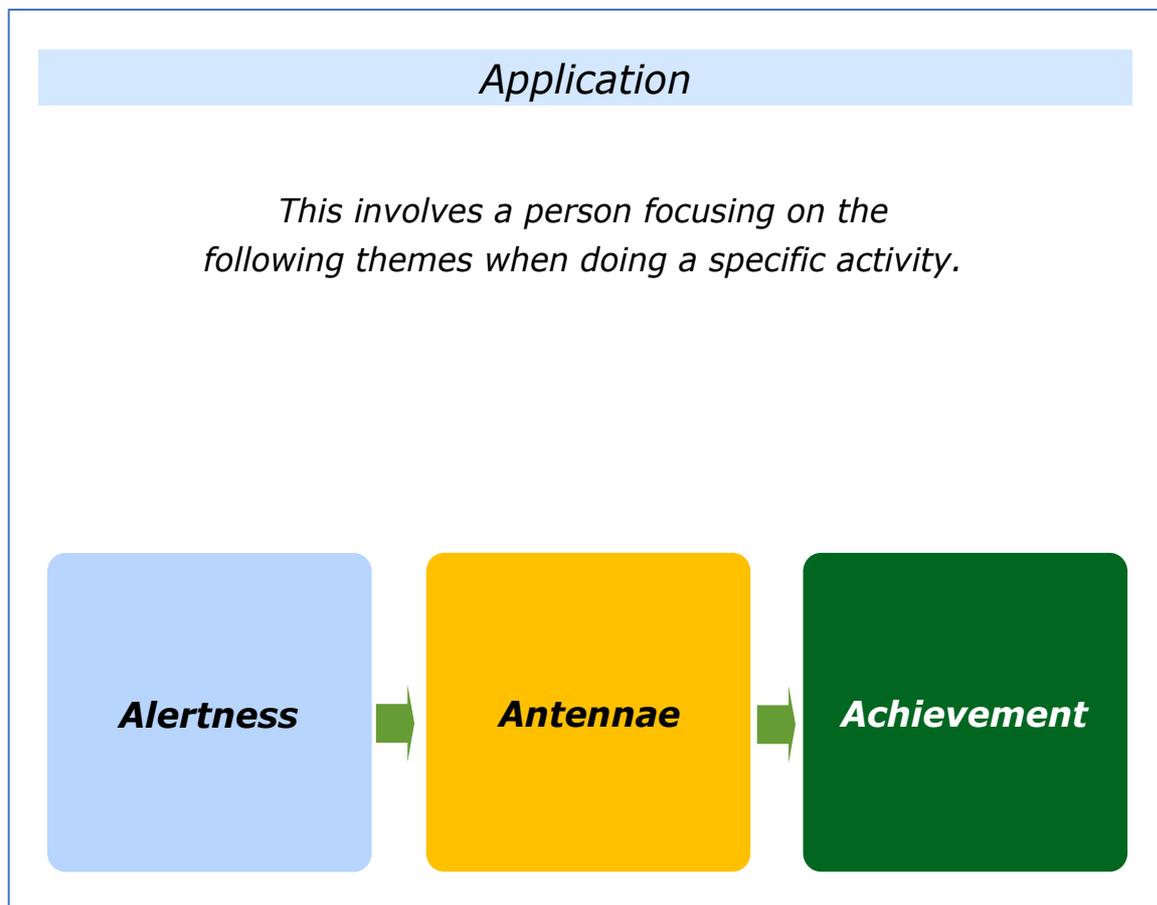
Application

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.

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.



Alertness

The person feels alive and alert. They give their full attention to the activity. They may be encouraging a person, playing an instrument, practicing a skill or doing another task.

Antennae

The person uses their antennae to sense what is happening. They pursue their chosen strategies and apply their skills. 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:

*

*

*

Achievement

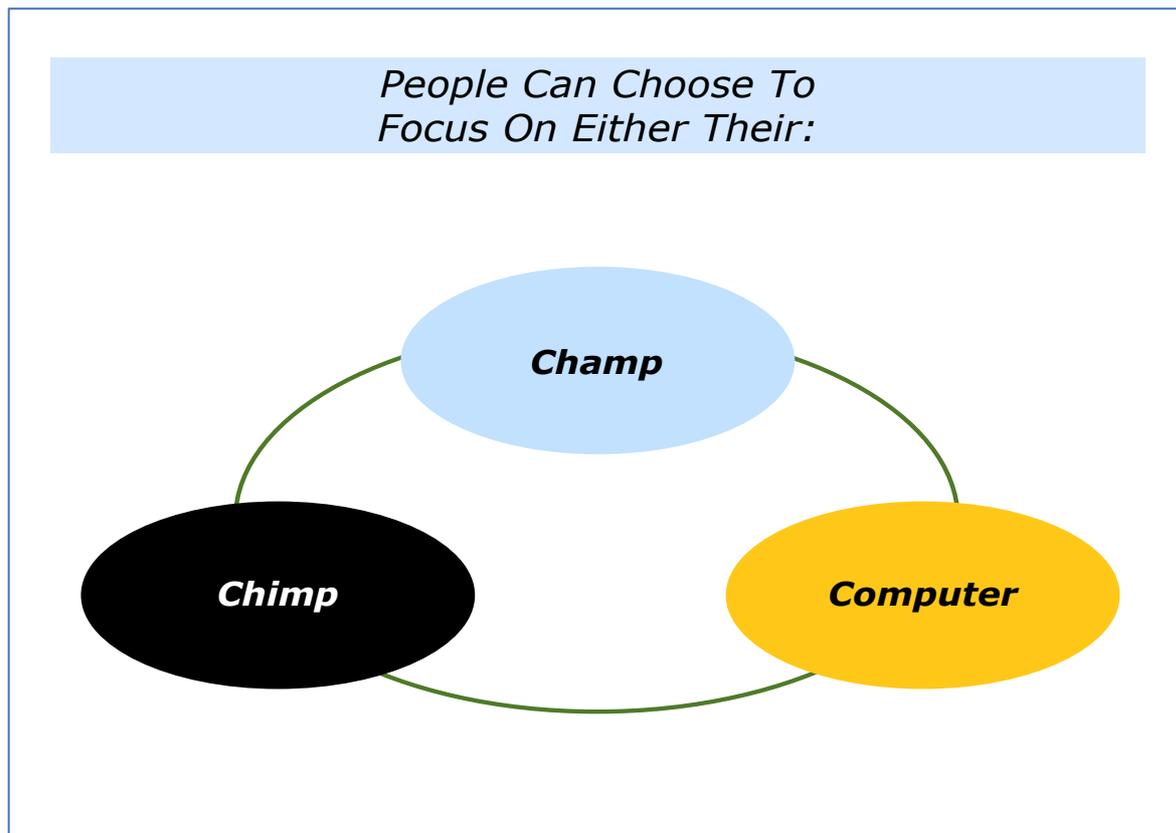
Imagine that the person has demonstrated the right attitude, built on their abilities and applied themselves properly. Here are some of the many models for helping individuals to move from potential to peak performances. Some have been described earlier in the book, so here we will refer to them briefly.

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 translate it into action to achieve peak performance.

The Champ, Computer And Chimp Approaches



This model encourages a person to channel their inner champ. It also invites them to channel their computer to behave in a considered way. When necessary, it also invites them to manage their chimp.

This approach builds on the work done Steve Peters, who 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.

The following section starts by focusing on how a person can build on the positive aspects of their personality. Let's explore these steps.

The Champ

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.

Different people apply this approach in different ways. Let's look at one example. This comes from the world of entertainment, but it is possible to apply this in many different areas.

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.

There are many ways to follow this approach. In certain situations, however, it can be useful to apply the following model.

The Computer

This approach can be useful when you need to stay calm, make decisions or manage pressure situations. Such an approach sometimes involves you aiming:

To buy time to think, drain yourself of emotion and clarify the real results you want to achieve;

To clarify the possible options for going forward together with the pluses and minuses of each option;

To settle on your chosen strategy and do whatever is required to achieve the desired concrete results.

Looking back on your life, can you think of a time when you took this approach? This may have been when you chose to manage a crisis or make a decision. It could have been an event in your personal or professional life.

What did you do then to drain yourself of emotion? What did you do to clarify the results to achieve? What did you do to clarify the possible ways forward? What did you do to settle on your chosen route? How did you then pursue your action plan?

This version of the computer approach calls for behaving in a considered way. It calls for buying time to think and being logical. It then calls for carrying out your plan in a methodical way.

This approach is slightly different from the computer approach described by Steve Peters. He uses the term to refer to a person's system of beliefs, experiences and other resources. The person then uses these to make decisions about their future actions.

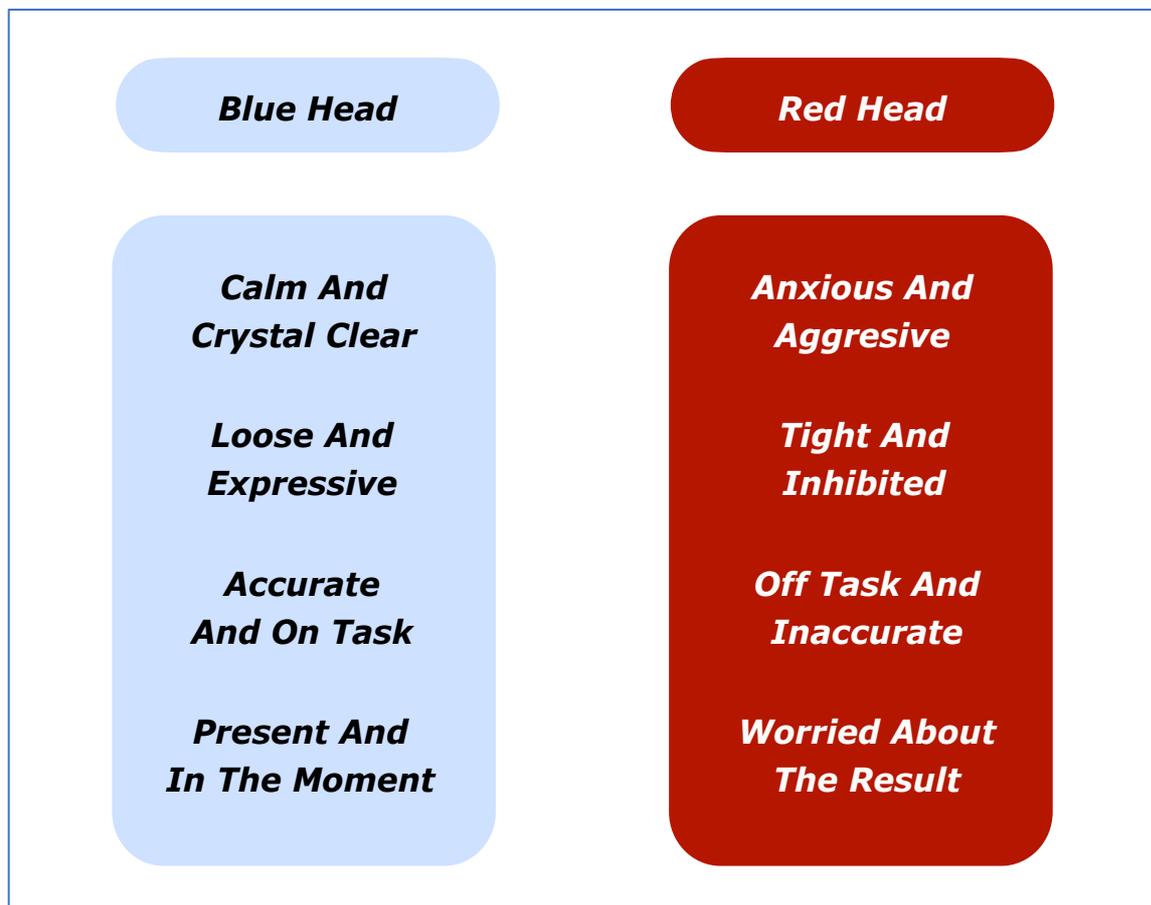
The computer approach we are referring to involves a person drawing on these resources to make decisions in a logical way. They then pursue their chosen strategy in a considered way. Let's explore one way that some people take this approach.

The Computer – Putting On Your Blue Head

Writing in his book *Legacy*, James Kerr describes how the New Zealand All Blacks rugby team used elements of this approach. He begins by describing how the players are 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.

The Computer – Applying Cold Courage

Different people channel their emotions in different ways when tackling pressure situations. Some 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."

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

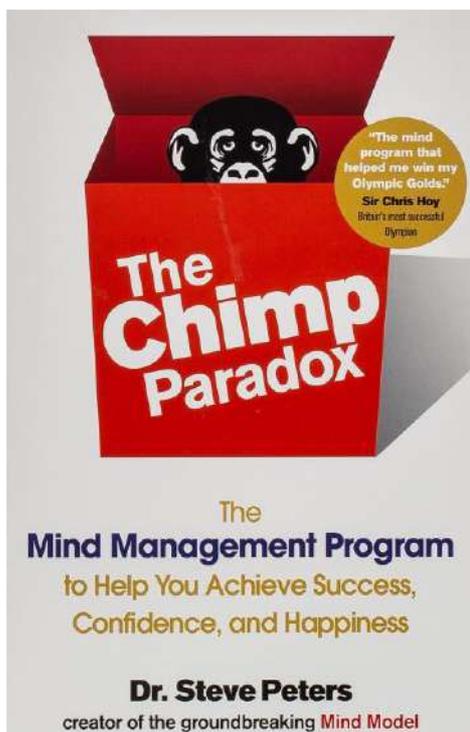
following their principles in the situation. Why? Because it would be difficult to live with themselves afterwards.

The Chimp

As mentioned earlier, Steve Peters has helped many people to manage their chimp. Their chimp can take many forms. It can be self-doubt, irrational emotion and negative self-talk.

Steve's work helps people to manage these impulses. He also helps them to focus on how they can make plan, do their personal best and achieve peak performance.

The Chimp Management approach has now been made available through individual sessions, books and workshops. Here is an excerpt from the organisation's website.



Chimp Management specialises in training people to manage their mind more effectively, with an approach grounded in neuroscience.

Through The Chimp Model, we help people understand how the mind functions so they can develop the insight and skills needed to get the best out of themselves and others.

Our approach can help people to improve success in both personal and professional settings.

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*.

How to clarify whether a person may be able to achieve their aims? You can ask yourself the following questions.

When does the person achieve their aims? When do they do their personal best? When do they go beyond 8+/10 – even for a short time - and achieve peak performance?

What are they doing right then? What are principles they are following? How do they translate these into action? How can they be helped to follow these principles in the future and achieve peak performance?

On a scale 0-10, how high would you rate the likelihood of the person 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:

*

*

*

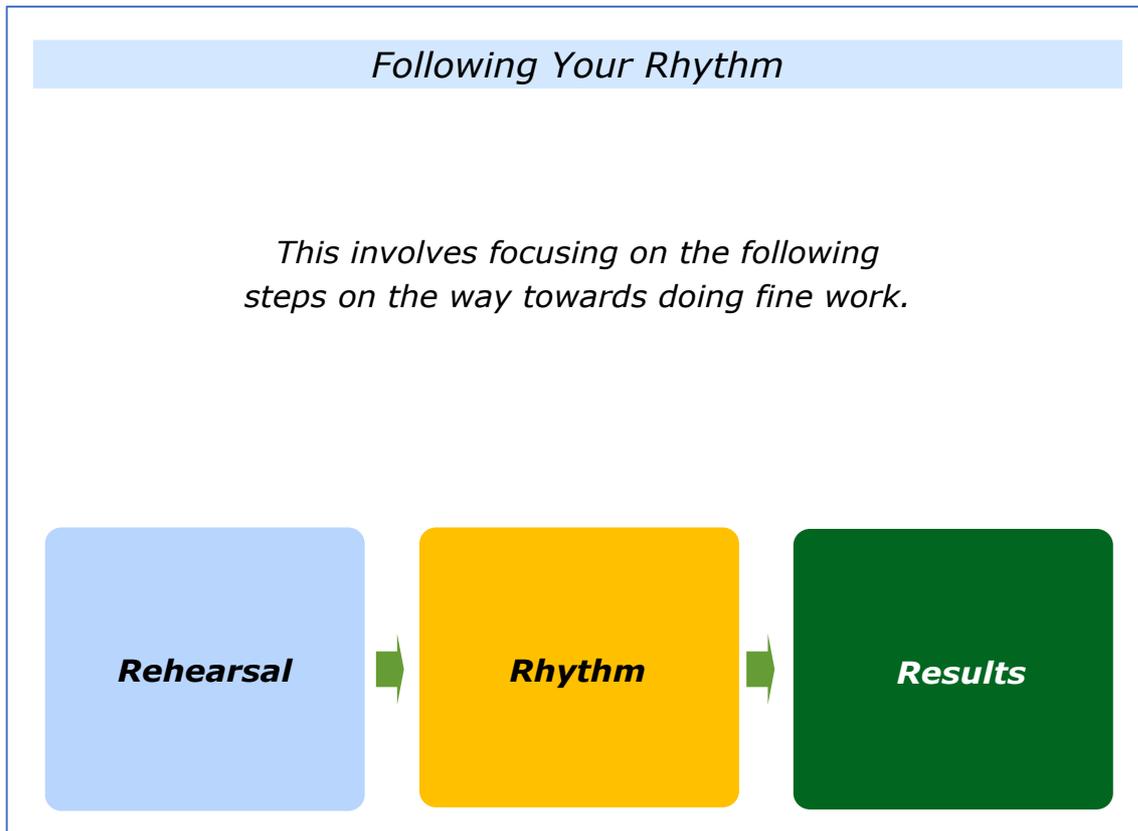
The specific things I can do to help them to maintain or improve the rating are:

*

*

*

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.

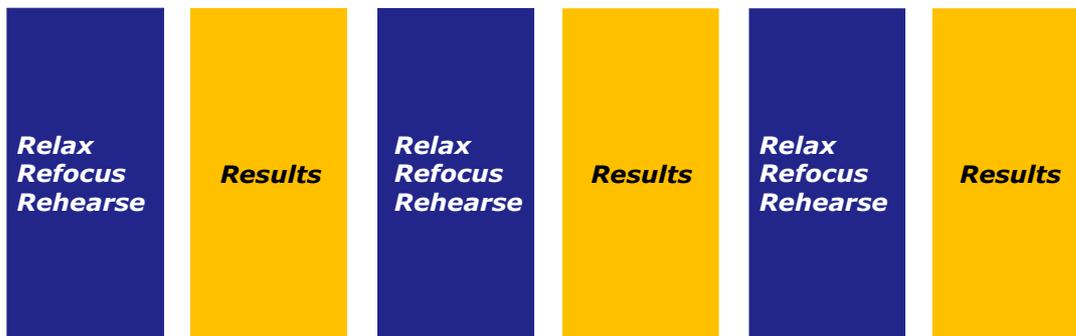
A person may prepare by following their chosen ritual. They relax, refocus and rehearse what they are going to do next. They click into action and go into their version of the arena.

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.

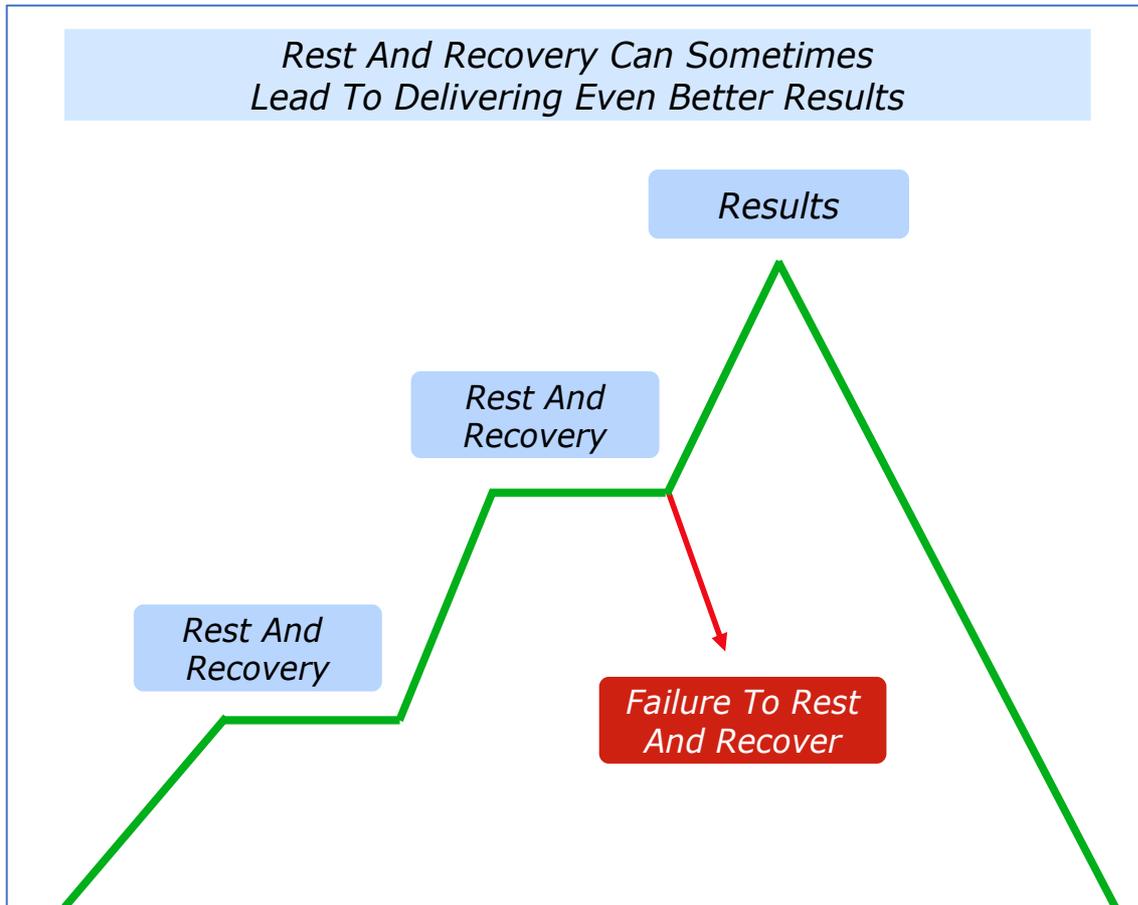
They click into action when going into their version of the arena. They then aim to flow, focus, finish and deliver the desired results.



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 When Pursuing A Road Map

This approach involves following your rhythm when pursuing a road map on the way towards achieving the desired results. It involves starting from the destination and working backwards.

You can aim:

To clarify the results to achieve;

To make a road map towards achieving those results;

To then follow your rhythm when pursuing the road map on the way towards achieving the results.

The key will be to follow your rhythm, manage and challenges and do your best to achieve the results.

The Road Map Approach

This approach involves following your rhythm when pursuing a road map on the way towards achieving the desired 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."

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. Sometimes this also involves taking the following steps to deal with challenges.



Great workers aim to keep following their rhythm but can be thrown off-course by events. Such workers often plan how to deal with such situations.

Different people do this in different ways. One approach is for them to plan ahead and work through the following framework.

The specific event that could interrupt my rhythm could be:

*

The specific things I can do to respond well to this event are:

*

The specific things I can then do to regain my rhythm are:

*

Such people buy time to think when encountering events. They may then aim: a) to clarify their options for dealing with the situation; b) to pursue their chosen option; c) to then regain their rhythm.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a situation where you may want to follow the rhythm approach? How can you do this in your own way?

What may be the specific situation? How can you rehearse what you are going to do? How can you follow your chosen rhythm? How can you then do your best to achieve the desired results?

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

Following Your Rhythm

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

*

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

*

*

*

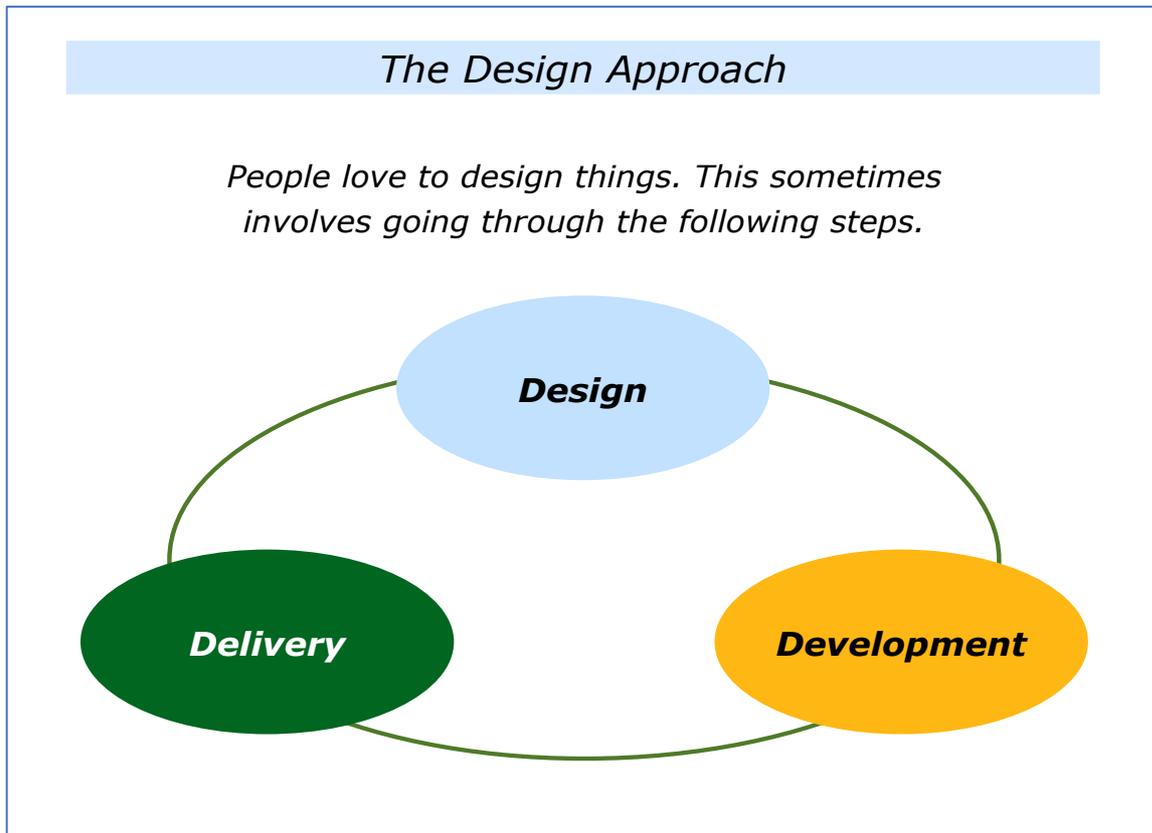
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

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

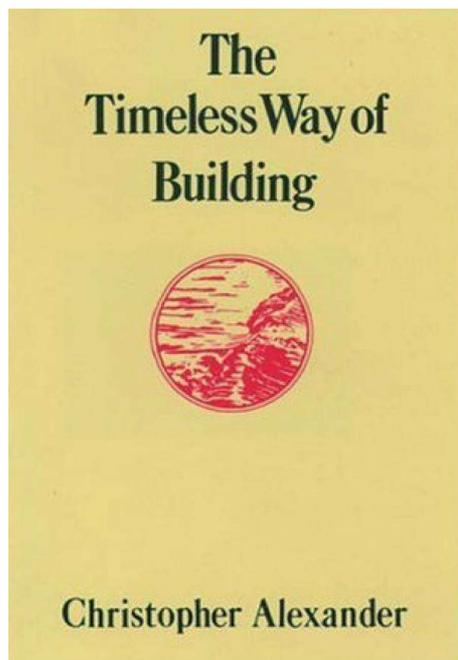
You develop the strategies you can follow to deliver success. You do your research and clarify: a) the strategies that are most likely to work; b) the challenges and solutions. You then rehearse and develop these strategies until you feel ready to do the piece of work.

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.

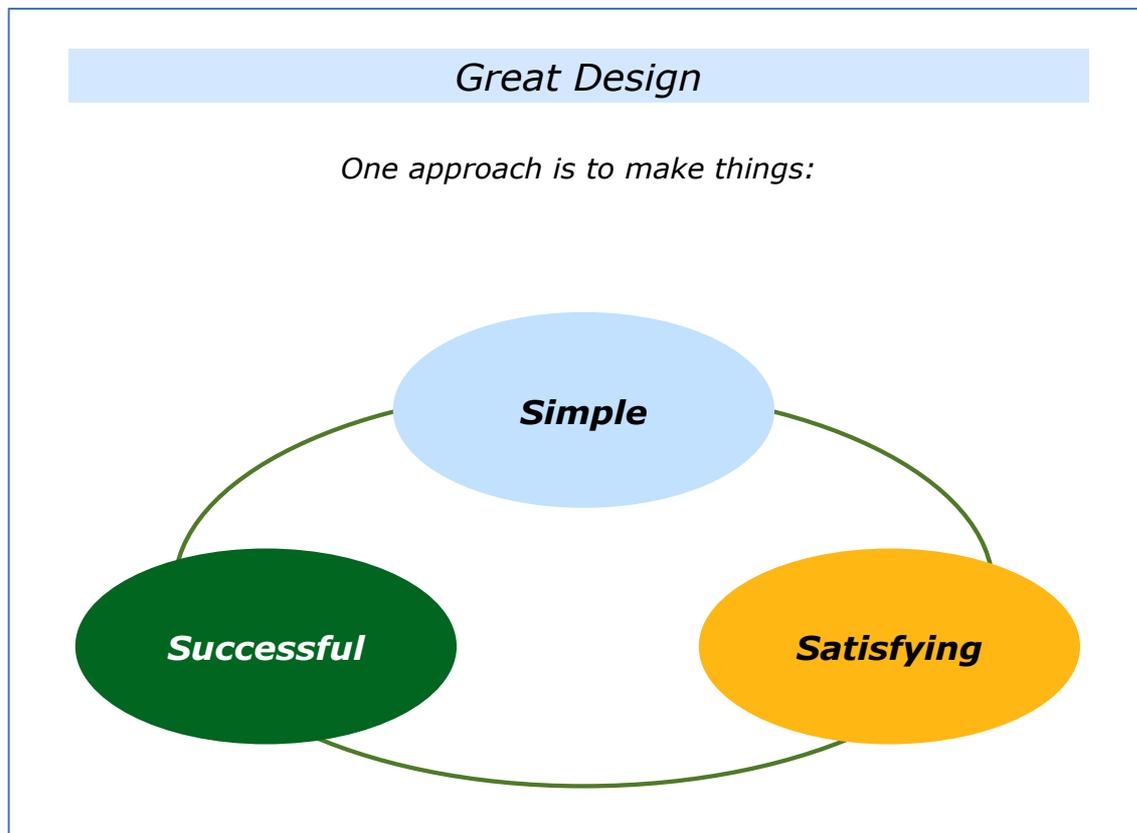
There is one timeless way of building. It is a thousand years old, and the same today as it has ever been.

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.

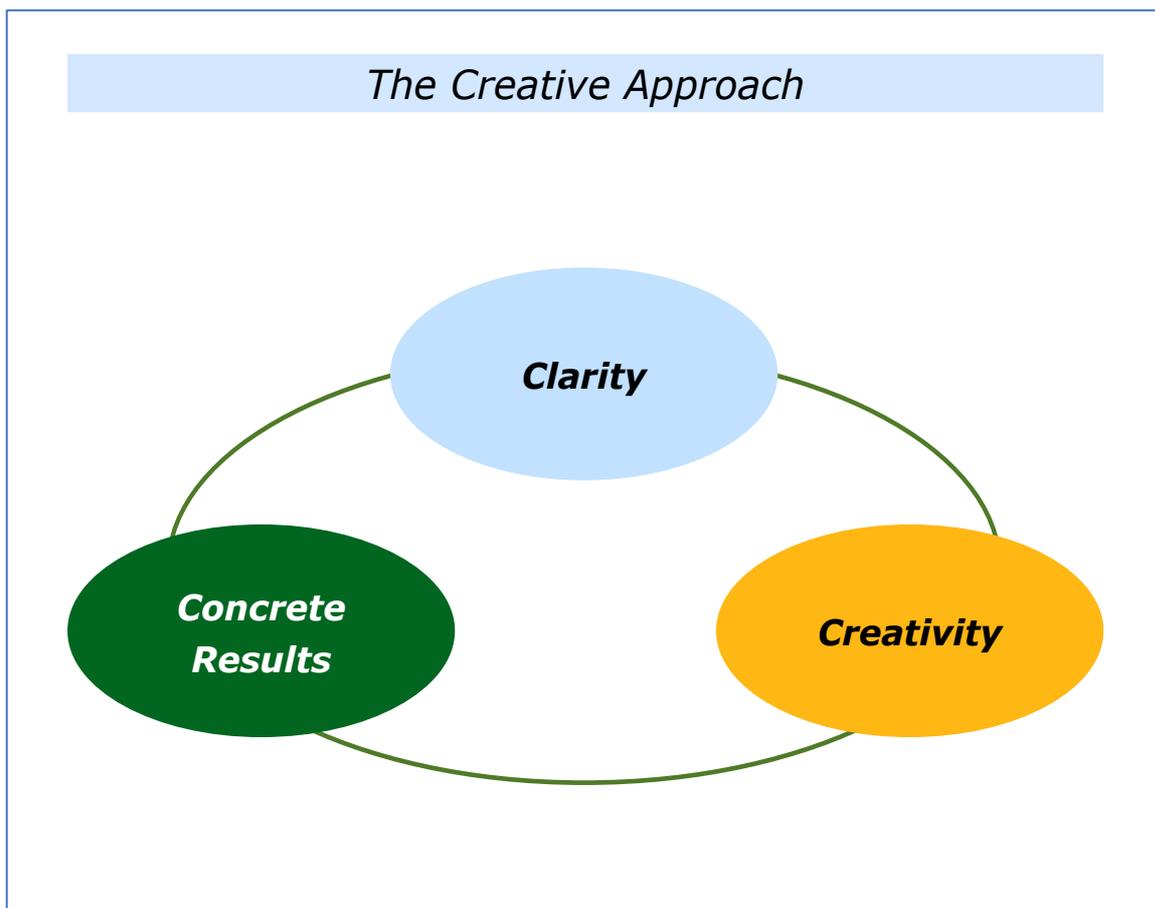
The Feel, Imagine, Do, Share framework helps to develop the much required 21st Century Skills in children. It builds their social and emotional competencies and promotes employability skills.

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 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:

*

*

*

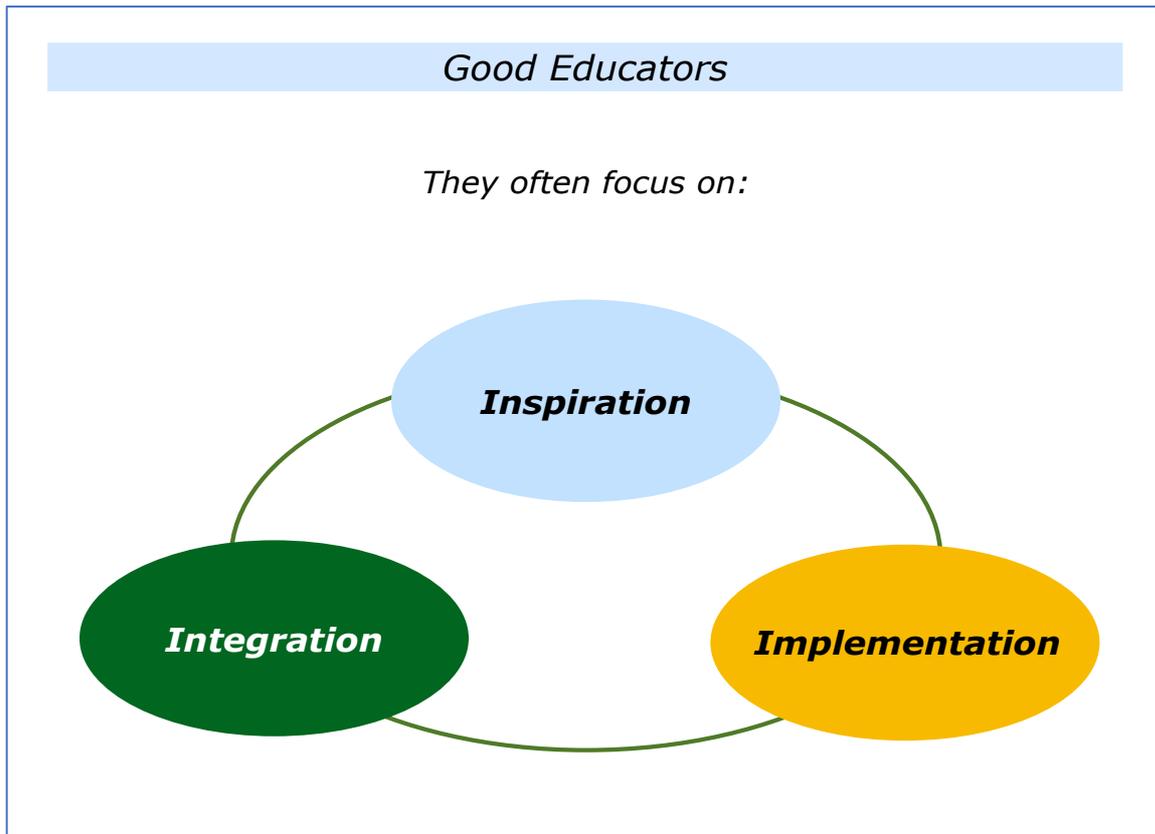
The specific benefits – for myself and for myself – of doing this may be:

*

*

*

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

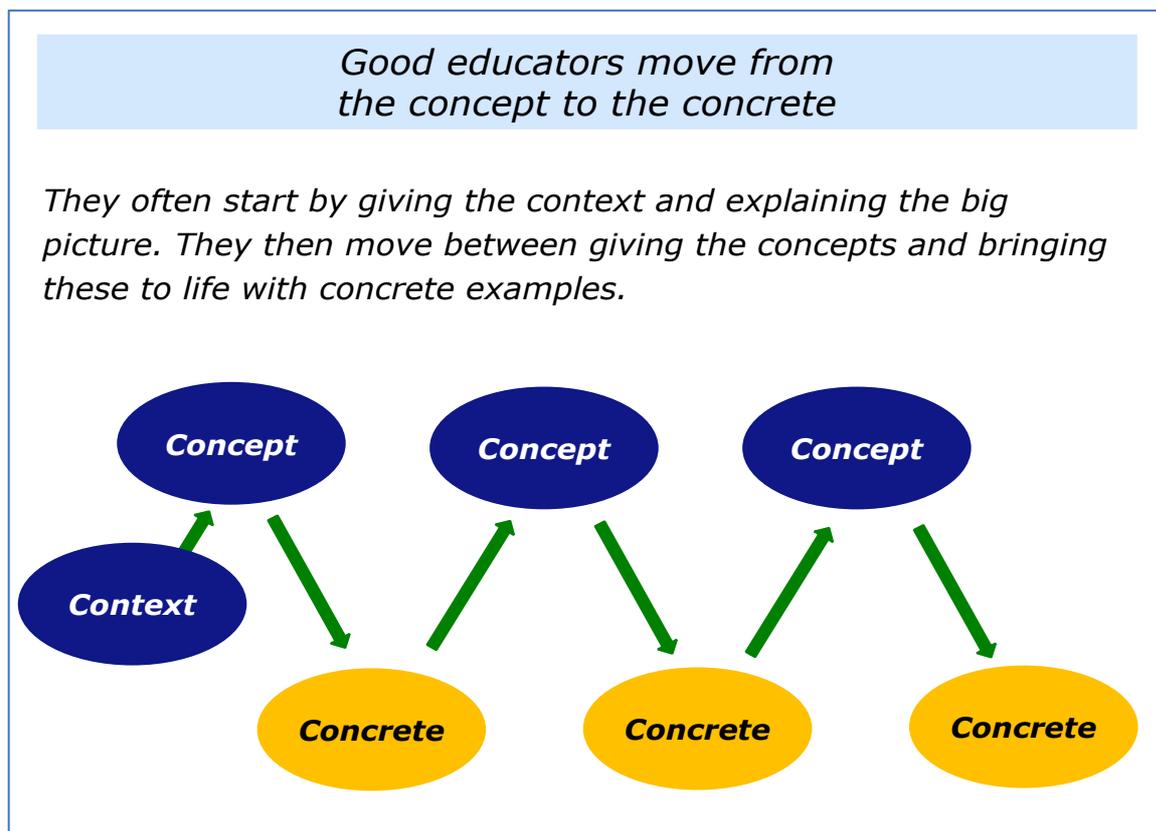
Good educators create an inspiring environment. They make sure all the physical and psychological things are in place to enable people to learn. They then launch into the first topic to explore.

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 ...



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:

*

*

*

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.

Set The Scene And Inspire People In Your Own Way

1 *Introduce The Theme*

*Give an introduction to the theme.
Give examples from everyday life and work.
Give practical models and tools.*

2 *Give An Activity On The Theme*

*Give an exercise that brings the learning to life.
Give people chance to own the knowledge.
Give people chance to produce a finished product.*

3 *Summarise The Theme*

*Give people chance to clarify their learning.
Give more practical models and tools.
Give a summary of the theme – then link to the next theme.*

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:*

*

*

*

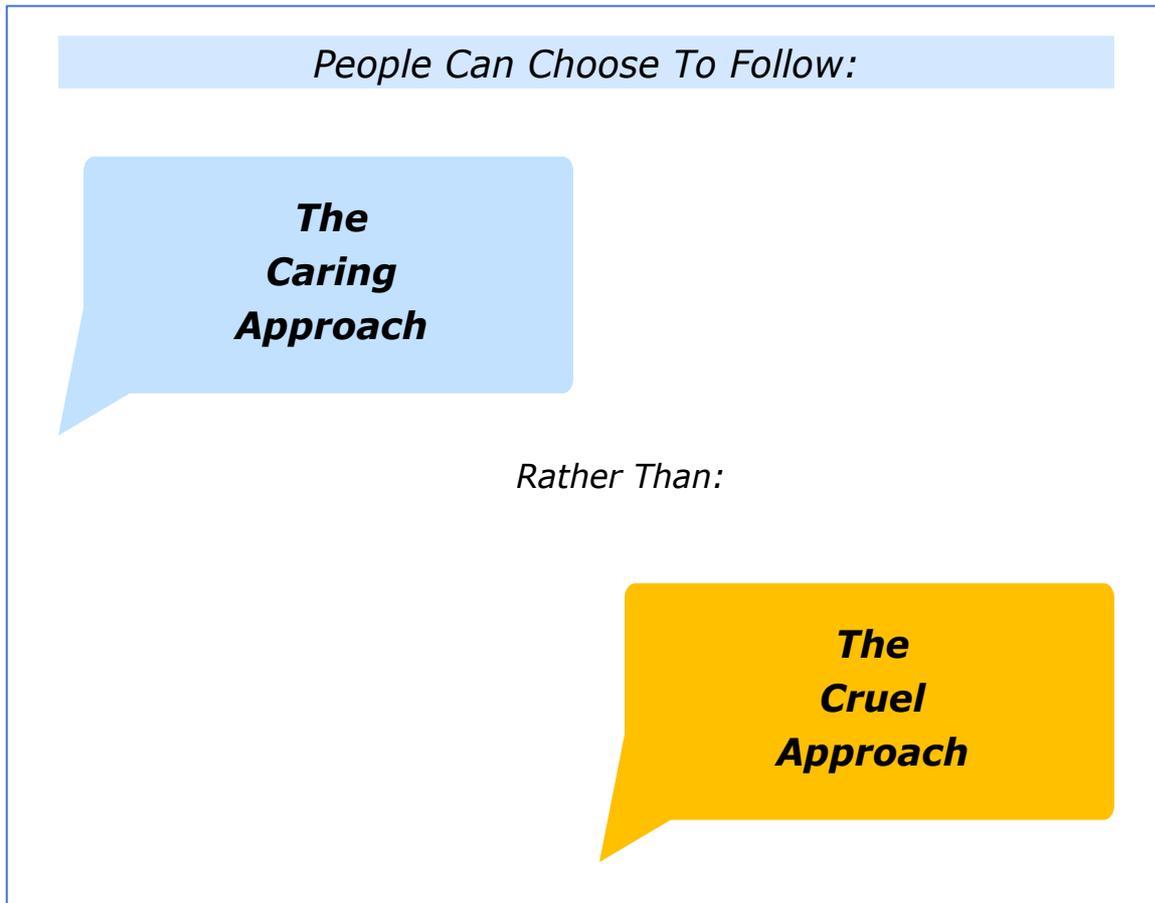
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

The Caring Approach



There are many ways to live life. Some people aim to follow the caring approach rather than the cruel approach. The route they follow has consequences – both for themselves and other people.

Different people follow the caring approach in different ways. They may focus on caring for people, for their products or for the planet. Some aim to combine all of these elements. Let's explore these themes.

They Care For People

Some people aim to care for their loved ones and for other people. They are kind, encouraging and supportive. They have also often learned how to take care of themselves in a healthy way. This means that when they meet a person:

They believe it is always about helping the other person. It is not about themselves.

Such people often have a clear moral compass, however, and are clear on what they can and can't do for other people. This means they do not become victims or enablers. They then do their best to help people to shape their futures.

They Care Their Products

Some people do work they care about. They believe in following certain ways of encouraging people, designing things, solving problems or doing other activities. They aim to do their best when helping people, providing services or creating products. They sometimes ask themselves:

How is this going to help people or the planet?

Such people do things they believe in. They do the basics and then add the brilliance. They may also follow some of the elements of great design. They may aim to make things simple – in a profound way – satisfying and successful.

They Care For The Planet

Some people aim to care for the planet. They may do practical things that encourage people, care for the environment or give hope to both and future generations.

Some people aim to share a positive paradigm. They try to show people a way of living or working that is practical and, in the widest sense, profitable. They show how it will benefit both people and the planet.

Imagine that you want to take some of these steps. You will do this in your own way, so let's explore some of the ways it may be possible.

Caring For People

How can you continue to care for your loved ones? How can you continue to care for other people? Different people express caring in different ways. Some ask themselves the following questions before meeting a person.

Who is the person I am going to meet? What is happening in their world? What may be their goals? What may be the challenges they face? How can I make them the centre of my world? If appropriate, how can I encourage them in their lives and work?

Some people aim to care for others in their daily lives. Some aim to create positive environments in which people can thrive. Some gifted people pass on guidelines that other people can follow to do great work.

Dame Cicely Saunders, for example, helped to helping to create the modern hospice movement in Britain. She cared about helping people who were moving towards the end of their lives.

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.

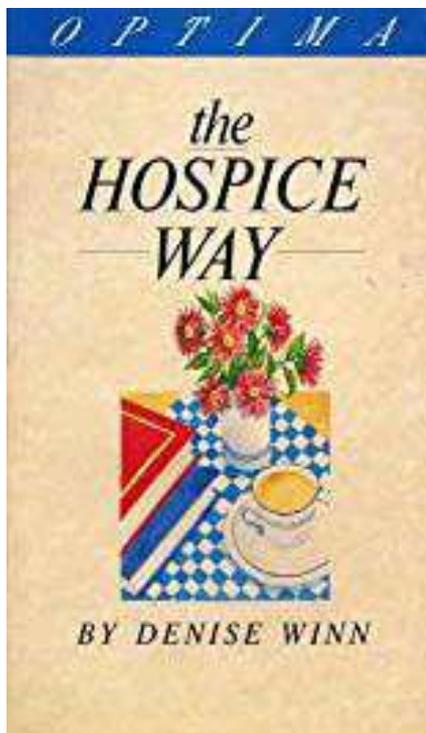
David had no relatives so Cicely devoted many hours to talking with him about his life. Apart from exploring his feelings, they discussed the need to create special facilities for people who were dying. Denise Winn takes up the story in her book *The Hospice Way*.

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.

Caring For Products

What are the kinds of work you really care about? When do you do work that gives you positive energy? What are the kinds of work you find satisfying? When do you flow, focus, finish and find fulfilment?

When do you do work where you build on your strengths, follow strategies that work and achieve success? How can do more of this in the future? What will be the benefits for people or the planet?

People who care about what they are doing are more likely to do fine work. They believe delivering consistently high standards when helping people, providing a service or creating products.

Such people often start by choosing to do work they really care about. Here are some answers that individuals may give when exploring this theme.

The Kinds Of Work I Really Care About Are:

Helping children who are dyslexic ... Growing organic food ... Providing young people with sports experiences that help them to develop ... Running events that give people positive memories for life.

Working as a paramedic ... Making films that inspire people to care for nature ... Designing beautiful buildings ... Creating user-friendly software ... Passing on knowledge that helps people to succeed.

Different individuals follow different models to put their heart and soul into the work. Bearing in mind they thing they really care about, some people focus on the following themes.

Clarity

Such people start by establishing clarity. They sometimes do this by exploring the following questions.

What is the kind of work I really care about? How can I pursue this theme? What may be the piece of work I want to do to encourage people, provide a service or create a product?

What are the real results I want to achieve? What is the picture of success? What may be the benefits of doing such work? How may it help people or the planet?

Creativity

Such people then plan how to do the work. Sometimes this involves focusing on both what they know works and also potential creative possibilities. They may do this by exploring the following questions.

What are the possible options I can follow to perform the work? What are the pluses and minuses of each option? What is the attractiveness rating of each option? What are the other potential creative solutions?

What is the route – or combination of routes - I want to pursue? What are the key strategies I can follow to give myself the greatest chance of success? How can I translate these into a clear action plan?

Concrete Results

Such people move onto doing the work. Bearing in mind the results they want to achieve, they may take the following steps.

They keep following their chosen strategies, get some quick successes and do superb work;

They keep reading reality by focusing on: a) what they are doing well and how to do more of these things; b) what they can do better and how;

They keep finding solutions to challenges, do their best to reach the goals and add that touch of class.

Jürgen Griesbeck is somebody who followed elements of this approach. 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.

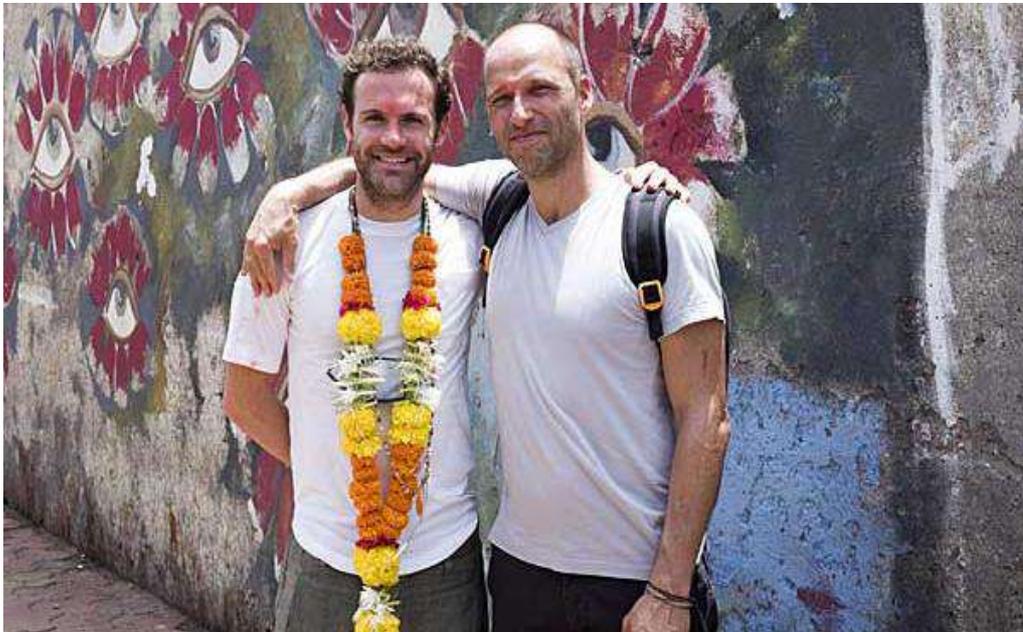
1% may seem like a small figure, yet it stands to make a big difference.

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



Caring For The Planet

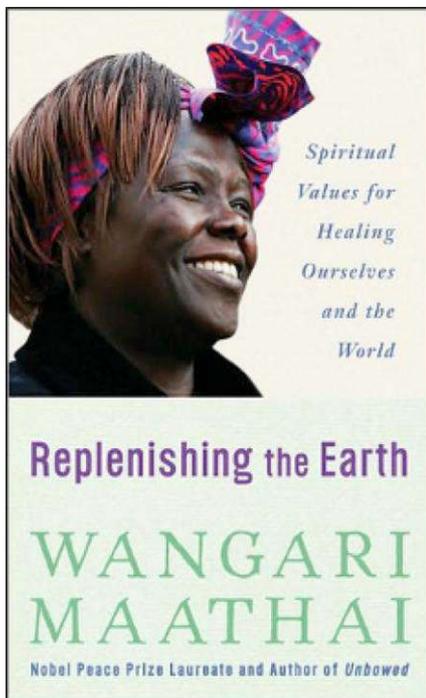
Some people focus on caring for the planet. They may do practical things that encourage people, care for the environment or give hope to both and future generations.

Such people often invest enormous amounts of emotional energy into their work. Staying sane therefore calls for them remembering one key

rule. They can focus on what they can control rather than what they can't control. They are then more likely to be able to see things in perspective.

Wangari Maathai was somebody who took this approach. 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.

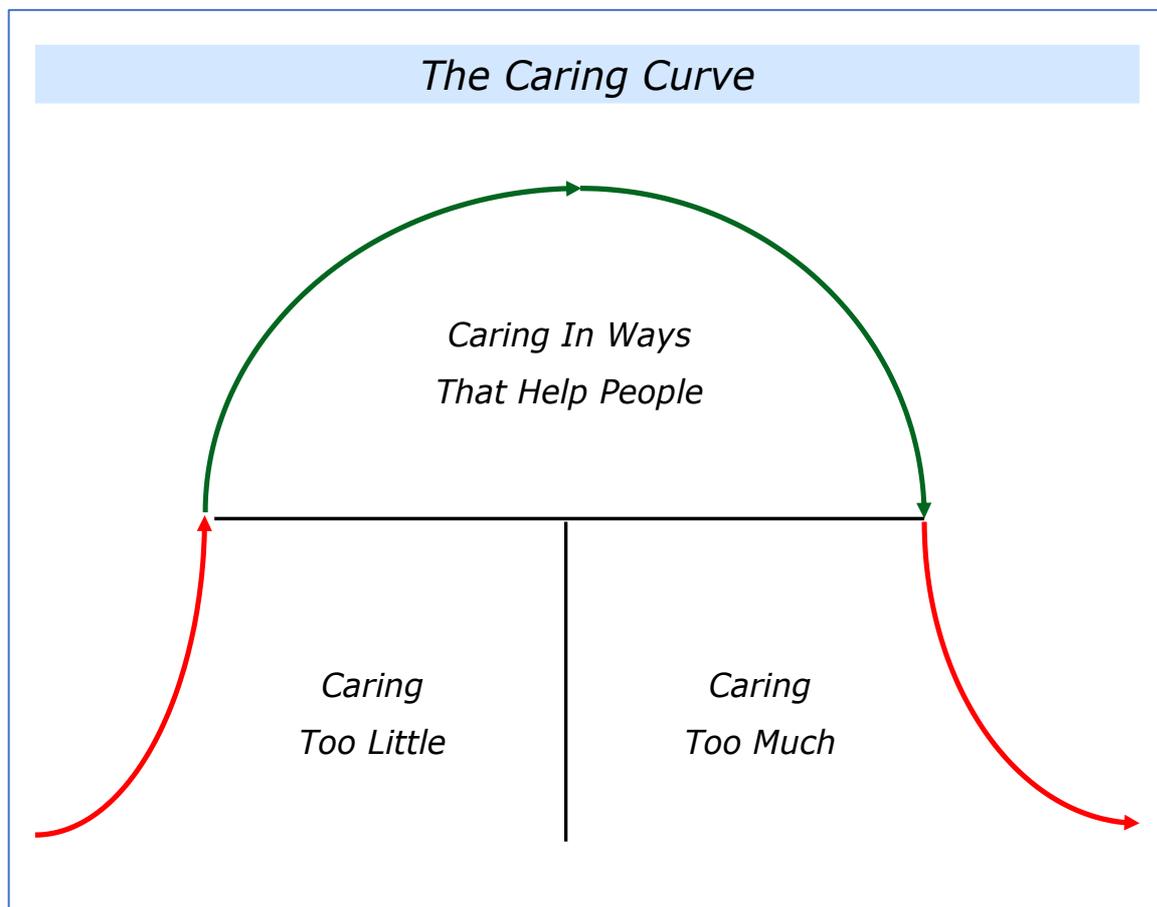
Tree planting became an honourable activity in Kenya, said Wangari. This led to creating thousands of greenbelts in the country and soon spread to other countries in Africa.

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.

Imagine that you aiming to follow some elements of the caring approach. Sometimes it can also be worth bearing in mind the following ideas.

The Caring Curve Approach



Different people express caring in different ways. The ways they do this will obviously depend on the topic. Bearing this in mind, let's look at one example. This is the extent to which a person may care about helping other people or the planet.

Some people seem to care only about themselves. They seem to care too little about other people or the planet. This may help them to feel good but it does not help other people.

Some people go to the others extreme. They care passionately about people or the planet. They may almost care too much, however, and their feelings overwhelm them.

A person may feel acute pain or become paralysed by the enormity of the challenges. Being passionate, they may also sometimes express their views in ways that put off other people.

Some people learn to channel their caring in ways that help other people or the planet. Sometimes it can take years to develop this approach.

A person may start by throwing themselves into many projects that help others. They may reach a stage, however, where they take stock.

Bearing in mind how they want to help people, they clarify their views about:

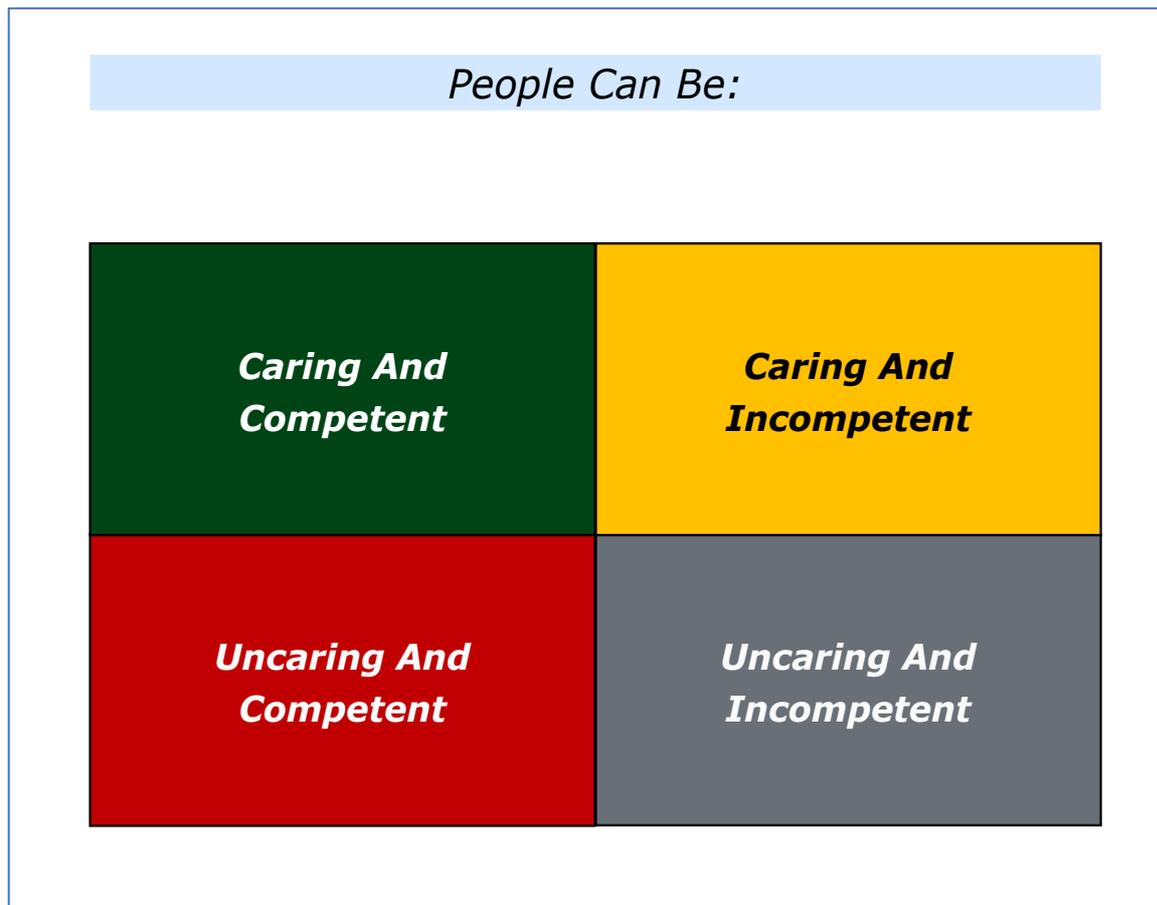
Caring in ways that do help people ... Caring in ways that may help people ... Caring in ways that probably don't help people.

They may then choose to channel their caring in ways that are more likely to help people or the planet. They may focus on working with troubled people, inspiring students in education, making films that show how to build a better world or doing other activities.

Such people may also learn to be measured when faced by certain situations. They learn to buy time, think and consider the best ways to help others. They may also explore the following questions focusing on how to channel their caring.

What is happening with this person or group of people? How can I demonstrate caring in this situation? How can I help people to get positive results? How can I do this in a caring way that is most likely to help the person or the group of people?

The Caring And Competent Approach



There are many models for understanding people and their performance. One approach is:

To focus on the things they care about;

To focus on their competence in being able to deliver these things.

Good people leaders, for example, care for people and also have the competence to enable them to deliver great results. Some leaders care about other things, of course, such as power, money or status.

The following section focuses on the caring and competence approach to leading people. Different leaders may or may not demonstrate these qualities in different ways. Let's explore these themes.

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 do not demonstrate the required strategic thinking or skills.

Some leaders are successful in some situations 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. They may stick to what they do best or aim to add other 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.

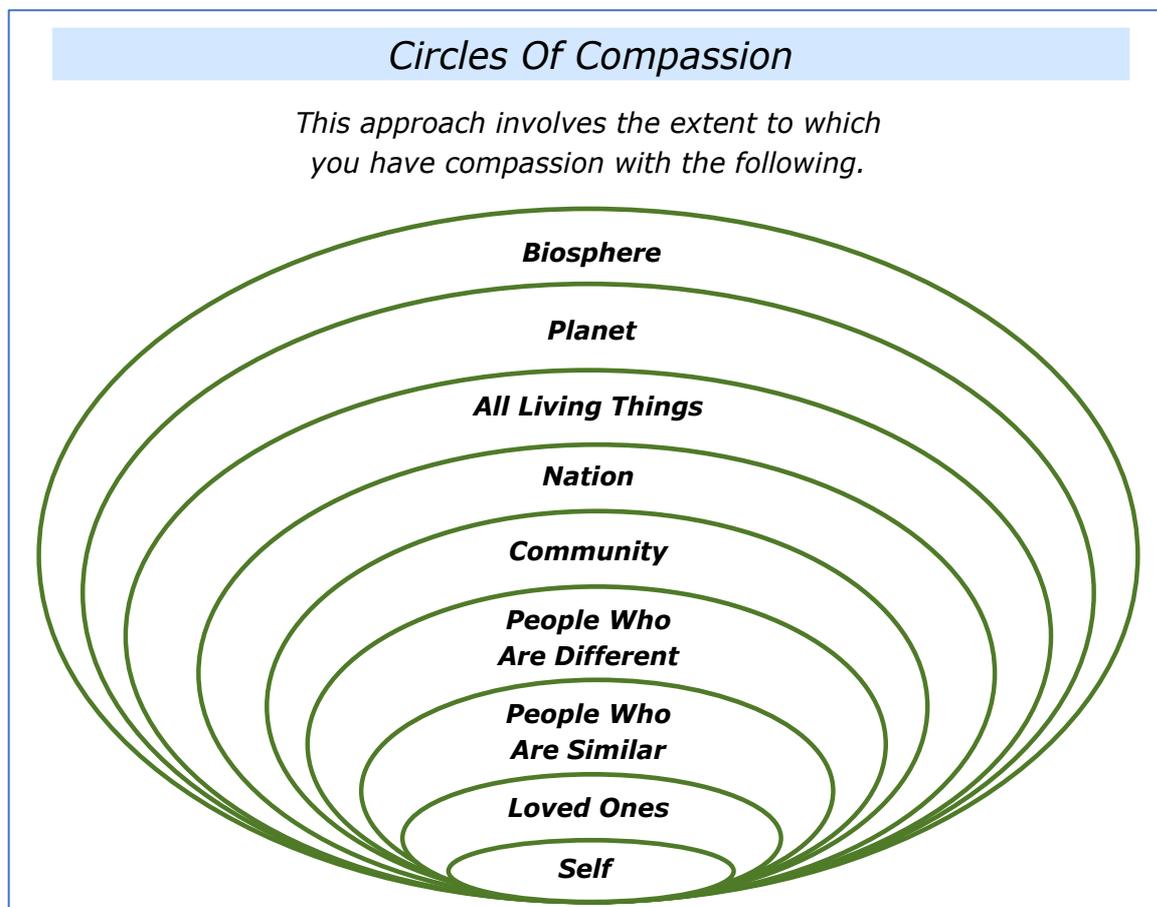
People who behave like authoritarians, dictators and psychopaths can demonstrate these characteristics. They focus on pursuing their own agenda and don't care about other people's feelings.

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.

The Compassionate Approach

The compassionate approach has been passed down to many generations throughout history. The extent to which we feel compassion for certain things can govern our actions.

One view is that we each have own approach to the various circles of compassion. Different people populate these circles with different names regarding the things for which we may feel compassion. Let's explore one approach.



Some people have compassion for themselves and may extend this to their loved ones. Some have compassion for people who are similar to them. Some have compassion and respect for people who are different from them.

Some have love and compassion for their community. Some for their nation. Some have compassion for all living things. Some care for the

whole planet. Some believe it is vital to care for the life-giving forces of the whole biosphere.

People can choose to take the compassionate, clear or cruel approaches in life. The route they take has consequences both for themselves and other people.

Some people seem to have a compassionate gene that is strongly developed. Many people who go into the caring professions – such as nursing – often demonstrate this approach.

People who show compassion often have a history of being loved and being taught to respect other human beings. As the saying goes:

Love is like many things in life. If you don't learn it early, it is much harder to learn it later.

The same can be said for compassion. People who learn it early are more likely to show it later. At the same time, however, some people choose to show compassion as they get older.

William Ross Wallace alluded to this approach in a poem he published in 1865. This later became known as *The Hand That Rocks The Cradle Is The Hand That Rules The World*.

This emphasised the influence that mothers and fathers had on a child. The love – or lack of it – the child received then could affect their character later in life.

Different people show caring in different ways. Some may show sympathy, some may demonstrate empathy. Some may show compassion. Such people aim to translate caring in action.

The Compassionate Approach

Different people show caring for others in different ways. They may demonstrate sympathy, empathy or compassion. Compassion is translating caring into action.



Some people follow the clear approach in life. This can take many forms. One person may aim to get to the heart of the matter and see what is really happening.

Another person may focus on the real results to achieve in situation and then do their best to achieve these results. Another person may be clear on following certain strategies in life.

Some people who take the clear route come from a compassionate base. They aim to care for others. They are then clear on how they want to translate this approach into action.

Some people demonstrate the cruel approach. They seldom show compassion and are mainly concerned with their own agenda. Such people often express this in a way that hurts other people.

People who are compassionate believe in spreading happiness rather than hate. They want to plant seeds of hope that will encourage both present and future generations.

As mentioned earlier, 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 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.

Let's explore some of the ways that people may express these themes.

The Charter For Compassion



Karen Armstrong focused on this theme 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 – The Importance Of 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 fulfillment 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.

There are many ways to live life. People can choose to follow the caring approach or the cruel approach. The choice they make has consequences for both themselves and other people.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific situation where you may want to follow elements of the caring approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

You may want to care for your loved ones or for other people. You may want to do work you care about by encouraging people, providing services or creating products. You may want to do work that cares for the planet.

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

The Caring Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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

Steve Clayton 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 Microsoft in the UK. This is where I met him when doing mentoring sessions for employees.

Steve 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 explaining how Microsoft'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 Microsoft's Chief Storyteller. He continued in that role for over ten years.

Steve built a team that focused on bringing to life the value that the company's services could provide for people. Like many writers, they followed some of the classical frameworks for telling stories.

They also encouraged other people, teams and organisations to bring their services and products to life. This involved making the stories more human rather than just using technical terms. Here is a summary of the framework they used.

Steve Clayton – Microsoft Storytelling

Steve and his team adapted several approaches when settling on the Microsoft framework for storytelling. Here is a summary of the model they used.

● People

Good stories often talk about people. This can be an individual or a group of people who are tackling a challenge or working to achieve a specific goal.

● Place

Good stories are set in a certain place. This can be a school, work place, community or other environment. They describe how people in this place work to achieve a specific goal.

● Pictures

Good stories often provide or create pictures. It is important to bring the concepts to life with examples, images and pictures that people will remember.

● Personal

Good stories provide the audience with something personal. Try to relate what you are saying to individuals and how they can use the ideas in their daily lives or work.

● Platform

Good stories sometimes highlight the platform or product that embodies the strategy, service or solution that is being described. This is done in a sharing rather than selling way.

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.

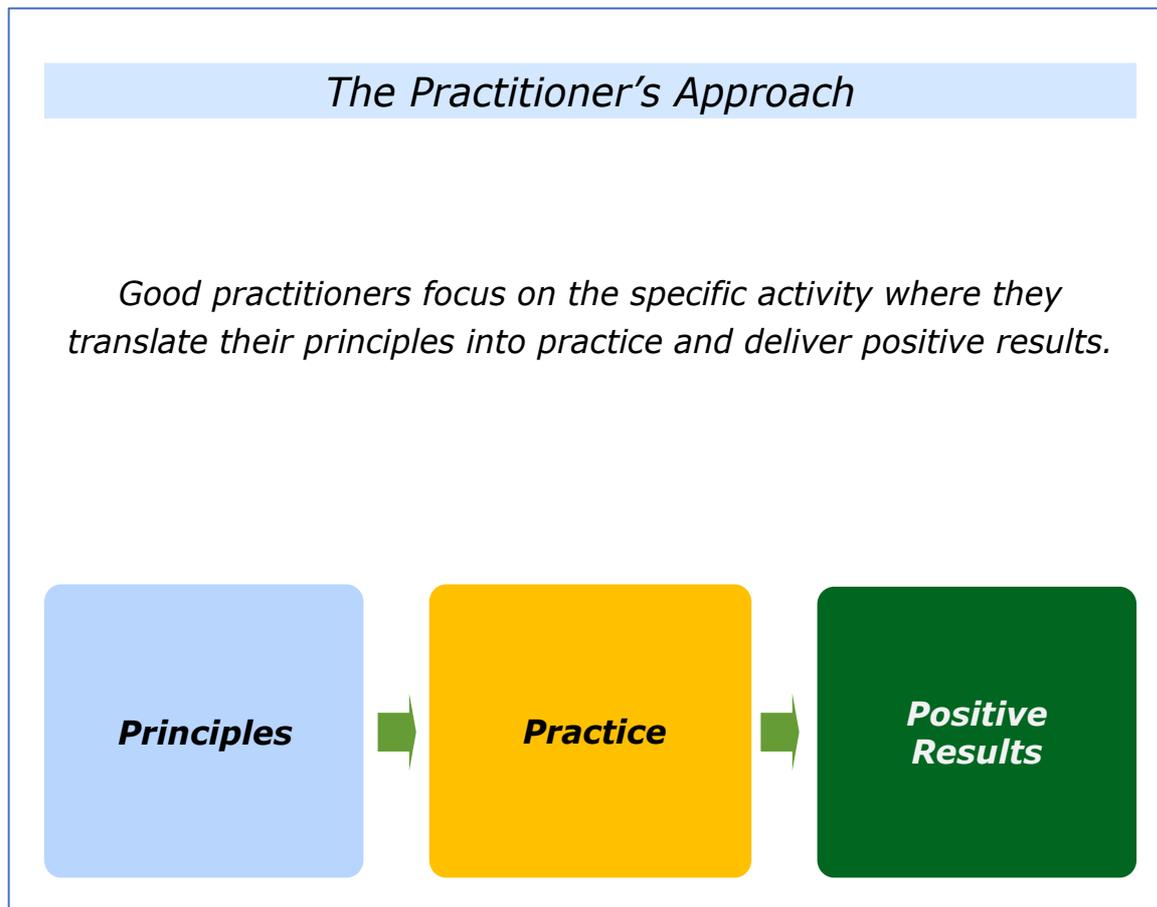
The project had a tight deadline, but this was fine. Sue believed in the work. She also believed that, when it was completed, she would find or create the next stimulating project.

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.



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:

*

The specific things I can do to pursue this activity are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can deliver to customers, employers or other stakeholders when doing this work are:

*

*

*

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.

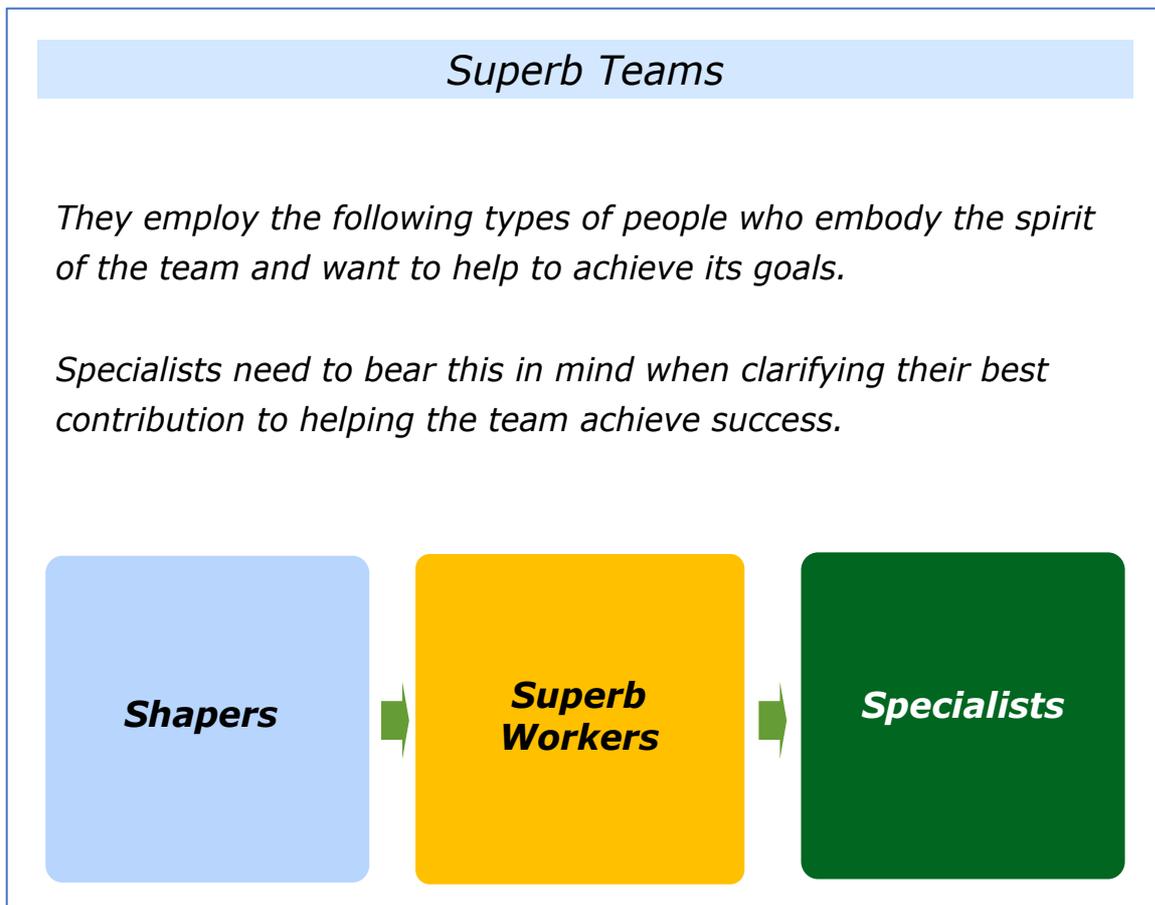
This can provide them with the platform: a) to develop their craft within the role; b) to develop by doing stimulating projects in their free time; c) to, when appropriate, move on to the next role that will help them to develop.

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.



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

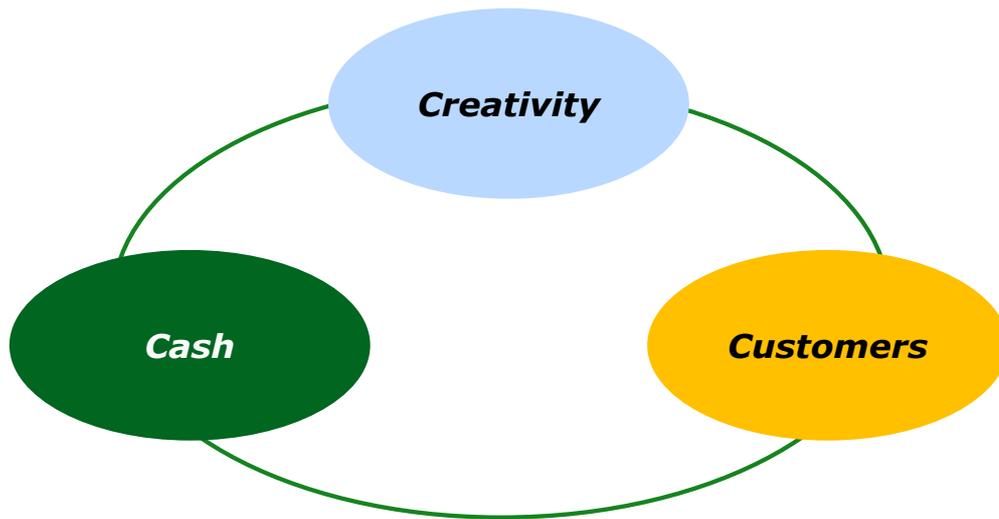
Many specialists follow their calling and enjoy being creative. Some want to translate this into setting up and running their own business. Some take this step and thrive; others find they are more suited to working in an organisation.

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.

Specialists Running A Business

It can be important for them to get the right balance between:



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:

*

*The specific things I can do to
translate this idea into a service
or product that helps people are:*

*

*

*

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:

*

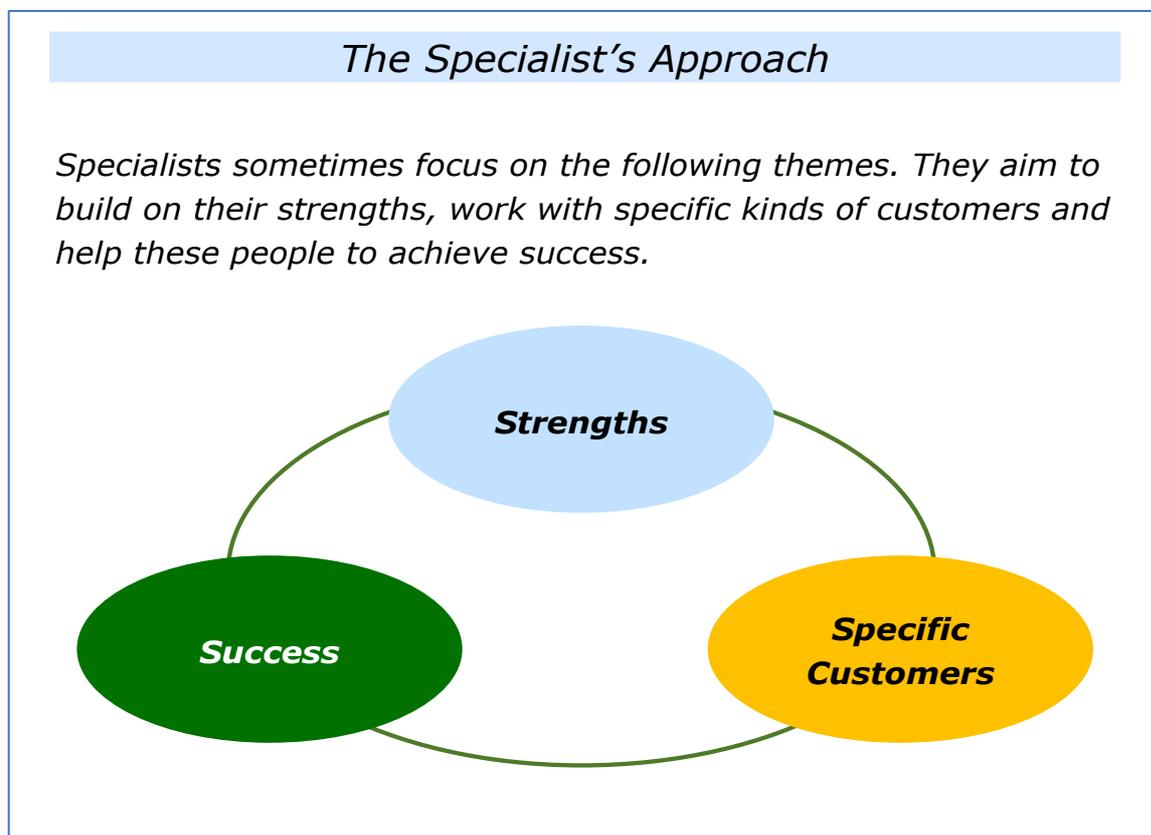
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*

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:

*

*

*

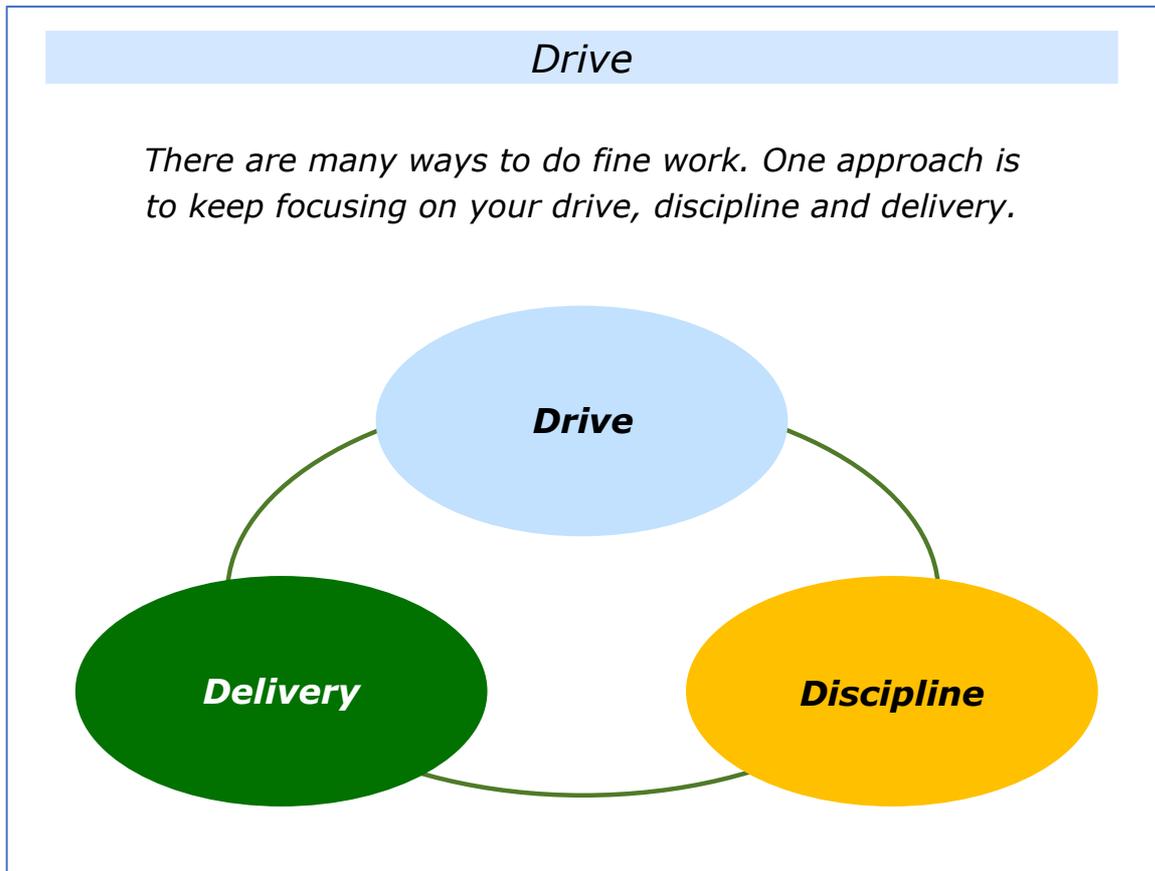
The specific things I can do to do my best to achieve my definition of success are:

*

*

*

The Driven Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One way is to follow the driven approach. It is to do what you do best and focus on the following themes.

Drive - this involves following your drive and deciding how you want to translate this into action.

Discipline – this involves following your chosen disciplines and, when appropriate, also being daring.

Delivery – this involves doing your best and dealing with dramas on the way to delivering the goods.

Looking back, when have you followed some of these steps? You may have been pursuing a project, writing a book, playing a sport or doing another activity. 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 this 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 is possible to take this route.

Drive

The process starts by focusing on something you feel driven to do. It then involves deciding how you want to translate this into action. You may then dedicate yourself to working to achieve a specific goal.

Different people follow their drive for different reasons. Some do it to satisfy their basic needs. Some follow it after having an epiphany. Some move forwards after a period of research and reflection. 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 drive I want to pursue? What is the theme I keep returning to? What are the principles I believe in following? How can I translate this into action? What is my picture of success?

Imagine you have provisionally settled on the drive you want to pursue. You may then move on to the next stage. Translating the drive into action.

Decision Making

Great workers take time to think before deciding to commit themselves to working towards a specific goal. Bearing in mind their drive, they explore the potential way forwards and do their due diligence. They then dedicate

themselves to following their chosen route. Let's explore these themes, starting with making decisions.

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. 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 exploring the possible ways forward. 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.

Imagine that you explored the possible routes you can take in the future. You may then want to focus on the following theme.

Dedication

Great workers commit themselves to doing their best and aiming to get positive results. This often involves them taking the following steps.

They clarify the route they want to follow, clarify the real results they want to achieve and translate this into a clear picture of success;

They clarify the key strategies they can follow to achieve the picture of success;

They clarify the pluses and minuses involved in doing the work and commit themselves to achieving the picture of success.

Great workers embark on their journey with their eyes open. They anticipate what can happen and decide if they are prepared to accept the whole package.

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 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.

Dedication

*The specific thing
I want to do is:*

*

My Motivation Rating

*Pluses. The potential pluses
involved in doing the work may be:*

*

*

*Minuses. The potential minuses
involved in doing the work may be:*

*

*

*Bearing these in mind, the extent to which I
feel motivated to pursuing my chosen route is:*

____ / 10

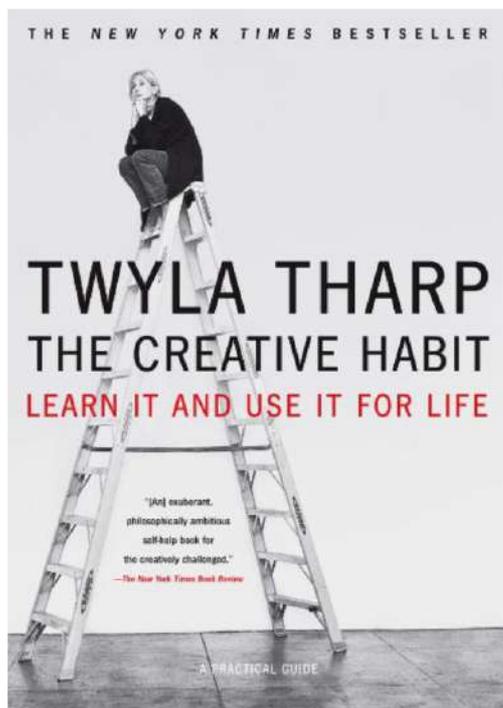
Discipline

Great workers take a delight in following certain disciplines. They also recognise that, when appropriate, they may need to be daring or demonstrate dexterity. They do this in a calculated way, however, to increase the chances of success.

Such workers often pursue their chosen discipline by following a certain rhythm. They 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 keep doing their best when working towards their goals. Different people do this in different ways. One approach is for them to clarify the daily disciplines they can follow to deliver the goals.

They do their best to keep following their daily disciplines and also take the following steps.

They keep developing – they build on their strengths, clarify what they are doing well and do more of these things.

They deal with disappointments – they focus on what they can improve and implement these ideas.

They do their best to deliver the goods – they keep doing what works, keep improving and do everything possible to achieve the goals.



Some people keep on ongoing journal describing the specific things they are doing well and how they can keep improving. Here is one example.

Doing My Best

Daily Disciplines

*The daily disciplines I can follow to
work towards delivering the goods are:*

*

*

*

Doing Well

*The specific things I am doing well and
can continue to do in the future are:*

*

*

*

Can Do Better

*The specific things I can do
better in the future and how are:*

*

*

*

Daring

Great workers sometimes choose 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.

They use their preferred decision making process to clarify the options for going forwards. They then dare to commit themselves fully to pursuing their chosen strategy.

The term daring rather than taking risks is one that I use deliberately. This encourages people to think in a more positive way rather than worrying about what they have got to lose. Let's look at some of the motivations for being daring.

Deciding To Be Daring

Different people choose to be daring for different reasons and in different ways. These may include the following.

- *Daring by aiming to do something special.*
- *Daring by aiming to be decisive rather than drift.*
- *Daring because they have nothing to lose.*

Some people choose to be daring because they aim to do something special. They may do this after following their disciplines but recognising that it requires something extra. They then build on their strengths and produce a superb piece of work that enables them to reach their goals.

Some people choose to be daring because they have nothing to lose. Such individuals can prove very difficult for opponents to deal with in sports or other activities because they are prepared to do almost anything to achieve their desired goals.

Great workers are determined and follow their chosen disciplines. When appropriate, they also demonstrate dexterity. There are several definitions for this quality. One of these is:

The ability to think quickly and effectively or to do something difficult extremely well.

Such workers have the ability to be agile and find creative solutions to challenges. This involves focusing on the next step

Delivery



Great workers keep doing their best. They keep following the strategies most likely to achieve success. They aim to make things as predictable as possible but sometimes they may need to manage other issues. Let's explore one of these themes.

Dealing With Dramas

Such workers may need to deal with dramas on the journey. They then channel their feelings into working towards achieving the desired goals.

They do not get distracted by such issues 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:

*

*

*

Delivering The Goods

Great workers often demonstrate relaxed relentless. 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. Imagine that you want to do what you do best and follow your drive in the future.

How can you decide on the way forwards and dedicate yourself to this 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 this approach may be:*

*

*The specific things I can do then
to follow some of these steps are:*

*

*

*

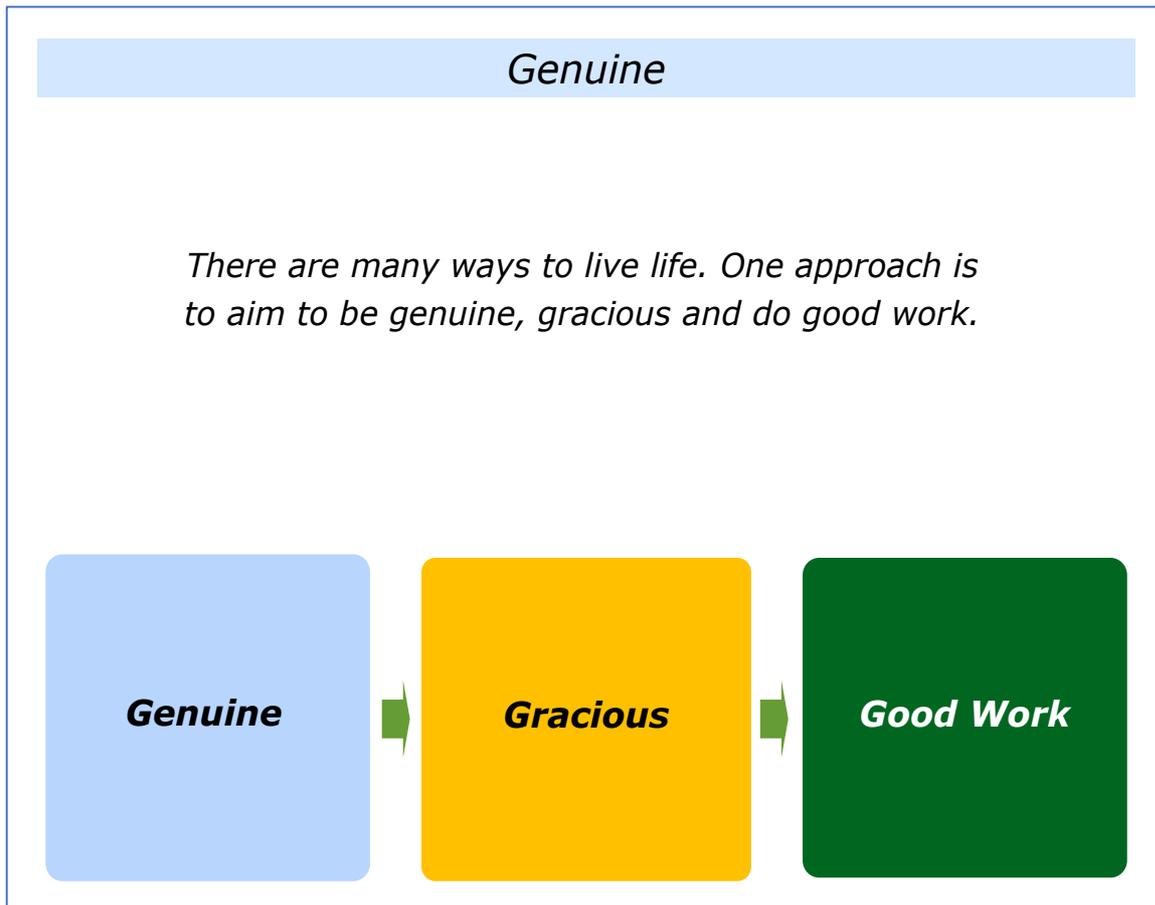
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

The Genuine, Gracious And Good Work Approach



There are many ways to live and work. One approach is to aim to be genuine, gracious and do good work. Let's explore these themes.

Genuine

When do you feel genuine? You may take this approach when, for example:

*You are doing what you believe in ... You are building on your strengths ...
You are aiming to be the best you can be.*

You may also feel genuine when you are following your principles and aiming to perform superb work. When does this happen for you? Here are some answers that people give when exploring this theme.

I feel genuine when I am doing the following kinds of work:

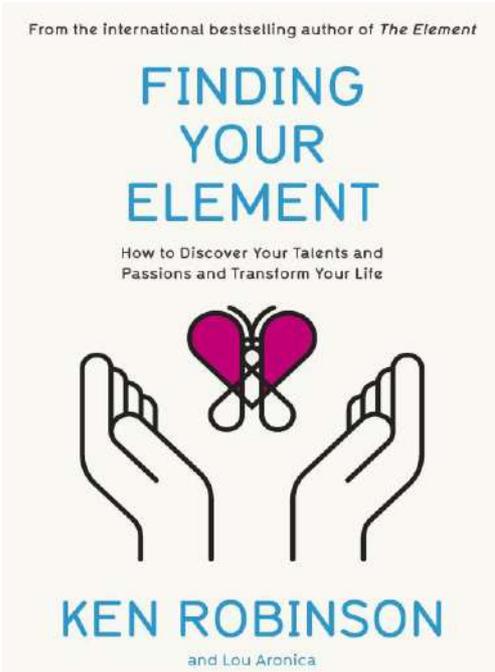
Helping a troubled person in my work as a counsellor ... Caring for people in my role as a nurse ... Doing interior design for houses ... Singing certain kinds of songs as a performer.

Orchestrating teams to achieve a compelling goal ... Solving technical problems when helping clients ... Writing positive articles that may inspire people .. Passing on knowledge that helps people to succeed.

Being In Your Element

Some people feel genuine when they are in their element – at ease and yet able to excel. Sir Ken Robinson’s TED talk on creativity encouraged many people to focus on this theme. 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."



From the international bestselling author of *The Element*

FINDING YOUR ELEMENT

How to Discover Your Talents and
Passions and Transform Your Life

KEN ROBINSON
and Lou Aronica

"Knowing what your Element is will give you a much better sense of direction than certainly bouncing from one job to the next.

"If you know what your Element is, you are more likely to find ways to make a living at it.

"Finding your Element won't guarantee being in an unblocked state of pleasure in life.

"It will give you a deeper sense of who you really are and of the life you could and maybe should live."

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.

Let's return to your own work. What are the specific situations when you feel genuine in your work? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentence.

Genuine

The specific situations where I feel genuine when doing certain kinds of work are:

*

*

*

Gracious

Some people aim to act in a gracious way towards other people. They aim to be caring and show a generosity of spirit. Different people do this in different ways.

Some do it in their daily life by simply being kind. They aim to help people to feel at ease and able to be themselves. They may also encourage people and help them to achieve their goals.

Some do it in their work. They demonstrate graciousness – respect and reverence – towards the work they are doing. They may do this when pursuing a craft, caring for people or doing another kind of work.

Some aim to show graciousness towards the planet. They are grateful and show respect for Mother Earth. They aim to care for the life-giving forces and to pass these on to future generations.

Looking at your own life, can you think of situations where you aim to be gracious? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

Graciousness

*The specific situations where
I aim to be gracious are:*

*

*

*

Good Work

Some people aim to do good work. They may aim to use their gifts to do work that contributes to helping people or the planet. They may also do work that enables other people to feel good. There are many ways to do such work. Let's look at one approach.

Doing Good Work By 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.

There are many ways to live life. One approach is to be genuine, be gracious and do good work. This can help both people and the planet.

Let's return to your own life and work. If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on these themes. This invites you to describe how you may be able to do good work. Here is the exercise.

Good Work

*The specific activity in which I
may want to be genuine,
gracious and do good work 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 of taking those steps may be:*

*

*

*

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:

*

The specific things I can do to do this in a way that feels comfortable for me are:

*

*

*

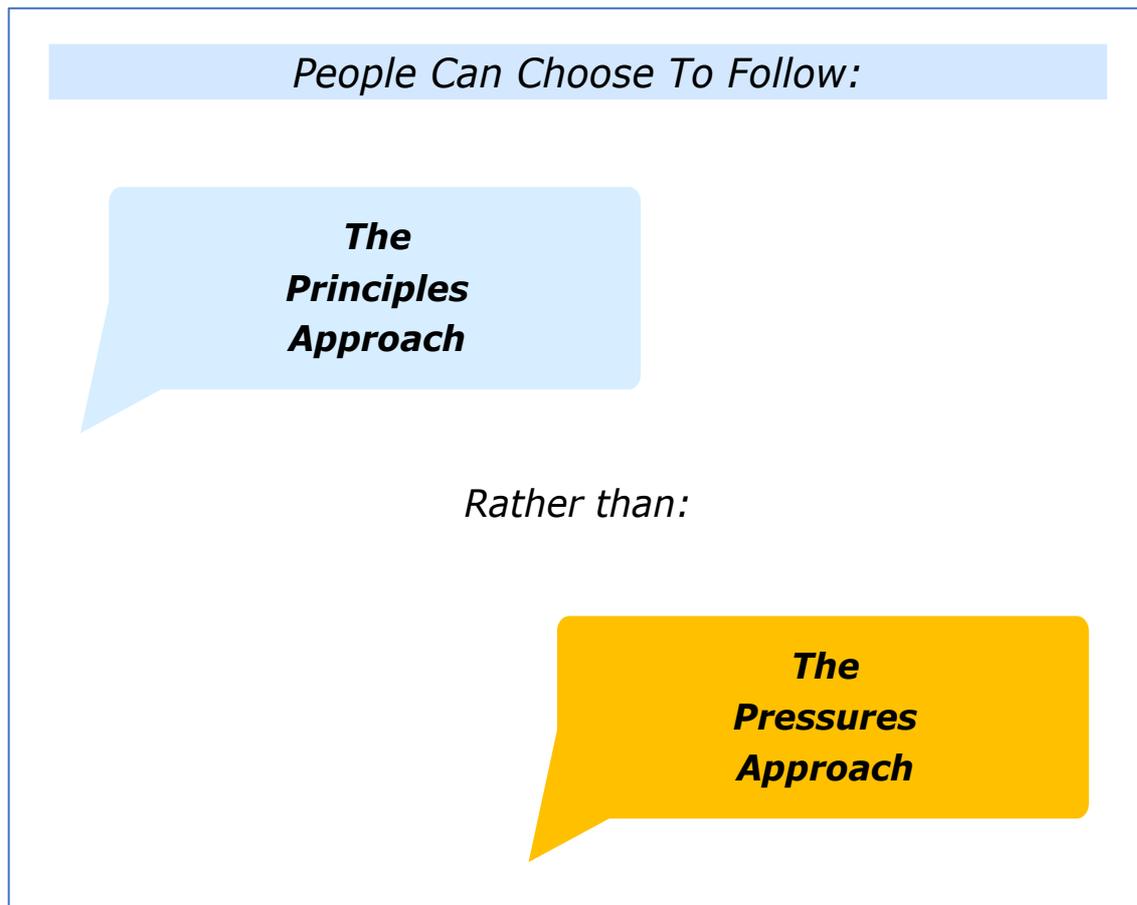
The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

The Principles Approach Rather Than The Pressures Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. Some people choose to follow the principles approach rather than the pressures approach. They keep following principles rather than worry about what some may see pressures.

People who follow this approach sometimes go through the following steps. They start by clarifying the principles they want to follow in their work. Here are some that some people mention.

*Principles - The specific principles
that I want to follow in my work are:*

To encourage people ... To clarify people's goals ... To provide great service ... To deliver high professional standards ... To find solutions to

challenges ... To pass on knowledge to people ... To help people to achieve their goals.

Such workers then focus on the specific situations where they may want to follow their principles. These may be positive or pressure situations. Here are some themes they may mention.

The specific situations where I may want to follow these principles may be when I am aiming:

To counsel a troubled person ... To mediate in a conflict situation ... To manage a specific crisis ... To help an athlete to prepare for a competition... To do my best in a so-called pressure situation.

Such workers then do three things. You will, of course, follow these steps in your own way.

They clarify the specific situation where they may want to follow their principles.

They clarify the specific principles they want to follow in their work.

They clarify the specific things they can do to follow these principles in the specific situation.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to focus on specific situation where you may want to follow the principles approach rather than worrying about any pressures.

Here is the exercise. This is followed by exploring several other approaches to managing what some would see as pressure situations.

The Principles Approach Rather Than The Pressures Approach

The specific situation where I may want to follow my principles may be:

*

The specific principles I want to follow in my work are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to follow these principles in the specific situation are:

*

*

*

The Managing Pressure Situations Approach

Managing Pressure Situations Successfully

People who take this approach sometimes redefine the situation as a challenge. They then move through the following stages.

They manage themselves successfully. They manage one challenge successfully. They move on to managing multiple challenges successfully.



There are many ways to manage pressure situations. This section explores some to the steps that people take to manage such challenges successfully.

Such people often start by redefining the situation as a challenge. They then take some of the following steps.

They manage themselves successfully

Some people aim to manage themselves. They do this in order to be able to manage pressure situations successfully.

They aim to take care of themselves psychologically. They have a positive attitude and do things that give them positive energy. They learn how to manage both personal and professional situations successfully.

Such individuals may then choose to tackle certain kinds of pressure situations or challenges. They take either of the following steps:

They choose to proactively put themselves into such situations, or:

They choose to react to certain events by taking responsibility for tackling such situations.

Imagine a person has chosen to tackle certain challenges. They then move on to the next stage.

They manage one challenge successfully

They focus on the first challenge they want to tackle. They recognise, however, that it may also be necessary to manage other related issues.

Such people prepare properly. They start by clarifying the results to achieve. They rehearse the strategies they will follow and translate these into a clear action plan. They also rehearse dealing with any problems they may encounter when working to achieve their goals.

They move into action. Bearing in mind the results to achieve, they follow their chosen strategies. They also keep reading reality. They aim: a) to keep building on what is working; b) to tackle areas for improvement

Such individuals buy time to think when faced by unexpected problems. They then aim to find solutions, do their best to manage the challenge and achieve the desired results.

They take time to reflect after completing the work. They clarify: a) the specific they did well; b) the specific things they could have done better and how; c) the specific lessons they can apply to tackle future challenges. They may then move onto the next stage.

They move on to managing multiple challenges successfully

Some individuals move on to tackling multiple challenges. Such people may take the following steps:

They continue to manage themselves successfully;

They still focus on managing one challenge at a time – whilst managing any related issues - and doing everything possible to manage it successfully;

They then aim to box-off that challenge, move on to the next challenge and manage it successfully.



Different people follow these principles in different situations. Let's explore some of these scenarios.

Defusing Bombs

Many people 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."

Different people manage pressure and challenges in different ways. The following section explores some of these approaches.

The Positive Approach Rather Than The Pressured Approach

The Positive Approach Is Where:

You do feel in control in your personal or professional life.

You are doing something that gives pleasure.

You can do your best and get positive results.

The Pressured Approach Is Where:

You don't feel in control in your personal or professional life.

You are doing something where you feel pressured.

You can find it hard to get positive results.

There are many ways to do fine work. Some people aim to follow the positive approach rather than the pressured approach. They do this even in situations that others would find challenging.

People obviously need to be given the basic materials for life – food, money and love. It can be harder to take the positive approach if these are lacking. Let's explore these different routes.

The Positive Approach

People who take this approach often have a positive attitude. They may demonstrate this when pursuing their work, playing a sport or doing another activity. They may demonstrate it when working as a nurse, educator or in another role.

Such a person may say something like the following when embarking on a piece of work or tackling a challenge.

"I have the opportunity to do work that is a pleasure. Some people may see it as being pressured, but I do not see it that way.

"Real pressure is being in a war zone, not being able to feed your family or being in another situation that is threatening.

"The work I do gives me the chance to help other people and get positive results. Other people may not have such opportunities."

Different people follow the positive approach in different ways. Bearing this in mind, however, some of them focus on the following themes.

*They aim to do something
where they can feel in control*

Such people like to feel in control. Bearing this in mind, they do the following things before going into situations.

They control their attitude. They aim to be positive rather than negative.

They clarify what they can control in the situation. They make sure that they will have enough freedom to shape their part of the work.

They then choose whether they want to do the work. They clarify the pluses and minuses involved and decide whether they want to do the work.

"That sounds reasonable," somebody may say. "But what about when there appears little option but to do the work?"

Such a person recognises they still have a choice. They recognise that there are consequences – both pluses and minuses - involved in them doing the work or not doing the work. Bearing this in mind:

They may well choose to embark upon tackling the challenge;

They choose this route because they do not want the consequences of not tackling the challenge.

Let's move on to another principle pursued by some people who take this approach

*They aim to do something
that gives pleasure*

Such people do something that give pleasure to other people or to themselves. Different people do this in different ways. They may aim, for example:

To encourage other people ... To provide medical care ... To cook nourishing food ... To pass on knowledge ... To manage crises ... To act as mediators ... To create beauty ... To do creative work ... To fix problems ... To help people to succeed.

Imagine that a person is doing something that provides benefits. They may then move on to the next stage.

*They aim to do something where they can
do their best and get positive results*

People like feel that, providing they do their best, they have a chance of achieving positive results. This gives them to strength to work towards the desired picture of success.

People who take this do their due diligence before embarking on a piece of work or tackling a challenge. They sometimes work through the following exercise.

Success Rating

Bearing in mind the things I can control, the rating I would give regarding the probability of being able to achieve the goal is:

___ /10

The specific things I can do to maintain or increase the rating are:

*

*

*

Such people make sure the rating is at least 7+/10. They focus on the specific things they can do to improve the chances of success. They then do their best to achieve the goals.

Some people, however, find themselves in situations where they are following the pressure approach. Let's explore how this may happen.

The Pressured Approach

There are many reasons why people may experience pressure. This may be because they have not been given the basic materials for life or are not doing satisfying work. They may then experience some of the following things.

They may not feel in control of their personal or professional lives.

They may be doing something where they feel under pressure – such as doing work they don't like, being micromanaged or experiencing other pressures.

They may find it hard to deliver positive results.

People who have such experiences may show symptoms. They may feel exhausted, lose confidence or lack a sense of purpose. This can create problems for themselves and other people.

Over the years I have worked with many people who have shown such symptoms. The aim has been to help them to take more control of their lives and work.

Whilst it can take time, it is often possible to help them to find ways to pursue the positive approach. This also calls for giving them tools for managing any present pressures successfully.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you want to follow elements of the positive approach? How can you do this in your own way?

How can you aim to take control? How can you do work that gives pleasure to other people or yourself? How can you make sure that, providing you do your best, you have a good chance of getting positive results?

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

The Positive Approach In The Future

*The specific situation where I may
want to follow elements of
the positive 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 Professional Reframing Approach



Great workers sometimes reframe pressure situations as professional situations. This is an approach sometimes taken by first responders, medics, athletes and others in challenging professions.

Bearing in mind what they can control, some individuals take the following steps:

They channel their emotions by reframing the event as a professional situation.

They aim to prepare properly, be professional and do their best to achieve peak performance.

Different people follow these steps in different ways. One of the keys, however, is to channel their emotions in a positive way. Let's look at some examples.

First Responders

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.

Such athletes often use certain mantras to remind themselves of what they can do when performing in their version of the arena. They may say some of the following things.

Be calm, controlled and centred ... Keep following the process rather than worrying about the prize ... Try easy rather than try hard ... Flow, focus and finish.

Matthew Syed, the author of *Bounce*, gives an example of how this approach to perform at their best. 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."

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a challenge that you can as reframe as a professional rather than a pressure situation?

How can you prepare properly for the situation? How can you behave in a professional way? How can you then do your best to achieve peak performance? 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 Professional Reframing Approach

The specific situation in the future that I may reframe as a professional rather than pressure situation may be:

*

The specific things I can do then to prepare properly, be professional and do my best to achieve peak performance are:

*

*

*

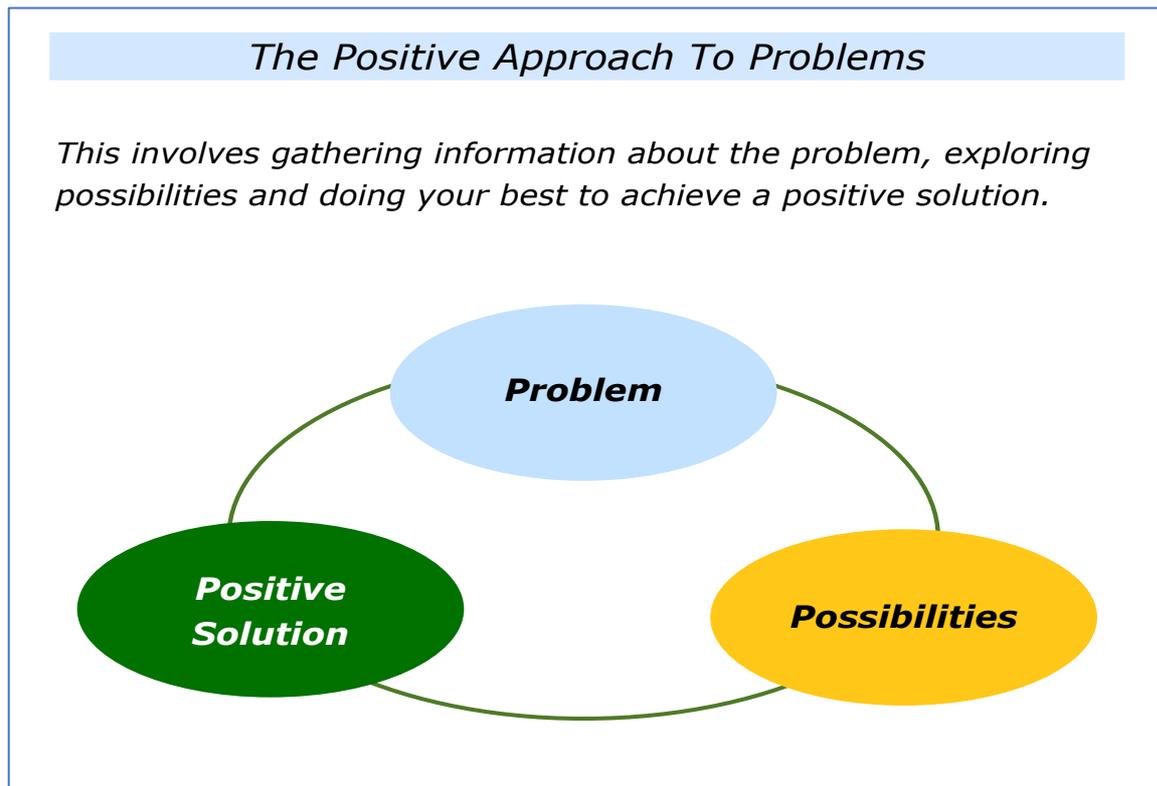
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

The Positive Approach To Problems



There are many ways to tackle problems. The positive approach involves gathering information about the problem, exploring possibilities and then doing your best to achieve a positive solution.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach. When appropriate, this involves working through the following steps.

The Problem

Some people prefer to reframe a problem as a challenge. This helps them to maintain a positive mindset. Whatever term you use, you may aim:

To gather information about the problem;

To begin exploring potential positive solutions;

To see things in perspective.

Good decision makers keep moving between these themes. They take this approach rather than always working through the steps in a linear fashion.

Such people gather information when faced by a problem. They focus on the facts of the situation rather than become overwhelmed by their own and other people's feelings.

The paramedic arriving at the scene of a multiple accident will gather information about the state of each casualty. Dealing with any critical issues, they will move on to what must be done to help each person.

The technical trouble-shooter will identify what is working and what is not working. They will then aim to fix the short-term issues and, when appropriate, provide long-term solutions.

The mediator in a conflict situation will aim to connect with each party and clarify the real results they want to achieve. Building on what each party has in common, they will then aim to find win-win solutions.

Imagine that you encounter a problem in your personal or professional life. Sometimes it can be hard to move beyond your feelings or the temptation to make moral judgements. Some decision makers go into a situation and ask the following questions.

What is the challenge? What are the things I can control in the situation? What are the real results to achieve? What is the picture of success? What will be happening that will show we have achieved the picture of success?

What is actually happening? What are the successful patterns? What are the unsuccessful patterns? How can we build on the successful patterns and manage the unsuccessful patterns? What else can we do to achieve success?

What is working? What is not working? What are the immediate problems that need fixing? How can we fix the short-term problems and, when appropriate, tackle the medium and longer-term problems?

What are people actually doing? How are they behaving? What are they doing that is helping? What are they doing that may not be helping? What will happen if they continue to behave in these ways?

When working in conflict situations, what does each party want? What are the things they have in common? How can we work towards some of these common goals? How can we find, as far as possible, some win-win solutions?

The positive approach also involves maintaining a sense of perspective. Sometimes this can be difficult – especially if you feel hurt, out of control or are experiencing grief.

Different people choose different ways to see things in perspective. Here are some themes they may explore when taking this step.

Perspective

- *What are the positive things in my life? What are the things for which I am grateful? What are my personal and professional assets? How can I use these to work towards my future picture of success?*
- *What are the times in the past when I have overcome challenges? What did I do right then? What were the principles I followed? How can I follow these – plus maybe add other skills – to tackle the present challenge successfully?*
- *Bearing in mind the positive things in my life, what percentage does the present challenge play in my life? How can I build on the positive things and tackle the present challenge? How can I do my best to work towards my picture of success?*

The Possibilities

Imagine that you have gathered information about the problem and begun to focus on a potential positive solution. It may be useful to work through the following steps before settling on your chosen strategy. You may aim:

To clarify the possible ways forward;

To clarify any positive possibilities that may have emerged;

To explore any creative solutions.

You will have your own approach to considering the possible ways forward. One approach is to work through the following steps

The possible options for working towards the desired positive results

Option A Is:

** To ...*

The potential pluses are ... The potential minuses are ...

Option B Is:

** To ...*

The potential pluses are ... The potential minuses are ...

Option C Is:

** To ...*

The potential pluses are ... The potential minuses are ...

Imagine that you have begun exploring the potential ways forward. Before going further it may be worth considering that may seem counter-intuitive.

Are There Any Positive Possibilities That May Emerge?

This seems an odd question to ask, but sometimes problems can help us to reflect on what is really important in life. They can also help us:

To do some positive framing ... To build on our strengths and focus on the possible opportunities ... To find creative ways to tackle the challenge;

This approach applies to certain kinds of setbacks. It does not necessarily apply to issues such as personal loss or chronic grief. Bearing this in mind, let's look at some challenges where positive possibilities may emerge. Martin Braithwaite, the Danish international footballer, has had many setbacks. Here he describes some of the positive things that emerged.



"I was born with Leggier Calve Perthes disease which affects the hip. Since I was 5, I spent two years in a wheelchair.

"When I turned 18, I broke my leg. It changed my perspective on life and it was one of the best things that could have happened to me.

"It may sound strange but not being able to play made me focus more on getting where I wanted to go. I found out I had to dedicate my life to football."

Many people find that vulnerability is a great teacher. They find that an illness or other setback helps them realise what is really important in life. Some people apply these lessons when they regain their stability.

One business that I worked with was declining before Covid. The way it responded to the pandemic, however, helped it to refocus and thrive. Here is a summary of the CEO's reflections on what happened.

"Our company followed a predictable route. We began by focusing on what we did best and doing great work for certain types of customers.

"We generated good profits and acquired other businesses. This led to us offering a wide spectrum of services, but this created problems and we became more diffuse.

"We tried to offer end-to-end services to many different kinds of customers, but this did not work. We also found that our culture became diluted.

"Covid forced us to refocus our strengths. As a result, we took practical steps: a) to build on what we did best; b) to build on the kinds of customers with whom we worked best; c) to build on the people who could help us to shape a positive future.

"The hardest part was around the people. We kept the majority of the people we employed and involved them in shaping the future. We also paid generous amounts – in some cases up to six-months salary – to people who moved on.

"The pandemic forced many professionals to think about their futures. Bearing this in mind, we proactively recruited some of these specialists who wanted to continue to work remotely.

"Covid taught us: a) to return to our core business; b) to find creative solutions to the challenges. It forced us to take steps to build a sustainable business."

Different people choose different ways to take these steps. Some people take time to get over the initial shock. Setting aside time to reflect, they then ask themselves:

"Are there any positive possibilities that may emerge from this situation?"

They focus on: a) how to build on their strengths; b) how to build on any positive possibilities that may have emerged; c) how to find creative solutions to any challenges. They then move on to the next stage.

The Positive Solution

Imagine that you feel ready to embark on tackling the problem. It can then be useful:

To clarify the real results you want to achieve - the desired positive solution;

To clarify the route – or combination of routes – you want to follow to work towards the positive solution;

To move into action, get some quick successes and do your best to achieve the desired positive solution.

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 to tackling problems?

Some situations come out of the blue, but some can be anticipated. What may be a potential challenge you may face in your personal or professional life?

How can you gather information? How can you begin to focus on a positive solution? How can you see things in perspective? How can you consider any positive possibilities that may emerge? How can you then pursue your chosen route towards the desired positive solution?

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

The Positive Approach To Problems

*The specific situation in the future
where 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:*

*

*

*

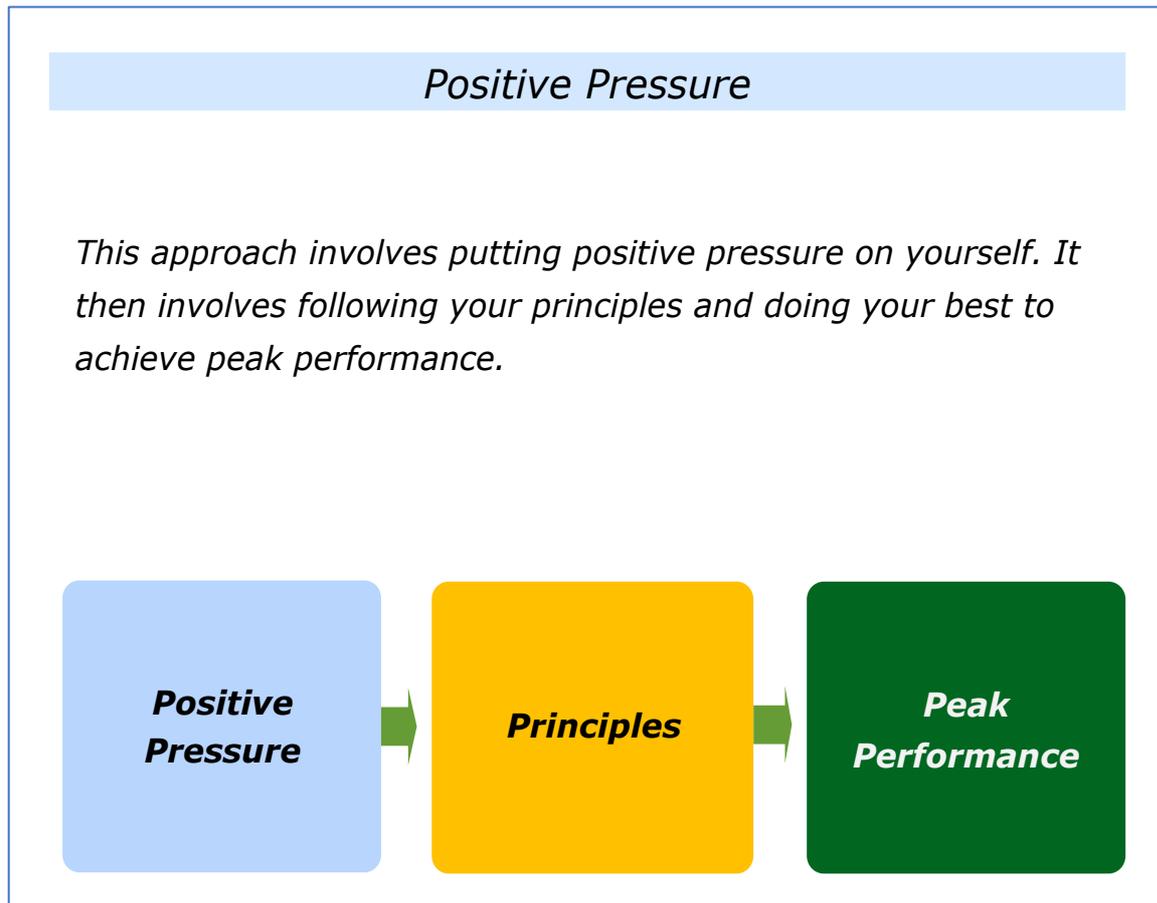
*The specific things that may happen as
a result to taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

The Putting Positive Pressure On Yourself Approach



Let's return to a variation of the model described at the beginning of this section. Some people choose to put positive pressure on themselves. They then aim to follow their principles and do their best to achieve peak performance.

We have explored these themes elsewhere in the book, so here is a brief overview. Such people often focus on the following themes.

Positive Pressure

Different people put positive pressure on themselves in different ways. Let's look at some examples.

A writer may set a date for finishing their manuscript. They may then tell their publisher that they complete it by that date. This may force them to follow a certain rhythm to finish the book.

A person may plan to be a certain weight on their wedding day. They may then follow a specific diet to make sure they can get into the clothes they have ordered for the big day.

A leadership team may choose to clarify the principles they want to follow in a company. They may then focus on how they can live these principles in their daily work. This is an approach we will explore later in this piece.

Different people have different motives for putting positive pressure on themselves. Whatever their reasons, some may then move on to the next stage.

Principles

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.

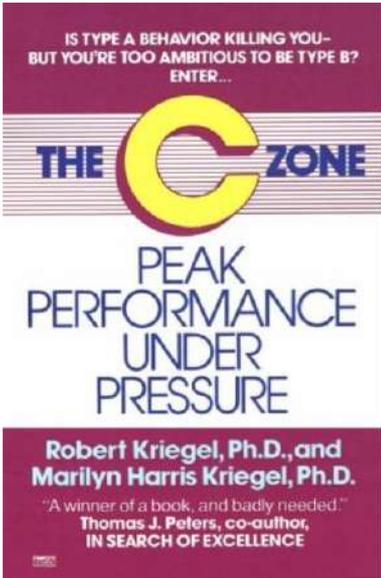
This highlights a key point. Great workers keep going back to their principles – which act as a guiding compass - especially during crises. This can lead to the next stage.

Peak Performance

Imagine that you have followed your chosen principles. You may then aim to follow these principles and do your best to achieve peak performance.

Different people do this in different ways. Some people follow the approach described by Robert Kriegel and Marilyn Harris Kriegel in their book *The C Zone: Peak Performance Under Pressure*.

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.



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. They aim to stay calm and focus on the following steps.

Control

They have a positive attitude but are also good at reading reality. They clarify what they can control in the situation. They then aim to build on what they can control and manage what they can't.

Clarity

They clarify the What – the real results they want to achieve. They clarify the How – the key strategies they can follow to achieve the results. They clarify the When – the action plan they will follow to achieve the results.

Concrete Results

They move into action. They pursue their chosen strategies but also keep reading reality. They build on what is working and tackle areas for improvement. They then do their best to achieve 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 put pressure on yourself? How can you do this in a positive 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.

Putting Pressure On Myself

The specific situation in the future where I may want to put pressure on myself in a positive way may be:

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The specific things I can do then to put pressure on myself in a positive 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 Performing To Your Potential Approach

Performing To Your Potential

There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to play to your strengths, follow your principles and perform to your potential.



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to play to your strengths, follow your principles and perform to your potential.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach. 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.

The Strengths Approach

This involves focusing on the specific activities where you build on your strengths, do satisfying work and achieve success.



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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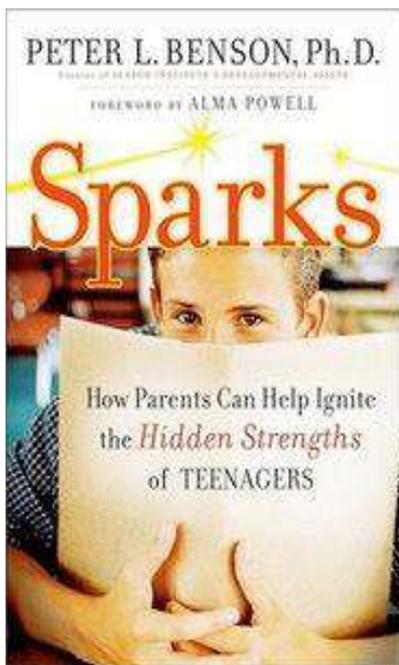
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The Sparks Approach

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:*

*

*

*

*The specific steps I can take to do
more of these things in the future are:*

*

*

*

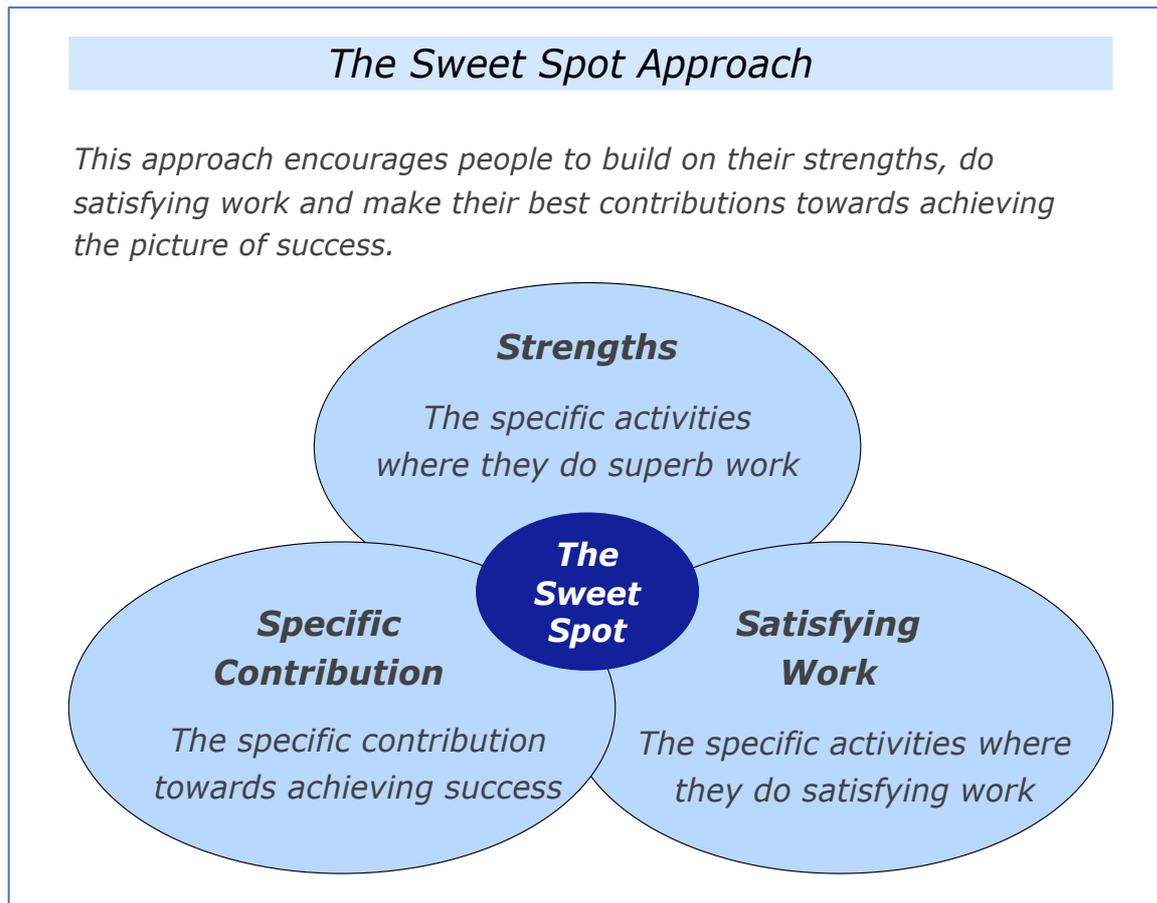
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Sweet Spot Approach



This is an approach that can be used by individuals, teams and organisations. It encourages people to build on their strengths, do satisfying work and make their best contributions towards achieving the picture of success.

The sweet spot concept stems from 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.

Some elements of this approach have been used in career development workshops since the 1960s. It encourages individuals to do what they do best and make their best contributions to a team or organisation.

The approach is obviously related to the Japanese concept of Ikigai. But it does not necessarily cover their purpose, vocation or mission on the planet. When appropriate, however, these are themes I sometimes explore with a person. This involves focusing on the following themes.

Strengths. The specific activities where they do superb work.

Satisfying Work. The specific activities where they do satisfying work.

Specific Contribution. The specific contribution they can make towards helping people, the team or the organisation to achieve success.

Over the past fifty years I have worked with many people who have used this approach. The follow section describes some of these individuals.

Jack – Being A Specialist

Jack was unhappy in his role as Chief Operation Officer for a worldwide digital company. He had risen through the ranks by being good at solving technical problems and developing software.

Being ambitious, he was delighted when offered the COO role. This came with status – being a member of the C Suite – a pay rise and a number of shares. Unfortunately the role also involved certain aspects that did not play to his strengths. He was expected:

To manage multiple problems that often involved fire-fighting;

To deal with emotional issues as well as technical issues;

To manage people who had lower quality standards than himself and also be on duty 24/7.

Jack also had a young family and felt stretched. This led to him occasionally having outbursts that did not help himself or others. He was quite traditional in some ways. Whilst recognising it would be good for him to revert to a specialist role, he did not want a drop in status.

He and the CEO explored ways he could play to his strengths and also help the company to achieve success. This eventually led to him taking an individual specialist role. This involved him being able:

To do specific project work with certain departments across the world;

To develop pacesetting technical solutions that helped their clients to achieve success;

To maintain his shares and salary but only attend the C-Suite meetings when appropriate.

This proved to be a win-win. The company got the best use of his skills and it resulted in getting increased orders from the customers with whom he worked. Jack was able to do stimulating work, set specific goals and deliver success. This also benefited both his family.

Anna – Being A Chief People Officer

Anna had spent a number of years doing freelance work. Previously a head of HR, she had done projects helping companies to shape their cultures. She found this relatively fulfilling but missed leading a team.

Bearing in mind her strengths, she took a proactive approach to finding a full-time role that would be more satisfying. This led to one of her previous managers – who was now a CEO – asking her to consider joining their company as the Chief People Officer.

Such a role calls for a person demonstrating certain strengths in order to deliver success. They need to be able:

To clarify the CEO's philosophy, principles and picture of success regarding the company's people strategy;

To communicate this approach and lead a HR team that successfully implements the key principles regarding the company's people's strategy;

To embody the ethic of continuous improvement and continue to deliver the company's people strategy.

Anna scored at least 8/10 in each of these areas. Working alongside the CEO, she implemented a strategy that enabled employees to develop a people and as professionals.

Per – Being A Peak Performer

Per was sixteen when he played for the Academy football team that I coached. Dynamic and adrenaline driven, he was an attacking forward who scored many goals. Continually positive, he acted as a good model for other people.

Bearing this in mind, I offered him the chance to be the team captain. This seemed a good idea at the time, but it did not work as planned. Whilst he continued to be positive, his form suffered.

Per wanted to encourage people but the responsibilities involved in being captain meant he felt diluted. We agreed he would revert to his role as a model and goal-scoring attacker.

Fast forward thirty years. Per contacted me to describe his working career. He had become the top sales performer for a big company in Sweden. Per loved being able:

To use his strengths when striving to achieve the specific goals;

To have a sense of autonomy when working to achieve the specific goals;

To get an adrenaline kick and a good bonus when achieving the specific goals.

Per recognised that his energy may reduce as a got older and had plans to run his own sales training company. He had already set targets for the first three years of running this business.

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that you are helping a person to focus on their sweet spot. Here are some exercises that you can use to help them to take this step. These invite them to focus on the following themes.



Satisfying Work

The specific kinds of work – the tasks, projects and other activities – that I find satisfying to do are:

*

*

*

The specific things I find satisfying when doing these kinds of work are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to follow these principles and do satisfying work in the future are:

*

*

*

There are many ways to apply the sweet spot approach. You can use it:

To clarify how you can continue to do satisfying work;

To help other people – such as your children, friends or customers – to do satisfying work;

To help people in your team or organisation to do satisfying work and make their best contributions towards achieving the picture of success.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe how you may want to use elements of the sweet spot approach. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

The Sweet Spot Approach

The specific situation where I may want to use elements of the sweet spot approach may be:

*

The specific things I can do then to use elements of the sweet spot approach are:

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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 to do build on these skills and deliver success are:

*

*

*

The specific benefits of doing these things will be:

*

*

*

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:

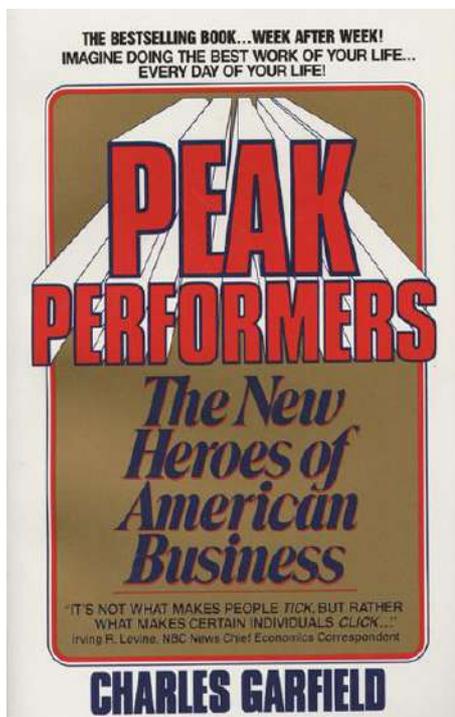
Now I began to understand what I was hearing and seeing, as one peak performer after another spoke of self-training, learning by experience,

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."

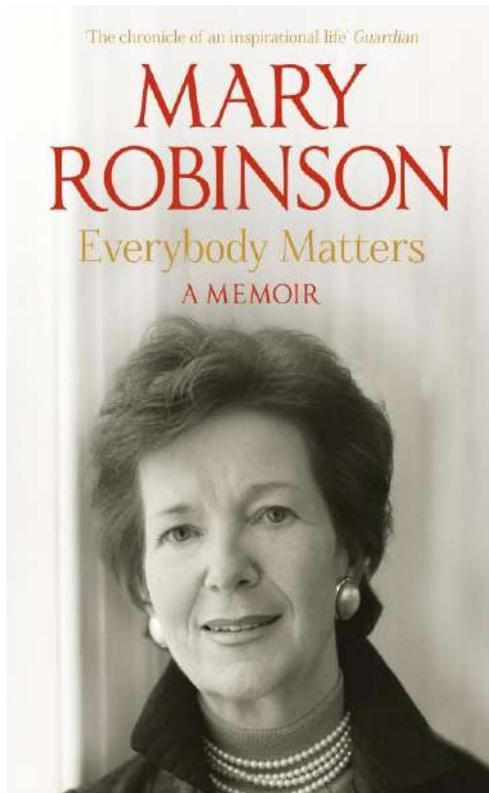


"The mission of the individual needs to align with the mission of the team, which needs to align with the mission of the organization.

"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.



"People I admire have two qualities: a kind of simplicity, and generosity of spirit."

"It seems to me that the more impressive people are in what they have done, the simpler they tend to be in how they talk to you, or in what they say or write."

"The aim of human rights is to move beyond thinking and talking about the foundations stones - to laying those foundation stones, inch by inch, together."

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.

Principles

*The specific principles I
want to follow in my work are:*

*

*The specific things I can do
to follow these principles are:*

*

*

*

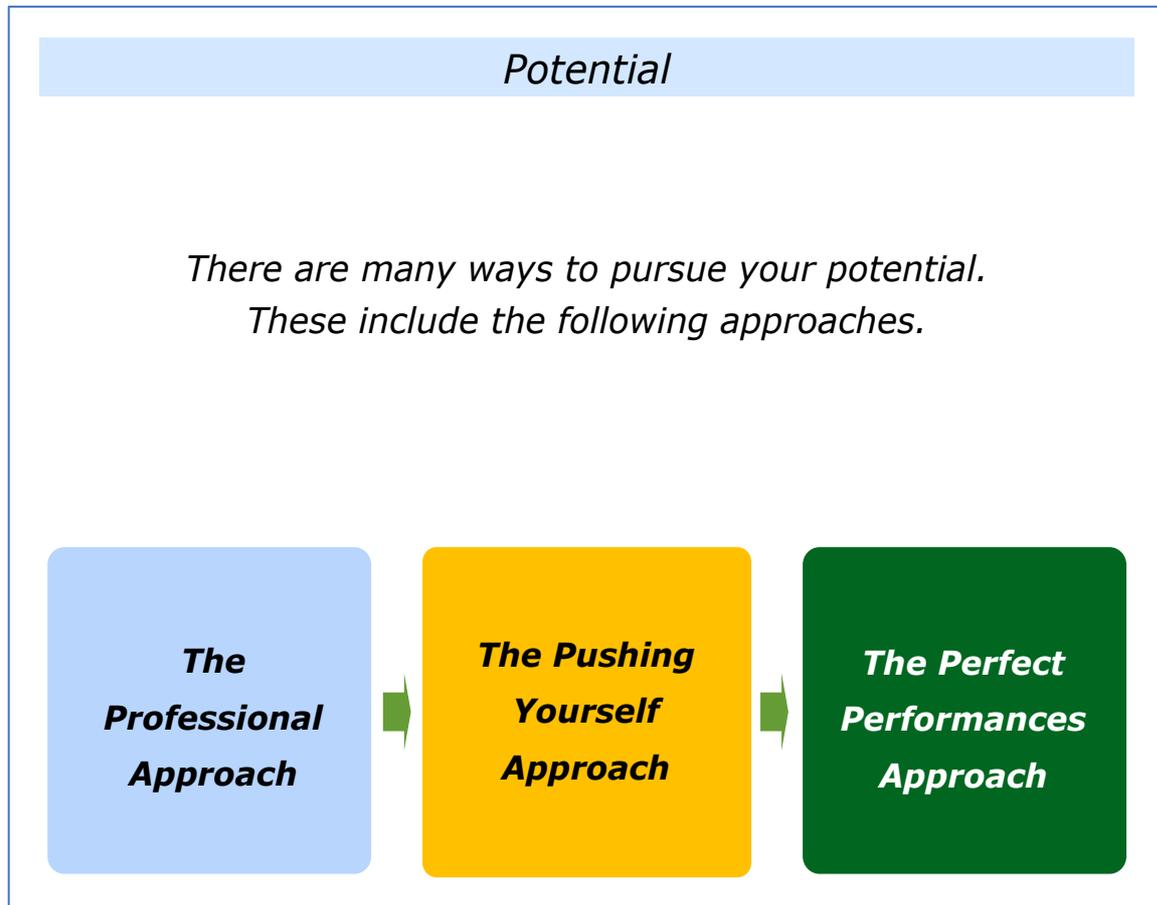
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

Potential



Different people choose different ways to pursue their potential. They may follow the professional approach, the pushing themselves approach or the perfect performances approach.

The Professional 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 delivered high professional standards in a similar situation in the past;

To clarify the principles they followed then – and how they translated these into action - to high professional standards;

To clarify the specific things they can do to follow similar principles – plus add other skills – to deliver high professional standards 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 Pushing Yourself To Expand Your Comfort Zone Approach

This approach starts by putting yourself into situations where you feel comfortable and deliver positive results. It is then to do consistently superb work and sometimes to add that touch of class. The next step may be to expand your comfort zone. Let's explore these themes.

The first step is to put yourself into situations where you feel comfortable and do superb work. This often involves focusing on where you are able:

To play to your strengths – such as to doing what you do best;

To put yourself into places where you can perform superbly – such as the specific situations where you work best.

To produce success – such as doing your best to find solutions to certain challenges and delivering success.

Great workers often do work where they feel in their element - at ease and yet able to excel. They put themselves into places where they feel comfortable and have the competence to perform superbly.

Great musicians, for example, may begin by experimenting with many instruments. They may then settle on their chosen instrument and repertoire.

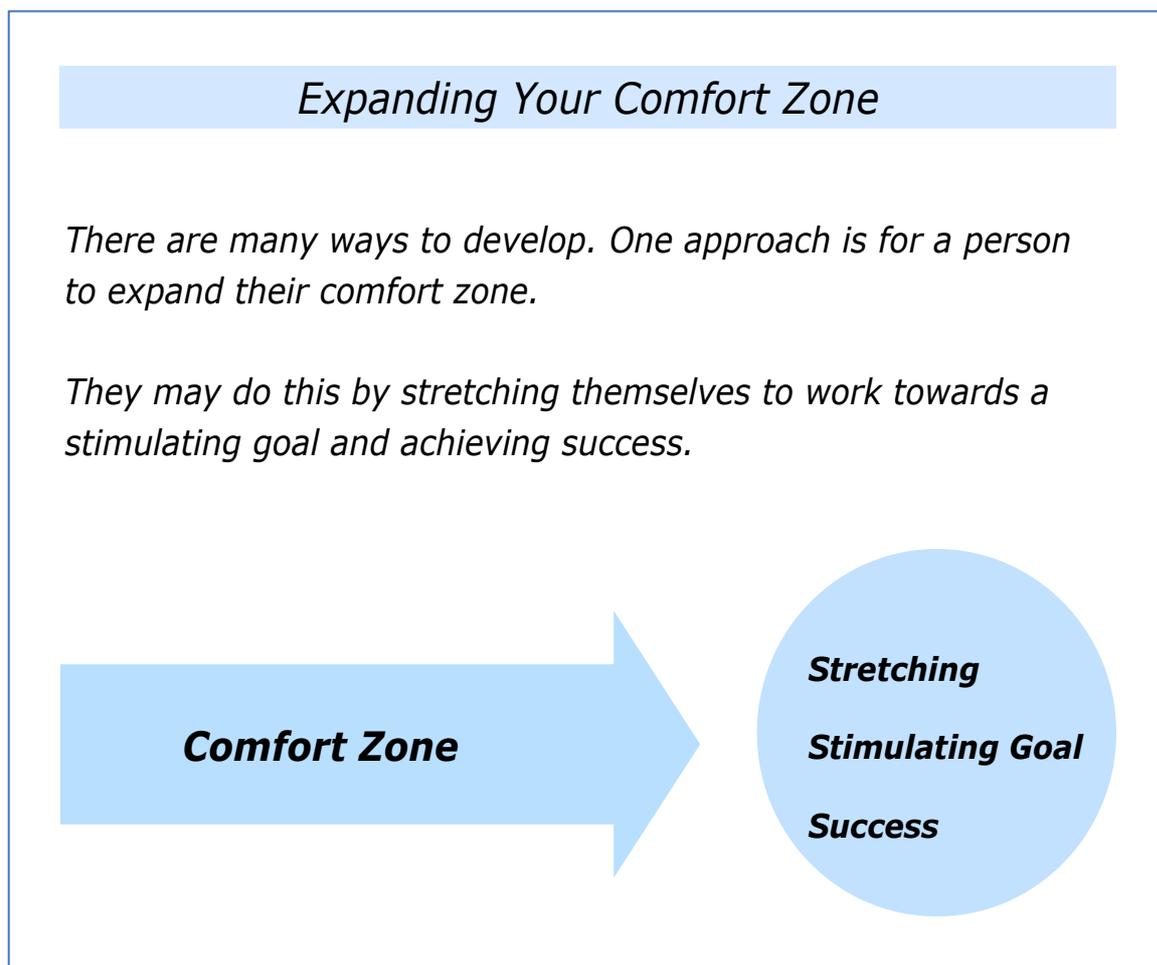
Such a musician may also focus on their chosen target audience – the kinds of people who appreciate their music. They may then develop their skills and aim to become the best musician they can be.

Great footballers may start by playing many different sports during their childhood. They may opt to pursue football and try playing in many different positions. They may then settle on a position where they feel in control and perform superbly. They may then aim to be the best they can be in that position.

Sometimes a person can develop by expanding their comfort zone. But we need to be clear on what this means. Many people urge others to behave in a certain way by saying:

"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 doing boring work sitting at a desk?

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 build on and expand their comfort zone. The novice mountaineer stretches themselves by climbing increasingly difficult mountains.

They do not immediately move from tackling small climbs to scaling Everest. Certainly they would be out of their comfort zone – and they may succeed – but it is more likely to end in tragedy.



Let's explore how expanding your comfort zone works in practice. Imagine that a person has decided to improve their wellbeing by taking up running.

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.

The person may choose instead to start by walking and jogging for short distances. They will then 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.

Imagine that you want to follow this approach in your own way. It may be useful to focus on the following themes.

Stretching Yourself

You can choose a specific activity in which you want to stretch yourself. It can also be good to clarify the reasons why you want to stretch yourself in this activity.

Stimulating Goal

You can set a stimulating goal that you want to achieve in this activity. It should be one where, providing you do your best, you have a good chance of success.

Success

You can plan ahead, prepare properly and rehearse following your chosen principles when doing the activity. It will then be time to do superb work, keep improving and do your best to achieve success.

There is another approach to expanding comfort zones. Sports coaches, for example, talk about the idea of helping athletes to get used to positive discomfort.

This can involve doing new things, changing routine or dealing with challenging situations. Such coaches throw the occasional curve ball during practice. This could be a new experience, a surprise or a challenge.

The athletes can then learn to adapt, make decisions and perform at their best. This can help them to expand the situations in which they feel comfortable.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of an activity where you may want to expand your comfort zone?

How can you do this in your own way? How can you stretch yourself by setting a stimulating goal and working to achieve success? Let's explore another approach for performing to your potential.

Expanding Your Comfort Zone By Following The One Chance Approach

One Chance

People who take this approach often have a positive rather than negative attitude. They may prepare properly for a specific event, however, by saying something along the following lines.

You have one chance:

- *To do your best;*
- *To follow your disciplines;*
- *To do something special and deliver the goods.*

This is an approach used by some individuals who want to do their best in certain situations. They may be helping a person, playing a sport, doing a creative project, performing on stage, tackling a crisis or doing another activity.

Such individuals frame an event as having just the one chance to do their best. They do have a positive attitude, however, when looking forward to the event. They use the approach to prepare properly and follow certain principles in the situation. They may then say to themselves:

You have one chance:

To do your best ... To follow your disciplines ... To do something special and deliver the goods.

People who follow this approach often embody a paradox. They find that doing so enables them to be relaxed rather than tense. After preparing properly, they go into the situation and aim:

To be positively engaged and fully present;

To pursue their principles rather than worry the prize;

To do their best to achieve peak performance.

Different people follow the one chance approach in different ways. Here is one example from sports. Some of these principles, however, can be applied in other areas of life.

Jamie Ward-Prowse is recognised as being brilliant at scoring goals from free kicks in football. His approach to practice is different from David Beckham's, however, who was also renowned for scoring from free kicks.

Here is an excerpt from a piece written by Daniel Storey for the *inews* website that highlights the difference. It can be worth considering whether you can apply these principles in any area of your life or work.

The biggest difference between James Ward-Prowse's approach to free-kicks and David Beckham's, according to Ward-Prowse himself, is not in the curl, the power or the percentage that go on target, but the practice.

Beckham would famously practice his set pieces repeatedly after training, staying behind with a bag of balls and a youth-team goalkeeper.

Ward-Prowse is proudly different. If practice usually makes perfect, he believes in an alternative method.

Once you have the ability to curl the ball beyond a goalkeeper's reach, it's all about making sure you peak at the right moment.

Take 50 free kicks in training, and it doesn't really matter how many you score.

Take far fewer, and you can better recreate the pressure of a match situation. Ward-Prowse explains this in the following way.

"At the start I would take 12 to 14; not every day, but twice a week. Now I'm more into taking six to eight, just once a week.

"I'm trying to recreate the pressure of a game because you don't get too many opportunities. If I can limit the amount I take and put pressure on those, it works better.

"To be honest, I don't even look too much at the goalkeeper or the wall. It's more about my process in terms of being able to deliver that."

The magnitude of the situation doesn't matter and it's never just a friendly in a World Cup year. No wall, no goalkeeper, nobody else. Just Ward-Prowse. and a ball.

Everybody is different. David Beckham's approach worked for him, whilst Jamie Ward- Prowse's approach works for him.

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 one chance approach?

You may apply this mentality when running a mentoring session, helping a customer, leading a team, tackling a challenge or doing another activity. What can you then do to make the most of the opportunity?

How can you prepare properly? How can you click into action and be positively engaged? How can you follow your chosen principles? How can you do your best to achieve peak performance?

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

The One Chance Approach

*The specific situation where
I may follow elements of the
one chance approach may be:*

*

*The specific things I can do to
follow elements of this approach are:*

*

*

*

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

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*

*

The Perfect Performances Approach

Perfect Performances

Some people follow this approach that embraces a paradox. They aim to produce perfect performances but know they will seldom achieve these aims.

The paradox is that some people find this approach liberating. They then aim to have a positive attitude, follow their principles and do their best to achieve perfect performances.



Some people follow this approach that embraces a paradox. They aim to produce perfect performances but know they will seldom achieve these aims.

The paradox is that some people find this approach liberating. They aim to do their personal best when doing certain kinds of work, performing in the arts, playing a sport or doing another activity.

Such people have a positive attitude to their work. They follow their principles and aim to perform superb work. They then do their best to deliver perfect performances.

The liberating part is simple. They know they may never achieve perfection but they find this uplifting. They recognise that their work is a journey.

They focus on enjoying the journey and aiming to do their best. They also set their own terms regarding the standards they want to deliver on the way towards achieving their goals.

A runner may aim to achieve a time which is their personal best. An artist may work towards achieving their vision. A mentor may aim to help their client to achieve success.

Such people prepare properly before doing a piece of work. They then have a positive approach rather than a neurotic approach when doing the work. They believe in continuous improvement and keep focusing on:

The specific things that are working and how they can do more of these;

The specific things they can do better and how;

Such people are passionate about their work but maintain perspective. They take their work seriously but do not take themselves seriously. They use their strengths to serve something greater than themselves.

One person explained why they found aiming to achieve perfect performances as liberating. They said:

"Some people see striving for perfection as a stopper but I see it as a spur. As the old saying goes, when you've got nothing you've got nothing to lose.

"Similarly, when you realise that you will never achieve perfection you have nothing to lose. You can then enjoy the journey when aiming to do your best to deliver perfect performances."

Let's return to your own life. 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.

Perfect Performances

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

*

The specific things I can do then 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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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.

Potential

The specific activity in which I would like to pursue my potential is:

*

The specific things I can do to play to my strengths, follow my principles and pursue my potential 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 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. They have the desire and discipline to do their best.



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 specific goals they wanted to achieve;

The specific strategies they could follow to achieve the goals;

The specific pluses and minuses involved in working to achieve the goals.

The following pages describe the exercises that people did. They then clarified whether they were prepared to do their best to work towards achieving the goals.

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:

*

*

*

The potential minuses involved in working towards and achieving the goals may be:

*

*

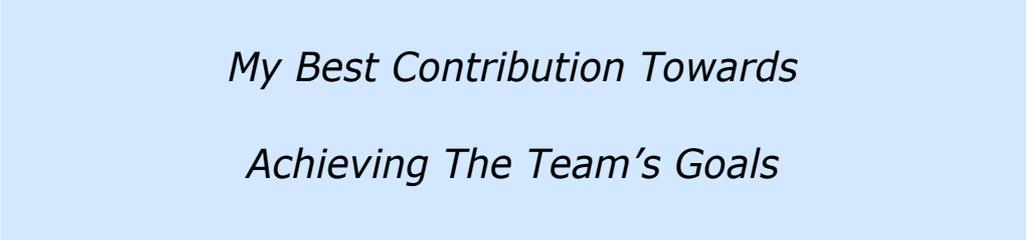
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The crew members explored these themes. Bearing in mind the tough conditions – such as storms in the Southern Ocean – it was important to explore the potential pluses and minuses involved.

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 ...*

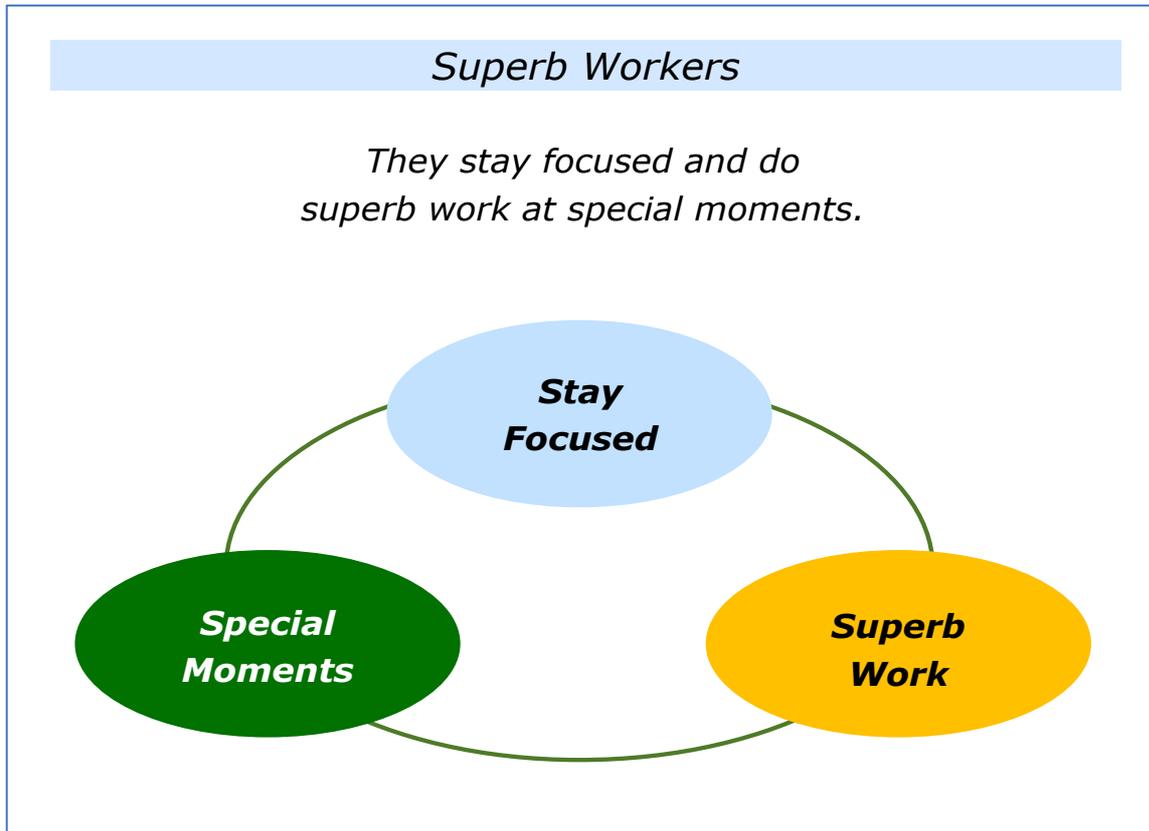
For example ...

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?

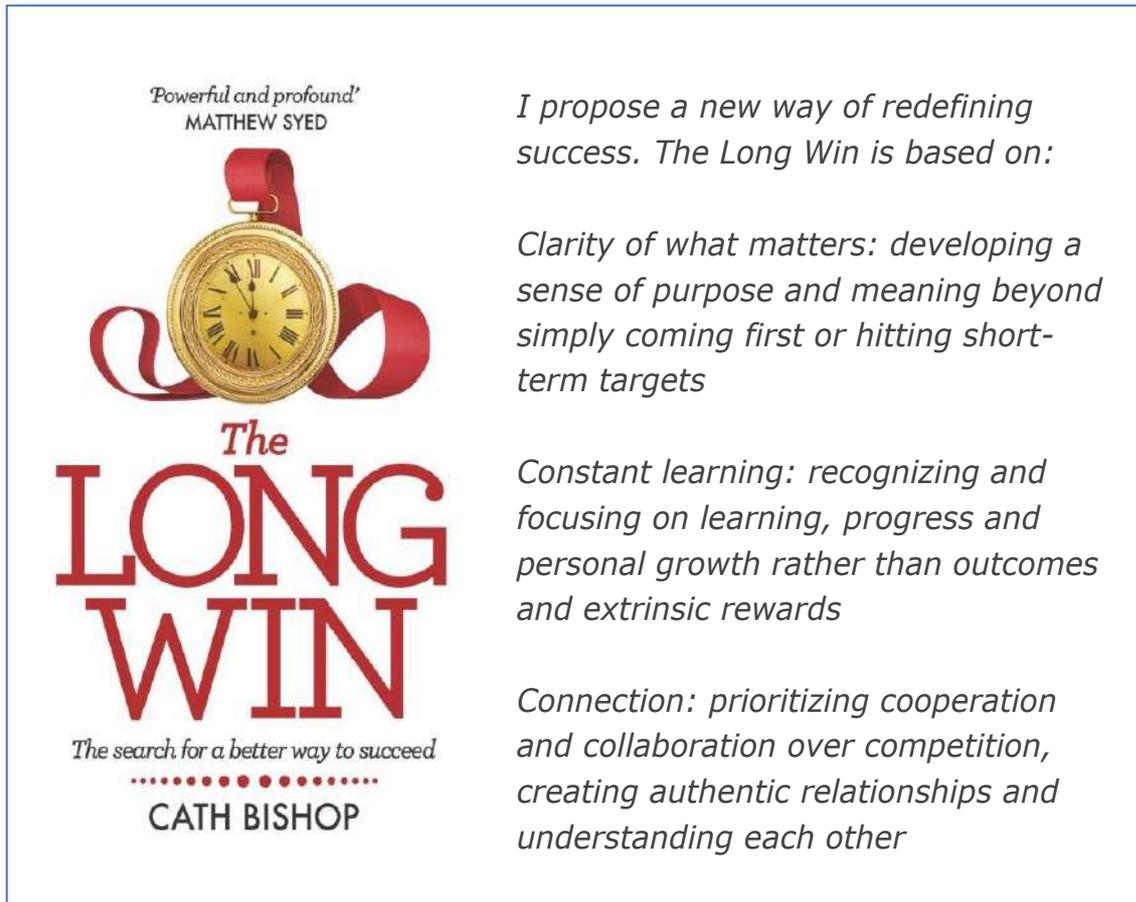
Isn't success about changing the world for the better in some way, whether through providing a better world-class service to its customers, creating a new and better product or having an impact that improves the environment and society around it?

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.



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.

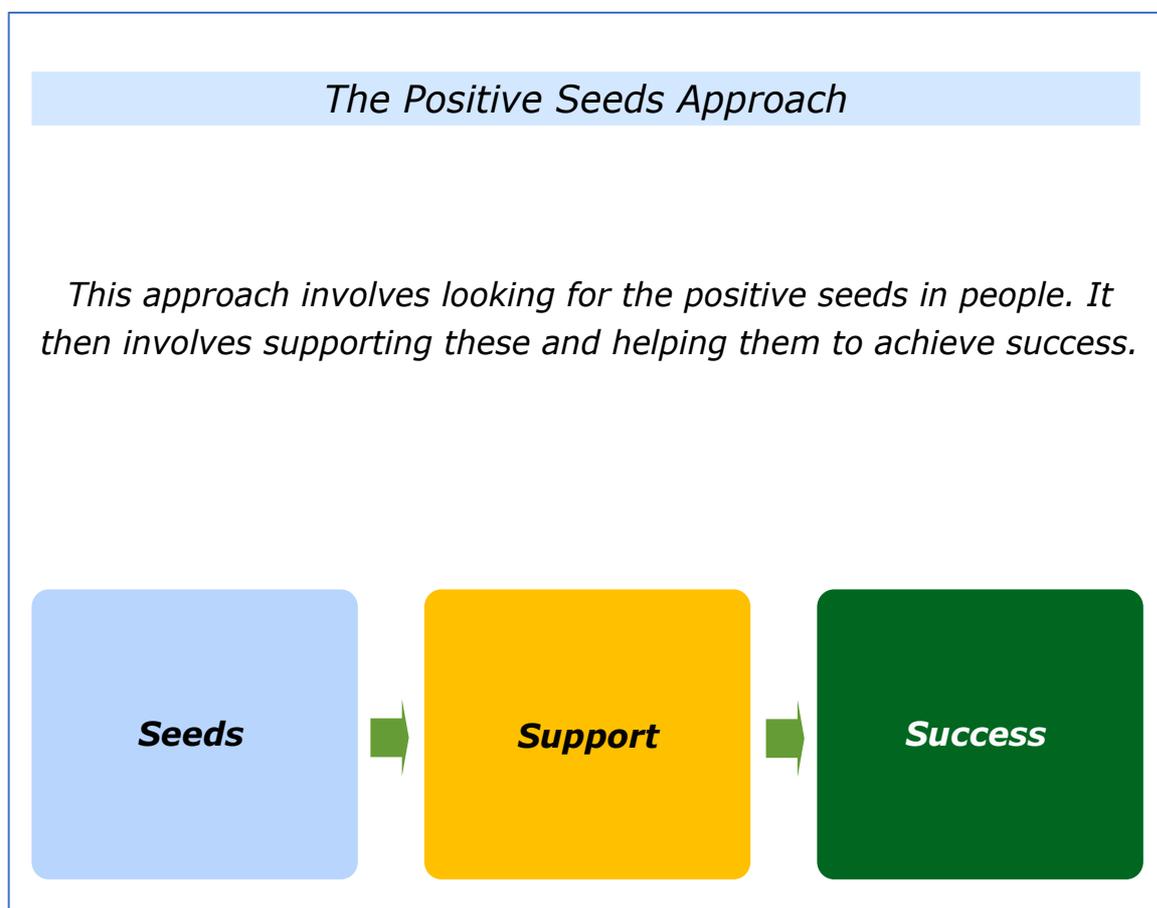
The organic approach believes that many people already have inner strengths and successful patterns. They can build on these – plus add other skills – to achieve their picture of success.

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.

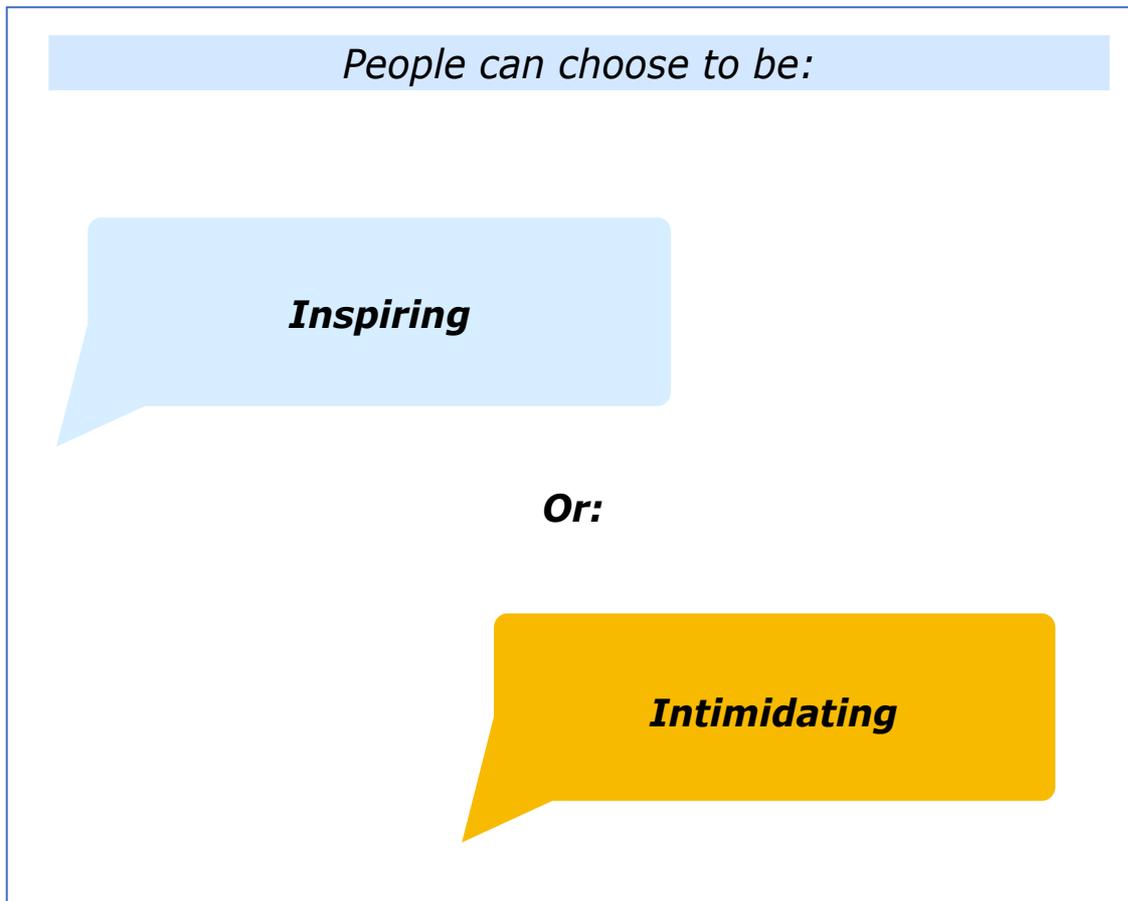
People are often more open if they are offered specific things they can add to their repertoires. They then have more practical tools they can use to achieve their goals.

Some people call this the positive seeds approach. It involves looking for the positive seeds in people. It then involves supporting these and helping them to achieve success.



The Organic Development Approach In Action

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.

The Channelling Your Character Approach

A person can sometimes develop by focusing on:

**Channelling
Their Character**

Rather than:

**Changing
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:

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*

*

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:

*

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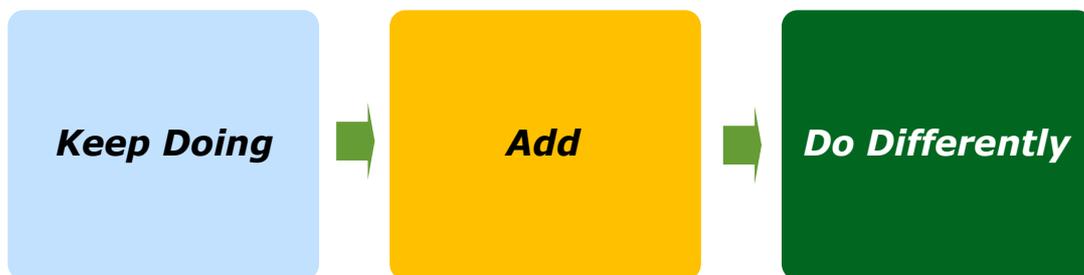
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The Keep, Add And Do Differently Approach

Keep, Add And Do Differently

This approach starts by communicating the future goals and the benefits of achieving the picture of success.

It then invites people to suggest the things that they believe it can be useful to keep doing, to add and to do differently to achieve the picture of success.



This is an approach that can help people and teams to develop rather than telling them they have to change. It also gives them some ownership in working towards the aims.

The approach starts by communicating the big picture and giving people the context. It then involves describing the strategy for moving forwards and the benefits of achieving the future picture of success.

It is important to share this information in a way that enables people to see the reasons for pursuing the future strategy. Imagine that you have taken this step and people are prepared to contribute towards achieving the goals.

The next step is to invite people to suggest ideas that will help them and the organisation to achieve these aims. Invite each person to write their suggestions on Post-it Notes under the following headings.

Keep Doing

They are to write what they believe their team or the organisation needs to keep doing in order to achieve future goals.

Add

They are to write what they believe their team or the organisation may need to add in order to achieve the future goals.

Do Differently

They are to write what they believe their team or the organisation may need to consider doing differently in order to achieve the future goals.

People can write as many ideas as they wish under each category. It is good if they can write one idea per Post-it, because this makes the ideas easier to collate afterwards.

Give people at least fifteen minutes to write their Post-its. They can then be invited to go up in turn and put their ideas under the relevant headings. They can also explain their reasons for each idea.

After all the ideas have been added, you may want to discuss some of the themes that have emerged. The ideas can then be collated and shared back with people.

It will be important to describe how some of the ideas are going to be implemented. Plus, if appropriate, the support that people will be given to enable them to achieve the aims.

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? Here is an exercise on this theme.

The Keep, Add And Do Differently Approach

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

*

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

*

*

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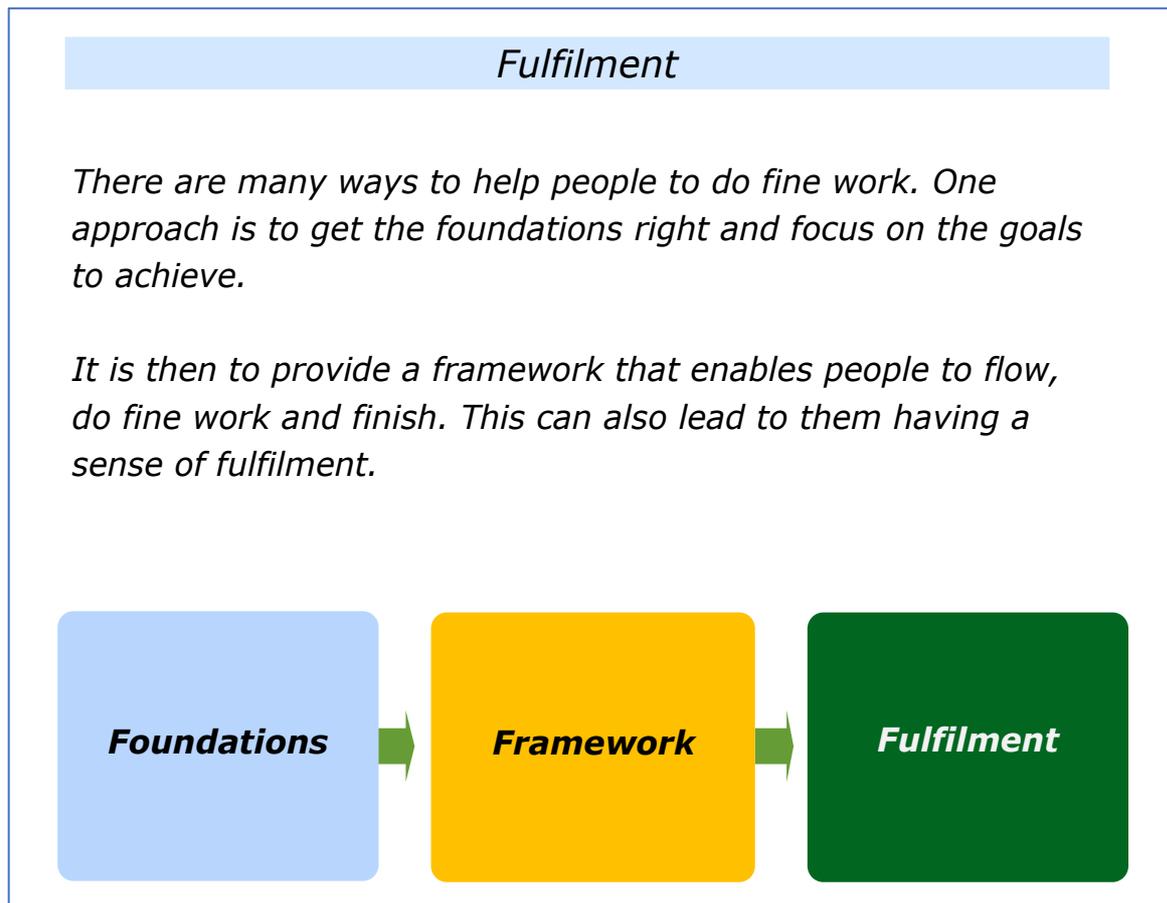
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

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The Foundations, Framework And Fulfilment Approach



There are many ways to help people, teams and organisations to do fulfilling work. One approach is to get foundations right and then provide a framework that enables people to do fine work and find fulfilment.

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.

One approach is clarify the teams strengths. Bearing these in mind, you can clarify the specific goals the team can achieve that may lead to people having a sense of fulfilment. You can then later translate these into a clear picture of success.

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

The Team's Goals

The specific team I lead is:

*

The specific strengths of the team are:

*

*

*

*The specific goals I believe we can
achieve that may also lead to people
having a sense of fulfilment are:*

*

*

*

Foundations

Imagine that you have clarified the team's aims. It will be important to build on solid foundations and also ensure people keep focusing on the team's goals. Let's explore these themes.

Foundations

Good leaders start by getting the foundations right. They are positive, predictable and create a positive environment in which motivated people can achieve peak performance.

The foundations to put in place will obviously depend on the kind of work the team is doing. Whatever the work, however, it will be important:

To get the physical things right – such as providing a good environment in which people can flourish;

To get the practical things right – such as providing people with the tools they need to do the job;

To get the psychological things right – such as providing people with the support they need to do fine work.

Getting the basics right also calls for implementing the right strategy with the right people in the right way. This leads to the next stage.

Focus

Good leaders encourage people to focus on the team's goals. They sometimes do this taking the following steps.

They give people the big picture and explain the team's purpose, principles and picture of success.

They give people the chance to reflect and decide if they want to contribute towards achieving the picture of success;

To make clear contracts with each person about their best contributions towards achieving the picture of success.

The Picture of Success

*The specific goals we
want to achieve by ... are:*

1) To

For example ...

2) To

For example ...

3) To ...

For example ...

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.

Such leaders then manage by outcomes rather by tasks. They make clear contracts with each person about the outcomes they will deliver. They then encourage and enable them to deliver their contributions towards achieving the goals.

Let's assume that you have taken these steps with your team. It can then be time to move on to the next stage.

Framework

Different leaders follow different frameworks to help people to channel their talents towards reaching the goals. Let's explore one approach.

Flow

Some leaders aim to create an environment where people can flow and do fine work. They may do this by encouraging people to play to their strengths, perform superb work and do their best to achieve success.

Imagine that you have communicated the team's purpose, principles and picture of success. You have also given people the chance to opt in to making their best contribution.

The next stage will be to follow a framework that you can use to encourage people to perform at their best. Here are some of the approaches you may take to make this happen. You may aim:

To make sure the team is following the right strategy with the right people in the right places;

To put people in the places where they are more likely to flow, focus and do fine work;

To enable people to build on their strengths, perform superb work and deliver success.

Good leaders then encourage people to focus on the team's goals and do fine work. Let's explore this step.

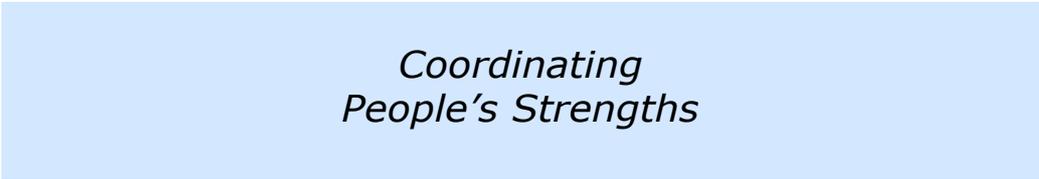
Fine Work

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 and do fine work.

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.



*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>	As. <i>The specific activities in which they deliver As are:</i>	Bs. <i>The specific activities in which they deliver Bs are:</i>	Cs. <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>	As. <i>The specific activities in which they deliver As are:</i>	Bs. <i>The specific activities in which they deliver Bs are:</i>	Cs. <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>	As. <i>The specific activities in which they deliver As are:</i>	Bs. <i>The specific activities in which they deliver Bs are:</i>	Cs. <i>The specific activities in which they deliver Cs are:</i>
<i>Person G</i>	* * *	* * *	* * *
<i>Person H</i>	* * *	* * *	* * *
<i>Person I</i>	* * *	* * *	* * *

Imagine that you are ensuring that 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 encouraging people:

To keep following the team's principles and perform superb work;

To build on their strengths, manage the consequences of any weaknesses and make their best contributions;

To find solutions to challenges and keep working towards the picture of success.

Good leaders 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.

Let's assume you are taking these steps. It can then be time to focus on the next stage.

Fulfilment

Good leaders do their best to enable people to finish and find fulfilment. Let's explore these steps.

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

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 rehearsing 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

Invite the team to brainstorm 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 their personal or professional goals. They may also 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.

There are many models for building superb teams. One approach is to start by getting the foundations right. It is then to encourage people to follow a framework that enables them to do fine work and find fulfilment.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you 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 Foundations, Framework And Fulfilment Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

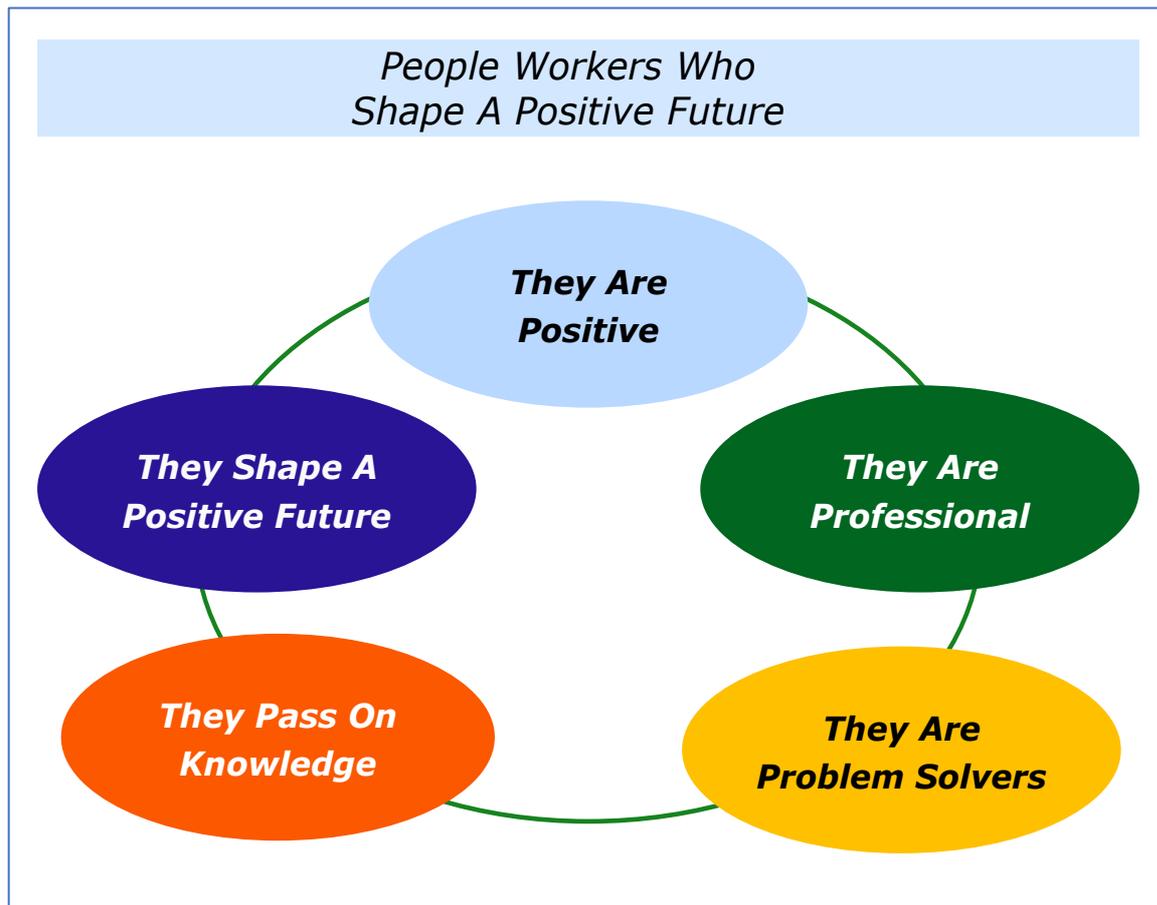
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

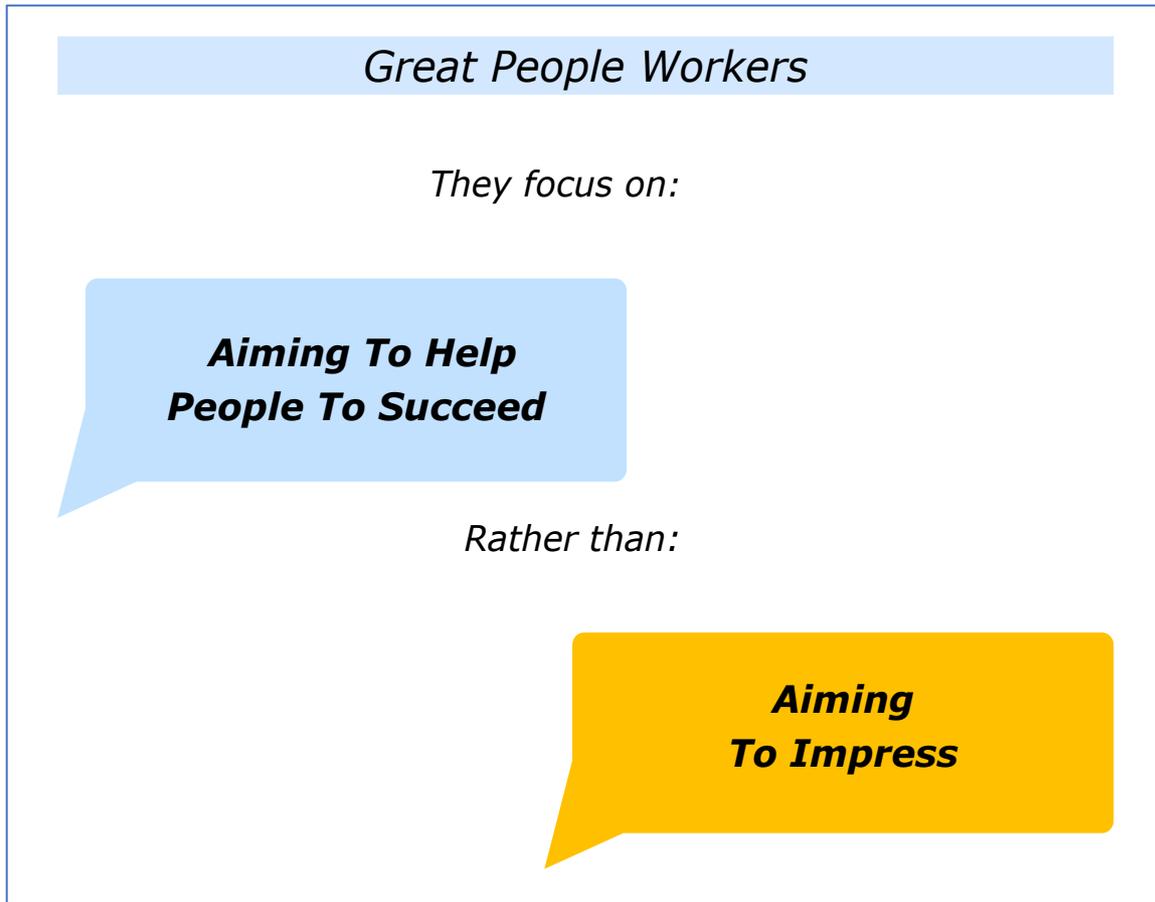
The People Worker Approach



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 aim to help people to succeed rather than 'promote their personal brand'.

They believe the work is about helping other people. It is not about them. This can have an interesting side-effect. Aiming to inspire people – rather than trying to impress – can sometimes also be impressive.

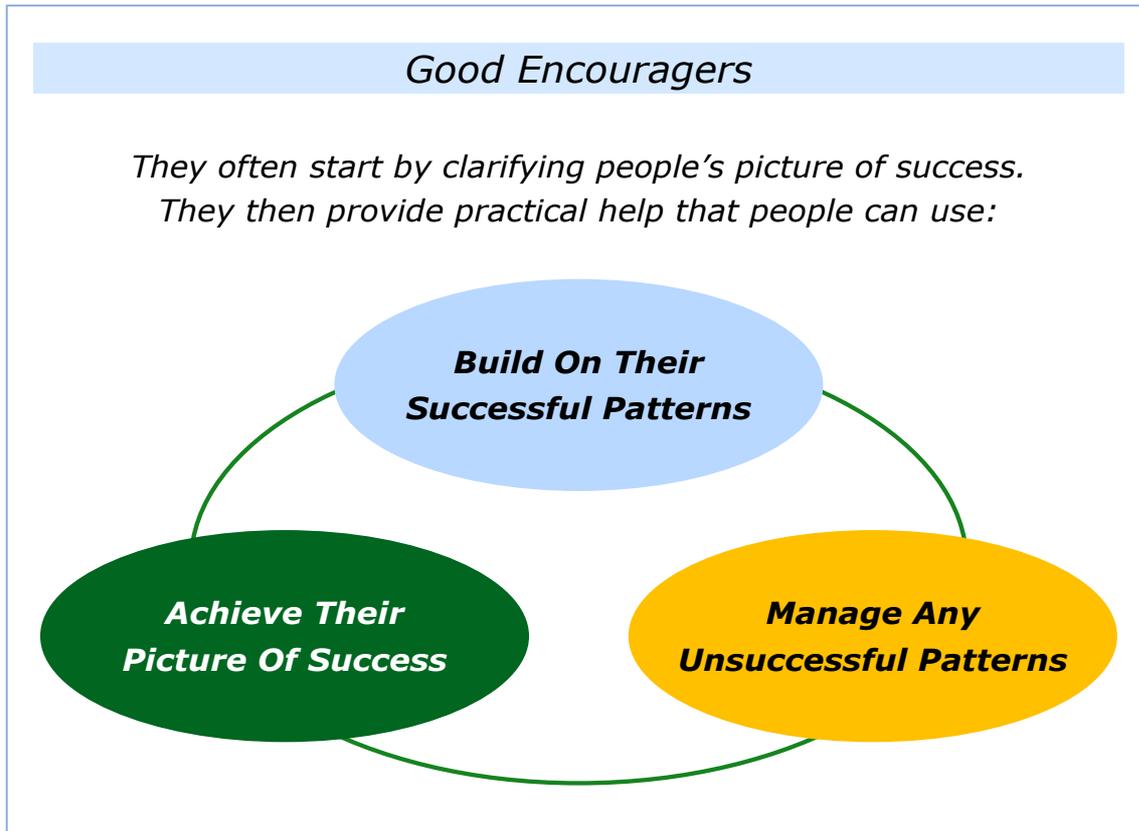


The following pages describe some of the principles followed by people workers. These includes examples of people I have known. It also invites you to explore your own approach to translating these principles into action.

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.

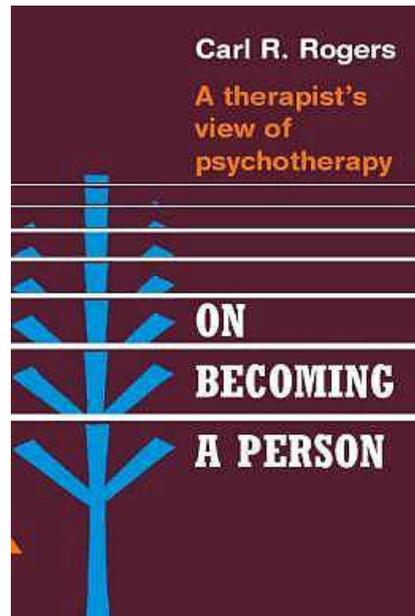
If the drive is frustrated, the person may experience difficulties - some of which might be displayed in various symptoms.

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 they old saying goes:

You never forget a good teacher.

Henry Pluckrose was such a person. He was 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.

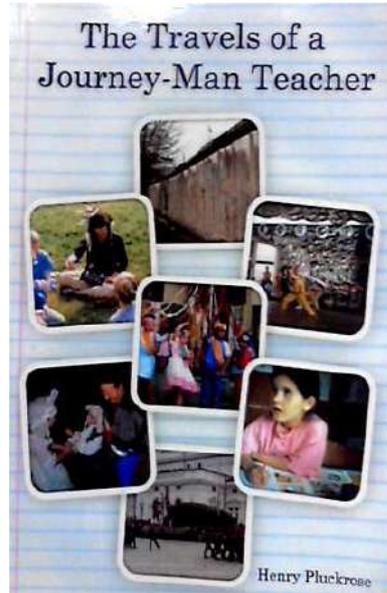
Henry Pluckrose Writing About Schools

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 21st 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

The Professional Approach

Many people workers aim to demonstrate the following characteristics. They aim to be:

- *Positive*

They are positive and also good at reading reality.

- *Personable*

They are personable and also focus on the person they are helping.

- *Professional*

They are professional and help people to achieve their goals.

Many people workers have a positive attitude but are also good at reading reality. They are personable and person-centred. They focus on the person in front of them and make them the centre of their world. They then use their professional skills to help the person to achieve their goals.

Good people workers 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.*

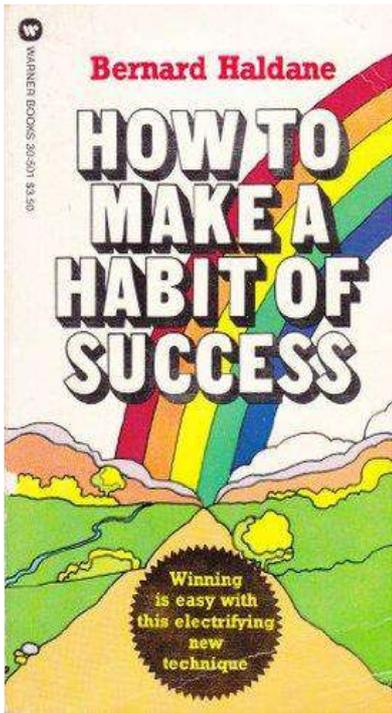
"As early as 1962, Bernard wrote: 'Seventy percent of all beginning jobs today are obtained through personal contacts with an employer or through friends.'

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 Great Experiences used to complete the Exploration Chart on the 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>Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on how your strengths shape your academic and career path • Include your strengths in your resume, LinkedIn profile summary or other online media • Practice integrating strengths into your elevator pitch and interviews • Talk about your strengths with a career counselor, advisor, or mentor • Explore the online WOS strengths activity for additional career implications at suck.org

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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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.

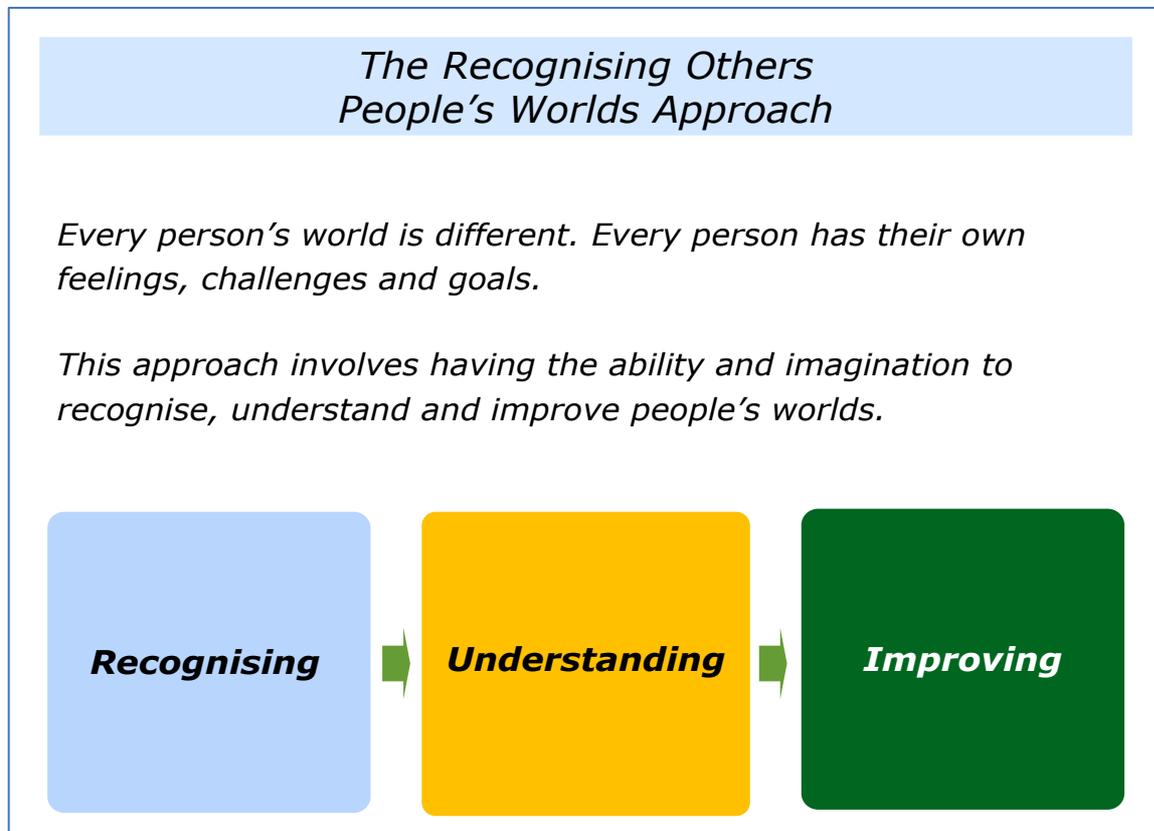
One key point to remember regarding the outcomes approach. It is important to clarify the specific things that people want to achieve on:

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.



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.

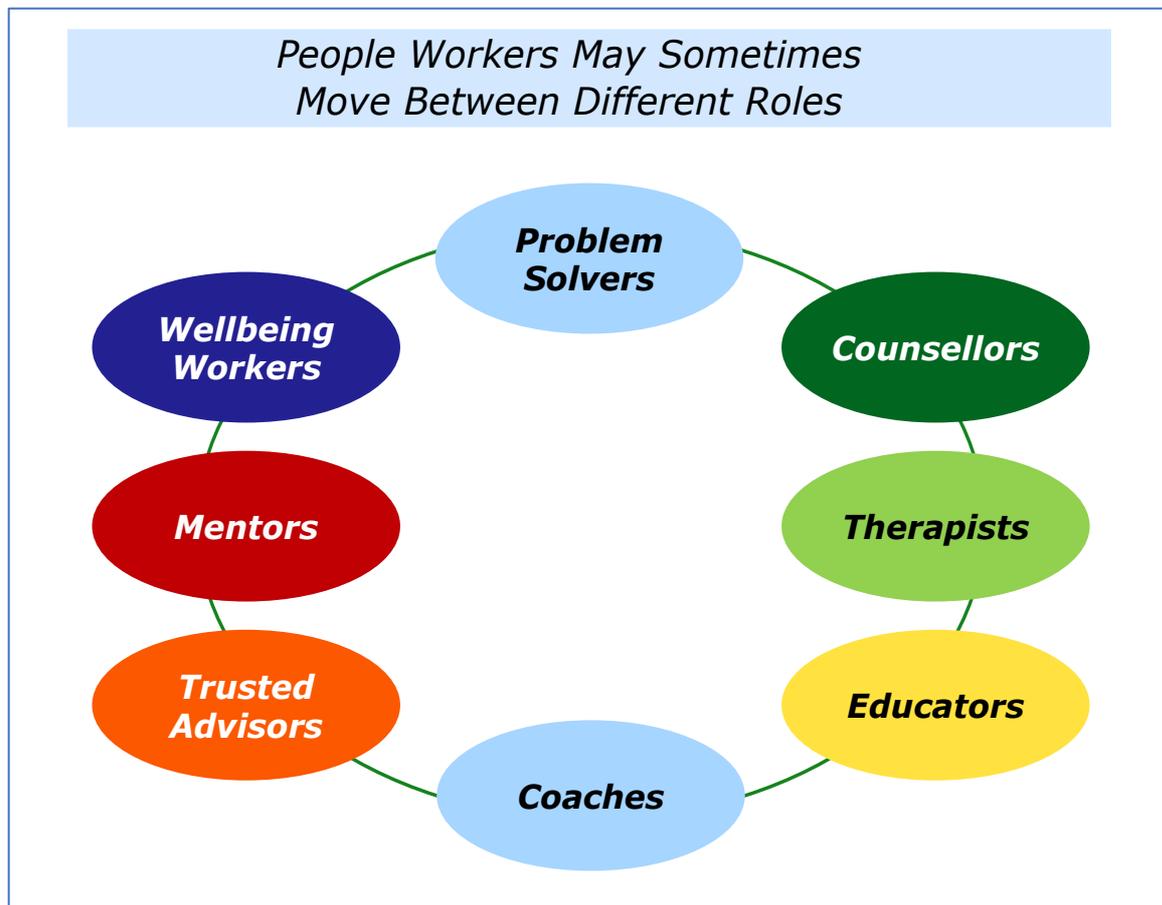
Some simply act as good models and show how to behave in positive ways. Some pass on knowledge in their professional role. They may act as a counsellor, educator, coach, mentor, trusted advisor or in another role.

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 Practice

The educator describes or demonstrates what is considered to be the correct practice.

Copying The Correct Practice

The student copies this approach and aims to emulate what is considered to be the correct practice.

Achieving The Correct Practice

The student continues to work until the educator considers that they have demonstrated the correct practice.

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 Practice

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 practice. 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 Practice

This stage involves the student aiming to emulate what is considered to be the correct practice. 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 Practice

The student continues to work until they have achieved what the educator considers to be correct practice. 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 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:*

*

*

*

*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.

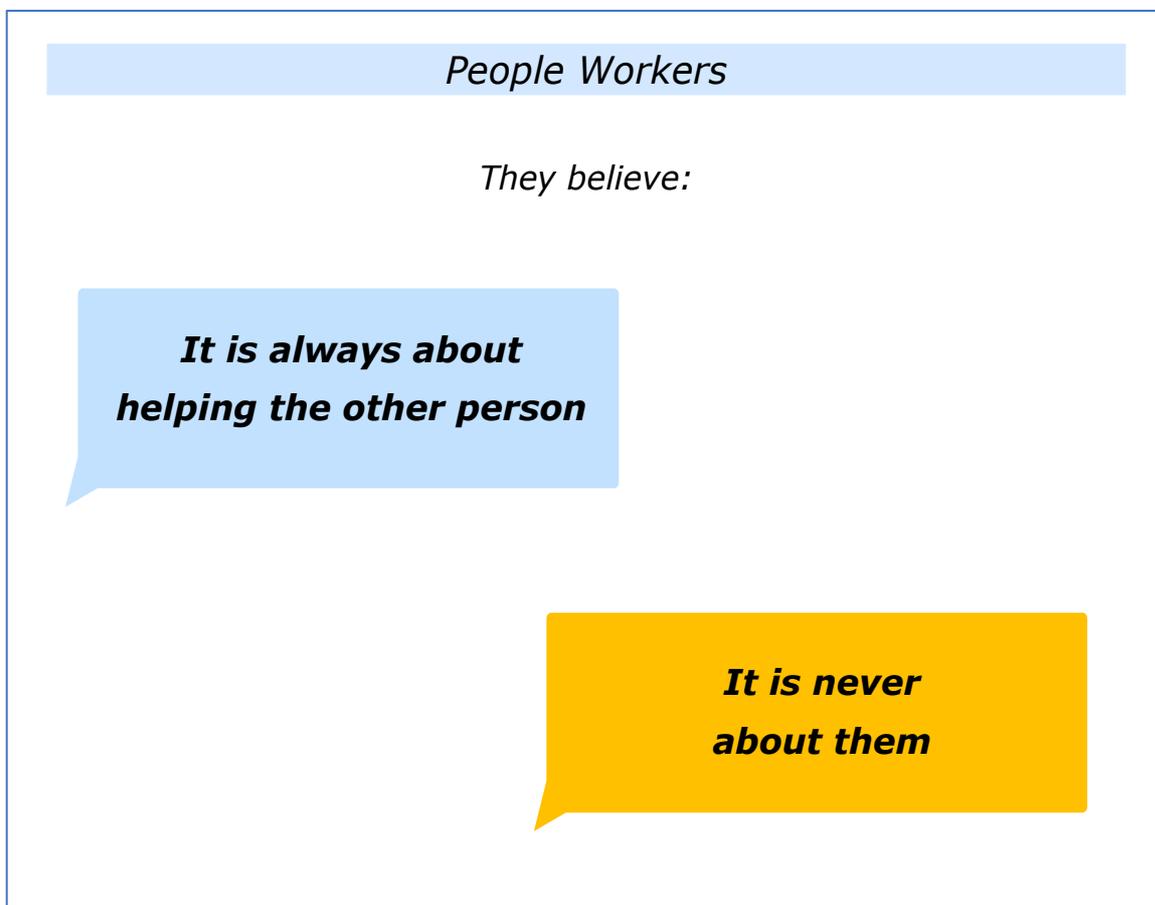
The reasons I went into this kind of work were because I wanted:

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.



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?

Let's explore another approach that some people workers take. Such individuals love to give to others. They also follow certain guidelines, however, on the ways towards helping people to grow. Let's consider this approach.

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

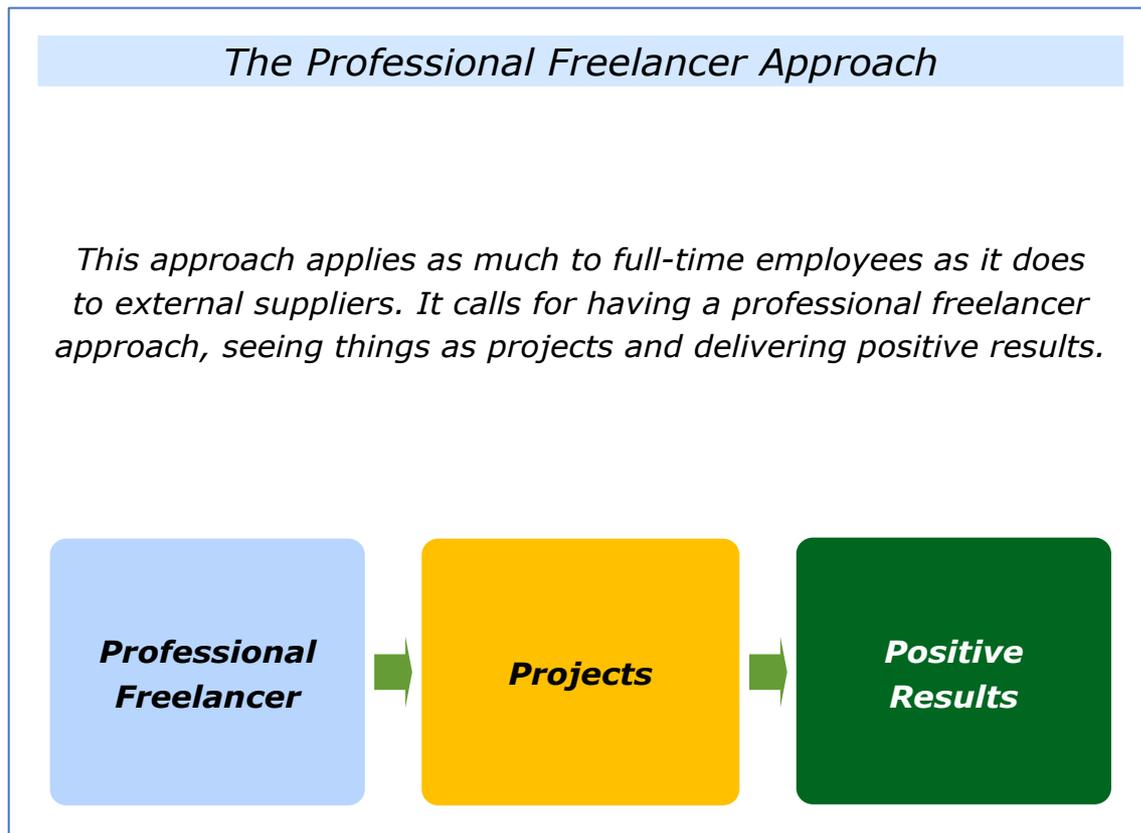
The specific things I can do to maintain or improve the rating are:

*

*

*

The Professional Freelancer Approach



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 have a strong service ethic and use their strengths to help other people to succeed. They recognise that the world of work has changed, but there will always be lots of projects.

- *They therefore aim to play to their strengths, find or create satisfying projects and make clear contracts with the stakeholders.*
- *They get some early successes, behave in a positive and professional way, keep people informed about their progress and perform superb work.*
- *They deliver positive results, help all the stakeholders to achieve success – sometimes adding that touch of class - and find or create the next satisfying project.*

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 you are on a rolling contract and that, in order for it to be extended, it has to be signed off by the key stakeholders every three months. If this was the case:

● *How would you behave towards your colleagues, customers and the key stakeholders? Looking at your present work, what would you continue to do? What would you add or do differently?*

● *How would you aim to give great service? How would you encourage people? How would you deliver successes? How would you proactively keep the stakeholders informed about the progress towards achieving the agreed goals?*

● *How can you do these things? How can you encourage people and deliver successes? How can you 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 ...*

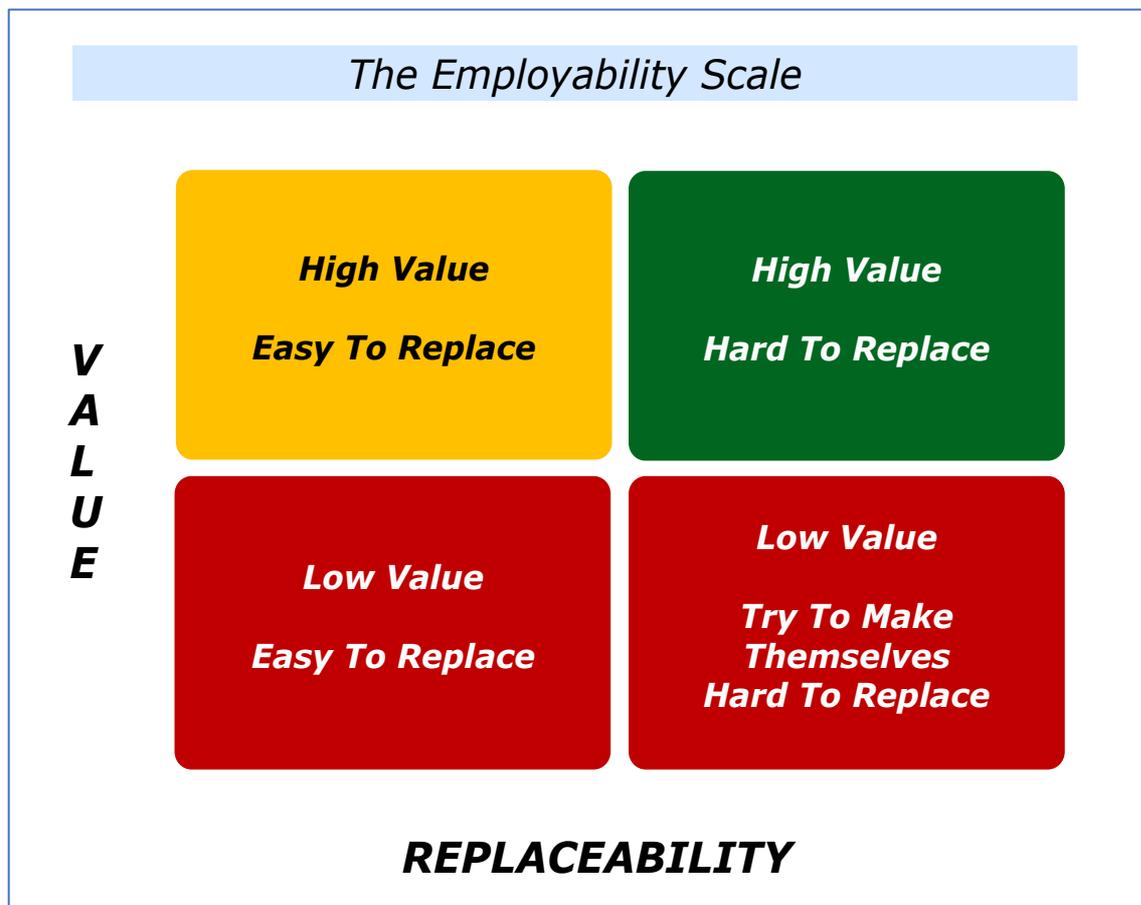
* *We would ...*

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.

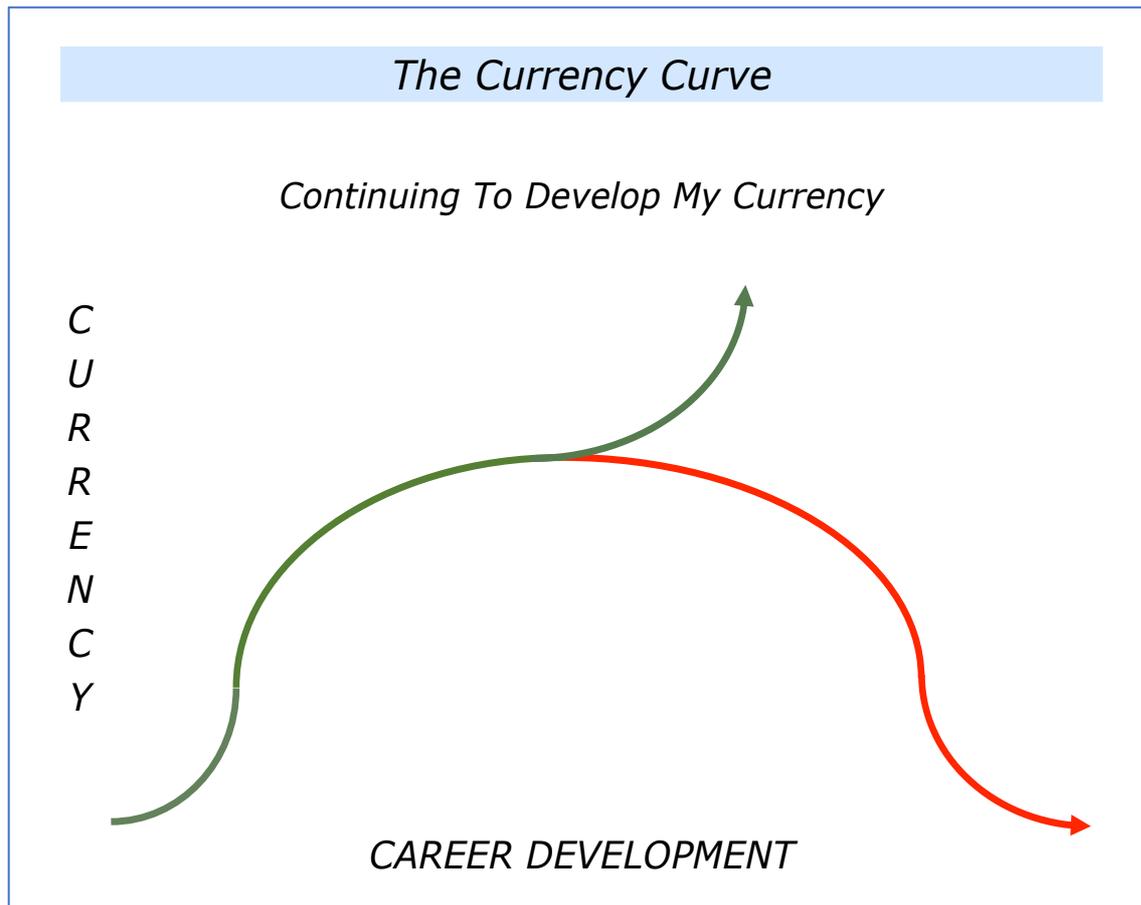
The second part highlights something that seems counter-intuitive. Great workers often make themselves valuable by giving away their knowledge rather than by hoarding trade secrets.

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.

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 inside, 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:

*

*

Builders. The specific things I can do to communicate with the builders are:

*

*

Craftsmen. The specific things I can do to communicate with the craftsmen are:

*

*

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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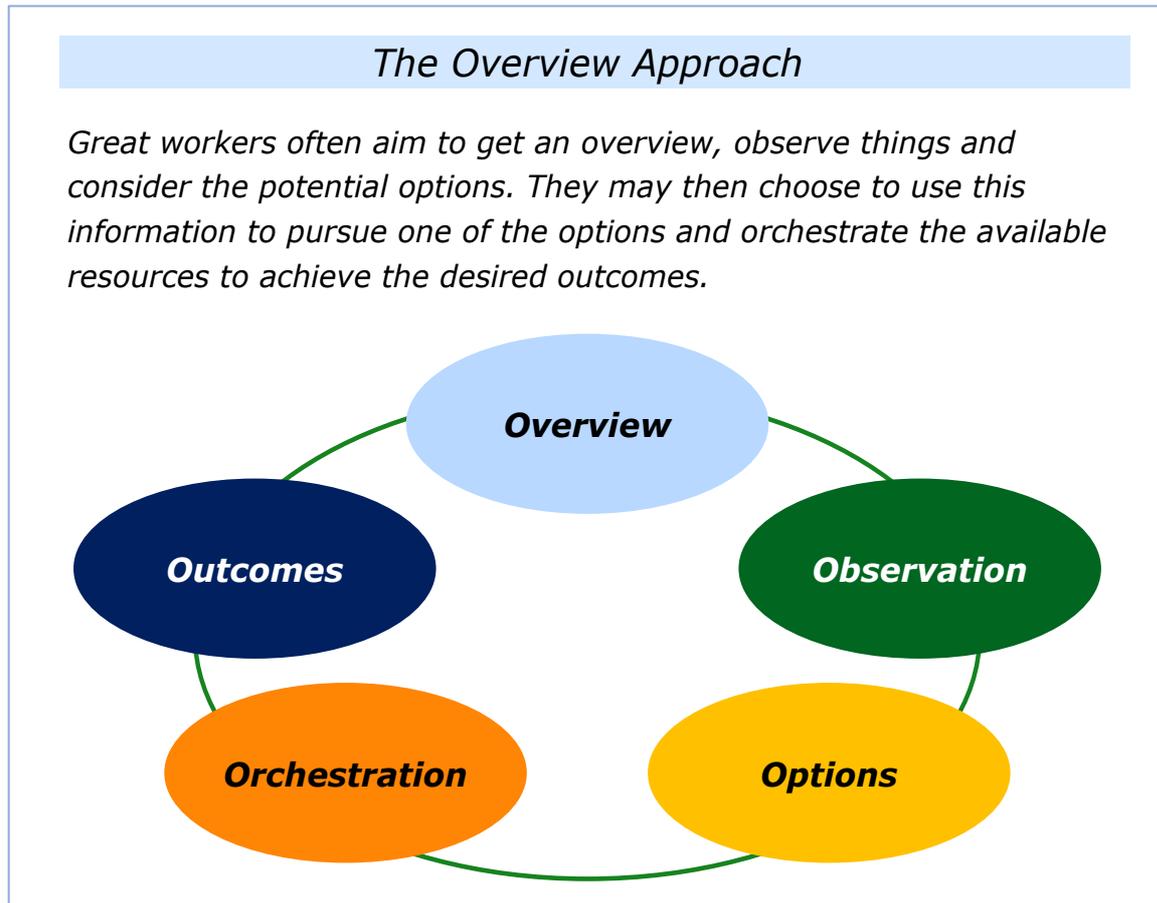
*The specific things I can do
to find or create potential
future work opportunities are:*

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*

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The Overview Approach



Great workers are good at getting an overview of events in their area of expertise. They aim to gather information, observe things and see the big picture. They then explore the potential options for going forwards.

Such workers may choose to pursue one of the options and translate their chosen strategy into action. They may then aim to orchestrate the available resources to achieve the desired outcomes.

Great workers sometimes do this by themselves. Sometimes they take a leadership role. They then employ coordinators and experts to do superb work and achieve success.

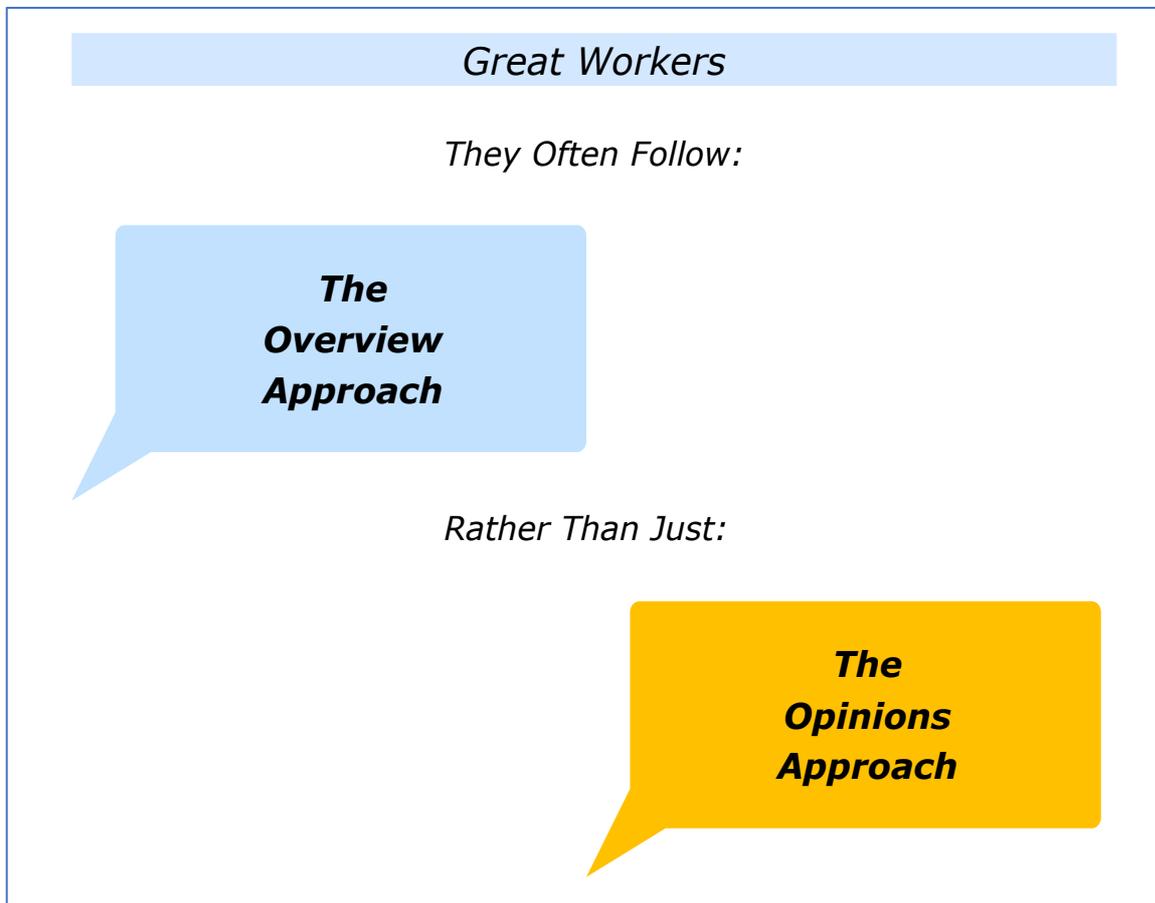
Let's consider some of the steps that such people take to pursue these themes.

Overview

Great workers quickly get an overview of the situation in the specific activities where they excel. They like to gather information, get the big picture and see how things are connected.

Such workers aim to clarify what is happening and consider the potential options for going forwards before then forming an opinion. They take this approach even they may have strong opinions.

Some other people may immediately revert to their opinions. They take that approach rather than getting an overview and exploring the potential options.



Observation

Great workers get an overview by gathering information and also observing what is happening. Such people do this by taking the following steps.

They aim to observe what is actually happening – such as what the people are doing or the actual events that are happening;

They aim to see patterns – both the potentially successful and unsuccessful patterns;

They aim to make sense of what is happening - plus what may potentially happen in the future.

Such workers sometimes seem to hover above a situation and also see things from different angles. Advisors who are asked to help organisations, for example, may aim to look from the outside to see what is happening. This can help them to see patterns.



Options

Great workers observe what is happening. If appropriate, they then clarify the potential options for going forwards. They also clarify the pluses and minuses of each option.

Different workers do this in different situations. They may do it when in some of the following situations.

They may be aiming to make a particular decision;

They may be aiming to achieve a particular goal;

They may be aiming to provide other decision makers with potential options for achieving a particular goal.

Such workers go through a certain process when making decisions. They may take the following approach.

Distancing

Great workers are highly sensitive to what may be happening in their chosen field. Bearing this in mind, they aim to manage their emotions. They may do this when making a tough decision, tackling a crisis or managing a challenge.

Different people employ different ways to distance themselves. 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 this comes with a caveat. It is also important to recognise that the decision they take will affect both their own and other people's emotions.

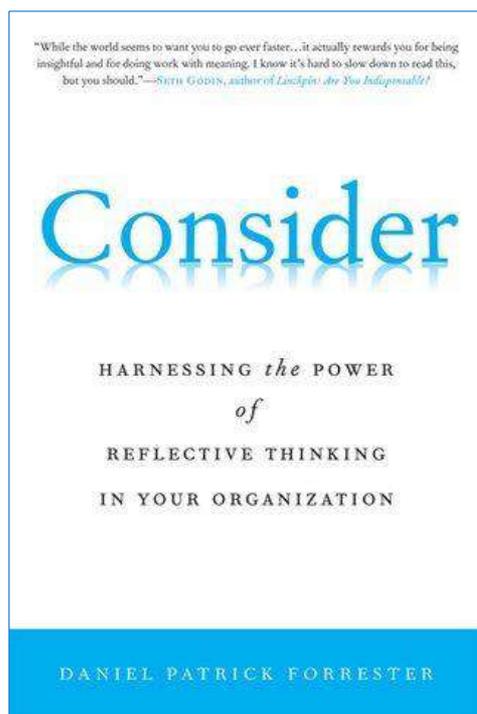
Desired Results

Great workers begin to focus on the desired results. When appropriate, they may employ the classic questions for clarifying the goals. These include the following.

What is happening in the situation? What are the real results we want to achieve? What is the picture of success? What will be the benefits of achieving these goals? What will be happening that will show we have achieved the picture of success?

Good decision makers take time to get a deep understanding of the situation, the options and the implications. 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*. Here is some background from Daniel's website.



*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.

Consider

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.

"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.

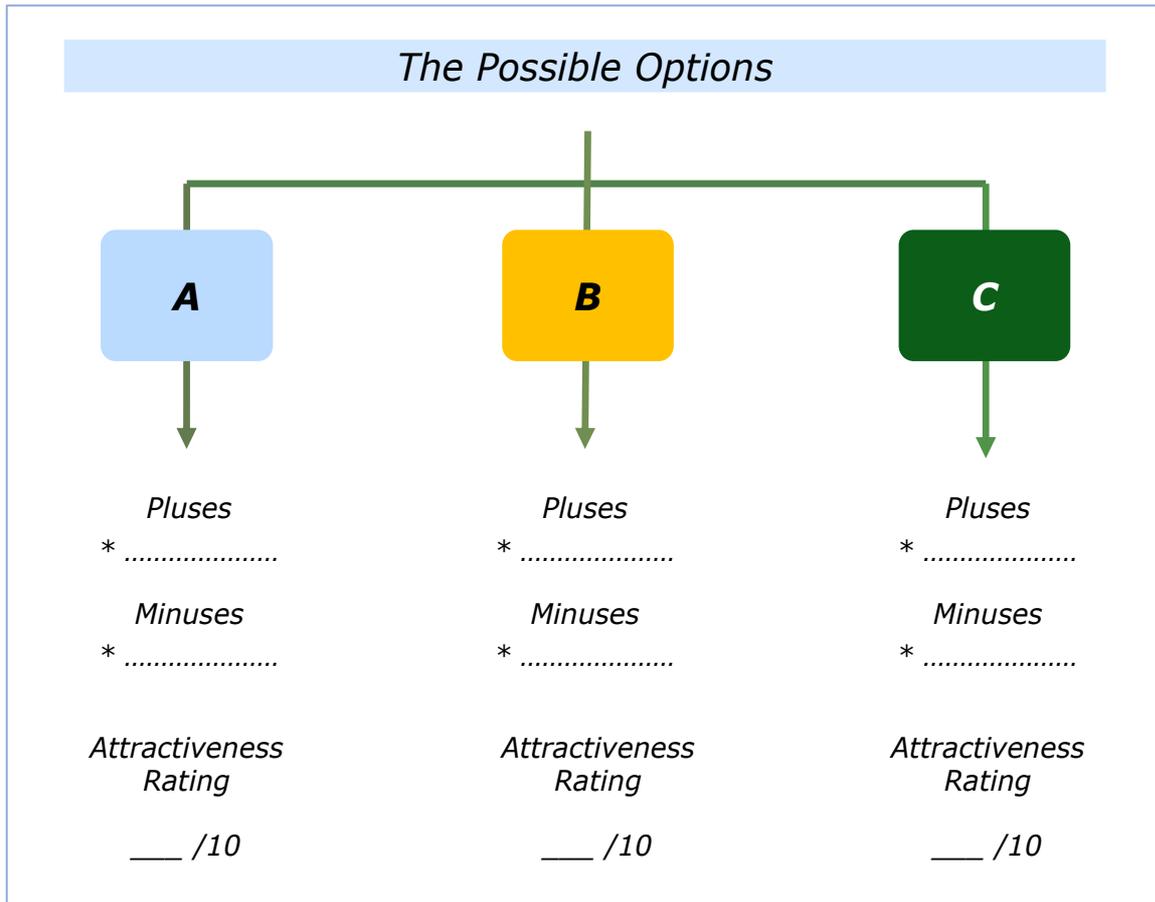
Forrester shows us that taking time and giving ourselves the mental space for reflection can mean the difference between total success and total failure.

Different Options

Great workers may brainstorm the possible options together with the pluses and minuses of each option. They may also consider the attractiveness rating of each route.

Such a worker who has been asked to advice other decision makers, for example, may simply outline the options and the implications. They may then present these to the decision makers.

Great workers who are focusing on their own piece of work may settle on their chosen route. There may be times, of course, when they combine elements of the various options to create a new route.



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

Good orchestrators provide the bridge between clarity and concrete results. They start by clarifying the real results to achieve.

They then coordinate the available resources to deliver the desired concrete results. They focus on the following steps.



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?

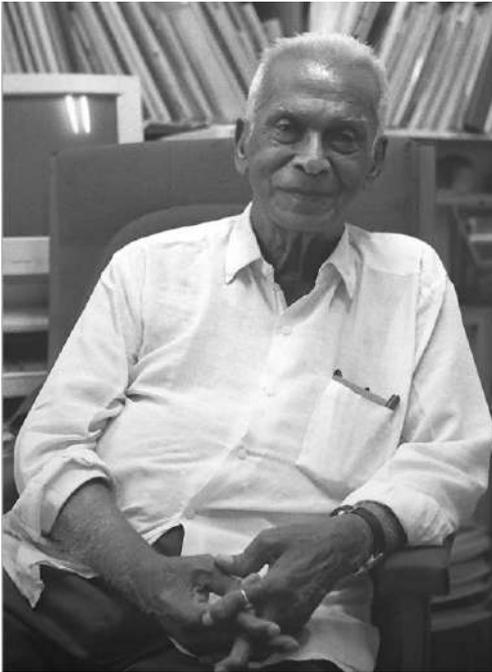
Sometimes you may do these tasks yourself. Sometimes you may complement your strengths by working with people who have other skills. What do you do then to make sure the goods are delivered?

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 paramedicals 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.

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 overview approach? How can you 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.

The Overview Approach

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

*

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

*

*

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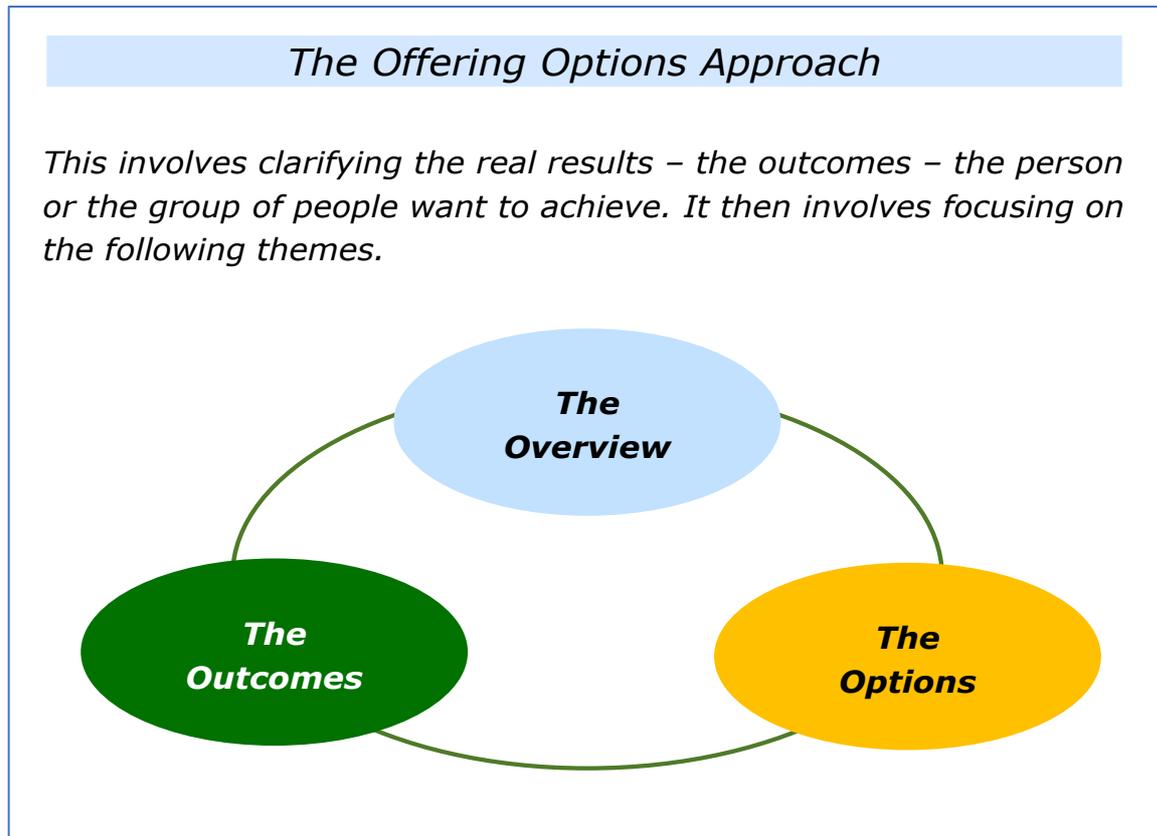
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The 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 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 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."

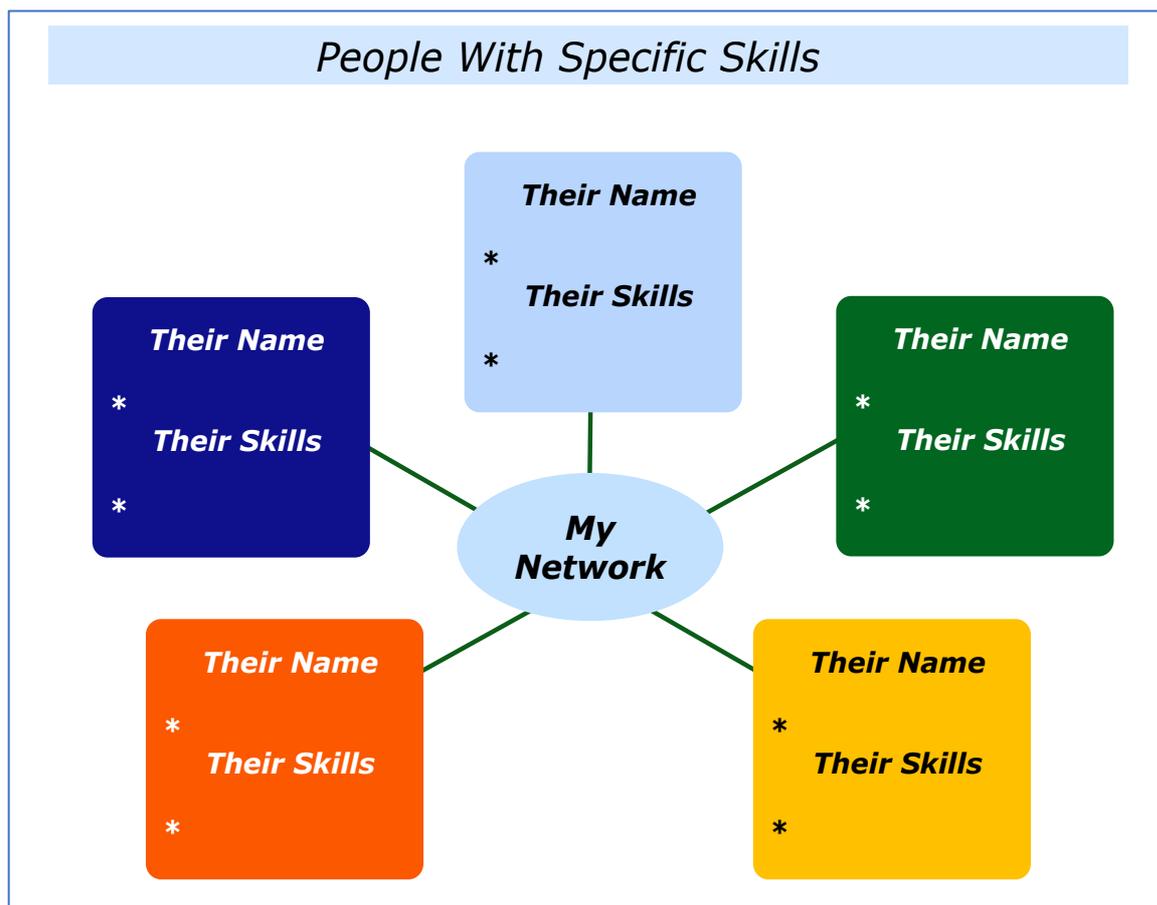
Imagine that you want to give people the opportunity to work together and succeed. Let's explore some of the potential steps towards making it happen.

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.

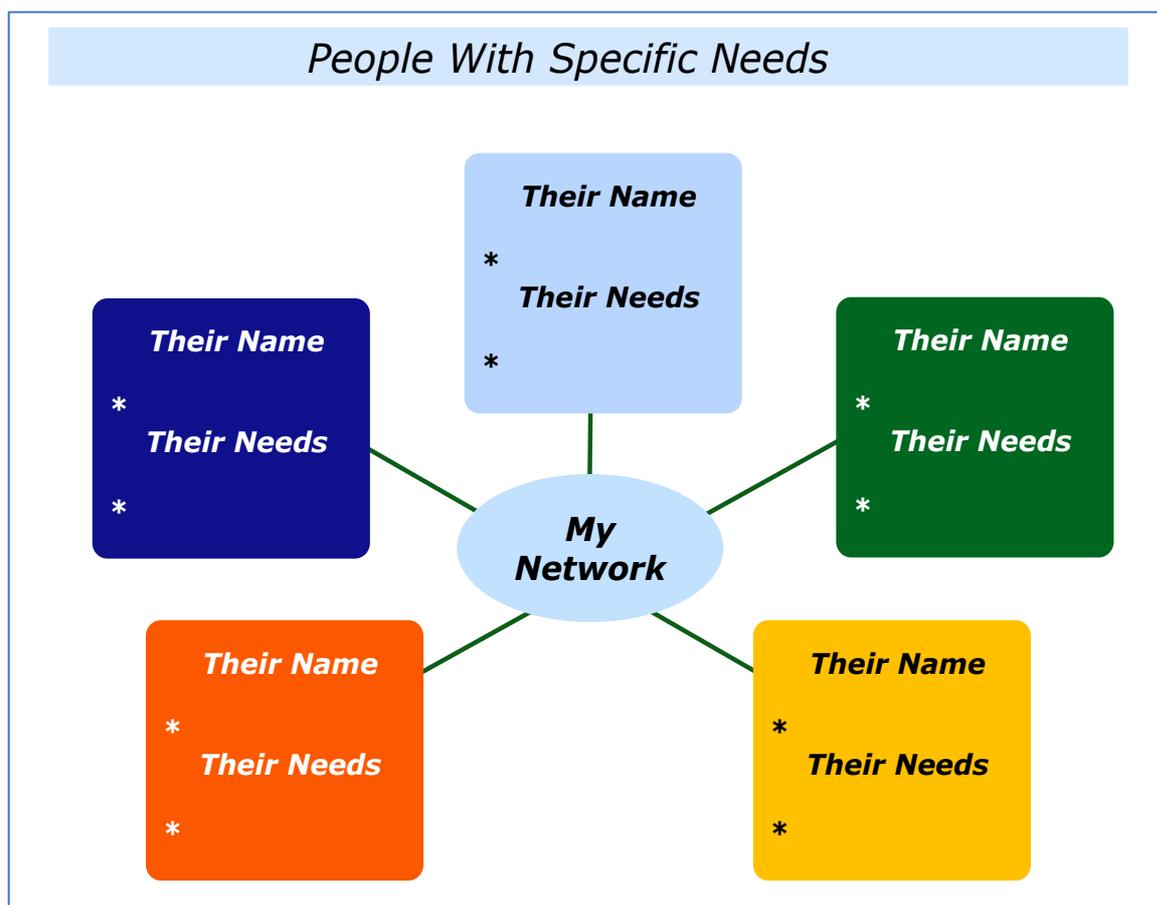


You can create a portfolio of people who have specific needs

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:*

*

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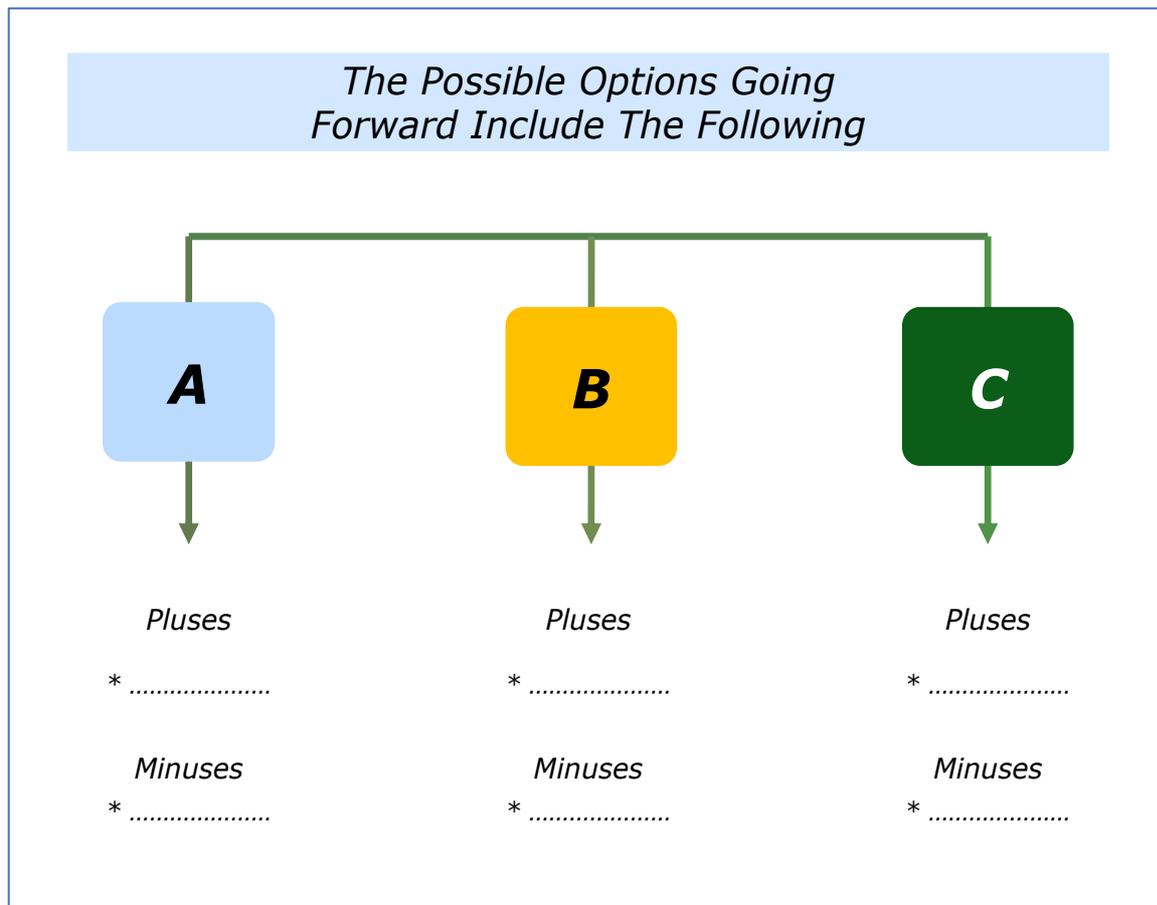
*The specific things may happen as a
result of taking these steps may be:*

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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:*

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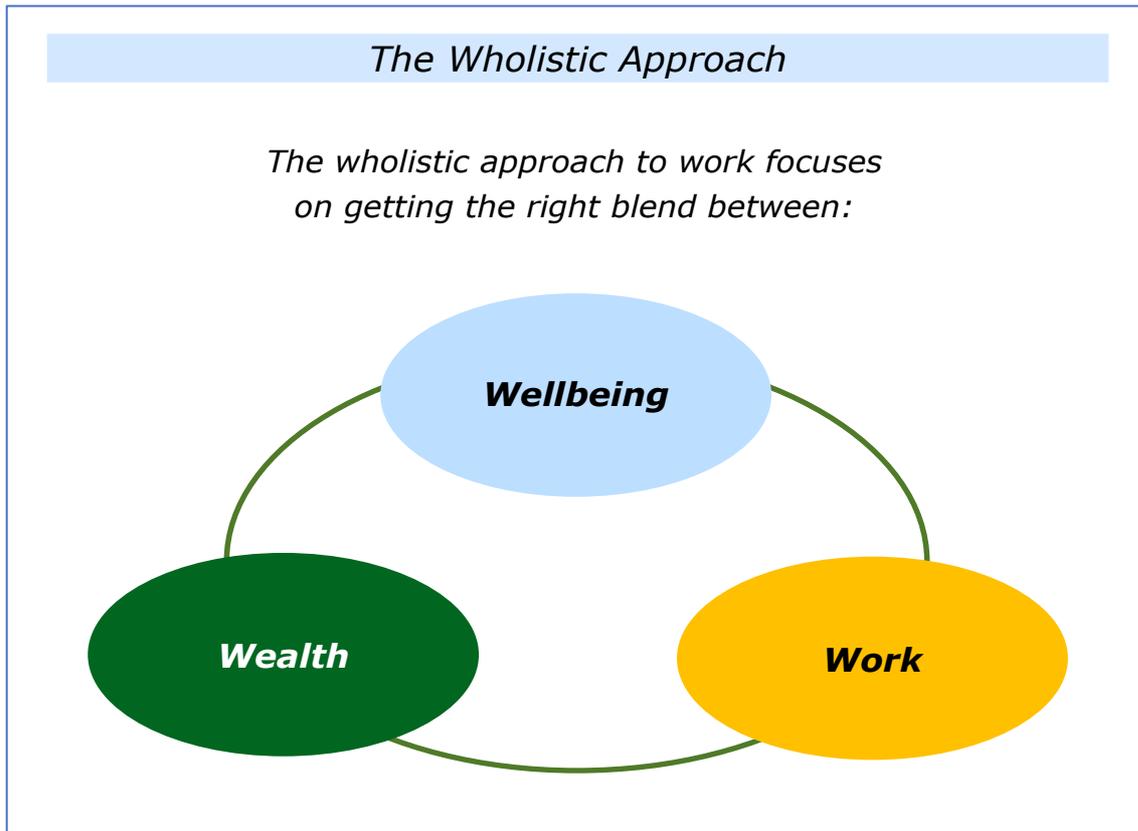
*The specific things that may
happen as a result may be:*

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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.

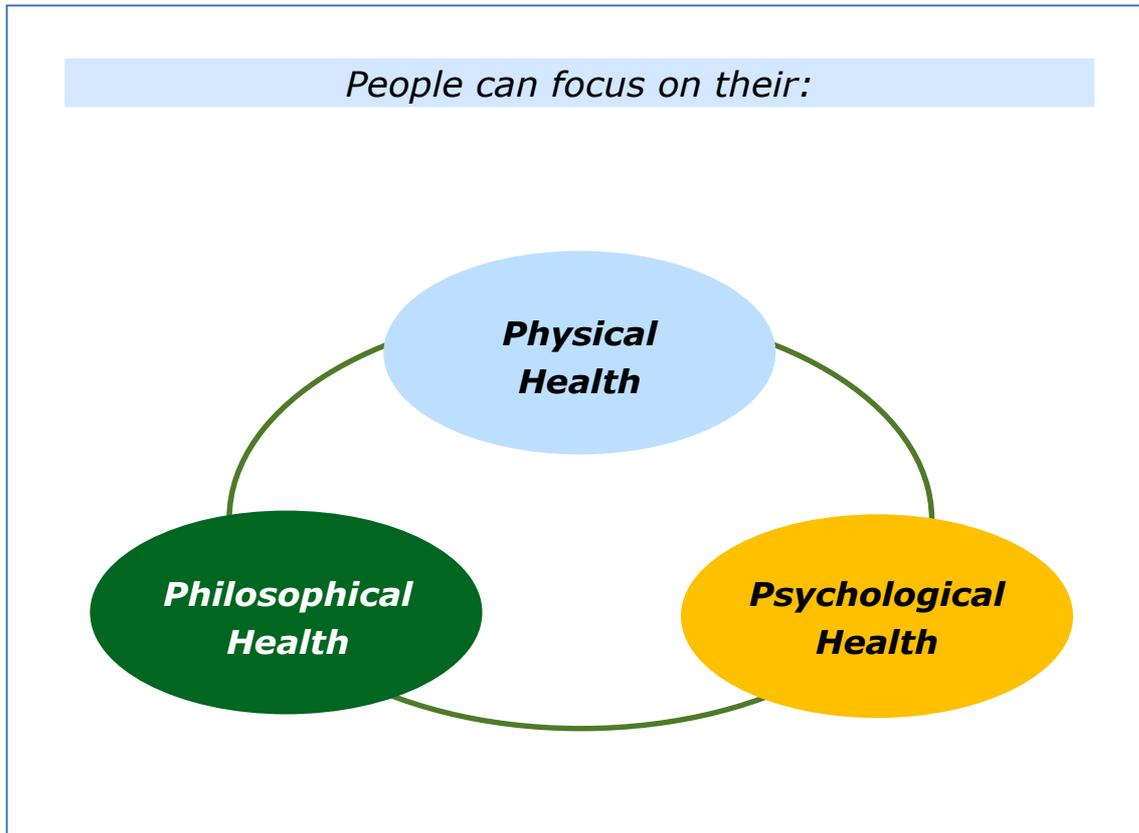
Wellbeing

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, happiness and hope.

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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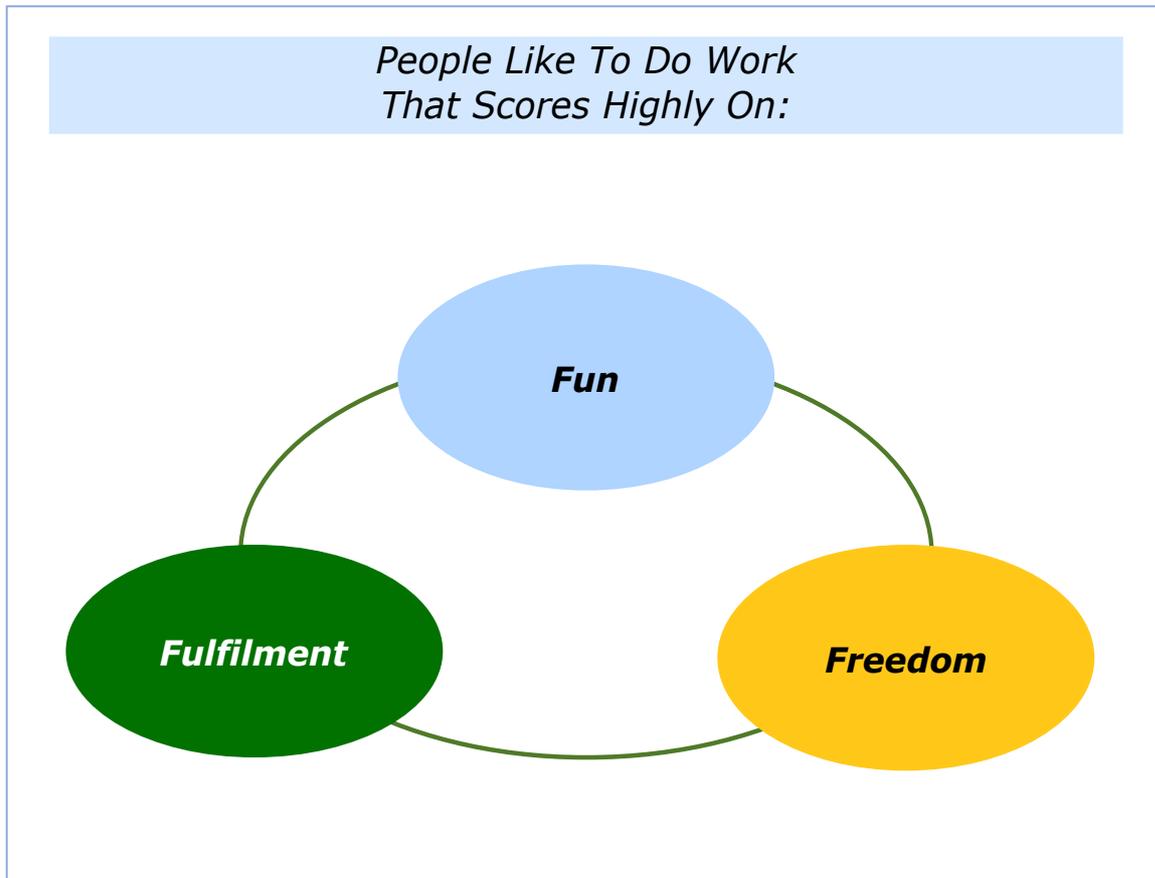
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There are many things that people can do to maintain their physical, psychological and philosophical health. Their sense of wellbeing is often affected by what they do at work, however, so let's explore this theme.

Work

There are many views on how people can do work that maintains their wellbeing. Let's look at one approach.



People like to do work that scores highly 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 work. 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.

Great organisations therefore focus on managing by outcomes rather than by tasks. 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. They therefore take the following steps to give people freedom – within parameters – to deliver the goods. They aim:

To communicate the organisations aims and the specific outcomes to achieve;

To make clear contracts with people about their contributions to delivering the outcomes;

To encourage people to deliver high professional standards and achieve the agreed outcomes.

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. One person expressed

"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."

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.

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;

To perform superb work and deliver success.

People who take these steps often move from project to project. They may do this as a freelancer or as a full-time employee. They find that delivering the goods gives them more freedom to shape their future work.

Let's return to your own 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 freedom in your work. Rate this on a scale 0 – 10. Describe the specific things you can do to maintain or improve the rating.

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 Other Parts

What are the other 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 other parts?

What percentage of my time am I prepared to spend on the other 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.

Let's return to your own 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 fulfilment in your work. Rate this on a scale 0 – 10. Describe the specific things you can do to maintain or improve the rating.

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:

*

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*

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.

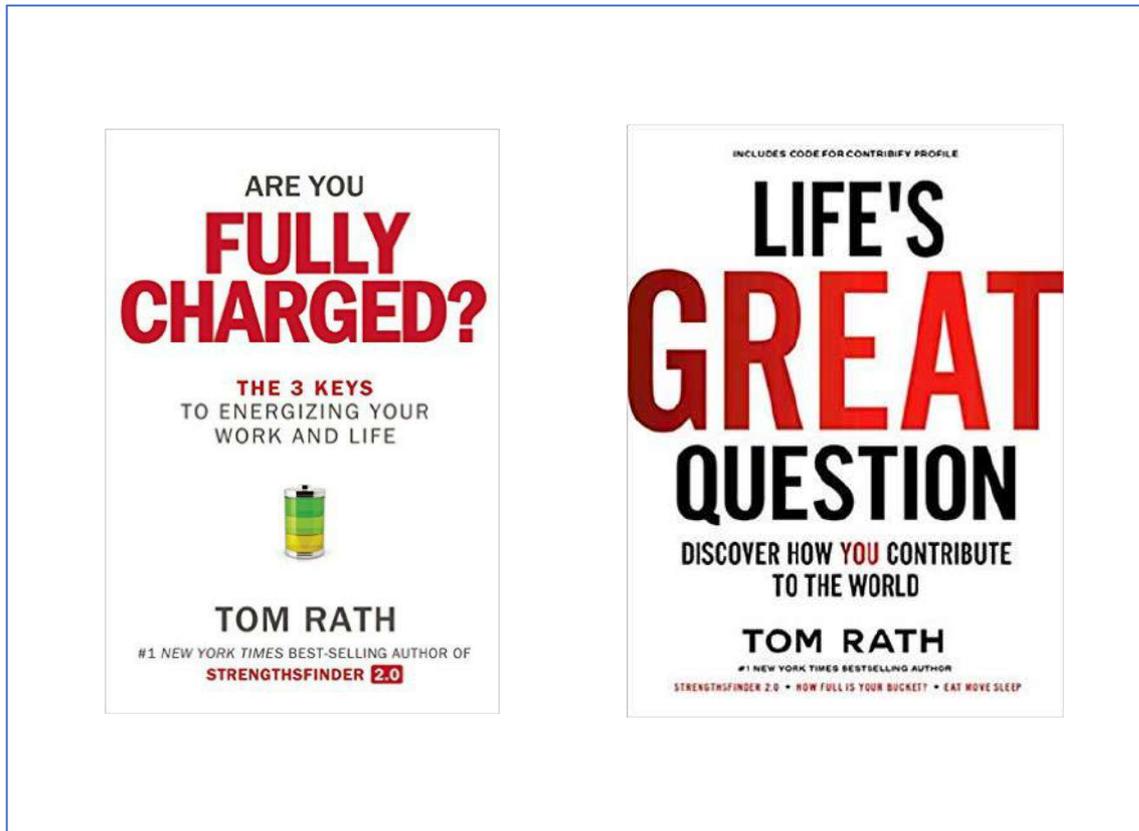
The vast majority of human disease and illness is preventable. There are hundreds of specific, proven actions we can take to increase our odds of living longer and stronger.

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.

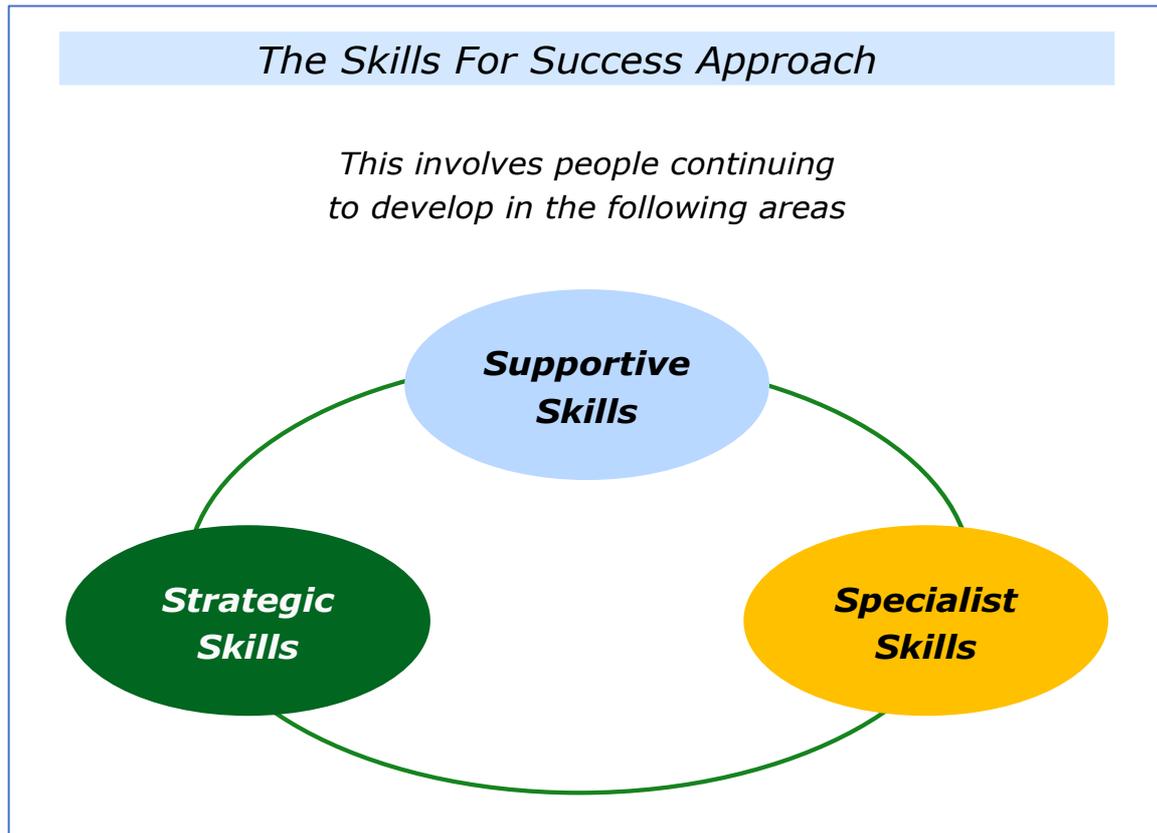
The key is to invest more time where your talents will yield the greatest return for others. Work is about what you create that improves lives. It is about investing in the development of other people.

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.

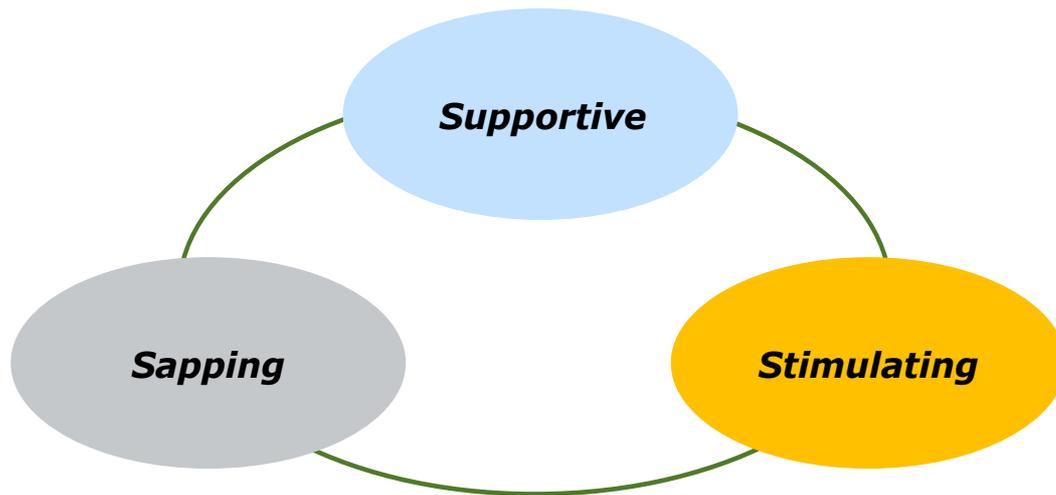
The final point involves focusing on: a) the person's attitude and whether they want to demonstrate the required skills; b) the person's ability to demonstrate the required skills.

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.

People's Styles Can Be Supportive, Stimulating Or Sapping

Different people have different styles of interacting with others. They may demonstrate some of the following styles. They may be:



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, stimulating or sapping. Some people are 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 in a supportive way. They come across as encouraging, caring 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 or inspiring. Here are some of the ways they interact with other people.

Some people are stimulating. They come across as alive, positive and even sparkling. Some may also share stimulating ideas that inspire other people.

Some people are solutions-focused. They 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.

Such people are sage-like. 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 approaches mentioned so far are likely to encourage people. Sometimes we meet other styles that are not so helpful. These may fall under the following general heading.

The Sapping Style

Some people behave in ways that sap the energy from other people. Here are some of the styles they may demonstrate.

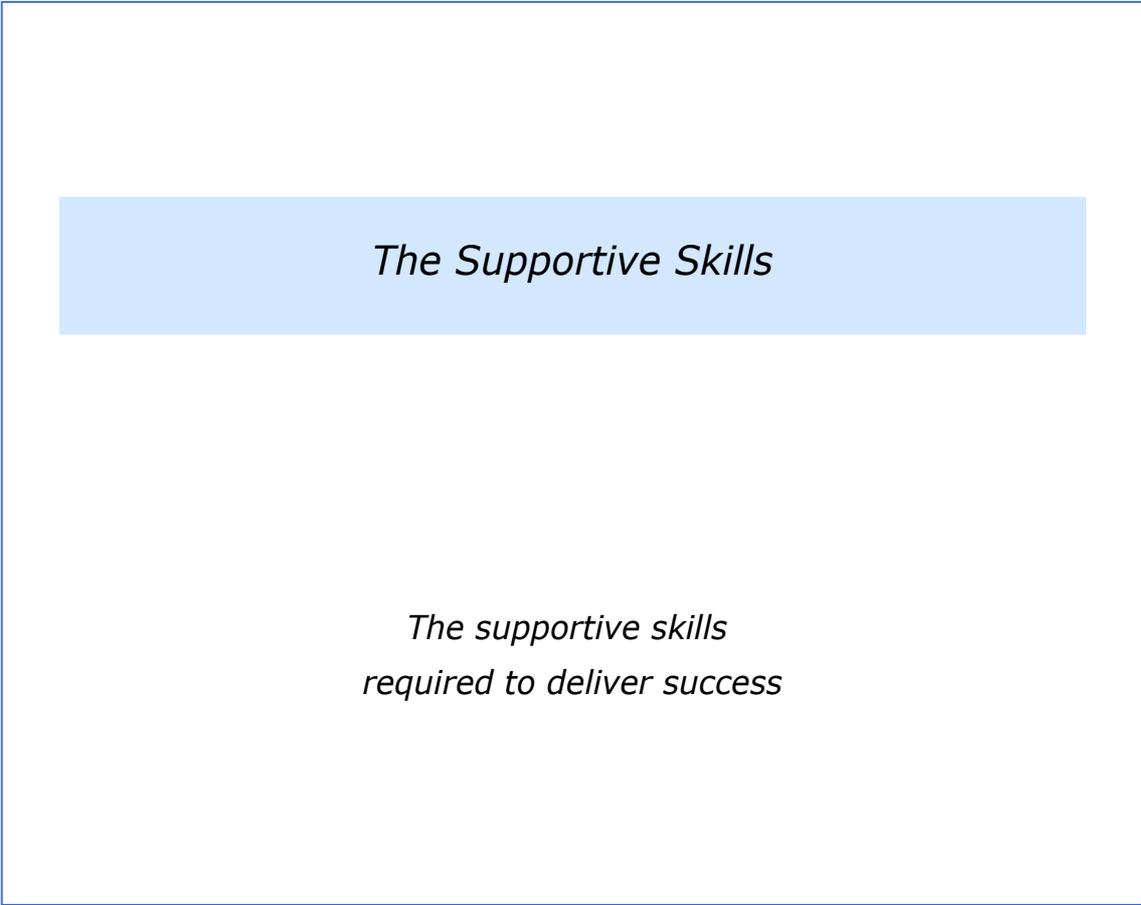
Some people behave in a superior way. They may see themselves as above other people. They may also want to control others and order them to behave in certain ways.

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

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

Some people's styles are sapping. They 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 are 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:

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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:*

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*

*

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. It studies humanity at its best 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.

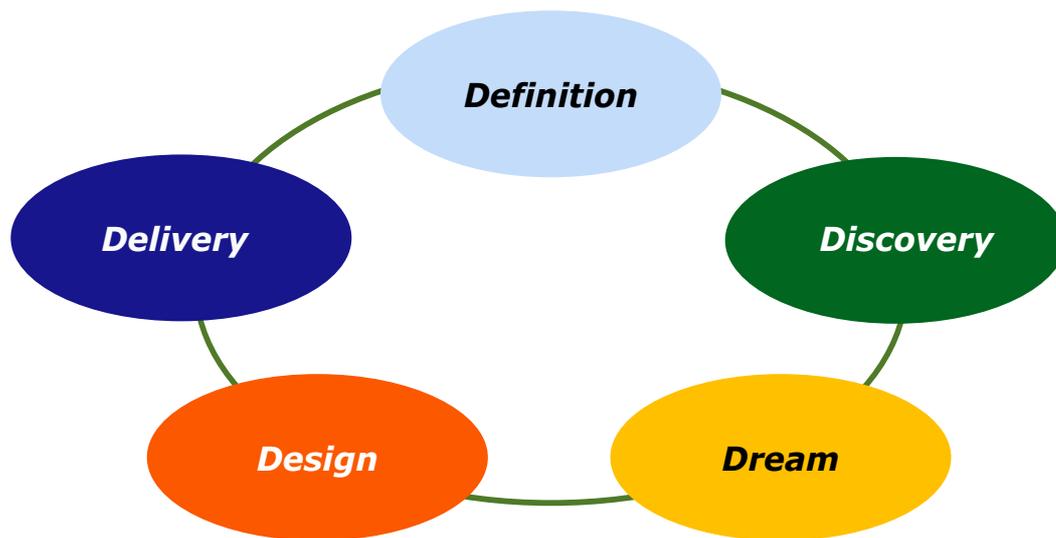
People like Appreciative Inquiry. It builds on what works and, providing people then do the work, it works. People can keep building on their strengths and delivering success.

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.

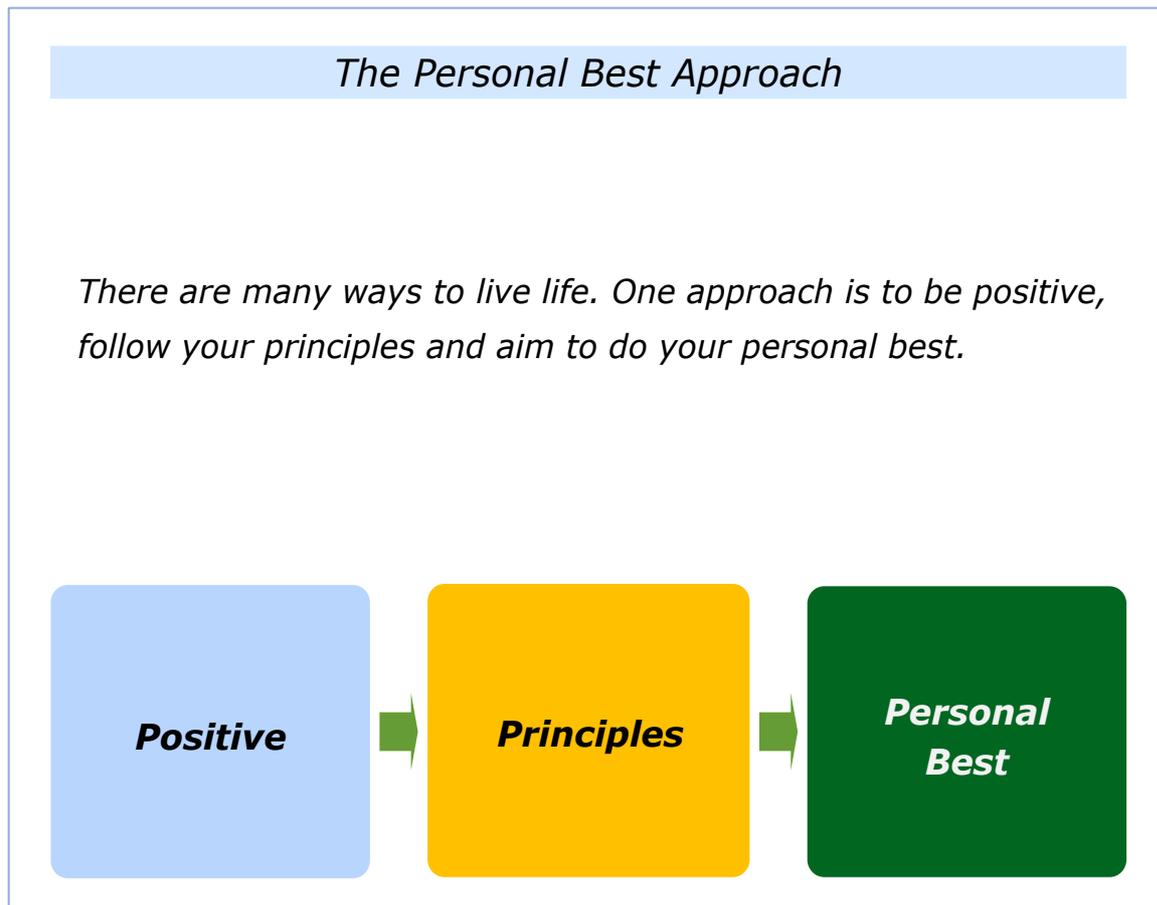


"The question we're working on now is whether the strengths revolution can lead us to a point where positive institutions can be defined as places that elevate, magnify, and then extend our higher human strengths into the world?"

"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 many ways to live life. One approach is to do your personal best and see any prizes that you get as a bonus. The real prize, however, is doing your best each day. Bearing this in mind, you can aim:

To be positive;

To follow your principles;

To do your personal best.

This is an approach that is often used with athletes. They are encouraged:

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.

Positive

Different people have different philosophies of life. Some people choose to have a positive philosophy. They then aim to translate this into action.

Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to clarify your own positive philosophy. One approach is to clarify what you believe is important in life. Here are some things that people mention when exploring this theme.

My Positive Philosophy

*The things I believe
are important in life are:*

To be grateful ... To count my blessings ... To encourage other people ... To focus on what I can control ... To do things that give positive energy ... To build on my strengths ... To see every day as a bonus.

Different people choose different ways to translate their philosophy into action. The following section describes one person who decided to take charge of her life.

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 Positive Philosophy

*The things that I believe
are important in life are:*

*

*

*

Principles

Imagine that a person has been able to summarise their philosophy in one sentence. They may then translate this into action by following certain principles.

Some people use the following framework to make this happen. Here is how I try to do this in my own life. You will have your own approach.

My Positive 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 so to translate principle this into action are:

I can ...

I can ...

I can ...

Let's look at one person who follows certain principles. 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.'

My husband David, a cabinet maker, had always wanted to run his own business - yet possessed none of the required sales, marketing or

organisational skills. We also knew that one day we would set up on our own business.

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?

Imagine that you are going to participate in a situation where you believe certain things are at stake. Some people are calm in such situations. Some may become paralysed or nervous. They become consumed by what they see as the importance of the prize.

Some people have a different view. They recognise that doing their best is what is really at stake. They find that taking this approach enables them to do their best in their daily life, work and many other situations.

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."

The following section describes approaches that are used by educators and organisations to encourage people to do their personal best.

The Kaizen Approach To Continuous Improvement

The Kaizen Approach

This involves encouraging a person to develop the habit of continuous improvement. It involves watching them in action or seeing a piece of their work. It is then to have a conversation with them around the following themes.

- *What are your goals? What are the real results - the outcomes - you want to achieve? What is the picture of success?*
- *What are you doing well that can help you to reach your goals? How can you do more of these things in the future? What do you think you can do better and how?*
- *What are the kinds of practical ideas that you would like that could maybe help you to reach your goals? Are there any other topics that it may be useful to explore?*

Listen to the person and their ideas. You can then ask: "Is it okay to share some ideas that may help to reach the goals?" You can pass on knowledge in a way the person can accept and use to achieve their goals.

This is an approach that can be used during coaching, performance management or educational sessions. The involves going through the following steps.

*You can watch a person in action
or see a piece of their work*

If possible, try to watch the person in action or see a piece of their work. When doing this, it can be useful to focus on the following themes.

What are the person's goals? What are the real results – the outcomes - they want to achieve? What is their picture of success? What will be happening that will show they have achieved their goals?

What are they doing well 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 positive models and practical tools that I can pass on to help them to achieve their goals? How can I pass on this knowledge in a way they can accept and use to achieve their goals?

Imagine that you have explored these themes. You can then move on to the next step.

You can invite the person to evaluate their own work and focus on continuous improvement

It can be useful to invite the person to do this before they have the session with you. This involves them focusing on: a) the specific goals they want to achieve; b) the specific things they have done well: c) the specific things they can do better and how.

You will already have some ideas about these topics, but it is important that the person does some self-evaluation before meeting you. Bearing in mind their view of their own work, you can then have a conversation with them around the following themes.

What are your goals? What are the real results – the outcomes – you want to achieve? What is your picture of success? What will be the specific things that will be happened that show you have achieved your goals?

What are you doing well that will help you to reach your goals? How can you do more of these things in the future? What do you think you can do better and how?

What are the kinds of practical ideas that you would like to explore that could maybe help you to reach your goals? Are there any other topics it may be useful to explore?

Imagine that the person has shared some ideas about what they have done well and what they can do better. You can then ask them:

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

It is important to make this psychological contract to ensure they are open to ideas. You can then move on to the next step.

You can pass on knowledge that the person can use to achieve their goals

You will have your own approach to taking this step. When doing so, it can be useful to focus on the person's goals – the real results they want to achieve. It is then:

To share what works – to pass on knowledge, positive models and practical tools that will help the person to achieve their goals;

To bring the ideas to life by giving examples that resonate with the person;

To pass on knowledge in a way that the person can accept and use to achieve their goals.

Imagine that you have taken these steps and the person has got some ideas they can use in their own way. If appropriate, you can then invite the person to set aside time:

To clarify what they have learned or relearned during the session;

To clarify their action plan for continuing to work towards their goals;

To clarify how they can get some quick successes and keep encouraging themselves on the way towards achieving their goals.

Great workers develop the habit of continuous improvement. They build on their strengths and find solutions to challenges. Let's explore another approach that encourages people to do their best.

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 ...

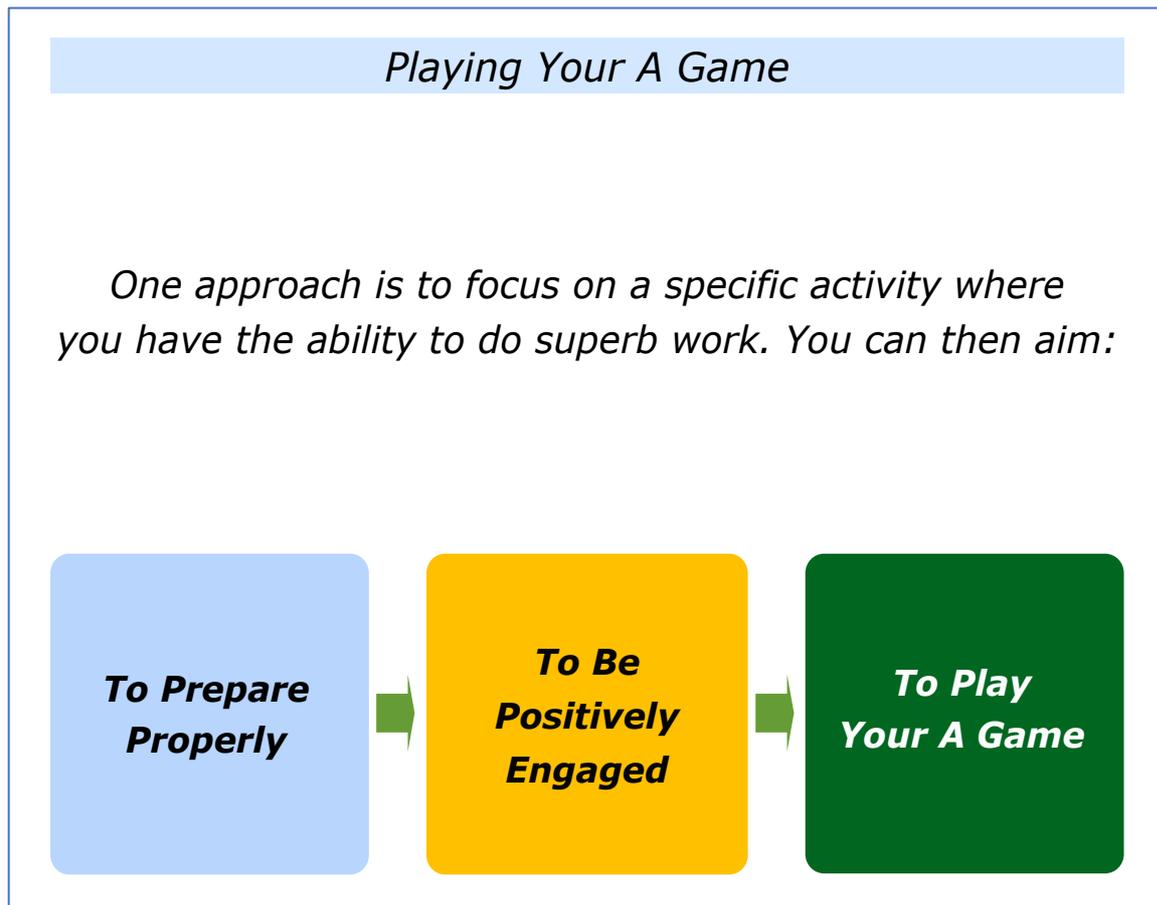
* To ...

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.

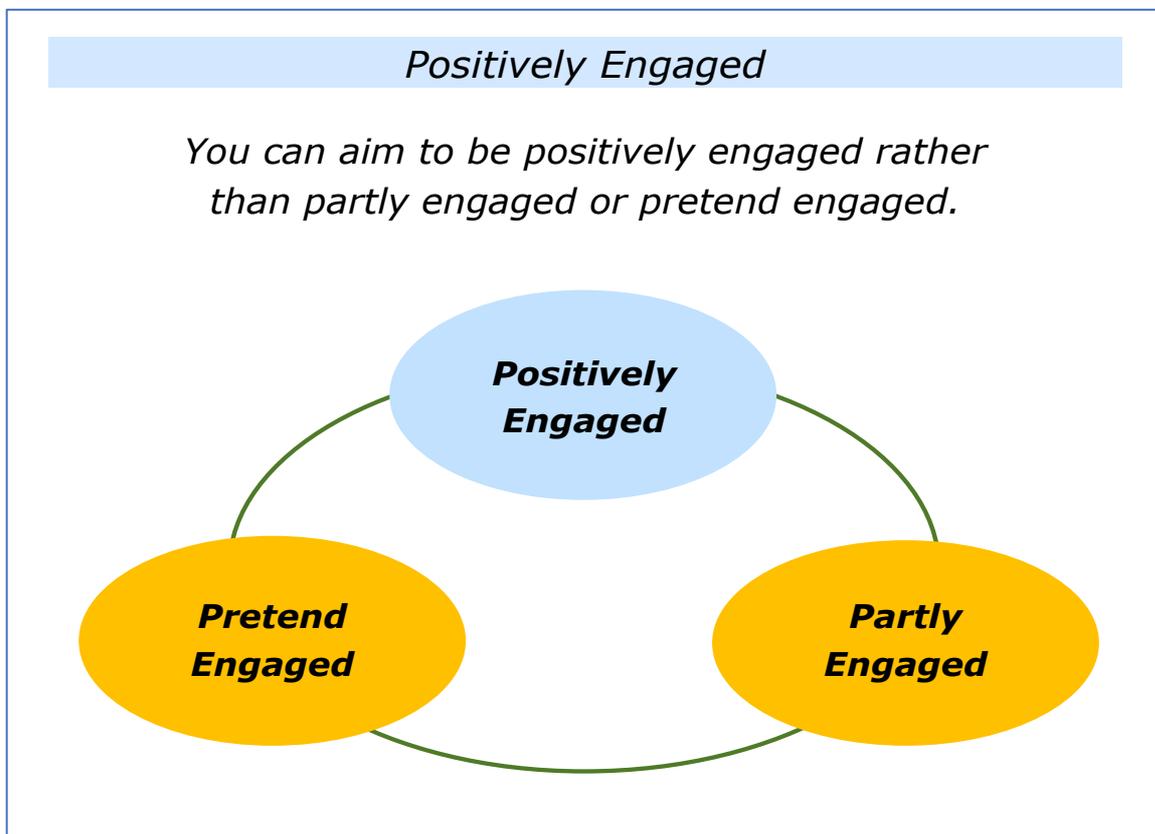
They rehearse pursuing the key strategies they will follow to achieve the goals;

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:*

*

*

*

The Shaping, Satisfying Work And Success Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach involves going through the stages of shaping things, doing satisfying work and achieving success. Let's explore these themes.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you followed elements of this approach? You may have been pursuing a passion, doing a creative project or doing another activity.

How did you aim to shape things? How did you do satisfying work? How did you do your best to achieve success? 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.

Satisfying Work In The Past

*The specific situation when I aimed
to shape something, do satisfying
work and achieve success was:*

*

*The specific things I did then to
go through these stages were:*

*

*

*

*The specific things that
happened as a result were:*

*

*

*

Shaping

People like to feel in control. They like to shape things in their lives and work. They sometimes follow this path when doing work by themselves. Being natural designers, they enjoy making decisions about the work they are going to do and deliver.

People sometimes follow elements of the shaping approach when working for organisations. They recognise that their decision making power will be more limited, however, when contributing towards achieving the organisation's goals.

Good organisations recognise this challenge. They therefore manage by outcomes rather than by tasks. They give their people freedom, within parameters, regarding how they use their strengths to deliver the agreed goals.

People like to be architects in their lives and work. They are then more likely to channel their energies into being artisans on the way towards achieving success.

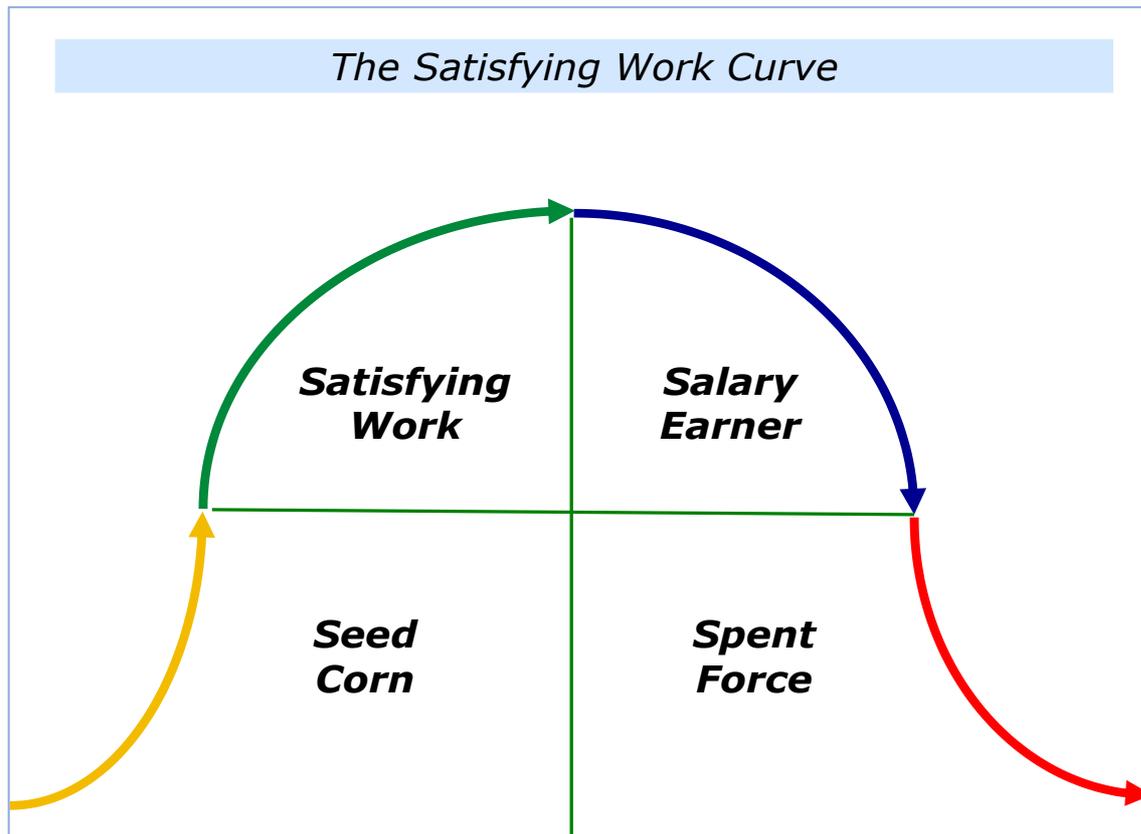
Imagine that you want to shape something in the future. You may want to do work in a garden, write an article, do a creative project or pursue another activity.

Bearing in mind the things you can control, what may be the results you want to achieve? How can you shape the way you do the work? How can you do your best to achieve the desired results?

Imagine that you have taken this step. It will then be time to move on to the next stage.

Satisfying Work

People like to do satisfying work. There are many models for doing such work. One approach encourage people 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.

Imagine that you are doing satisfying work. This may also involve going onto the next stage.

Success

Different people have different definitions of success. Here are some of the things that people may mention.

Success For Me Is:

Doing my best every day ... Staying sober ... Helping children to read ... Creating an environment in which people grow ... Making music that makes people happy ... Passing on knowledge that helps people to succeed.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation when you may aim to shape something, do satisfying work and do our best to achieve success? How can you take these steps in your own way?

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

Satisfying Work In The Future

*The specific situation when I may aim
to shape something, do satisfying
work and achieve success may be:*

*

*The specific things I can do then
to go through these stages are:*

*

*

*

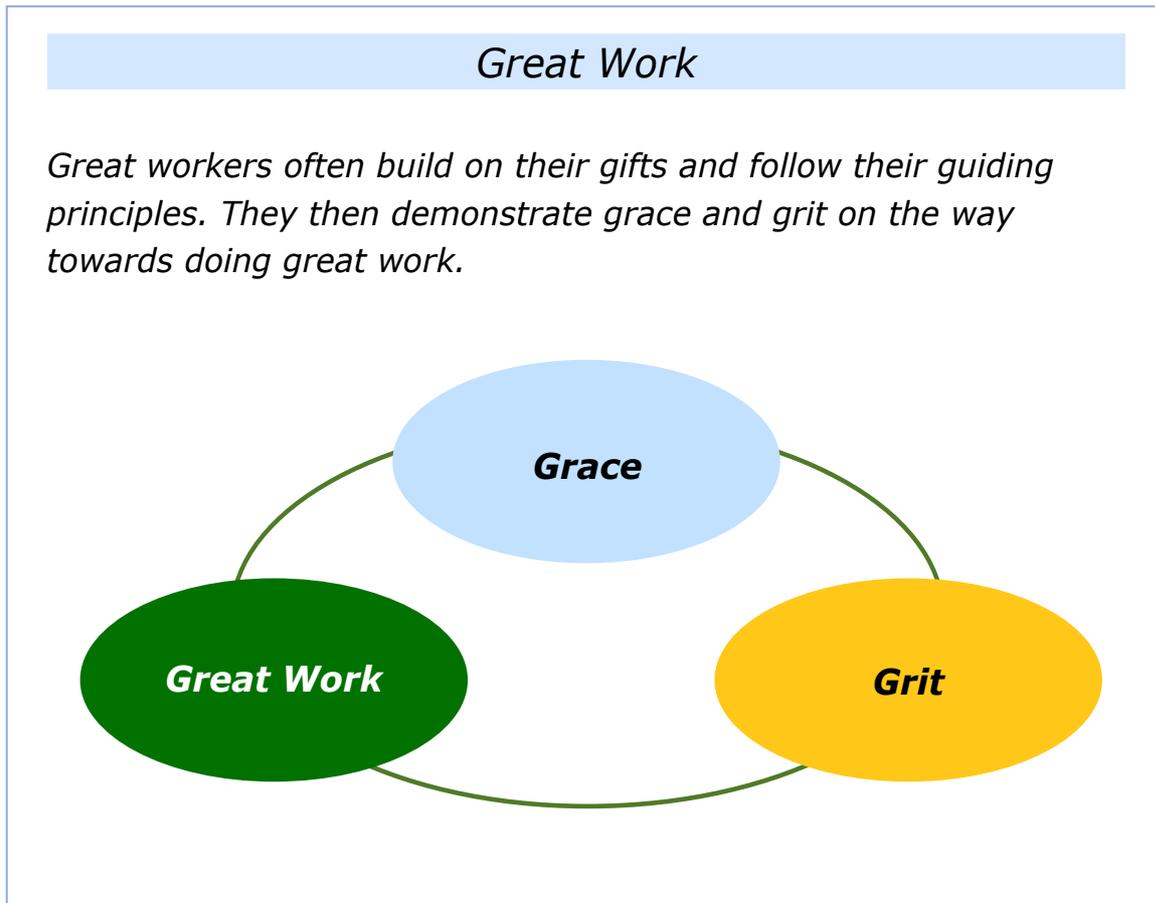
*The specific things that may
happen as a result may be:*

*

*

*

The Grace, Grit And Great Work Approach



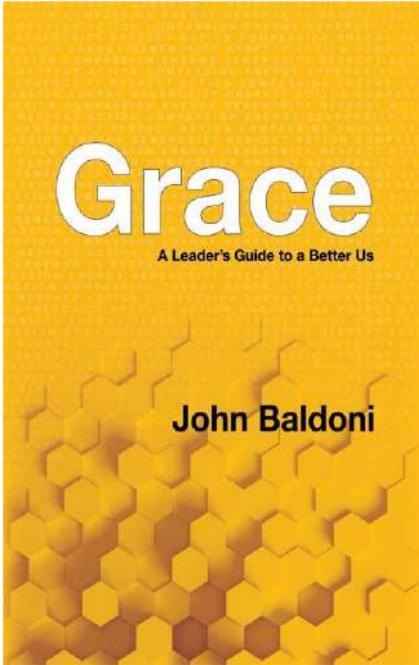
Great workers starts by building on their gifts. They then follow their guiding principles and aim to achieve their goals. Some demonstrate the qualities of grace and grit on the way towards doing great work. Let's explore these themes.

Grace

Great workers may demonstrate grace. Grateful for the chances they have been given, they remain humble. They show graciousness towards the path they have been given the opportunity to follow. They also to demonstrate grace in their dealings with other people.

John Baldoni explored these themes in his book *Grace: A Leader's Guide To A Better Us*. He created an acronym to describe some of the qualities demonstrated by such leaders. Here is an overview of his model.

John Baldoni On Grace



G is for **Generosity**: the will to do something for others.

R is for **Respect**: the dignity of life and work.

A is for **Action**: the mechanism for change.

C is for **Compassion**: the concern for others.

E is for **Energy**: the spirit that catalyzes us.

Let's return to your own life and work. What are the specific things you do well to demonstrate grace? What can you do better and how? What will be the benefits of continuing to do what you do well and also improve in the other areas?

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

Grace

The specific things I do well to demonstrate grace are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do better – and how - to demonstrate grace are:

*

*

*

The specific benefits of continuing to do what I do well and improving in the other areas will be:

*

*

*

Grit

Great workers demonstrate grit. Such people often retain the mentality of being a challenger. They continue to be positive, focus on possibilities and give everything to achieve their picture of success.

Grit is an interesting topic. A person may demonstrate it in the area they find fascinating and in which they excel but not necessarily in other areas. They may demonstrate it when doing a specific activity, playing a sport, managing certain kinds of crises or tackling particular challenges.

Grit

Some people demonstrate grit when doing specific activities and in certain situations. Drawing on their inner resources, they demonstrate the grit required:

-  *To stay positive and manage their personal emotions;*
-  *To keep following their principles and be persistent;*
-  *To recover from potential setbacks and find solutions to problems.*

What are the specific activities where you show grit? What are the things you do well then to demonstrate grit? What can you do better and how? What will be the benefits of continuing to do what you do well and also improve in the other areas?

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

Grit

The specific things I do well to demonstrate grit in a certain activity are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do better – and how - to demonstrate grit are:

*

*

*

The specific benefits of continuing to do what I do well and improving in the other areas will be:

*

*

*

Great Work

Great workers aim to keep improving. They continue to build on their strengths and follow strategies that work. They then sometimes do something special to perform great work and achieve their picture of success.

As mentioned earlier, there are different kinds of champions. Some champion a way of thinking or a cause. Some gain prizes. Some do both. Different people do great work in different ways.

Marcus Rashford, the footballer, used his resources to promote free school meals for children. Emma Barnett, the broadcaster, used her skills to promote care for women experiencing endometriosis. Deborah James raised millions for research into bowel cancer by using her communication talents and the twitter name bowelbabe.

Sadio Mané and Didier Drogba are just two of the many Champion's League winners who have used their wealth to fund social projects in their countries of birth. Tanni Grey-Thompson won 16 Paralympic Medal and then went on to become the patron of many charities.

Roy Orbison, the singer, acted with grace and humility when making use of his talents to give great performances. David Attenborough created compelling television series that increased people's awareness of the need to take care of the planet.

Let's return to your own life and work. What is the specific activity where you may have the ability to do great work? How can you continue to pursue this path?

What do you do well when pursuing this activity? What can you do better and how? How can you do your best to keep working towards doing great work? What may 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.

Great Work

The specific things I do well when pursuing the activity where I may have the ability to do great work are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do better – and how – to work towards doing great work are:

*

*

*

The specific benefits of continuing to do what I do well and improving in the other areas will be:

*

*

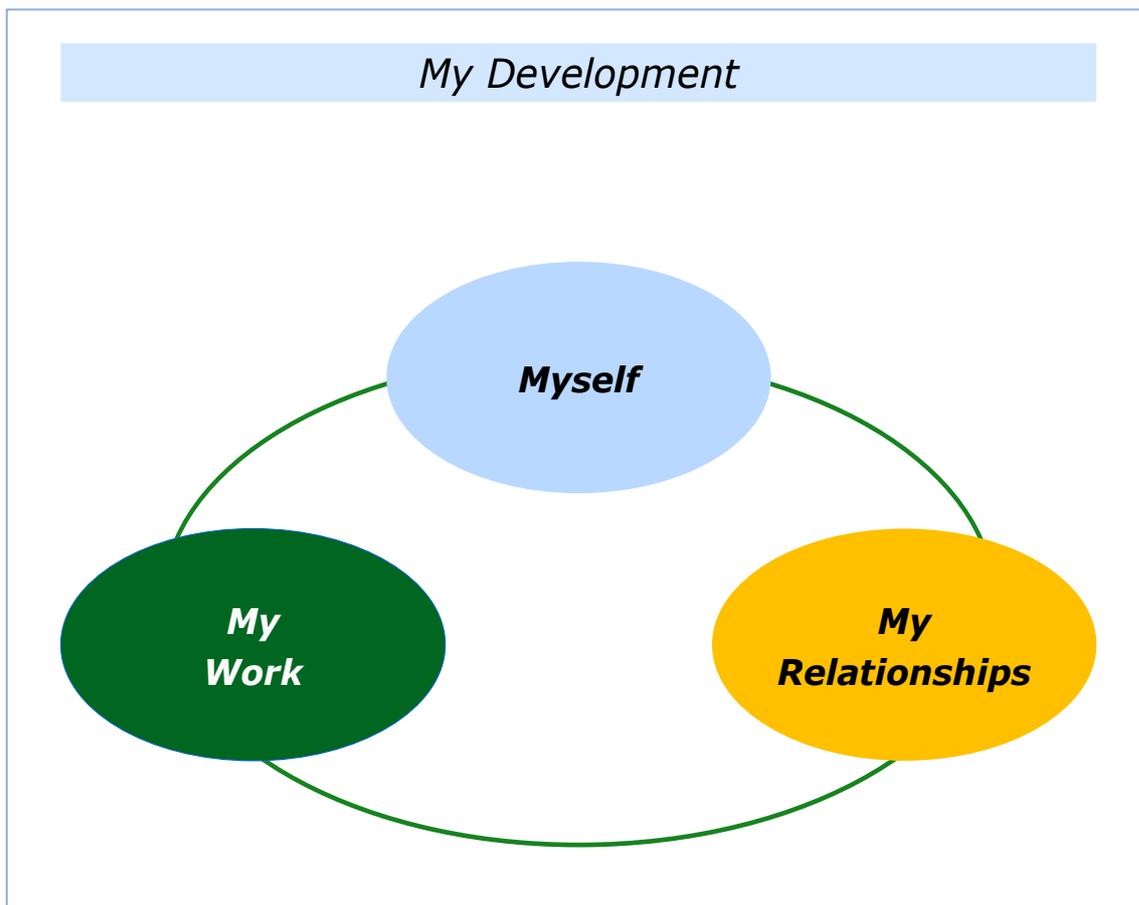
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As mentioned earlier, there are many ways to do your personal best. Let's look at another approach.

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:

*

*

*

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

Imagine that you are managing your key stakeholders, managing your team's outcomes and managing your customers. It is may also be vital to stay healthy and manage yourself.

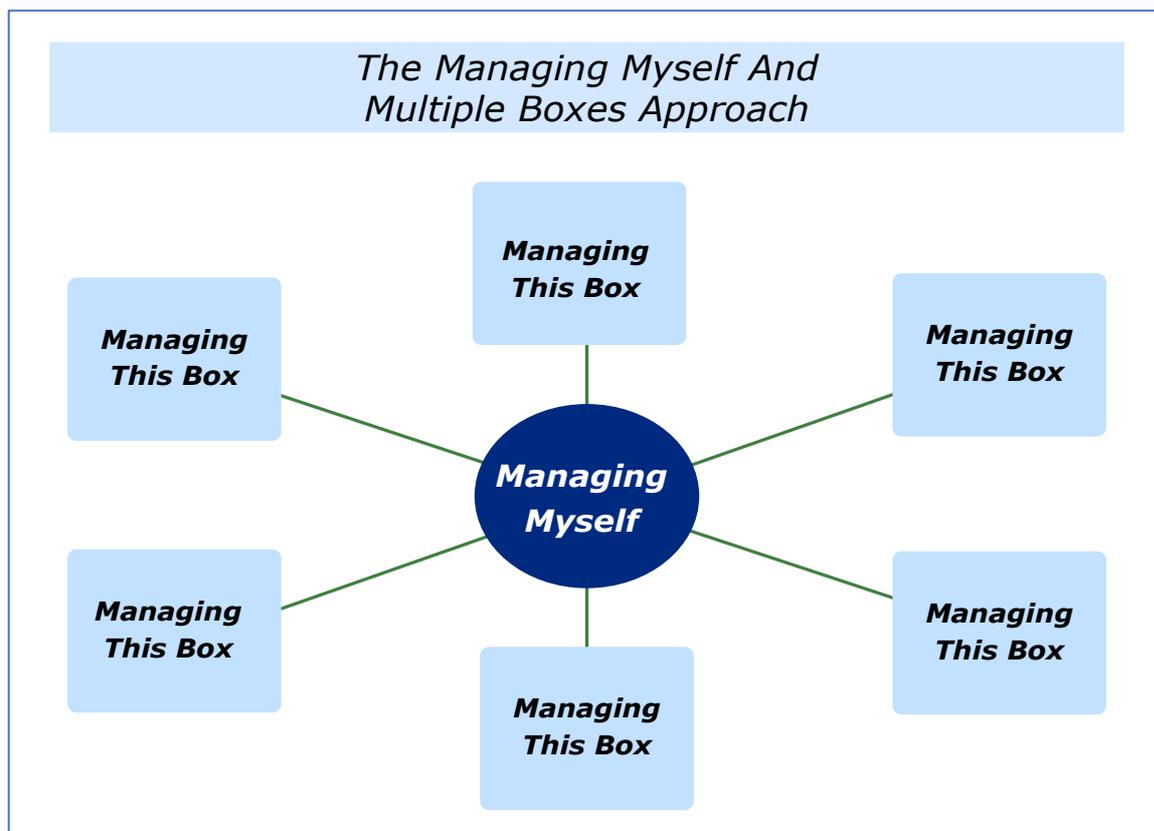
One approach is: a) to enjoy life and maintain your sanity; b) to keep developing as a person and as a professional. Bearing these things in mind, it may be useful:

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.

You will follow you own habits for staying healthy. Sometimes you may also want to consider adding the following approach.



Sometimes you may also have to manage multiple boxes. You may feel surrounded by multiple tasks, relationships, situations, challenges or other activities.

Sometimes this can feel overwhelming. Bearing this in mind, one approach it to take the following steps.

Step One

You can do things to manage yourself and take care of your wellbeing. This will give you energy to deal with the other challenges.

Step Two

You can focus on each of the boxes in turn. Looking at the task, relationship or challenge, you can ask yourself the following questions:

What are the things I can and can't control in the situation? What are the things I can expect and can't expect in the situation? Bearing these in mind, what are the results I can achieve? How can I do my best to achieve these results?

You can then aim: a) to go into the situation; b) to do your best to achieve the desired results; c) to then go back to your centre and take care of your wellbeing.

Step Three

You can, at some point, take stock of your situation. When doing this, it can be useful to explore the following questions.

Which of these boxes do I want to continue to have in my life? How can I do my best to manage these boxes?

Which of these boxes do I not want to have in my life? How can I move on from these in, as far as possible, a positive way?

Which boxes – tasks, relationships, situations – do I want to add? What will be the pluses and minuses of adding these boxes?

You can then aim: a) to keep managing yourself; b) to manage the boxes that give you pleasure; c) to move on from – or find ways to manage – any boxes that are more challenging.

Imagine that you want to keep yourself healthy. If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

Managing Myself

The specific things I can do to stay positive and keep myself healthy are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to keep developing as a person and as a professional are:

*

*

*

The specific benefits of doing these things will be:

*

*

*

Let's return to the theme of doing your personal best. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific situation where you want to be positive, 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 be positive? How can you prepare properly? How can you follow your principles? 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 do my personal best is:*

*

*The specific things I can do then to do
my personal best in the situation are:*

*

*

*

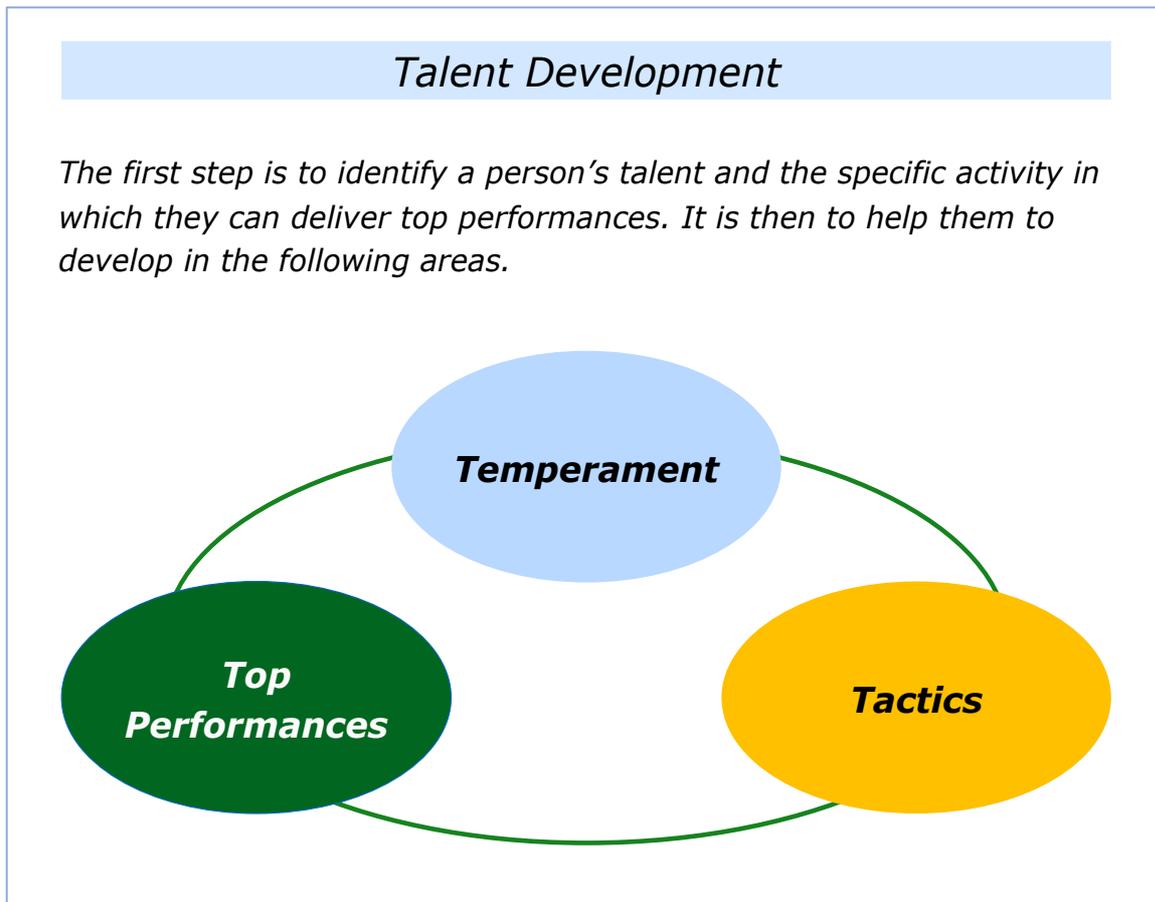
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

The Talent Development Approach



There are many ways to help a person to develop. The first step is to identify their talent. It is then to help them to keep developing in the areas of temperament, tactics and delivering top performances.

Imagine that a person has asked you to help them to take these steps when focusing on a specific kind of work. If appropriate, you may want to focus on the following themes.

Talent

There are many ways to identify a person's talent. It will be important to watch them in action or see an example of their work. Bearing in mind what you see, it can be useful:

To clarify their talent – such as the times when they demonstrate the ability to deliver As rather than Bs or Cs;

To clarify the specific activity where they may be able to use this talent to deliver top performances;

To clarify the specific reasons why you believe they may be able to deliver top performances in this activity.

Talent is a prerequisite for doing great work. A therapist needs to combine caring with being able to clarify a person's aims and 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 has a great track record for producing young players. It uses the Acronym TIPS when looking at a player's development.

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.*



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 complete the following sentences.

Talent

The specific activity in which the person may have the ability to deliver top performances is:

*

The rating I would give regarding them having the ability to deliver 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 where they aim to develop. 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 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 who may want to develop. Bearing in mind the activity they want to pursue, 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:

*

*

*

Tactics

Talent and temperament can take a person so far. They may then 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 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.

Great workers 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:

*

*

*

Top Performances

Great workers pursue their chosen tactics and apply their technique to deliver top performances. How to help them to make this happen? Here is one approach that can help them to do great work.

Top Performances – The Positive History Approach

How to help a person to deliver top performances? One approach is to invite them to revisit their positive history. It is to invite them:

- To clarify a specific situation in the past when they did superb work and delivered top performances;*
- To clarify the principles they followed then – and how they translated these into action - to deliver top performances;*
- To clarify how they can follow these principles in the future – plus add other skills – to deliver top performances.*

Great workers focus on continuous improvement and developing their technique. 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."

Top performers see every day as an opportunity to deliver high standards. There are also occasions when they choose to trust their talent, tactics and technique. They take this approach rather than being tense.

They Trust Their Talent

Such workers often aim to relax and trust their talent. It sounds like a paradox, but they work hard at being able to relax. This enables them to make better use of their strengths when doing the work.

They Trust Their Tactics

They aim to trust their tactics - which includes both physical and psychological preparation. They rehearse following their strategies and tactics. This gives them something to fall back on when necessary.

They Trust Their Technique

Top performers hone their technique and aim to trust it in certain situations. They take this approach rather than becoming tense. 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.

They take these steps whether they are playing a sport, acting on stage, climbing a mountain or doing some other activity. 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 become over-critical and get into a downwards spiral. Top performers may then follow their chosen ritual to calm themselves.

Matt Lloyd, the climber and writer, explores this approach 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 the person you may be helping. 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?

You can then help them to develop and deliver great work. Sometimes they will do this by adding that touch of class. That is the Holy Grail.

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:*

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*

*

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.

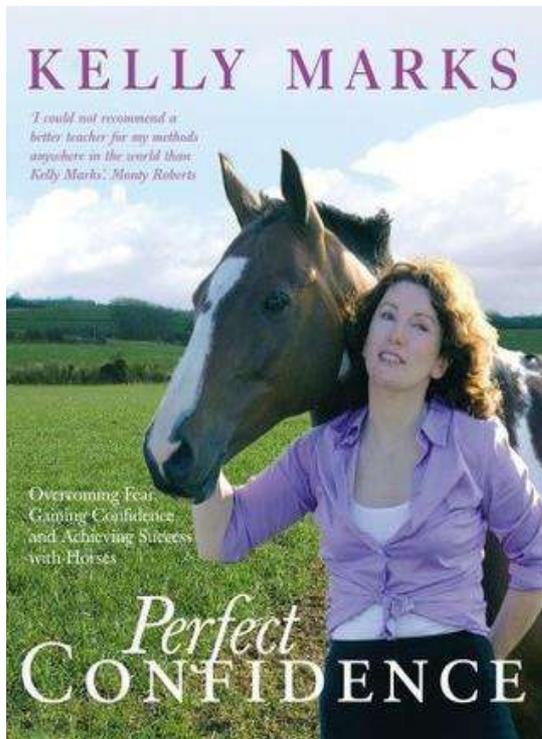
During her riding career she won on the flat, over hurdles and was in the Ladies British Team. In 1991 she stopped using the whip in races as it 'just felt wrong' whipping a horse whether racing or not.

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.

There are many ways to do fine work as in individual or when leading a team. Sometimes this depends on the kind of work you want to do.

People who work in certain caring professions, for example, are often prepared to spend a lot of time helping people who have social problems. This calls:

For providing a supportive environment;

For having the skills and patience needed to help troubled people to achieve their goals.

People who work in other kinds of teams or organisations may work best with those who are motivated to achieve certain goals. This highlights another model which seems rather tough but, at times, it may be necessary to take this approach.



Great teams often get the right mixture of warriors and warrior wizards. They do not employ people who want to keep complaining.

Different 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."

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 this ability and
add touches of wizardry are:*

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*

*

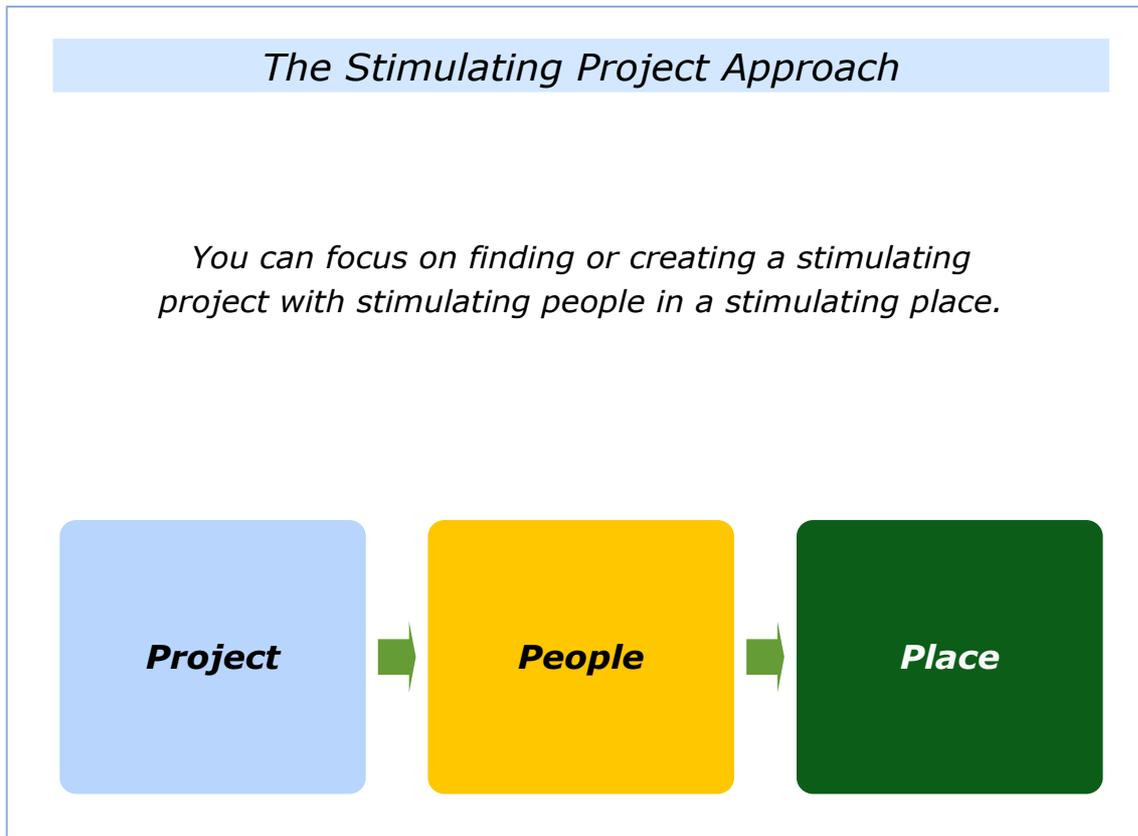
*The specific things that may happen
as a result of taking these steps may be:*

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*

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The 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:

*

*

*

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:

*

*

*

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.

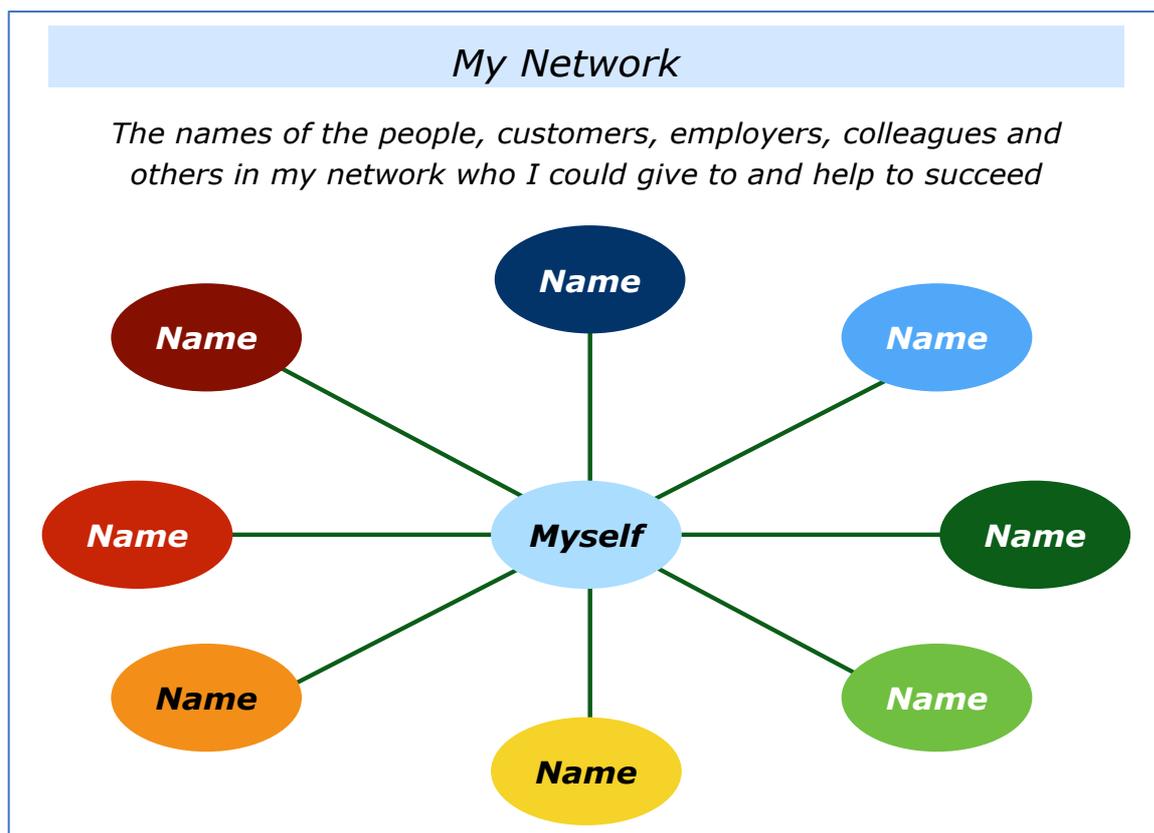
Do things that put a spring in your step. You can share knowledge, recommend books, offer to provide a pair of hands or connect like-minded people by putting them in touch with each other.

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:*

*

*

*

*The specific things I can then
do to do my best to deliver
success when doing the project are:*

*

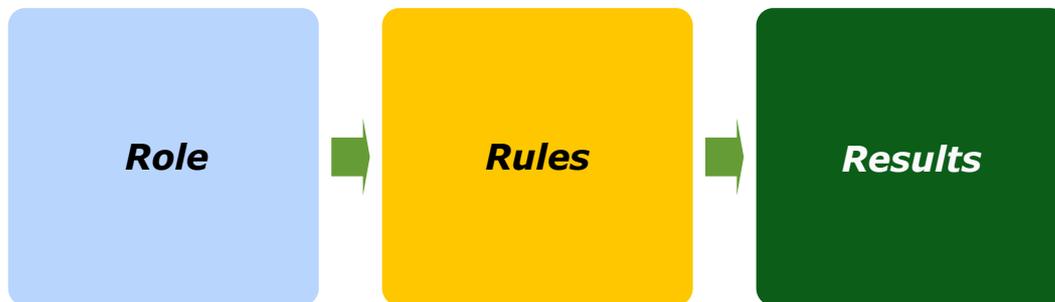
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The Rewarding Role Approach

The Rewards Of Going Into Role

Some people find it rewarding to go into role. This is a route sometimes taken by introverts in their professional work. They then aim to follow certain rules on the way towards getting the desired results.



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is for a person to choose to go into what they find to be a rewarding 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:*

*

*

*

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.

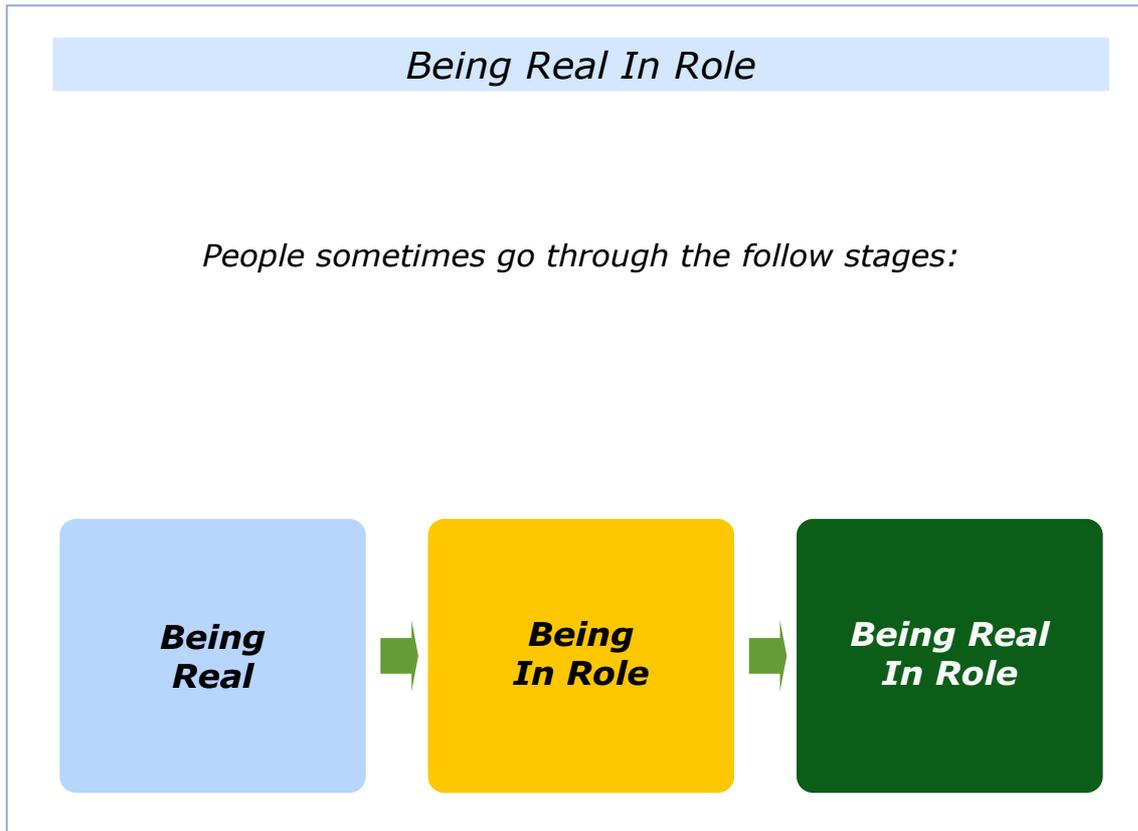
Great leaders sometimes follow a similar pattern. They like to reflect, make decisions and plan the future strategy. They also mentally rehearse how they will act in certain situations and the key messages they want to give people.

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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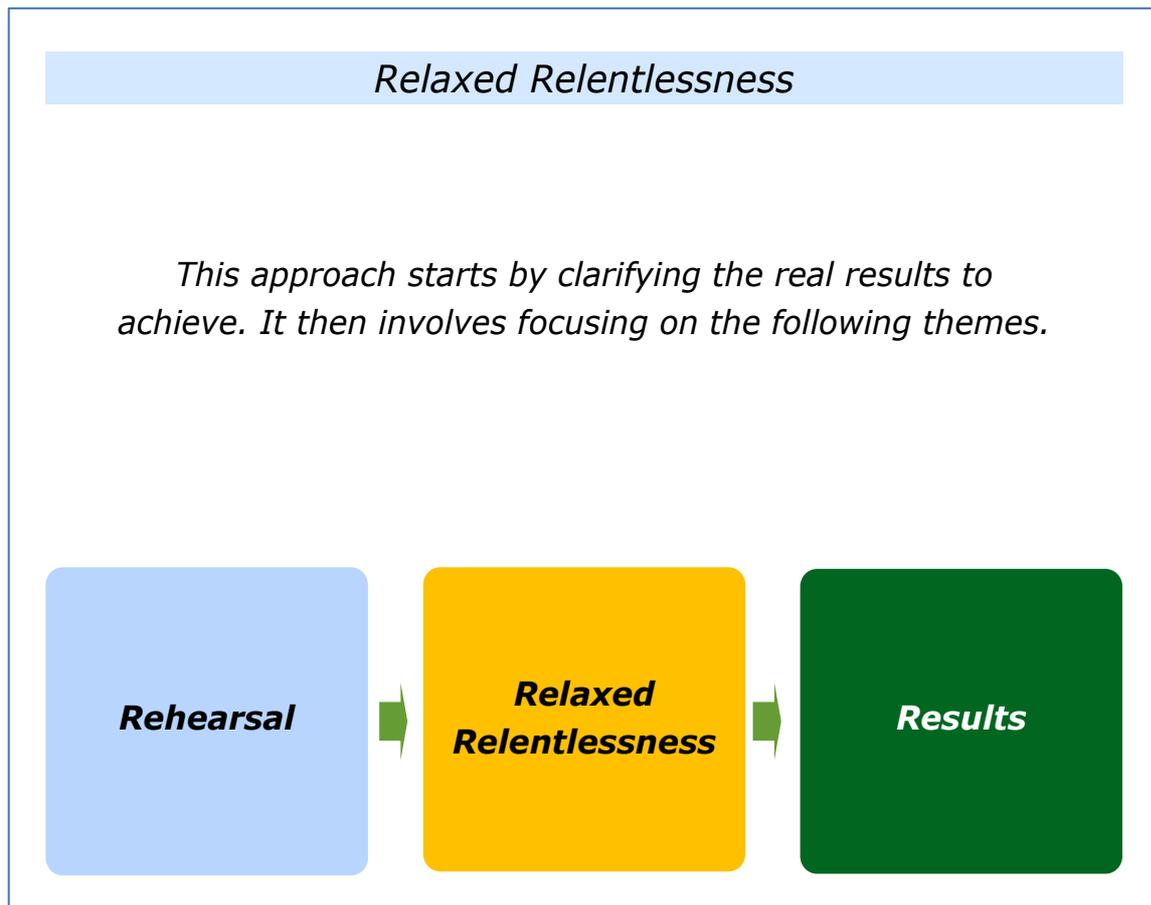
*The specific things that may happen
as a result of going into role may be:*

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The Relaxed Relentlessness Approach



Great athletes sometimes follow these steps when performing at their best. It is an approach that 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.

"I then returned to the work with renewed energy. Following this pattern helped me to complete the project."

You will have your own approach to following the 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 elements of this approach was:

*

The specific things I did then to follow elements of this approach were:

*

*

*

The specific things that happened as a result were:

*

*

*

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 began to define the results you wanted to deliver for the organisation. Bearing in mind the research you had done already, you aimed:

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 could follow to deliver these results;

To clarify the specific things that would be happening that would 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 clarified the targets to be achieved under the relevant headings. You may then aim 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 deliver. For example, you may want one of your external customers to say the following things about you.

"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:*

*

*

*

*The specific things I can 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:*

*

*

*

*The specific things I can 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:*

*

*

*

*The specific things I can do to do my best
to ensure they are saying these things are:*

*

*

*

Rehearsal

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 former 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 is the positive visualisation approach.

Bearing in mind what you can control in a situation, this involves focusing on what you do want to do rather than don't want to do. You can then relax and work through the following steps.

The Positive Visualisation Approach

You can start by clarifying what you can control in the situation. Bearing these things in mind, you can then work through the following steps.

Success

You can clarify the real results you want to achieve - the picture of success. You can then focus on the following steps.

- *Strategies*

You can rehearse following the key strategies that you believe will give you the greatest chance achieving success.

- *Solutions*

You can rehearse anticipating and overcoming potential challenges on the road towards achieving success.

- *Success*

You can again rehearse pursuing the key strategies for achieving the picture of success.

Imagine that you have prepared properly and want to translate your strategies into action. One approach is to focus on the next step.

Relaxed Relentlessness

Great Workers, Teams And Organisations

They build on their strengths and clarify the strategies they want to follow to achieve success. They then follow a certain rhythm by creating a structure that enables them:

- *To pursue their chosen strategies;*
- *To perform superb work;*
- *To do their best to achieve success.*

They then demonstrate a relaxed relentlessness when pursuing these strategies on the way towards achieving success.

Great workers often take this approach. Bearing in mind their strengths, they clarify the strategies they want to follow to achieve success.

They then aim to follow a certain rhythm by creating a structure that enables them to follow their chosen strategies. Moving into action, they demonstrate relaxed relentlessness on the way towards achieving success.

Let's return to the scenario we explored earlier. Imagine that one of your former managers has hired you to do a project in their organisation. You have clarified the key strategies you can follow to do your best to deliver success. Bearing these in mind, you may aim:

To keep following your chosen strategies by doing the right things in the right way every day;

To keep managing your energy properly and following your chosen rhythm;

To keep being relaxed but relentless in the way you pursue your chosen strategies.

Different people develop different rhythms for doing fine work. One person said:

"Preparation is crucial. I then have a ritual for clicking into action and hitting the ground running. My best performances come from being able to get into my rhythm and deliver the required results.

"Sometimes I get distracted. But I have now developed a ritual for regaining my rhythm and doing good work."

If you are a creative artist, for example, you may have a certain ritual for clicking into action. You may work for a set time and then take break. You may go for a walk or do something else before returning to the work.

Several leaders I worked with before Covid established a different kind of rhythm. One leader for the European arm of a global business explained this in the following way.

"I prefer my lifestyle now, compared with when I headed the UK business. My working work has the following pattern.

"On Monday I take the children to school and then take a lunchtime flight to one of the major capitals. Monday night is spent having dinner with colleagues or clients. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday are devoted to clients visits.

"Sometimes this involves another flight on, for example, Wednesday night. The work is intensive, but it is also rewarding. I am able to play to my strengths, which is working directly with clients.

"Normally I fly back on Thursday evening and take the children to school on Friday. The rest of the day is spent working from home and finalising plans for the next week.

"This sounds tough, but it was harder when I ran the UK business, which meant travelling into London every day. My diary was full from the moment I entered the building.

"There were always crises to solve and meetings to attend. Sometimes I was lucky to get home before 8.00 pm at night.

"The lifestyle I have now is excellent. Sometimes I need to spend a week in the USA, but that is fine.

"I have also built a good leadership team who run the daily business. They release me to do what I do best, which is to work with customers and shape tomorrow's business."

Let's assume that you are following your own approach to being relaxed but relentless. It will then be time to focus on the final stage.

Results

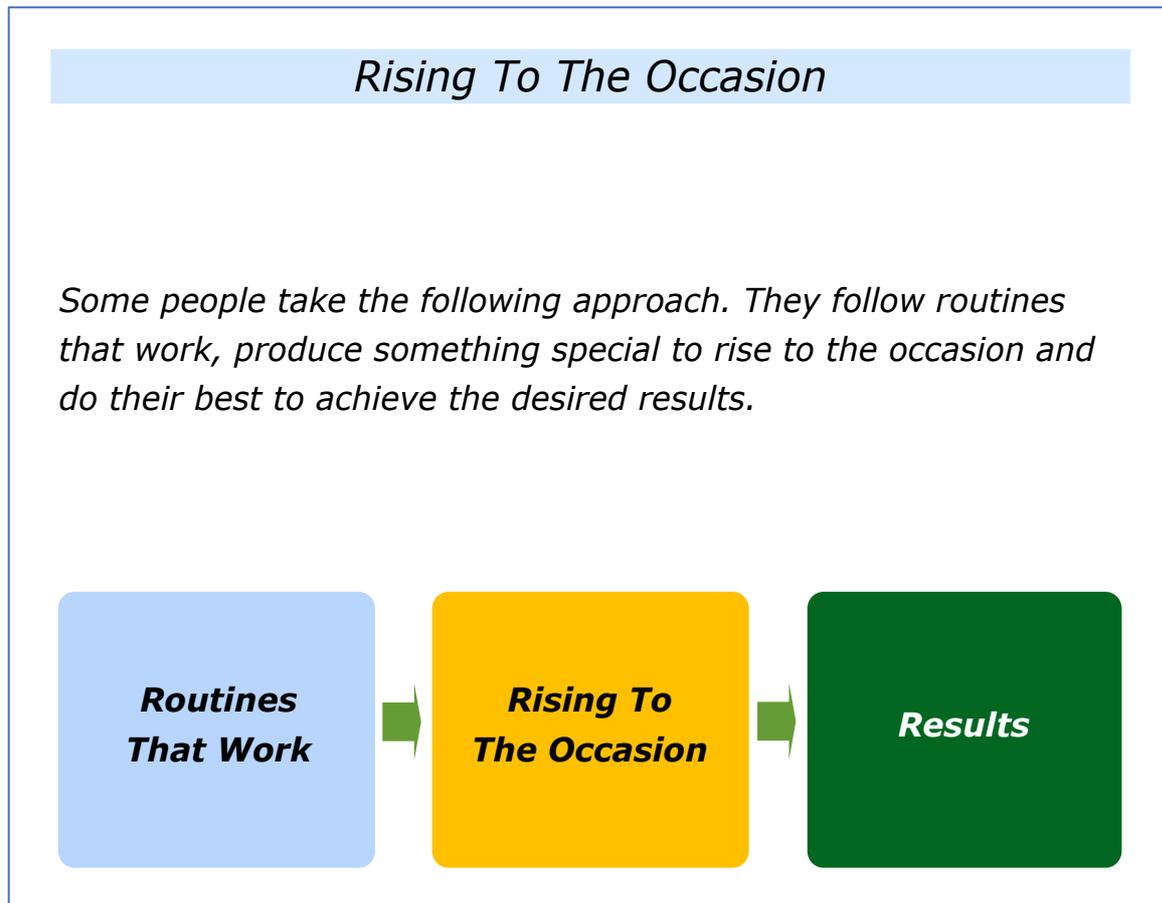
Imagine that you are doing the freelance work in the organisation and aiming to deliver success. Like many people in today's world, it will be vital:

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 calls for doing something special to perform superb work, tackle challenges or achieve your goals. Some people do this by taking the following approach.



Great workers continue to follow routines that work. They aim to keep doing the right things in the right way. This creates the platform for moving on to the next stage.

Such workers then aim to rise to the occasion. They buy time to think, look ahead to the challenge and clarify the real results they want to achieve.

They relax and explore the potential options for going forwards.. Sometimes this involves reaching into their repertoire to clarify the strategies they want to pursue.

Great workers rehearse how they are going to tackle the challenge. Moving into action, they then become totally engaged. Pursuing their

chosen strategy, they do their best to rise to the occasion and produce the desired results.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead can you think of a specific situation where you may want to follow some elements of the relaxed relentlessness approach?

You may want to do this when pursuing a project, tackling a challenge or doing another activity. You may want to do it when working as a therapist, mentor, leader, trusted advisor or in another role.

How can you clarify the results to achieve? How can you rehearse what you are going to do? How can you follow your chosen rhythm? How can you follow the relaxed relentlessness approach? How can you rise to the occasion? 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
elements of this approach may be:*

*

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

*

*

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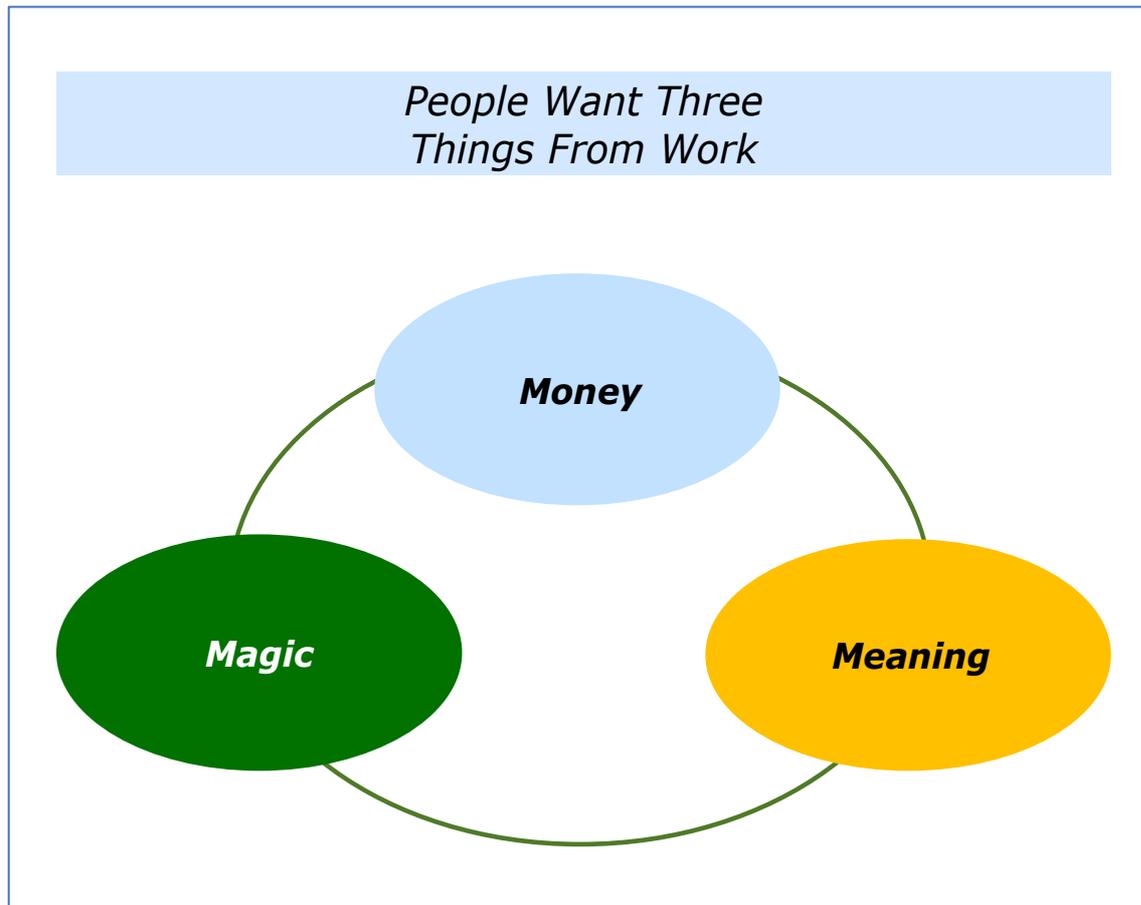
*The specific things that may
happen as a result may be:*

*

*

*

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:*

*

*

*

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:

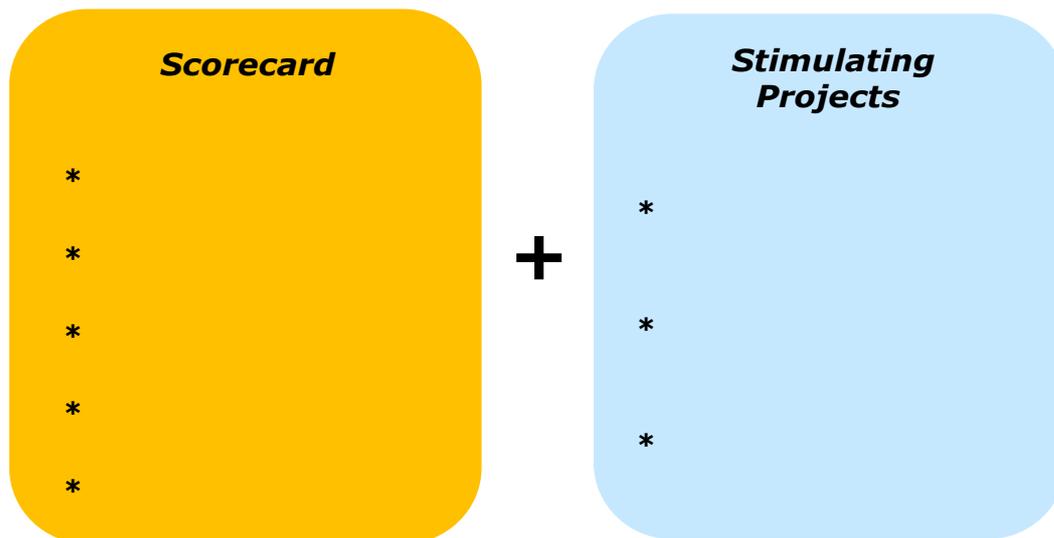
To get wins for the organisation, wins for the customers and wins for the colleagues.

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:

*

*

*

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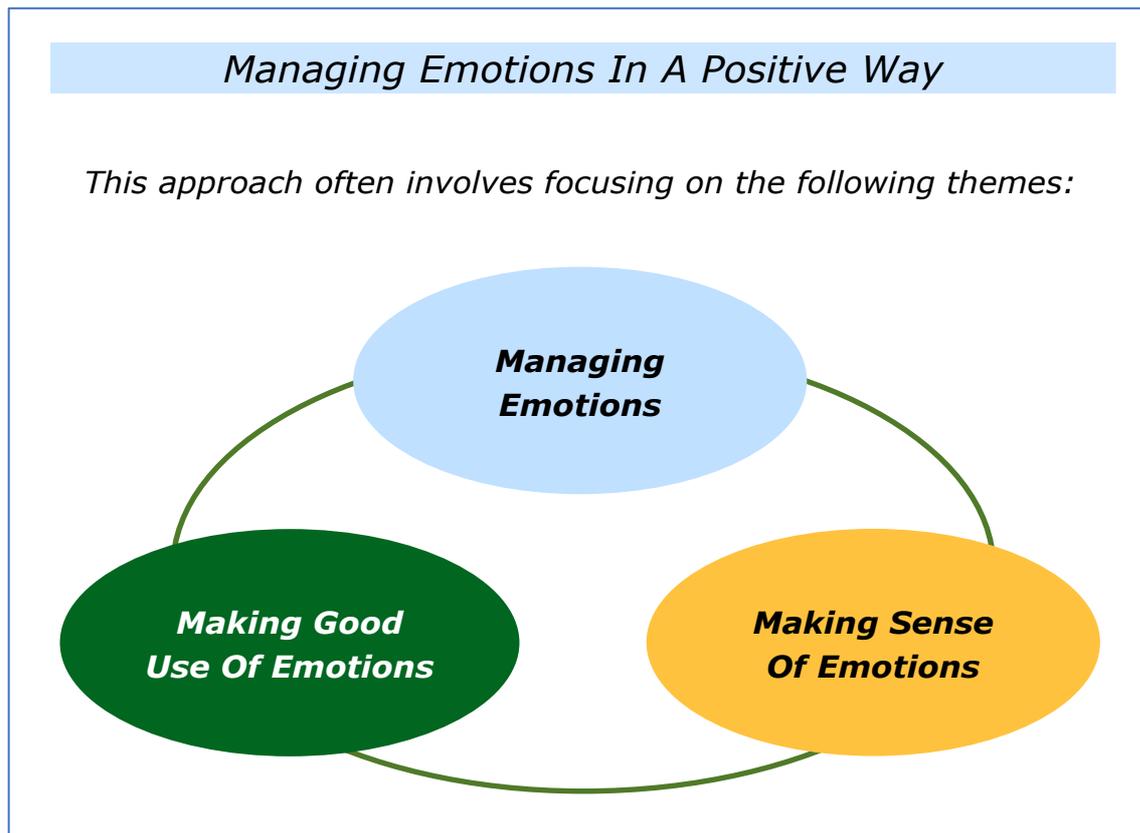
*The specific benefits of
taking these steps will be:*

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The Managing Emotions Approach



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:

*

The specific things I did then to manage the emotions in a helpful way were:

*

*

*

The specific things that happened as a result of taking these steps were:

*

*

*

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.

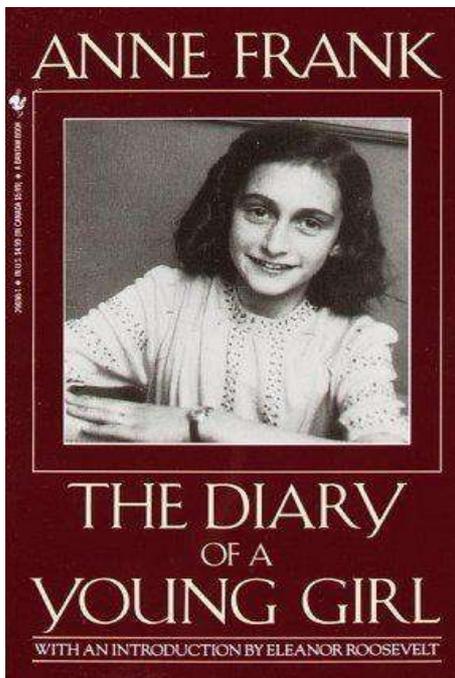
They can translate their sadness into doing something that helps other people – because giving to others often helps the giver to feel good.

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."

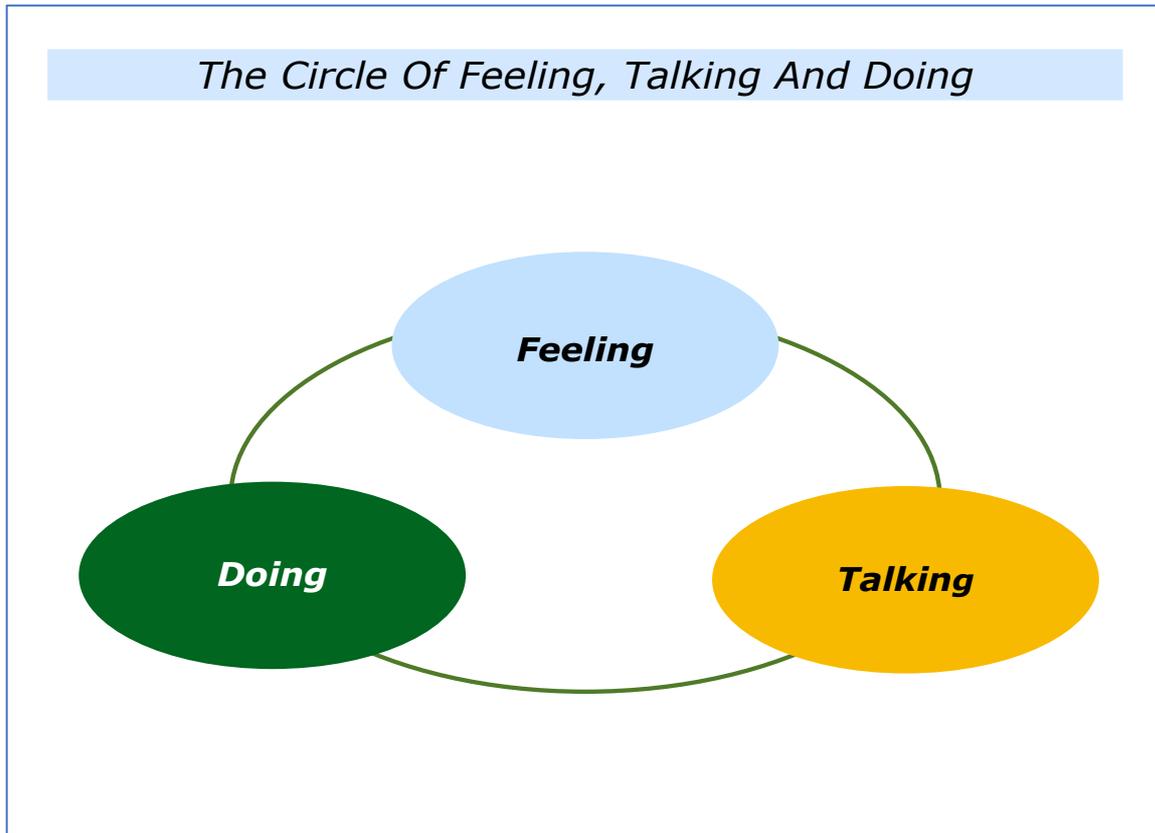
"Look at how a single candle can both defy and define the darkness."

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.

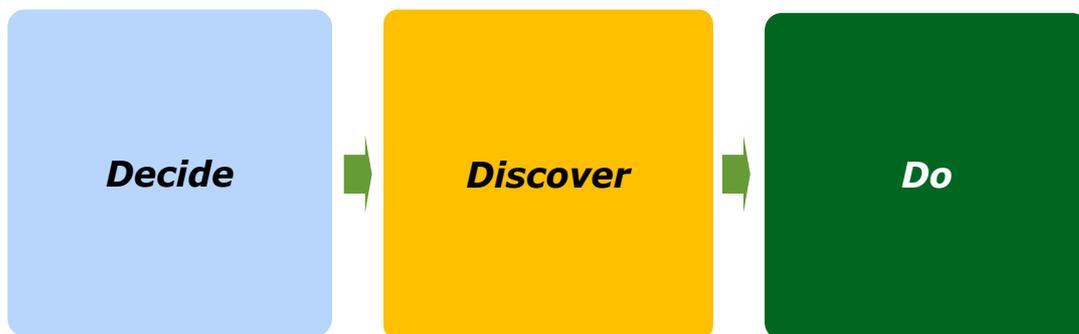
Feeling, talking and doing are all important. If somebody wants to feel differently quickly, however, they can do this by behaving differently.

People can choose what they do and, in this way, often choose their feelings. Let's explore this approach.

The Deciding The Feeling You Want Approach

Deciding The Feeling You Want

There are many ways to manage your feelings. One approach is to decide on the feeling you want, to discover how you can get that feeling and then to do your best to get that feeling. It is to:



There are many ways to manage your feelings. One approach is to decide on the feeling you want, to discover how you can get that feeling and then to do your best to get that feeling. Let's explore these themes.

Decide

The first step is for a person to decide what feeling they want. This may sound like a cerebral way of managing feelings but I have seen it work on many occasions.

Person A wanted to move from being depressed to feeling happier in their daily life. They wanted to do things that put a spring in their step and enabled them to look forward to each day.

Bearing these things in mind, we explored: a) what they would like to feel; b) what they would like to do; c) what their perfect day would look like. We then explored how to make this happen.

Person B felt worried about what was happening in the world and carried this cloud with them. This affected both themselves and other people. They wanted to feel more hopeful.

We explored what they could do: a) to decide whether they wanted to spread practical hope or depress people; b) to study the positive things happening in the world; c) to focus on what they could control and do positive things in their own life.

Person C felt apprehensive about embarking on a two-month course of cancer treatment. They did not look forward to each day's routine which could dominate their life. They wanted to uplift their spirits.

We explored: a) the long-term feeling they wanted to achieve – which was living longer and encouraging their grandchildren; b) the things they could do to focus on those feelings; c) the things they could do to encourage themselves and others on the journey during their treatment.

Imagine that you want to want to feel grateful, happier, fulfilled, at peace or have another feeling. You may then want to explore the following theme.

Discover

This step involves discovering how to increase the possibility of getting the desired feeling. It involves focusing on what works and asking the following questions.

What is the feeling I want? What have I done right in the past to have this feeling? What were the principles I followed? What have other people done to get such feelings?

What are the principles I can therefore follow to increase the chances of having such a feeling? How can I translate these into action? How can I get some quick successes and encourage myself on the journey?

Imagine that you have discovered some of the ways that can increase the possibility of getting the desired feeling. You may then want explore the next theme.

Do

This step involves doing your best to get the desired feeling. Imagine that you want to feel more positive, happier or at peace. If appropriate, you may aim:

To clarify the strategies you can follow to increase the chances of getting the desired feeling;

To translate those strategies into a clear action plan for getting the desired feeling;

To move into action, get an early success and do your best to get the desired feeling.

There are many ways to live a fulfilling life. One model is to follow the decide, discover and do approach to shaping your feelings.

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

What may be the feeling you want to get in the situation? What are the principles you can follow to increase the likelihood of getting the feeling? How can you do your best to follow these principles to get the desired feeling?

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

The Deciding The Feeling You Want Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

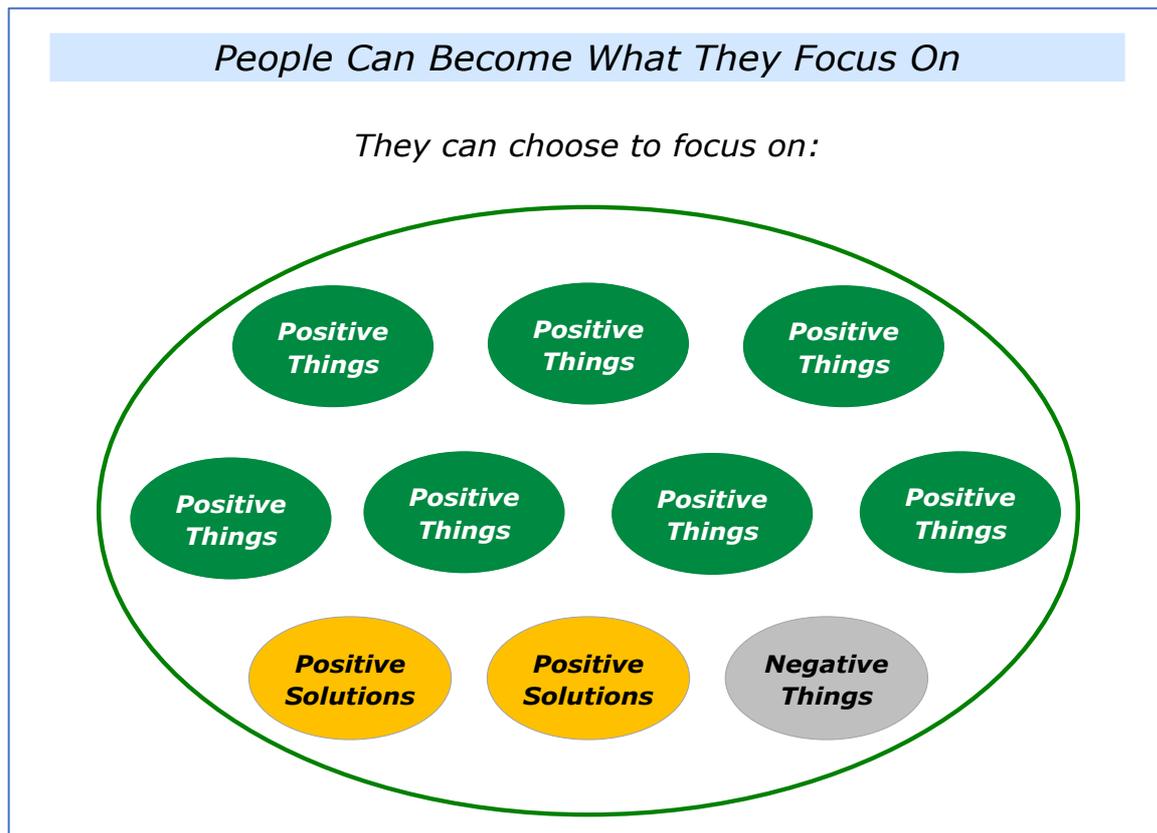
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

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The People 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 Daily Delights And Anti-Depressants Approach



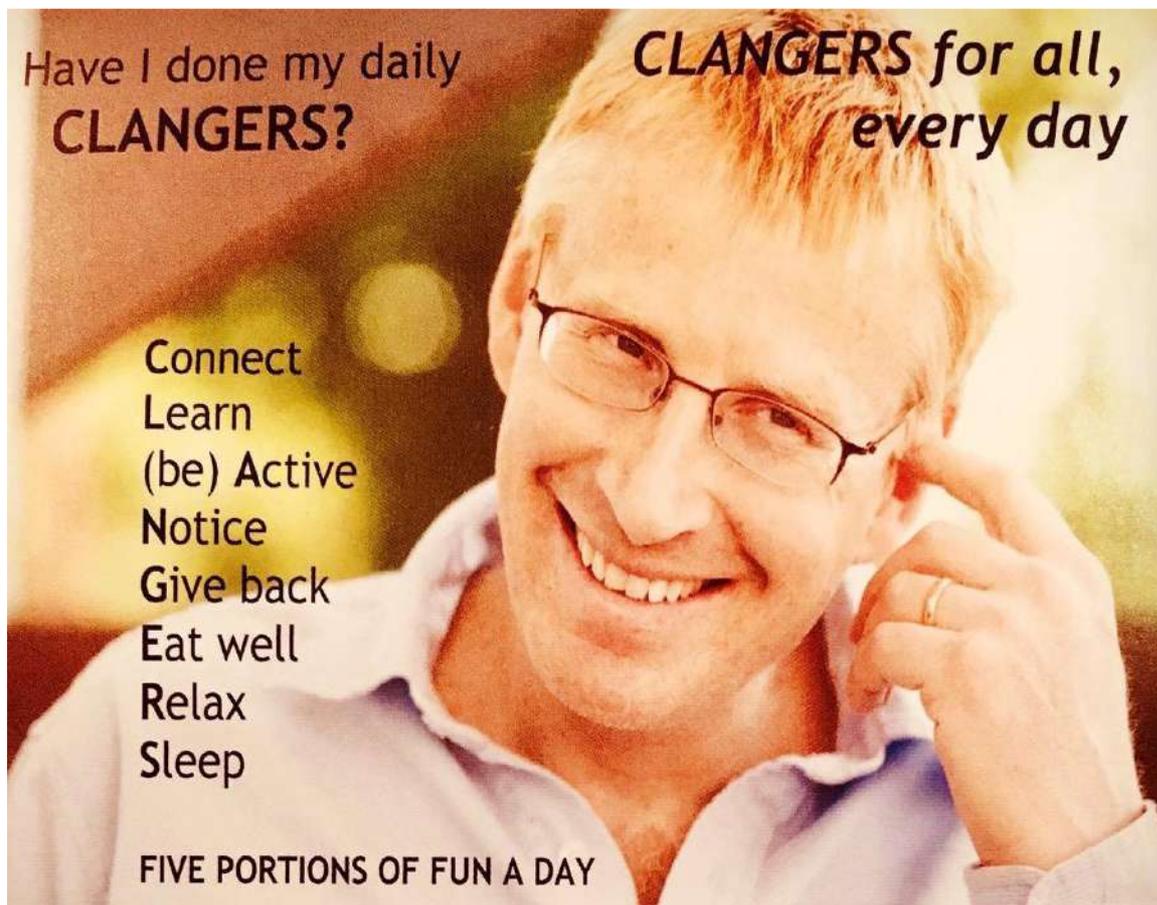
Many people find it challenging to manage their emotions regarding events happening in the world. Some want to know what is happening but also find the information overwhelming.

This feeling was epitomised in the famous cartoon published by David Sipress in the New Yorker in 1989. It in it a woman is saying to a man:

"My desire to be well-informed is currently at odds with my desire to stay sane."

Different people find different ways to manage their emotions. One approach is to make sure you get your daily delights and healthy anti-depressants.

Doctor Phil Hammond describes one such approach. Here is an excerpt from a piece he wrote on this topic.



Our health is our freedom to live a life that we have reason to value, and our ability to bounce back when our circumstances change and life kicks us in the teeth.

Both of these elements of health are more likely to happen if we try to adopt daily habits that are fun, good for us and rewarding. One way to remember them is the acronym CLANGERS, which depicts 8 daily vitamins (and joys) of health.

Connect .. Learn .. Active .. Notice .. Give Back .. Eat well .. Relax .. Sleep

These are the fundamentals of feeling good and, if you can do them at regular times to fit in with your body's natural 24 hour rhythm (particularly eating, exercising and sleeping), it should improve how you feel and your energy levels.

Doing Your Daily Clangers

- **CONNECT** with the world around you.

Human beings are social animals. We are leaves on a tree, needing to feel part of something bigger. Reach out to people, pets, plants, places and the planet.

- **LEARN**

What do you want to do with your one wild and precious life? A purpose in life often stems from learning about what matters most to you, developing a passion for learning and keeping your curiosity alive.

- **BE ACTIVE** in mind and body.

Rediscover activities and passions you left behind. Have the courage to try new ones. Aim for five portions of fun a day, each different, at least one outdoors and one that involved getting pleasantly breathless.

- **NOTICE** and be present in the world around you

Try to be as still as you can for fifteen minutes every day, preferably outside. Fill up your senses. Catch sight of the beautiful. Enjoy the everyday. Savour the moment. Slowing down and focusing on your breathing for ten minutes a day can pay huge dividends.

- **GIVE BACK**

Helping and caring for friends, strangers and those less fortunate than ourselves is fundamental to good emotional health. It cements us as part of a community and develops more meaningful connections and insights.

- **EAT WELL**

Food is above all a pleasure. Learn what's good and enjoyable to eat, and in what quantities. Learn how to grow it, where to buy it and how to prepare it. Set time aside to sit and eat with friends and family.

- RELAX

Take time to rest and reflect on the day you've had, reliving and re-savouring the happy memories and having gratitude for friends and family. Learn to meditate. Be kind to your mind and let it wind down and de-clutter.

Our brains are neuro plastic, which means what we focus on is what grows. So if we learn to relive happy moments and have gratitude for the good things, it can actually make us happier. And this happy end of day wind down can really improve your sleep.

- SLEEP

Good sleep is one of life's great joys. It's also essential for mental and physical health, helping you prevent and recover from a whole range of illnesses and improving your energy levels, creativity and performance.

Doctor Phil works with young people and others who experience chronic fatigue. There are many physical and psychological approaches to helping such people to regain their health.

One approach is to encourage them to do that things that give them delight. It is also to pursue some of the healthy anti-depressants – such as walking, exercising, playing and doing things that give them joy.

People who experience bipolar feelings are sometimes given similar advice. Here is an excerpt from the website of the American Addiction Centers Resources.

This advises people: a) to follow a regular routine; b) to do things that give them positive energy. It also provides the following suggestions.

Persons with Bipolar Disorder who are in the grip of severe mood episodes are often unable to help themselves or often even to stop themselves from acting out in ways that may damage their health.

However, these same people can do a whole lot to help ensure their health and safety as their bipolar symptoms stabilize (generally with the help of bipolar medication therapy).

Self-help methods include any activities that patients may engage in which will help keep their moods maximally stable. Useful methods that patients might explore would include:

Setting and maintaining a standard bedtime and wake-time.

Eating a healthy diet at regular times each day

Regular physical exercise.

Practicing relaxation or meditation exercises regularly.

Reducing work and family stress as much as is practical.

Regular participation in communities (including peer-support groups, religious communities or other civic or interest-based regular gatherings).

Regular attendance in psychotherapy and/or regular self-monitoring exercises designed to help promote awareness of moods (talking about problems and problem solving help to prevent depression).

Avoidance of mood-altering drugs, including alcohol.

Self-help approaches can help patients increase their ability to resist extremes of emotion (insomuch as that is possible to accomplish), and also help patients to recognize when a shift in mood is about to occur so that they may take steps to minimize the severity and impact of that oncoming mood.

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that you want to develop the habit of doing things: a) that you give you delight; b) that are healthy anti-depressants.

You may aim to count your blessings, spend time with your loved ones, walk with your dog, play music or do creative activities that give you energy. Doing these simple things can feed your soul and provide strength to tackle other challenges.

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

The Daily Delights And Anti-Depressants Approach

*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 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>	
<i>Volunteer Language</i>	<i>Victim Language</i>
<i>They choose to believe: "I can make things happen."</i>	<i>They choose to believe: "Other people make things happen to me."</i>
<i>They choose to take responsibility for their feelings.</i>	<i>They choose to blame other people for their feelings.</i>
<i>They choose to be grateful and appreciate life.</i>	<i>They choose to be grumpy and get angry about life.</i>
<i>They choose to focus on what they can control.</i>	<i>They choose to focus on others they would like to control.</i>
<i>They choose to be builders and try to find win-wins.</i>	<i>They choose to be blamers who try to win and make others lose.</i>

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:

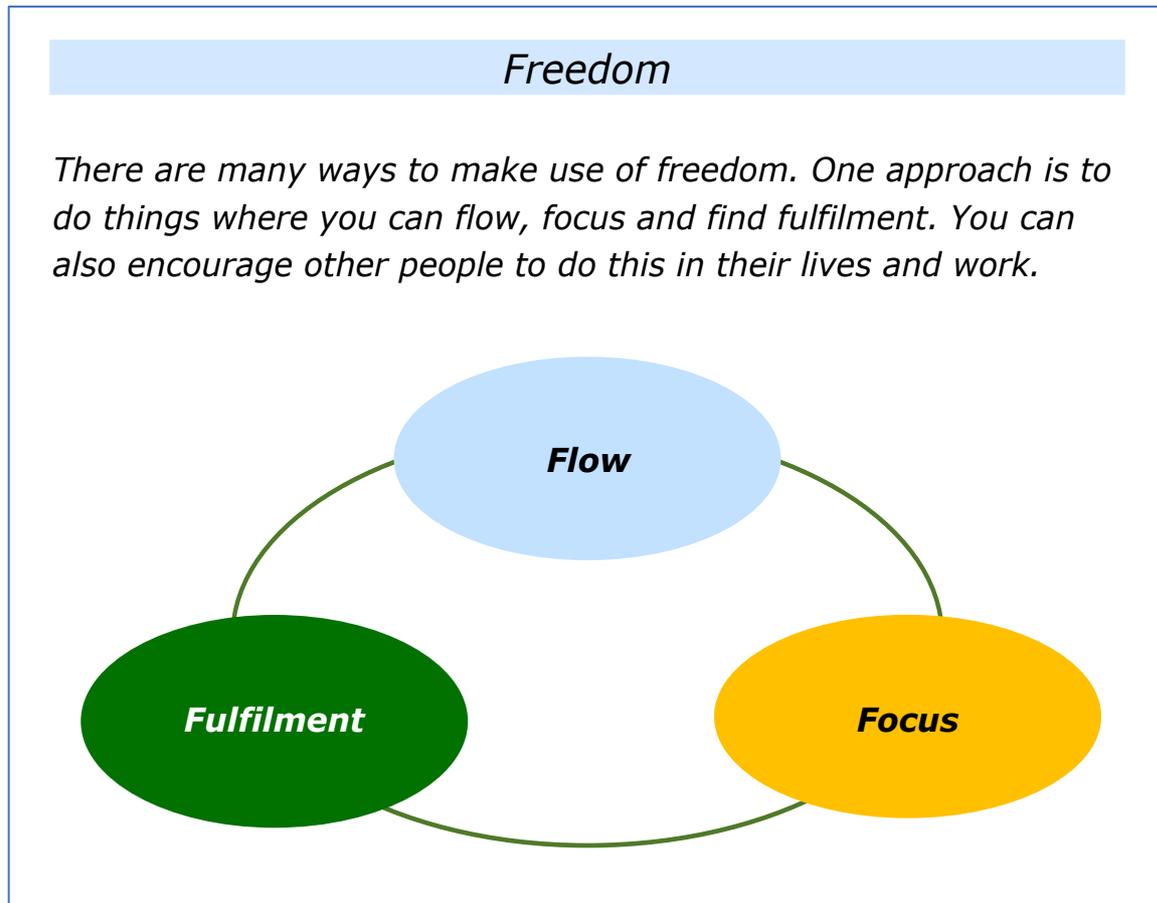
"I am happy to continue to work with you, but it will be important for you to decide if you want to shape your future."

"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 Freedom Approach



Many people aim to get a sense of freedom in their lives. They may aim to have economic, emotional or other kinds of freedom.

Some people make good use of their freedom. They fill their lives with doing projects that bring satisfaction to themselves and other people.

But some people encounter a dilemma. They may have been working so long to achieve this goal that they do not know what to do after achieving it. This can lead to a sense of frustration.

There are many models for making good use of freedom. Some people develop a sense of purpose, follow their principles and work towards a picture of success. Other people follow other approaches.

Some people choose to be passive but in a positive way. They take time out to reflect, recentre and see what happens. This can lead to a sense of

stillness and appreciating life. Sometimes this create new impulses that they want to follow in the future.

Some people choose to be proactive and do things that give them positive energy. They do this in a smooth way rather than a strained way. They aim to enjoy the journey as well as reaching a particular goal.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may have a sense of freedom? How can you make good use of this gift?

One approach is to do things where you can flow, focus and find fulfilment. You also can encourage other people to follow these principles in their lives and work.

Different people follow these paths in different ways. Two people described the steps they took in the following ways.

*Person A – The Freedom
Of Being Myself Again*

Several years ago I left an abusive relationship. I took my daughter, lived with my parents and began rebuilding my life.

Six months later I joined a fitness group, began running and learnt self-defence. This helped me to feel more at ease. Gaining confidence, I began to apply for jobs and eventually got one as a care assistant in a hospice.

I love my job and it teaches me a lot about life. I know it is a cliché, but the main lessons include the importance of being true to yourself. This is something I teach my daughter and also try to follow myself.

The work I do is fulfilling and I am studying to be a nurse. I feel able to breathe and enjoy life. This is something that I relearned in my late-twenties – which is better late than never.

*Person B – What To Do With
Freedom After Selling My Business?*

Since I was a teenager my aim has to been to be financially independent. Maybe this is because of my background, because my parents constantly struggled for money.

Several years ago I fulfilled this dream by selling my marketing business to a big company. This was something I had worked towards for years and gave me a great deal of financial freedom.

Then I experienced something which probably happens with athletes after they have won a gold medal. I kept asking myself: 'What next?' I was looking for the next big thing.

Talking with other entrepreneurs who had sold their businesses, I found they had taken several routes.

Some had thrown themselves into pastimes – such as golf, sailing, climbing or other activities.

Some had done charity work or had become advisors in their field of expertise.

Some had pursued things that fascinated them and this led to discovering their next project.

Going the latter route, I went to the USA to study social enterprises that were using technology to build a better world. Whilst I got lots of ideas, I kept returning to the theme of helping people to do rewarding work.

This eventually led to me creating a strengths-based recruitment company. Whilst this is a crowded field, our business creates wins for both the employers and employees.

I enjoy leading the business but I am a builder - not a maintainer. Bearing this in mind, I am recruiting somebody to run the business. I will then pursue the next fulfilling project.

Let's consider another situation where some people make use of their freedom. This sounds paradoxical, but some follow this route when realising they have only a certain time to live.

We are told that near death experiences focus the mind. This can certainly be the case with some people who realise they have only so long to live. They choose to live this time by being true to themselves and, in some cases, doing their best to help other people.

Many people were inspired to take this route after hearing about the path followed by Zach Sobiech. Diagnosed with osteosarcoma at the age of 14, he vowed to live life fully and also help other people.

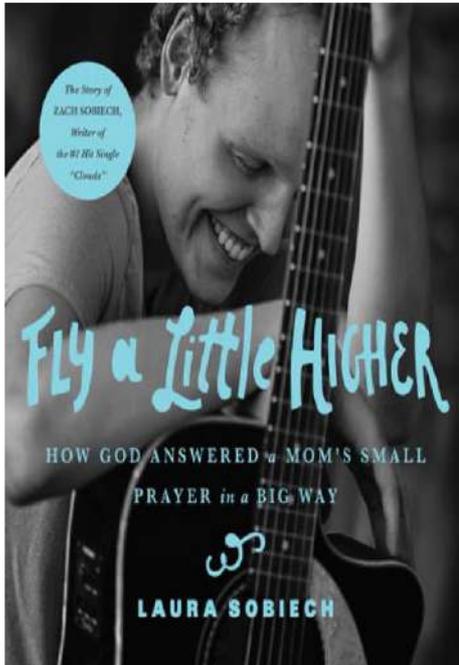
This led to him writing and performing the song *Clouds*, which was viewed by millions on YouTube, and his life was depicted in a Disney film. The American Childhood Cancer Organization's website described him as a Gold Ribbon Hero. Here is an excerpt from the site.

During Zach's journey, he remained incredibly positive and hopeful that his diagnosis was for something big. He told his mom that if he was going to die, he wanted to leave the world a little better than what it was.

He made it his mission to keep a smile on the faces of everyone he met and his energy was felt in every room he walked into.

When Zach received the news that the treatments were no longer working instead of breaking down, he asked for a party. Zach gained his wings in May of 2013 and his legacy lives on with "Clouds."

Laura, his mother, went on to write *Fly A Little Higher*. Here are some of the things Zach said about his life and journey.



"You don't have to find out you're dying to start living."

"I want to be remembered as a kid who went down fighting, and didn't really lose"

"You don't have to wait for things to happen to live your life."

"Try and make people happy, and you will make the world a better place."

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to make good use of freedom?

You may start by doing things you enjoy or find stimulating. How can you then flow, focus and find fulfilment? What may be the benefits – for yourself and maybe for other people – of taking these steps?

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

Freedom

The specific situation in the future where I may enjoy a sense of freedom may be:

*

The specific steps I can take then to do things where can I flow, focus and maybe find fulfilment are:

*

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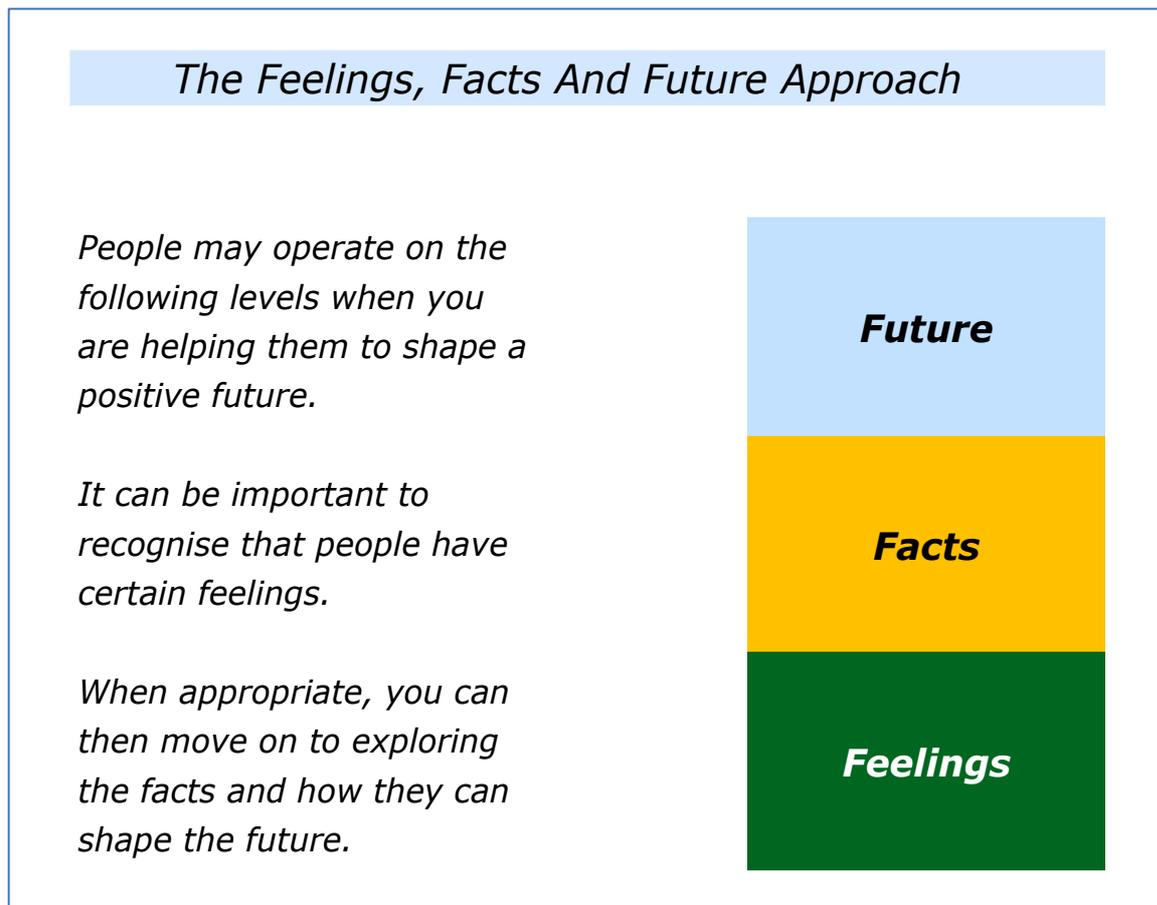
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Feelings, Facts And Future Approach



There are many ways to help people. One approach is to focus on the feelings and facts when helping them to shape their futures. This approach is also worth bearing in mind when communicating with people.

Imagine that you are aiming to encourage a person to deal with a difficult situation. It can be important to recognise that they have certain feelings before moving on to how they can shape their future. Let's look at one example.

A doctor who is giving somebody bad news will recognise the importance of a patient's feelings. They may say something like the following.

"We have got the results back. Unfortunately it is not good news. There are, however, several possible ways forwards."

"I recognise that this may come as something as a shock, so you may need time to reflect. I can also give you any more information you want to know about the results.

"When you are ready, but only when you feel it is appropriate, we can explore the possible ways forward.

"There are several different routes we can take. Each route has pluses and minuses. It is important that you know the implications about each route.

"First of all, however, I can give you any information you want to know about the present situation and the possible ways forwards."

Good communicators recognise the importance of connecting with people. People are different, however, and have different ways of operating. Here are three different ways that people operate. These are extremes, of course, and people often blend these approaches.

Feelings

Some people mainly operate and talk on the level of feelings. Their feelings are real for them and they want these to be respected.

They may have difficulties with people who – for various reasons – may not believe that the person's feelings are justified or who simply want to talk about facts.

Facts

Some people mainly operate and talk on the level of facts. They can find it difficult to communicate with those who operate on the level of feelings.

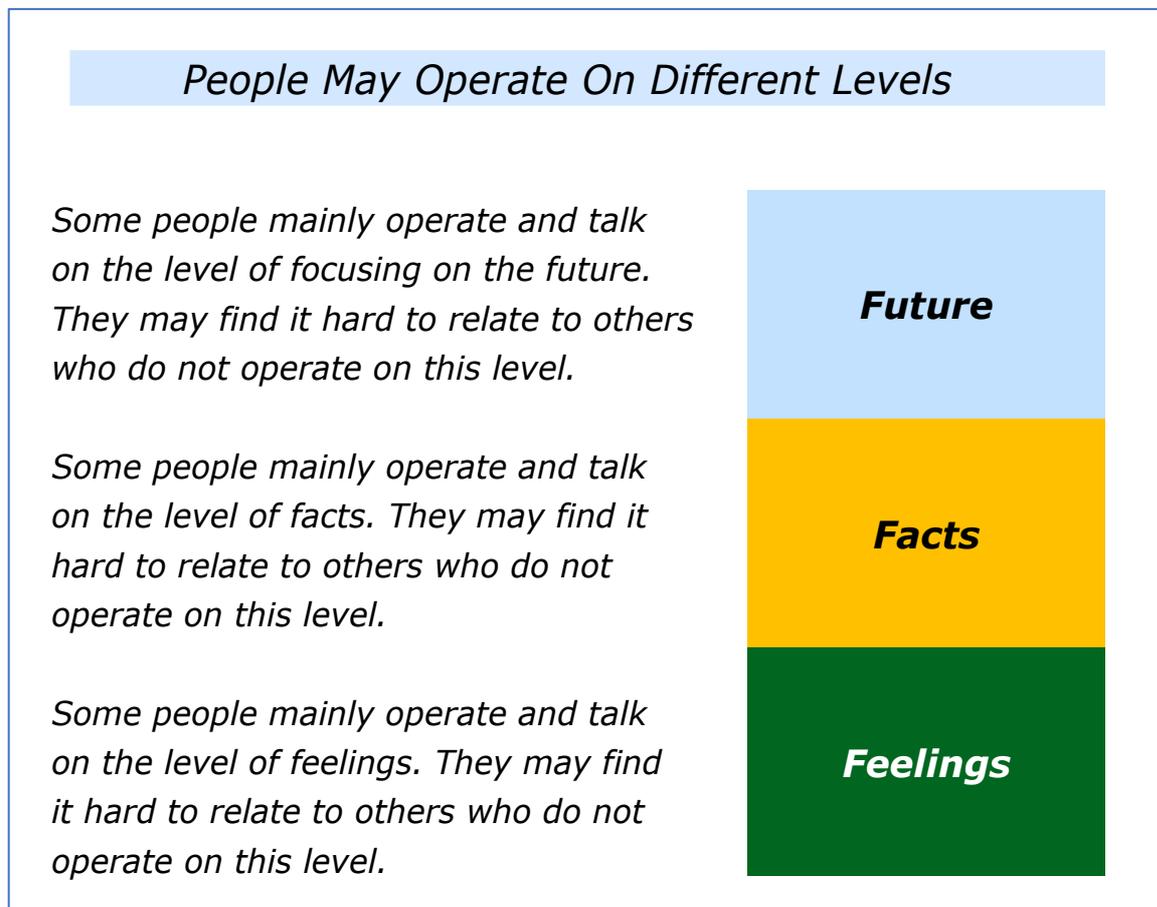
The classic example is when the feelings person says: "I feel ..."

The facts person responds by saying: "But that is illogical. Here are the facts."

Future

Some people operate by focusing on the future. Whatever the situation, they may quickly move into solutions mode or setting positive goals.

Such people do have feelings and do explore facts. They quickly channel these into looking to the future, however, and looking at how to achieve success.



Good therapists, for example, often start on the level at which the other person is operating. When working with a feelings person they will show that they recognise that the person's feeling is authentic. This does not mean that:

They have the same feeling;

They are saying the feeling is justified;

They are prepared to accept how the person behaves in the way they express their feeling.

When I worked as a therapist, if a person said: "I feel ..." I would ask: "What do you want to feel in the future?" We then explored how they increase the likelihood of experiencing that feeling.

Good communicators take similar steps when encouraging people to work towards a positive vision. They often aim:

They recognise the authenticity of people's feelings;

They then show the possible ways forwards – such as the facts – that people can follow to shape a positive future.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach? You may want to help a person to deal with a setback, take the next step in their career, deal with a challenge or reach a specific goal.

What can you do to recognise the person's feelings? When appropriate, how can you encourage them to explore the facts and shape their future? 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 Feelings, Facts And Future Approach

*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
this approach in my own way are:*

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Managing Your High Sensitivity Approach

Managing Your High Sensitivity

This approach sometimes involves going through the following steps.



There are many models for managing your emotions. One approach involves making good use of your high sensitivity. Different people tune into and are highly sensitive to different things.

Some individuals may be strongly affected by physical events – such as certain sounds, images, smells or other sensations. Some may be affected by psychological events – such as people behaving in certain ways.

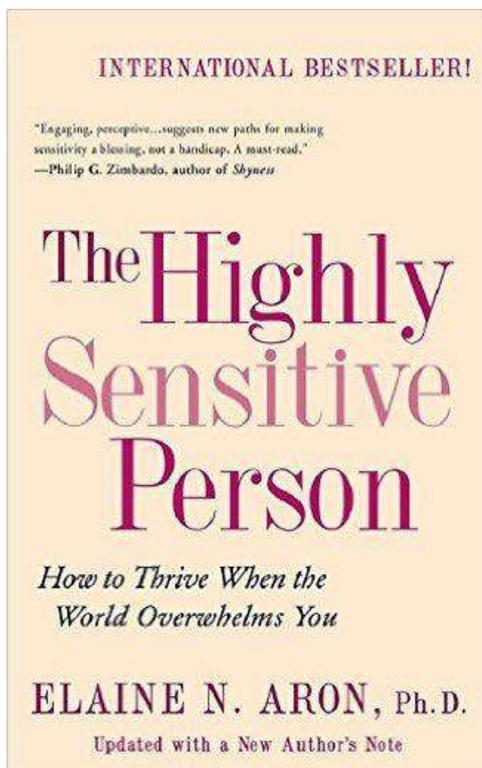
Some people learn how to use their sensitivity in a positive way. Some learn how to manage it. Some find it difficult to deal with the emotions that are triggered by their sensitivity.

The following sections explore some ways to manage such experiences. Let's explore these themes.

Making Sense Of Your High Sensitivity

Elaine Aron introduced many people to this theme in her book *The Highly Sensitive Person*. Sensitivity is what makes us human. It enables us to enjoy life, be empathetic and encourage others.

Every person is different, however, and is sensitive to different kinds of experiences. Sometimes we react in positive ways. Sometimes we react in negative ways.



Sensitivity is what makes us human. Certain experiences enable us to live fully but sometimes we can feel overwhelmed.

Elaine says it can be useful to understand highly sensitive people who: "just feel more deeply."

She also provides many practical tools that we can use to make good use of our own and other people's sensitivity.

Great workers often learn how to use their sensitivity. They translate their experiences into ways of encouraging others, playing music, creating beauty or doing other activities.

This approach calls for going beyond ignoring such signals or being afraid of being called a snowflake. People who learn how to manage their sensitivity can then use it to help other people.

Let's return to your own life and work. You may be sensitive to certain kinds of physical or psychological sensations. These may include the following.

Being Highly Sensitive To Certain Sensations

Physical Sensations

You may be highly sensitive to certain kinds of physical sensations.

These may include certain kinds of sounds, sights, smells, environments or other sensations.

You may respond to these in a positive or potentially negative way.

Psychological Sensations

You may be highly sensitive to certain kinds of psychological sensations.

These may include certain kinds of feelings, values being violated or people behaving in certain ways.

You may respond to these in a positive or potentially negative way.

Managing Your High Sensitivity

Imagine that you may be sensitive to certain physical or psychological stimuli. There are many approaches to manage these experiences. Let's explore some of these themes.

*You can accept your high sensitivity and
choose to manage it in positive ways*

Imagine that you are highly sensitive to certain kinds of sounds. You can choose to accept this trait. You can then aim either:

To surround yourself with sounds that you like;

To avoid sounds that you don't like;

To try to get used to sounds that you don't like.

The same rule applies to other experiences where you have high sensitivity. This leads to the next approach.

*You can aim to control what you
put into your body and soul*

Individuals like to feel in control. They like to manage their environment, their decisions and their future. They also like to feel in control of what they put into their body and soul.

Everything is food. This includes the experiences, sounds, sights, emotions and other things we expose ourselves to each day. Bearing this in mind, you may want to take the follow steps. You may aim:

To put yourself into stimulating environments – such as stimulating sanctuaries or stimulating work places – rather than sapping environments;

To spend time with people who are encouragers and who give you positive energy – plus you also encouraging them - rather than with negative people who take energy;

To focus on positive things happening in the world – such as human beings finding solutions to challenges – rather than only on negative things.

You can focus on experiences that support rather than sap your body and soul. Sometimes this involves the next skills.

*You can find ways to manage triggers
that lead to negative experiences*

Individuals often respond to triggers which can lead to positive or negative experiences. Many people know the triggers they can help them to feel joyful, satisfied and happy. Sometimes it is harder to identify the triggers that lead to them feeling lost, depressed or unhappy.

You may, for example, believe it is important to follow certain values in your daily life and work. You may then get upset when seeing other people violating these values. Such an experience can act as a trigger for you going into a negative spiral.

One approach is to avoid putting yourself into situations where you may encounter negative triggers. If you do encounter one, however, you may want to take the following steps.

You can do something physical – such as to breathe deeply or move away from the triggering situation – to recentre. You can then aim:

To recognise the trigger – which may be a certain kind of experience or people behaving in a certain way – and buy time to think;

To focus on what you can control, clarify the possible ways forward and the potential consequences of each option;

To pursue your chosen strategy, get a quick success and do something to put yourself into a positive cycle rather than a negative cycle.

Imagine that you have developed the habit of putting positive things into your body and soul. This can then lead to the next step.

You can make use of your high sensitivity

Imagine that you are aware of the areas where you have high sensitivity. One approach is to then explore how you can make good use of these qualities.

Some therapists, for example, often have high degrees of empathy. They then use this to help troubled people to survive and then thrive. They do not use this empathy to become overwhelmed by other people's worried.

Some people who care about life on Earth use this emotion to share stories about how others are healing and improving the planet. They do not allow this caring to drive them into depression.

The Verywell Mind website describes some of the qualities shown by highly sensitive people. Here is an extract from the website.

Being A Highly Sensitive Person

Some of the ways that being an HSP might impact your life include the following.

- *You might avoid situations that leave you feeling overwhelmed.*

Highly sensitive people may be more affected by certain situations such as tension, violence, and conflict, which may lead them to avoid things that make them feel uncomfortable.

- *You might be highly touched by beauty or emotionality.*

Highly sensitive people tend to feel deeply moved by the beauty they see around them. They may cry while watching particularly heart-warming videos and can really empathize with the feelings of others, both negative and positive.

- *You may have close relationships with others.*

They care deeply about their friends and tend to form deep bonds with the right people.

- *You may be grateful for the life you have.*

Highly sensitive people appreciate a fine wine, a good meal, or a beautiful song on a level that most people can't access. They may feel more existential angst, but they also may feel more gratitude for what they have in life, knowing that it is possibly fleeting and nothing is certain.

If you know how to manage the unique features of being an HSP, you can make it more of a strength and less of a challenge in your life. For HSPs, lows may be lower, but highs have the potential to be higher as well.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of specific area where you may be highly sensitive? This may involve physical or psychological experiences.

Looking ahead, how can you manage or make use of this sensitivity? What are the practical steps you can take? What may be the benefits to yourself or other people?

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

High Sensitivity

The specific area where I may be highly sensitive may be:

*

The specific things I can do to manage or make use of my sensitivity in this area are:

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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 he 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:

*

*

*

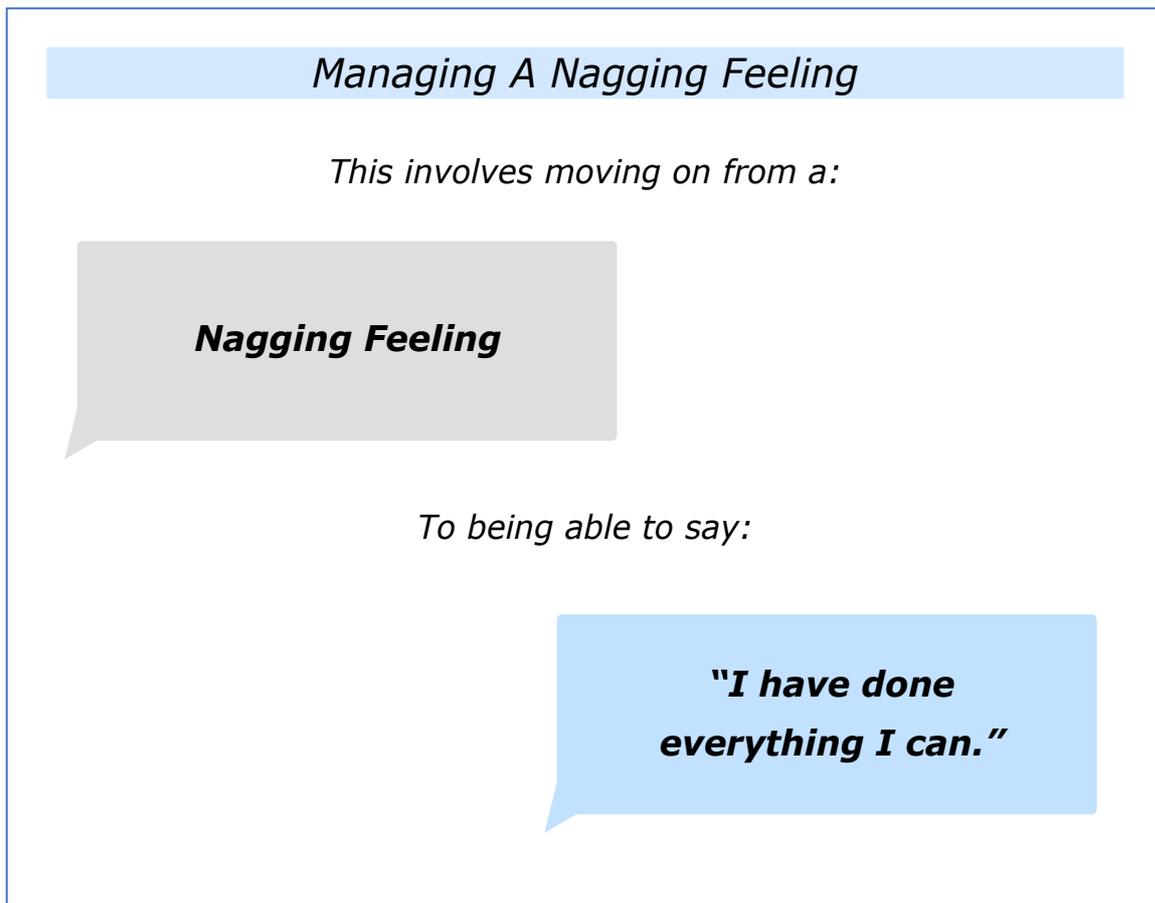
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

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:

*

*

*

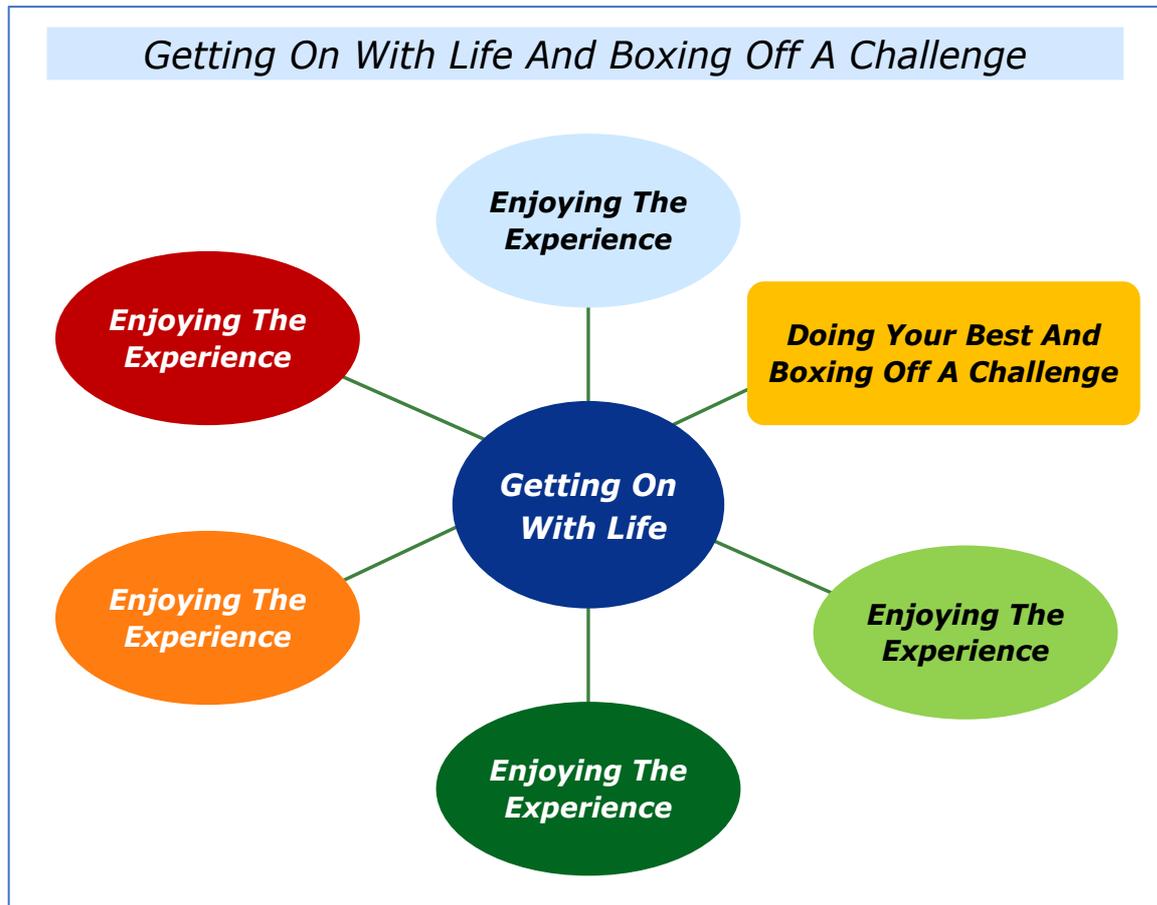
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

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 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.

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 that help people to shape a positive future.

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:*

*

*

*

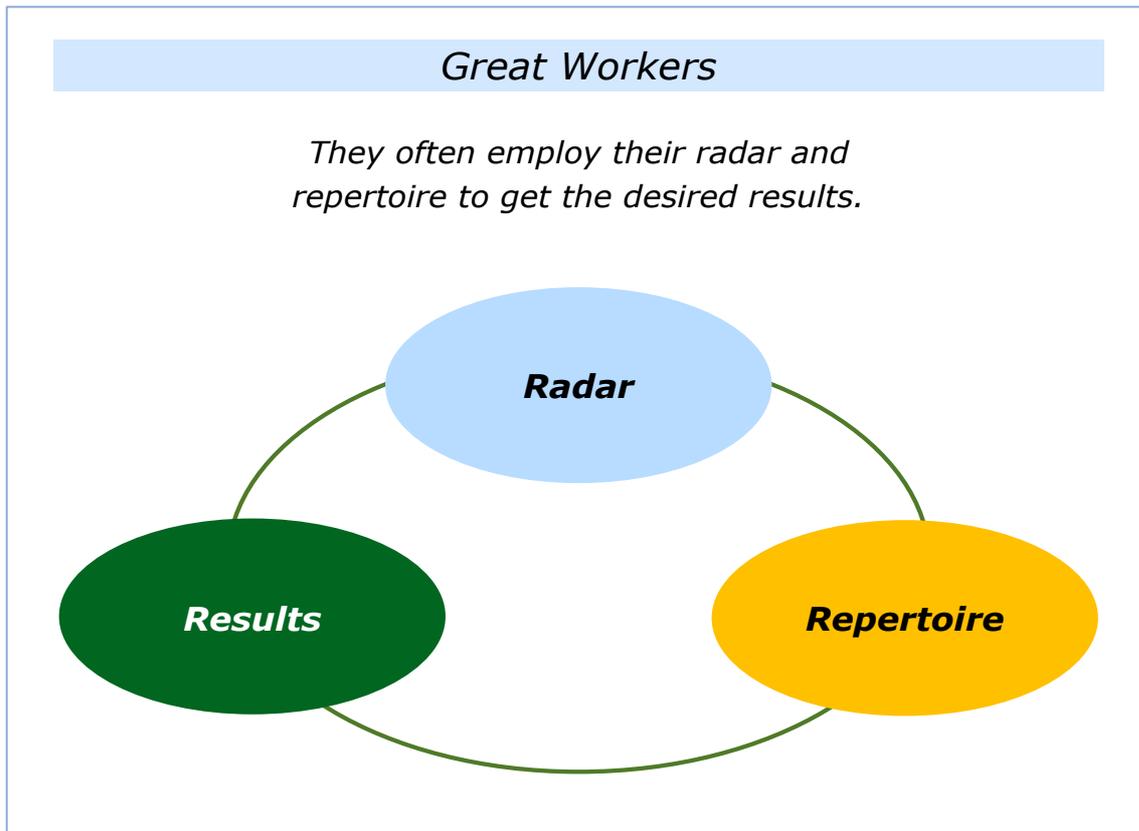
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

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.

Radars

*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."

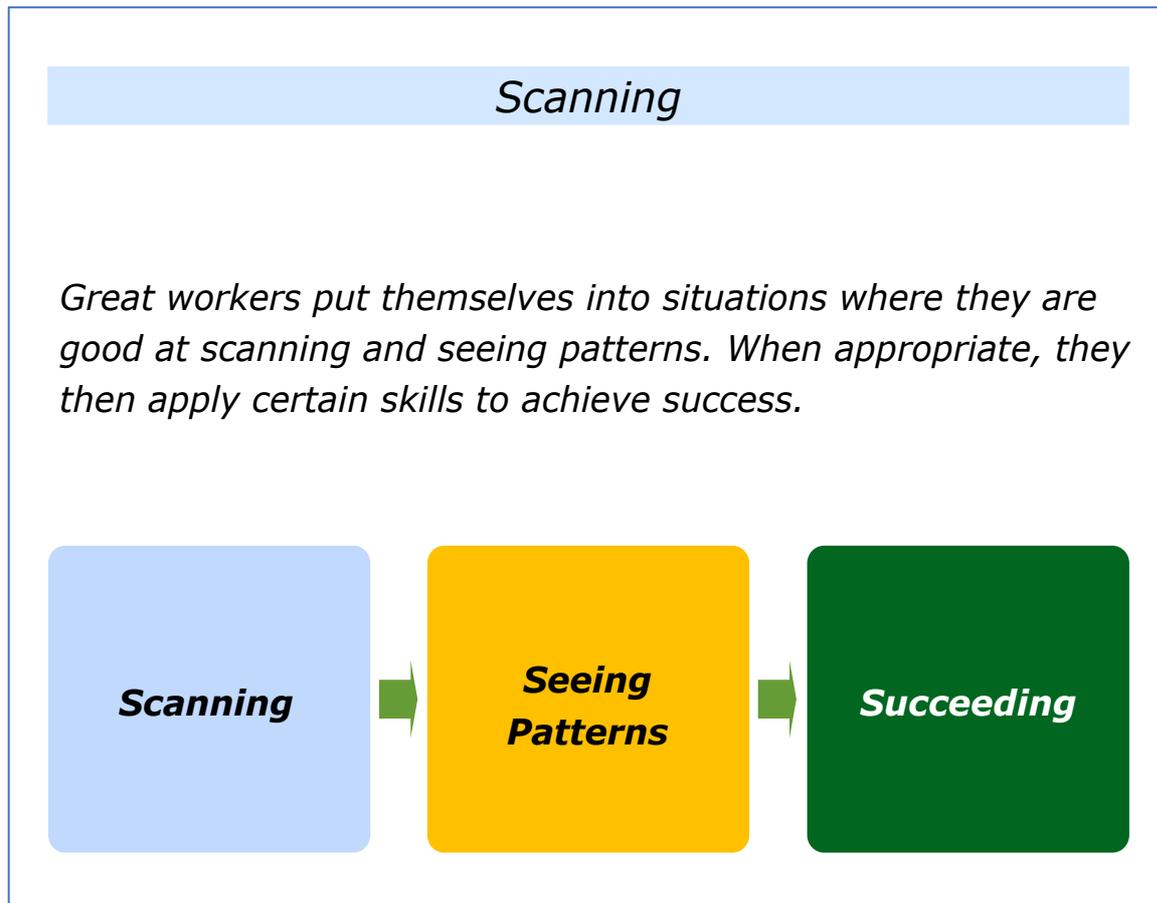
Arsène described the ability: a) to see what is happening; b) to anticipate what may happen. Then then comes the next step. This is developing the ability use this knowledge and make things happen.

Lionel Messi often demonstrated these gifts. Here is how Barney Rooney described this ability in an article in the Guardian.

Footballers are often said to carry a picture in their head. Messi has a great whirring bank of air traffic controller's screens up there, alternate visions of the future to scroll through and finesse.

Messi then applied his remarkable skills to deliver success. He did this on the football field, but other people do it in other areas.

Great workers put themselves into situations where they are good at scanning and seeing patterns. When appropriate, they then apply certain skills to achieve success.



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:

*

*

*

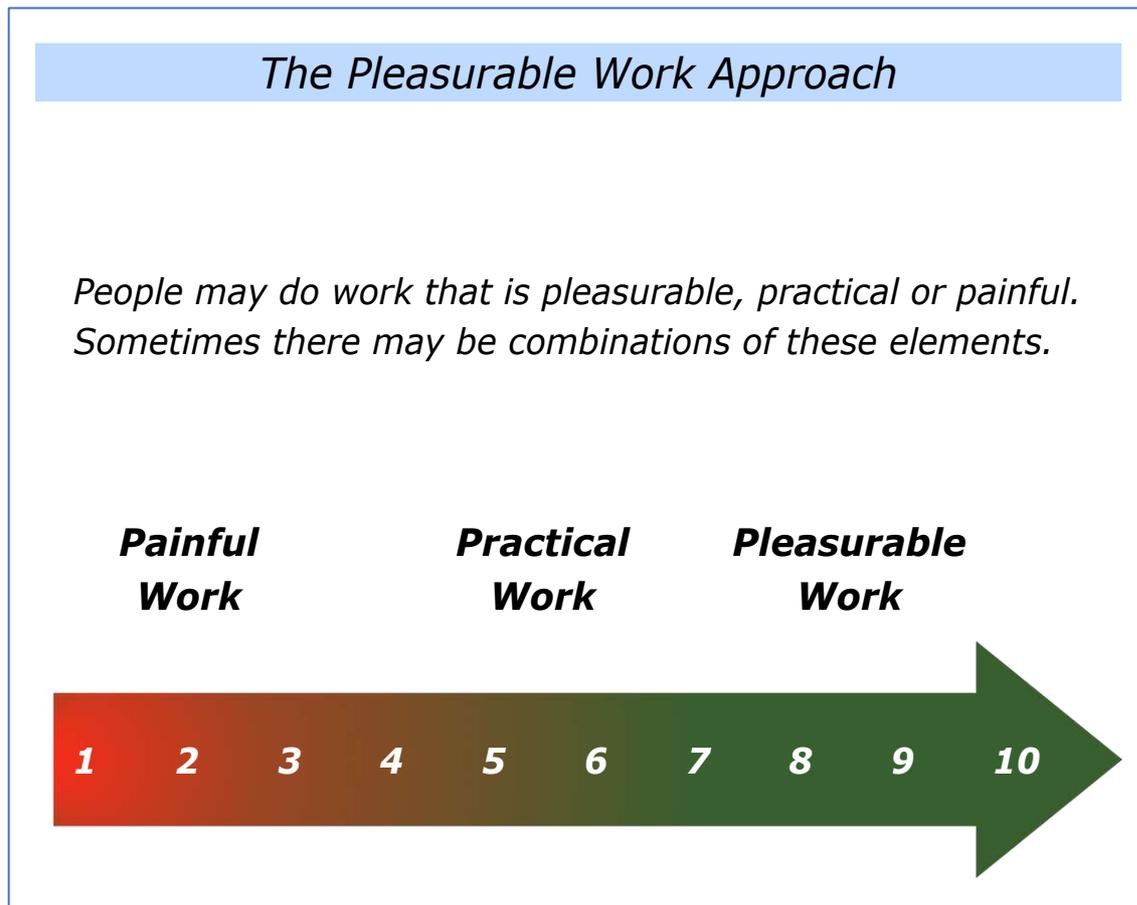
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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*

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The Pleasurable Work Approach



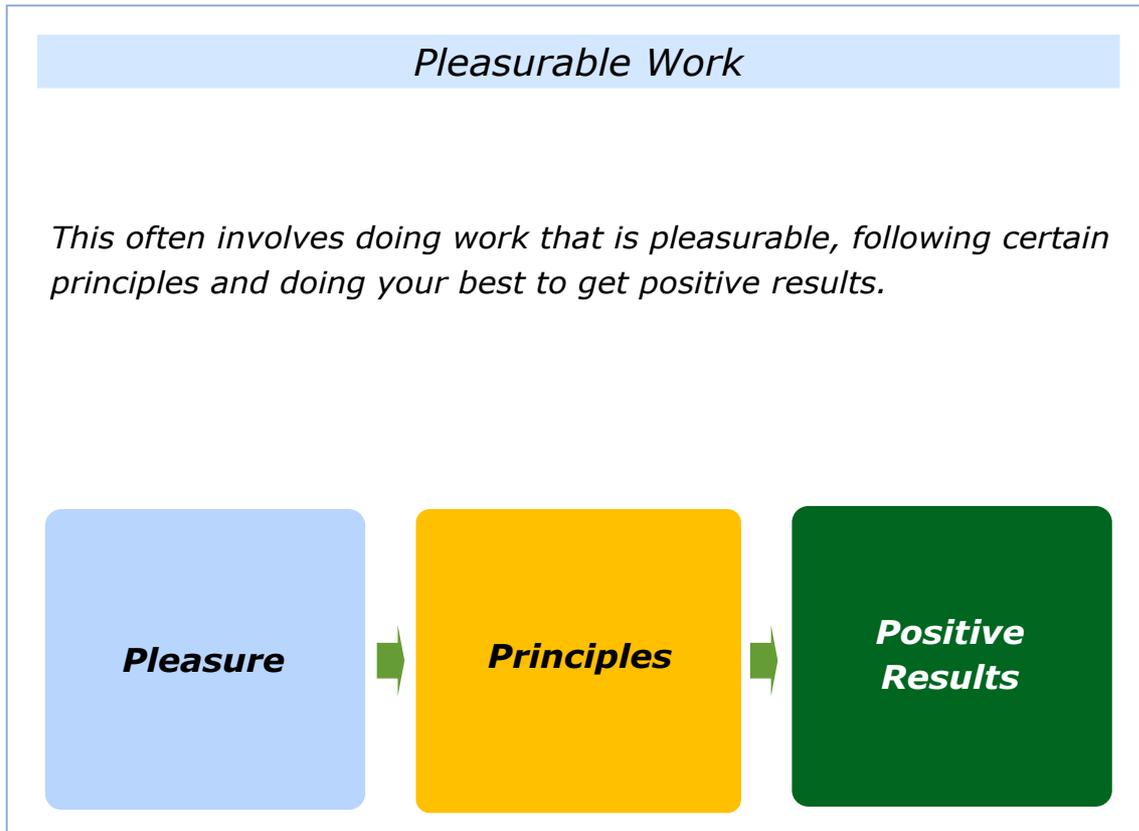
Some kinds of work are pleasurable, some are practical, some are painful. Each person will have different feelings about the various kinds of work. One approach is to take the following steps:

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.

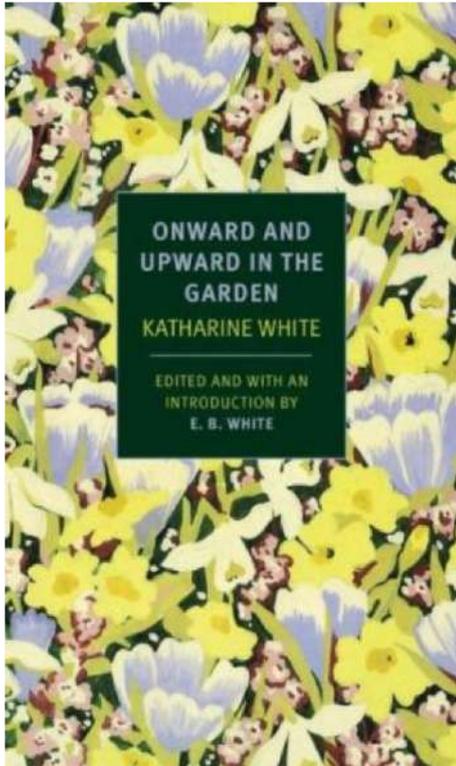


What are the kinds of work that you find pleasurable or that give pleasure to other people? What are the principles you follow then? How do you do your best to get positive results?

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:*

*

*

*

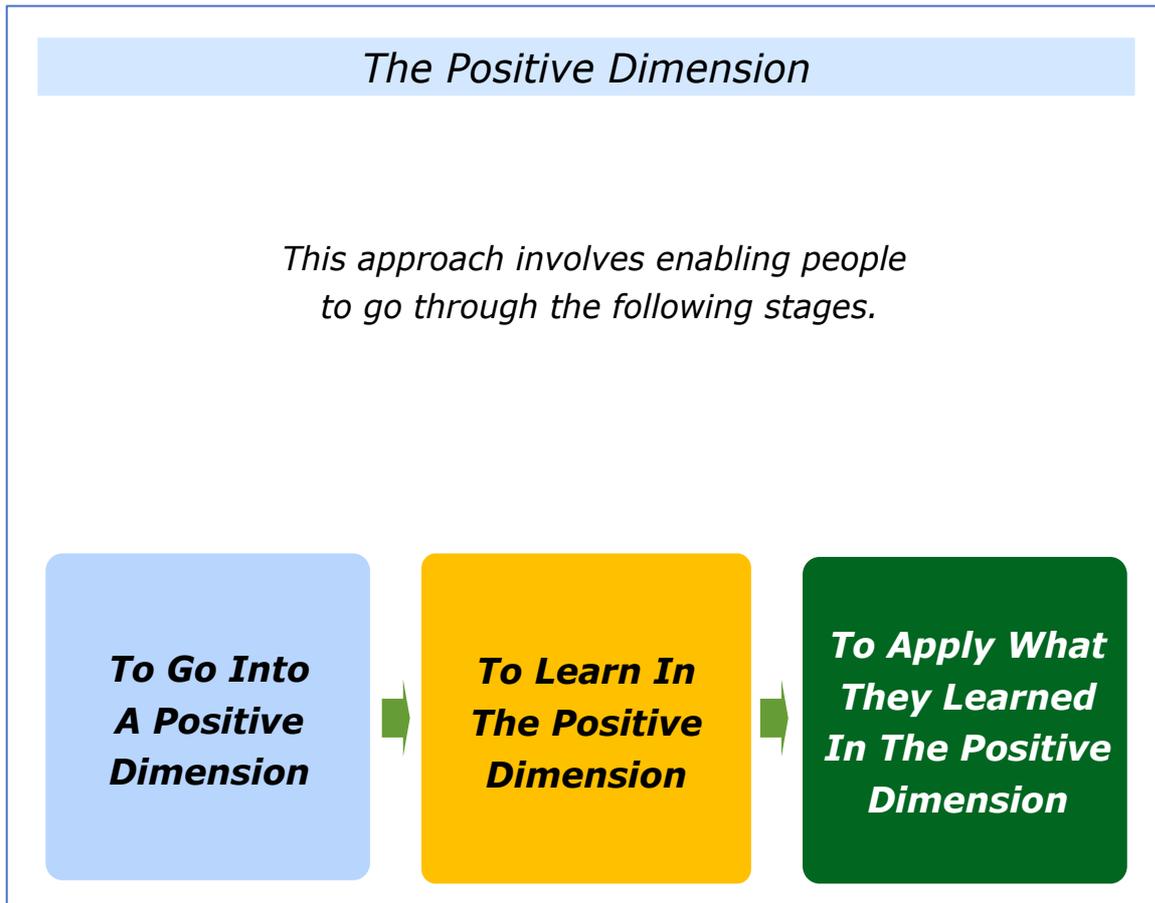
*The specific benefits of doing this
kind of pleasurable work may be:*

*

*

*

The Positive Dimension Approach



There are many ways to help people. One approach is to offer them experiences that take them into a positive dimension.

People often develop by going into another dimension. They may be exploring, working, listening to music, appreciating beauty, seeing new paradigms or doing another activity. They may then apply what they learned from the experience.

Some workers enable people to go through these steps. They may do this in their work as artists, educators, therapists, coaches or in other roles. They help people to develop by having such experiences.

Looking back, when have you aimed to help people in this way? What did you do to help people to learn from going into a positive dimension? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

The Positive Dimension In The Past

*The specific situation in the past when
I aimed to help people to learn by
going into a positive dimension was:*

*

*The specific things I did then to aim
to help people to learn by going
into a positive dimension 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 want to follow similar principles in the future? One model is to build on your strengths – as a person or as a professional - when taking this approach.

You will do this in your own way, of course, but here are some steps it can be useful to consider.

The Positive Dimension

Start by clarifying the topic that the person or the group of people wants to explore. Bearing in mind your strengths, you can then offer people the chance to do the following things.

- *To learn from positive models or their own examples of experiencing things from a positive dimension;*
- *To clarify what they learned or relearned when experiencing things from a positive dimension;*
- *To choose how they want to apply what they learned or relearned when experiencing things from a positive dimension.*

As mentioned, it can be good to use your own strengths when offering people the chance to learn from such experiences. You will then feel on solid ground and be more able to bring things to life with concrete examples.

The work I do has been influenced by many people who enabled others to go into a positive dimension. 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 capsized 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

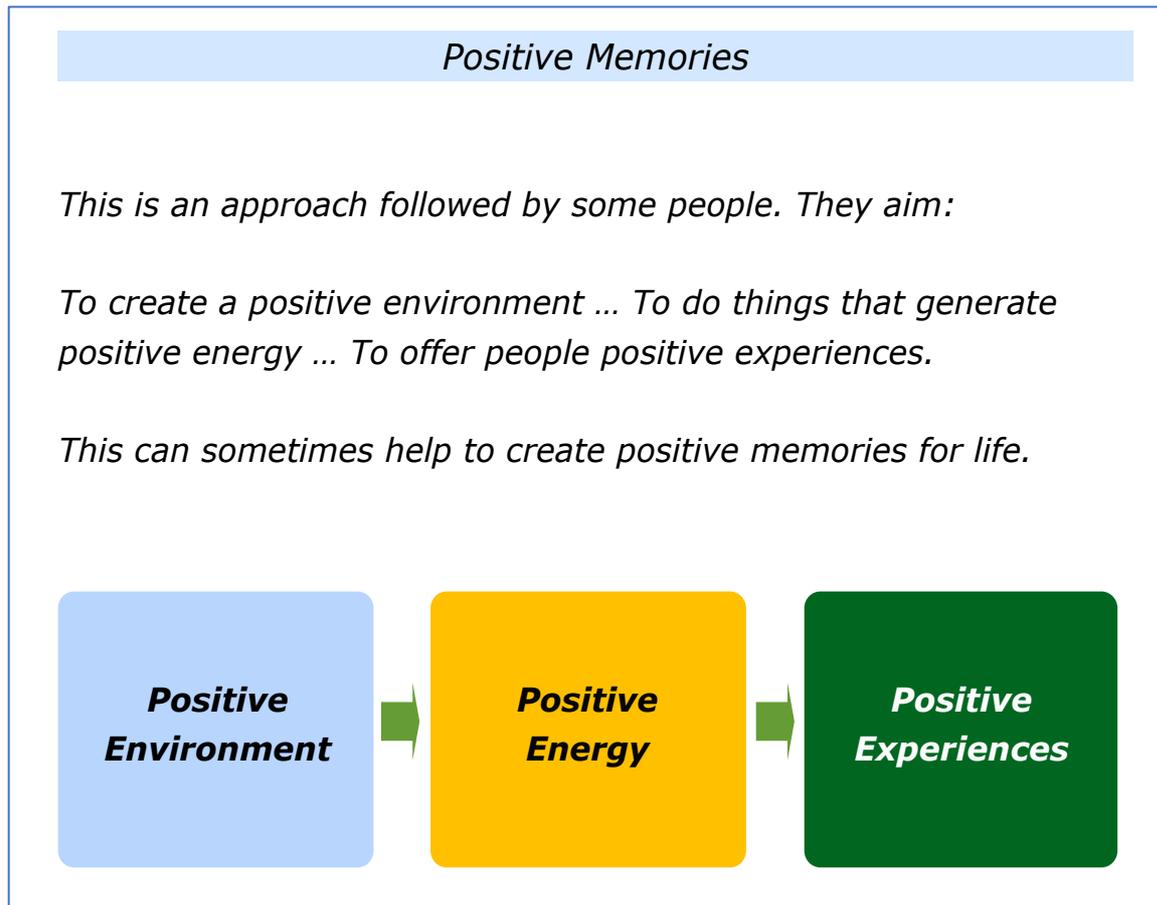
then went through the normal process of decision making, design and working towards delivery.

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.

There are many ways to offer people the opportunity of going into a positive dimension. The following section looks at one such approach.

The Positive Memories For Life Approach



This is an approach followed by some people, teams and organisations. They aim:

To create a positive environment ... To do things that generate positive energy ... To offer people positive experiences.

Sometimes this can help to create positive memories for life. Let's explore how different people translate these themes into action.

They Create A Positive Environment

Good encouragers often aim to create a positive environment in which people can grow. They may do this as a parent, friend, educator, leader or in another role.

They make a person feel welcome and the centre of their world. They may, if appropriate, focus on the person's goals. Sometimes they focus on their mutual goals.

Henry Pluckrose, a great educator, created a warm and welcoming atmosphere when working as a head teacher in primary schools. He explained this in the following way.

"We aim to make each child feel welcome because it may be their first interaction with an institution. We invite them to visit us several times before their actual first school day.

"It is vital to recognise each child as an individual rather than as a number in a group. Getting this right can help them to feel at ease and eager to come to school."

Good leaders sometimes aim to create a positive environment in which self-motivated people can do superb work. They then enable people to make their best contributions towards achieving the organisation's goals.

Let's return to your own life or work. Imagine that you want to create a positive environment in the relationship, team or organisations. How can you do this in your own way?

Let's move on to another theme followed by people who sometimes help to create positive memories.

They Do Things That Generate Positive Energy

Good encouragers sometimes do things to generate positive energy. Depending on their role, different people do this in different ways. They may aim, for example:

To encourage a person to talk about what gives them positive energy;

To encourage a person by focusing on their strengths and catching them doing something right;

To encourage a person by inviting them to focus on their positive goals in their personal or professional lives.

Good educators may generate positive energy by focusing on inspiration, implementation and integration. They create an inspiring environment and clarify what people want to learn.

Such educators then pass on implementation tools that people can use in their daily lives or work. They then help people to integrate the learning and achieve their goals.

Let's return to your own life or work. Imagine that you want to do things that generate positive energy in the relationship, team or organisation. How can you do this in your own way?

Let's move on to another theme followed by people who sometimes help to create positive memories.

They Offer People Positive Experiences

Good encouragers aim to offer people positive experiences. They may do this when acting as a parent, educator, coach, chef, designer, leader or in another role.

Different people do this in different ways. The leader of a football club, for example, may describe this in the following way.

"We aim to embody the spirit of the community and offer people enjoyable experiences. We aim to do this with all our stakeholders.

"The main group, of course, are our fans. Whilst we can strive to win trophies, this is not always in our control. Bearing this in mind, we also try to create positive memories for life. These are what many people remember in later years.

"We also have this aim with our other stakeholders. These include our community programmes, youth academy, players and their families, plus all our corporate backers.

"We aim to make our club a force for good in our community and our society."

There are many ways to encourage people in our lives and work. One approach is to do things that help them to take away positive memories for life.

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

How can you create a positive environment? How can you generate positive energy? How can you offer the person or the group of people positive experiences? How can you maybe help to them to take away positive memories for life?

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

Positive Memories For Life

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

*

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

*

*

*

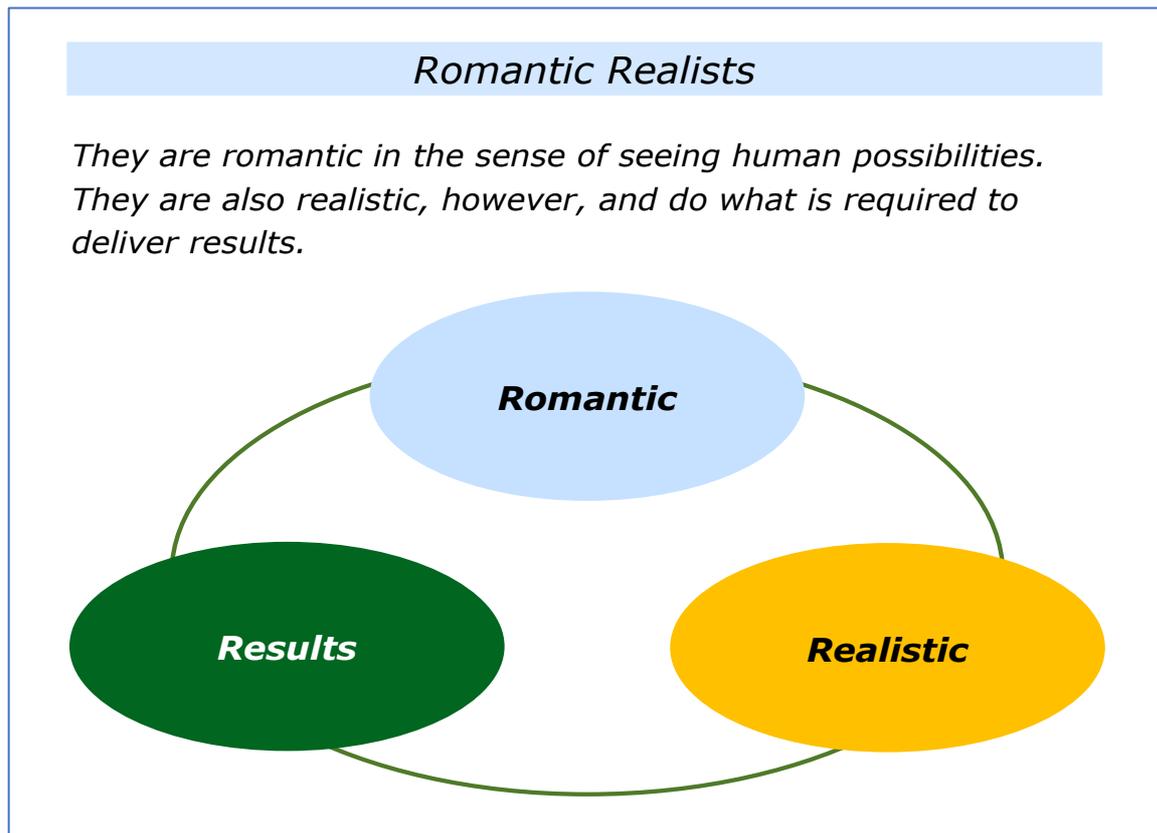
The specific things that may happen as a results of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

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.

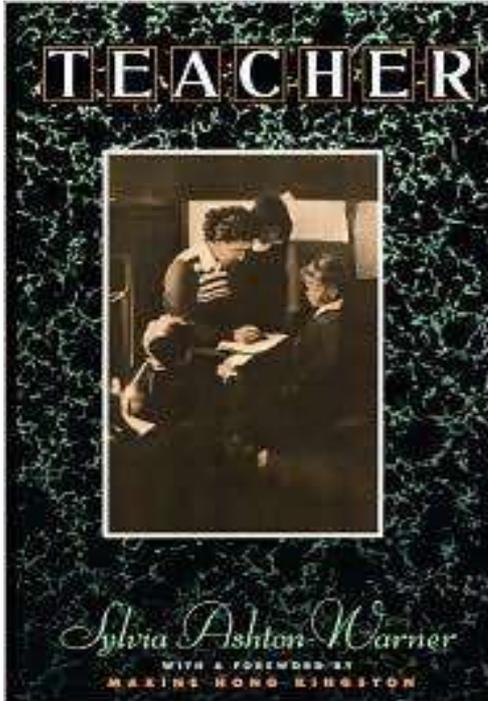
Looking back, can you think of a person who was a romantic realist and delivered results? This could have been somebody you knew or have heard about. The person may have worked in education, therapy, business, art or some other field.

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 help people to learn by going into a positive dimension?

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 use your strengths to help people to go into a positive dimension? How can you help people to learn in the experience? How can you help them to apply what they learned in their life this in their lives work?

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

The Positive Dimension In The Future

*The specific situation in the future when
I may aim to help people to learn by
going into a positive dimension may be:*

*

*The specific things I can do then
to help people to learn by going
into the positive dimension are:*

*

*

*

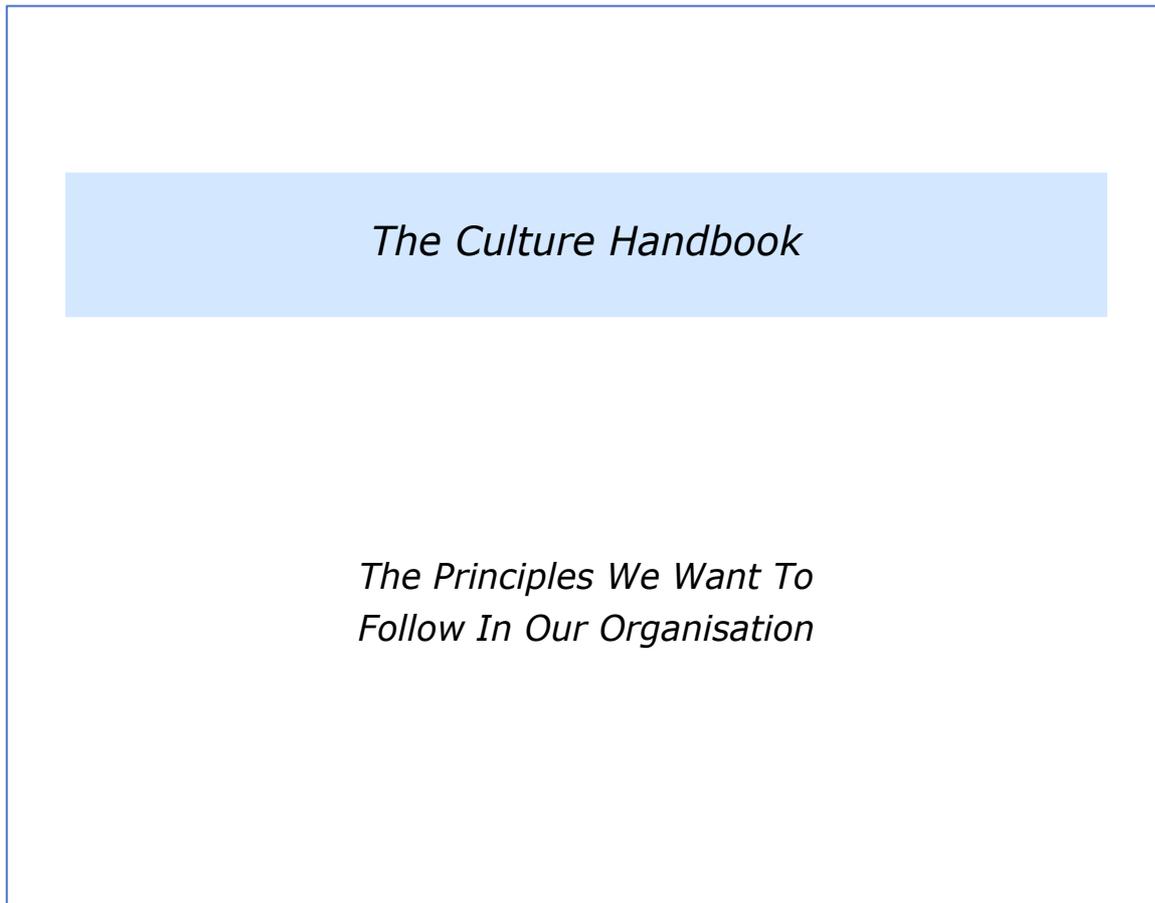
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

The Culture Handbook Approach



There are many ways to build a principles driven organisation. This section describes an approach that worked effectively during the Covid lockdown when it was difficult to do off-site workshops.

The approach has since been adapted by other work places. It works best in places where people have already discussed the possibility of building a principles driven organisation.

The example described in this section was driven by the leadership team. It also gave other key people a sense of ownership in shaping the organisation's future. Here is some background to the approach.

The Culture Handbook Approach

This involves the leader and leadership team putting together a Culture Handbook that can be used in the organisation. The handbook describes

the principles that people can follow to help the organisation to achieve success.

There are many ways to arrive at such principles. One approach is:

To clarify when people in the organisation have done superb work and delivered success;

To clarify the principles they followed to do superb work and deliver success;

To clarify how they can follow these and other principles – and express these in modern ways – to deliver future success.

There are many ways of communicating these principles to people in an organisation. Before the lockdown one approach was to go through the following steps. It was:

To do workshops with the leadership team to clarify the principles that people could follow to deliver success;

To do workshops with all the employees to communicate the principles and involve them in clarifying how to translate these into action to deliver success;

To follow up by continually publishing success stories that showed how people were following the principles and delivering success.

This approach became more difficult during the lockdown. Bearing this in mind, I used the Culture Handbook approach when a leader asked me to help their organisation to clarify its principles. Let's call it Organisation A.

Here is a precis of the approach that we arrived at as result of our conversations.

*Organisation A - The Background To
Building A Principles Driven Organisation*

The organisation had around 80 people spread in locations across the world. This had both advantages and disadvantages.

The advantages were that it hired high quality employees who could do superb work in the different countries. This enabled it to stand out from its competitors. The disadvantages included it being hard to maintain consistency. It was also sometimes challenging to manage such people.

The leader, who was also the founder, had a charismatic personality. At the beginning this was a strength because they inspired people to do fine work. This proved more difficult as the organisation got bigger and people waited for the leader to make decisions.

The leader and the leadership team wanted people in the organisation: a) to align their efforts to following certain principles; b) to deliver consistently high standards; c) to use their strengths to deliver success.

The leader and I explored how to make this happen. He eventually decided it would be useful for the leadership team to take the following steps:

To build an organisation that was principles driven rather than personality driven;

To focus on managing the principles rather than just managing the people;

To also encourage people to use their strengths to translate the principles into action and deliver ongoing success.

After discussions with the leader and other key people, we embarked on taking the following steps. (Other organisations that I worked with later followed elements of this approach in their own ways.)

The Leader Starts By Putting Together A Provisional Version Of A Culture Handbook

The leader had strong views about the principles people could follow to help the organisation succeed. Whilst it would be important to involve other people, it made sense to begin by getting him to clarify these views.

Bearing this in mind, I invited him to describe what he saw as the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success. We could then invite others to add to this framework.

The following section provides a summary of his thoughts. (I have described these in generic terms rather than the detailed descriptions he gave.) Here are the main themes.

Purpose

The purpose of our organisation – the specific thing we want to do – is the following.

We want:

To use our strengths to do superb work that helps all our stakeholders to achieve success.

Principles

We want to encourage our people to pursue the following principles in our work:

To Be Professional

To have a positive mindset and behave in a professional way towards both internal and external customers.

*To Take Ownership
And Focus On Outcomes*

To take ownership for doing things and keep focusing on the outcomes to achieve.

*To Help Our
Customers To Succeed*

To provide great service and pass on knowledge in ways that help our customers to succeed.

*To Stay Healthy
And Keep Developing*

To maintain our wellbeing and continue to keep developing as people and as professionals

The Picture Of Success

*The specific goals we
want to achieve by ... are:*

To achieve £... in terms of profit.

To achieve a rating of ... in terms of customer satisfaction.

To achieve a rating of ... in terms of employee satisfaction.

The leader and I had three virtual sessions which involved crafting these themes to his satisfaction. He also shared some of his early thoughts with three people close to him in the leadership team. We then moved on to the next stage.

The Leader Involves The Wider Leadership Team In Adding To The Cultural Handbook

The leader invited the wider leadership team to add their ideas to the handbook. This involved ten people who had senior roles.

He began by sending out the following email people. This was followed by having a virtual workshop conducted by himself and his two closest colleagues. Here is the email he sent to people.

Building A Principles Driven Organisation

As you know, for some time we have been talking about the idea of making sure we build a principles driven organisation.

Bearing this in mind, I have had a first go at writing what I believe may be our purpose, principles and picture of success.

This can form the basis for creating a Culture Handbook that we can use as a guiding compass for our work.

I have based the principles on the guidelines we seem to follow when we do superb work.

There may, of course, be many more principles. But I wanted to focus on the core ones we seem to follow.

I would like you to look at what I have written and then to do the following things:

To see if you think the purpose, principles and picture of success embody some of the things we do as an organisation;

To give your suggestions regarding what you believe could be added to the provisional draft.

We will then have a virtual workshop where we can build on these ideas.

The next step will be to share these principles with people in the organisation. When doing this, it will be useful:

To explain how the principles have been built on when people in the organisation have performed superbly;

To describe the principles we would like people to follow – together with the reasons for these - to increase the chances of success;

To invite people to flesh out the principles plus describe how they think we can translate these into action.

Before then I would like your ideas for adding to the purpose, principles and picture of success. If possible, get your ideas back to me within the next week.

We will then have a virtual workshop to agree on the final version of the principles. Thanks in advance for your ideas.

The wider leadership team members responded with their ideas. Many of these mirrored the principles outlined by the leader – though there were some slight differences on wording.

The principle that created the most debate was that around people staying healthy. One person responded to this in the following way.

"If we are serious about people's wellbeing, it will be important to study organisations where they have made this work successfully.

"We rely on many people who are dutiful in carrying out their work. Sometimes they pay a price for being so conscientious.

"We may need to find ways that enable them to work in smart ways whilst also taking care of the wellbeing."

The wider leadership team workshop proved successful. After a short introduction, each person gave their views about the principles.

They were in broad agreement about the key themes, though some wanted to go into more detail. The leader suggested that this could be done in small groups.

Bearing this in mind, people formed four groups. Each of these focused on one of the principles. They then aimed:

To give concrete examples of when people had followed these principles successfully in the past;

To give concrete examples of how people could follow these principles in the future;

To give concrete examples of the support people would need to be able to follow the principles successfully.

Each sub-group presented their ideas back to the whole group. After some discussion, the leader said they would work with two other people to complete the next draft of the Culture Handbook.

The wider leadership team then explored how to present the principles to everybody in the company. This would take the form of an All-Hands Meeting being followed up by regional sessions in each of the locations.

Originally the leader saw it as his role to introduce the session and take people through the principles. This changed at the end of the wider leadership team session.

The sub-groups suggested they each take responsibility for introducing the specific principle they had worked on. Whilst the leader could introduce the session, it would help to show how the leadership team were supporting each of the principles.

The leader liked this idea. He also suggested that, if appropriate, I could offer people a framework they could use when introducing the principles to their people. This led to doing some work with each of the sub-groups.

We focused on how we could bring the principles to life in a way that resonated with people. The aim would be that, after presenting the principles, people in the organisation would be saying things like:

"This is us. We recognise ourselves and we want to follow these principles."

"We also believe the organisation is serious about supporting us in following these principles to achieve success."

The wider leadership team had another virtual meeting where they practiced presenting the principles to their people. They were then ready to move on to the next stage.

The Wider Leadership Team Introduce The Principles To People Across The Whole Organisation

The wider leadership team did this in the following stages. The leader kicked off the process by writing an email to everybody in the organisation.

This mirrored several of the themes he outlined in his original note to the wider leadership team. Here is a summary of what he wrote.

The Next All-Hands Meeting

During our All-Hands Meetings we have sometimes highlighted the principles that people in our organisation have followed to do superb work. Looking ahead, it will be important:

To build on these principles to shape a successful future;

To encourage our people to build on their strengths to follow these principles and translate these into action;

To give our people the support they need to follow the principles and achieve success.

Bearing this in mind, the leadership team and I have put together a provisional draft for a Culture Handbook. This describes our organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success.

The purpose of our organisation will continue to be: 'To use our strengths to do superb work that helps all our stakeholders to achieve success'.

The principles will be similar to those that we follow to deliver success. Though the way we express these may evolve because of modern technology and other events.

The picture of success will also evolve as we continue to develop as an organisation.

The next All-Hands Meeting will take the following format.

I will kick-off the session and give an introduction to the reasons why it is important to continue to build a principles driven organisation.

This will be followed by members of the leadership team introducing each of the principles in turn. When doing so they will aim:

To describe real-life examples of when people have followed this principle in the past;

To describe the reasons why it will be important to follow this principle in the future and how it can be translated into action;

To describe how we as an organisation will support you in aiming to follow this principle successfully.

We hope that you recognise yourselves in some of the principles. We also hope that you will feel able to use your own strengths to translate these into action.

We will follow-up the All-Hands Meeting with smaller sessions in your locations. During these sessions we would like your feedback on the following themes:

- a) What you like about the principles;*
- b) What you would like to see added to them;*
- c) What concerns and questions you may have about them;*
- d) What you would like to do in your part of the organisation to translate these principles into action.*

We will then aim to incorporate some of these ideas into what will become the organisation's Culture Handbook.

This will be something that you can use, for example, when recruiting people. You can clarify to what extent you believe that a person will use their strengths to follow the principles and deliver success.

We will follow up the local sessions with producing success stories that show how we are translating the principles into action. This will be something we do on a regular basis to maintain the momentum.

I hope this gives you some background and the reasons for continuing to build a principles driven organisation. I look forward to seeing you at the All-Hands Meeting.

The All-Hands Meeting went well. Like many virtual meetings it had its limitations, but most people enjoyed the session.

The leader started by referring to the organisation's purpose and gave examples of when people had helped both customers and colleagues. He also referred to the organisation's picture of success.

The leader emphasised, however, that it was important to follow certain principles in order to achieve sustainable success. He then handed over to members of the leadership team who introduced each of the principles to the wider organisation.

The leaders brought the principles to life by giving examples of when people had translated these into action. This was accompanied by photographs and other illustrations of the people.

During the session there were some written comments from the wider audience. These were mostly complementary or humorous. There were also questions about the extent to which the organisation was serious about following the principles.

The All-Hands Meeting was followed-up by local sessions. As outlined in the email from the leader, this focused on certain themes

People were encouraged to describe: the things they liked about the principles; the things they would like to see added; the concerns and questions they had; the specific things they could do to translate the principles into action.

These sessions were led by members of the wider leadership team. Before conducting them, however, they were given tips. It would be important:

To create a positive environment in which people were encouraged to share their ideas;

To recognise that people would demonstrate their normal personalities – some would be positive, some would be positive/neutral, some may not be positive;

To, if any negative comments emerged, invite people to describe the positive things they would like to see happen instead.

The local sessions produced many ideas that were fed back to the leadership team. Some were then incorporated into the final version of the Culture Handbook. This led to the next stage in the process.

The Organisation Publishes Success Stories That Highlight People Following The Principles Outlined In The Cultural Handbook

The leadership team were pleased by the response from most people in the organisation. They then took several steps to increase the chances of success.

The leader hired a writer to produce the Culture Handbook that captured the essence of the organisation. A version of this was given to people who joined the organisation.

The leader appointed a Mission Holder who ensured the organisation kept publishing success stories. These highlighted how people had translated the principles into action.

The leadership team members started every All-Hands Meeting by reminding people of the organisation's purpose and picture of success. They also gave examples of people following the principles.

Since the end of lockdown the organisation had had several off-sites. These have included customers sharing stories about how the organisation has helped them to reach the goals. This has encouraged people to continue to follow the principles and achieve success.

The Culture Handbook approach is one that can be used as a Trojan Horse for helping people and organisations to develop. Here is the framework for a version that can be given to new joiners. You will, of course, have your own approach to building a principles driven organisation.

The Culture Handbook

The Principles We Want To Follow In Our Organisation

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 Organisation:

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 Financial 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 Managing Your Obsessions Approach



Great workers are often obsessed by doing certain things. They may display elements of OCD – Obsessive Compulsive Discipline. They manage 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 do this by being obsessive about following certain habits in their daily lives. They like to feel in charge by on following consistent patterns and making things as predictable as possible.

People who do creative work often follow certain obsessions. They may be obsessed by designing gardens, solving maths problems, finding medical cures, renovating houses or doing other activities. They then follow certain habits to translate their drives into concrete results.

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 the following stages to make this happen. They need:

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.

Imagine that you have found ways to manage your obsessions. If appropriate, you may want to move on to the next stage.

Making Good Use Of Your Obsessions

Great workers often follow their chosen strategies for making good use of their obsessions. Some do this in a structured and systematic way that enables them to focus. Such an approach can have both pluses and minuses.

The pluses may be:

They stay ahead of the game ... They are fully prepared ... They know some areas in great detail ... They get things done effectively ... They follow a predictable rhythm ... They anticipate future scenarios ... They perform superb work and get a sense of satisfaction.

The potential minuses may be:

They may appear anti-social when doing their work ... They may appear odd ... They may behave in ways that affects others ... They may have blind spots.

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 how he could balance being a warrior and a worrier.

*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. Being sensitive to issues, they use worry as a drive to fix problems, improve things or work towards achieving perfection. Sometimes the balance can get out of kilter, however, and this can cause problems.

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.

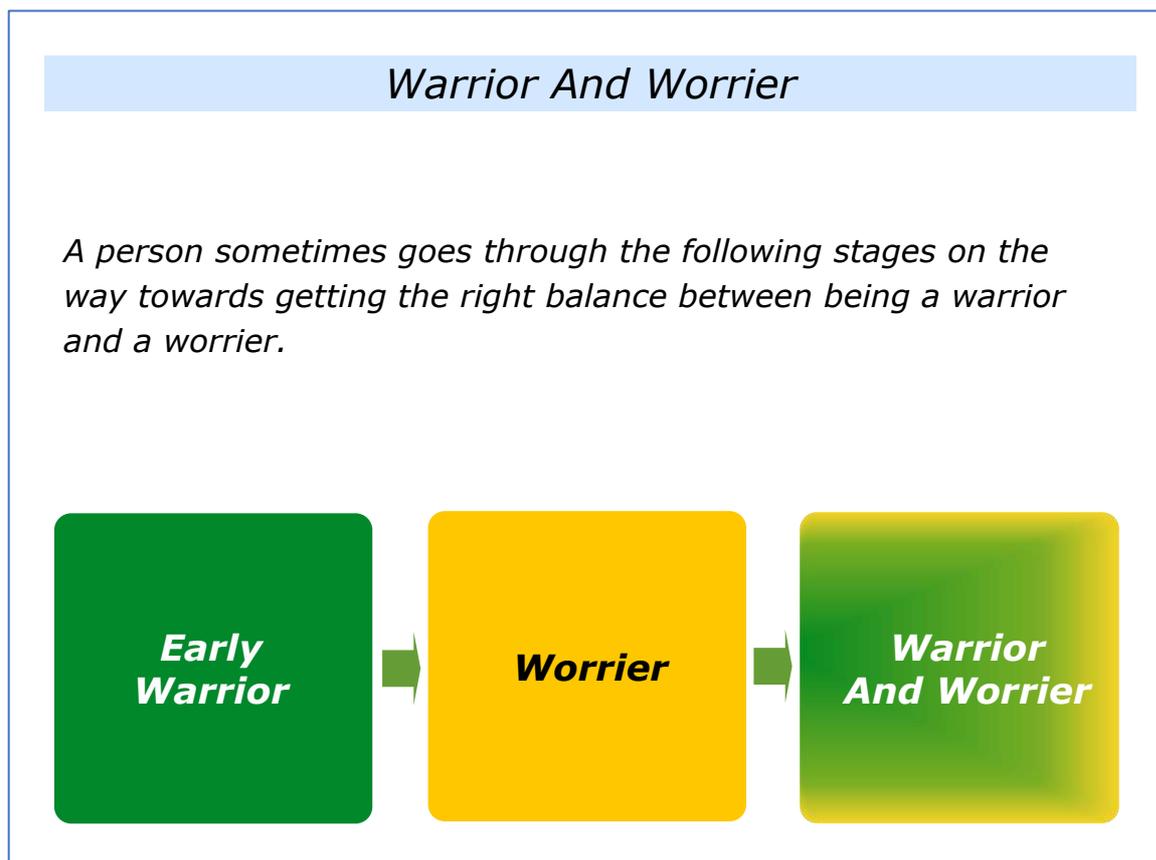
Looking back, can you think of a situation when you got the right balance between being a warrior and a worrier? This could have been in your personal or professional life.

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.

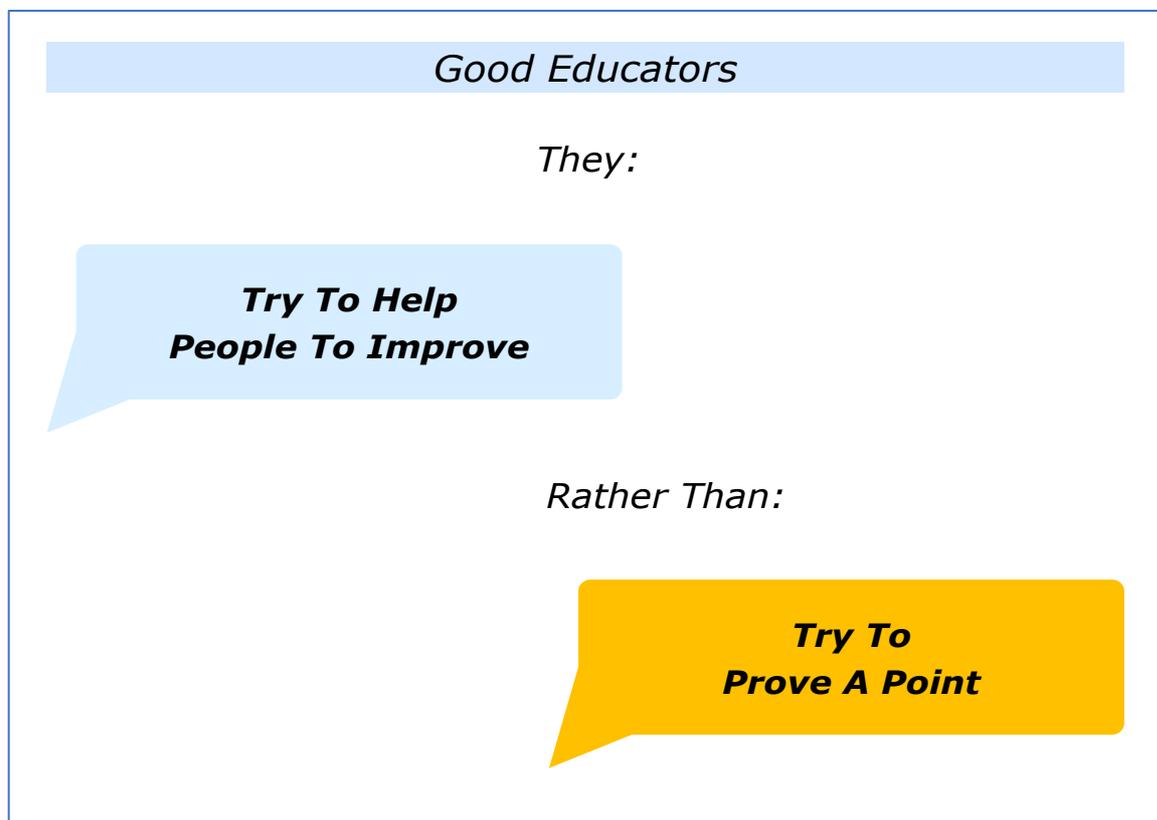
"This means that sometimes I communicate in a way that comes across as pointing out what they do wrong. I know this can have a negative effect on them and our relationship."

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:

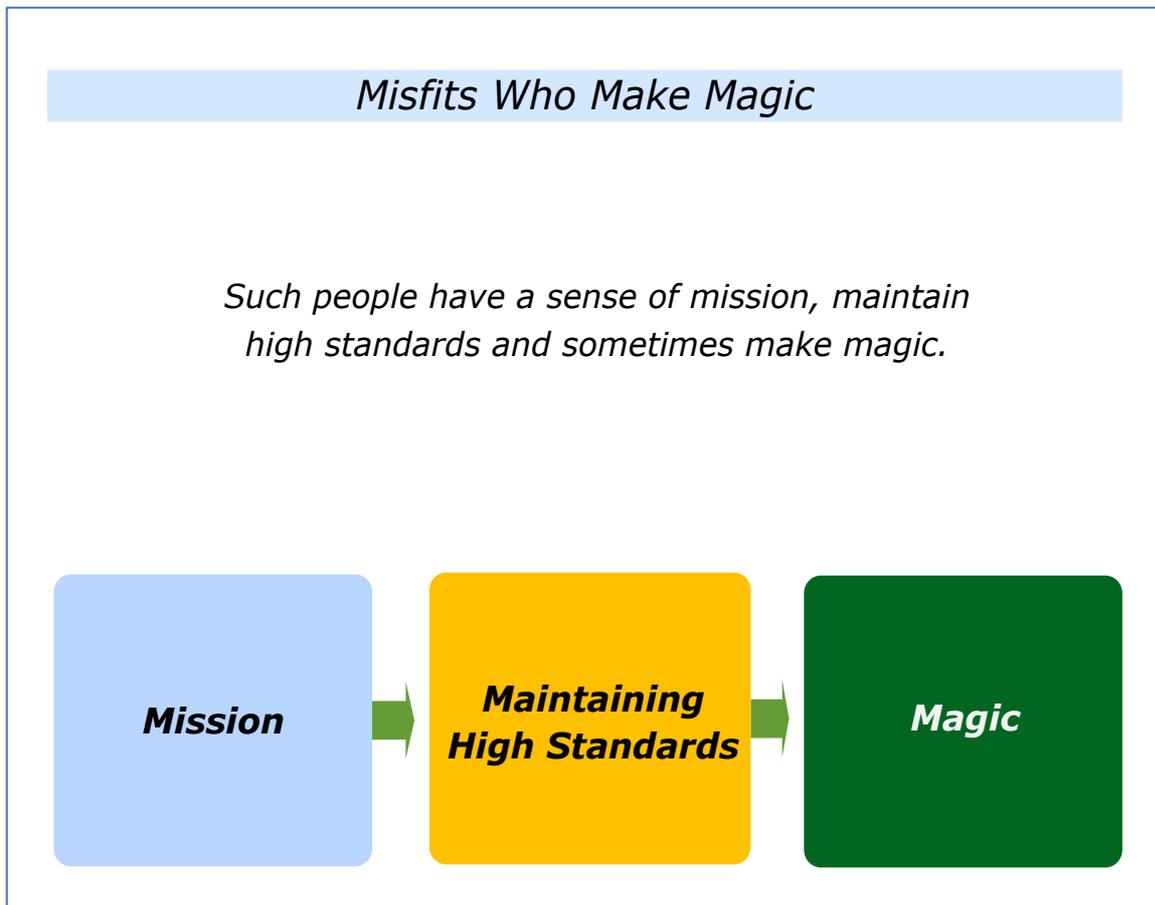
"How can I help the person to improve rather than try to prove a point?"



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.

Let's consider another way that people can manage their obsessions.

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

Such 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.

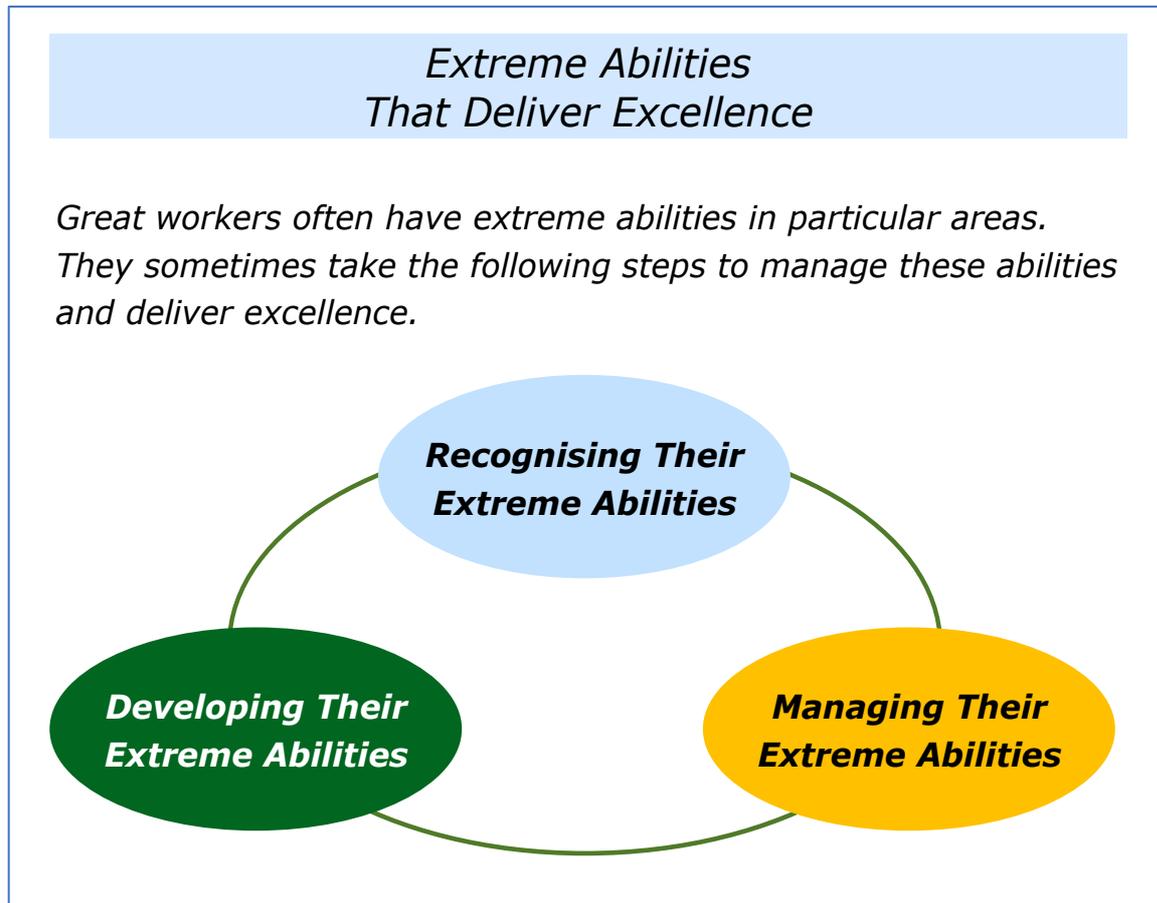
They Make Magic

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.

The Extreme Abilities Approach



Great workers often have extreme abilities in particular activities. They then take certain steps to manage these abilities and deliver excellence in their areas of expertise.

Such people may also have extreme personality traits. They are not necessarily well-rounded and may have lop-sided personalities. This can take different forms.

They may be brilliant in some activities but have blind-spots in other areas. This can produce both pluses and minuses for themselves and other people.

Great workers sometimes learn how to recognise, manage and develop their abilities. Let's explore these themes.

They Recognise Their Extreme Abilities

Great workers have extreme abilities. Some may also have extreme personality traits. They may be deeply introverted or have elements of OCD, autism, dyslexia or other kinds of behaviour.

Many people have been helped to recognise and accept these elements relatively early in life. They may have had supportive parents who encouraged them to build on who they are as individuals rather worry about who they are not.

Different people learn about their personality traits – and the potential implications - in different ways. One person described this in the following way.

"My parents taught me to concentrate on the areas where I was confident and did good work. Being an introvert, I was happier reading and writing.

"When I was in big groups I went into my shell. This did not sit well with teachers who consistently reported that I needed to be more social.

"Later on I recognised that I felt more at ease doing work by myself or with a couple of people that I trusted. I did not like playing team sports or being in big groups.

"One reason was that I didn't like to be judged by certain kinds of people. I am happy to learn from people I respect but no longer pay attention to some kinds of critics."

Different people have different extreme traits. Warren Buffett describes how he is brilliant at reading spread sheets and forecasting potential trends. But he cannot tell you the colour of the wallpaper in the offices he has worked in for the past thirty years.

Warren chooses to focus on the area where he can see patterns and do fine work. This takes us to the next step taken by some people who have certain abilities.

They Manage Their Extreme Abilities

Some people learn to manage their extreme abilities and traits. This calls for building on their talents and, if appropriate, recognising the consequences of their behaviour. One approach involves finding ways:

To build on the pluses of their personal abilities and traits;

To manage the consequences of any minuses.

Stephen Fry, the actor, has shared his own experiences with bipolar disorder. Sometimes this can lead to great highs but also deep lows. During a television programme he described how twenty people with this condition were asked:

"Let me pose a hypothetical question. If you were given the chance to get rid of the lows but, at the same time, lose the highs, what would you do?"

Stephen reported that only one of the twenty people said they would take up this offer. Every person has things they need to manage in life, said Stephen. Bipolar was one such thing for him.

Many websites have been created by people who experience such mood swings. These provide practical tools that people can use to manage this trait. These include the following.

Set and follow a chosen routine ... Plan ahead ... Do things that give you positive energy ... Exercise in way that works for you ... Recognise and manage triggers ... Learn how to manage your moods ... Set and reach achievable goals ... Focus on improvement not perfection.

Different people use different ways to manage their extremes. This takes us to the next step taken by some people who have these characteristics.

They Develop Their Extreme Abilities

Great workers learn to develop their extreme abilities and deliver excellence. They may also learn how to develop and make good use of their extreme personality traits. Different people do this in different ways.

People who demonstrate some characteristics of autism, for example, may build on their strengths. They may have deep knowledge in their areas of interest, great attention to detail and the ability to deliver high quality work when doing repetitive tasks.

People who demonstrate characteristics of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder also have strengths. The ADDA website describes these in the following way.

Each individual with ADHD has unique skills and advantages. Within the ADHD community, these advantages are often referred to as ADHD Superpowers.

They Are: Quick Starters ... Creative ... Adventurous ... Courageous ... Focused ... Intuitive ... Detail Oriented ... Good In Crises ... Entrepreneurial ... Driven To Achieve.

Different people develop different ways to build on such traits. Some take the following approach.

They put themselves into places where they can do positive work ... They find ways to take a positive role and make a positive contribution ... They build on their strengths and do their best to get positive results.

Let's return to your own life. The extreme approach may or may not apply to you. If appropriate, however, try exploring the following theme.

Can you think of a specific activity where you may have the potential to develop an extreme ability and deliver excellence? 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 Extreme Abilities Approach

*The specific activity where I may have
the potential to develop such an
ability and deliver excellence may be:*

*

*The specific things I can do to develop
this ability and deliver excellence are:*

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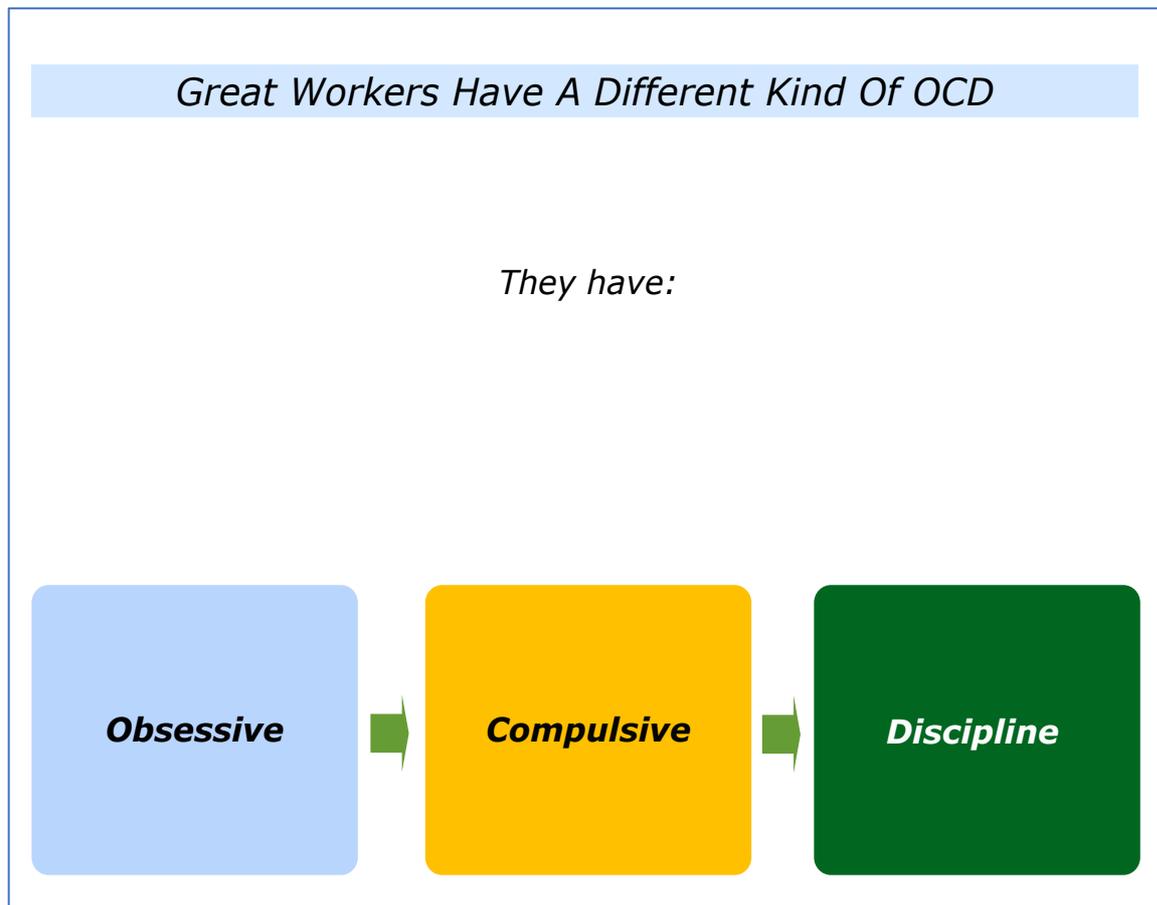
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Obsessive Compulsive Discipline Approach



Great workers often have a different kind of OCD. They have obsessive compulsive discipline rather than disorder. They feel compelled to follow this approach and aim to do superb work.

Different workers are obsessed by different things. They may feel compelled to write, paint, help people, solve certain problems or do other things. They then follow their chosen activity in a disciplined way.

Different people follow this approach in different areas. They may be artists, educators, medics, sports coaches, engineers, people workers and those in other fields. One person described this in the following way.

"Looking back, I do not know if I chose my obsession or if my obsession chose me. But it doesn't really matter.

"Every morning I get up feeling compelled to do what I believe in. It is then up to me to channel my creative drive and do work that helps other people."

Such people sometimes feel like they have been given a gift. Like the person mentioned above, they are not sure if they found their purpose or if their purpose found them. They then follow this purpose in their daily life or work.

Looking back, such people can sometimes see a pattern. They began by exploring interests that gave them positive energy. Then, at a certain point, one of these interests took over. This was sometimes because:

They found the activity to be fascinating;

They followed a certain discipline and experienced a sense of flow;

They did fine work and got a sense of fulfilment.

Such people may find that their chosen activity becomes a positive addiction. Becoming obsessed by the activity, they follow it in a compulsive and disciplined way. Taking this approach can sometimes lead to them experiencing a creative high.

When do you follow elements of this approach? You may do this when encouraging people, playing music, gardening, solving problems, tackling challenges or doing other activities.

Imagine that you want to pursue this activity in the future. How can you follow your obsessive compulsive discipline in your own way? What may be the potential pluses and minuses of taking this approach? How can you build on the pluses and minimise any minuses?

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

The Obsessive Compulsive Discipline Approach

*The specific activity where I follow elements
of this approach in my own way is:*

*

*The specific things I can do to keep
pursuing this activity in my own way are:*

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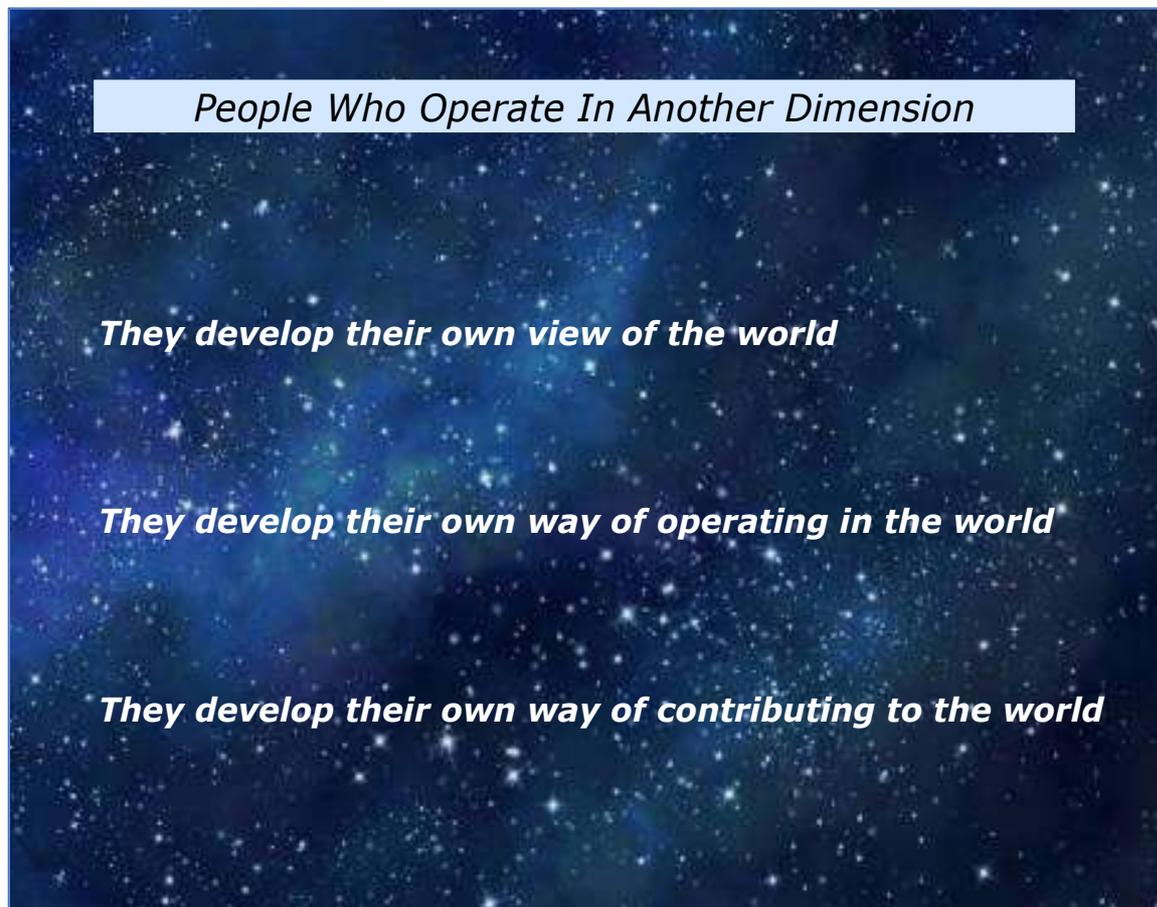
*The specific things I can do to build
on the pluses and minimise any
minuses of taking this approach are:*

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The People Who Operate In Another Dimension Approach



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

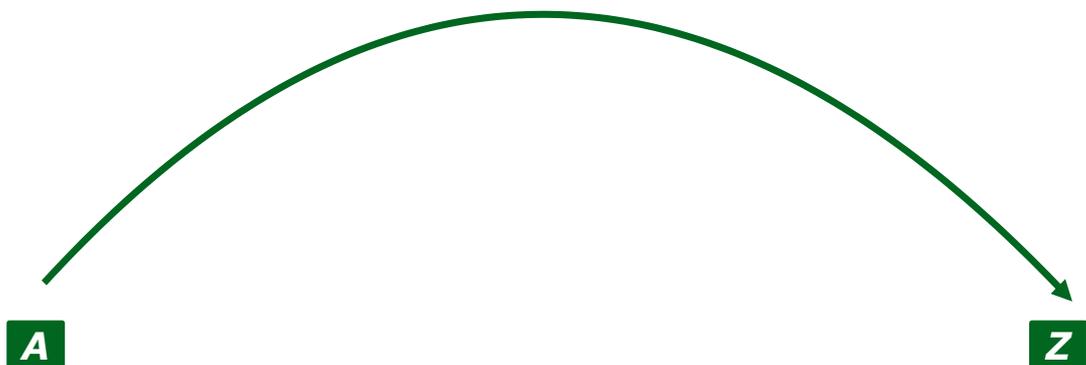
Such people often think and behave in ways that others find difficult to understand. This can create challenges for both themselves and other people.

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.

People Who Go Into A Different Dimension Have Their Own Way Of Operating In The World

They may start at A but then leap to Z. They may keep moving between the various letters in the alphabet. This will be different from other people's styles – and in a different order – but they then make a plan for getting to Z.



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."

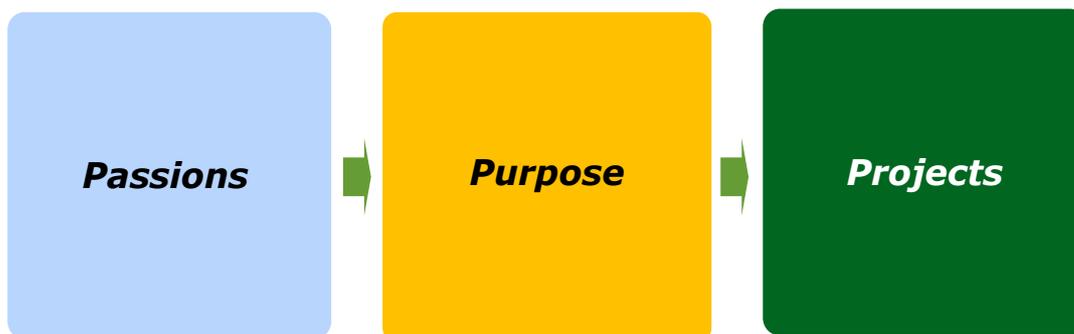
The CEO laughed and accepted that it may not be possible for others to understand his thinking style. They enjoyed working with him, however, and knew how to manage him.

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.

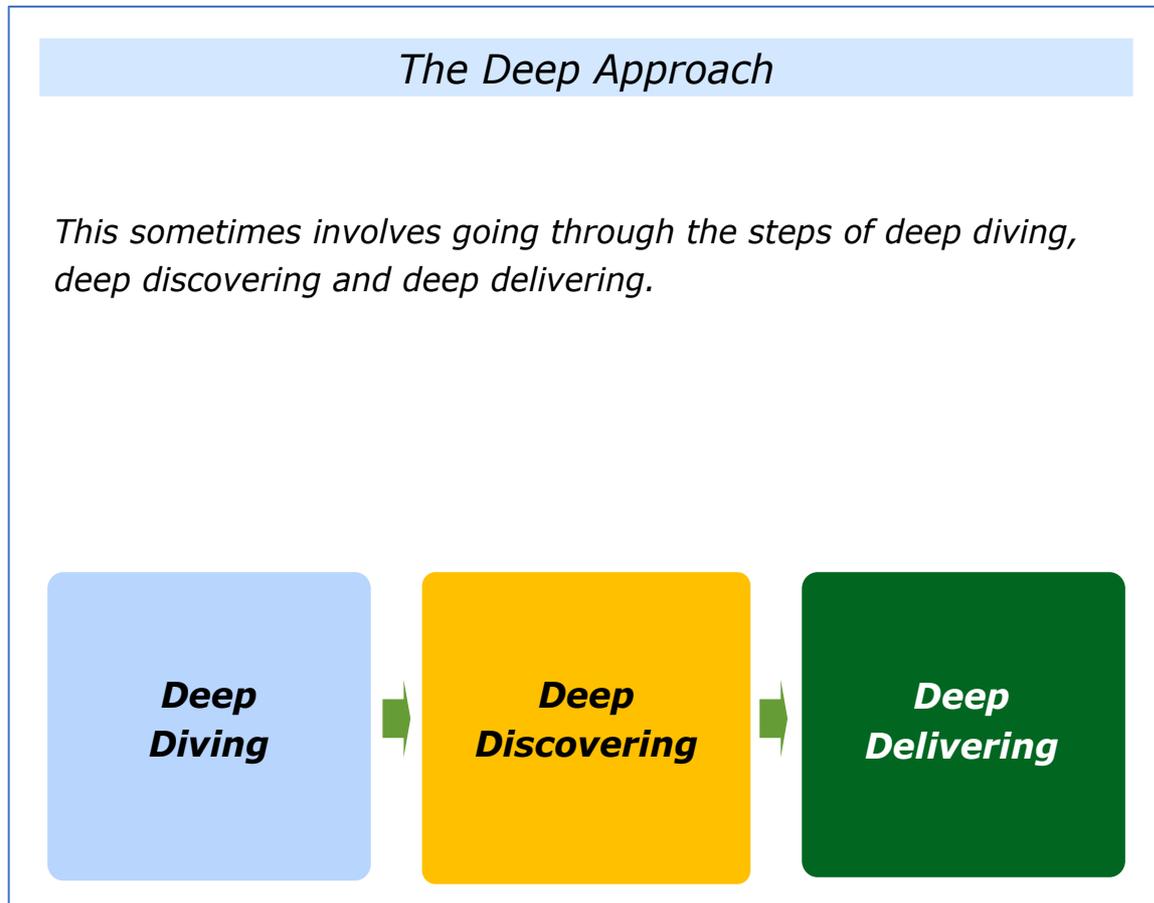
They enjoyed talking about these things and provided many insights. You will, of course, have your own way of relating to such people.

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 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.

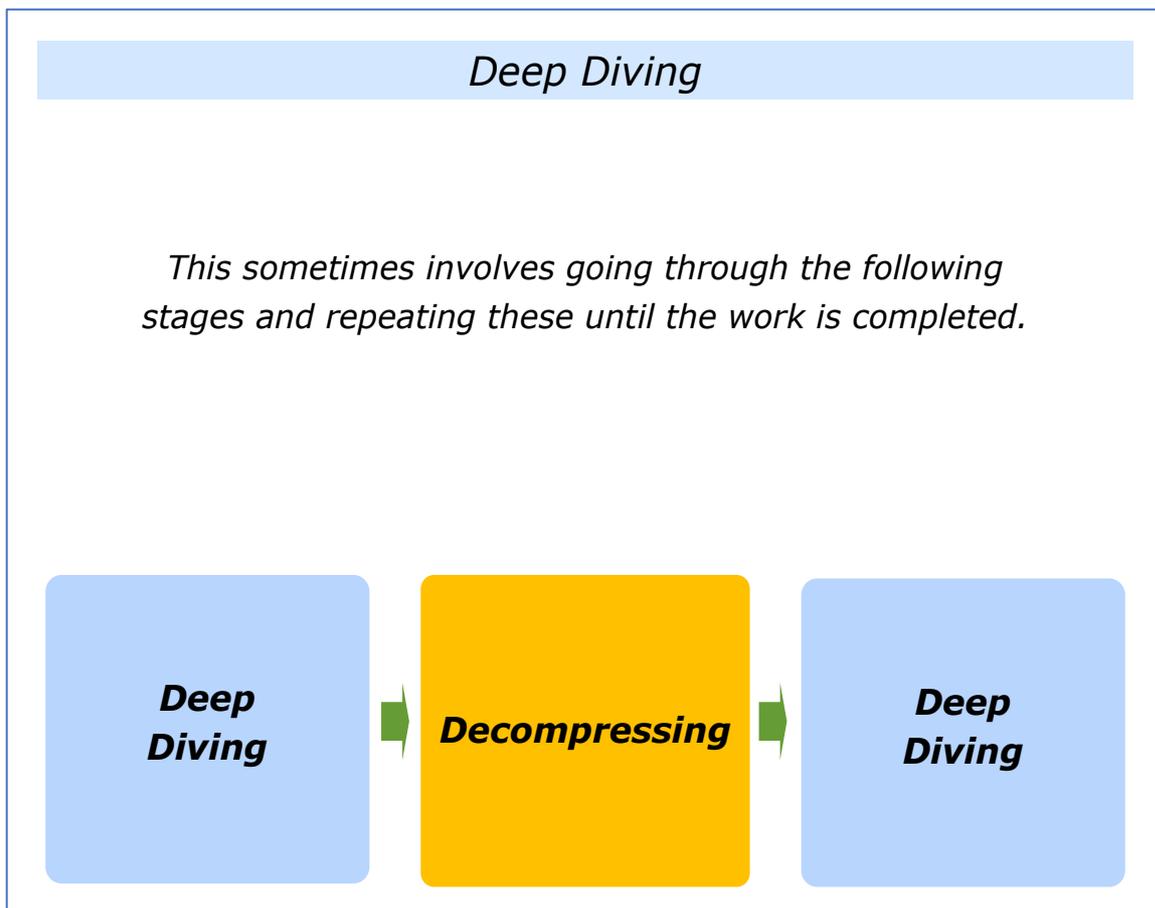
Great workers sometimes dive deep into their specialist area. They find this to be extremely enjoyable and also beneficial for their employer. But sometimes they encounter challenges that provide obstacles to doing their best work.

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:*

*

*

*

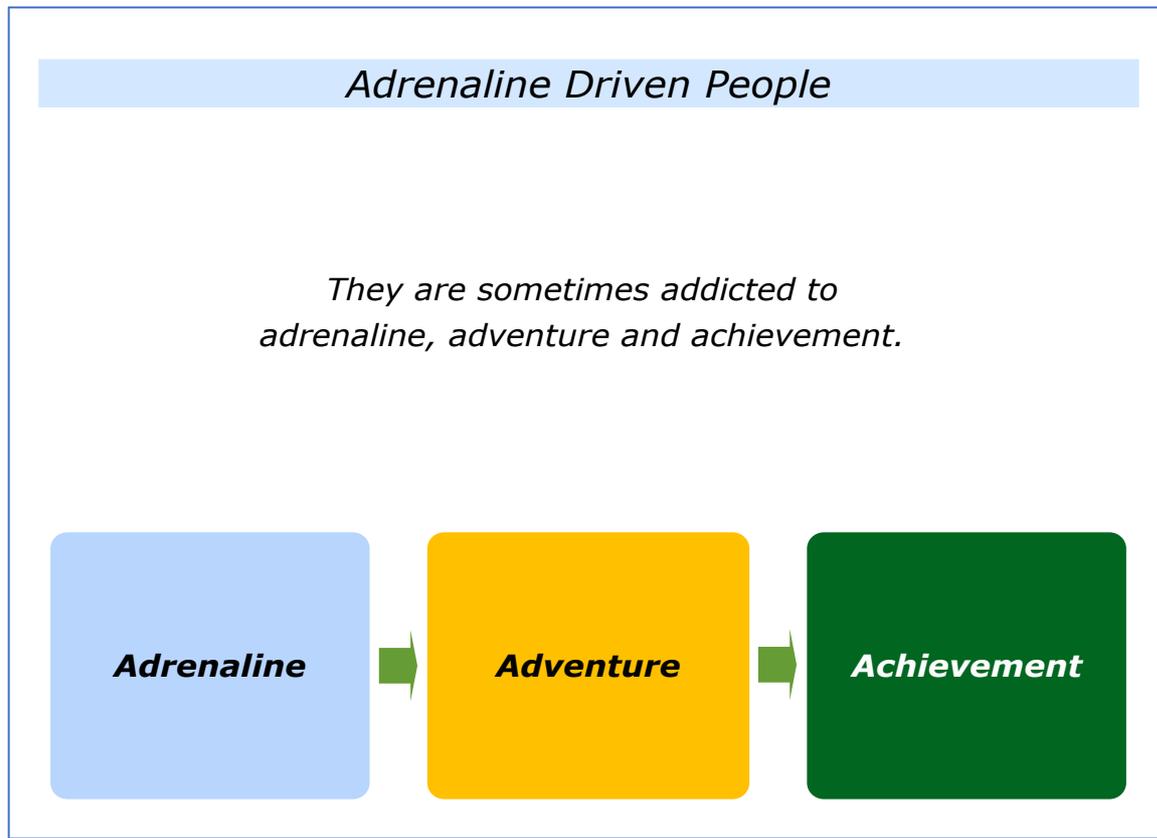
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Adrenaline Driven 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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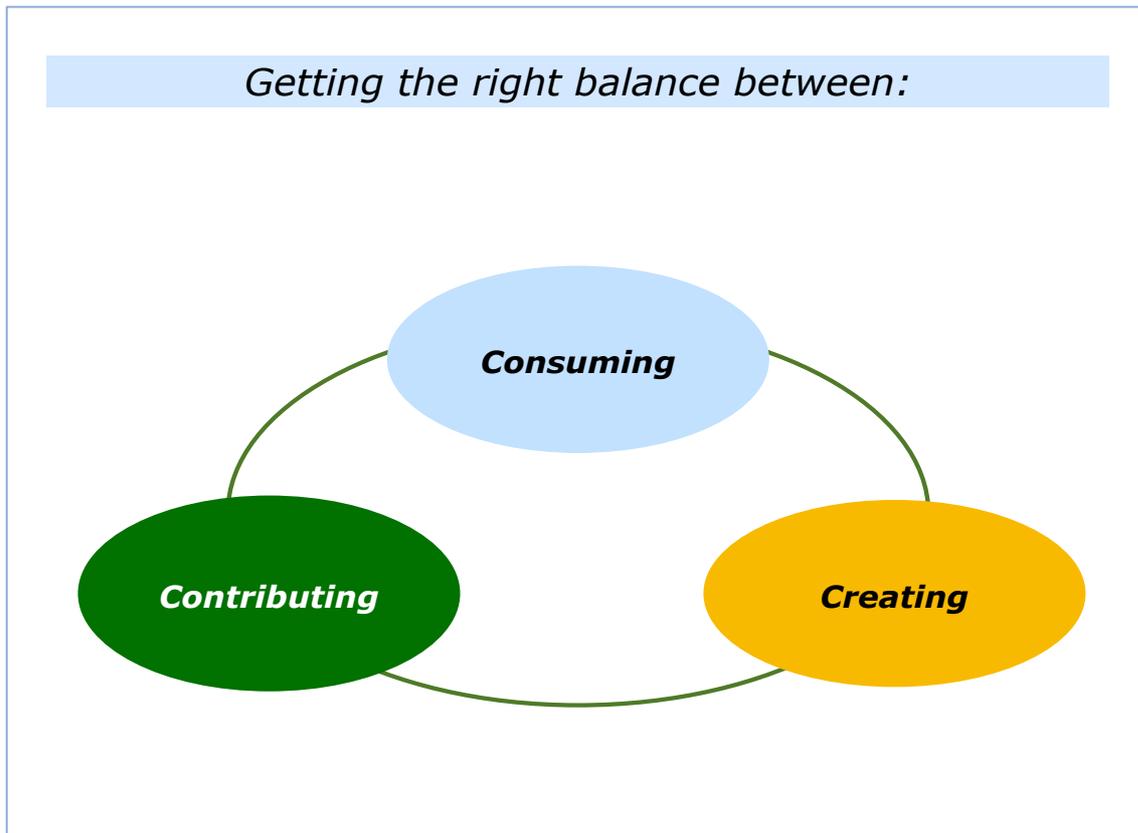
The specific things I can do to continue to build a successful team are:

*

*

*

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:

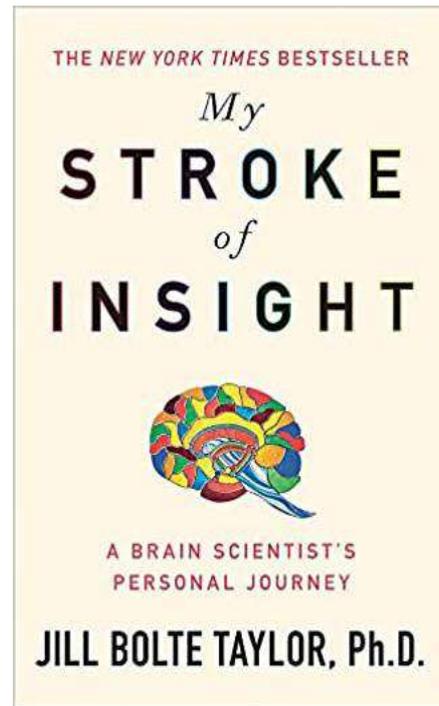
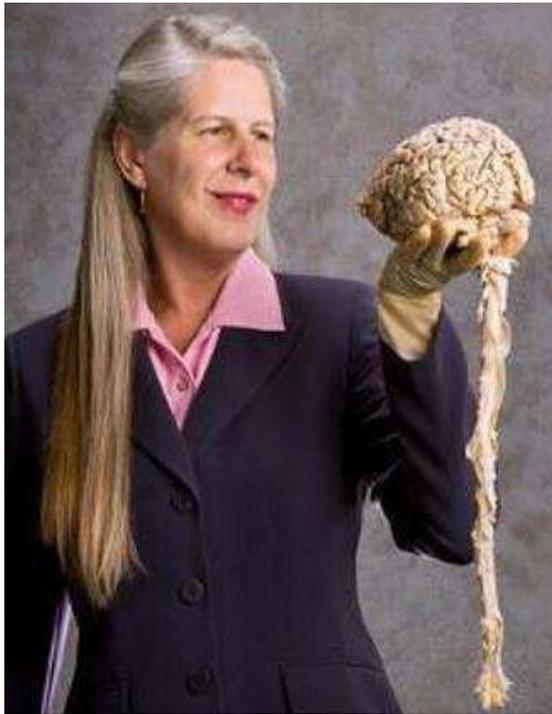
To create websites for patients ... To help the homeless ... To help prisoners of conscience ... To help athletes whose careers are cut short ... To help people change their careers ... To pass on knowledge that helps people to shape their future lives.

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.



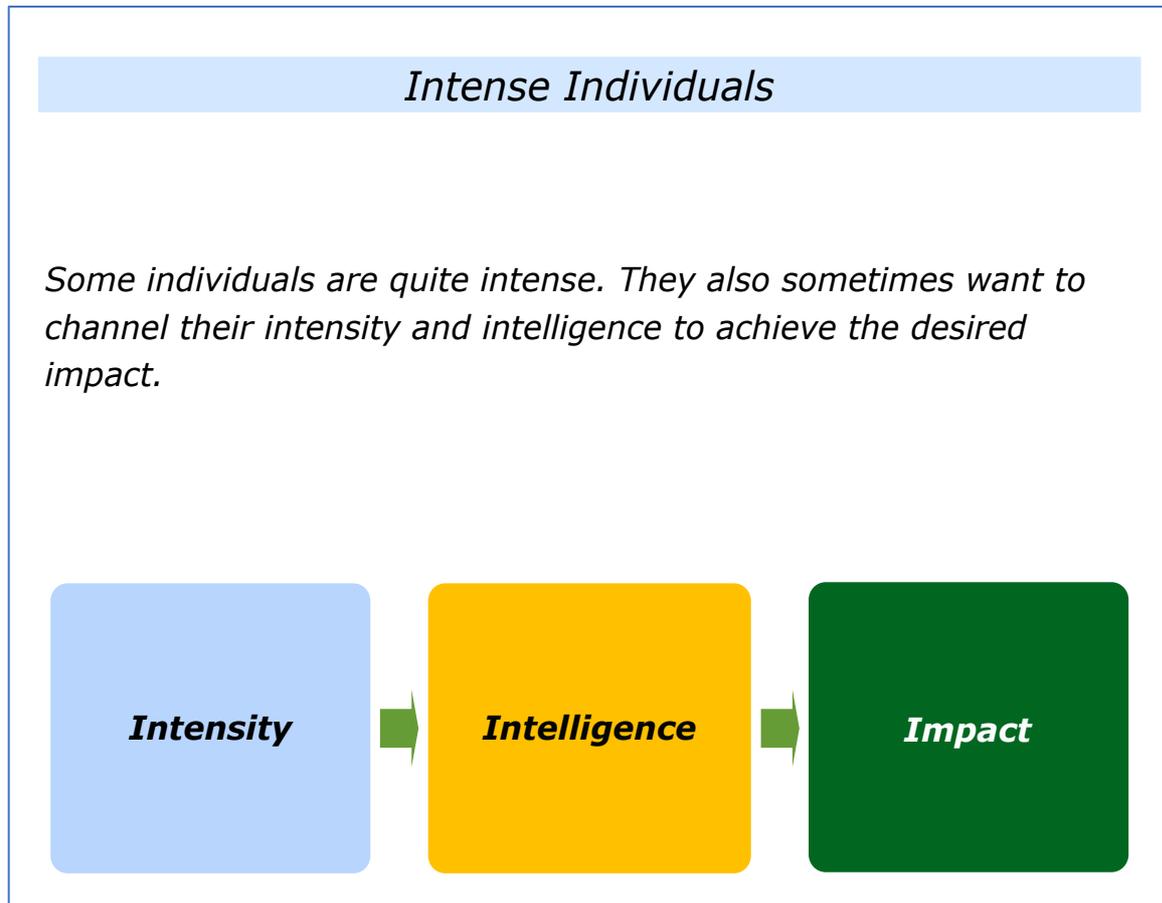
Jill shares with us her recommendations for recovery and the insight she gained into the unique functions of the right and left hemispheres of her brain.

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.

The Intense Individual Approach



Imagine that your work involves helping intense 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

Intense 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

Imagine that you are helping an intense person. Sometimes it is important to acknowledge their 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

Intense 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.

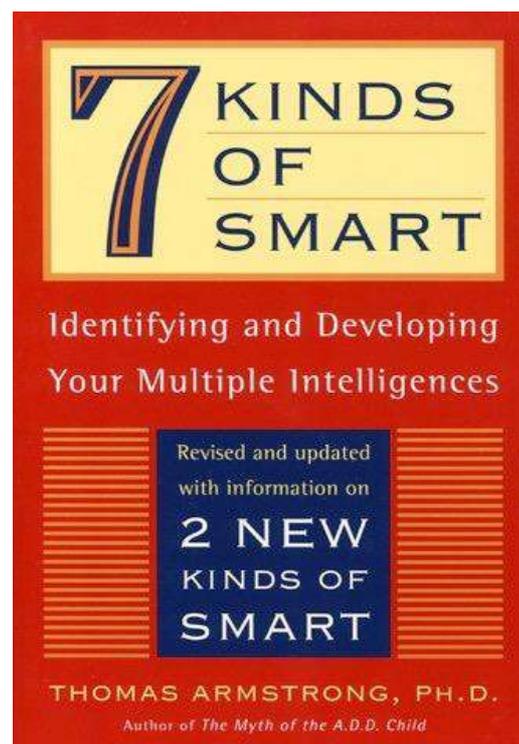
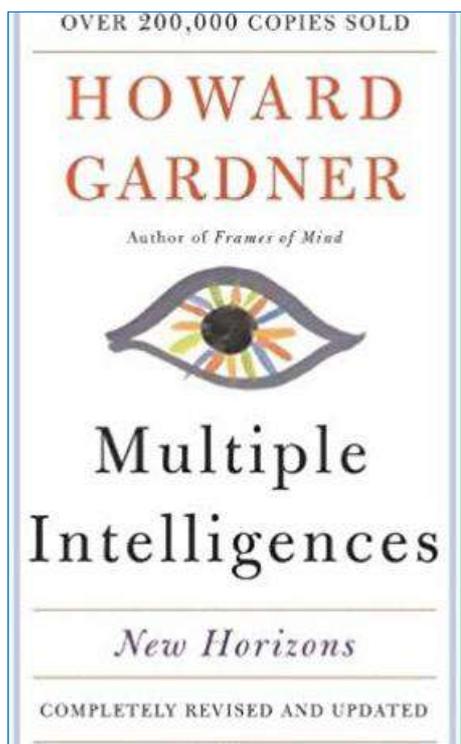
Howard showed how people may also have interpersonal, visual, musical or other intelligences. Since then he has expanded these to cover the following intelligences: interpersonal, spatial, linguistic, logical, musical, kinaesthetic, naturalist, existential and intrapersonal.

His treatise was somewhat academic, as were the names he coined. He also later confessed to being deliberately provocative by calling these intelligences rather than, for example, styles.

Gardner got his reaction. Academics debated the semantics, whilst practitioners translated the ideas into action in the schools. By the start of the 21st Century many of his ideas had entered mainstream education.

Some educators understood the spirit behind the approach; others simply applied it as a tick-box system they must implement. The phrase MI entered the educational system, but there was a need to reach a wider audience.

Thomas Armstrong built on Howard's 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.



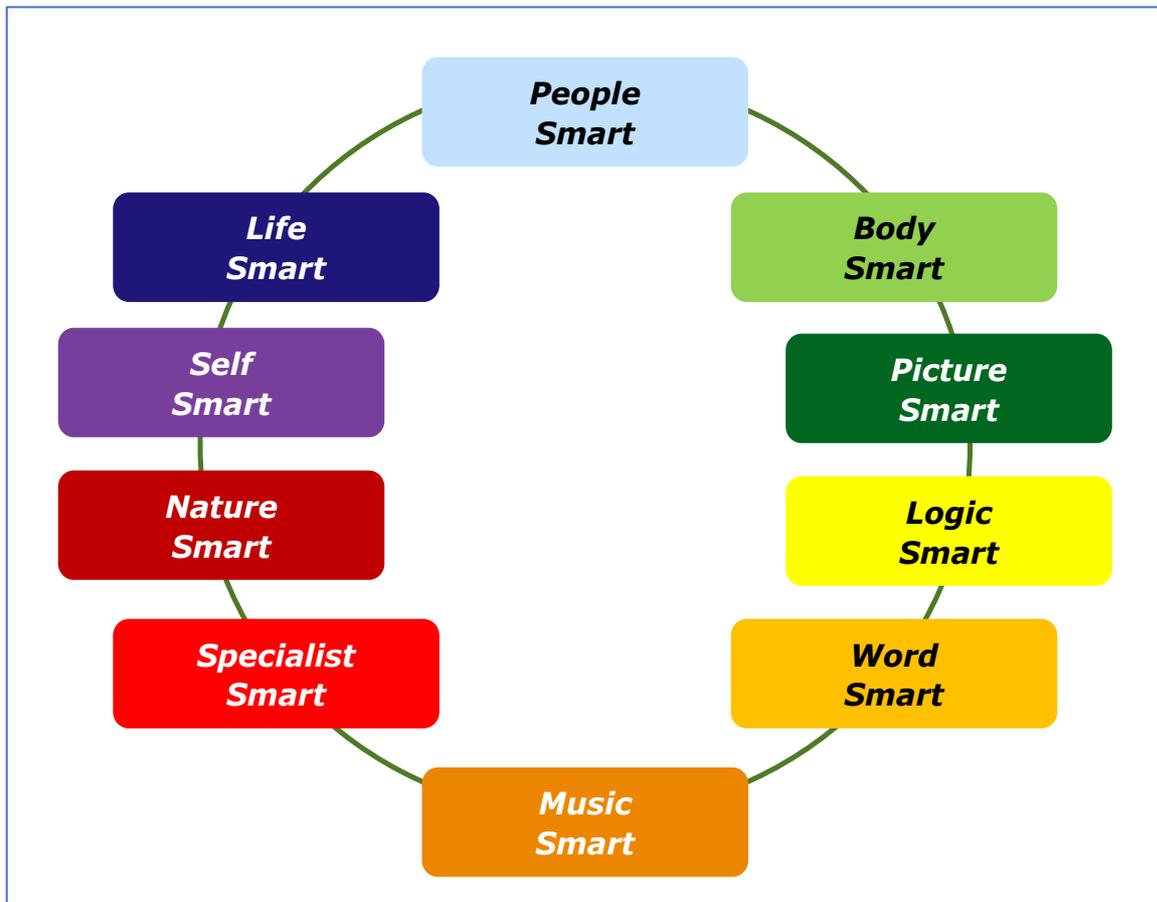
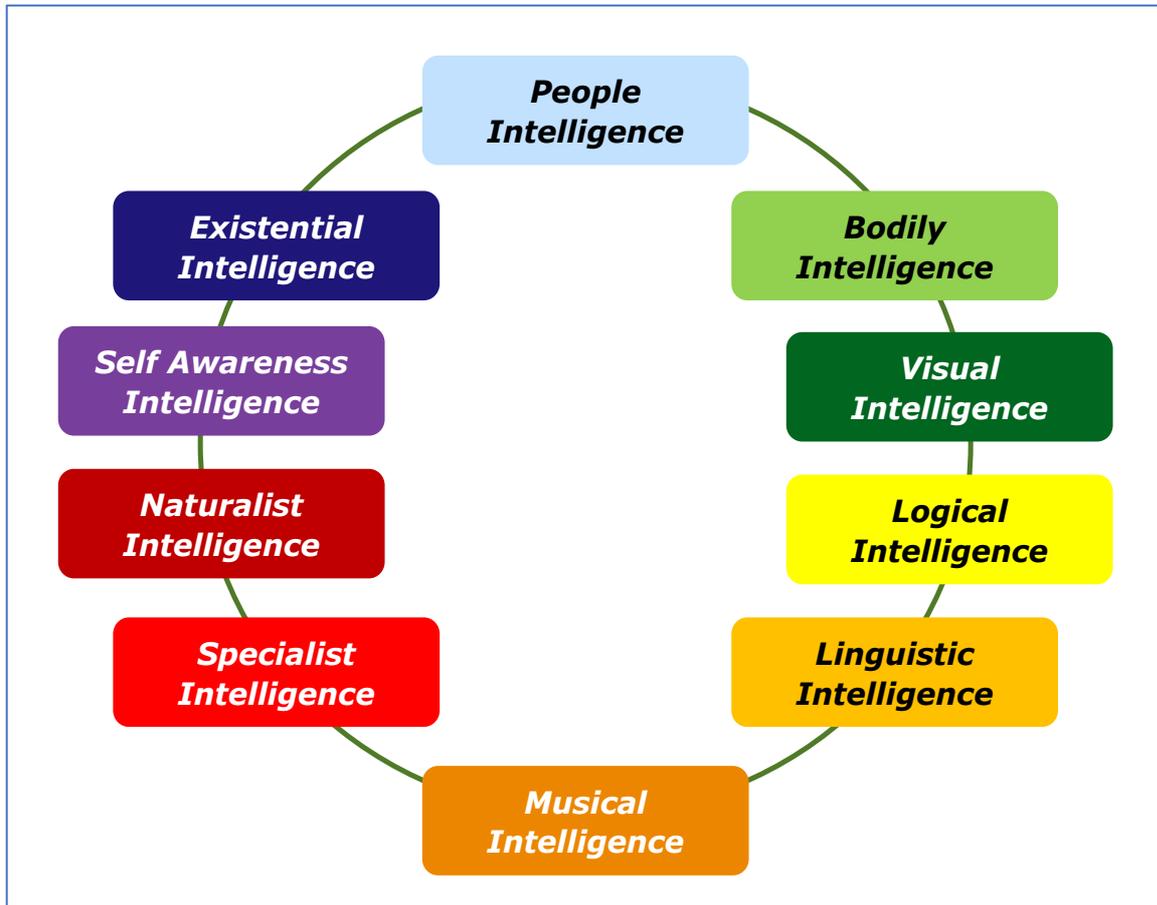
The concept of multiple intelligences has moved into mainstream education. Sometimes this has been used to help individuals to develop. Sometimes it has become a tick box approach to be applied in a mechanical rather than individual way.

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. These start by giving some of the original themes followed by the terms that Thomas used. People sometimes combine several of these qualities 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.



People Smart

Such a person may be good at working with people. For example, they enjoy building relationships, encouraging others and social interaction.

They have strong empathy skills. Sometimes they sense what is going to happen in a group, for example, before it actually happens. They can also be good at organising people and coordinating the strengths in a team.

The best way to help them learn may be through conversations, role-plays, simulation and other activities involving people. People smart corresponds to what Howard Gardner called Interpersonal intelligence.

Body Smart

They may be good at controlling their body movements, dancing, sports and managing materials successfully. They express themselves through movement – sometimes finding it difficult to sit still – and often have good hand-eye coordination.

The best way to help them learn is anything involved with movement or activities that evoke feelings. Such people have a strong muscle memory, being able to call on lessons they have integrated into their bodies. Body smart corresponds to Kinesthetic Intelligence.

Picture Smart

They may be good at working with pictures, images, drawing, colours, art, imagining or other forms of visual organisation. They often need to create or find visual images that enable them to retain information.

The best way to help them learn is by using these media. Picture smart corresponds to Spatial intelligence.

Logic Smart

They may be good at elements of reasoning, gathering information and numbers. They enjoy thinking conceptually, seeing patterns and making connections.

The best way to help them to learn may be inviting them to solve problems – particularly in their areas of greatest interest – collect data, do experiments and present the information. Logic smart to what Howard Gardner called Logical-Mathematical intelligence.

Word Smart

They may be good at working with words, conversations, writing and languages. They enjoy speaking, storytelling, explaining, using humour and teaching.

The best way to help them learn may be inviting them to use these skills through writing, presenting, speaking new languages and other verbal media. Word smart corresponds to Linguistic intelligence.

Music Smart

They may be good at creating and appreciating music. They also often think in sounds, patterns and 'rhythms'. Some are sensitive to even the smallest sounds – which can be either helpful or distracting.

The best way to help them to learn is through music and, for example, helping them to see rhythms – patterns – in other areas of learning. Music smart corresponds to Musical-Rhythmic intelligence.

Specialist Smart

They may have strengths in specific activities and area of expertise. Such people are able to quickly see patterns and the strategies required to achieve success.

They may operate in special areas of expertise that are not yet recognised in the mainstream. Bearing this in mind, they may have the ability to do pioneering work in such fields.

Nature Smart

They are good at seeing rhythms in nature and have a feeling for living things. Here is a superb definition from Kathy Koch of what is called Naturalist intelligence.

Nature-smart children think in patterns and are usually able to compare and contrast easily ... (They) usually enjoy collecting things according to shape, design, and texture ... Children who are nature smart love to be outside.

They may get dirty during every recess because they dig in dirt and pick up every rock and acorn ... Attention is probably heightened when lessons have to do with animals, rocks, mountains, lakes, planets, and other things of nature.

Self Smart

Such people have a good understanding of themselves. They clarify their inner feelings, strengths and weaknesses. They tend to think deeply about topics and can sometimes be quiet. They may feel uncomfortable being 'graded' by others, because it involves outside judgements about their own views.

They learn best by focusing on topics related to their own lives and experiences. Such people often prefer to work alone. They like being given time and space to explore their own insights.

Self smart corresponds to what is called Intrapersonal intelligence. Thomas has written:

Intrapersonal children tend to be loners. Although they may seem very isolated and cut off from the world, they in fact take in a great deal of what they observe, and possess rich inner lives.

They like going their own way – doing things in their own time. Fiercely independent, they can be very hard to deal with, if forced to learn in a specific way imposed from without.

They need to be given choices about their learning. 'Do you want to do a project on birds, or on dinosaurs? Do you want to study the problems on page 14, or page 16?'

They do best with independent study, individualized projects and self-paced materials such as computer software programs.

Ask them about their interests – they may be slow to warm up to you, but once trust has been established, they will share with you some of their hopes and fears, some of their dreams and visions.

Provide them with opportunities to be alone with themselves; give them the tools they require to carry out their self-chosen learning activities, and make sure they have enough time to work at their own pace.

Life Smart

This relates to people who are existential smart. Throughout history individuals have asked questions such as:

"Who am I? What do I want to do in my life? Why do I want to do it? How can I make it happen? When do I want to begin?"

People with existential intelligence gather knowledge and, in some cases, wisdom to explore and find answers to these questions. They may also focus on the more spiritual aspects of existence and our purpose on the planet.

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 an intense 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 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. The following pages explore some of the approaches such people may follow on the way to doing fine work.

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 Individual 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:

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Supporting The Ordinary Person Who Has An Extraordinary Talent Approach

Supporting The Ordinary Person Who Has An Extraordinary Talent

*This approach starts by creating a supportive environment.
It then involves going through the following steps.*

-  *Supporting The Ordinary Person*
-  *Supporting The Person's Extraordinary Talent*
-  *Supporting The Whole Person To Achieve Success*

This is an approach described by coaches who work with athletes, artists or other kinds of peak performers. It is one that I have found useful when working with people who may be well-known or stars in their particular field.

One coach expressed this in the following way:

"It is important to support the Norma Jeane rather than become starstruck by the Marilyn Monroe."

The approach calls for recognising that the individual may in some ways be an ordinary person with ordinary needs. They want to be able:

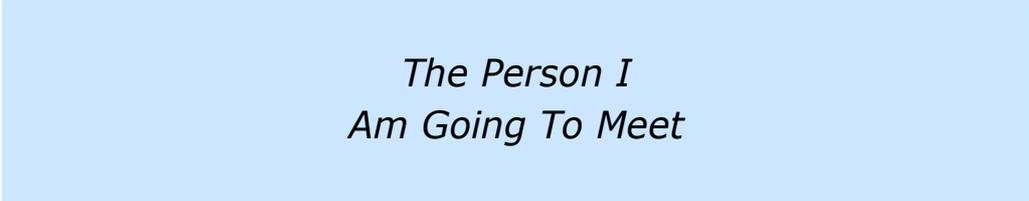
To shape their future ... To be supported ... To achieve success.

Bearing this in mind, sometimes it can be useful to focus on encouraging them as a person as well as a professional who has an extraordinary talent. It is, of course, important to do this in way that the person finds appropriate.

Some peak performers welcome other relating to them as a person rather than as a well-known personality. Others may simply want to focus on the professional aspects of their work.

How to take these steps? One approach is to prepare properly before meeting the person. It then involves following aspects of *The Mentoring Approach* that is described elsewhere in the book.

You will, of course, do this in your own way. Bearing this in mind, however, here are some of the themes you may wish to consider.



*The Person I
Am Going To Meet*

*Clarifying what I know about
the person I am going to meet*

The Personal Side

● *Who is the person I am going to meet? What is their background? What may have been their personal journey? What may they have achieved in their life? What may be the challenges they have overcome?*

● *What may be happening in their personal life at the moment? What may be their top priorities? What may be the challenges they face? What may be their short, medium and long-term goals?*

● *What are their personal strengths and qualities? How do they translate these into action? What is their style of interacting with other people? What are the pluses and minuses of their style?*

The Professional Side

● *What are the person's professional strengths? What may be the extraordinary talent (or talents) they have? What has been their professional journey? What have they achieved along the way? What have been the challenges they have overcome?*

● *What is happening in the professional life at the moment? What do they want to do with their extraordinary talent? What may be their top priorities? What may be the challenges they face? What may be their short, medium and long-term goals?*

● *What is their style of interacting with others in their professional life? What are the pluses and minuses of their style? How can they build on the pluses and manage the consequences of any minuses?*

The Practical Steps Regarding The Session

- *Before the session, ask yourself: What may be the possible topics or challenges the person may want to explore in the session? For example: 'How to ... How to ... How to ...?'*

Moving on to the session, consider the following questions.

- *How can I help the person to feel at ease and able to explore any topics they wish?*
- *How can I focus on the first topic they want to explore and clarify the real results they want to achieve?*
- *How can I, when appropriate, pass on knowledge, models and practical tools that the person can use to achieve their goals?*

The Positive Results

- *What else can I do to ensure the session is successful? What can I do to set things up beforehand to increase the chances of success? What can I do during the session to ensure the person is finding it relevant and rewarding?*

- *What can I do to ensure that the session is personal, practical and profitable. Personal – it relates their agenda and goals. Practical - it provides practical tools they can use. Profitable – it helps them to achieve their goals.*

- *What are the actual words I would like the person to be saying after the session? How can I do my best to increase the likelihood of them saying these things? If appropriate, how can I then follow up the session in a positive way?*

One final point is worth underlining regarding working with peak performers. Such people like to feel in control. Bearing this in mind, clear contracting is crucial. You can do this in several ways.

Before the session you can let the person know it is okay to explore any topics they want to focus on. You can also explain your approach to running a session. If appropriate, they can then prepare for the session in their own way.

Starting the session you can make clear contracts about the topics they want to explore. Focusing on the first topic, you can clarify the real results they want to achieve. You can then use your skills to help them to work towards achieving these goals.

Sometimes you may want to pass on knowledge that they can use in their own way. Before doing so, however, it can be useful to ask if it is okay for you to share some ideas.

The person will probably say 'Yes,' but it is important to make this psychological contract. You can then share the knowledge in a way they can use in their daily life and work.

You may want to conclude the session in a positive way. If appropriate, one approach is to give the person chance to clarify their take-aways from the session. Finally, you may also explain how you will follow up the session by sending along any relevant material or taking any other agreed actions.

Let's return to your own work. Can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the approach described in this section? If appropriate, how can you focus on helping a person who has an extraordinary talent?

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

Supporting A Person Who Has An Extraordinary Talent

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

*

*The specific things I can do then to
follow elements of this approach are:*

*

*

*

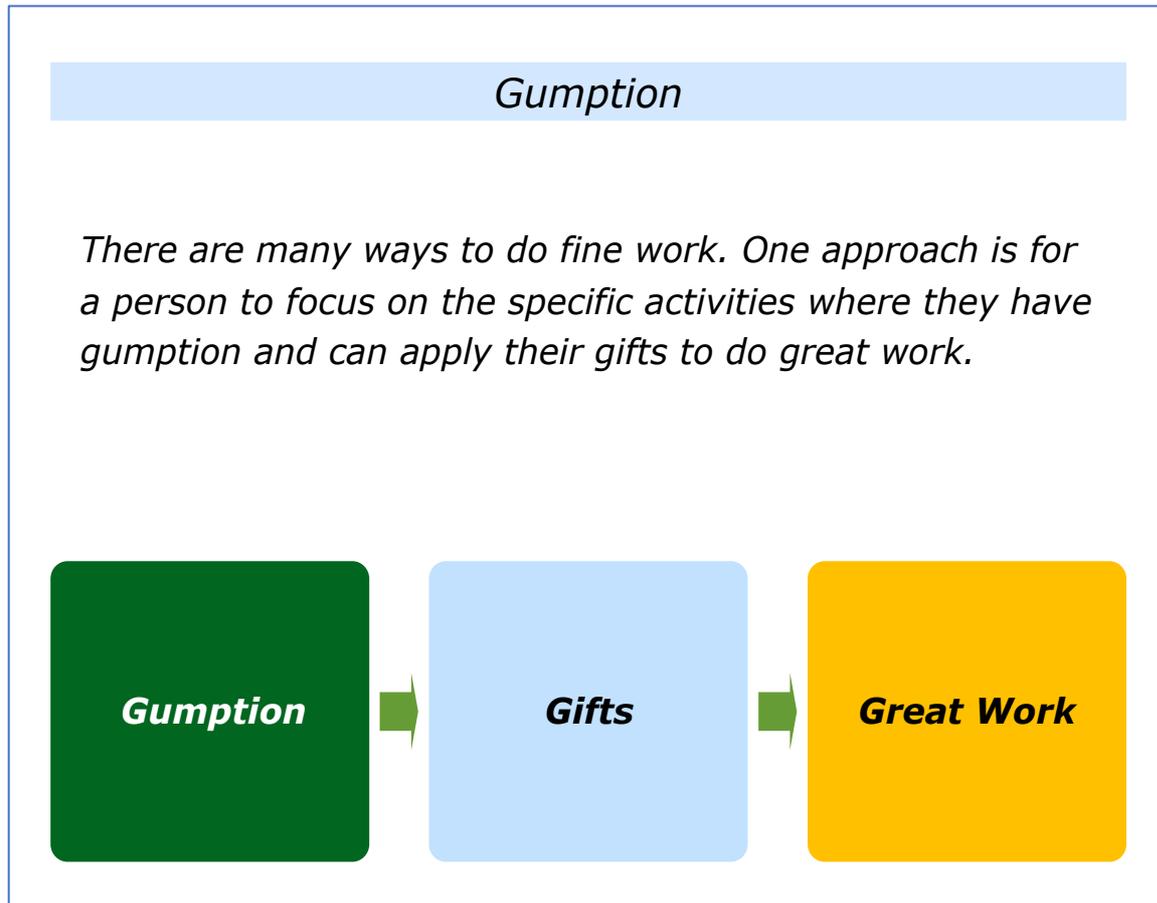
*The specific things that may
happen as a result may be:*

*

*

*

The Gumption Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is for a person to focus on the specific activities where they have gumption and can to apply their gifts to do great work.

Imagine that you want to follow this approach in your own way. Let's explore these themes.

Gumption

There are several definitions for gumption. These include people having common sense, courage and the competence required to deliver the goods. Here are some definitions.

Gumption 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.

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.

However, this current definition of gumption didn't arise until the nineteenth century. Before that time, gumption was a Scottish term and meant having street smarts or common sense, or being shrewd.

Some people have gumption – common sense and savvy - in certain areas but not in others. A person may have developed this through their natural feeling for an activity and also learning through experience.

What are the specific activities where you demonstrate gumption? Here are some answers that people give to this question.

*Gumption – I Demonstrate
Gumption When I Am:*

Helping recovering alcoholics ... Buying and selling antiques ... Being a chef in a Michelin Star restaurant ... Managing certain kinds of crises ... Playing in a particular position in a football team ... Mentoring leaders in pioneering companies.

Clarifying a specific activity where you have gumption is a good starting point. It can then be useful to clarify whether you have the ability to do superb work in this area. Let's explore this theme.

Gifts

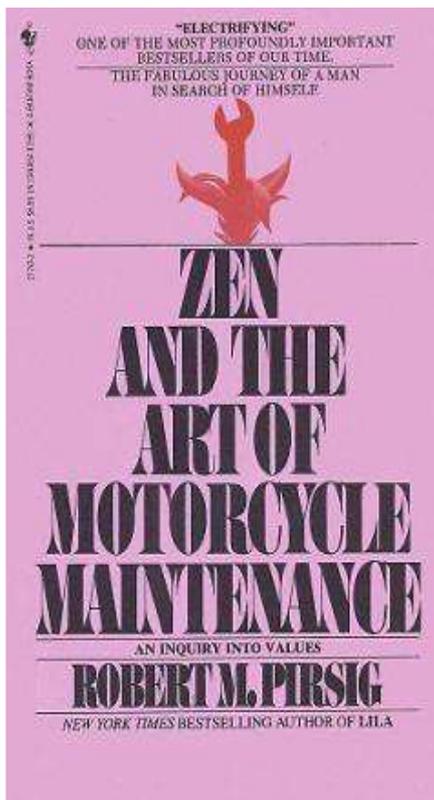
Gumption can help you to do several things. First, to see what is happening in a situation. Second, to clarify the desired results; c) to clarify the strategy you can follow to achieve success.

Great workers sometimes also possess another quality. They have strengths they can apply in the specific situation to achieve success.

What are the activities where you have both the gumption and gifts to do superb work? This may be when doing certain kinds of work with certain kinds of people in certain situations.

Robert Pirsig referred to both gumption and gifts in his book *Zen Art Of Motorcycle Maintenance*. He saw the word gumption as synonymous with quality. Here are some quotes from the book. (Pirsig used 'he' to refer to both male and female.)

I like the word 'gumption' because it's so homely and so forlorn and so out of style it looks as if it needs a friend and isn't likely to reject anyone who comes along. I like it also because it describes exactly what happens to someone who connects with Quality. He gets filled with gumption.



A person filled with gumption doesn't sit around dissipating and stewing about things.

He's at the front of the train of his own awareness, watching to see what's up the track and meeting it when it comes. That's gumption.

If you're going to repair a motorcycle, an adequate supply of gumption is the first and most important tool.

If you haven't got that you might as well gather up all the other tools and put them away, because they won't do you any good.

Great Work

Some people apply their gumption and gifts to do great work. Different people do great work. Different people do this in different ways.

Nick Offerman, the actor and author, wrote *Gumption: Relight the Torch of Freedom with America's Gutsiest Troublemakers*. In it he pays homage to some of his personal heroes and heroines who showed gumption.

The book describes well-known figures such as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Eleanor Roosevelt and Yoko Ono. It also provides insights into the work done by artisans, farmers and others who pursue their calling. Here are some quotes from Nick.

I am always hugely inspired (and personally relieved) to learn of the hard work that was required of any of my heroes before they could arrive at the level of mastery for which they ultimately garnered renown.

Part of what defines gumption involves a willingness, even a hunger, for one's mettle to be challenged. Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.

Find out what makes you kinder, what opens you up and brings out the most loving, generous, and unafraid version of you - and go after those things as if nothing else matters. Because, actually, nothing else does.

Today there are websites that describe how people can demonstrate gumption. Some tell the stories of real-life individuals, campaigners, artists, entrepreneurs and pioneers we can learn from.

Some describe famous or fictional characters who have demonstrated gumption. Here is an excerpt from the *Only Good Movies Blog* which describes films in which women show gumption.

These movies are perfect for anyone looking to be entertained by tales of strong and independent females. From gun-toting cowgirls to determined cotton farmers, this list covers a wide range of genres and time periods.

But they all have one thing in common: the men take a backseat to the women, and the estrogen will flow like a raging river.

Erin Brockovich (2000)

Julia Roberts captured a Best Actress Oscar for her portrayal of real-life figure Erin Brockovich, a single mom who gets a job as a file clerk at a lawyer's office and ends up discovering a massive cover-up involving Pacific Gas and Electric.

Miss Potter (2006)

Renee Zellweger stars as Beatrix Potter, the author of such children's stories as Peter Rabbit. A strong-willed woman, she starts her career as an author, defies her parents when it comes to marriage, and eventually begins buying up property to help preserve nature.

9 to 5 (1980)

Sick and tired of their sexist boss (Dabney Coleman), a trio of female employees (Dolly Parton, Lily Tomlin and Jane Fonda) decide to give him a taste of his own medicine.

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000)

Directed by Ang Lee, this international production features lots of eye-popping fight sequences and wire work, but none is more impressive than the showdown between Yu Shu Lien (Michelle Yeoh) and Jen (Zhang Ziyi), two martial arts masters with plenty of issues to work out.

Million Dollar Baby (2004)

Hillary Swank won her second Oscar for playing Margareth Fitzgerald, a scrappy waitress who leaves her Missouri hometown and heads to Los Angeles to become a professional boxer.

Norma Rae (1979)

Sally Field won a Best Actress Oscar for her portrayal of a factory worker in Alabama who becomes involved with the struggle to bring in a labor union. Based on the real-life tale of Crystal Lee Sutton.

A key question is: "Is it possible to develop gumption?" The answer is yes, but this comes with several provisos.

A person must have the right attitude and want to learn. They must also have some natural ability in the specific activity.

Let's assume that they meet these conditions. They can then follow the classic steps that people often take when learning about a topic.

*Developing Gumption
– A Person Can Aim:*

To clarify the specific activity where they want to improve and to study good practice – what works – in this activity;

To clarify the strategy they want to follow, perform superb work and do their best to achieve their goals when doing the activity;

To clarify what they have learned and how they can apply this knowledge in the future when doing the activity.

Let's return to your own work. What may be the specific activity where you have the ability to follow the gumption approach? What are the specific things you can do to follow this approach when doing this activity? 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 Gumption Approach

The specific activity where I may have the ability to apply the gumption approach may be:

*

The specific things I can do to follow this approach when doing this activity are:

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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?"

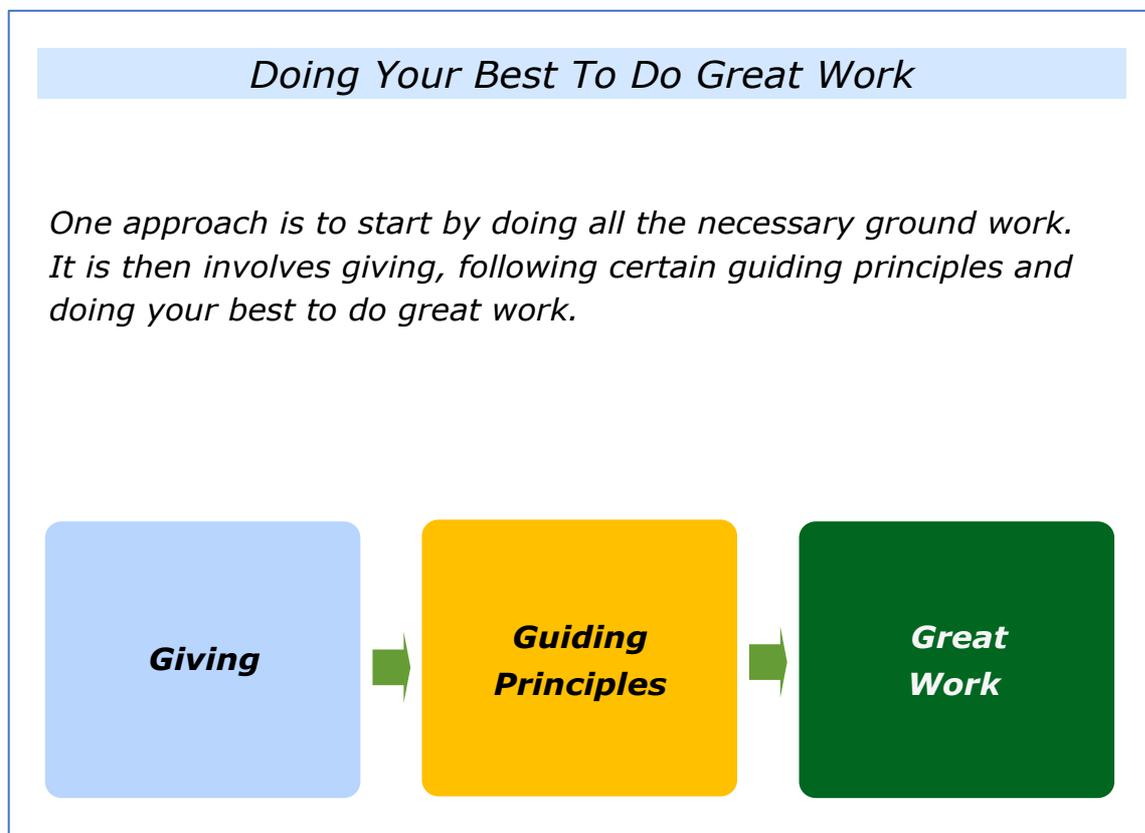
Different people follow different principles to make this happen. Let's explore some of these possibilities.

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 to 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.

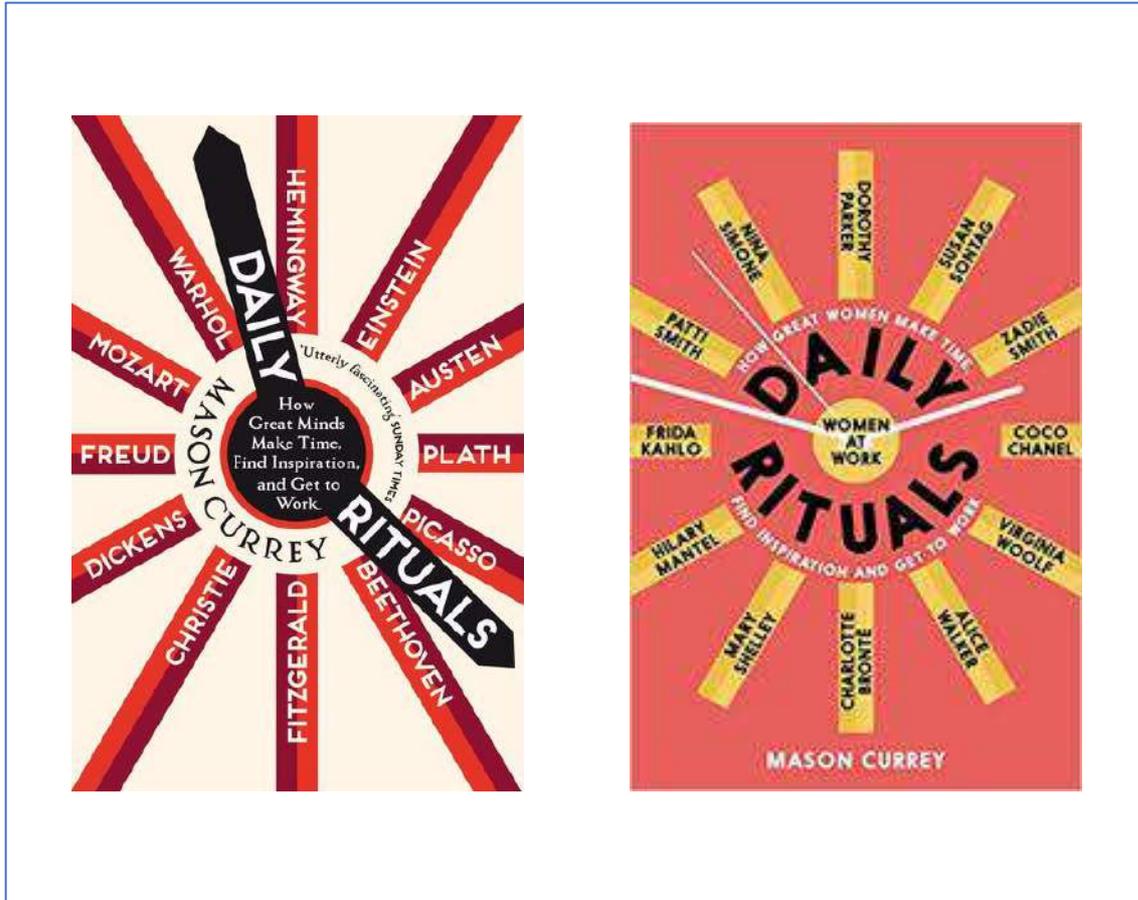
"I try to get there around 7, and I work until 2 in the afternoon. If the work is going badly, I stay until 12.30. If it's going well, I'll stay as long as it is going well. It's lonely, and it's marvellous."

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.*

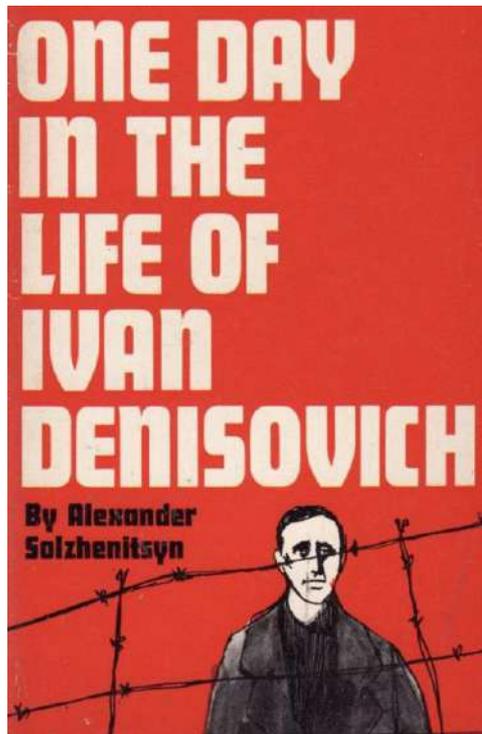
Keep getting successes on the journey. You can then do your best to achieve the long-term picture of success.

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 reenergise 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 to 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?

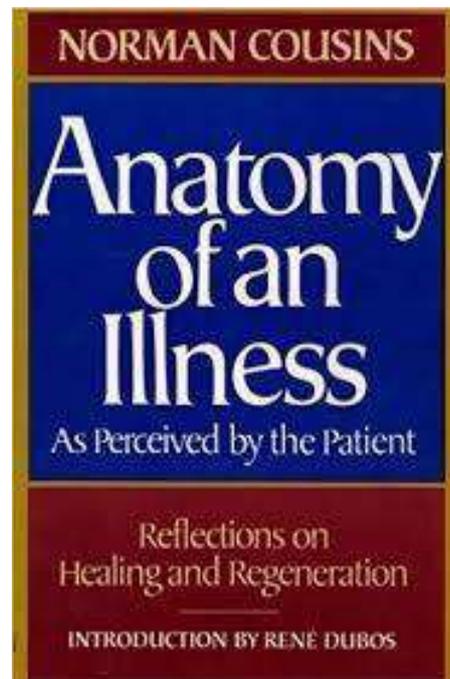
What is the route I want to follow? What would be the pluses and minuses involved? How can I build on the pluses and manage the minuses? On a scale 0-10, how motivated do I feel to do what is required to follow this route?

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 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 Succeed Or 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:*

*

*

*

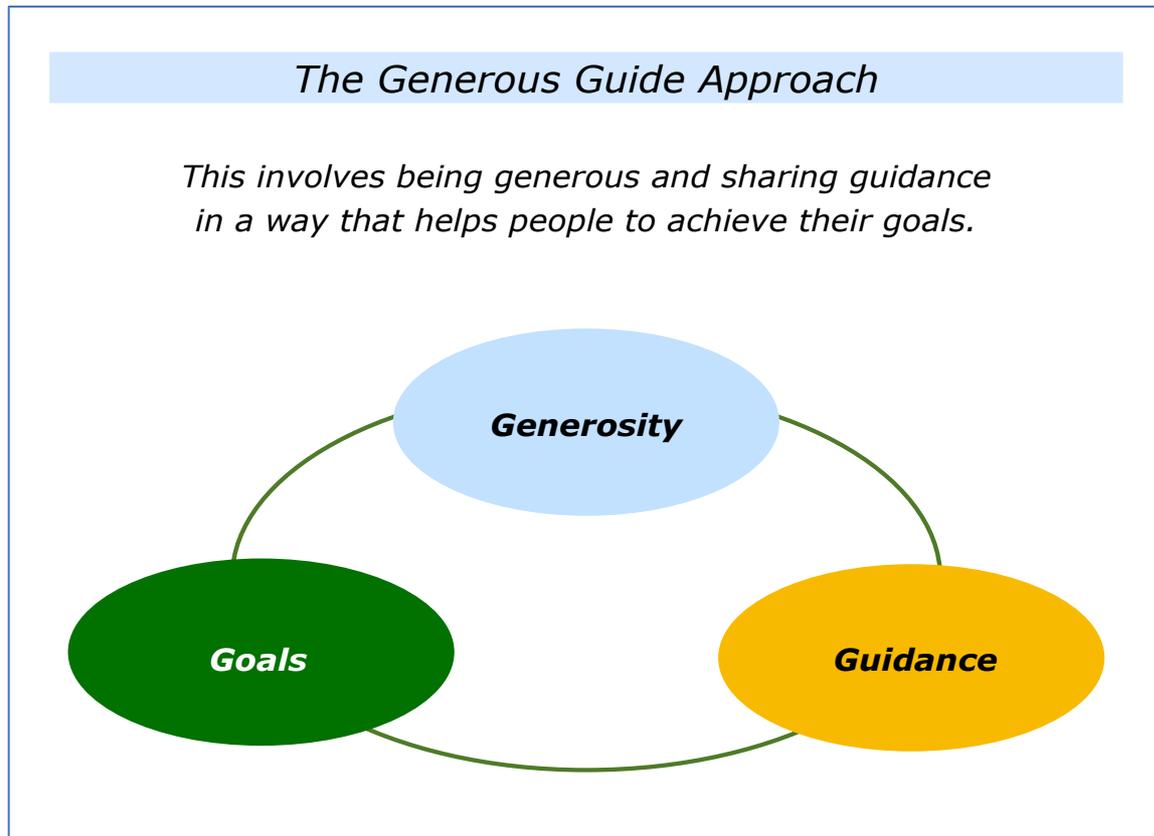
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

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.

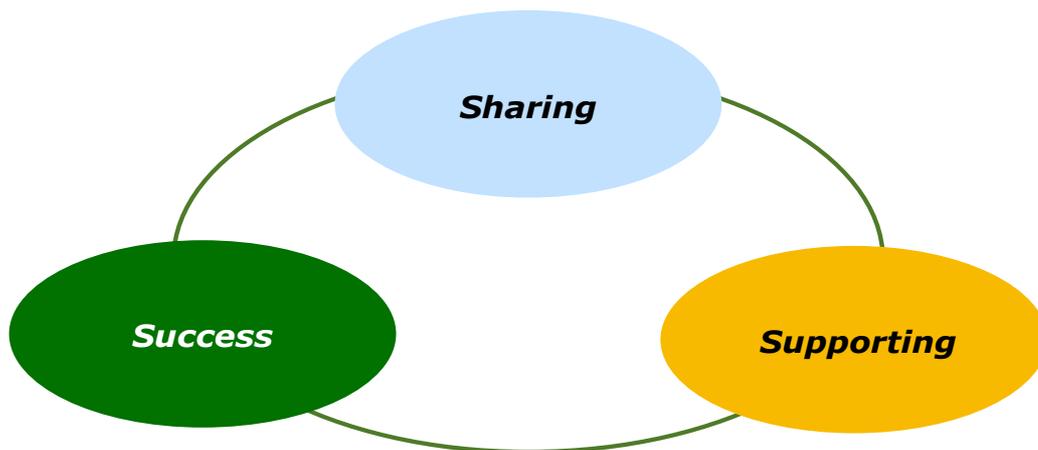
Such people often combined the elements of being kind, driven and humble. They saw themselves as lifetime students. At the same time they had strong convictions about how to help people during their time on the planet.

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:*

*

*

*

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.

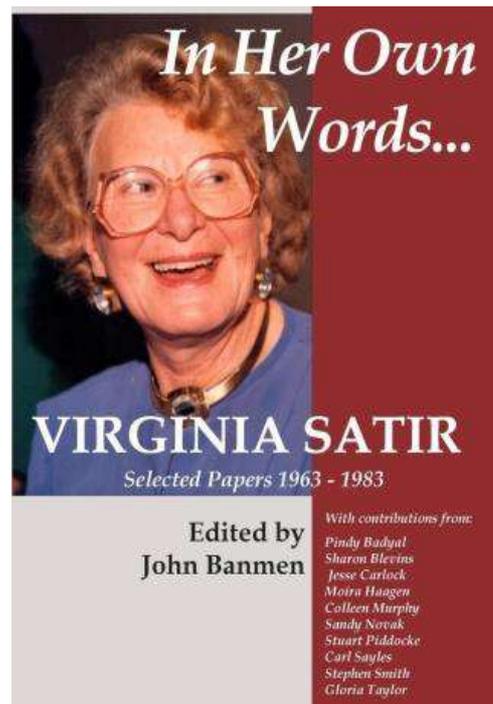
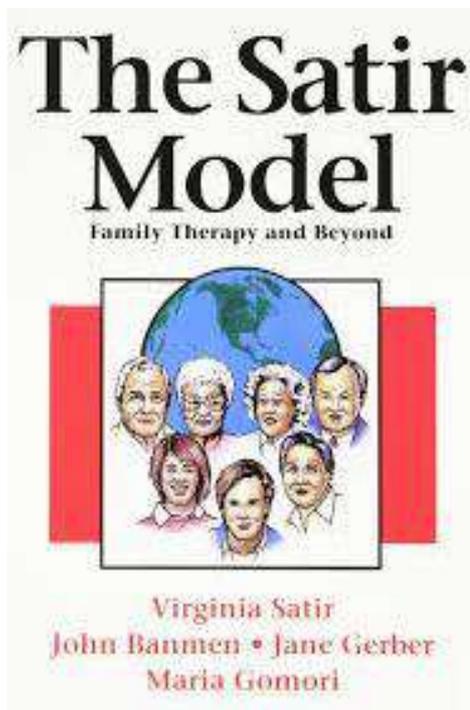
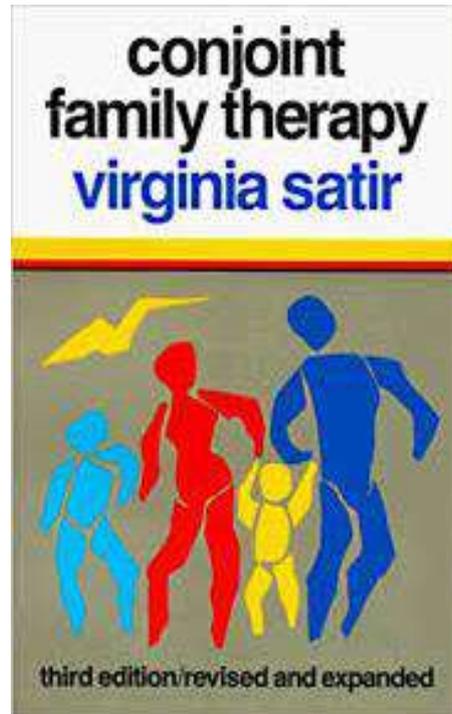
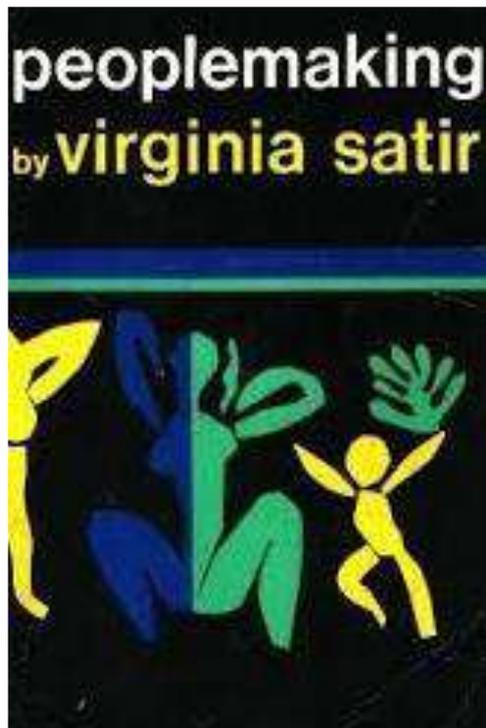
She then switched to full-time study, finishing her coursework by 1943 and her thesis by 1948. She also got married in 1941 and then divorced in 1949.

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-wracking 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."

Communication Can Help Or Hurt A Relationship

Virginia showed that communication plays a key part relationships. The ways that people communicate with each other can build or break a relationship.

Communicating in a positive way can help to build a relationship;

Communicating in a negative way can hurt and break a relationship.

Virginia's work led to many therapists teaching people how to communicate in a helpful rather than hurtful way. This helped them to build more positive relationships.

Here is one of the most common exercises on this theme. If you wish, you can try it in your own life or work.

Communication Can Help Or Hurt A Relationship

Introduction

Communication plays a key part relationships. The ways that people communicate with each other can build or break a relationship.

Communicating in a positive way can help to build the relationship. Communicating in a negative way can hurt and break the relationship.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites to focus on a specific relationship with a person or group of people.

It then invites you to describe the Dos and Don'ts you want to follow when communicating with the person or the group of people in this relationship.

Communication

*The person or the group of people
I want to communicate with is:*

*

The Dos

*The Dos I want to follow when
communicating with them are:*

* *Do ...*

* *Do ...*

* *Do ...*

The Don'ts

The Don'ts I want to avoid when communicating with them are:

** Don't ...*

** Don't ...*

** Don't ...*

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;

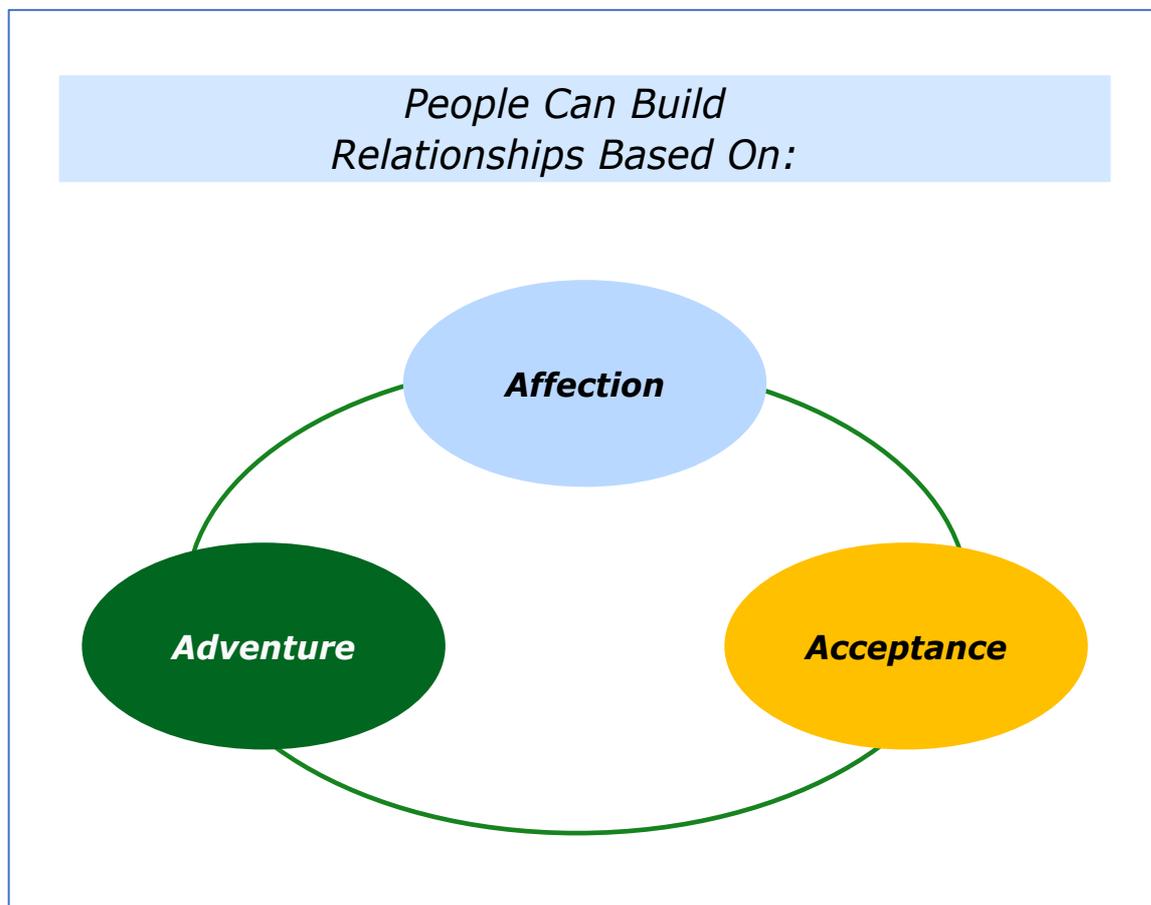
They respected and encouraged differences – obviously within certain parameters;

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.

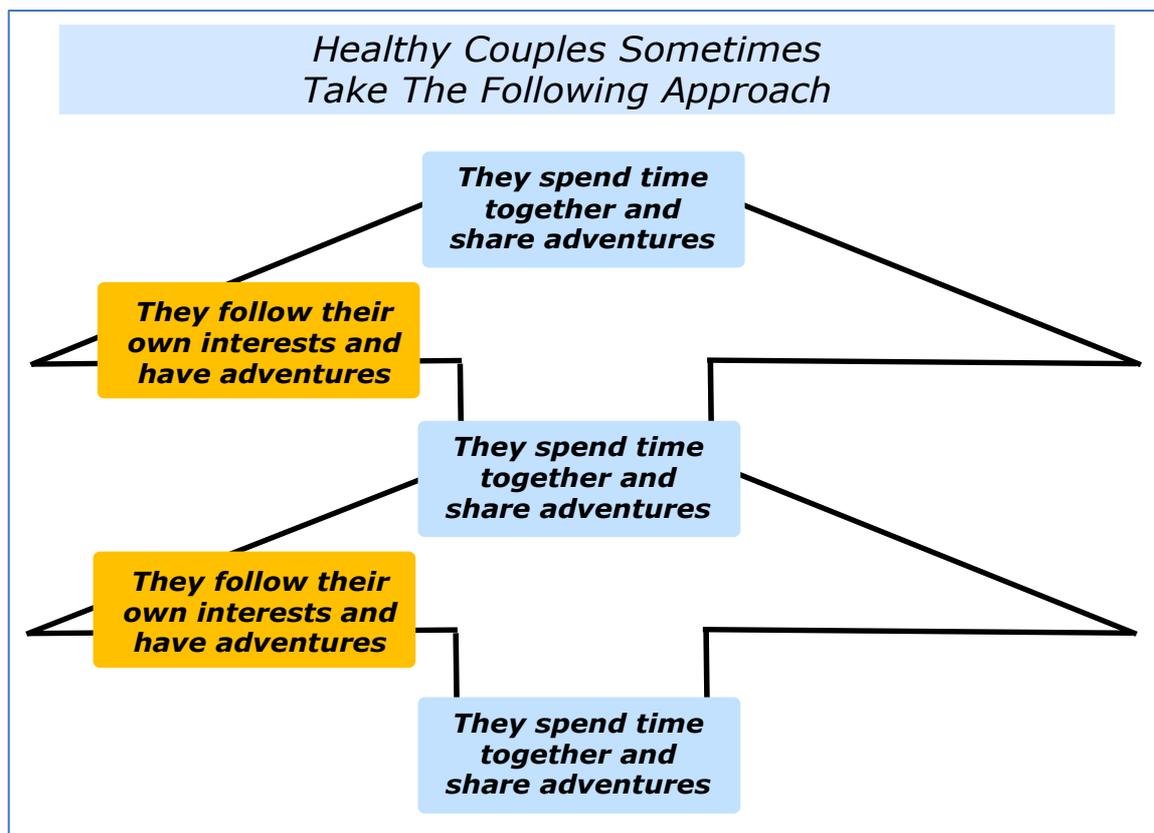
Adventure

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.

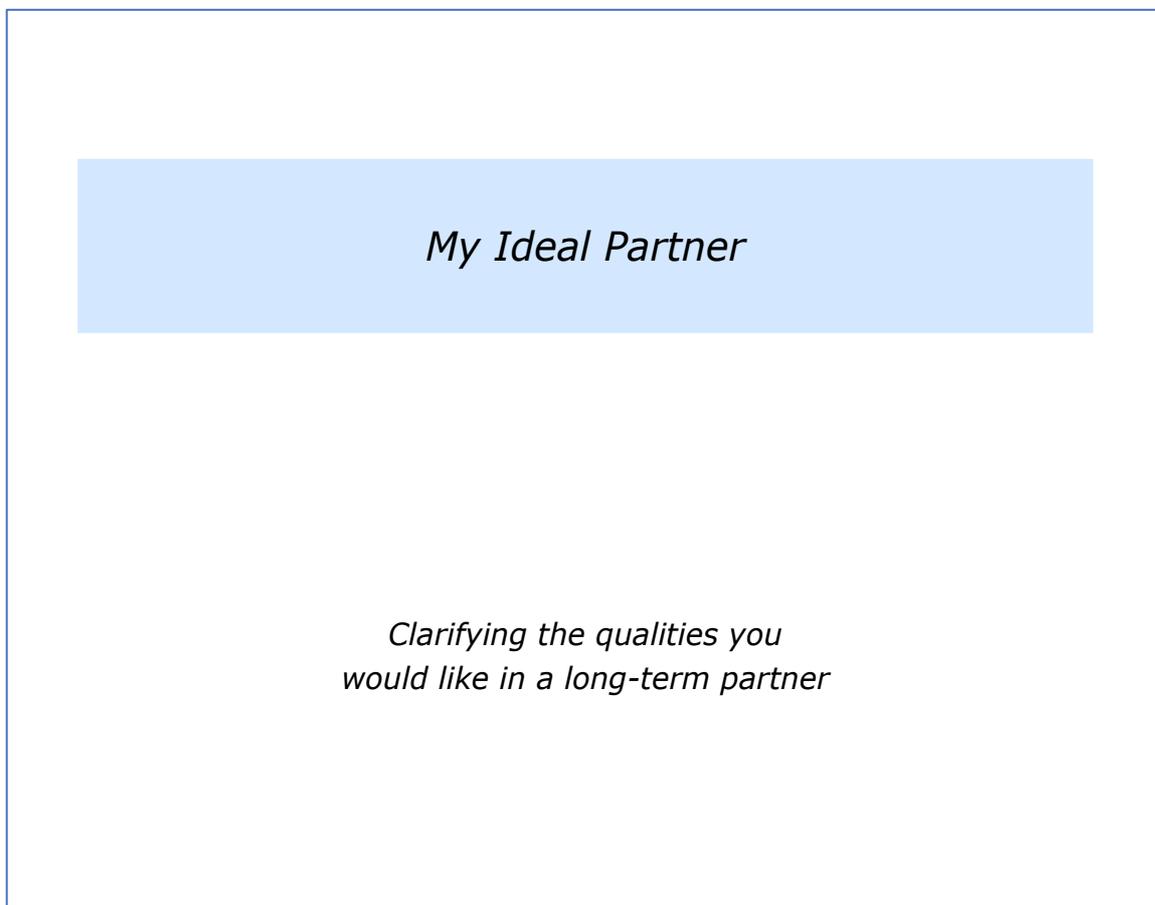
Such couples aim to enjoy their time together and also when they are apart. They take this approach to building a mutually enriching relationship.



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.



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 ...*

** 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 ...*

* *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.

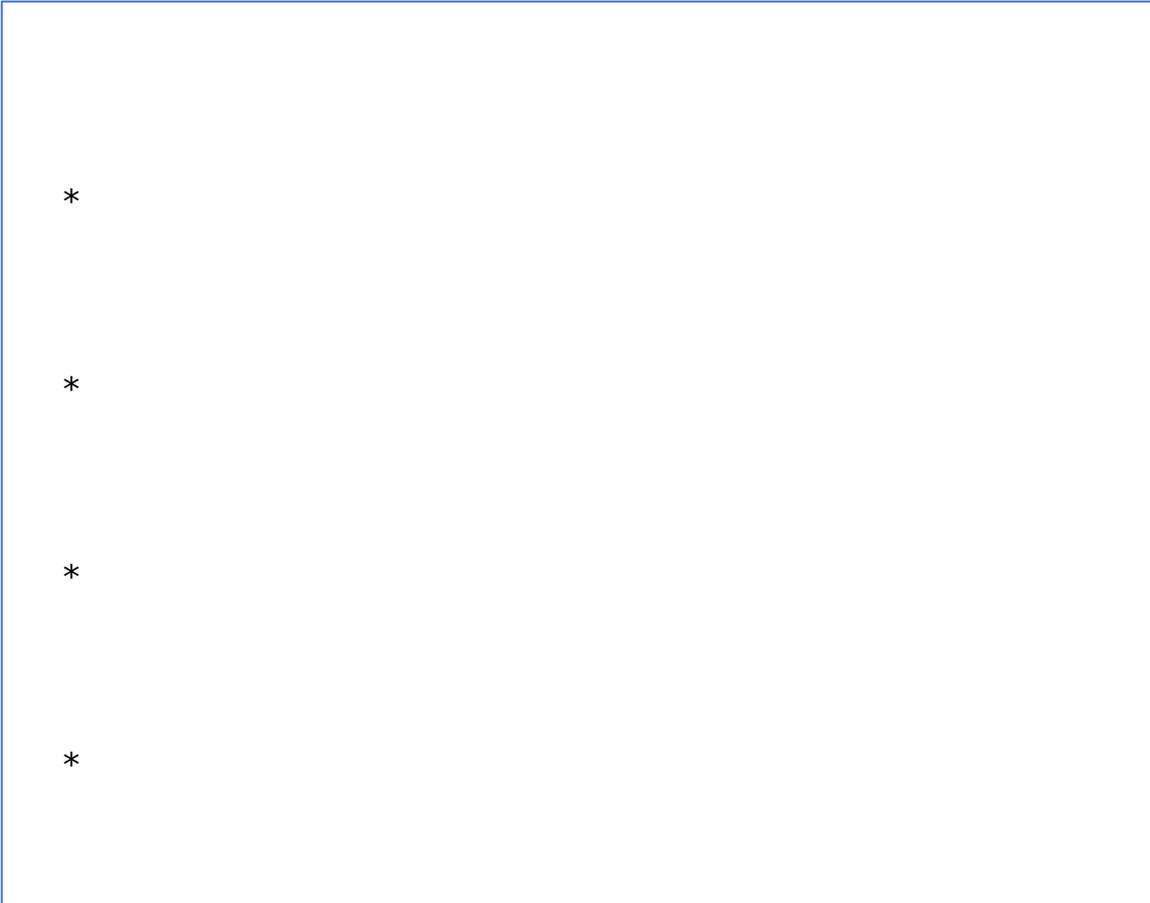
My Ideal Partner

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 style="text-align: center;"><i>Similarities</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How my partner is similar to me</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Differences</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How my partner is different from me</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">*</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">*</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.

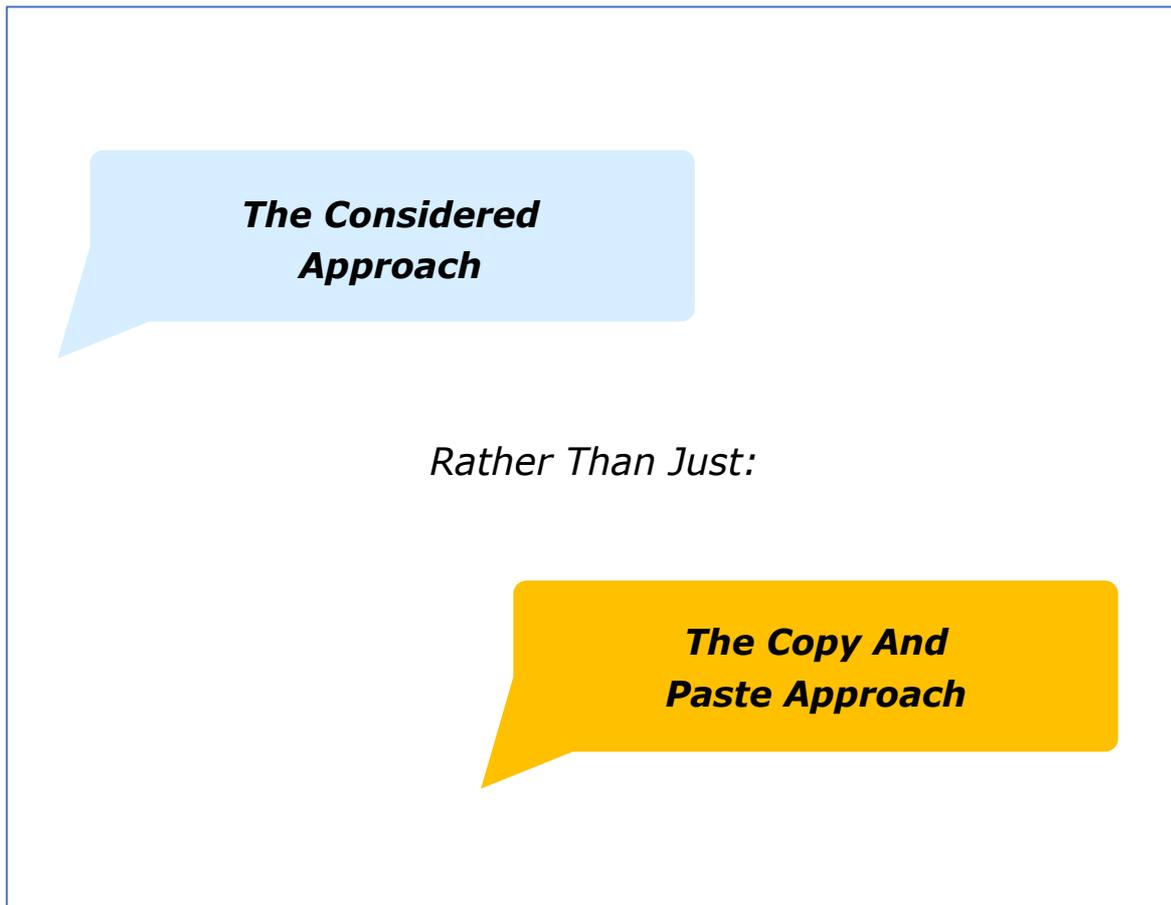
Looking at my own work, for example, I apply it to building positive teams. As described elsewhere in the book:

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 some of the ways they share they share their knowledge with people.

Generous Guides – They Often Follow The Considered Approach



Generous guides often follow a considered approach when making a decision or helping a person. They take this approach rather than copying and pasting phrases when answering a question.

Different people follow this approach in different way. Some of them aim to stay calm and considered. They may also follow the Three C Model of focusing on Clarity, Creativity and Concrete Results.

Generous guides may also build on this model and use a 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 offer a customised approach that resonates with the person. This involves moving from the concepts to the concrete. It calls for being able:

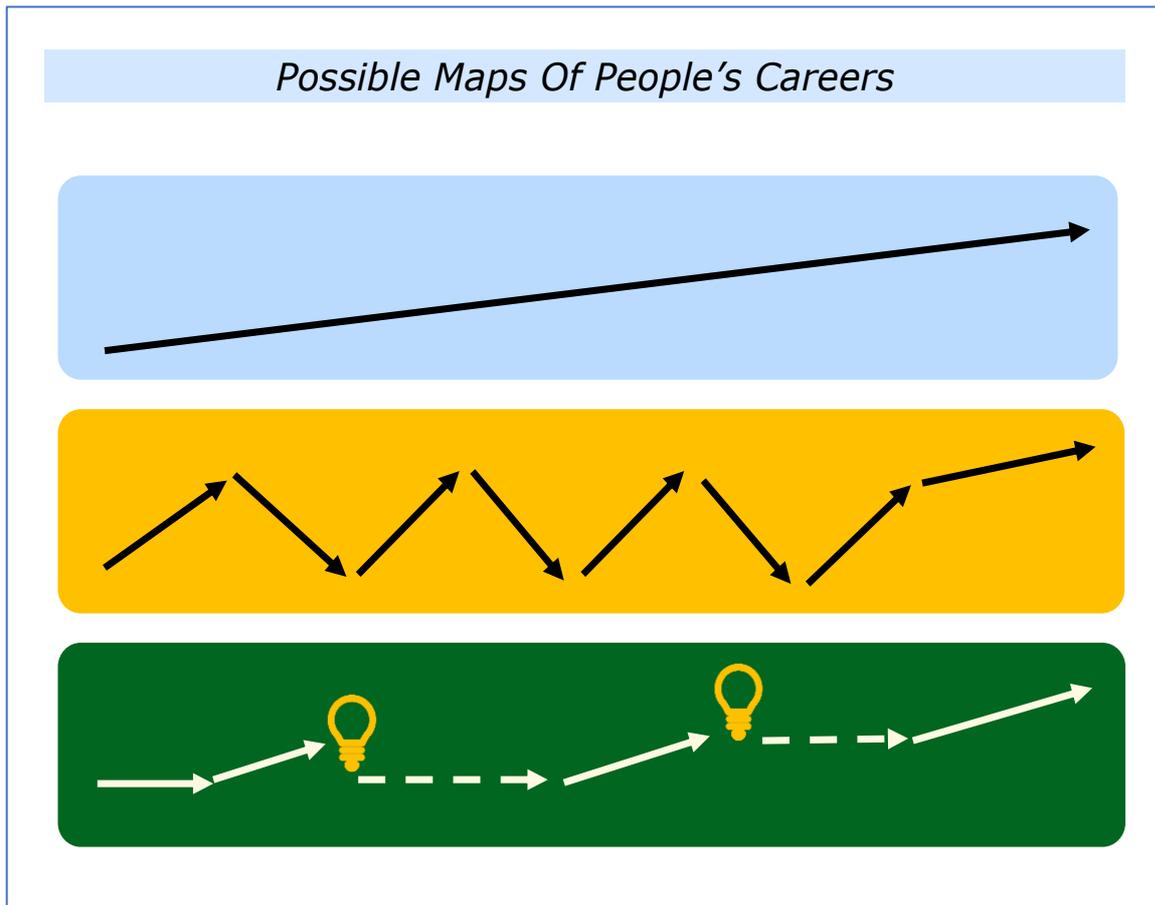
To focus on the person's specific situation;

To provide practical tools the person can use in their own way;

To help them to achieve the desired concrete results.

Let's explore another approach generous guides may follow.

The Sharing Potential Career Maps Approach



There are many models for helping people to shape their futures. One approach is to share maps of what may happen in their future careers.

These highlight possible events rather than being definitive guides. The aim is to raise people's awareness of:

The possible routes their careers may take;

The possible things they may experience along the way.

Showing people these maps can help them to recognise certain patterns and events. They may also help them to deal with certain situations they meet in their professional lives.

Let's begin by exploring some of the most predictable routes that people may take in their careers. We will then move on to consider of the events that can occur along the way.

The Straight Line Career

This is the imagined predictable career path. It used to be considered a safe route but nowadays unexpected events can cause problems. Nevertheless, many people still focus on this path.

One person who follows this route may aim to do well academically. They may aim to join an established company, climb the ladder and reach the C-Suite.

Another person who follows this route may go into medicine, the law, financial services or another established profession. They may continue to gain qualifications, develop their expertise and perhaps specialise in their chosen field.

The Status Seeking Career

This is a route followed by some people. They seek roles based on: a) the salary; b) the status it will give them. These factors can become an obsession as they go through their careers.

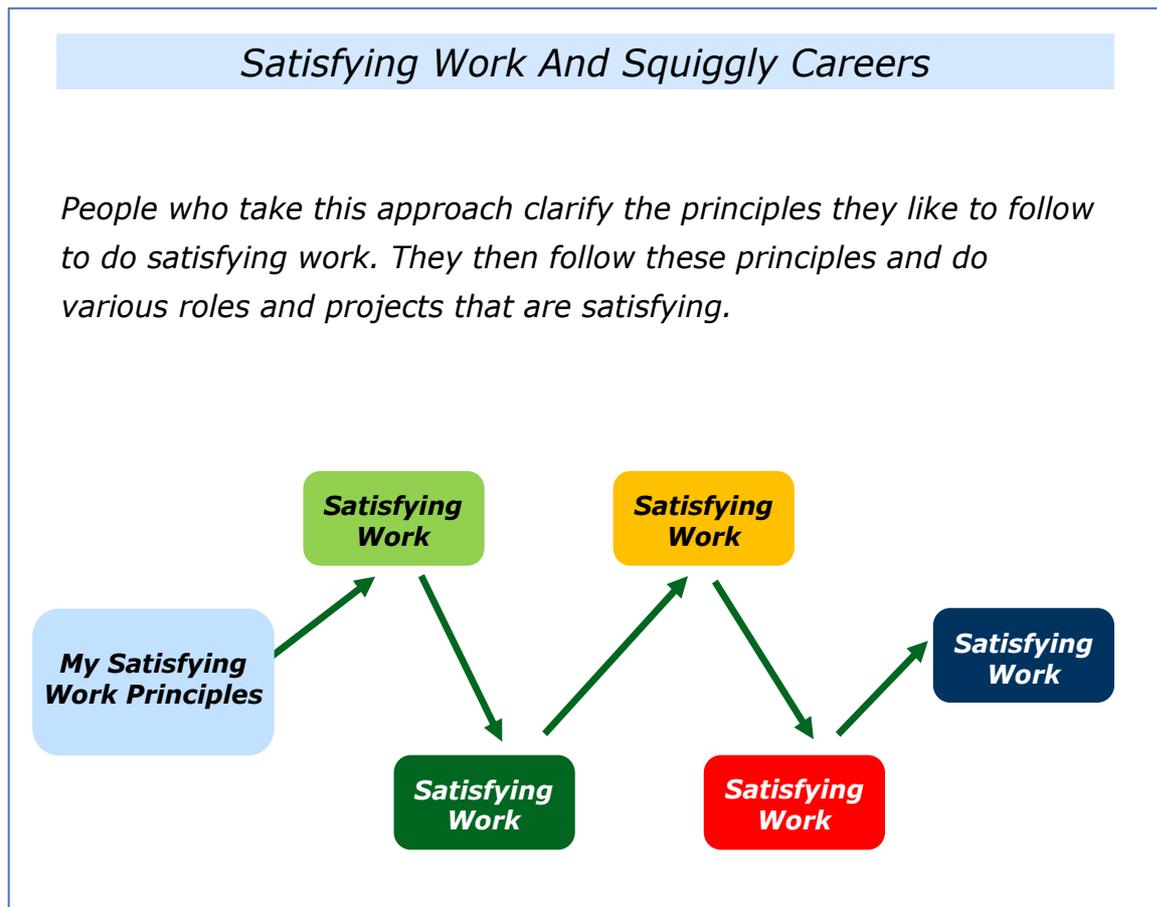
Such people may also compare themselves with others. They may measure their progress compared to what others in their age group are doing. This does not necessarily help their wellbeing.

The Squiggly Career

This approach has become more accepted in recent years. Some people pursue squiggly careers by doing projects and roles that appear quite different. But people who take this route often embody two themes.

They clarify the principles they like to follow to do satisfying work;

They then follow these principles and do various roles and projects where they can do satisfying work.



Mitch Joel talked about squiggly careers in his book *CTRL ALT Delete*. Here is a short introduction to his view of this approach.

Embrace The Squiggle

In the second half of the book (called Reboot: You), I talk about the value of having a squiggly career. I explain:

How the most interesting and successful people I know didn't have a very linear trajectory;

How it will not be uncommon for many of us to have 4-5 different careers in our lifetime (as opposed to 4-5 different jobs in our careers).

Too many people feel trapped and compelled to stay the course. Too many people think that a linear career is the prudent and true path. Squiggly is interesting. Squiggly is better.

The Satisfying Projects Approach

Some people aim to build on their strengths and do satisfying projects. They have a freelance mentality. They recognise there are now fewer predictable career paths but there are many potential projects.

Such people aim to find or create such projects. These may be in different fields – such as health care, logistics, local government, digital or other areas. They aim to contribute to these projects and deliver success.

Being professional freelancers, they aim to continually deliver high standards. They recognise that satisfying the key stakeholders can lead to getting more work on future projects.

Such workers also keep in touch with people in their network. Clarifying the challenges that these people face, they offer knowledge that these people can use to achieve success. Sometimes this leads to opportunities for future work.

The Serendipity Approach

Some people experience the serendipity approach. This can take many forms but here is one example.

Eric was finishing a degree in chemistry and aimed to pursue this as a career. During his final year he visited a friend who invited him to a trade fair where companies were looking to hire graduates.

Accompanying his friend, Eric became interested in a particular stand at the exhibition. The company was demonstrating a new technology that would diagnose illnesses at an earlier stage.

The representative for the company invited Eric to try the technology. This led to further discussions and him joining the business.

Eric went on to become the head of sales and, eventually, the CEO. He was then focusing on a different kind of chemistry. This involved channelling people's talents to achieve success.

There are many examples of serendipity striking to take people in different directions. Such chances can also lead to deeply satisfying careers.

Sharing Maps That Show People How Their Careers May Develop

There are other kinds of maps that can be shown to people when they are setting out on their careers. The following section describes one such example from sports.

Many young footballers start out with great hopes. Whilst encouraging them to pursue their ambition, it is also important to show the possible routes they can follow. These can be both inside and outside the game.

One approach is to meet with players individually to share a map of the possible stages they may go through in their career. They can also learn skills for dealing with these events.

Here is an overview of one such map. There are, however, many other scenarios that it is possible to share with the player.

A Possible Map Of A Player's Career

Being talented	Continuing to improve	Continuing to develop
Working to develop your talent	Successes and setbacks	Realising your career is relatively short
Taking care of your body	Learning to deal with both	Adapting your game as you get older
Developing lifeskills	Temptations	Being a leader
Media training	Financial planning	Enjoying every game
First team debut	Injuries and recovery	Doing community work
Moving in and out of the first team	Developing your best role in the team	Managing personal and professional challenges
Being a mentor and role model for players joining the academy	Being professional whilst also managing your personal life	Developing a new purpose for after the game
Establishing yourself in the first team	Possible moving to other clubs	Taking the next steps in your life and work

There Are Different Maps For Different Careers

Every person will chart their own career. But there are some relatively predictable stages people may go through in different professions. These will differ depending on whether they aim to be a nurse, musician, entrepreneur, therapist, scientist, journalist or work in another role.

Life can bring many twists and turns. Nevertheless, it can be useful to help a person to explore the possible things they may encounter. They may then be more able to shape their future career.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to consider a situation where you may want to follow elements of the sharing potential career maps approach. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

The Sharing Potential Career Maps 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:*

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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:

*

*

*

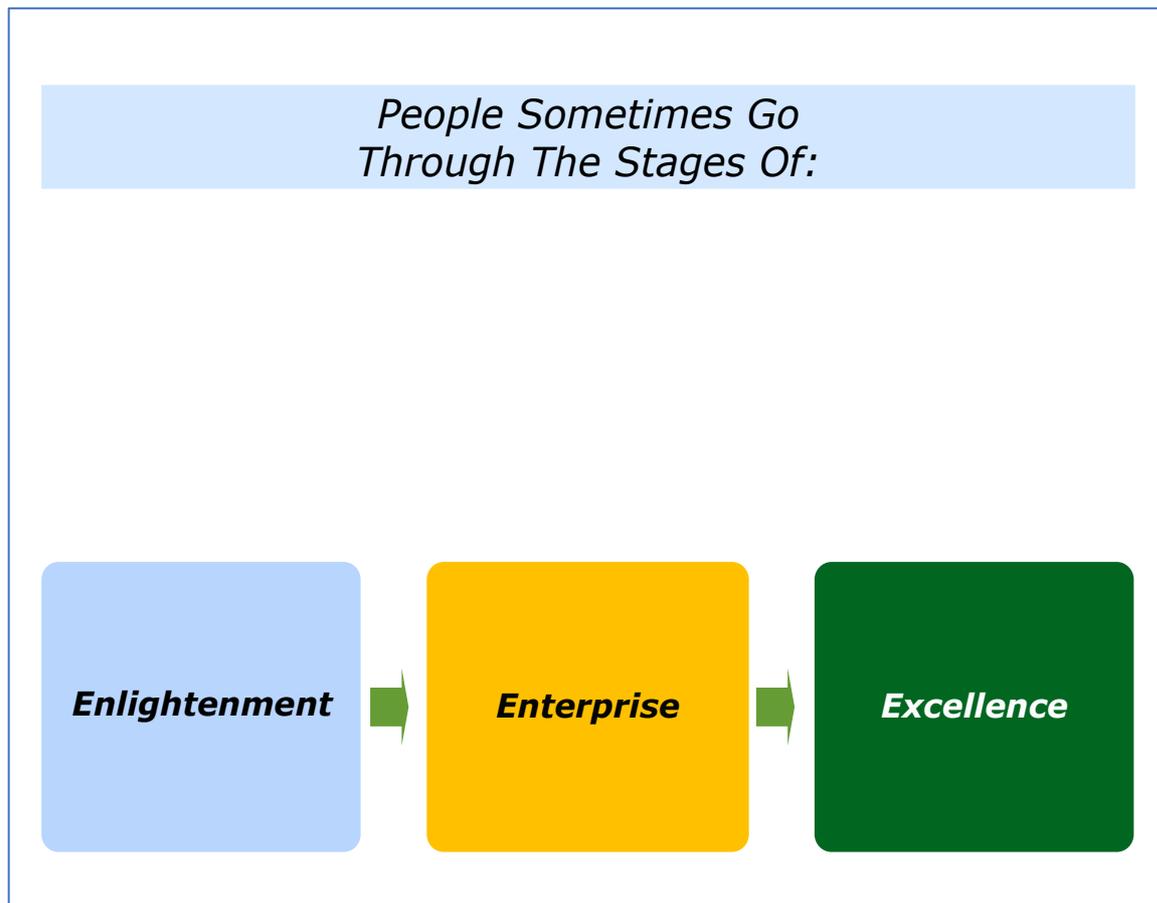
The specific things that may happen as a result may be:

*

*

*

The Enlightenment, Enterprise And Excellence Approach



There are many models for doing fine work. One approach is to go through the stages of enlightenment, enterprise and excellence.

People have many epiphanies but they may only pursue a few. Enterprise calls for doing things to translate their insights into action. They can then keep working until they achieve excellence.

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.

Looking back on your life, when you have gone through these stages? When did you have a creative breakthrough? What did you do to be enterprising and translate the insight into action? What did you do to deliver excellence?

Imagine that you want to follow similar principles to do a specific project. Let's explore how you can make this happen.

Enlightenment

When do you get creative breakthroughs? Maybe it is a particular time of day, such as the early morning. Maybe you are doing a particular activity, such as walking. Maybe you are in a particular location, such as the countryside.

There is no guarantee that doing these things will produce ideas, but it can be useful to consider the conditions that lead to such breakthroughs. Here is what one person said.

"I get my best ideas at different times. One is when running in the morning. My head feels clear and this releases my imagination.

"Running is easy at the weekends, but more difficult during the week.

"So I decided to create a 20-minute walk to my work place in London. I get off the tube two stops before I need to, buy a coffee and walk to the office.

"This helps me to recover from the crowded commuter train. I feel refreshed and able to do good work during the day.

"Another time I get ideas is when witnessing something brilliant. I love to see a superb musical, visit an art gallery or watch wildlife programmes on television.

"My mind feels stimulated. Frequently I follow-up the ideas and translate these into something tangible."

Enlightenment comes in many different forms. It also has many different names, such as 'epiphanies', 'realisations' or 'Aha!' moments.

Such moments are exciting, but not all stand the test of time. Some people therefore choose to 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. This is something we will explore later.

Imagine that you want to do a specific project. Let's explore how you can do this by going through the stages of enlightenment, enterprise and excellence.

The first step may be to gather information, make creative breakthroughs and settle on your chosen way forwards. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

Enlightenment

The specific project where I would like to get enlightenment and make a creative breakthrough is:

*

The real results I want to achieve by making the creative breakthrough are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to increase the chances of making a creative breakthrough are:

*

*

*

Enterprise

Some people see enlightenment as an end in itself. Another approach is to be enterprising. It is to do something with the idea and translate it into action. How to make this happen?

Let's assume that you have had a creative breakthrough. You can see a potential way forward with the project and are clear on your picture of success.

Good implementers then move into action. They aim to keep doing the right things in the right way every day. This increases the chances of delivering the right results.

Looking back at your own life, when have you followed a daily discipline? You may have been studying for an exam, aiming to improve your health, striving to hit a project deadline or whatever.

What did you do right then? How did you develop good habits? How did you overcome setbacks along the way? How did you encourage yourself on the journey? How can you follow similar principles in the future?

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

Enterprise

The specific project where I would like to move from enlightenment to being enterprising is:

*

The specific things I can do to be enterprising and translate the insights into action are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can then do to perform effective work when aiming to get the desired results are:

*

*

*

Excellence

Looking at the project you want tackle, what is your picture of success? What will be happening that will show you have delivered excellence?

Different people have different views regarding what they believe to be fine work. Much depends on the positive models they have learned from during the early part of their careers.

One Managing Director explained where he had learned about professional standards.

"My early working life was spent in retail. Fortunately I had a great boss who kept showing us what good looks like.

"Every morning he took us outside to stand in the car park. He encouraged us to look at the store through the customer's eyes.

"He then took us on the customer's journey. Looking at every detail as we walked through the store, he asked us to note the following things.

'What is good about the store, the display and the behaviour of the staff? How can we do more of these things?

'What can be improved about the store, the display and the behaviour of the staff? How can we do these things?

"Part of my job was to make sure that every tin was flush with the edge of each shelf. That is probably where I developed my OCD tendencies.

"Now I have extremely high standards regarding what must be delivered by the people in my company."

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

Excellence

*The specific project where I
would like to deliver excellence is:*

*

*The specific things I can do
to deliver excellence and
achieve the desired results are:*

*

*

*

*The specific benefits of taking these steps
and achieving the desired results will be:*

*

*

*

Different people take these steps in different ways. Some go beyond doing work that is excellence. 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 enterprise 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.

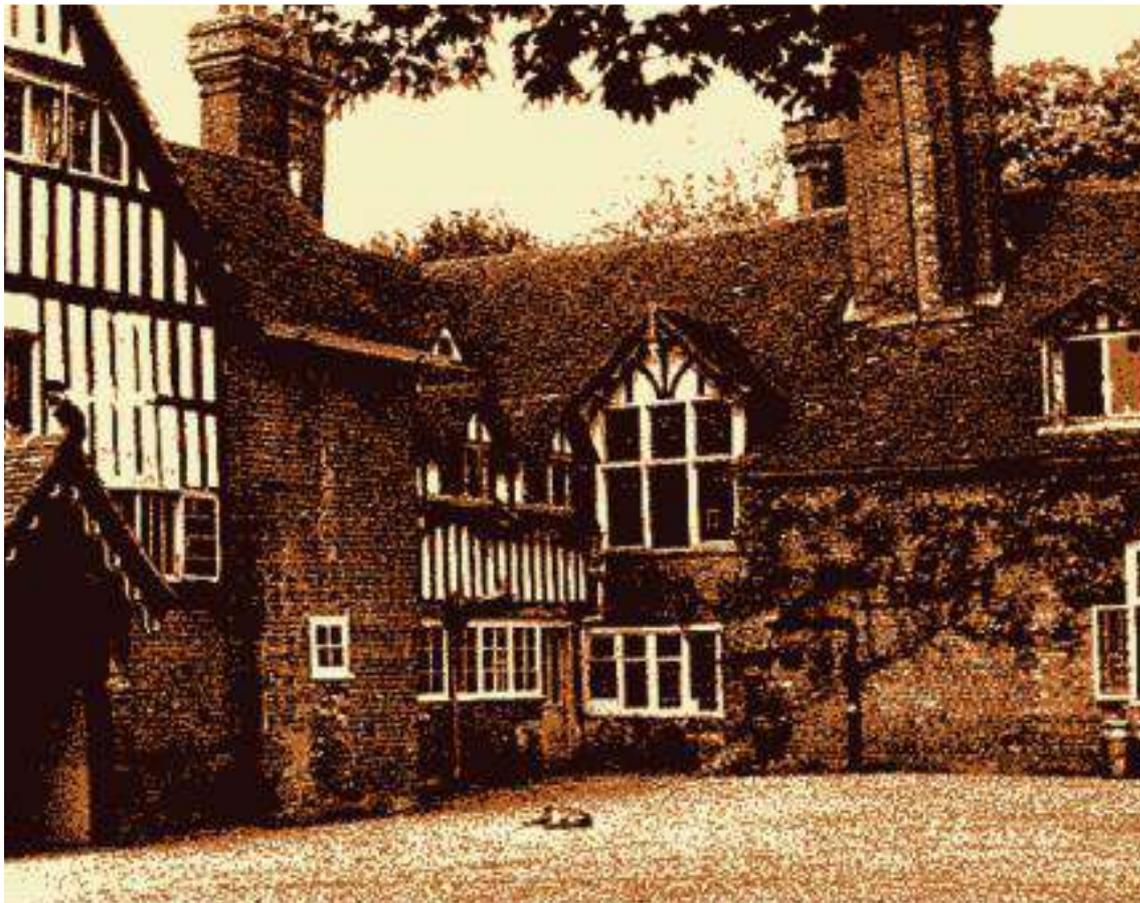
She went on to do stimulating work and stretch herself. Living and working in many countries, she learned to speak French, Spanish, Italian, Arabic and the West African language Fanti.

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.

George Lyward

George was a charismatic educationalist who achieved outstanding results at Finchden Manor, a pioneering a 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.

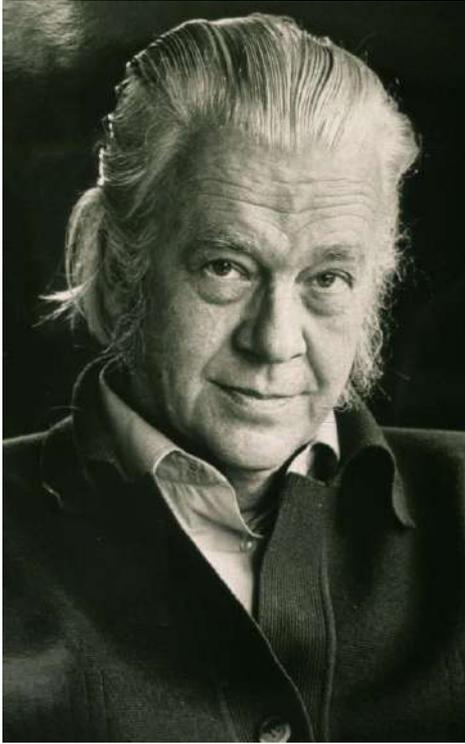
Boy: Nothing, sir?

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.

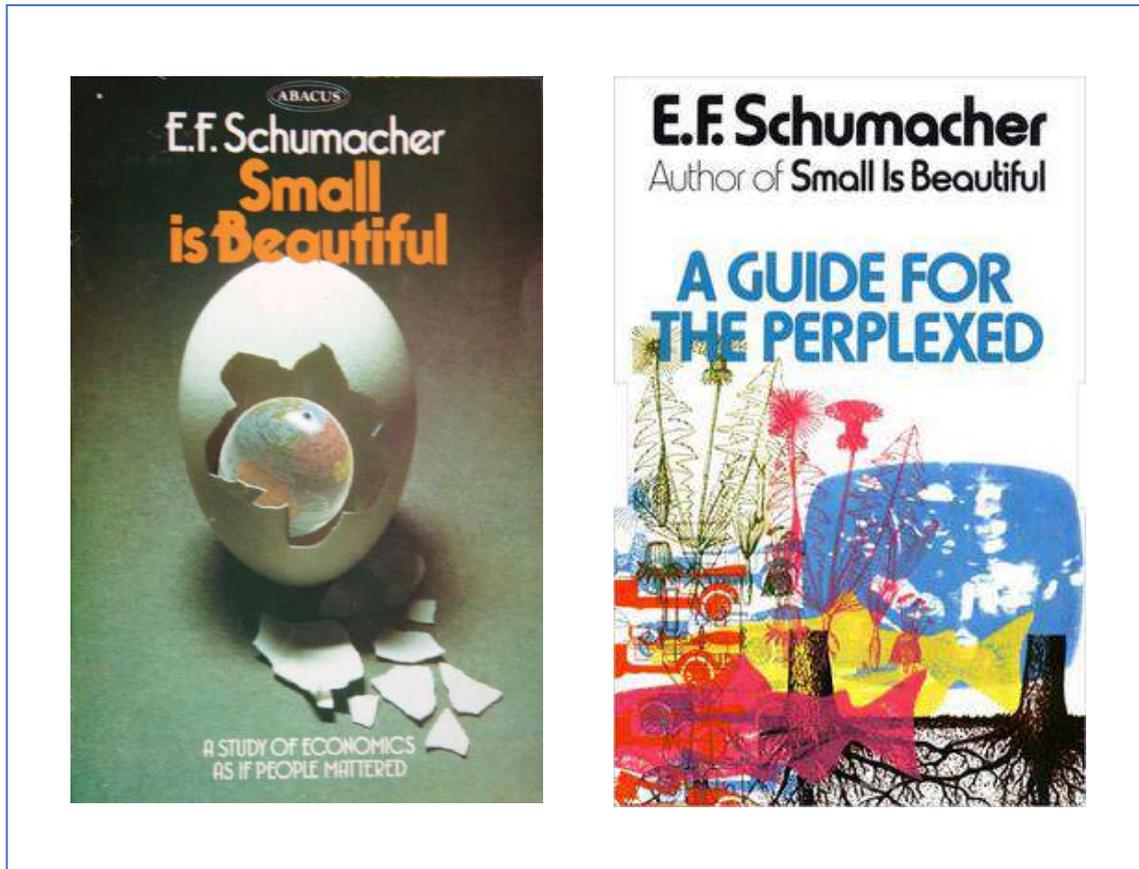
Schumacher's Small is Beautiful is an appeal to the deep instinctive understanding of the common good that all people share.

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



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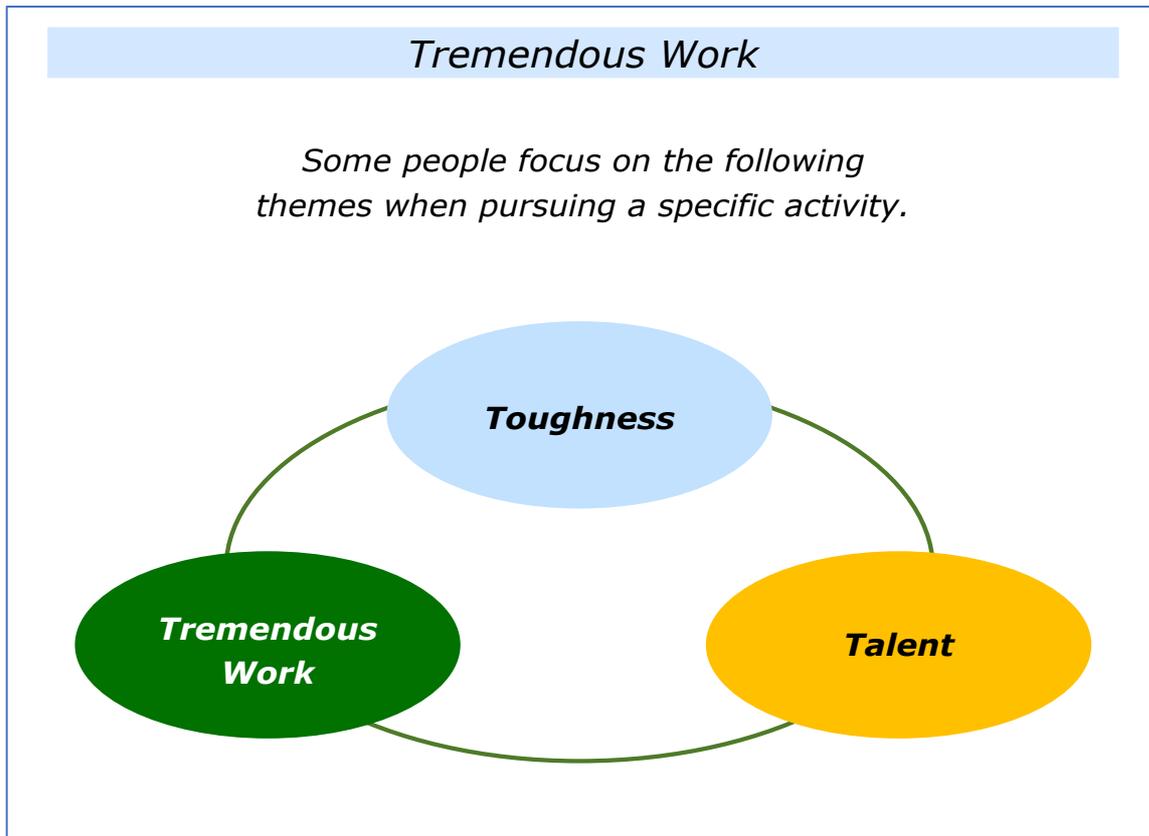
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

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 final 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:

*

*

*

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 Challenges Approach

There are many ways to manage challenges. This section provide positive models and practical tools you can use to tackle various kinds of issues.

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 Recentering Approach*
- *The Vulnerability Is A Great Teacher Approach*

- *The Different Kinds Of Time Approaches*
- *The Positive Reframing Approach*
- *The Positive Scripting Approach*
- *The Positive Patterns Rather Than Negative Patterns Approach*
- *The Managing Sorrow Approach*

- *The Alignment Approach*
- *The Stretching Work Approach*
- *The Renewal Approach*
- *The Apprentice, Achiever And Advisor Approach*
- *The Creating Space In Your Life Approach*

- *The Stimulating Approach*
- *The Resourceful Approach*
- *The Growing Things Approach*
- *The Managing Rome Approach*
- *The Cottage, Castle And Cathedral Approach*

- *The Positive, Percentage And Paralysis Approaches*
- *Recognising Warning Signs Approach*
- *The Managing Triggers Approach*
- *The Beating The Double Bind Approach*
- *The Caring To Callous Cultures Approaches*

- *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 "Are You Serious?" Approach*

The Taking Control Approach

Control

On a scale 0-10, to what extent do you feel in control of shaping your future?



A green arrow pointing to the right, containing a scale from 0 to 10. The numbers 0 through 10 are written in white inside the arrow's shaft.

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.

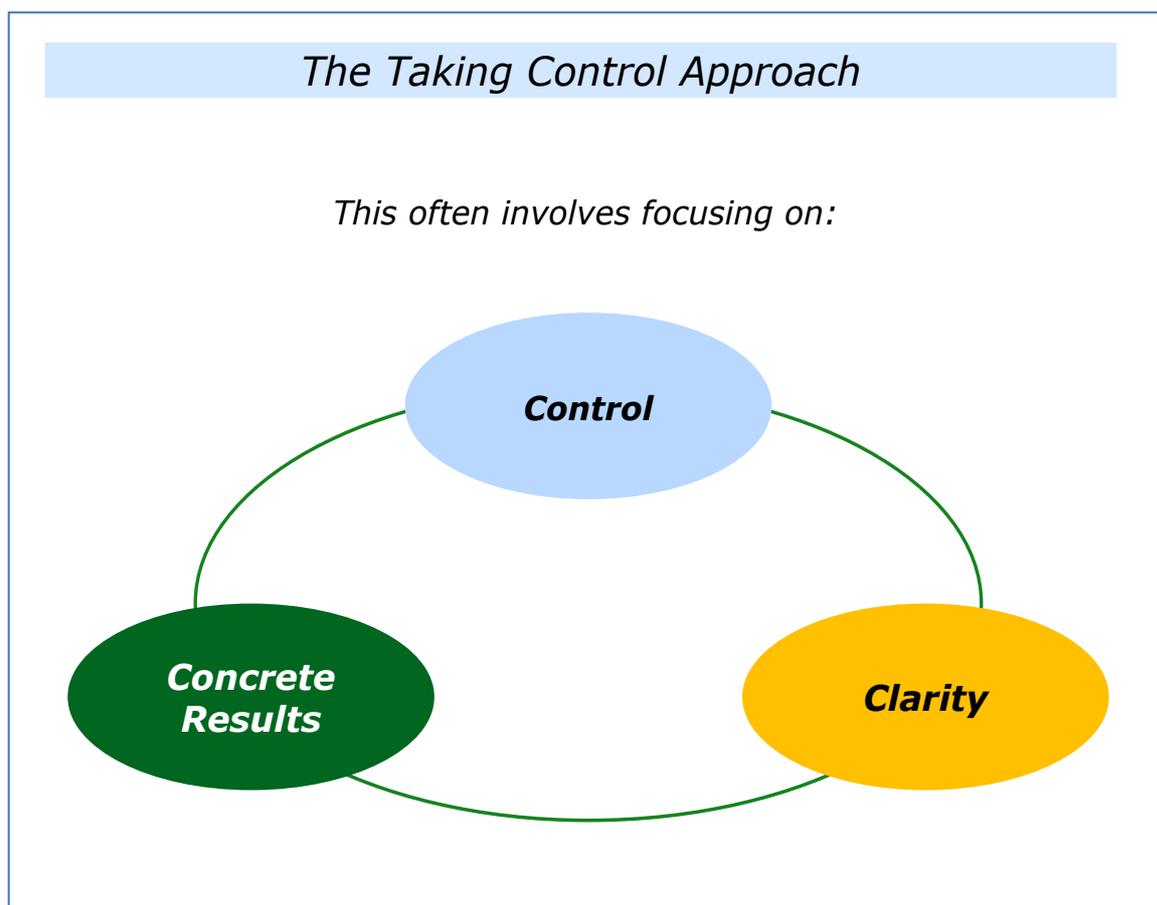
"I am feeling stressed ... I have lots of mood swings ... I am no longer enjoying my work ... I am in a situation where I feel trapped ... I am beginning to have panic attacks."

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.

As mentioned, people like to feel in control of their lives. There are many different models for taking this approach. One of these involves focusing on the following themes.



- *Control*

You can clarify the specific things you can control in the situation;

You can take control of the specific things you can control.

- *Clarity*

You can clarify the What – the real results you want to achieve and the desired picture of success;

You can clarify the How – the key strategies you can follow to give yourself the greatest chance of achieving success.

- *Concrete Results*

You can follow your chosen strategies and work towards your goals;

You can do your best to achieve the desired picture of success.

Taking Control In Action

How to translate this approach into action? 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

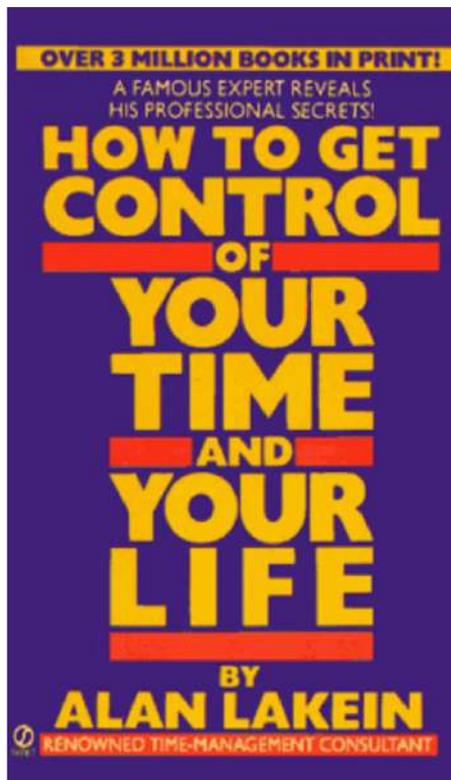
As mentioned many times, healthy people aim to build on what they can control and manage what they can't. They also keep focusing on their life goals.

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. The next pages describe one framework that people use to focus on their priorities.

This is followed by a piece that describes how some people realign themselves and their daily actions with their life goals.

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 Realigning Yourself With Your Life Goals Approach

Realigning Myself With My Life Goals

This involves focusing on the following steps:



Some people encounter experiences that encourage them to reflect on life. They may then choose to realign themselves and their actions with their life goals.

Different people take this step after different experiences. They may have an illness, suffer a setback or experience a life-changing event.

Some of the more fortunate people took these step after the Covid pandemic. They took time to reassess their priorities and focus on what they wanted to do in their lives.

Some realised they wanted to spend more quality time with their family as well as doing satisfying work. This led to them changing their lifestyle and doing something each day towards their life goals.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you refocused on your life goals? What did you do then to take this step? What did you do well to follow up on your action plan? With the benefit of hindsight, what do you think you could have done better to implement your plans?

Looking to the future, can you think of situation when you may want to take time to reflect and realign yourself with your life goals? What can you do then to do these steps?

Different people use different frameworks when focusing on these themes. Here is one framework that they follow. You will, of course, use your own approach to realigning yourself with your life goals.



My Life Goals

*The Three Main Things I
Want To Do In My Life Are:*

*

*

*

My Present Life

*The Things I Am Doing Well In Terms
Of Working Towards My Life Goals Are:*

*

*

*

*The Things I Can Do Better In Terms
Of Working Towards My Life Goals Are:*

*

*

*

My Future Life

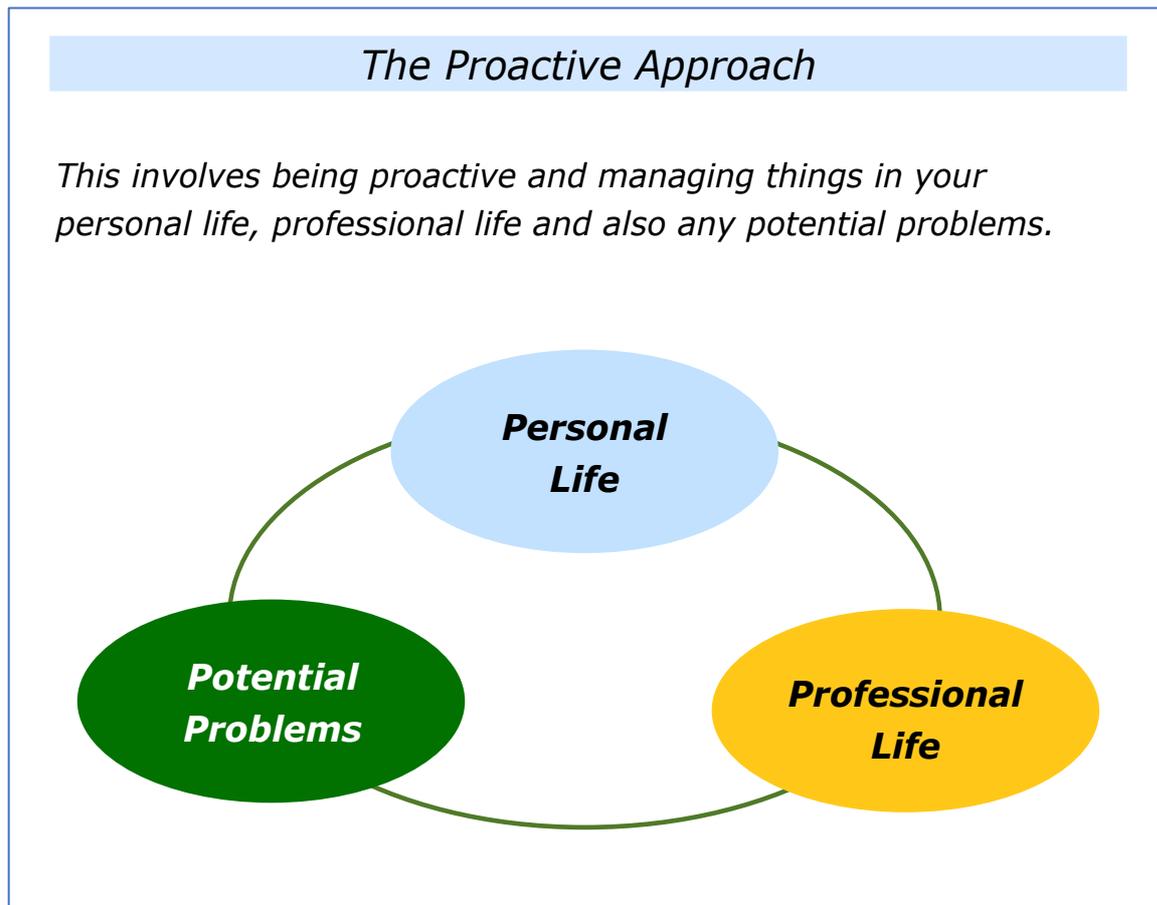
*The Specific Things I Therefore Want To
Do To Work Towards My Life Goals Are:*

*

*

*

The Proactive Approach



Some people aim to be proactive. They aim to, as far as possible, shape the future. Some people choose to be reactive. They respond to events when they happen. Some people combine both approaches.

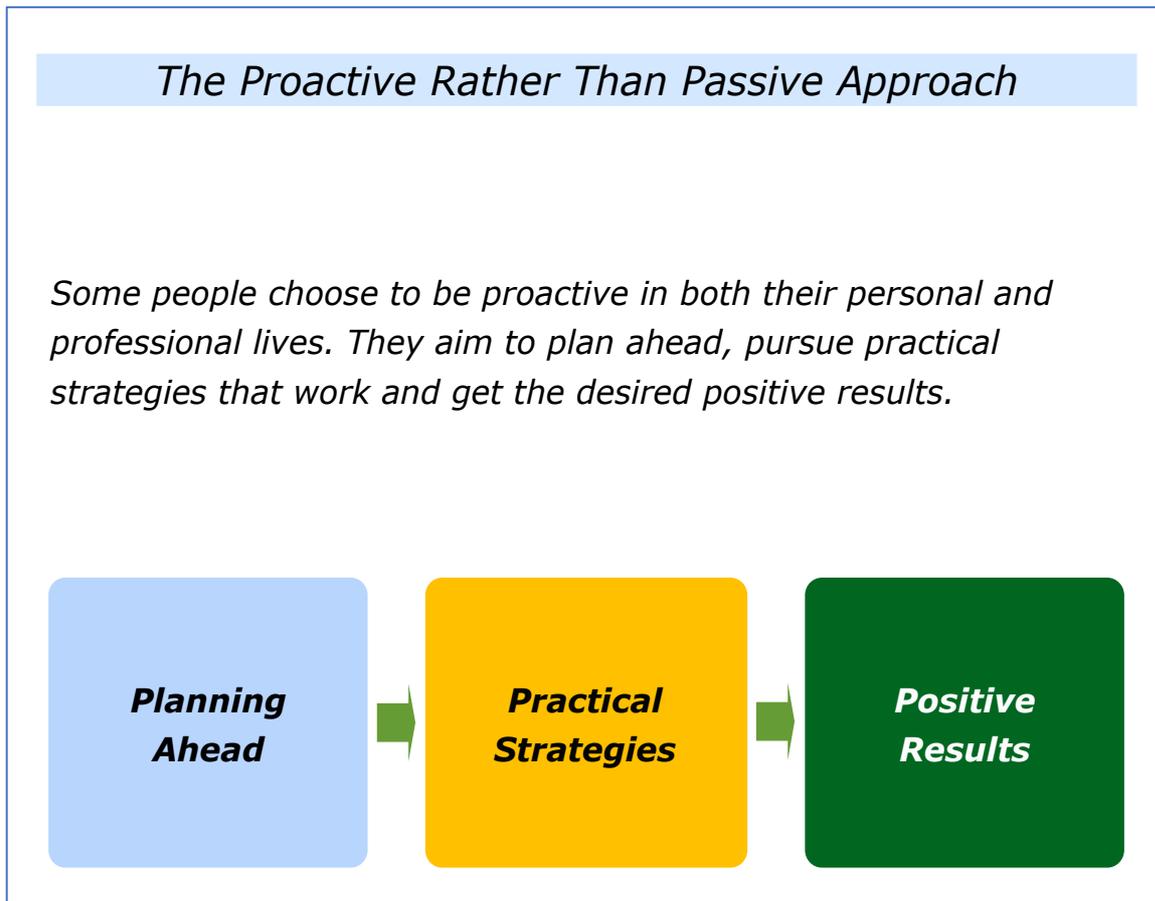
People who are proactive look ahead to anticipate events. They take this approach in their personal life, professional life and in managing potential problems.

Such people sometimes take time out to clarify their life goals and work towards their picture of success. They then aim to be proactive rather than passive. They then take the following steps when looking ahead to the next day, week, month, year or longer period.

They develop the daily habit of planning ahead in their personal and professional lives;

They develop practical strategies for managing things in their personal and professional lives;

They do their best to get the desired positive results in their personal and professional lives.



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."

Let's return to your own life and work. If appropriate, you may want to explore the following themes.

The Proactive Approach 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.

The Proactive Approach 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:*

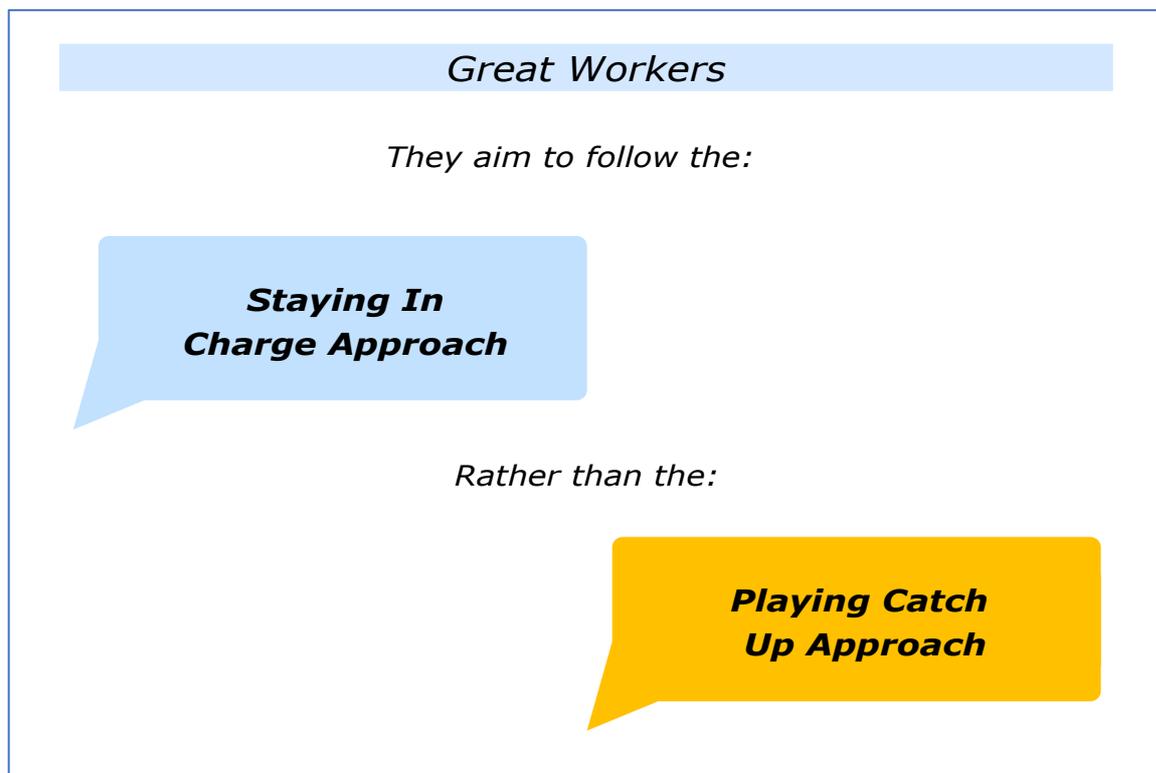
*

*

*

The Proactive Approach In Your Professional Life

Great workers aim to be proactive rather than passive. They aim to stay in charge rather than play catch up. They aim to be strategic and shape events. This helps them to stay ahead of the game.



Looking at your professional life, what are the areas where you are good at being proactive? You may be good at planning the practical aspects, organising your schedule, taking care of customers and managing your key stakeholders.

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.

People are now finding that their professional world is becoming more complex. Some organisations are asking them 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.

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.

The Proactive Approach 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:*

*

*

*

The Proactive Approach In Managing Potential Problems

How good are you at looking ahead and managing potential problems? Some people are good at doing it in their personal lives. They take action to prevent problems regarding their health, finances, relationships and other issues.

Such people may also be good at managing problems when, despite their best efforts, such issues do arise. They then buy time to think, explore their options and do their best to achieve positive results.

Some people are better at anticipating and managing problems in their professional lives. This can be because it involves strategic rather than emotional decisions – though that is not always the case.

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

The Proactive Approach In Managing Potential Problems

*The specific ways I am good at anticipating
and managing potential problems are:*

*

*

*

*The specific ways I could be better anticipating
and managing potential problems are:*

*

*

*

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.

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.

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

The Proactive Approach 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:*

*

*

*

The Good Decision Making Approach Rather Than The Gambling Approach



Great workers aim to follow the good decision making approach rather than the gambling approach. This calls for them developing and continually improving their decision making skills.

There are, of course, many models for making decisions. The following pages describe the Three C approach. This involves reframing the decision as a challenge and then focusing on:

Clarity – to clarify the real results to achieve;

Creativity – to clarify the choices, consequences and creative solutions;

Concrete Results – to clarify the action plan for achieving the desired results.

You will have your own approach to decision making. If you wish, however, you can pursue the following framework in your own way.

The Decision Making Pack

The Three C Approach

Introduction

People make decisions all the time and the choices they make have consequences – both for themselves and other people.

Decision making is a key skill in life. Bearing this in mind, it can be useful for people to know how they make decisions. They can then apply their approach to shaping their future.

There are many models for decision making. The following pages describe the Three C approach.

This starts by reframing the decision as a challenge. It then involves focusing on Clarity, Creativity and Concrete Results.

Imagine you want to follow this approach in your own way. You can work through the following steps.

Introduction

People make decisions all the time and the choices they make have consequences – both for themselves and other people.

Decision making is a key skill in life. Bearing this in mind, it can be useful for people to know how they make decisions. They can then apply their approach to shaping their future.

There are many models for decision making. The following pages describe the Three C approach.

This starts by reframing the decision as a challenge. It then involves focusing on Clarity, Creativity and Concrete Results.

Imagine you want to follow this approach in your own way. You can work through the following steps.

Clarity

This involves: a) clarifying the challenge; b) clarifying the real results you want to achieve; c) clarifying the things you can control in the situation.

Creativity

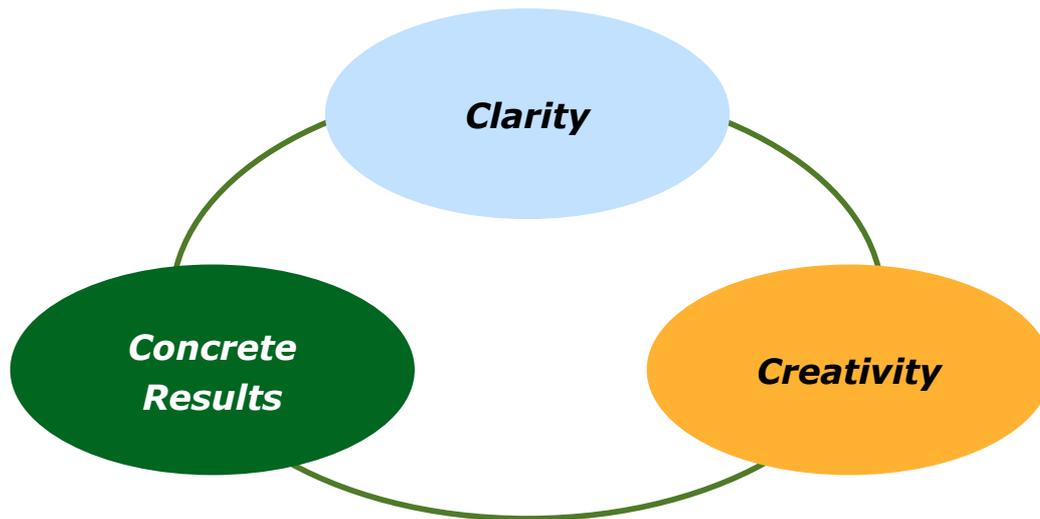
This involves: a) clarifying the possible choices; b) clarifying the consequences of each option; c) clarifying the potential creative solutions.

Concrete Results

This involves: a) clarifying the route you want to follow; b) clarifying the working contracts you may need to make; c) clarifying your action plan and getting concrete results.

Decision Making – The Three C Approach

There are many models for decision making. One approach is to focus on clarity, creativity and concrete results. You can then work through the stages that are described on the following page.



Clarity

Challenges. *The specific challenge I want to tackle is: 'How to ...?'*

Clarity. *The real results I want to achieve are:*

Controllables. *The specific things I 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 specific route I want to follow is:*

Contracts. *The contracts I need to make to achieve the results are:*

Concrete Results. *The specific action plan for achieving the results is:*

Imagine that you aim to make a decision. As mentioned earlier, this can involve reframing the decision as a challenge. Here are some possible examples.

"How can I take care of my health? How can I take the next step in my career? How can I do satisfying work? How can I turn around a difficult team? How can I set up and run my own business?"

The following pages provide a framework you can use for making decisions. You can also use this approach when helping individuals, teams and organisations.

When helping teams, the word 'I' is simply changed to 'We'. You can then encourage people to channel their ideas towards achieving the picture of success. Here is the framework.

Clarity

Introduction

Clarity is crucial. Good decision makers clarify the real results they want to achieve – the real 'What' – before moving on to the 'How'. You can go through the following steps to establish your goals.

Challenges - the specific challenges you want to explore and then settling on the first challenge you want to tackle.

Clarity - the real results you want to achieve and the picture of success.

Controllables - the specific things you can control in the situation.

Let's explore each of these stages.

Challenges

You can start by listing the various challenges you want to explore and then focus on the first topic you want to tackle. You can try to frame the challenge in positive terms. For example:

"How to stay healthy?" rather than "How to stop smoking?"

It can also be useful to frame the challenge in terms of "How to ...?" or "How can I ...?" For example:

"How can I do fulfilling work?" rather than "I want to change my career."

The "How to ...?" phrase also encourages you to begin using your imagination to generate solutions.

Challenges

*The specific challenges
I want to explore are:*

* *How to ...*

* *How to ...*

* *How to ...*

*The first of these specific
challenges that I want to explore is:*

* *How to ...*

*Here is some more information about the
situation and the specific goals I want to achieve:*

*

*

*

Clarity

Clarify the real 'What' before moving on to the 'How'. Sometimes it is tempting to begin moving into solutions mode.

Before doing that, however, it can be useful to clarify the real results you want to achieve and translate these into a clear picture of success.

Sometimes you may want to achieve lots of things related to this topic. If so, clarify all your goals and list these in order of priority.

Imagine that you are looking at the first challenge you want to tackle. The key is to ask:

*"What are the **real results** I want to achieve?"*

Sometimes this process takes a little time but it is a vital step in clarifying your real aims.

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 turnaround 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?"

Imagine you are focusing on your specific challenge. As mentioned earlier, it can be useful to do the following things.

First - to clarify the real results you 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 you are clear on the results you want to achieve. Before pitching into finding solutions, however, it is good to do a reality check.

Peak performers 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. Peak performers build on what they can control and manage what they can't.

You can apply the same rule in your own life. Returning to the results you want to achieve, describe the things you can control in the situation.

It will then be time to move on to the next stage.

Controllables

The specific things I can control in the situation are:

Creativity

Introduction

So far you have clarified the challenge, the results to achieve and the controllables.

It is then time to move on to exploring possible solutions. This will involve going through the following stages.

Choices - the potential options for tackling the challenge.

Consequences - the pluses and minuses involved in pursuing each option together with the attractiveness of each option.

Creative Solutions - the other possible creative solutions.

Let's consider these stages.

Choices

Bearing in mind the goals you want to achieve, you can explore all the possible options you 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 you are not going to pursue, to consider the whole picture. This provides the whole context for choosing your way forward. So you can outline the following choices.

Option A is: To ...

Option B is: To ...

Option C is: To ...

Etc.

Consequences

Looking at each option in turn, you can consider what you see as the 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.

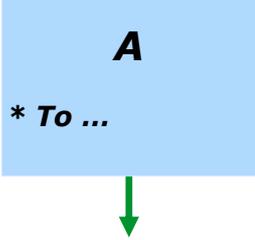
Bearing these things in mind, outline the various options. You can then rate the attractiveness of each option on a scale 0 – 10.

The overview of the potential options may look something like the illustration on the next page.

The pages that follow the illustration provide a framework that you can use to describe these options in more detail.

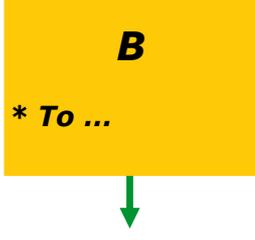
Choices and Consequences

The possible options are:



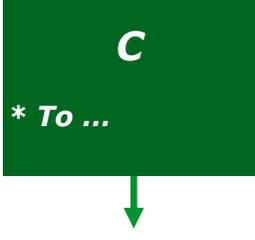
A
** To ...*

Pluses: ...
Minuses: ...



B
** To ...*

Pluses: ...
Minuses: ...



C
** To ...*

Pluses: ...
Minuses: ...

The attractiveness of each option is:

____ / 10

____ / 10

____ / 10

Option A Is:

** To ...*

The pluses are:

*
*
*

The minuses are:

*
*
*

The attractiveness of this option is: ____ / 10

Option B Is:

* *To ...*

The pluses are:

- *
*
*

The minuses are:

- *
*
*

The attractiveness of this option is: ____ / 10

Option C Is:

* *To ...*

The pluses are:

- *
*
*

The minuses are:

- *
*
*

The attractiveness of this option is: ____ / 10

Creative Solutions

Looking at the goals you want to achieve, are there any other possible creative solutions? If appropriate, you can explore the following themes.

"Let's start by re-establishing my goals. What are the real results I want to achieve?"

"Looking at the options I have outlined, which is the most attractive option? How could I build on the pluses and minimise the minuses? 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 my own successes. Looking back, have I ever been in a similar situation before and managed it successfully? What did I do right then? Is it possible to follow any of these principles to achieve the goals?"

"Are there any other people, teams or organisations that have tackled this kind of issue successfully? What did they do right? How can I follow these principles in my own way?"

"Bearing in mind the the goals I want to achieve, here are some other potential creative solutions I may wish to consider:"

"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 I like to explore further? How might these be translated into action?"

Keep going until you feel you have explored all the options. Then go on to the next stage.

Creative Solutions

*The other possible
creative solutions are:*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

Concrete Results

Introduction

It is then time to translate the ideas in action. You can do this by going through the following stages.

Conclusions - the specific route you want to follow to do your best to achieve the results.

Contracts - the specific contracts you may need to make with people to do the work involved on the way to achieving the results.

Concrete Action Plans - the specific action plans for achieving the results.

Let's consider these stages.

Conclusions

Sometimes it can be useful to take time out to reflect before settling on the way forward. Sometimes you may also need to cross over an emotional threshold before committing to your chosen route.

Imagine that you are ready to take this step. Looking at the various ways forward, you can settle on the route you want to follow. Sometimes you will choose to pursue one main option; sometimes you may want to pursue multiple options.

Imagine you have settled on your chosen route. What will be the pluses and minuses involved? How can you build on the pluses and minimise the minuses?

Looking at the results you want to achieve, you may want to complete the following framework.

Conclusions

The route – or combination of routes – I want to follow for tackling the challenge and achieving the results is:

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

The pluses of following this route will be:

- *
*
*

The minuses of following this route will be:

- *
*
*

The specific things I can do to build on the pluses and minimise the minuses are:

- *
*
*

Contracts

Looking at the road ahead, if appropriate you can consider if you need to make any contracts with people.

Your main contract, of course, is with yourself. Looking at the whole package – the pluses and minuses involved – do you want to make the commitment to achieving the goals?

You may also need to make clear working contracts with other people who can help you to reach the goals. If so, it is important to consider the following themes.

How can you ensure everybody is clear on the picture of success? How can you ensure people have the required support? How can you ensure people will proactively keep you informed about their progress toward the goals?

Contracting

The specific things I can do to make clear contracts with people are:

** To ...*

** To ...*

** To ...*

Concrete Results

You can then make a clear action plan and build in some early successes. Different people make action plans in different ways. Some people focus on the following themes.

Who will be responsible for delivering certain specific results

What - what they will actually deliver in terms of specific results.

How - how they will aim to deliver the specific results.

When - when they will actually deliver the specific results.

You will have your own approach to action planning. Bearing this in mind, complete the following step.

Concrete Results

My specific action plan for delivering the results is:

** To ...*

** To ...*

** To ...*

Conclusion

This pack has explored one approach to making decisions. As mentioned earlier, the approach can also be adapted to help other people, teams and organisations to make decisions.

You will, of course, follow the approach in your own way. You can reframe the decision as a challenge and then aim:

To establish clarity – the real results to achieve;

To explore the choices, consequences and creative solutions;

To achieve the desired concrete results.

You can then aim to shape a positive future and achieve your picture of success.

The Making Things Predictable Approach



Many people like to feel in control of shaping their futures. They therefore sometimes aim:

To make things as predictable as possible;

To make sure they manage the unpredictable things.

At the same time, they may like to leave space for pleasant surprises. Let's explore how it is possible to take these steps.

Making Things As Predictable As Possible

People who take this approach start by focusing on the predictable things. They often take the following steps.

*They clarify what they can do to make
things as predictable as possible in life*

Different people do this in different ways. Some individuals focus on what they can control and aim:

To earn enough money to maintain their lifestyle ... To take care of their health ... To encourage their loved ones ... To do things that give them positive energy ... To spend time with positive people.

To do what they can to feel in control ... To proactively plan ahead ... To make sure all the practical tasks get done ... To organise things in their personal and professional lives.

To follow their daily rhythm ... To focus on their life goals ... To do something towards these each day ... To do satisfying work ... To anticipate and manage potential challenges.

Such individuals also recognise that there are certain things in life that are relatively predictable. Bearing these in mind, they sometimes focus on the following theme.

*They clarify the things that are predictable
– that are likely or certain to happen – in life*

Different people describe different things when focusing on this theme. Here are some of the topics they may mention.

Some of the predictable things in life are:

That our children will grow up and leave ... That there will be successes and setbacks ... That there will be unexpected events in life ... That we all get older ... That we all die.

That there will be changes that affect the field in which I work ... That I will need to keep developing to do satisfying work and earn a reasonable salary ... That there will be world events that may impact our lives.

People who take this approach often aim to make some things as predictable as possible. They also focus on the next theme.

Managing The Unpredictable Things

People recognise that many things in life are caused by chance or other factors beyond their control. Some individuals are prepared to consider the potential unpredictable events that could happen.

This calls for using their imagination and exploring scenarios that may be daunting. They prefer to do this, however, rather than bury their head in the sand.

Different people describe different events when taking this approach. Here are some of the topics they may mention.

Some of the potential unpredictable things in life that could happen are:

That there may be unexpected positive or negative events ... That we may have unanticipated illnesses in our family ... That our life priorities may change because of events.

That the kind of work I do may be disrupted by innovations ... That the company I work for may be bought or go bankrupt ... That there may be worldwide events – pandemics or other crises – that create challenges.

Some individuals explore how they can take a positive approach to the unpredictable things that could happen. Such a person may then focus on the following theme.

The specific things I can do if some of the unpredictable things do happen are:

To buy time to think ... To remember my assets – the good things I have in life ... To maintain a sense of perspective ... To follow my chosen pattern for finding solutions to challenges.

To clarify what I can control in the situation ... To clarify the real results I want to achieve ... To give myself time to explore many possible ways forward ... To pursue my chosen route and get a quick success ... To do everything possible to work towards my picture of success.

Different people prepare for potential challenges in different ways. The following section looks at how one person took this approach. They focused on to equip themselves to deal with a potential challenge.

Alanna Shaikh: How I'm Preparing To Get Alzheimer's Disease



Alanna became well-known as a result of her TED talk about how she was preparing to get Alzheimer's Disease.

She is also a principal consultant at an organisation called Tomorrow Global. The website says:

We help clients think proactively about the future of global health. That includes strategic planning, preparedness, risk analysis, and troubleshooting.

Here is how the TED website described aspects of her work. This is followed by Alanna outlining how she is proactively working to tackle a personal challenge.

Global development expert Alanna Shaikh takes on the toughest of health issues - from the ones affecting the globe at large to the ones hurting her own family.

On her blog, Blood and Milk, she aims to make global development issues both accessible and understandable.

In her TED Book, What's Killing Us, she explains the biggest challenges in global wellness -- from HIV/AIDS to the diminishing effectiveness of antibiotics - in a way that anyone can understand.

Alanna is especially interested in Alzheimer's, as she has watched her father deteriorate from the disease over the past 12 years.

But she says the experience has not sent her into denial - she plans to be prepared for the genetically transmitted disease, should it ever arrive.

Alanna intends to develop a 'hobby' to keep her hands and mind active. She also intends to keep her body healthy. She says:

"The more things my hands know how to do, the more things that I can be happy and busy doing when my brain's not running the show anymore."

She moves on the third point which, she says, is for her more difficult. She aims to continue to become 'a better person'.

Alanna refers to her Dad, who emits love. She says that, to fight the disease:

"I need a heart so pure that if it's stripped bare by dementia, it will survive."

Let's return to your own life and work. You may want to feel in control of many events. At the same time, you may like to leave room for pleasant unpredictable surprises.

Imagine that you want to take steps: a) to make some things as predictable as possible; b) to manage the unpredictable things. How can you do this in your own way?

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

First:

To clarify what you can do to make some things as predictable as possible in life;

To clarify the other things that are predictable – that are likely or certain to happen – in life.

Second:

To clarify the potential unpredictable things that could happen in life;

To clarify what you can do to manage the unpredictable things in life.

If you wish, try completing the following sentences.

The Making Things Predictable Approach

The Predictable Things

*The specific things I can do to make some
things as predictable as possible in life are:*

*

*

*

*The other things that are predictable –
likely or certain to happen - in life are:*

*

*

*

The Unpredictable Things

The potential unpredictable things that could happen in life are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to manage the unpredictable things in life are:

*

*

*

The Setting Things Up To Succeed Approach

Setting Things Up To Succeed

This is an approach that can be used in many personal and professional situations. You can aim:

- *To focus on clarifying the picture of success;*
- *To focus on the strategies most likely to achieve the picture of success;*
- *To focus on rating and improving the chances of achieving the picture of success.*

You can then move into action and do your best to achieve the picture of success.

This is an approach that can be used in many situations. The aim is to set things up to increase the chances of success. You may use it to build relationships, do projects, lead a team or do other activities.

You may start by looking ahead to a specific situation. You may then aim: a) to clarify the results to achieve; b) to clarify the strategies for achieving success; c) to rate and improve the chances of success. You can then do your best to achieve success.

Looking back on your life, can you think of a situation when you aimed to set things up to succeed? This could have been in your personal or professional life. What did you do then to make this happen?

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

Setting Things Up To Succeed In The Past

The specific situation in the past when I did my best to set things up to succeed was:

*

The specific things I did then to do my best to set things up to succeed 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.

*You can focus on clarifying
the picture of success*

You can focus on something you want to do in your personal or professional life. You may want to build a relationship, run a mentoring session, do a specific project, lead a team or do another activity. Looking ahead, you can ask yourself the classic questions.

What is the situation I want to focus on? What is the relationship I want to build, the task to complete, the project to do, the team or organisation to lead, the challenge to tackle or the other activity I want to do?

What are the things I can control in the situation? What are things I can't control? How can I build on what I can control and manage what I can't control?

What are the real results I want to achieve in the situation? What is the picture of success? What will be the benefits of achieving these goals? What will be happening that will show I have achieved the picture of success?

Imagine that you have clarified the results you want to achieve. It can then be time to move on to the next stage.

*You can focus on the strategies most
likely to achieve the picture of success*

You can do your best to set things up to succeed. The steps you take will depend on what you want to do in your life or work.

You may want to do something in your personal life. This could be to build a long-lasting relationship, help your child to thrive, develop a healthy lifestyle, spend time with positive people or do another activity.

You may want to do something in your professional life. This could be to run a counselling session, do satisfying work, tackle a crisis, take over an ailing team, shift the culture in an organisation or do another activity.

Bearing these things in mind, you may explore some of the following themes. These involve clarity, contracting and concrete results.

Clarity

What are the specific results I want to achieve in the situation? What may be the specific results that other people want to achieve? If appropriate, how can we – as far as possible – get win-wins? Bearing these things in mind, what may be the picture of success?

How can I do my best to set things up to succeed? What are the strengths, assets and resources I can use to reach the goals? How can I use these things to do my best to reach the goals?

What are the key strategies I can follow to increase the chances of success? How can I build on my strengths and follow my successful style of working? How can I make use of the other resources?

What are the positive things in the situation? How can I build on these positive things? How can I build on the positive people and positive energies? How can I get some quick successes?

What are the potential difficulties that I may encounter? How can I prevent some of these happening? How can I manage these challenges if, despite everything, they do happen?

Who may be the other people – the person or group of people - involved in the situation? How may these people behave? What may be the positive things they may do? How can I build on these? What may be the not-so-positive things they may do? How can I manage these things?

Contracting

Clear contracting will also be crucial. This includes making contracts with myself and with other people. These will be about 'What' we want to achieve and 'How' we want to work towards achieving these goals.

Clear Contracting With Myself

What are the clear contracts I need to make with myself about: a) the specific results I want to achieve; b) the specific things I am prepared to do when working towards the goals; c) the specific things I am not prepared to do.

Clear Contracting With Other People

What are the clear contracts I may need to make with other people about: a) the agreed goals to achieve; b) my responsibilities in working to achieve the goals; c) their responsibilities in working to achieve the goals?

What support would I like to help to achieve the goals? How can I do my best to get this support? How can I find solutions if some of the support is not available?

Concrete Results

Let's return to the key strategies I want to follow. How can I translate my chosen strategies into a clear action plan? How can I get some quick successes?

How can I rehearse following my chosen strategies? How can I rehearse managing any potential challenges? How can I buy time to think if unexpected things happen?

How can I build on what is working? How can I tackle areas for improvement? How can I continue to encourage myself and support other people? How can I do my best to achieve the goals?

Imagine that you have considered how to set things up to succeed. Before embarking on the journey, you may wish to explore the following step.

*You can focus on rating and
improving the chances of success*

You may have a positive attitude but it is also important to be realistic. Whilst aiming to do your best, you do not want to ignore warning signs or become a victim. It can therefore be useful to rate the chances of success.

Bearing in mind what you can control, how would you rate the chances of achieving the goals? Rate this on a scale 0-10. Be honest when you do the rating because this will be important when exploring the next step.

Imagine that you have rated the chances on a scale 0-10. You can then describe the specific things you can do to maintain or improve the chances of success.

These may be things that you can do to set realistic goals, get some early successes, get support or take other steps. This involves completing the following sentences.

Success Rating

*Bearing in mind what I can control, the rating I would
give regarding the chances of achieving the goals is:*

_____ / 10

*The specific things I can do to maintain or
improve the chances of achieving the goals are:*

*

*

*

Imagine that you have done all these things. Make sure the chances of success are at least 7+/10. You may then be in a position to do your best to achieve the picture of success.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a specific situation where you may want to set things up to succeed? This could be in your personal or professional life.

Looking ahead, what is the situation you would like to focus on? What are the results you want to achieve in the situation? What are the key strategies you can follow to give yourself the greatest chance of success?

How can you set things up to succeed? How can you follow your chosen strategies? If appropriate, how can you make clear contracts with people? How can you get support?

How can you translate your strategies into action? How can you keep building on what is working? How can you tackle areas for improvement? How can you then do your best to achieve the picture of success?

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

Setting Things Up To Succeed In The Future

The specific situation in the future when I may want to set things up to succeed may be:

*

The specific things I can do then to do my best to set things up to succeed are:

*

*

*

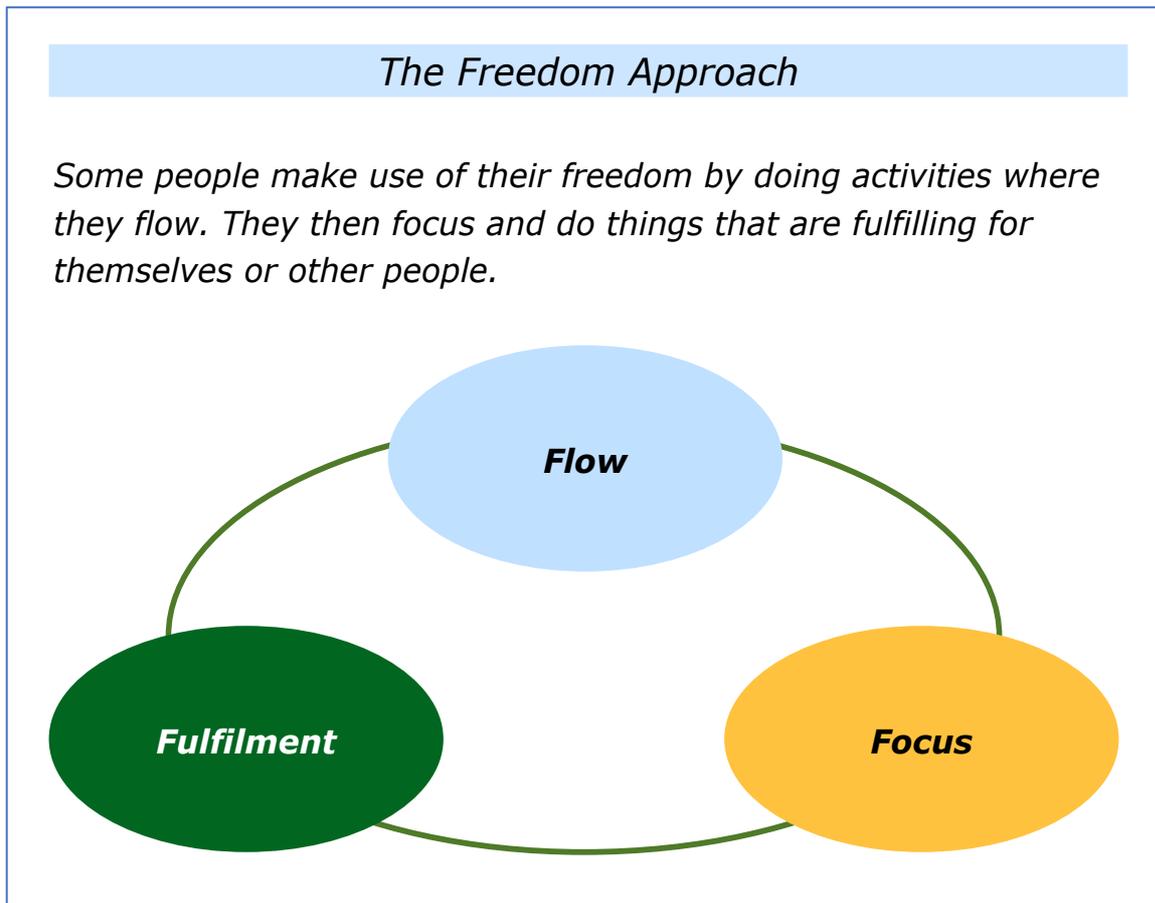
The specific things that may happen as a result may be:

*

*

*

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 can be more difficult after a person has achieved a specific goal. Let's explore this theme.

Moving Beyond Post-Purpose Syndrome

A person who has been working towards a specific goal may experience post-purpose syndrome. They 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 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:

*

*

*

The three strengths I have that I would like to build on are:

*

*

*

The three goals I would like to focus on working towards in my life are:

*

*

*

*The three possessions I
would like to keep and use are:*

*

*

*

*The three other things I would
like to have in my life are:*

*

*

*

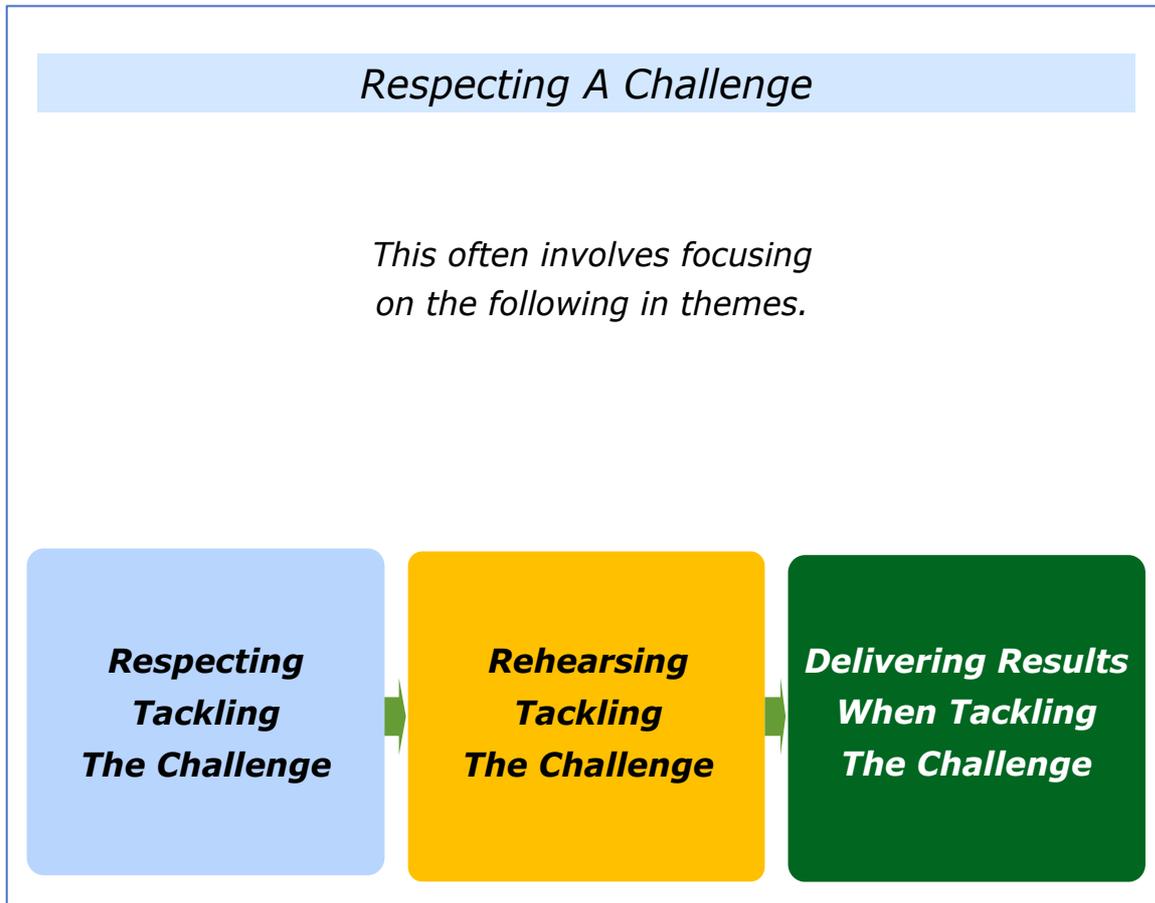
*The specific things I can do to
build on what I have described are:*

*

*

*

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:

*

The specific things I can do to respect the challenge, rehearse properly and do my best to deliver the desired results are:

*

*

*

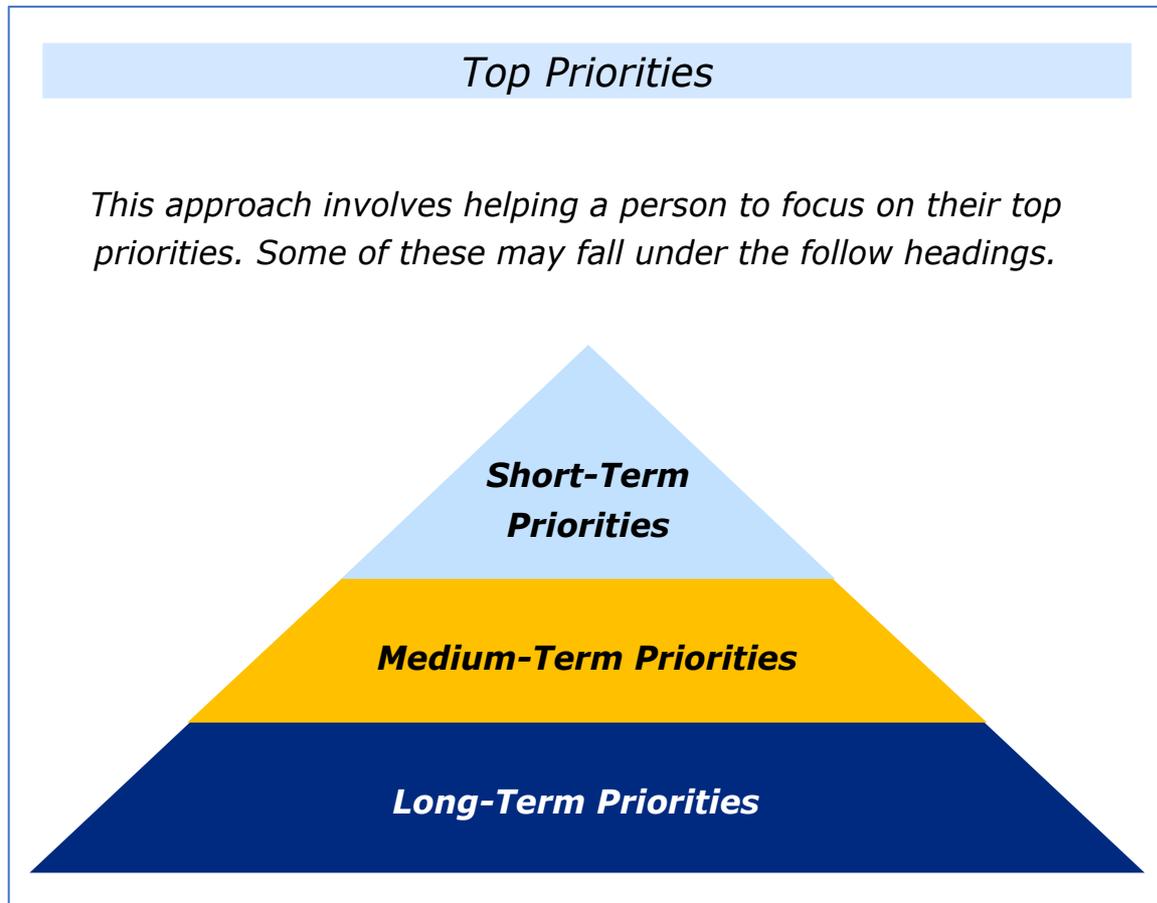
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

The Top Priorities Approach



There are many ways to help people to achieve their goals. One of the most basic is to focus on their top priorities.

Different people will have different priorities. A person may need short-term, medium-term or long-term help:

To deal with a pressing issue or a challenging situation;

To take care of their health, finances or other practical issues;

To focus on their relationships, work or other parts of their life;

To take decisions that can affect themselves and other people;

To shape their short-term, medium-term or long-term future.

You will have your own approach to helping a people to manage these issues. One approach is to ask them:

"What are your top priorities right now?"

When appropriate, you can help them to tackle these priorities. The next steps may be to help them to lay the foundations for shaping a positive future.

Looking back, when have you followed elements of the top priorities approach? This could have been in your personal or professional life.

You may have done this when supporting a friend, counselling a person or helping somebody to make a transition. You may have done so when acting as a trusted advisor, being a mentor or playing another role.

What did you do then to clarify the person's top priorities? How did you clarify their short-term, medium-term or long-term goals? How did you then help them to tackle these priorities? What happened as a result?

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach? You may do this when helping a friend, colleague or client to focus on their top priorities. What can you do then 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 Top Priorities Approach

The specific situation when I may 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 may be:

*

*

*

Let's return to the theme of taking control 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:

*

The specific things I can do to feel more in control in the situation are:

*

*

*

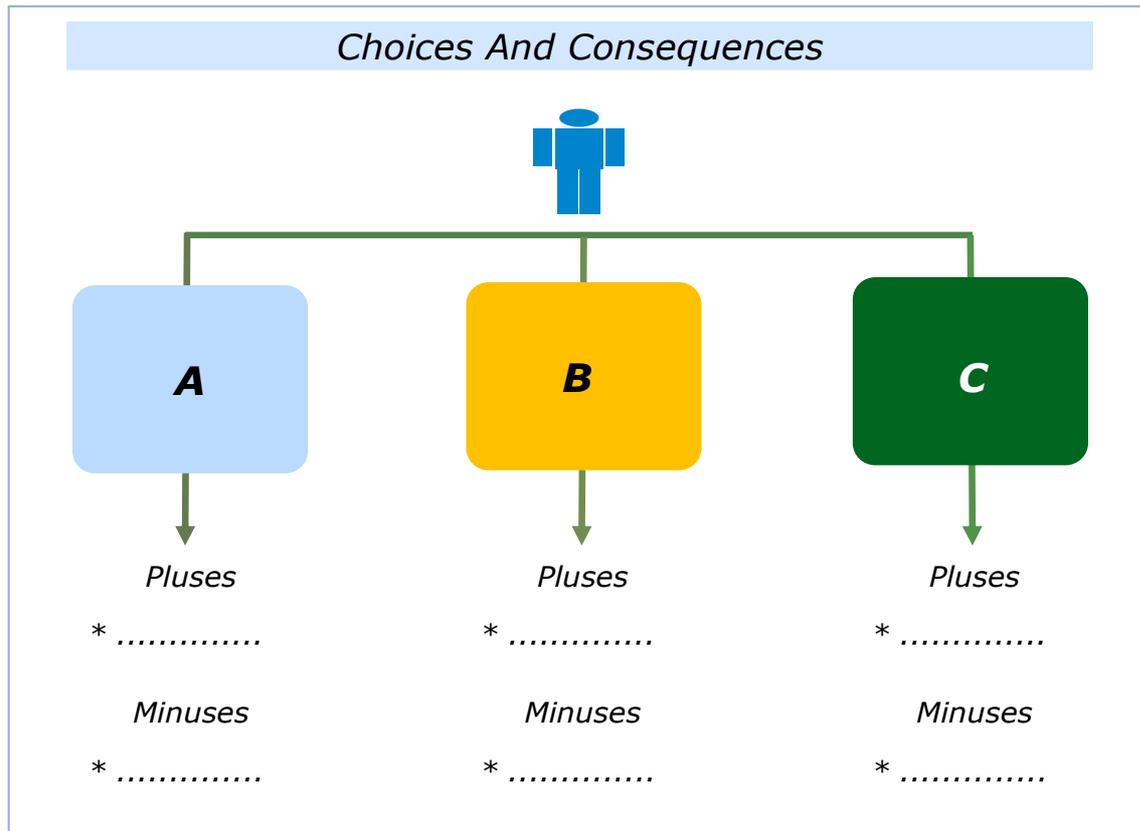
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

The Choices And Consequences Approach



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.

Everybody experiences 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.

Viktor Frankl described this approach in his book *Man's Search For Meaning*. This 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:

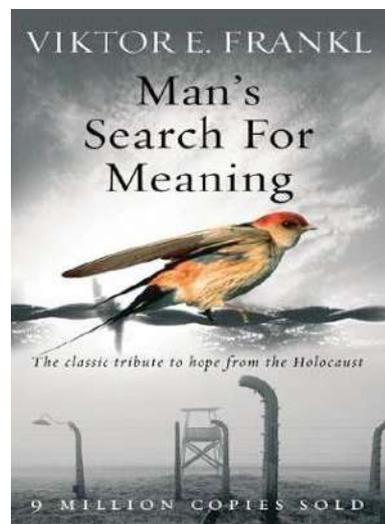
We found, in fact, that for the one it was his child whom he adored and who was waiting for him in a foreign country. For the other it was a thing, not a person.

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.

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.



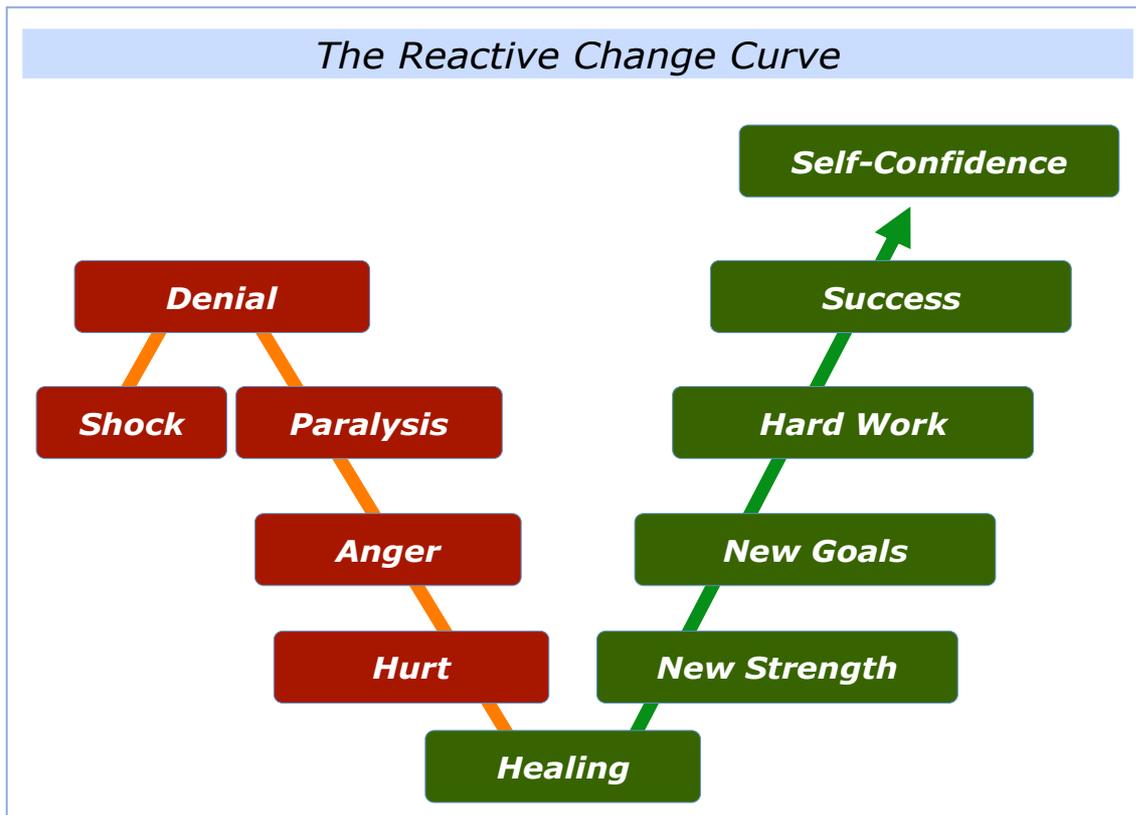
Choice Therapy

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 Reactive 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.

There are many views about this approach. Some new models actually say it is important to keep a loved one alive in our memories rather than aim to move on.

Lorraine Hedtke's work, for example, encourages people to focus on the positive memories that are invoked by remembering people. It can involve continuing to speak with a loved one – such as talking them in the chair they used to have.

Lorraine says that these and many other actions can help to keep our love alive. They are also a great tribute to the people who have meant so much to us in our lives. This approach does not involve going through stages – it provides positive memories for life.

Elisabeth's model can still be important to understand, however, and has helped many people. She 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 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:

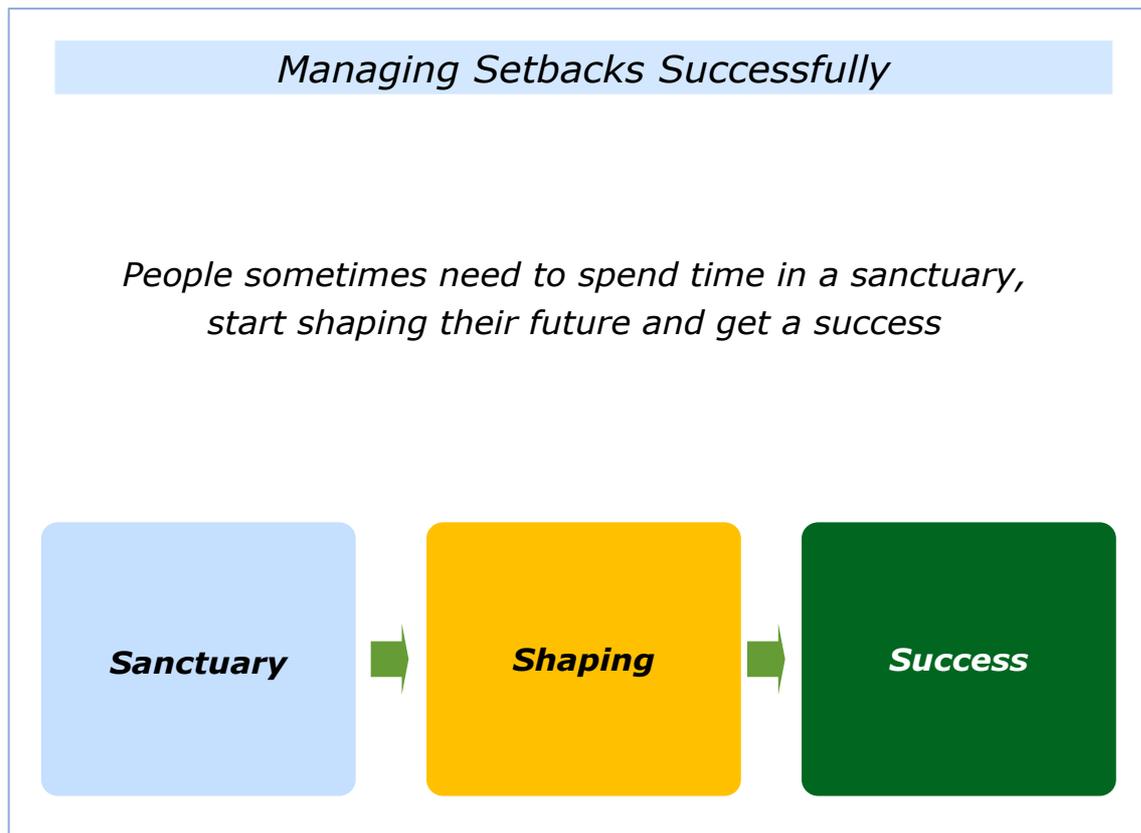
"It was the best thing that ever happened to me. It taught me that I could survive many things. It made me appreciate life and concentrate on what is important."

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:*

*

*

*

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

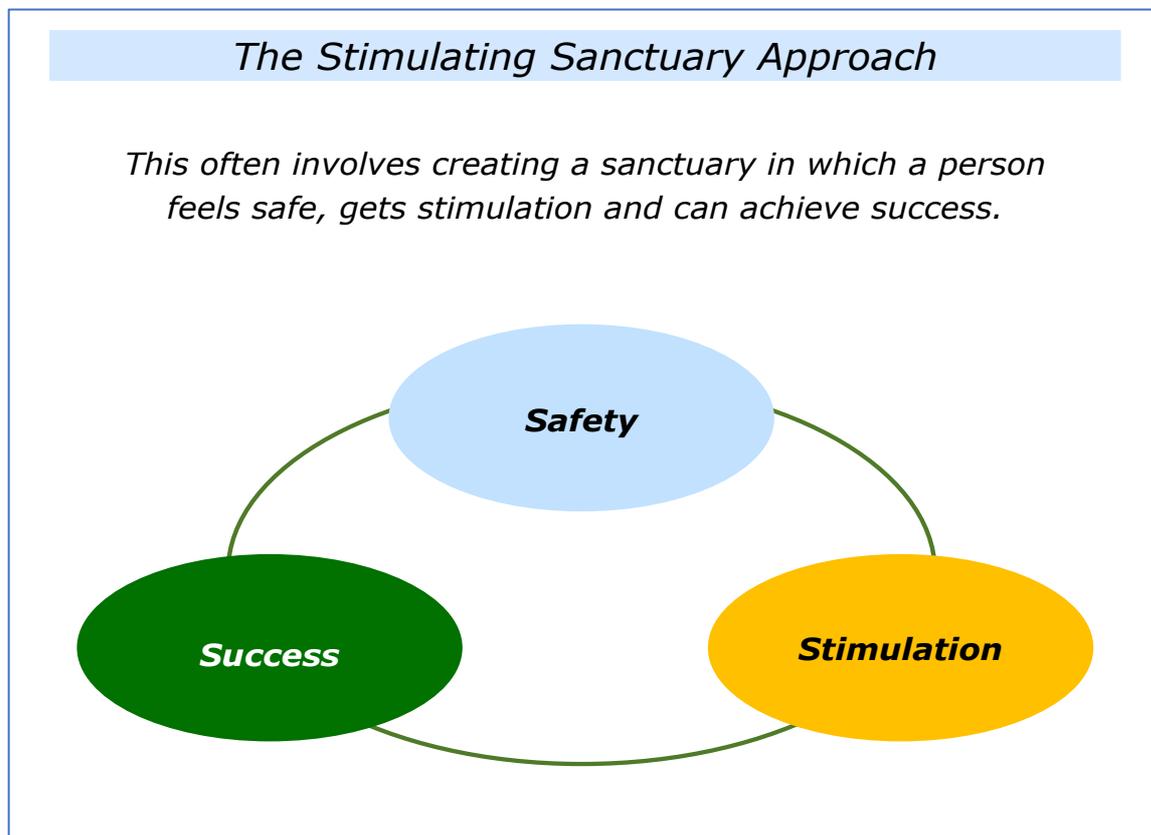
A person will begin by setting short-term goals. They may take their first steps after an accident. They may do a piece of project work for a friend after being made redundant. They will do something simple to follow their version of getting back on the horse.

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.

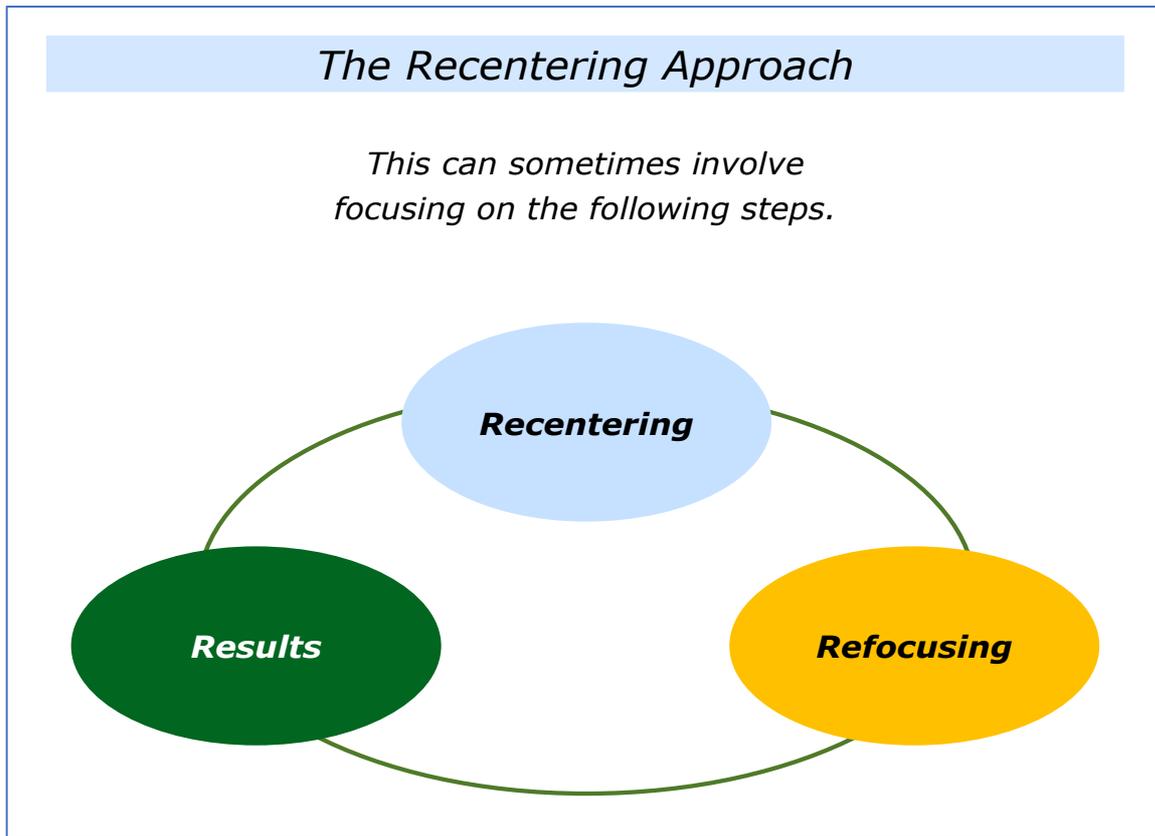
One mentor described how they met a person whom they had worked with a year previously. When asked about their situation, the person replied along the following lines.

"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:

*

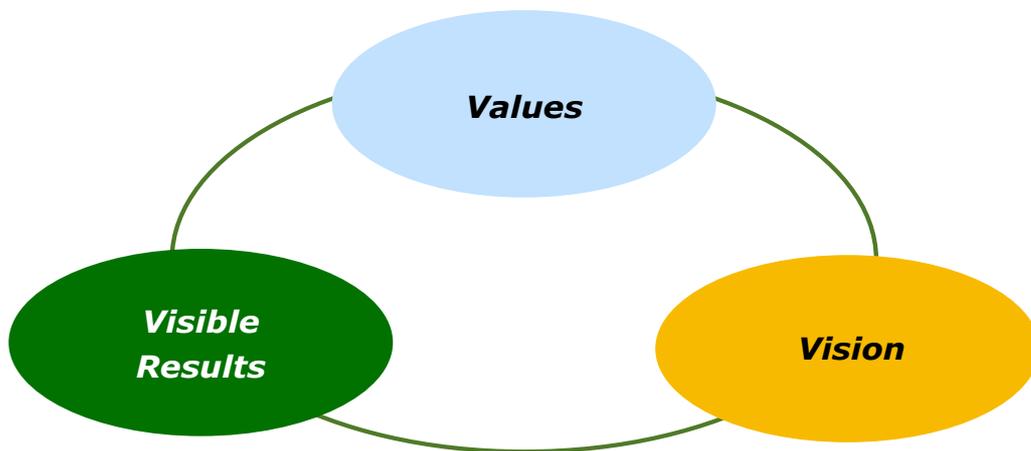
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The Vulnerability Is A Great Teacher Approach

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.

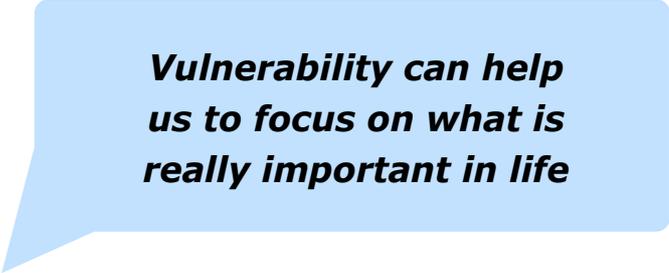
Can you think of a time when you felt vulnerable? You may have had an illness, lost someone close, suffered an unexpected setback or experienced another difficulty.

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.



Vulnerability can help us to focus on what is really important in life



We can then focus on doing more of these things in the future

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.

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.

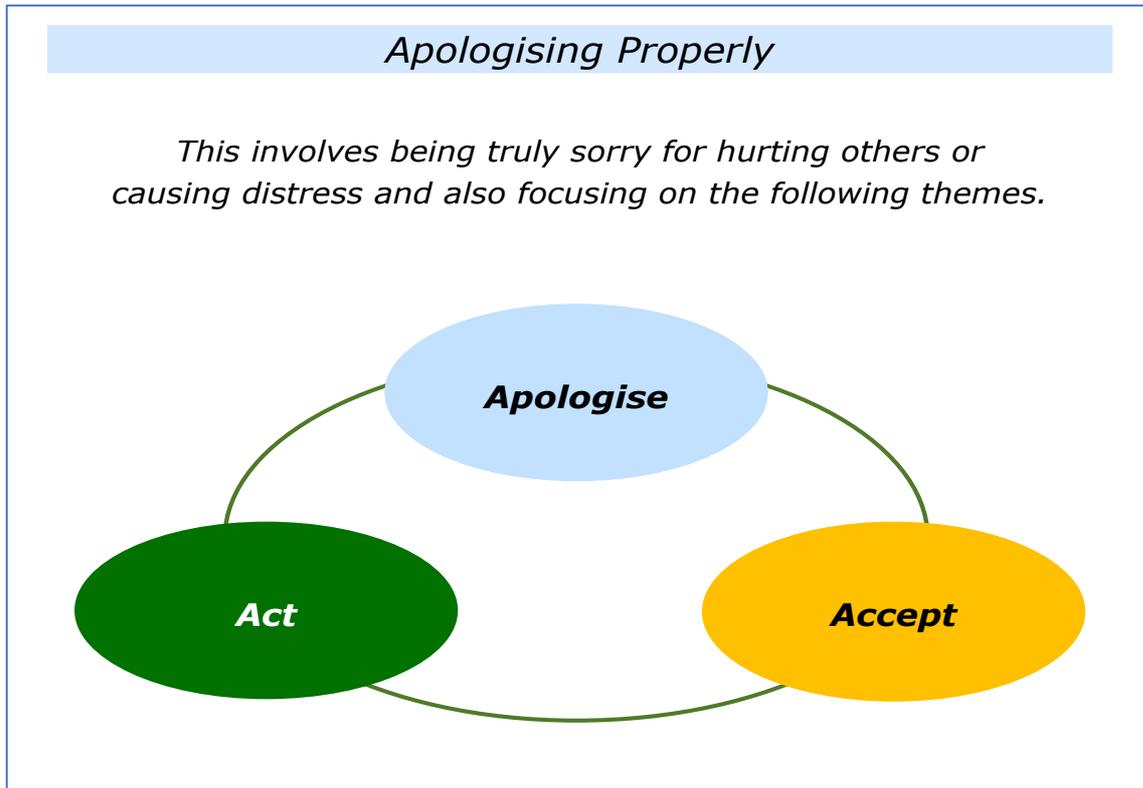
Sometimes we are most vulnerable when we make a mistake and do something that hurts other people. Let's explore how it can be possible to make amends and improve in such situations.

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, it is important that the person who is apologising 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

Let's return to theme of vulnerability being a great teacher. Many people then 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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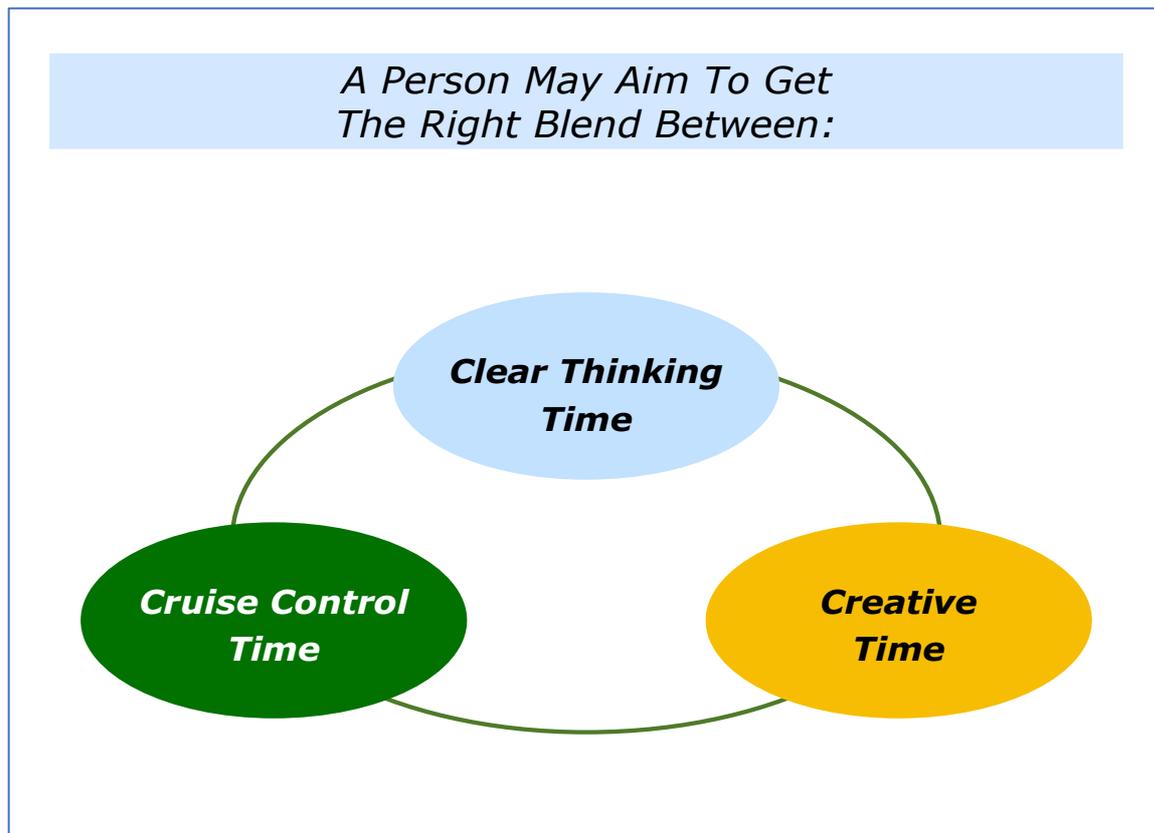
*The specific benefits of
taking these steps will be:*

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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.

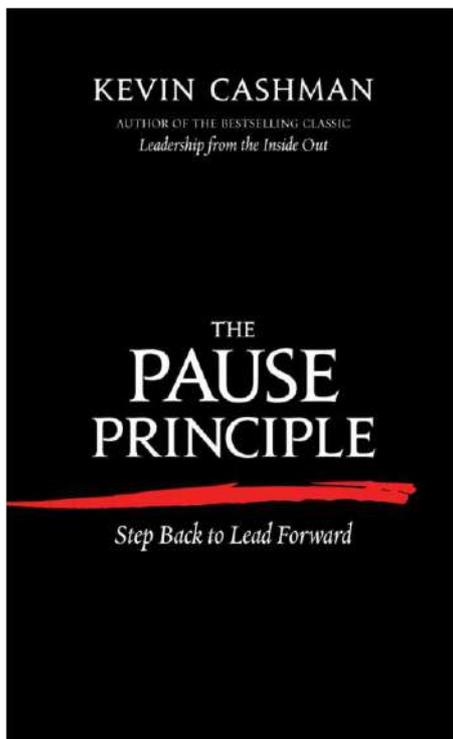
They may aim:

*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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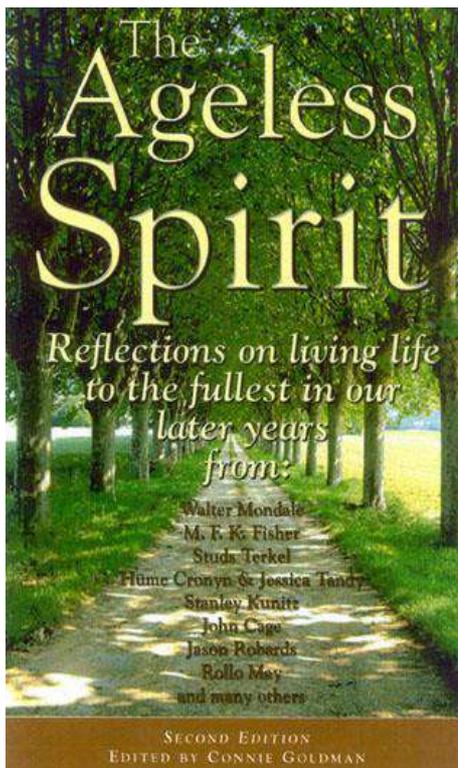
Creative Time

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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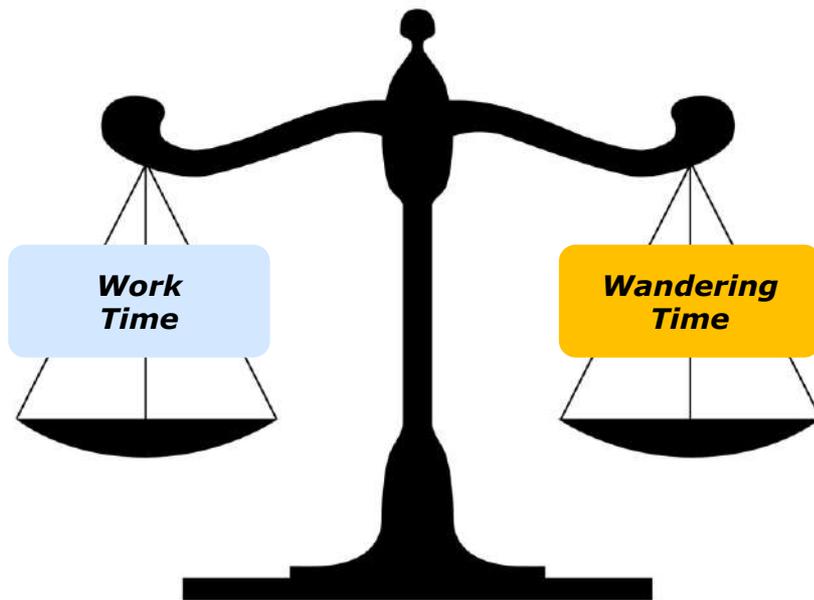
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There are many kinds of time. The following section explores two other approaches that people can use to stay creative.

The Work Time And Wandering Time Approach

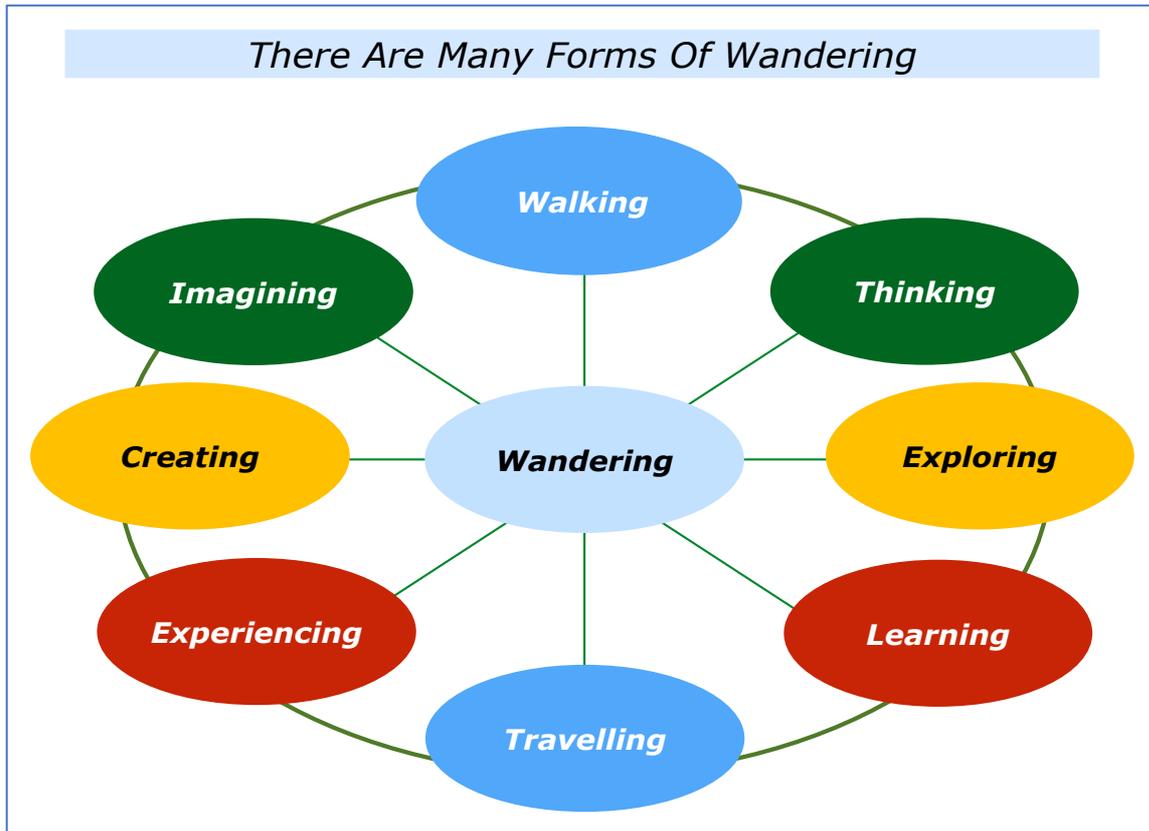
Getting The Right Blend Between Your:



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 may explore different kinds of wandering time during different stages of life. Let's look at some examples.

George Dennison, the educator, believed it was important to get to know children. This sometimes involved the idea of losing time rather than saving time. He wrote a book about his experiences of doing this when running the First Street School in The Lower East Side of New York.

Writing in *The Lives Of Children*, which was published in 1969, he describes how the school he ran followed Rousseau's old policy of losing time.

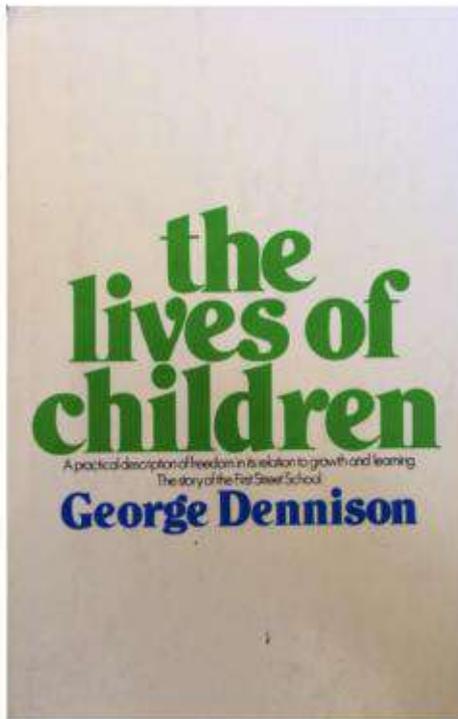
The most useful rule of education is this: do not save time, but lose it.

George and his colleagues made a lot of time to get to know the children, many of whom came from difficult backgrounds. Here is an excerpt from the book.

The first few weeks of school were extremely pleasant. With nine children and four adults, it seemed like a family gathering or a picnic, or perhaps a clubhouse of some sort.

In the range of educational endeavours, it must certainly have represented, for teachers and children alike, an extraordinary luxury.

Within this period many of the children's faces took on that glow of 23 eagerness that we associate with childhood.



We launched out immediately on the business of losing time. That is to say, we got to know the children really well.

We held long conversations with them, not on school topics, but on whatever occupied their minds.

We discovered the details of family life, neighbourhood events, personal worries and personal interests.

George goes on to describe how he balanced this wandering time with then moving into work time. This called for showing the children that they were cared for, which also involved equipping them to shape their future lives.

Jose Portillo was present at this time, as was his sister Elena, and the relationship I established with him was absolutely essential to our later lessons in reading.

He was thirteen years old, and after five years in the public schools still could not read, though he was of normal intelligence.

Now given this background, what must Jose have thought about my wanting to teach him to read? For I did want to, and I made no bones about it.

The fact is, he took it for granted. It was the right and proper relationship, not of teacher and student, but of adult and child ... and so I did not wait for Jose to decide for himself.

When I thought the time was ripe, I insisted that we begin our lessons. My insistence carried a great deal of weight with him.

My own demands were an important part of Jose's experience. They were not simply the demands of a teacher, nor of an adult, but belonged to my own way of caring about Jose. And he sensed this.

There was something he prized in the fact that I made demands on him. This became all the more evident once he realized that I wasn't simply processing him, that is, grading, measuring, etc.

And when he learned that he could refuse - could refuse altogether, could terminate the lesson, could change its direction, could insist on something else.

We became collaborators in the business of life.

Different people get different benefits from wandering times at different stages of their lives.

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.

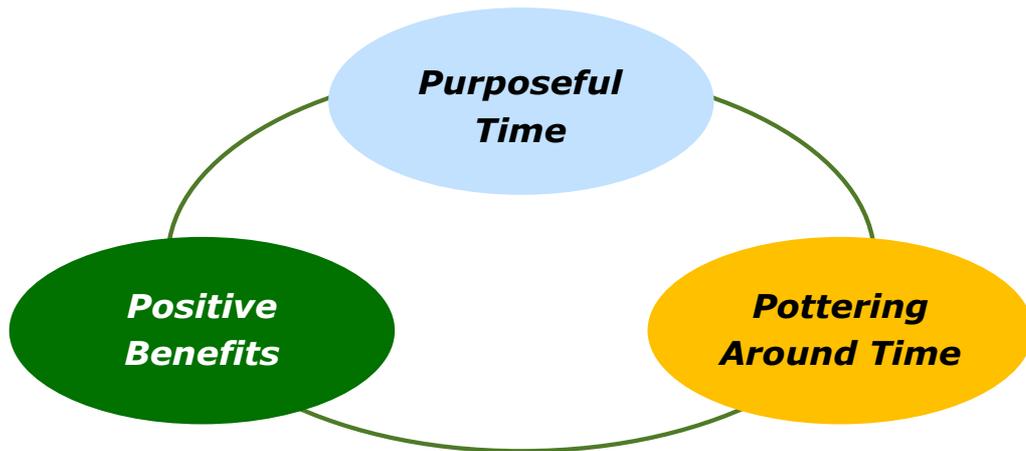
Looking at the rest of their life, however, the person may build in more time to develop. They may return to a former passion – such as playing music – or embark on physical tests, such as running marathons.

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.

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:*

*

*

*

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.

Pacing Yourself Properly

This can involve using the following approaches on the way towards achieving the goals.



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 Revisiting The Mission In The Middle Approach

Some start with a sense of mission when embarking on a piece of work. They may sometimes need to revisit the mission during the middle stages when things get tough. They may then get strength to move forwards and fulfil the mission.

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 reenergised 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.

The Finishing Strongly Approach

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.

There are many models for pacing yourself and finishing properly. The following pages describe one approach.

The Third Wind

There are many models for doing fine work. One approach is borrowed from athletics and describes going through the following stages.

The First Wind involves being energetic when starting the work. The Second Wind involves having a second bout of energy in the middle of the work. The Third Wind involves demonstrating a different kind of energy to finish the work.



There are many models for doing fine work. One approach borrows from athletics. It involves going through certain stages on the way towards finishing successfully.

The approach can be applied to doing a piece of work, completing a project or even doing one's best at certain stages of life. Let's explore these themes.

The First Wind

The first wind involves being energetic when starting a piece of work. It includes taking control, planning ahead and, when appropriate, hitting the ground running. It often involves aiming:

To prepare properly – both physically and psychologically;

To be proactive, plan ahead and rehearse your strategy for achieving the goals;

To move into action, get some quick wins and build the momentum.

Great educators often take this approach. They prepare properly, create an encouraging environment and introduce the topic in an inspiring way. They then focus on helping their students to learn things that are relevant, real and rewarding.

Great football teams take this approach. They aim to practice their game plan, take control of the game and earn the right to play. They then continue to set the tempo and follow their chosen strategies throughout the game.

Imagine you are going to do a piece of work. You will have your own approach to channelling your first wind to set off in the right way. Continuing to do good work, you may then move on to the next stage.

The Second Wind

This involves channelling new energy to tackle the middle or other parts of a project. There are several definitions for the term second wind. Here is one:

The return of strength or energy that makes it possible to continue an activity that needs a lot of effort.

Some people start a piece of work with a bang but begin to fade. It is important to pick up the momentum and continue to do superb work. Different people tap into their second wind in different way.

They may choose:

To breathe deeply or do other physical exercises that recharge their batteries;

To take a nap, go for a walk, listen to music or do another activity that stimulates their body and soul;

To relax, reflect on what they have done so far – including their successes - and rehearse what they are going to do next;

To make good use of their prime times – the times of the day, week or other period – when they have most energy;

To remind themselves of the principles they want to follow and how they can apply these in a pragmatic way to get positive results.

Many people experience a psychological second wind in the middle of their lives. They focus on what they really want to do in the future. This can lead to them taking decisions, making transitions and living different kinds of lives.

You will have your own approach to channelling your second wind to tackle the middle or other parts of a task. Sometimes you may then move on to the next stage.

The Third Wind

This involves channelling a different kind of energy and going into another dimension. You may do this to complete a project, add that touch class or do something special that enables you to finish successfully.

Some people take this approach in the third age of their life. They aim to follow certain principles, revitalise themselves and do fine work. Sometimes they also pass on knowledge to help other people.

There are many views on how to find the third wind in athletics. Jason Saltmarsh described one approach in an article he wrote for the Huffington Post called *The Zen Of Running: Catching Your Third Wind*. Here is an excerpt from the piece.

Most runners are familiar with the feeling of catching your second wind. It usually happens 10 to 15 minutes into a run.

After clearing out the initial aches, pains and tightness from previous runs, the body begins pumping more blood into the working muscles and warming up until perspiration begins.

The running suddenly feels a bit easier, and the runner usually responds by increasing their pace.

This is, of course, why warming up properly before a race is so important.

For runners that stick it out a bit longer, a third wind awaits.

For me, this usually happens around mile 5 or 6. I find myself slide into a hypnotic rhythm of footfalls and exhales, and my mind starts to entertain itself in other ways.

I'll suddenly have an epiphany concerning a project at work, or I'll find a solution to a problem that I've been struggling with, or I might begin writing a new article in my head.

How can you do the equivalent when completing a piece of work? One approach is to recall when you have finished something in a superb way. What did you do then to tap into and channel your third wind? How can you follow similar principles in the future?

Let's to your own work. Can you 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:*

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*The specific things I can do
to pace myself properly
when doing this project are:*

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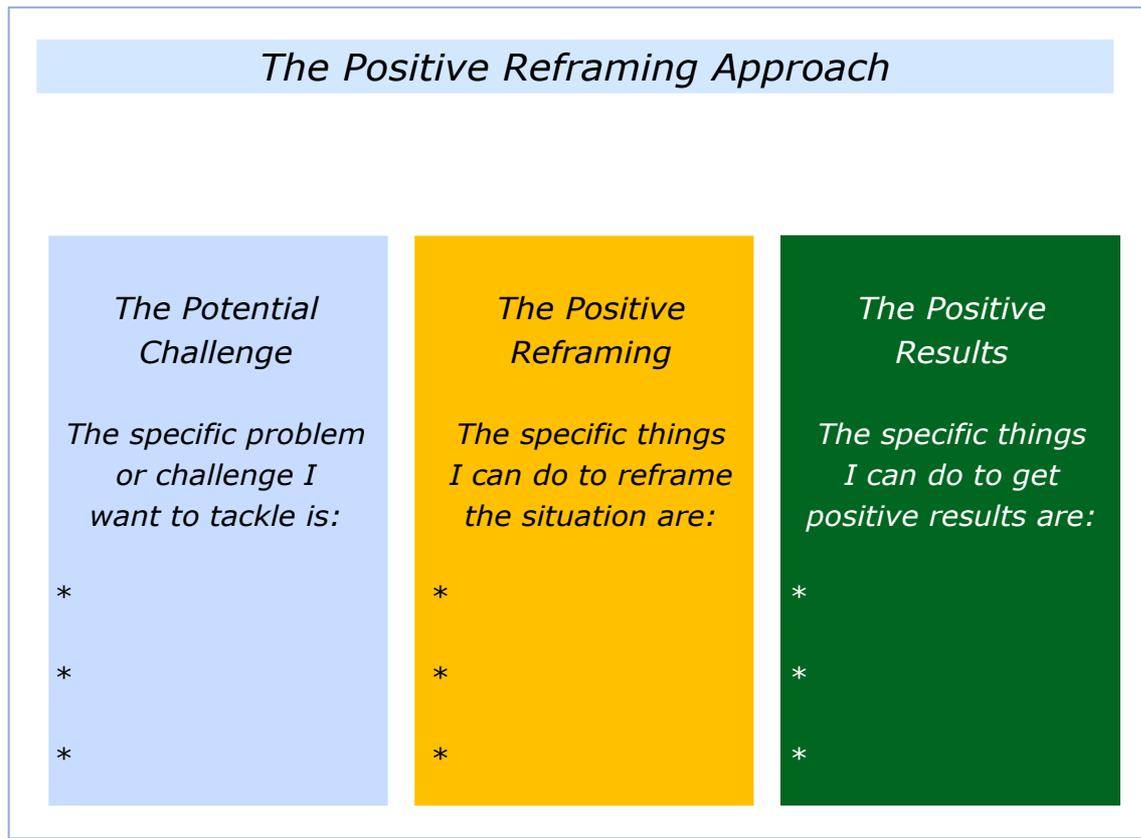
*The specific benefits of
taking these steps will be:*

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The 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.

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 Challenging Things As Projects

Reframing Challenging Things As Projects

Some people reframe a challenging situation as a project. They start by focusing on what they can control and clarify their goals.

They then aim to have a positive attitude, follow their chosen principles and work towards their picture of success.



Some people take this approach when faced by a challenging situation. They may lose their job, experience a setback, be diagnosed with an illness or face another challenge. Such people then reframe the situation as a project.

Bearing in mind what they can control, they focus on their desired picture of success. They then aim:

To have a positive attitude;

To follow their chosen principles;

To work towards their picture of success.

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.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a challenging situation where you may aim to reframe it as a project? How can you do this in your own way?

How can you buy time to go through the various emotions? How can you then reframe it as a project? Bearing in mind what you can control, how can you clarify your goals?

How can you maintain a positive attitude? How can you focus on the principles you want to follow? How can you then do your best to achieve the picture of success?

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

Reframing A Challenging Situation As A Project

The specific situation in the future where I may want to reframe a challenging situation as a project may be:

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The specific things I can do then to take 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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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 choosing 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:

*

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."

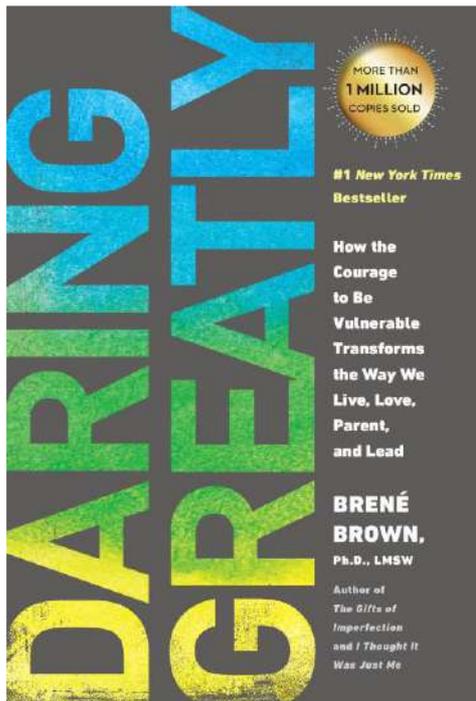
But it is when we feel vulnerable that this lesson strikes home. We have chance to consider what is important on life.

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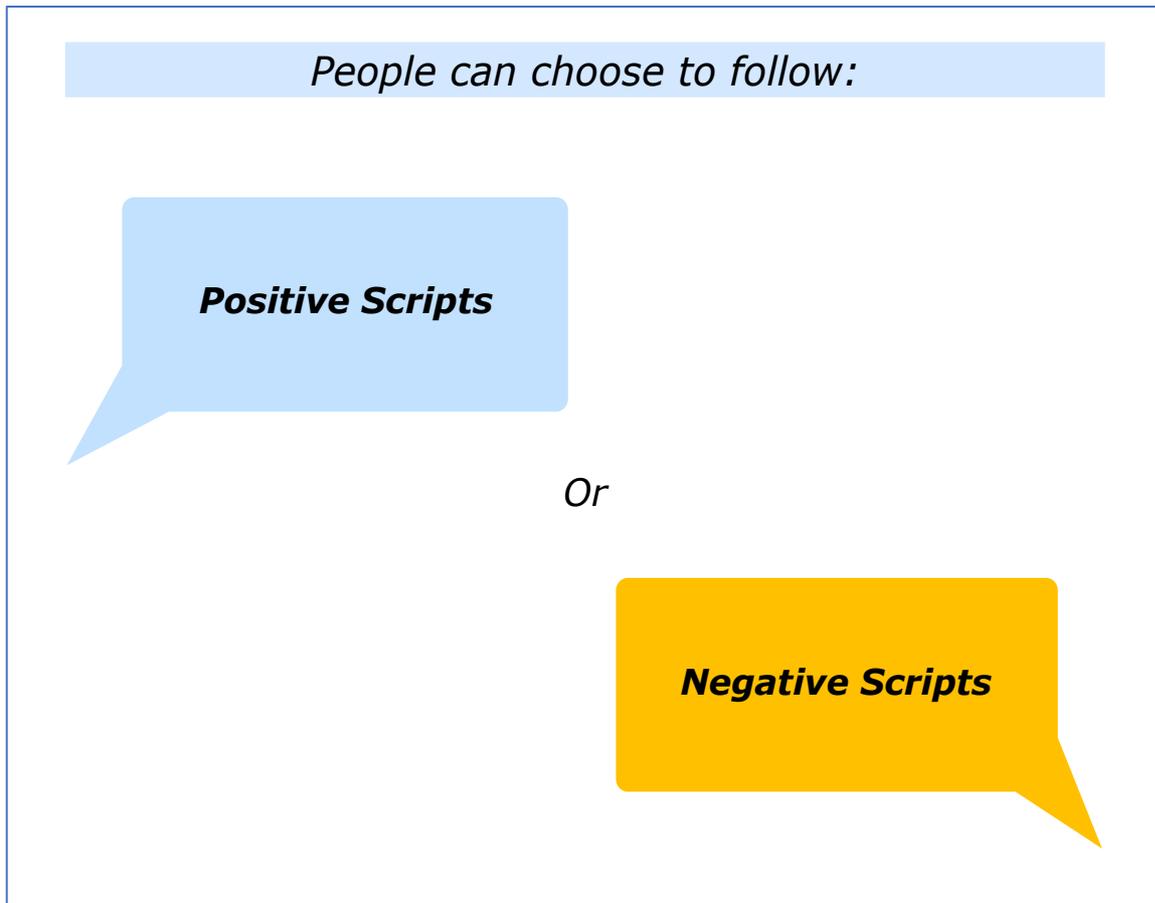
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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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.

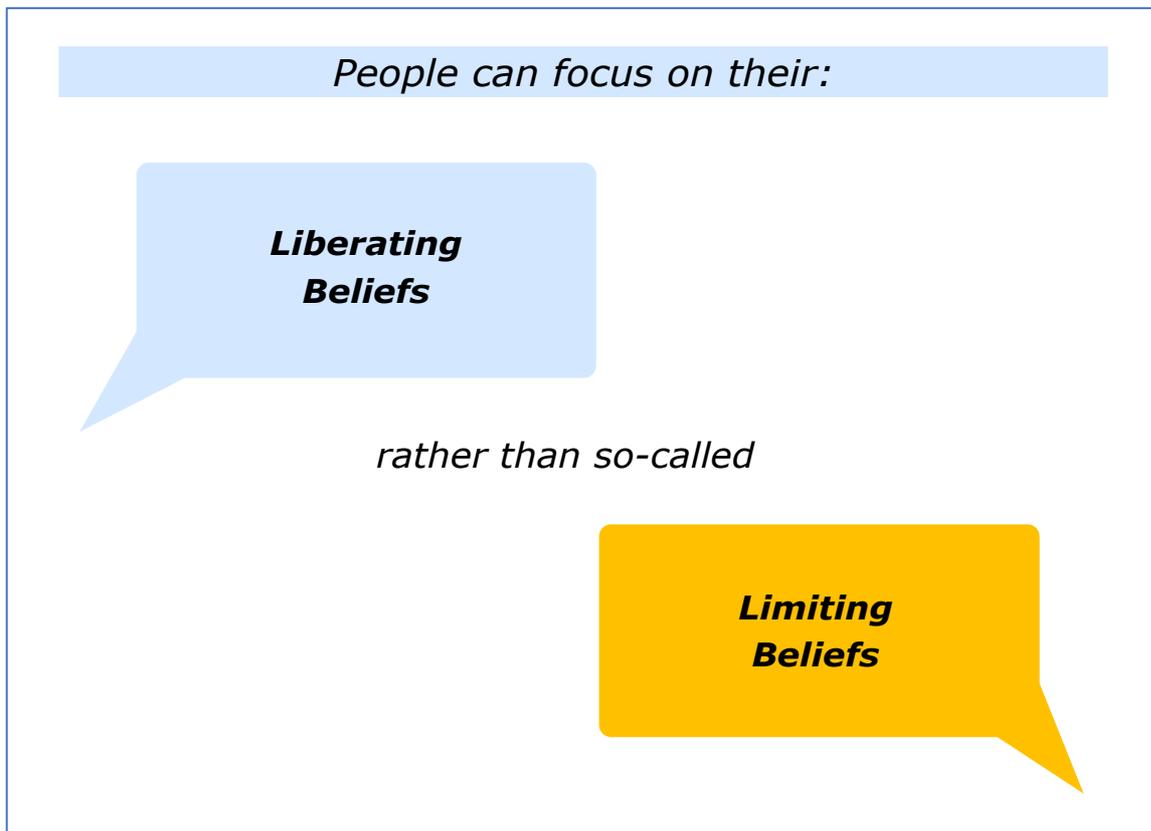
Bearing this in mind, the person decided to rewrite the messages they had internalised. They chose to write:

"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:

*

The practical steps I can take to translate this positive script into action are:

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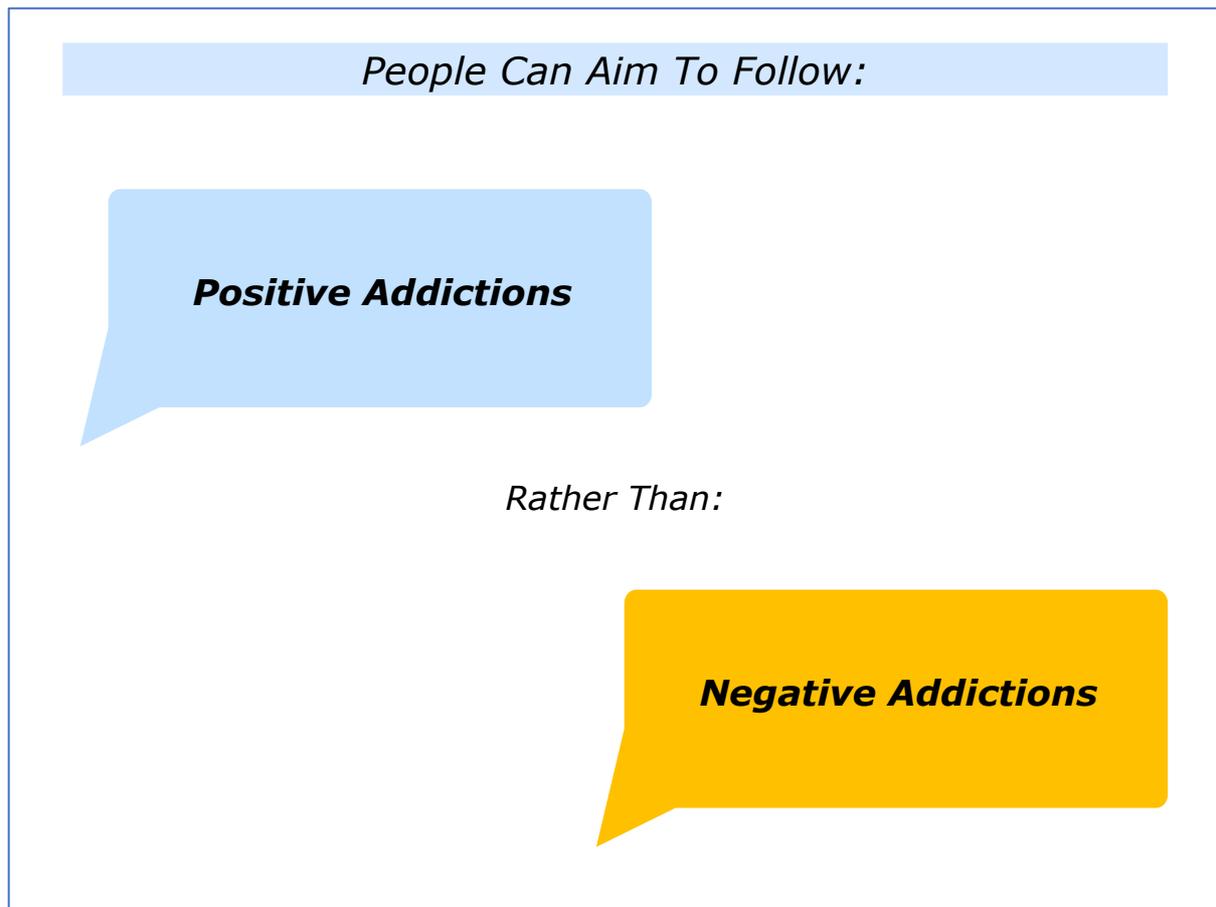
The specific things I can do to pause and revisit my positive script are:

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The Positive Addictions Rather Than Negative Addictions Approach



Everybody has addictions. These addictions may fall into two extreme categories.

Positive addictions – these can have positive consequences for themselves and others.

Negative addictions – these can have negative consequences for themselves and others.

Some people learn to recognise such addictions. They may then aim to channel these in ways that help - rather than hurt - themselves and other people. Let's explore these themes.

Positive Addictions

Some people may be addicted to focusing on positive things in life or finding positive solutions. They may be addicted to exercise, staying healthy or other activities. Some may be addicted to doing creative work. Some may be addicted to appreciating life and helping other people.

Negative Addictions

Some people may be addicted to alcohol, drugs or other substances. Some may be addicted to angst or continually finding problems. Some may be addicted to anger or getting their highs by hurting other people.

Some therapy programmes encourage people to follow positive rather than negative addictions. William Glasser described this approach in his 1976 book *Positive Addiction*. He showed how people could channel their energies into running, meditation or other beneficial activities.

This is an approach I sometimes used with people who wanted to channel their addictive personalities in positive ways. 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 some people found it proved more helpful for themselves and others. Some 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;

This approach calls for a person really wanting to turnaround their life. It can involve finding other ways to get their highs.

Some people with psychopathic tendencies, for example, may get a physical chemical reaction when they hurt others. Being cruel can give them the rush of feeling powerful. They become addicted to this approach and look for the next situation where they can get this kick.

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.

Some people take another route. They get their highs by helping other 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 greater than themselves. They may experience the helper's high.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow some of your positive addictions rather than negative addictions.

You may want to take care of your health, perform creative work or do another activity. You may want to help other people in your personal or professional life.

What are the positive addictions you may want to follow? 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 Positive Addiction Approach

*The specific situation where I
may want to follow some of
my positive addictions may be:*

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*The specific things I can do to follow
some of my positive addictions then are:*

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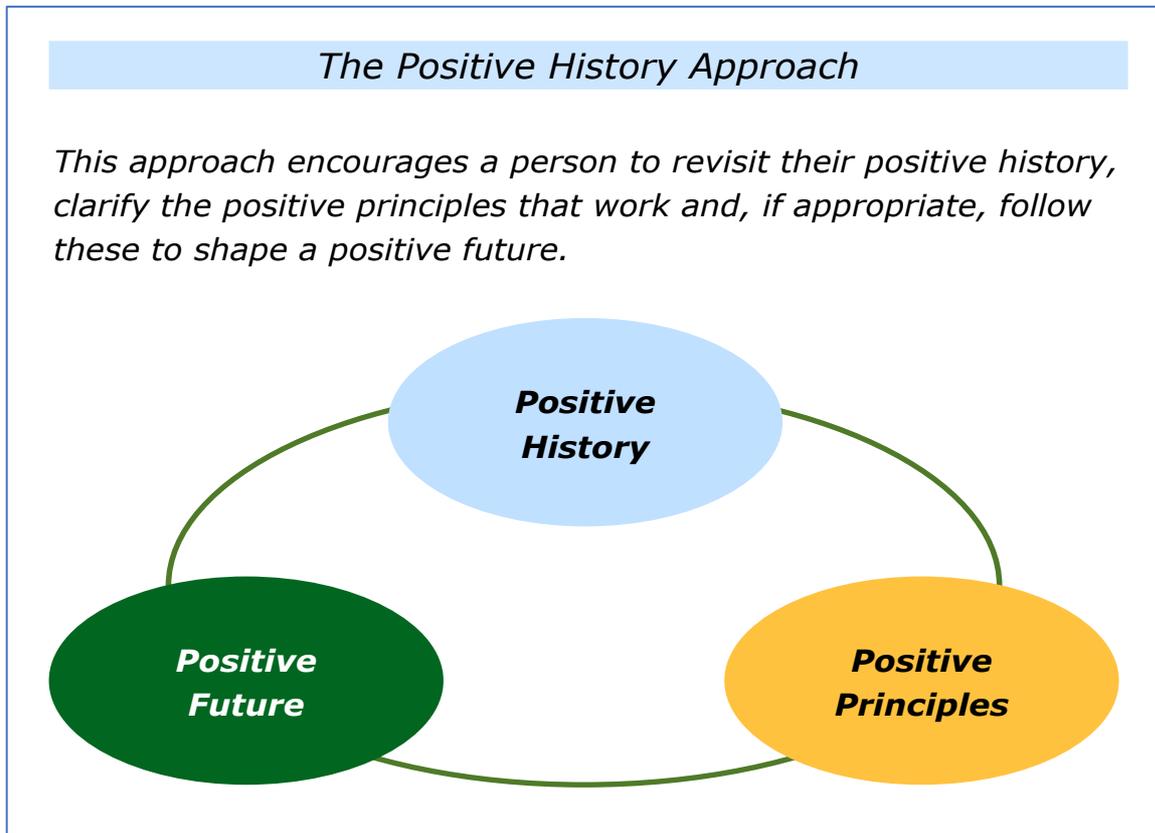
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Positive 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:

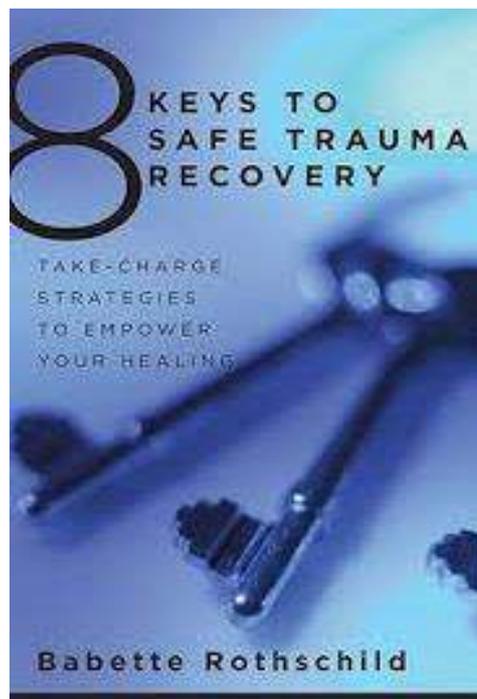
"The first goal of trauma recovery should and must be to improve your quality of life on a daily basis."

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.

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

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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:

*

*

*

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*

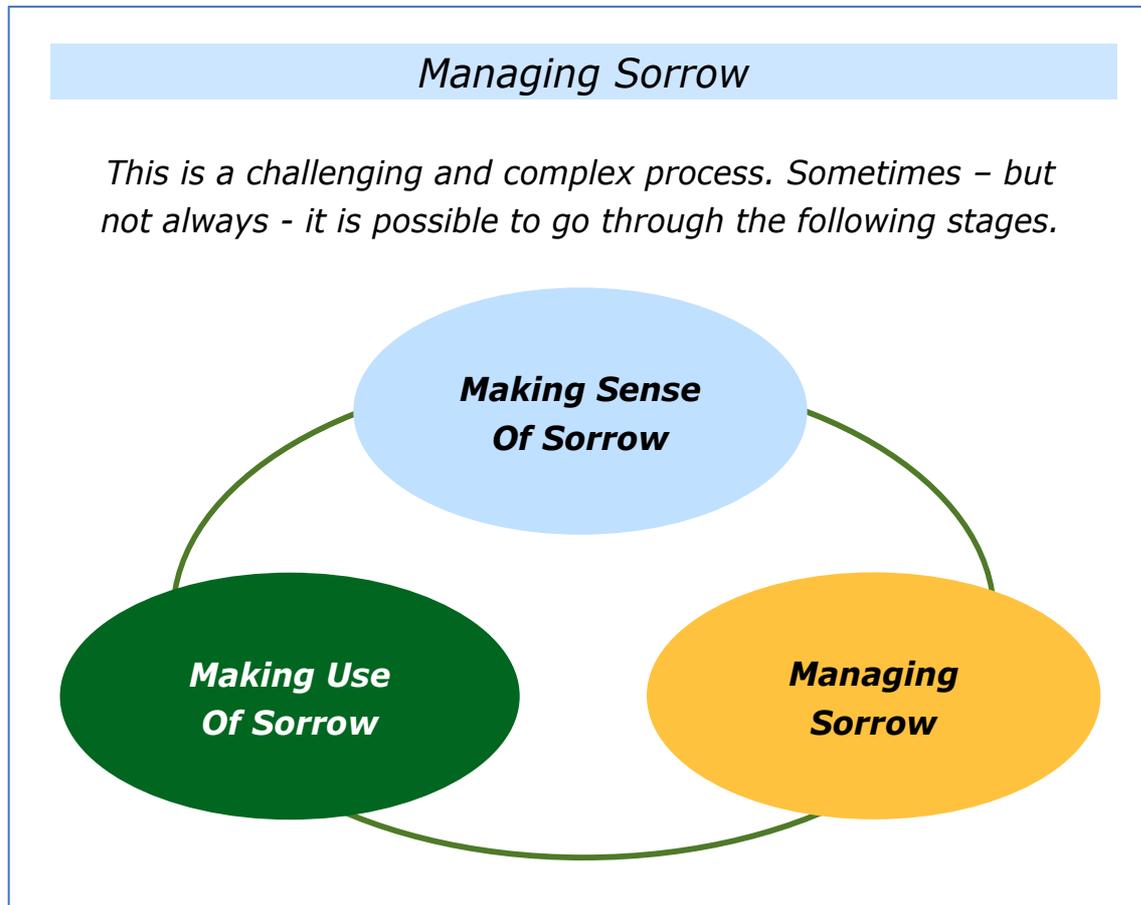
*The specific things I can do to follow
some of these principles in the future are:*

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*

The 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

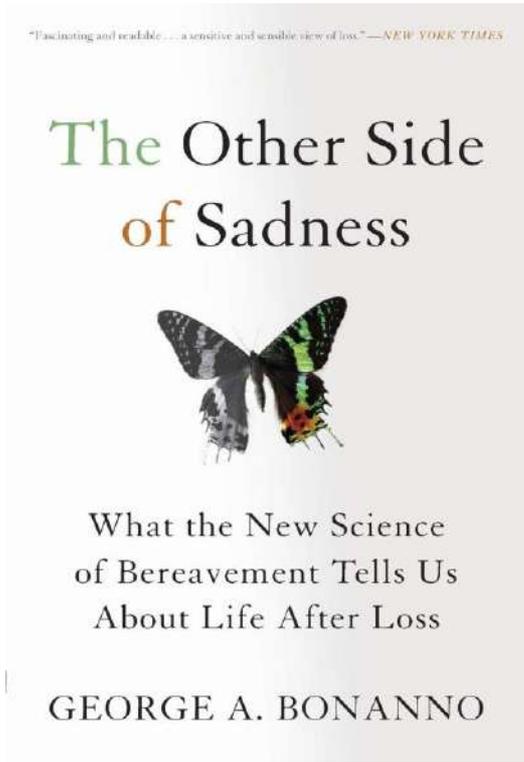
The majority of people, up to 65%, show resilience. They are affected, of course, but it does not change their life trajectory. They seem able to move on from the experience within several months.

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><i>Resilience</i></p> <p>Up to 65% of people are eventually able to get on with their lives.</p> <p><i>Recovery</i></p> <p>Up to 25% recover after a reasonable time.</p> <p><i>Chronic Grief Or Dysfunction</i></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."

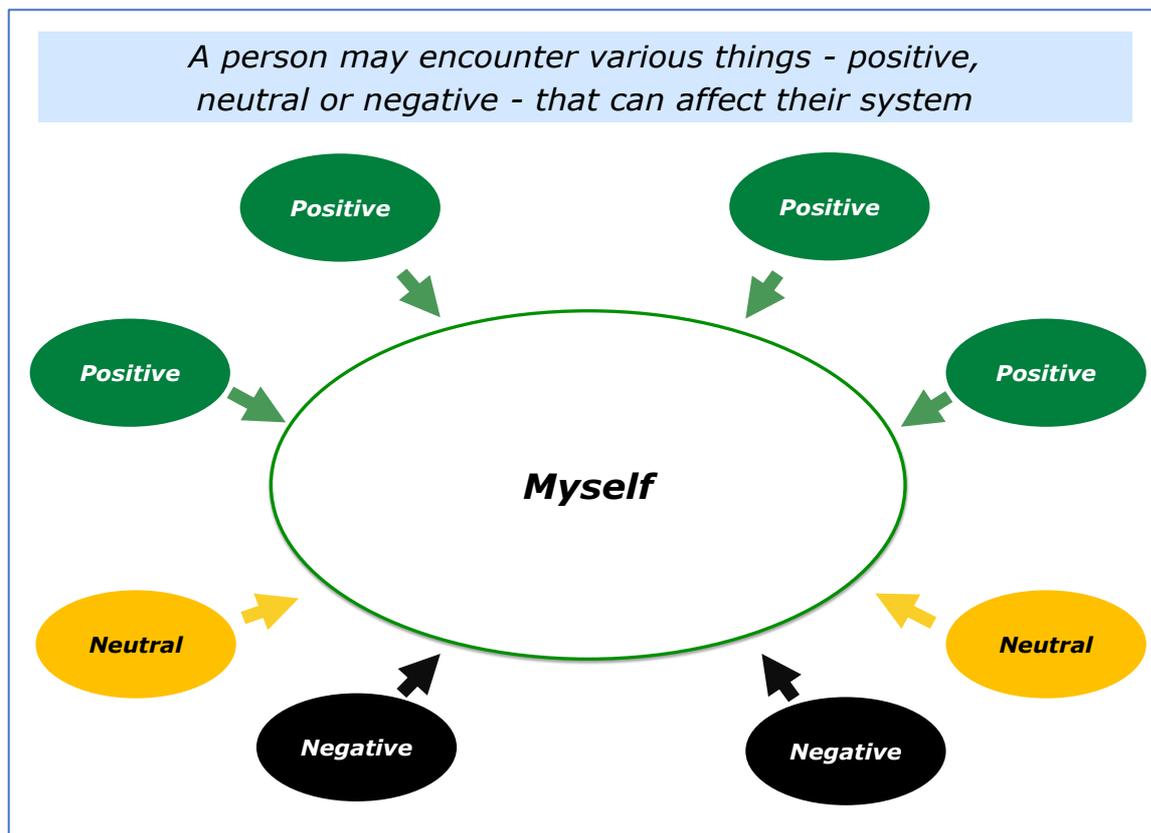
The things a person encounters each day can affect their body and soul. They can therefore explore the following questions.

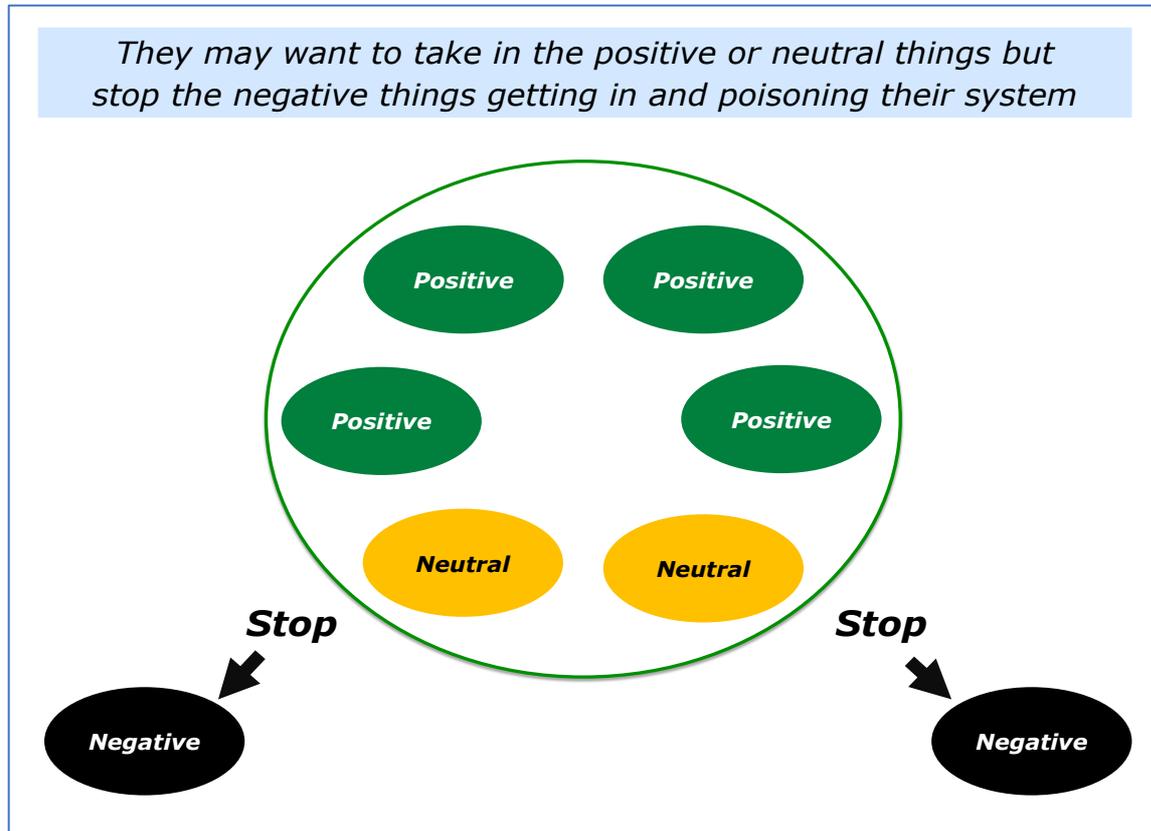
"What are the kinds of food – the experiences – I expose myself to each day? What are the kinds of things I put into my system? Which of these are positive, neutral or negative?"

"Who are the people I meet? Are they positive, negative or a mixture of both? What are the places where I spend my 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 I 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 21st 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.

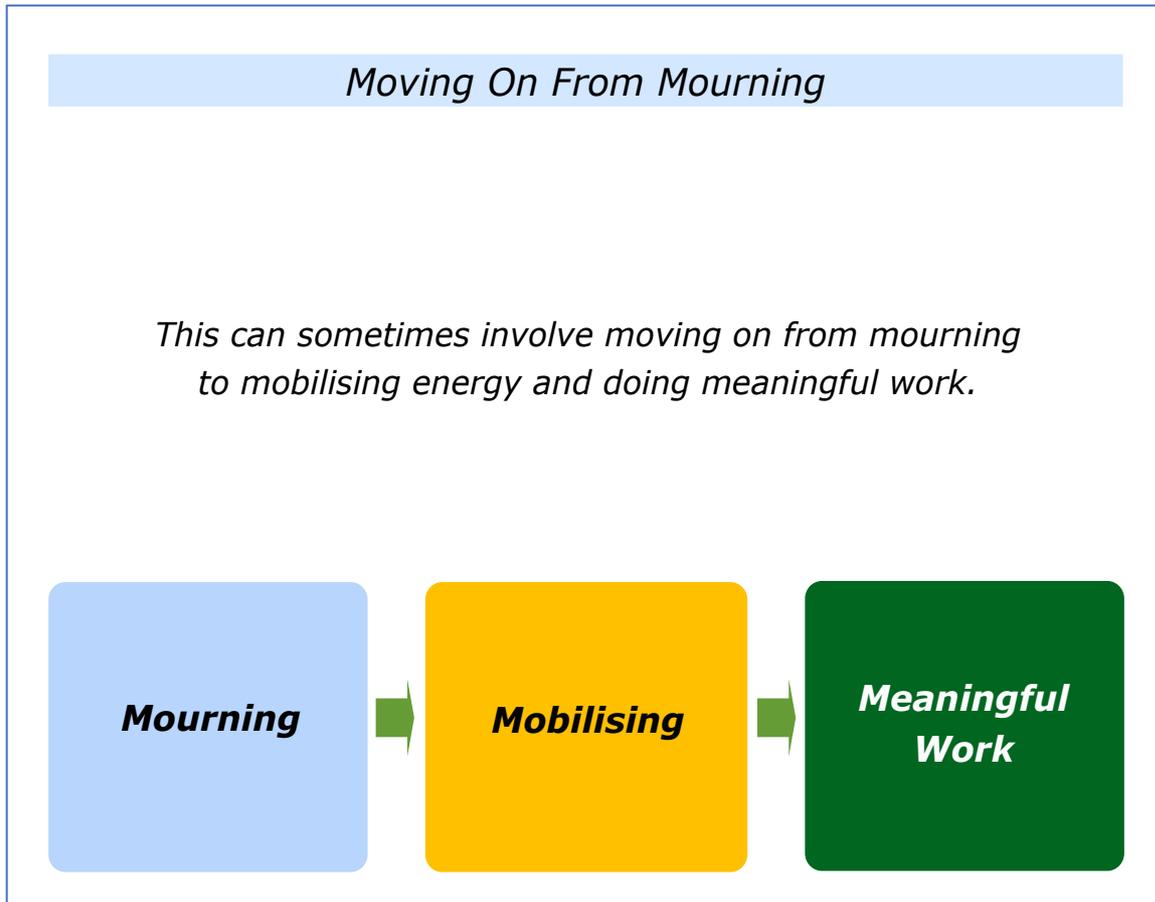
The top priority was his daughter, so he negotiated a four day working week. This helped him to provide the necessary care for both his daughter and himself.

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

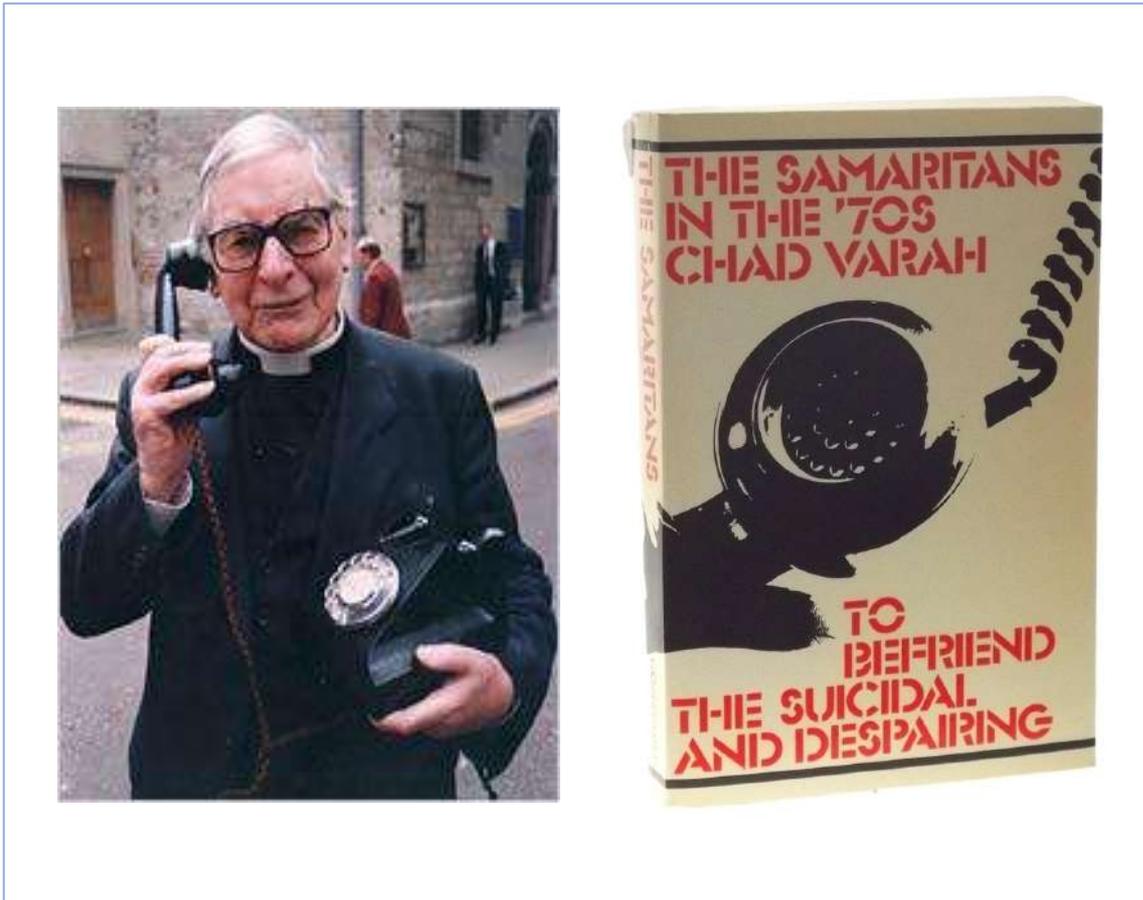
Chad was an Anglican clergyman who founded the Samaritans in 1953. Suicide was illegal at the time and he felt something could be done to help people in distress.

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 ...

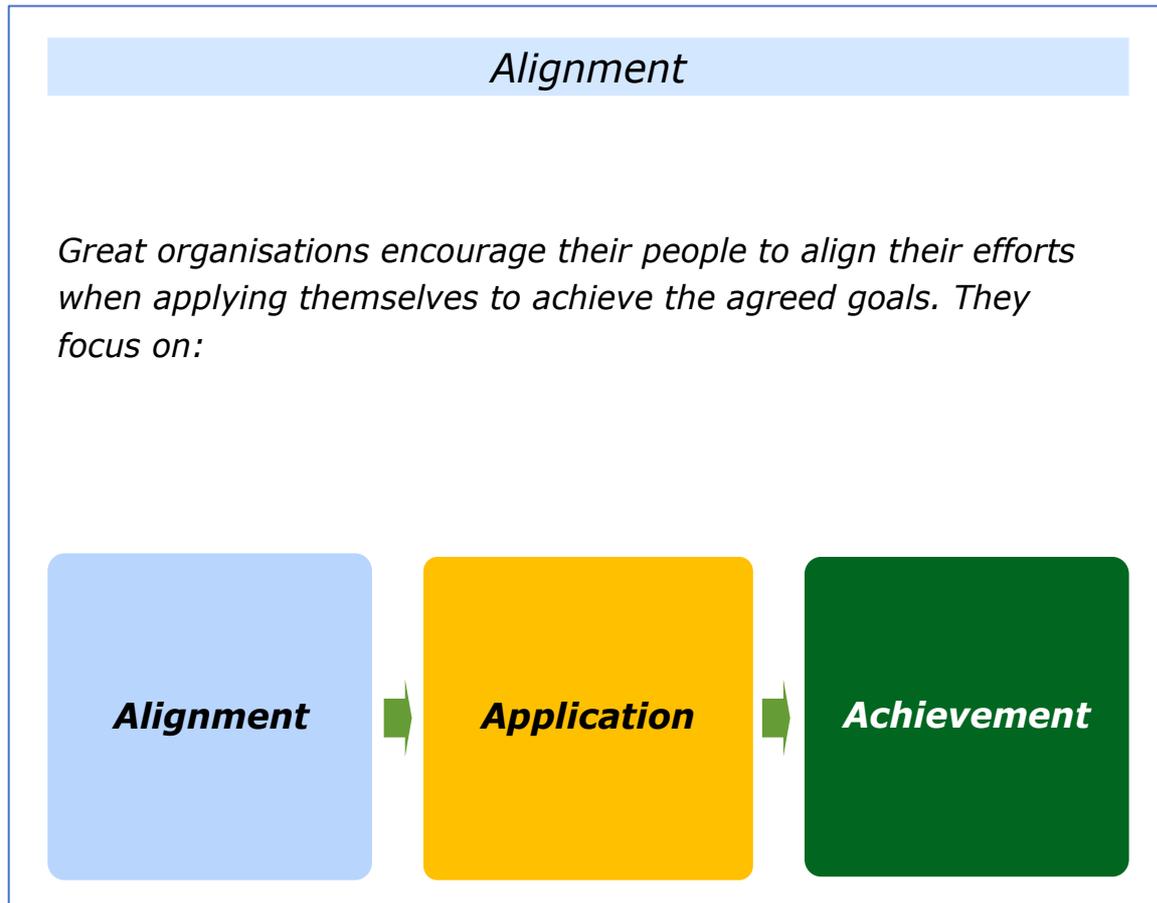
** They may ...*

For example ...

** They may ...*

For example ...

The Alignment Approach



Great organisations encourage their people to align their efforts when applying themselves to achieve the agreed goals. Different organisations do this in different ways.

One approach is to encourage people to focus on the organisation's purpose and follow its principles. Applying themselves in this way will often achieve at least 8/10.

There may be times, however, when they will want people to be agile – within certain parameters. People may then do what is necessary and produce something special to achieve the picture of success. Let's explore these themes.

Alignment

Imagine that you lead an organisation and want to encourage people to align their contributions with the organisation's aims. Different organisations do this in different ways. Some are more effective than others. You will, of course, choose your own approach.

Some organisations try to order their people to be aligned

They issue orders from the top and expect their people to fall into line. This approach may work for a time but then some people may decide they want more autonomy and move on from the organisation.

Some organisations try to control and micromanage their people into being aligned

They order people to follow certain processes and do certain tasks. They micromanage their people to ensure they are doing things in a certain way. This can give the impression of alignment but it can also drive some people away from the organisation.

Some organisations try persuade their people to be aligned

They may aim to sell a vision to their people. Sometimes this can work when there is a compelling story and people buy into following the strategies. Some people may prefer to be the ones who persuade themselves, however, rather being sold something.

Some organisations try to communicate a purpose, principles and picture of success that can help to create alignment

They communicate these to their people. They then invite people to decide if they want to contribute. This approach can work providing the organisation shows it is serious and encourages people to use their strengths to achieve the picture of success.

Some organisations try to recruit people who want to follow certain principles and this helps to create alignment

They communicate their purpose, principles and picture of success. They then recruit people who want to follow these principles and achieve the goals. This ensures there is an ongoing stream of people who want to use their strengths to help the organisation to achieve success.

Imagine that you have pursued a particular approach to creating alignment. This may have included aiming:

To communicate the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success;

To communicate that you would like each team and each person to clarify their contributions to following their principles and achieving the picture of success;

To communicate that you will then create success stories that show how the teams and people are following the principles and contributing towards achieving the picture of success.

You will, of course, also give people the opportunity to decide if they do want to take these steps. If so, you will make clear contracts with them about the outcomes they will deliver towards achieving the goals.

One leader I mentored aimed to take this approach. This would also involve meeting with each of their leadership team members. Bearing this in mind, he asked the following questions.

"How can I make sure the individuals are really aligned? How can I make sure they really want to take a specific role in the leadership team? They may say they are aligned but their later actions may prove otherwise."

Bearing this in mind, we explored one approach to trying to increase the chances of individuals being aligned with the principles and picture of success.

Clarifying Whether A Person Wants To Align Their Efforts To Achieve The Goals

Imagine that you are going to meet a member of your leadership team. You may want them to make a specific contribution to helping towards achieving the team's goals. This will involve them delivering certain results in a particular role. How to take this step? You may want to explore the following themes before and then during the meeting.

Before The Meeting

It can be useful to work through the following theme before meeting the person. You can aim:

To clarify the specific results the person will need to deliver in a particular role – the picture of success;

To clarify whether you think the person is prepared to follow the organisation's principles and deliver the picture of success;

To clarify whether – bearing in mind their long-term career goals – the person will be prepared to make this particular contribution towards achieving the picture of success.

This final point is crucial. The person may be a good professional and do a good job. But it can be good to check their motivation level.

Imagine the person will be able to see how the role may fit in terms of working towards their long-term career goals. They will then be more likely to align their efforts towards achieving the organisation's aspirations.

During The Meeting

If appropriate, you can then have a conversation with the person around the following themes. This sounds rather formal but you can cover these in your own way.

The Picture Of Success

"I would like to talk with you about how you can build on your strengths and make your best contribution to the organisation. There is a particular role on offer but it would be good to explore whether this would fit for you. I would like us to try to find a win-win that would also help you to work towards your long-term career goals.

"Looking at the particular role, these are the results that a person in this role would need to deliver. They would need:

1) To ...

2) To ...

3) To ...

The Principles

"As you know, the principles want to follow in organisation to achieve the results are these:

1) To ...

2) To ...

3) To ...

"Looking ahead, think about if you would be prepared to follow these principles to deliver the results.

"You will do this by using your strengths, of course, and doing this in your own way. We want characters not clones. But it is important that people across the organisation keep focusing on following the principles."

The Professional Contribution

"Bearing these things in mind, you may want to take time to reflect. Take time to think about if you would like to take the role and deliver these results.

"It is also good if you can see how taking this role may help you to work towards your long-term career goals.

"You have strengths in certain areas but not necessarily in others. Bearing this in mind, we will encourage you to build on these strengths.

"If appropriate, we can get somebody who has complementary strengths to work alongside you to cover the other areas.

"At the same time, you will of course still be accountable for ensuring the overall results are delivered.

"Take time to think and let me know if you would like to take the role. If not, we can look at other ways you may be able to contribute towards achieving the picture of success."

You will cover such areas in your own way. The keys will be to focus on the following themes:

To clarify the results to be delivered in a particular role and how these will contribute towards achieving the picture of success;

To clarify whether the person would like to deliver those results and contribute towards achieving the picture of success;

To then make clear contracts about the person's contribution towards achieving the picture of success.

Let's assume that you have taken these steps. Each team and each individual has clarified the contribution they want to make towards achieving the organisation's picture of success. It will then be time to move onto the next stage.

Application

Imagine that you lead an organisation. People have made clear contracts about the contributions they want to make. How can you know if they are really aligned in working towards the goals?

The answer will be if they apply themselves to achieving the aims.

Different organisations choose different ways to clarify whether people are translating their commitments into action. The approaches they use can have both pluses and minuses.

Some organisations aim to police people's actions. They produce lists of tasks and then micromanage people into doing these tasks. This approach can work for a short while but it also has downsides.

Some organisations choose another way. They encourage their people to keep following the principles. This involves taking the following steps.

Application

There are many ways to encourage people to align their actions to achieving the organisation's aims. One approach is:

-  *To keep reminding people of the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success;*
-  *To keep encouraging people to focus on how they can follow the principles to do superb work and tackle challenges;*
-  *To keep producing success stories that show how people are following the principles and delivering success.*

This involves continually showing people what good looks like. It rewards the behaviour you want repeated. Keep highlighting how people are following the principles and delivering success.

This approach often works. You can then keep encouraging people to follow the principles and achieve success.

Imagine, however, that positive majority of people are taking this approach but one person is causing problems. They are choosing to behave in ways that are unprofessional or causing collateral damage.

You can then meet with the person and clarify whether they want to follow the principles. One approach is to focus on the big picture and invite them to decide if they want to contribute.

You will do this in your own way. When having the conversation, however, you may want to cover the following points.

"Thank you for meeting. This may be a difficult conversation but I am sure that we can do our best to find a solution. Let's go back to the big picture about what we are trying to do in our work.

The purpose of our organisation is:

** To ...*

The principles we want to follow to achieve this purpose – together for the reasons for these – are:

** To ...*

** To ...*

** To ...*

"Bearing these things in mind, I would like you to take time to reflect and decide if you want to follow these principles and contribute towards achieving the goals.

"If so, then I would like you to come up with a plan of how you can do this and contribute towards achieving the goals. If not, then we can look at other options."

This may sound like a tough approach but you are the custodian of the culture. Your aim is to ensure that people are following the principles towards achieving the goals.

Imagine that you are going to have such a conversation with somebody. It can be useful to take the following approach:

To focus on alignment by inviting the person to decide if they want to follow the principles;

To not get into arguments – if the person wants to argue you don't fall into that trap;

To keep returning to explaining the principles and inviting the person to decide if they want to follow them.

Imagine the person says they do. You can invite them to produce an action plan about how they aim to the principles in the next month. They need to take this step rather than you write a plan or police them.

Imagine the person says they don't want to or, after saying they do, they break the agreements. You then replace them with people who do want to follow the principles.

Let's assume that many people are aiming to translate the principles into action. You will then move on to the next stage.

Achievement

Imagine that people are aligning their efforts. You will probably have some mechanism for clarifying the progress that they are making.

As mentioned elsewhere in the book, you may encourage people to keep others informed about their progress. Bearing in mind their agreed goals, they may give monthly updates on:

The specific things they have delivered in the past month;

The specific things they aim to deliver in the next month;

The challenges they face and any support they may need to tackle these challenges;

The other topics they may wish to discuss.

You may also want to ensure that people throughout the organisation keep focusing on the big picture. If appropriate, you can give them regular updates regarding how they are aligning their efforts towards achieving the organisation's aims.

Different leaders do this in different ways. One approach is to start by reminding people of the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success. You can then focus on the following themes.

Achievements

You can describe the specific things that people have achieved during a certain time frame. You can bring these to life by describing specific examples, customer feedback or other achievements.

Aims For The Future

You can describe the specific aims for the future. These can include the plans: a) for building on what the organisation does well; b) for tackling areas for improvement; c) for working towards other specific goals.

Additional Things

You can describe any additional things. These may include stories about employees achieving things outside work, proposed wellbeing initiatives or any other topics that may be of interest.

You will, of course, do this in your own way. If appropriate, however, you may wish to use the following template.

*The Organisation's Purpose,
Principles And Picture Of Success*

Progress Report

Achievements

*The specific things that people in the
organisation have achieved in the past ... are*

*

*

*

Aims For The Future

The specific things that we want to aim for and achieve in the next ... are

*

*

*

Additional Things

The additional things we would like to mention are:

*

*

*

Application Sometimes Also Needs Agility

Great organisations encourage people to align their efforts when working towards the agreed goals. As mentioned earlier, however, they also give them the following message:

We want you to keep following the principles. There may be times when you need to be agile in the way you express these, however, in order to achieve the picture of success.

Let's return to your own work. Imagine that you want to do your best to create alignment when leading a project group, team or organisation. One approach is to take the following steps. You can aim:

To give people the big picture by communicating the purpose, principles and picture of success;

To build on the people who want to follow the principles and make clear contracts about their contributions to achieving the picture of success;

To enable people to follow the principles and do superb work on the way towards achieving the picture of success.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the alignment 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 Alignment 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 then to follow these in my own way are:

*

*

*

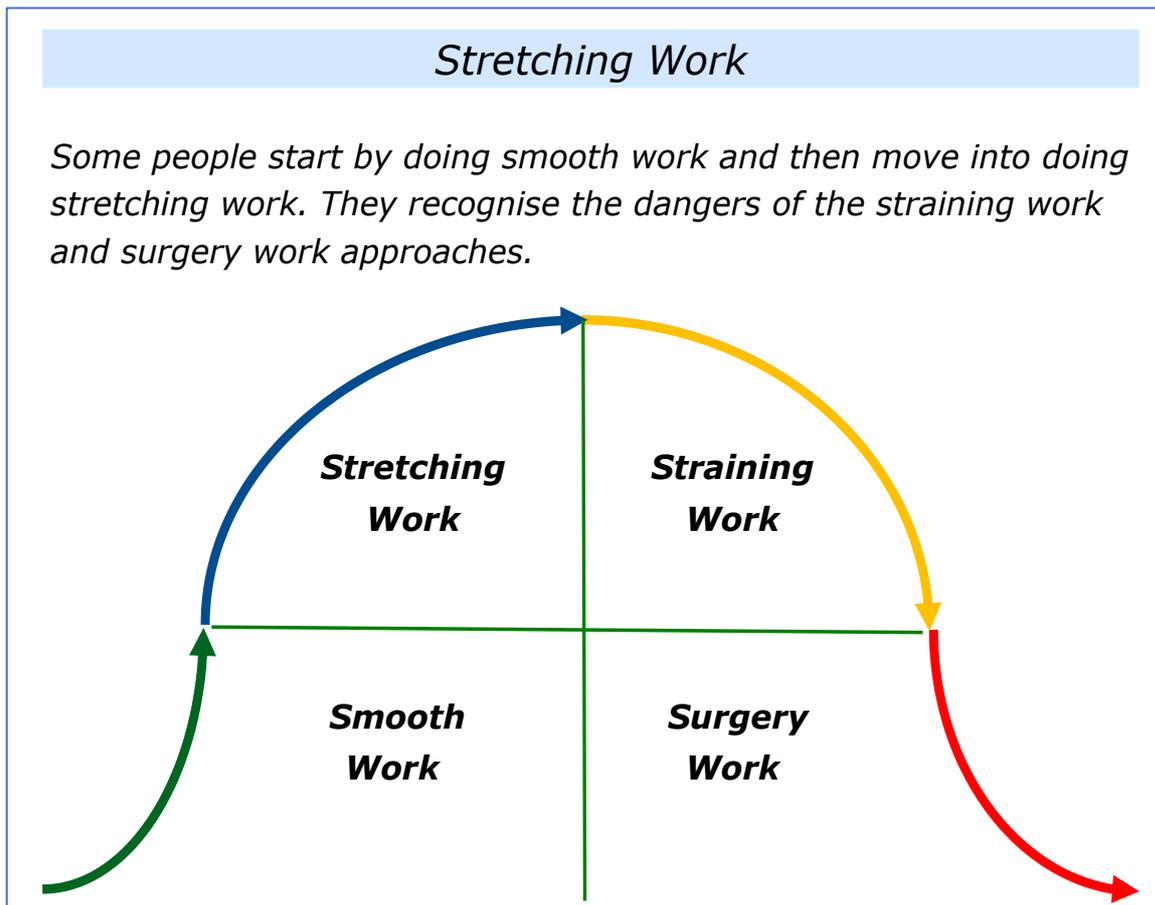
The specific things that may happen as a result may be:

*

*

*

The Stretching Work Approach



There are many ways to do superb work. A person may start by doing smooth work and move into doing stretching work. Sometimes they may take this step to deliver brilliance.

A person may stay at this stage for a time but recognise the warning signs if they are straining. Sometimes they may do work that is harmful and can lead to needing physical or psychological surgery. Let's explore these themes.

The Smooth Work Approach

Great workers sometimes aim to work in a smooth way. They take the following steps to increase the chances of making this happen.

*They plan to pursue the
strategies most likely to succeed*

Such workers prepare properly. Bearing in mind their strengths, they clarify the strategies most likely to deliver success. They then aim:

To rehearse pursuing their chosen strategies;

To rehearse managing any potential challenges;

To rehearse regaining their rhythm after managing challenges and then continuing to pursue their chosen strategies.

They plan to make things go as smoothly as possible whilst also managing how to deal with disruptions.

*They pursue the strategies
most likely to succeed*

Great workers move into action and aim to get an early success. Different people follow different approaches when doing their work. They may aim, for example:

To flow, focus and finish successfully;

To focus on a clear purpose, follow their principles and achieve their picture of success;

To build on their strengths, follow strategies that work and do their best to deliver success.

They will aim to follow their chosen rhythm when doing the work. Sometimes they encounter challenges, however, which involves taking the next step.

*They find positive solutions
and do their best to succeed*

Great workers buy time to think when faced by unexpected challenges. Different people do this in different ways. They may aim:

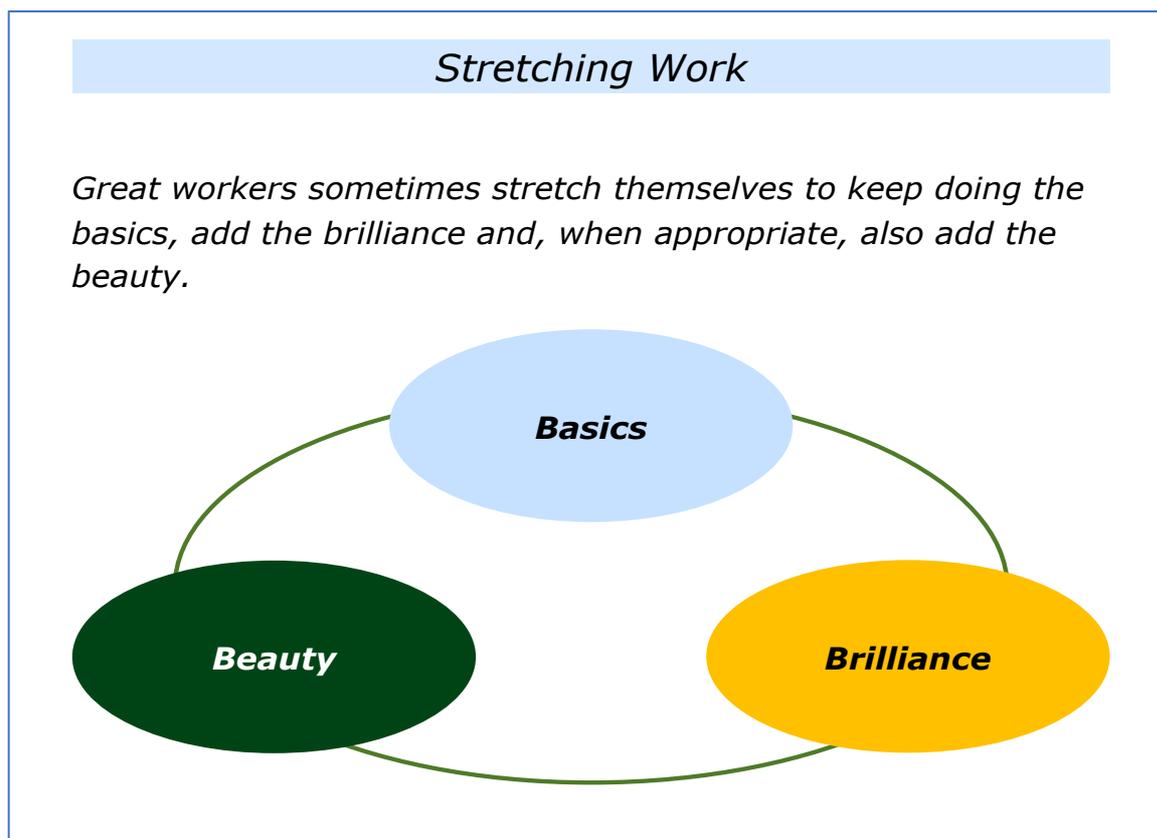
To keep focusing on what is happening – what is in the green, amber and red zones – and take the appropriate action;

To anticipate and prevent any potential haemorrhaging, start the healing process and solve the problems;

To buy time to think, find solutions to challenges and then continue to follow their chosen strategies.

Such workers try to make work as smooth as possible. At the same time, they prepare to deal with any bumps in the road. This helps them to increase the chances of achieving success.

Stretching Work



Great workers sometimes stretch themselves to go into another dimension. They may stretch their body, brain or other senses to go into their equivalent of the zone.

Sometimes they may stretch themselves to keep doing the basics. Sometimes to add the brilliance. Sometimes, when appropriate, they may also add the beauty.

The stretching approach can help them to expand their repertoires. They add more strategies and skills that can be used in different situations. This increases their ability to achieve success.

Straining Work

Great workers like to stretch themselves but also recognise potential danger signs. Sometimes this can happen when, for example:

They feel negative exhaustion rather than positive exhaustion ... They become conscious of strains in their body and soul ... They feel tense and grit their teeth ... They become irritable at small things ... They feel detached and elsewhere.

Some people find that stretching can be stimulating but straining can create problems. It is then important for a person to take time to heal themselves. This can also help to avoid the following stage.

Surgery Work

Some work can cause damage and lead to needing physical or psychological surgery. Some companies, for example, go beyond asking people to deliver stretch goals. They may ask people to achieve surgery goals. Their philosophy seems to be:

"People are straining every muscle to jump 2 metres but let's move the bar up to 4 metres. We will then get lots of people to jump 2.5 metres."

The employees may 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.

This approach may work for a while but there are downsides. A company may find that people resent being micromanaged, fall ill or move on to find more satisfying work.

Let's return to your own work. Looking ahead, can you think of situation where you may want to follow elements of the stretching work approach?

How can you set things up to do smooth work and move on to stretching work? How may you need to stretch yourself to keep doing the basics, add the brilliance and, if appropriate, add the beauty? 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 Stretching Work Approach

The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of this approach in my own way may be:

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The specific things I can do then to stretch myself to do the basics, add the brilliance and, if appropriate, add the beauty are:

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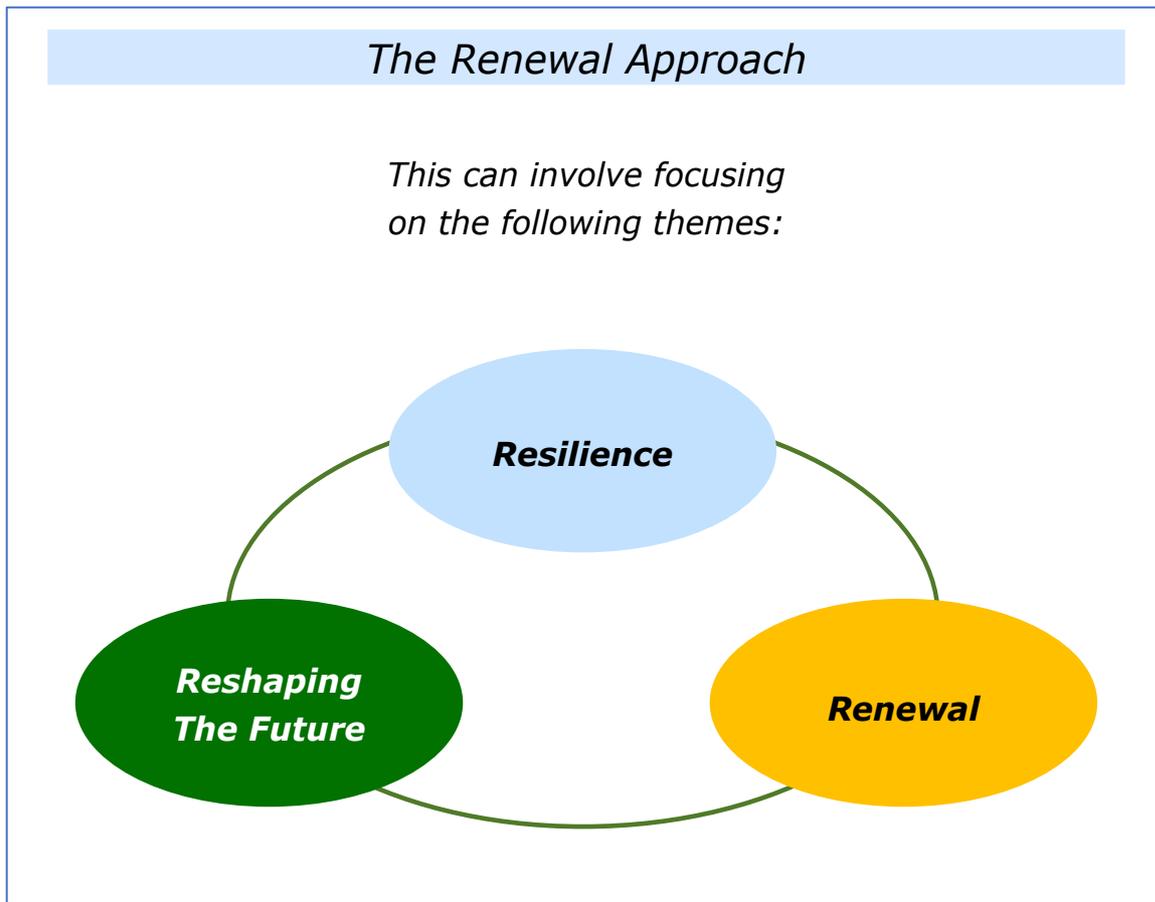
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The 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:*

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*The specific things that happened
as a result of taking these steps were:*

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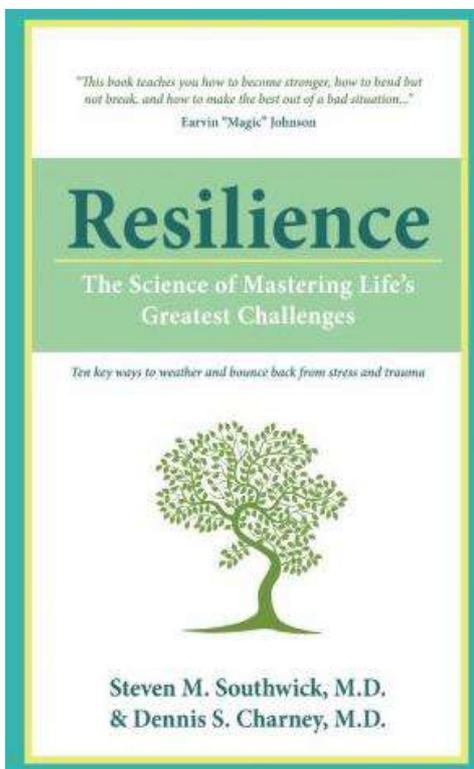
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Resilience

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.



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;*

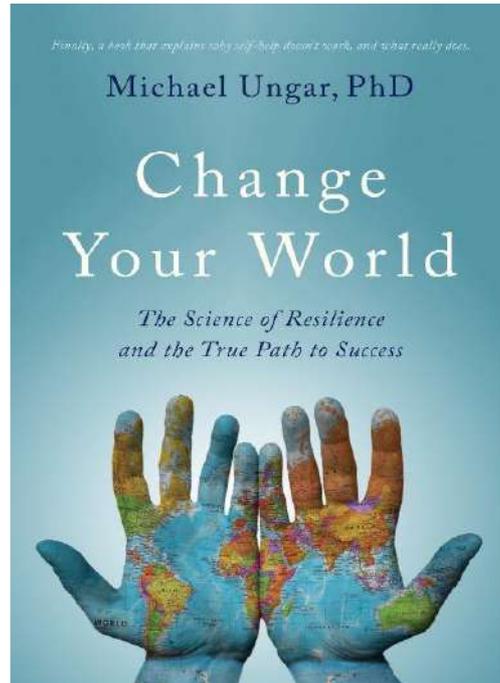
- *To train regularly and rigorously in areas such as their moral integrity, emotional intelligence and physical endurance;*
- *To recognise and foster their strengths - using them to deal with challenging situations;*
- *To care for their physical wellbeing;*
- *To have a strong social support network;*
- *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.

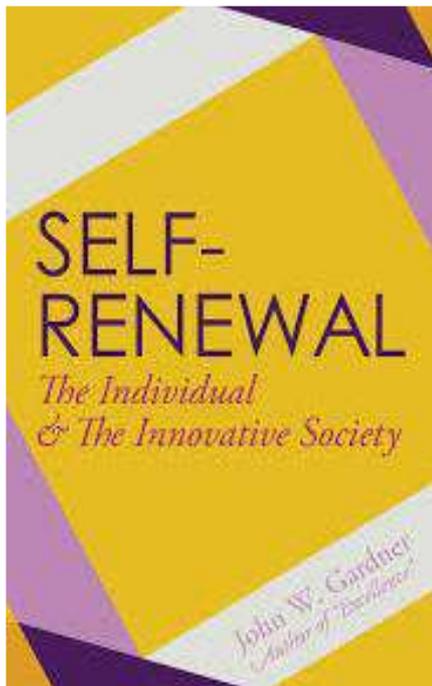
What Students Need To Succeed – Seven Core Elements

- *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 describe some of the approaches you can use to help people take this step or even sometimes renew yourself.

The Positive Biography Approach

The Positive Biography

*The positive things I have done in the past and
the positive things I want to do in the future.*

Imagine that a person has asked for your help in shaping their future. You will begin by making the person feel welcome and clarifying what they want to explore. You will then use your own approach to helping them to achieve their goals.

At some point, however, you may want to know more about the person. There are many models for taking this step. This short piece looks at one exercise that can be useful.

The Positive Biography

This approach invites the person to focus on two areas. First, the positive things they have done in the past. Second, the positive things they want to do in the future.

These can be small or big things, personal or professional. You may have to prompt the person a little but it can be an encouraging exercise. Here are some examples of what individuals may write.

The Positive Things In The Past

I have:

Tried to encourage many people in my life ... Raised a happy family ... Helped dyslexic students to build on their strengths ... Cared for my parents as they got older ... Helped many people to do satisfying work ... Done rewarding work as a mediator.

The Positive Things In The Future

I want to:

Keep enjoying life one day at a time ... Keep encouraging our family members and grandchildren ... Keep working in the local hospice ... Keep learning ... Keep sharing knowledge that, if they wish, people can use to shape their futures.

There are many ways to get to know more about a person. This approach focuses on the positive things they have done in their life. These can provide a superb starting point for exploring their strengths and successful patterns.

The approach also encourages a person to focus on the positive things they want to do in the future. This can provide the basis for helping them to set positive goals. If appropriate, you can then help them to achieve their picture of success.

Imagine that at some point you want to use elements of this approach. If you wish, it may be useful to tackle the exercise yourself.

This can provide insight into how you can use it to help other people. Here is the exercise that invites you to describe your positive biography.

Positive Things In The Past

The positive things I have done in my life in the past have included the following things:

- *
- *
- *
- *
- *

Positive Things In The Future

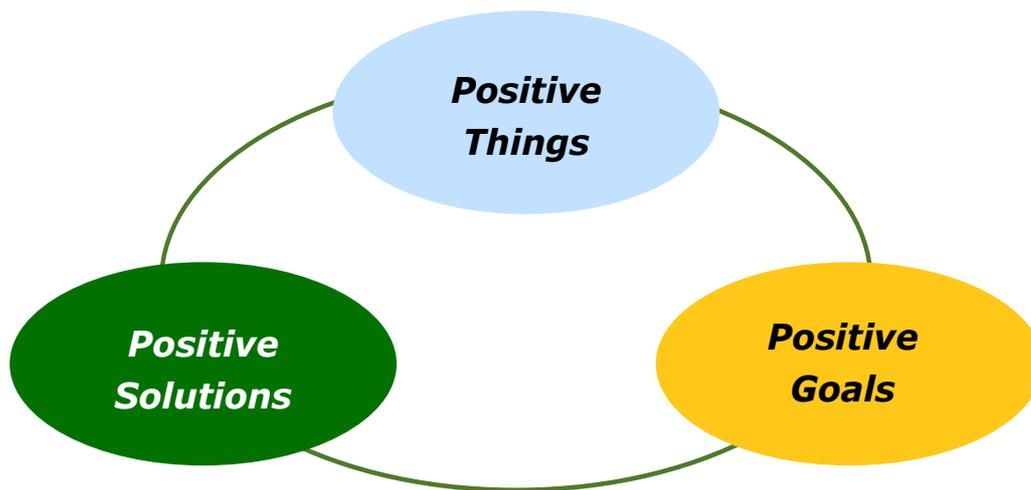
The positive things I want to do in my life in the future include the following things:

- *
- *
- *
- *
- *

The People Who Live In A Positive Universe Rather Than A Negative Universe Approach

People Who Live In A Positive Universe

They are often positive realists. They have a positive attitude but are also good at reading reality. They believe that 'what you focus on you become'. They therefore focus on:



There are many ways to live life. Some people choose to live in a positive universe rather than a negative universe. They are often positive realists. They have a positive attitude but are also good at reading reality.

Such people believe that 'what you focus on you become'. Bearing this in mind, they often take the following steps.

They Focus On Positive Things

People who take this approach focus on the positive things in life. Whilst they do see negative things, they quickly switch their attention. They then focus on positive things or aim to find positive solutions.

Some people take this approach relatively early in life. Some take it at a certain point in their lives. Such people choose to be selective and focus on what they can control in situations.

Different people take this approach in different ways. Whatever route they take, however, many focus on the following principles.

They have a sense of gratitude ... They count their blessings ... They do things that give them positive energy ... They love to encourage people ... They like to create positive experiences for people.

They focus on success ... They see when people come alive ... They build on people's strengths ... They focus on the principles people follow to achieve success ... They aim to shape a positive future.

Imagine that you are following some of these principles in your own way. If appropriate, you may wish to explore the next step taken by people who take this approach

They Focus On Positive Goals

Such people often focus on positive goals. They do this in their own life and, when appropriate, with other people. They then clarify the key strategies they can follow to achieve the desired aims.

Different people do this in different ways. Some ask themselves the following questions when focusing on different situations in their lives and work.

What do I want to do in my life? What are the principles I want to follow? How can I translate these into action in my daily life and work? How can I work towards my life goals?

How can I encourage people? How can I help them to feel at ease and, if they wish, to explore their aims? When appropriate, how can I help them to achieve their personal or professional goals?

How can I continue to have a sense of purpose? How can I keep following my principles? How can I do my best to encourage people during my time on the planet?

Imagine that you are following some of these principles in your own way. If appropriate, you may wish to explore the next step taken by people who take this approach

They Focus On Positive Solutions

Such people focus on finding positive solutions to challenges. They are good at seeing both successful and unsuccessful patterns in life. They also anticipate what will happen if these patterns continue.

They then like to channel their energy into finding solutions. Some people develop this approach early in life. They may have had parents, teachers or other people who modelled this approach.

Some people choose to take this approach later in life. They prefer to switch their energy to finding solutions rather than dwelling on problems. They also enjoy adding to their strategies for achieving success.

Some ask the following questions when exploring possible solutions. They adapt these questions when tackling challenges an individual or, for example, when finding solutions in a team or an organisation.

What is happening in the situation? What are the successful and unsuccessful patterns? What may happen if the unsuccessful patterns continue?

What do I want to do about the situation? Do I want to focus on exploring possible solutions? What are things that I or we can control in the situation? How is it possible to build on these things and manage the other issues?

What are the real results that I or we want to achieve in the situation? What is the picture of success? What will be the benefits – to all the various stakeholders - of achieving these goals?

What are the possible options – the ways forward - in the situation? What are the consequences – the pluses and minuses - of each option? On a scale 0-10, what is the attractiveness of each option?

What are the other potential creative solutions? What do we know works in these kinds of situations? How it is possible to build on what works? What are the other possible ways forward?

Let's return to the real results to achieve. What are the key strategies that I or we can follow to increase the chances of success? How can these be translated into action? What can be done to get some early successes?

There are many ways to live life. Some people choose to live in a positive universe rather than a negative universe. Such people aim to do things that encourage themselves and other people during their time on the planet.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of any ways 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 Universe Approach

The specific ways in which I may want to follow elements of this approach may be:

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*

The specific things I can do to translate these ideas into action are:

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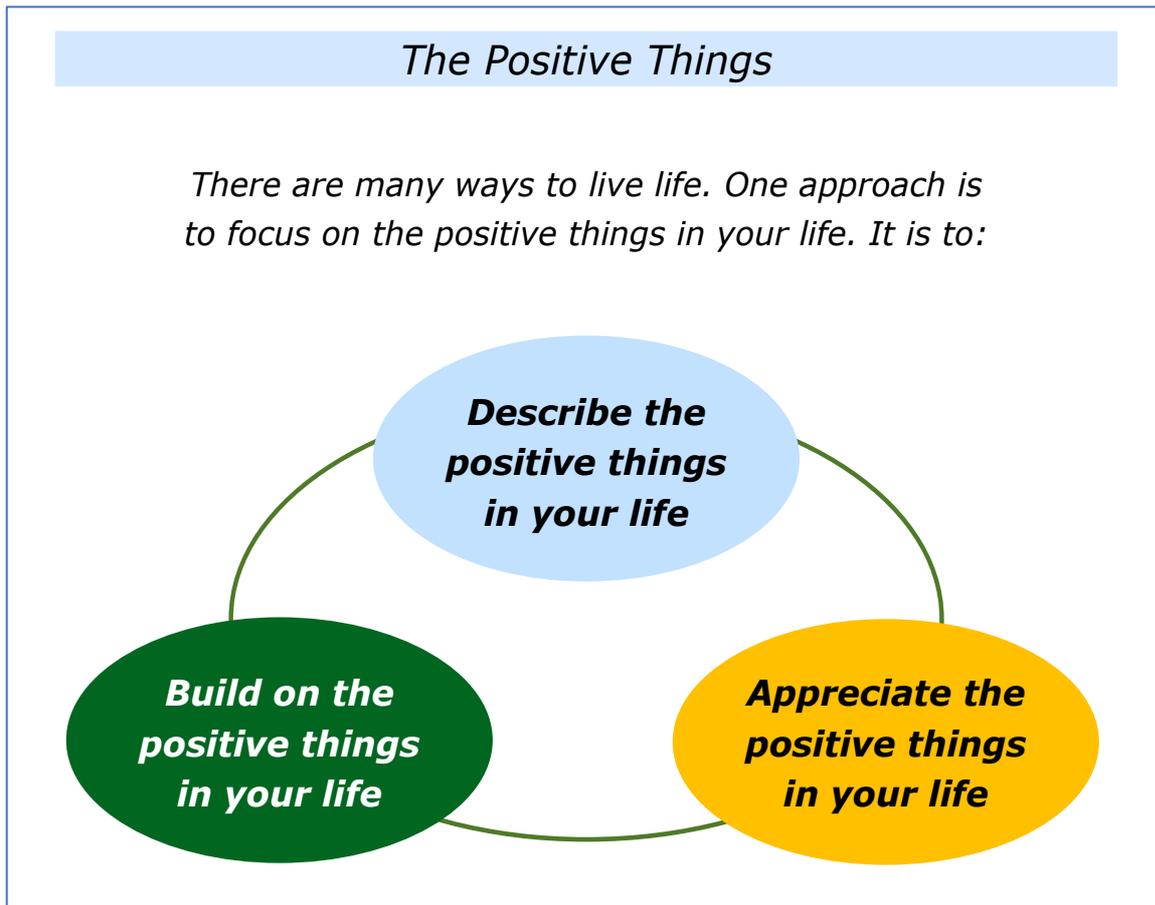
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Positive Things In Your Life Approach



There are many ways to live life. One approach is to focus on the positive things in your life. It is:

To describe the positive things in your life;

To appreciate the positive things in your life;

To build on the positive things in your life.

This approach can also give you strength to tackle challenges or other aspects of life. Imagine that you want to follow this approach in your own way. If appropriate, you can take the following steps.

You can describe the positive things in your life

What are the positive things in your life? Different people describe different things when exploring this theme. Here are some they mention when describing these things.

The positive things in my life are:

Our children - who give us joy ... My partner - who gives me encouragement ... Our pets - who give us pleasure ... Our house - which is warm, cosy and reassuring ... Our food - which is nourishing ... Our garden - which is wonderful to be in and feeds our souls.

My health - which is good for my age ... My upbringing - in which my parents gave me love, support and encouragement ... My education - which was mainly self-study and involved exploring, reading and meeting good models.

My work - which is fulfilling ... My strengths - which have provided the opportunity to do satisfying work and earn a good salary ... My drive - which means I want to continue developing ... My professional network - which consists of many encouraging people.

My opportunities in the future - such as the many chances to encourage people ... The opportunities to pass on knowledge - such as through writing and mentoring ... The chance to encourage grandchildren - though it will be up to our kids regarding how they want to shape their future lives.

Imagine you want to describe the positive things in your life. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentence.

Positive Things

The positive things in my life are:

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You can appreciate the positive things in your life

Different people choose different ways to maintain a sense of gratitude. Here is how some individuals describe their approaches.

"I take time each morning to count my blessings. Sometimes I do deep breathing and follow rituals that help me to recentre. I then focus on the key things I want to do that day."

"I maintain a sense of perspective and try to appreciate what I have in life. I used to worry about being a perfectionist. Then I realised it is okay to be a perfectionist as long as you realise you will never achieve perfection."

Barack Obama described how he drew strength from his family when facing tough decisions. Such decisions often got to this desk because they were difficult or people had refused to take them earlier. He needed to make calls that would have profound implications or disappoint people.

Barack followed a certain method for making decisions. This included: gathering the facts, listening to experts, seeking alternative views, looking at best practice, writing down the options – including the pros and cons. Then making a decision based on his principles and the desired goals.

Obama also built in time for reflection and having dinner with his loved ones. He described this in the following way.

There is nothing more refreshing than spending that time with the three most important people in my life – listening to Malia and Sasha narrate their days, ask questions and tease me no end. Afterwards, Michelle and I might get a few extra minutes alone to catch up. I always found myself replenished, as though my family had decluttered my mind and restored my equilibrium.

Imagine you want to appreciate the positive things in your life. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

Positive Things

*The specific things I can do to appreciate
the positive things in my life are:*

*

*

*

*The specific benefits of appreciating
the positive things in my life may be:*

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*

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You can build on the positive things in your life

Different people choose different ways to build on the positive things in their personal and professional lives. One person expressed this in the following way.

"The exercise reminded about the important things in my life. My first reaction was to safeguard and support these things. This led to spending more quality time with my family.

"This coincided with my boss at work taking time out to care for his partner who had a serious illness. He repeated the well-known story about us each of us juggling rubber and glass balls in our lives.

"He said that the rubber balls bounce back if we drop them. But it is important not to drop the glass balls – such as our family relationships. I took this message to heart.

"Moving on to my professional life, I returned to doing what I did best. It meant leaving the C-Suite and working directly with clients, which was immensely satisfying. I continue to enjoy work to this day."

Different people have different triggers for taking such steps. Some do it after a Eureka moment when they realise what is important. Some did it after the Covid pandemic. Some do it to simply feel positive and make the most of life.

Imagine that you want take some of these steps. How can you build on the positive things in your personal and professional life? What may be the benefits of taking these steps – both for yourself and for other people?

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

Positive Things

The specific things I can do to build on the positive things in my life are:

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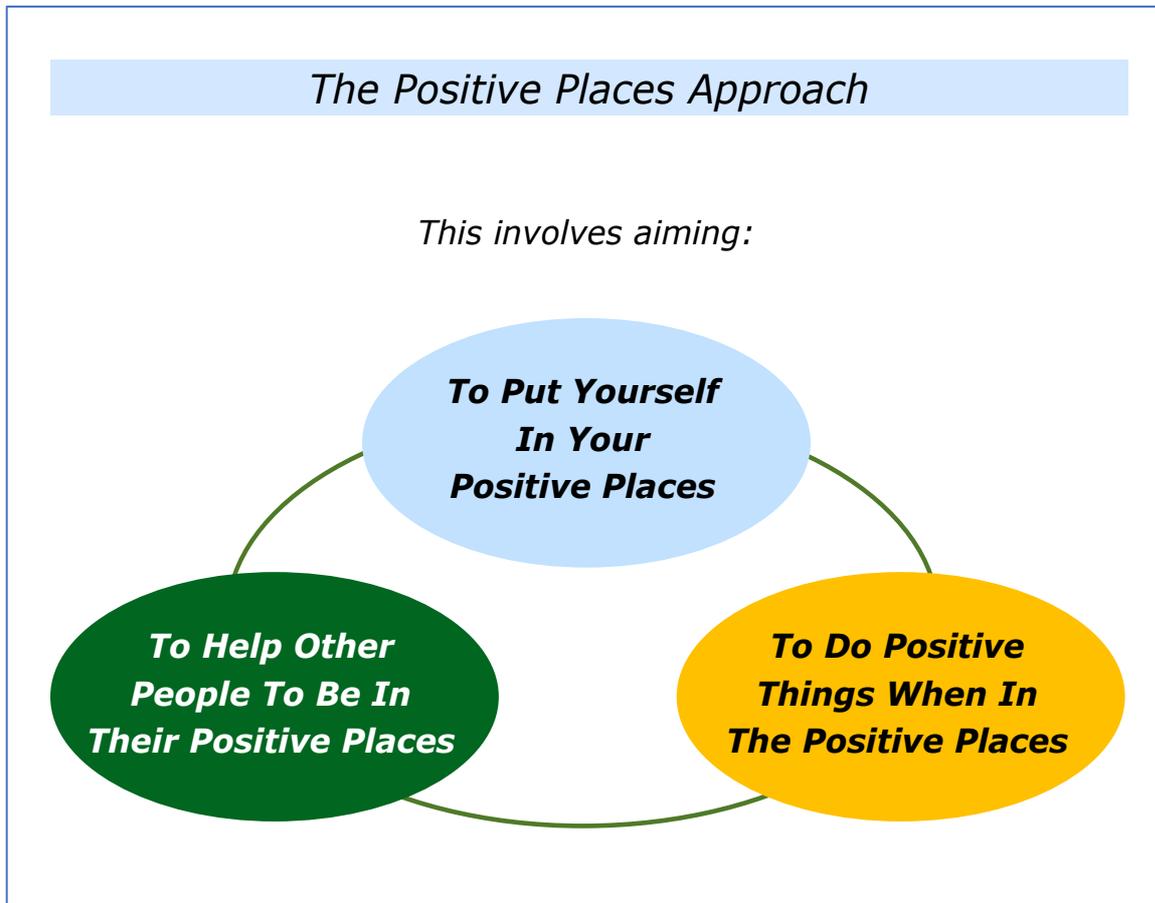
The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:

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The Positive Places Approach



There are many ways to live life. One approach is to put yourself in what for you are positive places. This sounds rather hippie but, when done properly, can also be a way to do fine work and encourage other people. Let's explore this approach.

*You can put yourself
in your positive places*

This step can involve the following themes. First, to do things that give you positive energy. Second, to put yourself into positive environments.

Energy is life. Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to do things that give you positive energy. Different people do this in different ways. They may aim:

To follow their passions ... To do creative projects ... To play their favourite music ... To go for walks ... To nurture their garden ... To exercise ... To climb mountains ... To go to the theatre ... To do other activities.

You can also aim to put yourself into positive environments. As the saying goes: 'Everything is food'. We can be affected by the people we meet, the sights we see, the sounds we hear and other things that influence our emotions.

Some people aim to put positive things – rather than negative things – into their system. They make a conscious effort to be with encouraging people and put themselves into positive environments.

Such individuals may also follow the adage that: "What we focus on we become'. They aim to focus on positive things and, when appropriate, try to find positive solutions to challenges.

You will follow these steps in your own way. If appropriate, you may also want to explore the next topic.

You can do positive things when in the positive places

This step can involve focusing on the following themes. First, to do things that are enjoyable – for you or for other people. Second, to aim to deliver excellence.

Some people do activities where they enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal. They may do this in both their personal and professional lives.

They may enjoy encouraging people, cooking, coaching sports or doing other activities. Some also focus on doing activities that help to create enjoyment for other people.

Some individuals may then aim to things that are effective and, when appropriate, deliver excellence. Sometimes they do this by adding that touch of class.

You will follow these steps in your own way. If appropriate, you may also want to explore the next topic.

*You can help other people
to be in their positive places*

This step can involve the following themes. First, to do things that encourage other people. Second, to enable people to shape their futures and put themselves in the positive places.

Some people do this in their personal lives. They aim to encourage other people in their role as a parent, partner or friend. They may also provide practical encouragement that helps people to work towards achieving their personal goals.

Some people also do this in their professional lives. They may do it when working as an educator, knowledge worker, therapist, trusted advisor, leader or in another role.

Such individuals may create an encouraging environment in which people can build on their strengths. When appropriate, they may also pass on knowledge that individuals can use to shape their futures and put themselves in their positive places.

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 positive places approach? This could be to encourage yourself or other people.

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

The Positive Places Approach

The specific activity where I may want to follow elements of the positive places approach may be:

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

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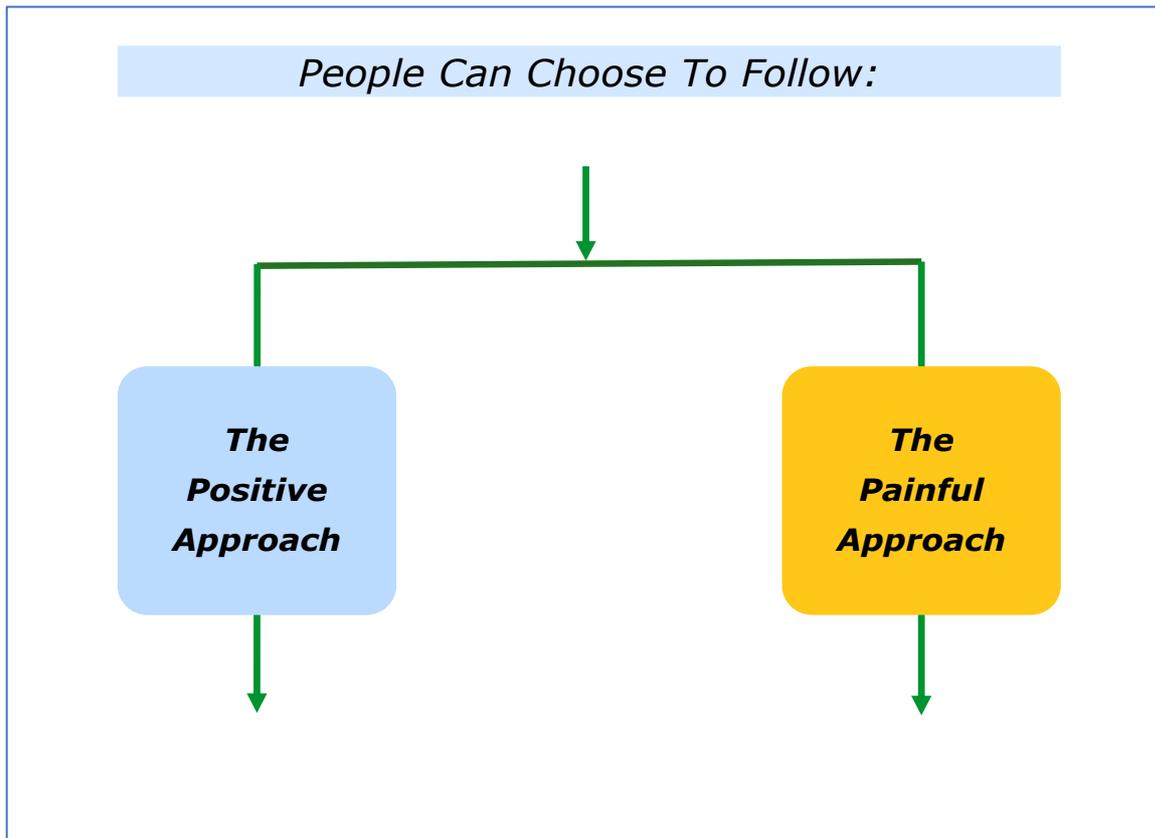
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Positive Approach Rather Than The Painful Approach



There are many ways to live life. The first step, of course, is to ensure that people have the basic materials for life – food, safety and the chance to do satisfying work. People can then choose the approach they take to shaping their futures.

Some people choose to follow the positive approach. They do things that are more likely to create positive feelings and results for themselves and others people.

Some people choose to follow the painful approach. They do things that are more likely to create painful feelings and results for themselves and other people.

There may be many reasons why people make such choices. Much depends on the models they have had and their ability to make decisions. Some people may also argue that following the positive approach sounds unrealistic. They may say:

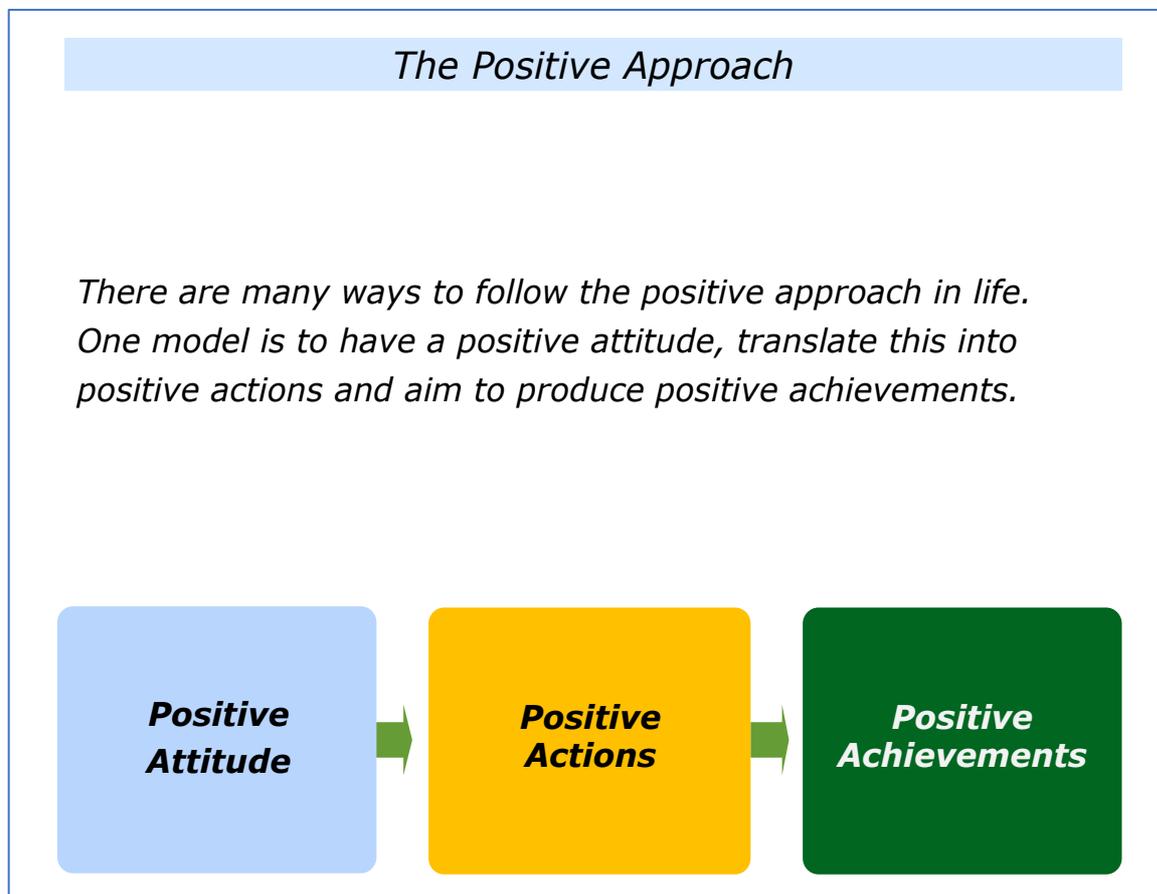
"The positive route sounds too easy. Sometimes you have to choose the painful route. After all, no pain equals no gain."

There are several answers to this point. One approach is to explain that following the positive route will also produce challenges. It may be to say:

"Don't worry about missing out on pain. If you follow the positive route, you will meet situations where you need to stretch yourself."

"You may also experience pain. But you will have the strength to find solutions to challenges and achieve positive results."

Let's explore how a person may translate this approach into action.



People who take this approach have a positive attitude. They recognise that in any situation they can choose their attitude. The choice they make can have consequences – both for themselves and other people.

They often choose to be positive rather than negative, to take responsibility rather than avoid responsibility. They choose to build on their successes and recover from setbacks.

They have a sense of gratitude. They are grateful for what they have been given in life. They aim to build on their assets rather than be consumed by angst.

Such individuals build on what they can control. They have an internal locus of control rather than an external locus of control. They say: "I can make things happen," rather than "Things happen to me."

They put positive things rather than negative things into their system. They believe that 'everything is food'. They therefore spend time with positive people rather than negative people.

Such individuals focus on positive things that are happening in the world. They also explore potential solutions to challenges. They then focus on how to implement these to achieve success.

Positive Actions

People who take this approach translate their attitude into actions. They aim to be kind, encourage people and, when appropriate, help people to achieve their goals.

They create a positive environment in which people feel welcome and able to be themselves. They may do this as a partner, parent or friend. They may do it as an educator, leader or in another professional role.

Such individuals aim to translate their abilities into action by doing superb work. They often aim to build on their strengths, do satisfying work and deliver success.

Positive Achievements

People who take this approach may translate it into aiming to achieve certain goals. They sometimes do work that helps people or the planet.

Such individuals often follow their heart but also use their head when tackling a challenge or planning how to achieve a goal. They ask themselves the following questions.

What are the real results I want to achieve? What is the picture of success? What will be happening that will show I have achieved the desired results?

What are the potential options for working towards the goals? What are the pluses and minuses of each option? On a scale 0-10, what is the attractiveness rating of each option? Are there any other potential creative solutions?

What is the route I want to follow? Looking at this route, what are the key strategies I can follow to give myself the greatest chance of success? How can I then do my best to achieve the picture of success?

Such individuals often rehearse follow their chosen strategies and managing any potential challenges. They then move into action, perform superb work and aim to deliver positive achievements.

There are many ways to live life. Some people aim to follow the positive approach. They aim to have a positive attitude, translate this into action and achieve positive results.

Some people take another approach. They have a negative attitude and translate this into negative actions. These can cause pain for both themselves and other people.

Let's return to your life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the positive approach? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

The Positive Approach Rather Than The Painful Approach

The specific situation where I may want to follow the positive approach rather than the painful approach may be:

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

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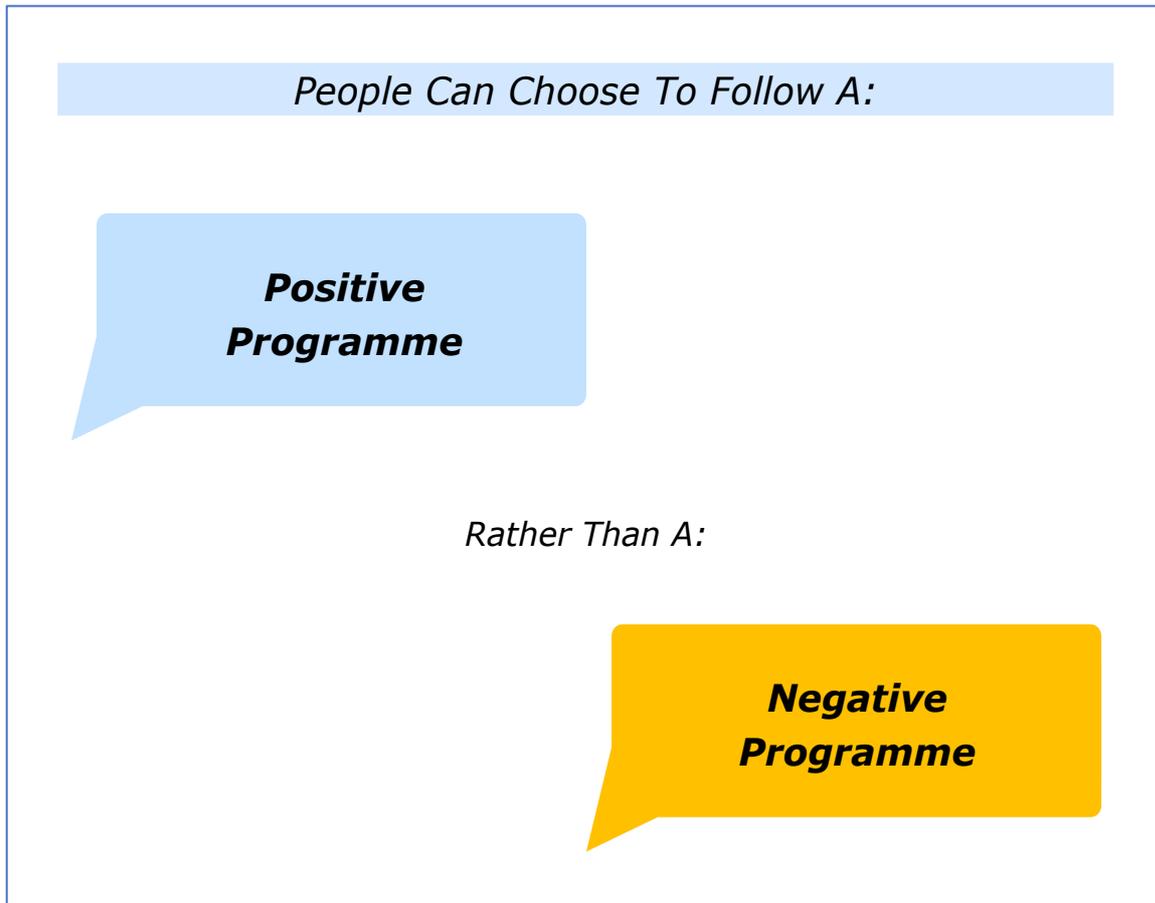
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Positive Programme Approach



People like to follow habits. Bearing this in mind, some people choose to put themselves on a positive programme rather than a negative programme.

A person may choose to do this when tackling a challenge or working to reach a certain goal. This could involve aiming to follow good habits in their personal or professional life.

A person want to recover from an illness, develop a healthy lifestyle, train for a marathon or do another activity. They want to do good work as a counsellor, athlete, trusted advisor, leader or in another professional role.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach in your own way. If appropriate, you may want to consider pursuing the following themes.

You can clarify the goal you want to achieve and the benefits of following a positive programme

Looking ahead, can you think of a goal you want to achieve? Different people want to achieve different things in their lives and work. Here is a summary of one person's aims.

"I want to develop a positive attitude and not compare myself to others. The family I grew up in was loving but sometimes we as children got negative messages. These often involved comparing ourselves to others. We were told it was important to get good grades and be top of the class.

"On the one hand this was good because it taught us to work hard. It was only later that I realised it was important to focus on what I was best at and do my best. Comparing myself to others was a no-win situation.

"Bearing this in mind, I want to maintain a positive attitude towards myself and other people. At the same time, I want to be grateful and humble.

"I also want to take care of my parents as they get older. This includes showing my gratitude for the positive things they have given me in life. I can also find ways to deal with any criticism they give.

"Doing these things will help me to feel positive and able to keep encouraging others. This will bring benefits to both myself and other people."

You will set your own specific goal. You will also see the benefits of achieving these aims. It will be important to keep focusing on these when working towards the goal in your personal or professional life.

You may want to stay healthy, run a marathon, resume playing music, climb a mountain or do another activity. You may want to achieve certain aims in your work as an artist, educator, technical specialist, leader or in another role.

Let's assume that you have focused on an activity you want to pursue and have also set a specific goal. You have also clarified the benefits of achieving the goal. It will then be time to move on to the next stage.

You can make specific plans and get some early successes when following the positive programme

People like to work towards achieving stimulating goals. They also like to make plans they believe in that include some of the following qualities. Providing they do their best:

They are able to stand a good chance of achieving success;

They are following their chosen rhythm – their way of doing things – on the way to achieving success;

They are getting some early wins and encouraging themselves on the journey towards achieving success.

People who take these steps may see themselves as following a positive programme. They make a plan and follow a certain rhythm towards achieving their aims. Different people follow this approach in different situations.

A recovering addict may aim to stay healthy one day at a time. A mediator may aim to stay positive and help warring parties to find solutions to conflicts. A great worker may aim to follow their principles and do their best to deliver peak performances.

Such people clarify the strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success. They then translate this into specific actions and follow good habits on the way to achieving their goals.

One person took this approach when having treatment for cancer. Here is a summary of the positive programme they aimed to follow.

"I was fortunate to have several non-invasive treatments for prostate cancer. These worked well for more than ten years. At that point,

however, I needed to consider other treatments. These involved hormone medication followed by twenty sessions of radiotherapy.

"I did lots of research about the treatment, the logistics and the side effects. I then focused on the benefits of the treatment. It would prolong my life and give me the chance to continue helping people.

"Looking ahead, I focused on all the practical aspects. These included driving to the sessions and drinking enough water to fill my bladder. I would then lie on the table and the radiotherapy be administered for ten minutes.

"I also positively reframed the sessions. It would be my equivalent of going the gym. The end result would be that I would be healthier.

"On the practical side, I walked more than ten thousand steps a day and ate good food. Plus I bought myself a two litre drinking bottle to ensure I drank at least that amount of liquid each day.

"I then followed the programme. I got into the habit of doing this without thinking. Whilst there were some ups and downs, the results were fine. I have now continued some the habits I began when doing the treatment."

You will have your own approach to making a plan. As mentioned earlier, it can also be helpful to get some early successes on the way towards goal. This can then lead to the next stage.

*You can achieve your goal and then
keep following a positive programme*

A person may put themselves on a positive programme in order to deal with a difficult challenge. This could be in their personal or professional life.

They may be aiming to stay sober, recover from an illness, build better relationships or achieve another goal. They may be aiming to find satisfying work, turnaround a company or achieve their version of peak performance.

Different people act in different ways after achieving their goal. Depending on the circumstances, a person may choose either:

To maintain some of the good habits they followed when pursuing the positive programme;

To build on some of the good habits, set new goals and aim to follow a new positive programme;

To revert to some of their previous unhelpful habit and maybe even follow a negative programme.

Imagine that you reach your goal and want to keep following some of the good habits. This could involve doing what you can to stay healthy, be creative or keep developing.

Alternatively, you may want to create a new kind of positive programme and tackle a different kind of challenge. How can you apply what you have learned and follow good habits to reach your goal?

There are many ways to continue to develop. One approach is to set a goal and then follow a positive programme. You will, of course, 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 Programme Approach

The specific activity where I may want to follow elements of the positive programme approach may be:

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

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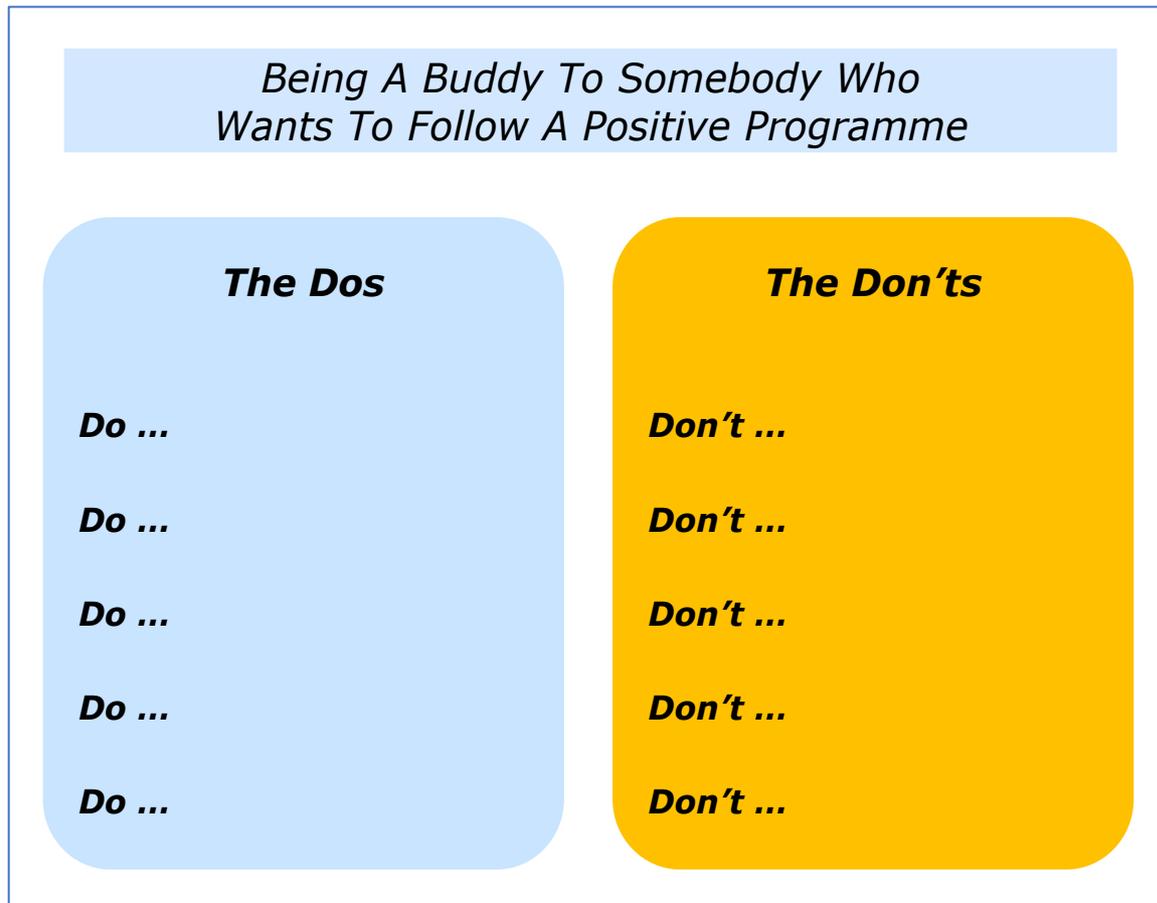
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Being A Buddy To Somebody Who Wants To Follow A Positive Programme Approach



There are many ways to help people. One approach is to act as a buddy to a person who wants to follow a positive programme.

This is an approach that has often been used to help people who are recovering from addictions. The approach can be adapted, however, to help people who want:

To take charge of shaping their future and set positive goals;

To clarify and follow a positive programme – such as an action plan – to achieve their positive goals;

To have somebody who acts as a buddy – rather than as a therapist or a policeman - to support them as they work towards achieving the positive goals.

This approach can work well with somebody who has elements of being an addictive personality. It enables them to channel their personality rather than change their personality.

They can then follow positive addictions rather than negative ones. They can do this in a way that enables them to work towards achieving their goals.

The pluses of this approach can include the following. It helps a person to accept and channel their personality; to build on their strengths; to follow their rhythm and achieve their positive goals.

The approach can also sometimes help a person to accept who they are rather than try to be something they are not. This can sometimes help them to feel more at peace.

The possible minuses include the following. It works best with somebody who wants to move beyond talking and move into action – so it does not necessarily work with everybody. The person will get highs on the journey but may find it hard to experience a long-lasting sense of peace. This is something that can be worked on in other kinds of sessions.

Imagine that somebody has asked you to be their buddy when shaping their future. You can act as a companion on their journey and sometimes help them to clarify the possible ways ahead.

When appropriate, you can at times ask if it is okay to offer suggestions. It is then up to them whether they want to use some of the ideas in their own way.

Two key points. First, you are not acting as a therapist - though they may find your help to be therapeutic. Second, you are not acting as a policeman who is holding them accountable. They need to hold themselves to account.

Here are some guidelines that you may want to consider. You can then follow these in your own way to help the person to work towards their goals.

Being A Buddy To Somebody Who Wants To Follow A Positive Programme

*Here are some guidelines - the Dos - that a buddy may
may want to follow. The Don'ts are the opposite of these
Dos.*

Dos - The Preparation Stage

- Do make sure the person is prepared to take responsibility
for shaping their future;*
- Do make sure the person is prepared to set themselves and
work towards positive goals;*
- Do make sure the person is prepared to follow a positive
programme to do their best to achieve the positive goals;*
- Do make clear contracts with the person about their role and
responsibilities in working towards their positive goals;*
- Do make clear contracts about your role and responsibilities
in helping them to work towards their positive goals.*

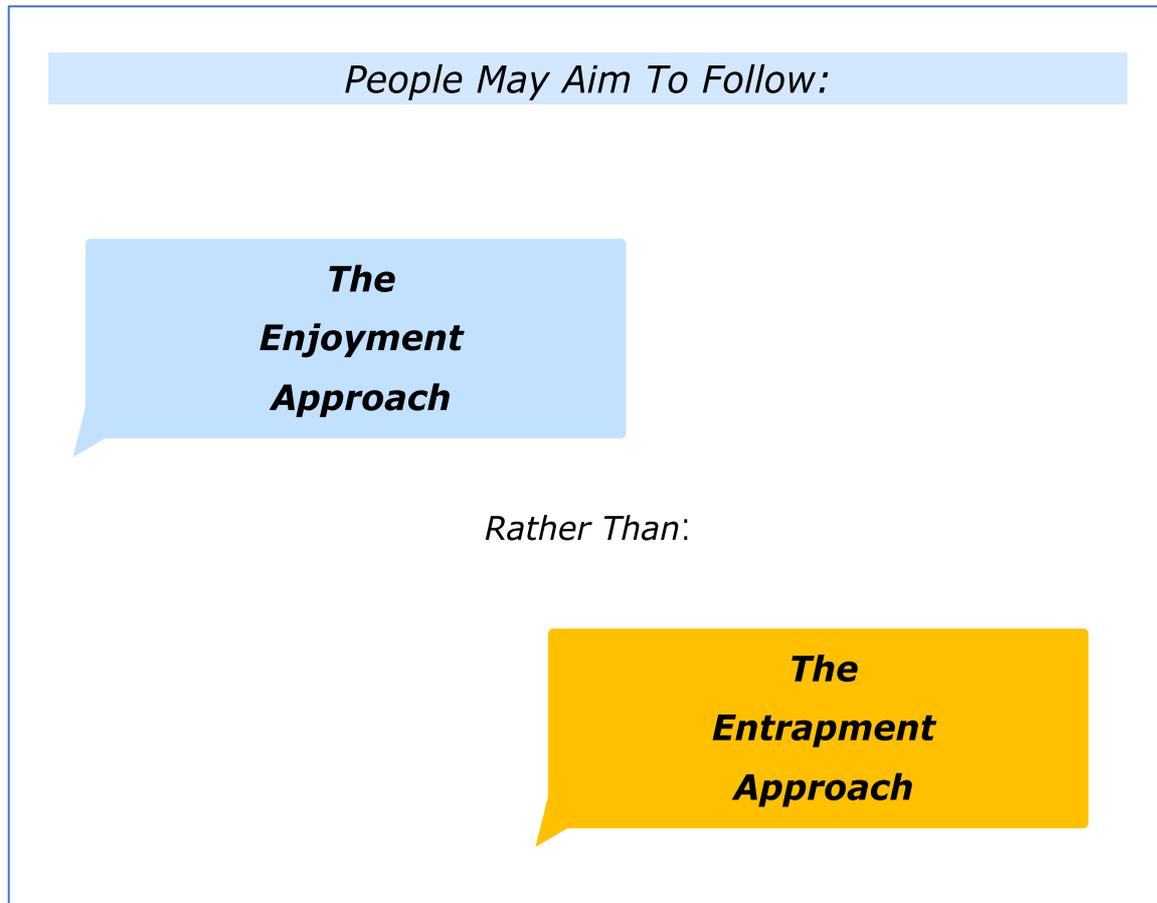
Dos - The Planning Together Stage

- *Do encourage the person to clarify their goals and the benefits of working towards these positive goals;*
- *Do, if appropriate, help them to clarify the specific strategies they can follow and the actual things they can do to achieve the positive goals;*
- *Do encourage them to then write the programme they want to follow to work towards the positive goals;*
- *Do make sure they believe in and want to follow their programme towards achieving the positive goals;*
- *Do encourage them to write a positive mantra they can follow – especially when things get tough – when working towards their positive goals.*

Dos - The Person Following Their Programme Stage

- *Do encourage the person to follow their successful style of doing things and aim to get some early successes;*
- *Do encourage the person to keep building on what they are doing well when following their programme;*
- *Do, when appropriate, help the person to focus on specific ways to manage any challenges – Don't Do Therapy;*
- *Do help the person to encourage themselves and, when appropriate, encourage other people*
- *Do encourage the person to reflect on: a) their successes; b) the goals they want to achieve in the future; c) the programme they can follow to achieve these goals. You can encourage them to keep following this positive programme.*

The Enjoyment Approach Rather Than The Entrapment Approach



There are many ways to live life. The first step, of course, is to make sure that people have the basic materials for life – food, shelter and safety. They are then more able to choose how they can shape their futures.

Different people may then follow different paths in life. Some may aim to do the things that they and others enjoy. Some may do the things where they and others feel entrapped. Let's explore these themes.

The Enjoyment Approach

Some people follow the enjoyment approach in their lives and work. Different people follow this for different reasons.

Some may have been encouraged to take this approach early in their lives. They may have had parents, teachers or other key people who gave them the following messages.

"You can aim to do things you enjoy and encourage other people to do what they enjoy. It is important to do this in ways that help people rather than hurt people.

"You can follow this approach when learning. You can focus on the topics you find interesting and that give you positive energy. You keep exploring these and add to your knowledge.

"You can, when appropriate, translate these into doing specific projects. You can set specific goals, apply yourself and do good work. You can then do your best to achieve positive results."

Some people follow the enjoyable approach in their careers. They also develop the savvy to get paid for doing what they love. They build on their strengths and do superb work that helps other people to achieve success.

They may also believe in the ethic of excellence. They may study what works and do things that are effective. They may then aim to keep developing and do their best to deliver excellence.

Such people may meet challenges on the journey. Providing they are doing what they believe in, however, they often develop the endurance and skills to find solutions to challenges.

People who follow the enjoyment approach may experience both pluses and minuses on the route. These can include the following.

The Potential Pluses

They are doing what they enjoy. They get positive energy and feel alive and alert. They often have a positive attitude. They may spread this and encourage other people. They can feel enriched and appreciate life.

They build on their strengths and do satisfying work. They can develop the savvy to earn money doing what they love. They develop the inner strength to manage challenges. They may experience a sense of peace.

The Potential Minuses

They may need support to deal with systems – such as schools and work places - that treat people like numbers. They may need help to find ways to make a living doing work they love. They may not always gain riches.

The Entrapment Approach

Some people follow this approach in their lives and work. This can lead to them entrapping themselves and, in some cases, other people. Different people follow this approach in different ways.

Some young people may not be encouraged to following their interests and instead pushed to pass outdated forms of exams. Whilst it can be important to get certain kinds of badges, this does not always equate with real education.

Some people move into jobs that are boring. Many do this out of necessity to get the basic materials for life. Some may stay in such jobs. Some may find a way to do more rewarding work and pursue their chosen lifestyle.

Some young people take on large debts when going to university. They may or may not learn how to build on their strengths and add to their repertoire of skills. The knowledge they amass may or may not enable them to shape their futures in the changing world of work.

Some people focus on getting jobs that pay the highest salary rather than the chance to do satisfying work. Sometimes this is out of necessity. Sometimes it is a conscious choice that involves aiming to climb the corporate ladder.

Some individuals do get promotions and do satisfying work. They may reach a point, however, where they feel stale. Such people may seem to

be successful but reach an impasse. One person expressed this in the following way.

"I have the luxury of what could be called a First World problem. Even though I am well paid I no longer look forward to going to work. This is affecting my health and has spilled over into my family life.

"I would like to leave the company but am locked in by my share options, which can be paid out in three years. I am not looking for sympathy, because in many ways I am fortunate. But I often feel numb inside."

Some people may be entrapped in another way. They may have a certain kind of mental model that may not help them or other people. This can take different forms with different people.

One person may focus only on the negative things in life. They may be full of angst rather than appreciation. This may also lead to them continually criticising their own and other people's shortcomings.

Another person may be addicted to the philosophy of 'no pain no gain'. Sometimes this takes the form of a Faustian pact. They are prepared to work long hours in a well-paid soul-destroying job in a toxic culture. They hope that one day they will be rich enough to retire and regain their soul.

A bullying leader may aim to entrap people. They may intimidate, micromanage and criticise them. Such a leader may control people but ultimately may trap themselves by shrivelling their soul.

You may see the evidence in their face. Look at a picture of the person when they were 20 and they may look happy. Look at a picture of them when they are 60. The leader may be rich but they look stone faced and angry.

People who follow the entrapment approach may experience both pluses and minuses on the route. These can include the following.

The Potential Pluses

They may get enough money to live or, in some cases, become rich. They may climb the ladder and get more status. They may enjoy a luxurious lifestyle. They may feel important and also wield certain kinds of power.

The Potential Minuses

They may fear losing what they have gained. They may be addicted to getting more money, status and power. They may be constantly striving to stay in the headlines or achieving the next symbol of success.

They may have problems in their personal life. They may be addicted to making sure they win and that other people lose. They may cause collateral damage to other people. This can sometimes come back to bite them.

Some people choose to move from the entrapped approach to the enjoyable approach. Some choose to stay with what they have because that is their definition of success.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of specific situation where you may want to follow elements of the enjoyment approach?

How can you do this in your own way? What may be the pluses and minuses involved in taking these steps? How can you build on the pluses and manage the consequences of any minuses?

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

The Enjoyment Approach

The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of the enjoyment approach may be:

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The specific things I can do then 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 Agility Approach



Many people talk about the importance of resilience in managing the challenges in a changing world. This can be vital but it is also important to develop agility. People who take this approach often demonstrate the following characteristics.

Awareness

They are aware of what is happening, what could happen and they begin clarifying what they want to happen.

Agility

They clarify what they want to achieve, use their agility to explore the possible ways forward then settle on and rehearse their chosen strategy.

Achievement

They apply themselves fully, do reality checks to focus on continuous improvement and do their best to deliver what they want to achieve.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach. Let's explore how you can do this in your own way.

Awareness

Great workers keep developing awareness in their chosen field. They love to keep abreast of events, explore new information and make sense of experiences. This acts as a resource bank when pursuing their work.

They put themselves into situations where they can use this information. They then sometimes take the following steps.

*They make themselves
aware of what is happening*

Such workers aim to raise their awareness about what is happening in the particular situation. Going into a situation where they may excel, they do their version of scanning. They aim:

To see what is actually happening ... To see the successful patterns ... To see the potentially unsuccessful patterns.

They gather information to do a reality check these themes. They may then go on to the next stage.

*They make themselves
aware of what could happen*

Great workers look for patterns in situations. They then use their experience, knowledge and imagination to explore what may happen if these patterns continue.

Such workers aim to consider the possible consequences. The patterns may lead to positive consequences, negative consequences or a mixture of both. They explore many potential scenarios.

Bearing in mind this information – and the potential implications – they may then move to the next stage.

*They begin to clarify
what they would like to happen*

Great workers begin to clarify what they would like to happen – the potential picture of success. They also envisage the possible benefits of achieving these aims.

They often begin by exploring many potential possibilities before choosing to focus on one of these. They may then move on to the next stage.

Agility

Great workers have an agile mindset when working in situations where they excel. There are several definitions for agility. These include the following:

To be able to think clearly, explore potential ways forwards and apply this ability to achieve success in certain situations.

To, when doing project management, focus on continuous collaboration and improvement in order to deliver the required goals.

Depending on their strengths, different people apply this ability in different situations. Some take the following steps

*They clarify what they want to achieve
in the situation – the picture of success*

Great workers clarify the real results they want to achieve in the situation. These may include short, medium and long-term goals. They then translate these into a clear picture of success.

Such people spend a lot of time clarifying the vision. Some report they can see it, feel it and picture it in great detail. They also see the benefits of achieving these aims. This leads to the next step.

They use their agility to explore the possible ways forward to achieve the goals

Great workers reach into their repertoire to find possible ways to achieve the aims. They may do this by working through the following themes.

They recall when they have tackled similar challenges successfully and how they can follow these principles in the present situation;

They use their creativity to explore many possible ways to reach the goals;

They clarify the key strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success.

Such workers keep going until they feel ready to move to the next stage.

They settle on and rehearse their chosen strategy for achieving the goals

Great workers settle on the strategy that is most likely to achieve success. They then rehearse and stress test the strategy. They may do this by taking the following steps.

They rehearse following their chosen strategy and translating it into action;

They rehearse finding solutions to the possible challenges on the way towards achieving the goals;

They conclude by again rehearsing following their chosen strategy for achieving the goals.

Such workers may then take time to reflect. Regathering their energy, they then move on to the next stage.

Achievement

Great workers often follow their preferred way of working towards achieving the goals. Whichever approach they adopt, however, some take the following steps.

*They apply themselves fully
to work towards the goals*

Such workers may have a ritual for clicking into action. They then focus on being positively engaged and applying themselves fully to the tasks in hand. Some do this in the following way.

They organise their time in blocks so they are able to do deep work;

They aim to deliver consistently high quality work;

They set achievable goals in the time frame and sometimes get a sense of success from achieving those goals.

Such workers also encourage themselves on the journey. At the same time, they often focus on the following theme.

*They keep doing reality checks to see
what is working and what can be improved*

Great workers do reality checks and embody the ethic of continuous improvement. Bearing this in mind, they often focus on:

The specific things that are working and how to keep doing these things;

The specific things that can be improved and how.

Such workers then implement these ideas. They continue checking reality, however, in order to improve their work.

*They do their best to
achieve the desired goals*

Great workers deal with both the successes and setbacks. But sometimes challenges can throw them off-course. They then take time to think.

Looking ahead:

They clarify the potential ways forward and the possible consequences of each option;

They clarify the option they want to pursue and rehearse following this option;

They move into action, follow their chosen route and aim to tackle the challenge successfully.

Such workers continue to pursue the strategy most likely to achieve success. They do superb work and find solutions to challenges. They then do their best to achieve the picture of success.

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach in your own way. How can you focus on the specific activity where you demonstrate agility?

What may be the goal you want to achieve in this activity? How can you continue to be agile to find ways forward? How can you do your best to achieve the goal?

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

The Agility Approach

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

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

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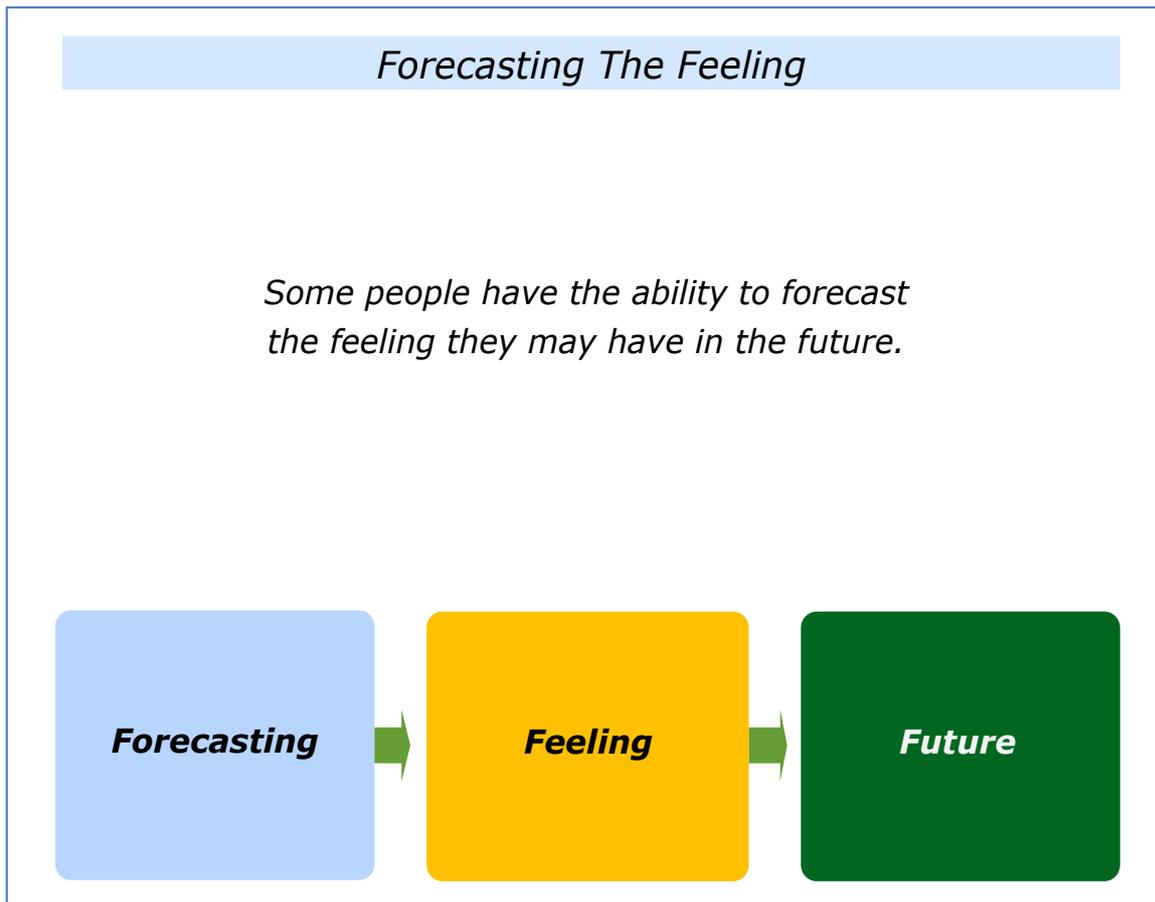
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Forecasting The Feeling Approach



Some people can forecast the feelings they may experience in certain situations in the future. This involves them taking the following steps.

They look ahead and explore the possible options they can pursue in the future;

They forecast the feelings they are likely to experience when pursuing each of these options;

They follow their chosen path and manage the feeling they are likely to experience when pursuing this option.

Many people can forecast the feelings they are likely to have in relatively straightforward situations. They may be aiming to visit a friend, do satisfying work, go for a walk or do another activity. They say:

"If do this activity and behave in a certain way then I am likely to have the following feelings."

Some people can forecast what they may feel in challenging situations. They may be 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, opting for a certain kind of medical treatment or leading a first responder team.

Some individuals have a memory of the future. They seem able to envisage many scenarios and 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 also find solutions. I can then make better decisions when meeting such challenges."

Some decision makers have the ability to forecast what other people may feel during an experience. They recognise that people may be about to suffer a loss, make a transition or encounter another challenging experience.

They may therefore aim to shape the experience in a certain way. They may aim to help people: a) to manage any challenging emotions; b) to, when appropriate, build on any possibilities that may emerge from the situation.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a specific activity where you have the ability to forecast the feeling that you or others may have during an experience? How can you use this ability in a positive way?

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 have the ability to forecast the feelings that I or others may experience in a particular situation is:

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The specific things I can do to use this ability in a positive way are:

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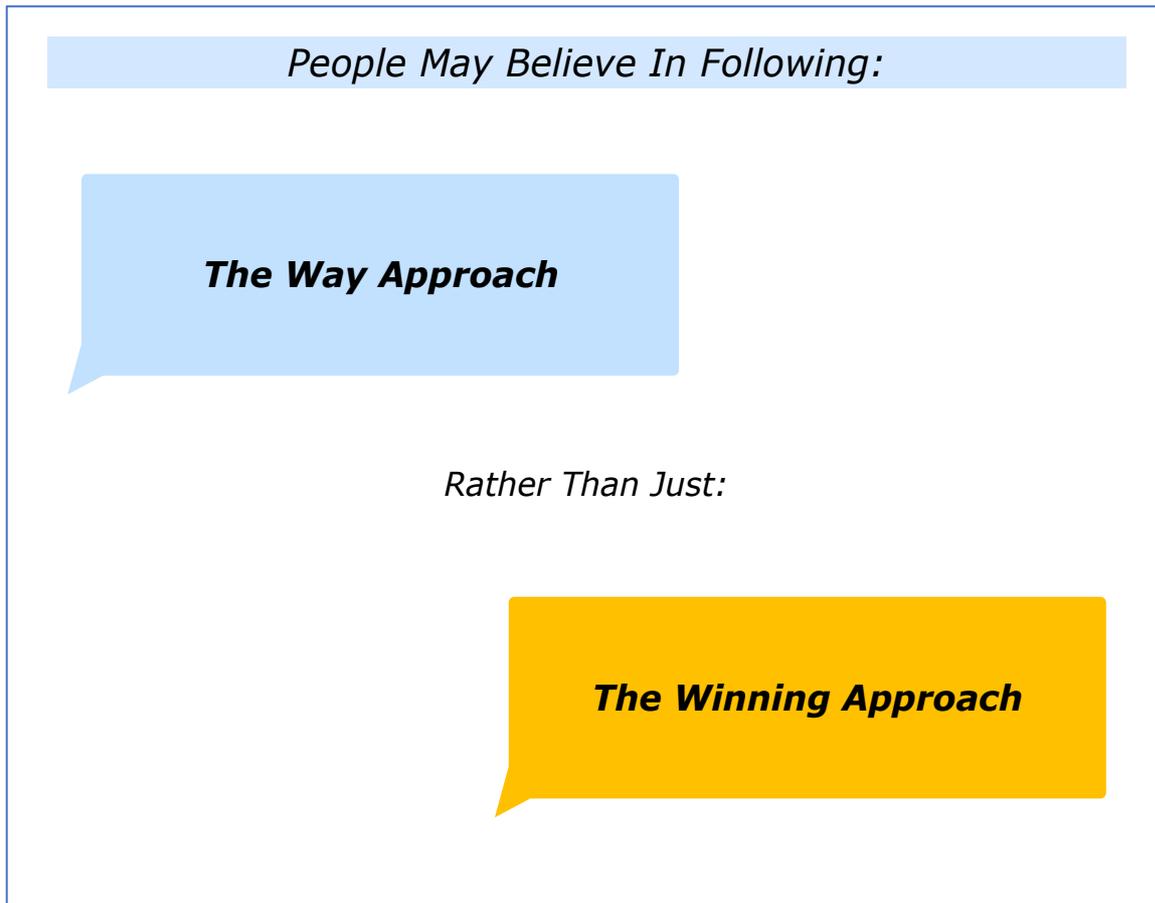
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Following The Way Approach Rather Than Just Following The Winning Approach



This is an approach that is described in some spiritual philosophies and by people who aim to pass on a positive legacy. They give the following messages.

The way you live your life has consequences for you, for other people and for the planet.

The way you live life may therefore be as important as the so-called winning in life.

Bearing this in mind, let's explore how some people aim to follow their version of the way approach rather than just the winning approach. You will, of course, do this in your own way.

The Following The Way Approach

Some individuals aim to live in a certain way during their lives. Different people do this for different reasons.

They may aim to follow certain human qualities that are admired in many civilisations – such as being kind, generous and wise;

They may aim to follow certain principles, a philosophy or a spiritual faith;

They may aim to follow a certain professional philosophy in their work or profession.

Different people learn the way approach in different ways. Here are some of the most common methods.

They may learn it from their parents, teachers or other people they admire;

They may learn it from studying spiritual or other philosophies;

They may learn it from reflecting on their own experience and deciding how they want to behave in life.

Let's return to your life. What are the principles you aim to follow in your life? How did you learn about these principles? How did you learn to treat other people? How do you try to translate these principles into action?

Let's move on to your work. What are the principles you aim to follow in your work? How did you learn about these principles? How did you learn about certain professional standards? How do you try to translate these into action?

We will be returning to these themes later. Before then, however, let's explore another approach to life.

The Following The Just Winning Approach

Different people behave in different ways on the way towards their definition of winning. Much depends on what they see as winning in life.

Some people have a caring view of life. They believe in caring for people and the planet. They may also believe in finding win-win solutions.

They believe that following their principles and doing their best every day is winning.

Some people have a competitive view of life. Some pursue this in a fair way – such as in sports – and win competitions. They may gain admiration for the way they operate and also that they win prizes.

Some people have a win-lose approach to life. They believe in focusing on their own agenda and pursuing it to achieve their personal goals. They may take any of the following approaches.

They may believe that life is a competition where they must win and make others lose in order to be seen as winning;

They may believe that getting high by hurting others is winning;

They may believe that gaining prizes by whatever means and at whatever cost is winning;

Some people have an approach to winning that brings out the best in themselves and in others. Some have an approach that causes difficulties.

Imagine that you want to clarify the way you want to behave in your own life. What are the principles you want to follow? How can you translate these into action? What may be the potential pluses and minuses of following these principles?

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

The Following The Way Approach

The specific way I want to live my life is by following these principles:

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The specific things I can do to translate these principles into action are:

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The potential pluses and minuses of following these principles may be:

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The Saying Yes, Maybe And No Approach

The Saying Yes, Maybe And No Approach

<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The specific things I want to say Yes to are:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">*</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Maybe</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The specific things I want to say Maybe to are:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">*</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">No</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The specific things I want to say No to are:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">*</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*</p>
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There are many ways to make decisions. One approach is to focus on the specific things you want to say Yes, Maybe and No to in your life. Let's explore these themes.

Saying Yes

What are the things you want to say Yes to in your life? Different people focus on different things when exploring this theme. Here are some of the topics they mention.

*Yes. The things I want to
say Yes to in my life are:*

Doing things that give me positive energy ... Encouraging my loved ones ... Taking care of my health ... Walking with my dogs ... Playing music that lifts my soul ... Spending time with positive people.

Building on my strengths ... Doing stimulating projects ... Preparing properly before tackling challenges ... Giving people positive alternatives if I want them to behave differently in the future.

You will have your own list of things you want to say Yes to in your personal and professional life. If appropriate, you can then move on to the next step.

Saying Maybe

Some people find it useful to describe the things they may want to do but are not yet sure about. This gives them time to reflect and decide if they do or don't want to do these things.

Different people focus on different things when exploring this theme. Here are some of the topics they mention.

Maybe. The things I want to say Maybe to in my life are:

Maybe aim for promotion. But I am not sure I want the hassle of being in so many meetings and doing less of the work I enjoy.

Maybe start my side business. I have many ideas that could fly but I would need to set aside time to make some of these happen.

Maybe spend less time with some people with whom I act as a kind of counsellor. Some of them are appreciative but others can be draining.

You will have your own list of things you want to say Maybe to in your personal and professional life. If appropriate, you can then move on to the next step.

Saying No

Some people find it difficult to say No to certain things. This can sometimes be because they have not yet figured out what they want to say Yes to in their life.

Peak performers, for example, often know what they want to focus on – be it playing a sport, pursuing a creative project or doing another activity. Knowing what they want to say Yes to makes it easier to for them to say No to other things.

Different people focus on different things when exploring this theme. Here are some of the topics they mention.

No. The things I want to say No to in my life are:

Being distracted from the really important things in life ... Spending time with negative people ... Doing projects where I have little chance of success ... Being worried about things I can't control.

You will have your own list of things you want to say No to in your personal and professional life.

There are many ways to make decisions. One approach is to focus on the things you want to say Yes, Maybe and No to in your life. It is then to translate these ideas into action.

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

The Saying Yes, Maybe And No Approach

*Yes. The specific things
I want to say Yes to are:*

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*Maybe. The specific things
I want to say Maybe to are:*

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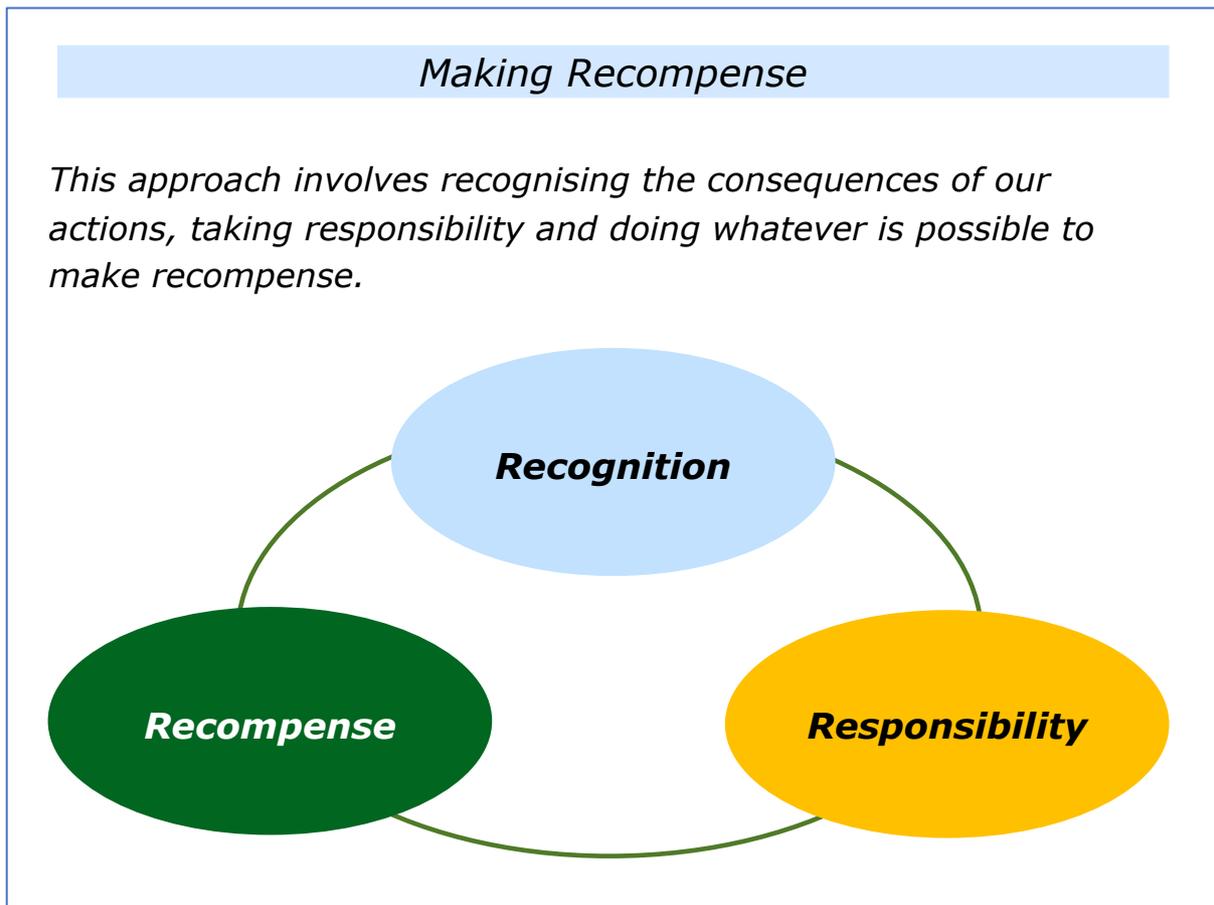
*No. The specific things
I want to say No to are:*

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The Making Recompense Approach



We all make mistakes in life. Sometimes we may also do things that cause pain or problems for other people. We may do these consciously or unconsciously.

Whatever the reasons for our behaviour, we have several choices regarding how we react to what took happened. We can choose:

To ignore or deny the consequences, or;

To recognise the consequences, take responsibility and do our best to make recompense.

Every person make mistakes that do not have huge consequences. But sometimes a person may act in ways that cause serious difficulties for people.

Different individuals react in different ways in these situations. Some deny their actions are causing pain or try to justify their behaviour. Some abusers, for example, claim that they are actually the victims.

Some people who hurt others double-down on what they have done. They may claim to be right and refuse to apologise. Some may say others are at fault for taking offence.

Making Recompense

Some people take a different approach and seek redemption. Whatever route such individuals take, they may go through the following stages.

First, they recognise their actions have produced pain or problems. They may or may not understand fully why their behaviour has had such effects - but they do recognise it has produced difficulties.

Second, they take responsibility for their actions. Looking back, they recognise they could have done better and they do not blame others. They also take responsibility for improving in the future.

Third, they take action to recompense for their actions. It is not always possible to heal the original hurt, it is possible to do their best to help others and improve. Let's look at some examples.

A former drug addict may dedicate themselves to helping others to recover from their addiction. Understanding the world from the addict's point of view, they may show individuals how it is possible to stay healthy.

A former footballer who has committed crimes may teach young players about the importance of not throwing away their careers. Passing on hard-earned lessons, they may encourage others to make full use of their talents.

A famous person who falls from grace may dedicate their life to caring for others. They may do this through work for a charity, social enterprise or

another activity. They may aim to alleviate poverty, help victims of abuse or serve another cause.

Some individuals change their lives as a result of events that cause great pain. They may feel responsible for a tragedy which has deeply affected other people.

A driver who kills a child in a traffic accident, for example, knows it will be impossible to ease the parents' pain. They may also be overcome their own guilt. The grief will not go away but they may find another way to channel their emotions.

Such a person may commit to helping children, campaigning for road safety or doing another activity that improves people's lives. The road will not be easy, but they can do their best to recompense for what has happened.

Some individuals choose to never say sorry. They may live in a world where they feel right or justified in how they behave – whatever the cost to other people.

Some have the honesty to admit mistakes. They recognise the consequences of their actions, take responsibility and do their best to make recompense.

Looking back, can you think of a situation where you followed elements of this approach? What are the lessons you learned? If necessary, how can you apply these lessons in the future?

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

Making Recompense

*The specific situation when
I took responsibility and
tried to make recompense was:*

*

*The specific lessons I learned
from the situation were:*

*

*

*

*The specific things I can do to
apply these lessons in the future are:*

*

*

*

The Positive Things In - Positive Things Out Approach

People Can Choose To Follow The:

***Positive Things In – Positive
Things Out Approach***

Rather Than The:

***Negative Things In - Negative
Things Out Approach***

There are many ways to live life. One approach follows the rule that was popularised during the early days of computing. This was:

Garbage In - Garbage Out

The quality of the input – the information and data you put into the computer – would determine the quality of the output. Bearing this in mind, some people aimed to follow the motto:

Great Work In - Great Work Out

People can follow a similar rule in life. Those who put positive things into a system are more likely to get positive things out. They can aim to put positive things into their relationships, work, organisations and society. Let's explore these themes.

Positive Things

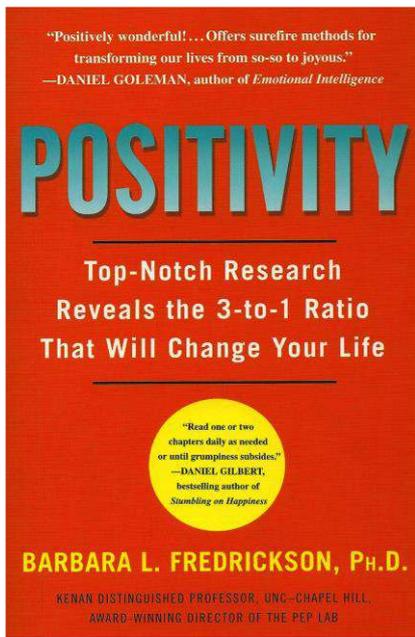
Barbara Fredrickson did pioneering work that demonstrated how positive emotions can improve our lives. Twenty years of research into emotions culminated in her book *Positivity*.

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. She described this in the following way.

Positive Emotions



"Positively wonderful!... Offers surefire methods for transforming our lives from so-so to joyous."
—DANIEL GOLEMAN, author of *Emotional Intelligence*

POSITIVITY

Top-Notch Research
Reveals the 3-to-1 Ratio
That Will Change Your Life

"Read one or two chapters daily as needed or until grumpiness subsides."
—DANIEL GILBERT, bestselling author of *Stumbling on Happiness*

BARBARA L. FREDRICKSON, Ph.D.

KENAN DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR, UNC-CHAPEL HILL
AWARD-WINNING DIRECTOR OF THE PEP LAB

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.

Positivity consists of the whole range of positive emotions – from appreciation to love, from amusement to joy, from hope to gratitude, and then some.

It even includes the long-term impact that positive emotions have on your character, relationships, communities and environments.

Barbara's work highlights the importance of putting positive things – rather than poisonous things – into a system. This approach is more likely to improve our relationships, work place, society and planet.

This approach can lead to conversations regarding the importance of nature and nurture in terms of human development. Let's explore some of these themes.

Parenting, Postcodes And Personal Experiences

Many studies have focused on how a person's environment and experiences can affect their life-chances. There are, of course, some individuals who develop healthy ways to deal with negative conditions.

But it can be useful to focus on how people can be given the best chance to thrive. Here are three factors that are highlighted by some of the studies.

Parenting

Parents obviously play a big part in a person's development. Many children have one or more parents who are positive and predictable. Such parents often provide a stable environment in which a child can feel safe, secure and able to grow.

Some children have one or more parents who are negative and unpredictable. They may then feel unsafe, frightened and unstable. This can create problems and limit their life-chances.

Postcodes

Postcodes has become a short-hand term to describe the effects that a person's local environment can have on their life. It can affect their health, education, job opportunities and other factors.

People are more likely to thrive if they have the opportunity to live in a healthy environment, a good home and have access to good facilities. Living in a less healthy areas can limit their life-chances.

Personal Experiences

Different people grow up in different environments. The way they develop can sometimes come down: a) to their personal experiences; b) to how they choose to respond to those experiences.

A young person may grow up in a challenging family, for example, but attend a school where they get encouragement. They may have the opportunity to join a sports club or another place that helps them to channel their energy in a positive way.

There may be many young people who do not have such positive experiences. They may go to school hungry, have difficulty concentrating and find their learning style does not fit the school. They may then look for affirmation in gangs or other activities.

People who grow up in positive environments often have more opportunities and are more likely to prosper. Negative environments seldom improve the chances of people being able to have a good quality of life. There are exceptions, however, which links to the next theme.

Personal Responsibility

Warren Buffett, the financial guru, says he was lucky to win what he called 'the ovarian lottery'. He was born as a man, white and with loving parents. He grew up in a time when many opportunities were offered to such people.

Many people do not have such opportunities. Some individuals reach a point, however, when they make a decision. One person I worked with described the choices they faced.

"I was always a leader at school and had also done some drug dealing. It was the early days of the internet and, looking ahead, I could see two routes.

"The first involved setting up a business selling legitimate goods over the internet. The second involved using my contacts to sell drugs."

He chose the first route. This led to him building several businesses, leading a media company and then becoming head of a national arts institution.

There are many ways to live life. Some people choose to follow the positive things in positive things out approach. This increases the possibilities of helping people and the planet.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific 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 Things In Positive Things Out 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 then to follow this approach in my own way are:

*

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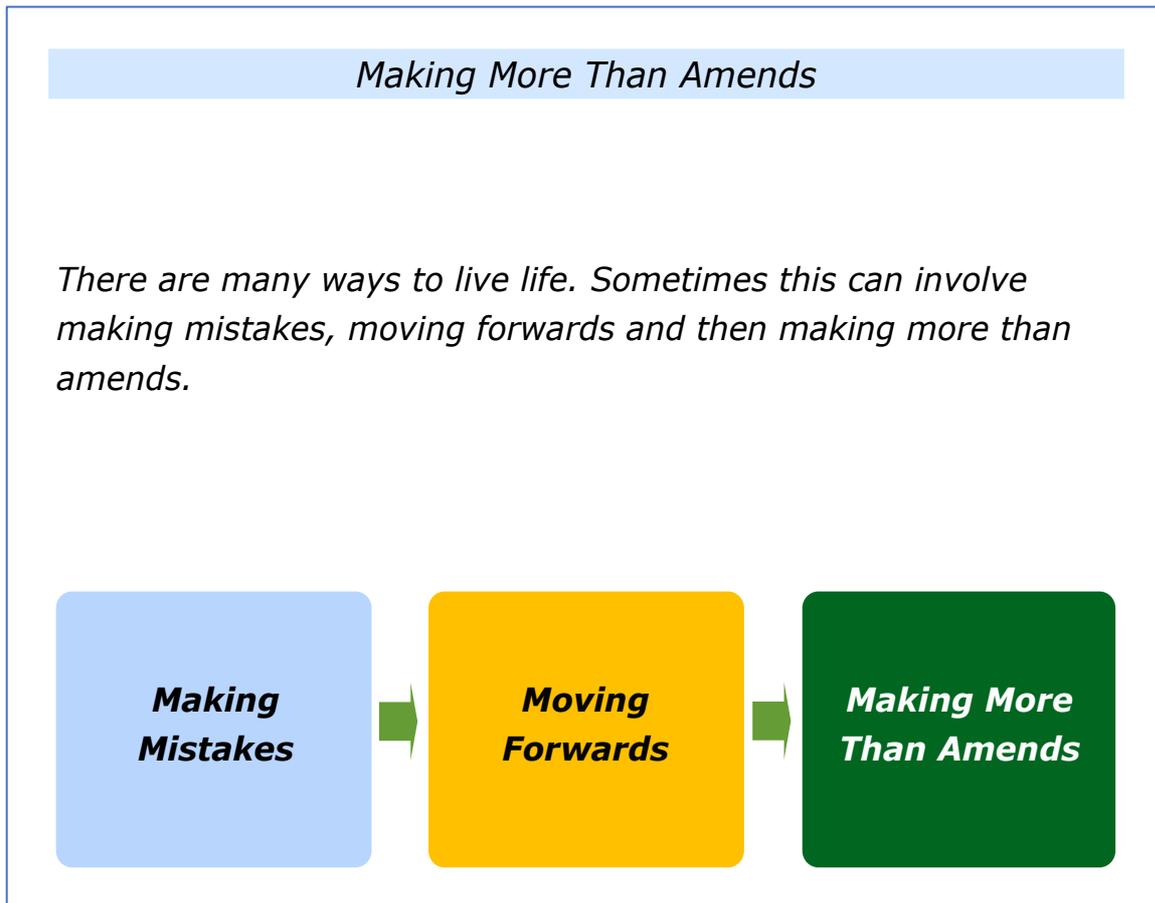
The specific things that may happen as a result to taking these steps may be:

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The Making More Than Amends Approach



This is an approach taken by some people who make a mistake. They aim to move forwards and do more than make amends. They may aim to improve the situation and shape a positive future.

Everybody makes mistakes. They may hurt a person, lose money on a venture, fail to score a penalty that would win the World Cup or do something that causes terrible consequences.

Many people seek to make amends for their mistake. This may involve them making a sincere apology and taking the following steps.

They take responsibility for their actions;

They face the truth and see the consequences;

They do their best to try to heal what has happened and improve the situation in the future.

This is a route take by some individuals. It is also sometimes followed by bodies that are set up to investigate the harmful actions taken by authorities, institutions and countries.

Writing in *Psychology Today*, Samantha Stein refers to the work done in this area by different people. Here is an excerpt from the article.

How does one go about making sincere amends? On the surface, it seems simple. Just go to the person and say, "I'm sorry." But hasn't everyone had the experience of having that inadequate apology thrown our way?

Usually, it isn't really satisfying, nor does it take away the concern that the person is simply trying to get you to leave them alone or forget about what just happened.

True apology and making amends is something much more than that.

David Hawkins, director of the Marriage Recovery Center, outlined one prescription. He outlined a three-step process of the three R's:

Remorse, Responsibility And Restitution

*A sincere expression of **remorse** is a simple statement that you are truly sorry for what you've done without excuses, dismissal, and rationalizations.*

*A statement of **responsibility**. We accept and understand our behavior's impact on the injured party.*

***Restitution**. We are willing to take whatever steps are necessary to make it up to the injured person—to listen to what they need from us.*

"Humbling ourselves," he said, "we listen to what they need to feel safe again. We are paying back something we've taken from them."

Some people choose to use their mistake as the springboard to aiming to live a better life. Different people do this in different ways.

A person may be careless and cause a tragedy. They may then devote their life to working for a charity or a cause that aims to help the victims of similar tragedies.

A person may have led a life of crime until reaching a point where they chose to go another way. They may then decide to help at risk young people by showing how they can follow a healthy route to achieving their life goals.

A person may work in an industry that causes harm. They may then devote themselves to telling the truth about that industry or dealing with the harm caused by its action.

Some people respond to making mistakes by going through a period of reflection. They may then ask themselves the following questions.

"How can I use this feeling in a positive way? How can I use the lessons I have learned to help other people? How can I use these to improve people's lives and help them to shape a positive future?"

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 in your personal or professional life.

How can you follow it in your own way? How can you do more than make amends? How can you translate this approach 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.

The Making More Than Amends 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 then 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 Therapeutic Activities Approach

Therapeutic Activities

*The activities that I find
therapeutic to do are:*

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There are many definitions for the word therapeutic. These include the following. Something that is therapeutic can help a person:

*To relax ... To heal ... To feel healthy ... To feel happy ... To feel hopeful ...
To feel stronger ... To feel stimulated ... To feed their spirit ... To
reinvigorate their soul.*

There are many ways that people can experience these feelings without going to a therapist. They can also build these experiences into their days to relax, recentre and refresh themselves.

Different people do this in different ways. They may take a nap, walk, exercise, do deep breathing, do a creative activity, listen to music or simply potter around. They may find that it re-energises their body and soul.

Some people find it therapeutic to do such activities by themselves. They like to be themselves, explore, wander and do things without fear of judgement. They may return feeling refreshed and stronger.

Some people like to do such activities with other people. They may spend time with encouraging people who accept them, listen and provide support. They may enjoy singing in a choir, dancing or doing other communal activities.

Some doctors now invite people to spend time walking or doing other exercises to improve their wellbeing. People on hormone medication may spend time walking with their dog to help manage weight gain or fluctuations in their moods.

Some people believe that 'laughter is the best medicine.' Norman Cousins followed this approach when diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. In addition to getting great treatment, it involved him watching lots of Marx Brothers films. He 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.

Let's return to your own life and work. What are the kind of activities that you find therapeutic? How can you do more of these things? What may be the benefits – both for yourself and other people?

Some people believe in this approach but argue that they do not have time to squeeze such activities into their day. This sounds reasonable, but other people take a different approach.

They see it as vital to build in times to relax, recentre and refresh themselves. This can have beneficial effects for both themselves and other people.

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

Therapeutic Activities

*The specific activities that
I find therapeutic are:*

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*The specific steps I can
take to do these things are:*

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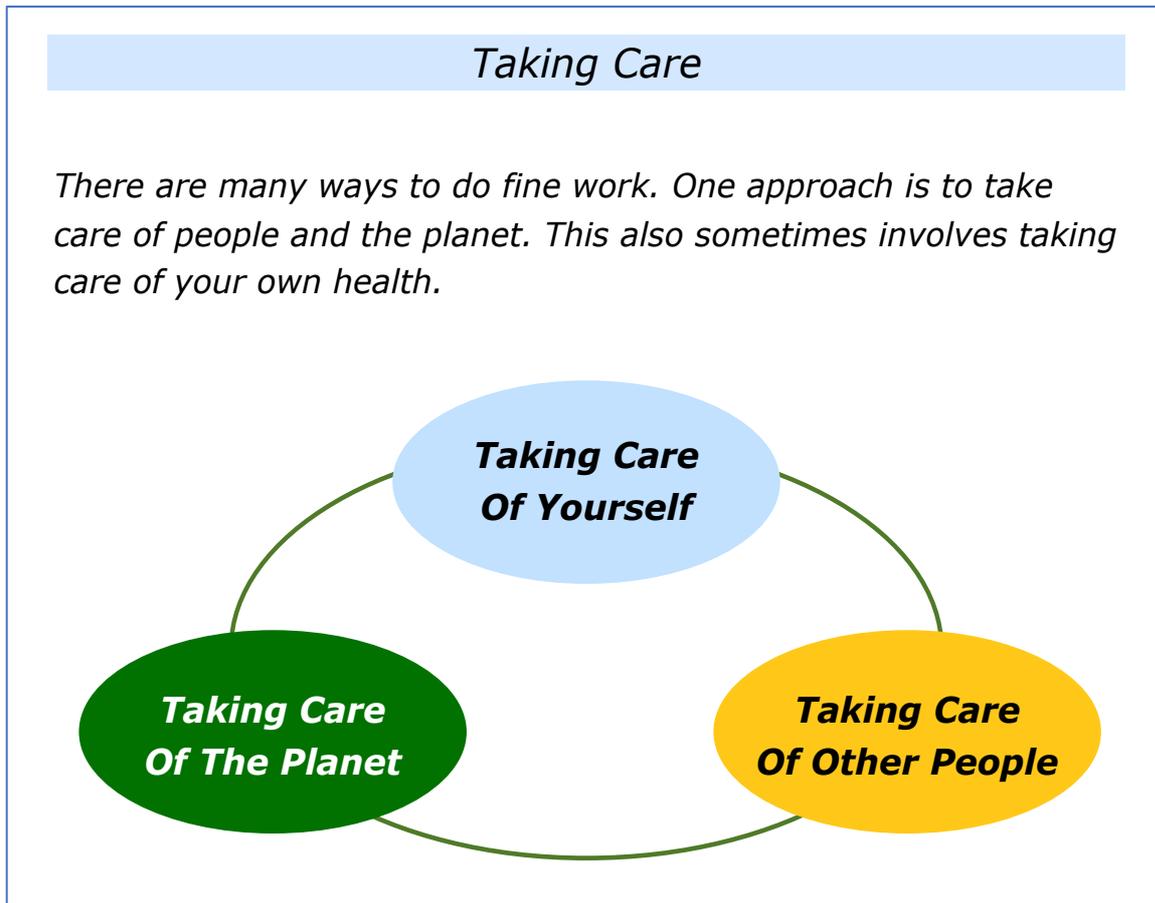
*The specific benefits of
doing these things may be:*

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The Taking Care Approach



During the past fifty years I have worked with many people in the caring professions. They have used their compassion to care for other people or the planet.

Such people love to give to others. At the same time, it is important for them to take care of themselves and their health. Taking this step enables them to keep giving their best to other people.

Imagine that you want to follow this approach in your own way. This can involve focusing on the following themes.

Taking Care Of Yourself

Different people take care of themselves in different ways. One approach is for them to take care of their physical, psychological and philosophical health.

Imagine that you want to follow element of this approach. Here are some topics you may want to consider.

Physical Health

How physically healthy do you feel? How would you rate your physical health on a scale 0-10? How can you maintain or improve the rating?

You may want to eat nourishing food, exercise in a way that you enjoy and manage your energy. You may also want to feel more in control of shaping your days.

The latter point is crucial. People often feel better when they are following their own rhythm rather than somebody else's rhythm. This is especially true as they get older.

Bearing this in mind, how can you shape your days so you feel more in charge? This can be challenging - especially if you work for a big organisation that has its own rhythm.

You may be morally bound to make your best contribution to an organisation. At the same time, it can sometimes be useful to work in a flexible way that supports your quality of life.

Psychological Health

How positive do you feel? How would you rate your psychological health on a scale 0-10? How can you maintain or improve the rating?

You may want to do the things that give you positive energy. These may include doing what you enjoy, walking, being with your loved ones, pursuing your passions, doing satisfying work or other activities.

You may want to continue being with positive people. These are people with whom you feel at ease and able to be yourself. They may be your loved ones, kindred spirits or other people.

You may want to continue to have a positive attitude. This may include focusing on what you can control, having a sense of gratitude, seeing possibilities and giving to other people.

Philosophical Health

How do you feel in terms of having a sense of purpose and working towards your life goals? How would you rate this - your philosophical health - on a scale 0-10? How can you maintain or improve the rating?

You may want to focus on the things that enrich your life. These may include serving something greater than yourself, working towards your life goals or following your vocation.

You may want to reflect on what you have achieved in your life. Who have been the people you have helped? How have you encouraged loved ones, friends and other people? What would they say about how you have helped them?

People who are givers sometimes need to take care of themselves. Taking this step can give them more energy to give to other people. This leads to the next theme.

Taking Care Of Other People

Different people take care of people in different ways. Some do it in a proactive way, some do it in a reactive way, some combine both elements. Let's explore these themes.

Some people care for others in a proactive way. They may aim to offer provide a loving environment, encouragement and the basic materials for life.

They may take this approach as parents, educators, scientists, mentors, decisions makers or in other roles. They aim to provide people with the tools they can use to shape a positive future.

Some people care for others in a reactive way. They may care for them by providing support, medical care, therapy, counselling or doing other activities that help people to heal.

Such people may also move into taking proactive action. After helping with the healing, they may aim to provide the conditions that can help people to stay healthy and grow.

Taking Care Of The Planet

Different people take care of the planet in different ways. They may aim to do this in a practical, psychological or philosophical way.

Some people care for the planet in a practical way. They may aim to do this by cleaning up pollution, gardening, farming in a sustainable way or doing other things to protect or enhance the beauty of the planet.

Some people care for the planet in a psychological way. They may do this by writing inspiring articles, describing positive models that show a better way or supporting people who are doing their best to care for the planet.

Some people care for the planet in a philosophical way. They may do this by sharing positive paradigms. This can involve that showing people how to build sustainable systems that benefit both people and the planet.

Let's return to your own life. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific situation where you may want to follow elements of the taking care approach?

You may want to focus on taking care of yourself, taking care of other people or taking care of the planet. 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 Taking Care 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 then 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 'How Are You Choosing To Feel Today?' Approach

"How Are You Choosing To Feel Today?"

This approach is based on you first being able to fulfil your basic needs for food, safety and shelter. If so, then you can:

- Choose to increase the likelihood of having a certain feeling;*
- Choose the attitude you want to have towards having a certain feeling;*
- Choose to be aware of the consequences – the pluses or minuses – of how you express a certain feeling.*

There are many ways to live life. This approach explores how a person can choose to increase the likelihood experiencing certain feelings in life.

The first step, of course, is for a person to be able to satisfy their basic physical needs. They need food, safety and the basic materials for life. They can then focus on their psychological needs.

Every person is different. They will have had different experiences and models in their lives. These will influence how they manage their emotions. There comes a point in their life, however, when a person can choose their attitude in certain situations.

Many people recognise the specific things they can do to increase the likelihood of them feeling positive or negative. They may also recognise

that the way they behave has consequences – both for themselves and other people.

Viktor Frankl highlighted this approach in his book *Man's Search For Meaning*. This described his journey as a prisoner in the Nazi concentration camps.

The daily horrors left much to chance and survival could depend on the whim of a guard. Trying to make sense of the madness, Viktor described what he saw as the last human freedom. He described this in the following way.

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.

This is an approach I built on when working with people. Greeting them in a positive way, I would also ask:

"How are you choosing to feel today?"

When appropriate, we then began to focus on the theme of choices and consequences. Bearing in mind the things they could control, we focused on the choices they wanted to pursue in their lives or work.

They could choose their attitude, aspirations and how they wanted to work towards potential achievements. They could also choose to increase the likelihood of having certain feelings. The choices they made could have consequence – both for themselves and other people.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach. You may want to increase the chances of having certain feelings. Or you may have a professional role where you are helping others to shape their future lives. Let's explore the following themes.

Choosing to increase the likelihood of having a certain feeling

How can you help to shape your feelings? One approach is to ask yourself the following questions.

What are the specific things I can do to increase the chances of feeling positive? What can I do to increase the chances of being happy? What can I do to increase the chances of developing my strength to deal with challenges?

What have I done in the past to develop these feelings? What did I do right then? What were the principles I followed? How can I follow these principles – plus maybe add other skills – to have these feelings in the future?

What can I do to encourage myself? What can I do to count my blessings? What can I do to build on my personal and professional assets? What can I do make the most of my life on Earth?

What can I do to put myself into positive circles? What can I do to put myself into negative circles? What will be the consequences of taking each of these approaches?

What are the feelings I want to have in the future? How can I do my best to increase the chances of having these feelings? What will be the consequences – both for myself and other people?

There are many ways that a person can be helped to shape their feelings. Let's look at another approach.

Choosing the attitude you want to have towards having a certain feeling

A person can sometimes feel out of control, worried or have another challenging feeling. They may say something like:

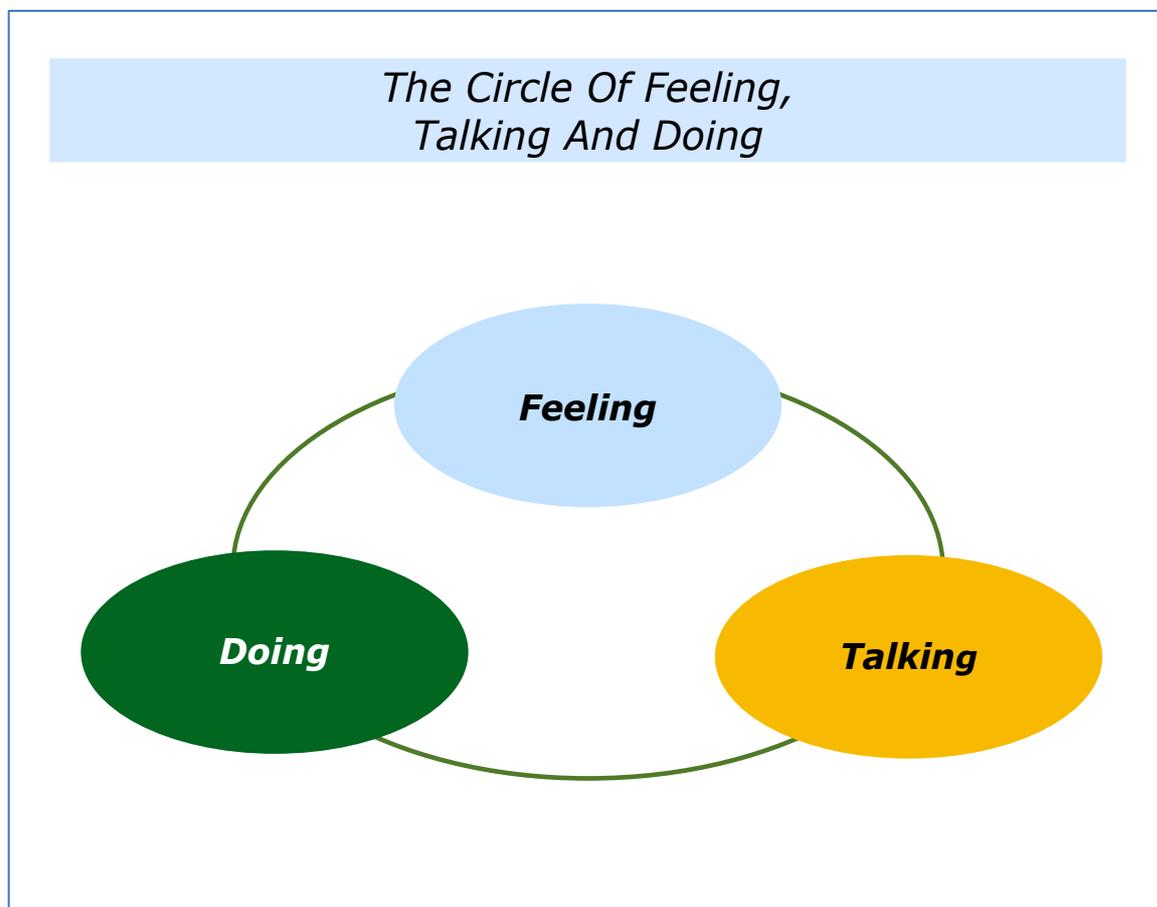
"I feel really down and am not sure how to deal with this feeling."

How to help them to retake control? Some people may respond by showing empathy, some may make suggestions. When appropriate, there is another approach.

This involves inviting the person to take charge of shaping their future. It is to ask the person:

"What is the attitude you want to take towards having this feeling?"

This involves helping the person to find ways to manage the feeling rather than let the feeling manage them. One approach is to help the person to recognise the circle of feeling, talking and doing.



Imagine, for example, 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 difficult feeling;

To decide that you want to have a better feeling;

To do something that is likely to increase the chances of having that 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, help to shape their future feelings.

Choosing to be aware of the consequences of how you express a certain feeling

A person may sometimes want to talk about their feelings or express these in other ways. Many people find this a good way to manage or deal with feelings.

Some people may do this in helpful way. They may find it helps to heal themselves. It can also sometimes lead to deepening relationships with other people.

Some people may express their feelings in not so helpful ways. Sometimes this can have less helpful consequences – both for themselves and other people.

When appropriate, a person may therefore find it helpful to buy time to reflect. They may then want to explore the following questions.

What am I feeling at the moment? What do I want to do about this feeling? How can I manage it in, as far as possible, a positive way?

Do I want to express this feeling in any way? If so, what are the possible ways I can express this feeling? What may be the consequences – the pluses and minuses – of each option? What may be the effect – for myself and for other people?

Bearing these things in mind, what is the route I want to take to express the feeling? How can I express it in a way that helps – rather than hurts - myself or other people? What are the steps I can take to make this happen?

Such an approach sounds difficult – especially during heated moments or times of distress. But it is route is worth considering.

Some people find it useful to explore the possible choices they have and the consequences of each option. They may then choose to express their feeling in a way that is helpful rather than hurtful for themselves and other people.

There are many ways to live life. This section has explored how a person can choose to increase the likelihood experiencing and managing certain feelings.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific 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 sentence.

The 'How Are You Choosing To Feel Today?' Approach

The specific situation where 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 Solutions Approach

Positive Solutions

This approach aims to find positive solutions to challenges. It involves focusing on the following themes.

- *The Present Situation*

What is the present situation?

- *The Possible Options*

What are the possible options going forwards?

- *The Positive Solution*

How can we, as far as possible, find a positive solution?

Everybody meets challenges in life. Some people also learn skills for finding solutions to such challenges. Different people do this in different ways.

Some people learn from good models. They may have learned from parents, teachers or other people who demonstrated problem solving skills.

These good models may have shown how to find win-win solutions to conflicts. They may also have shown how to, as far as possible, find positive solutions to challenges.

Some people may not have had such good models and may not have developed the repertoire for finding solutions. This can mean they may get stuck when faced by certain challenges.

There are many models for tackling challenges. One approach involves following a certain mantra. This is to keep asking:

How can we, as far as possible, find a positive solution?

This is an approach that can be used in many situations. The aim is to channel people's energy in a positive way. It involves aiming:

To focus on the present situation ... To explore the potential options for going forwards ... To find, as far as possible, positive solutions.

As mentioned earlier, this is one of the many models for tackling challenges. The following section looks at how it can be applied in certain situations. This can involve focusing on the following themes.

The Present Situation

Imagine that a person or as asked for your help in tackling a challenge. The first step is to focus on their present situation and clarify what is actually happening. It can be important to explore this in depth so that you have a full picture of the situation.

Different people will obviously face different situations. Here are some examples that people have described in mentoring sessions.

Person A

"My son is having real problems at school. He is dyslexic and, whilst some of the teachers know how to help him, he is finding it difficult. He is not happy and feels judged when going to school.

"He is approaching the time to move on to secondary school. This is not something he is looking forward to and would actually prefer not to go to school. Have you any suggestions?"

Bearing these things in mind, we explored the situation in more depth. This included asking the following questions.

What are your son's strengths? What is he interested in? What are his passions? What does he enjoy learning about? What is his style of learning? When do you see him following this learning style?

What would your son like to do in the future? When does he feel happiest? What are the places where he feels safe or stimulated? When does he follow his interests and get a sense of achievement?

How do you want to help your son? What would you like him to be feeling when he is sixteen? What would you like him to be saying about how you have helped him during his life?

These questions helped to build a picture of the situation. They also provided information that could be used when exploring the possible ways forward. This is something we will focus on later.

Person B

"Looking from the outside, I have had a successful career but now face a dilemma. I am the VP of Customer Success. This is well-paid and I enjoy working with customers but the role has become challenging.

"A new CEO has arrived and set a different tone. They issue instructions and then micromanage the senior managers. Previously I had much more freedom to operate providing I delivered the goods.

"Now I am just acting as a go-between and it is not satisfying. Have you any suggestions?"

We explored the situation in more depth. This included asking the following questions.

What is actually happening in the situation? What does the CEO actually do to micromanage people? How does he behave? What are the consequences? What do you feel after your interactions with him?

Later on we will look at ways to manage the present situation. Before then, however, it would be good to know more about you and your work.

Looking back on your career, what has been the kind of work that you have enjoyed doing? When have you have felt happiest? What were you doing then? What made the work satisfying?

Let's look ahead for a moment. What are your career goals? Imagine that you are looking back at the end of your career. What are three things you want to have done by then that, if you have done them, you will feel satisfied?

One final set of questions. If your present company collapsed tomorrow, what would you do? What is the kind of work you would aim to do? How would you try to find or create that kind of work?

You will have your own way of getting a full picture of a person's present situation. Imagine that you have taken that step. It will then be time to move on to the next stage.

The Possible Options

This stage involves exploring the possible options for going forwards. It is important to brainstorm all the possibilities – even those that may easily be dismissed later on. This helps to clear the mind and create room for being even more creative.

Imagine you are doing this with the person you are helping. You may start by encouraging them to brainstorm what they see as the options.

If appropriate, you can then ask the person if it is okay for you to share some ideas. They will probably say that it is, but it is important to first get their psychological permission.

Depending on their situation, different people will come up with different options. Here are some of the ideas that were generated in the examples I have given.

Person A

She wanted to help her son who was having difficulty at school. From our earlier discussion we established that her son had certain strengths. These included the following.

He had a strong will ... He took the lead in situations where students needed to find creative solutions to problems ... He came alive when tackling practical issues.

He was brave and resilient ... He was good at outdoor activities – such as climbing, canoeing and some sports ... He related well to adults who showed him respect.

Bearing these things in mind, we explored many possible ways forward. We also looked at the pluses and minuses of each option. Here are some that we brainstormed.

To ask her son about how he would like to continue to pursue his passions and develop;

To encourage her son to pursue his outdoor activities and also to talk with him afterwards about what he learned;

To help her son to understand his learning style and how he could continue to develop this style;

To continue to show her son the famous people who had dyslexia and how they had used this to achieve success;

To visit the various secondary schools in the area together with her son and see which he liked;

To find the secondary school that had the best approach to helping students with dyslexia;

To meet the teachers and ask them about their philosophy about how best to encourage a student with dyslexia;

To teach her son about what he could and could not get from school and to take the best and leave the rest – to not to let school affect his self-esteem;

To gather information from many of the organisations dedicated to helping students with dyslexia to build on their strengths;

To follow some of these ideas to help her son to continue to develop and, when appropriate, stretch himself to achieve his chosen goals.

There were several other options but these were the main ones we explored. Later we began to focus on the route – or combination of routes – she and her son would like to follow.

Person B

He faced a professional dilemma. Whilst being a member of the C-Suite, the new CEO was micromanaging both him and his colleagues. At the same time, there both pluses and minuses in his role.

The pluses included the following. He was well paid, had a certain status and, with some creativity, may be able to find ways to manage his boss. The salary also helped him and his family to enjoy a certain lifestyle.

The minuses included the following. He felt no joy in his work, felt compressed by the micromanaging and was no longer doing the work he did best. Both his physical and psychological health were suffering.

We explored many possible ways forward, together with the pluses and minuses of each option. These included the following.

To focus on his long-term career goals and explore the route he could take that would help him to achieve these goals;

To continue in his present role for another six months and see how things worked out;

To try to find ways to manage the CEO and deal with the micromanagement;

To take a step down in the company and return to the kind of work he loved doing – such as spending more time with customers;

To look for a new job – such as one that played to his strengths - by contacting former colleagues with whom he enjoyed working;

To set up his own niche consultancy business and help companies to improve their ability to deliver customer success;

To talk with his partner about their goals as a family and the best way to achieve these goals.

There were several other options but these were the main ones we explored. Later we began to focus on the route – or combination of routes – he wanted to follow.

The Positive Solutions

Imagine that you are helping a person to tackle a challenge. You will have clarified their present situation and their potential options. It will then be time to focus on the possible solutions. Let's look at some examples.

Person A

She wanted to help her son who was having difficulties at school and about to go to secondary school.

Before looking at the possible solutions, we explored the many websites that focus on the strengths of people with dyslexia. Here is a summary of those we found on the Michigan Dyslexia Help site and other websites.

The Strengths Of Dyslexics

There several advantages reported by successful dyslexics that it can be important to consider.

Some of the world's great thinkers, entrepreneurs, celebrities, authors, and billionaires happen to be dyslexic.

Here are some of the strengths that are sometimes displayed by dyslexics.

- *Strong visual memory and seeing pictures*
- *Clear thinking and problem solving skills*
- *Spatial reasoning and movement*
- *Creativity and imagination*
- *Seeing patterns and making connections*
- *Empathy and connecting with others*
- *Storytelling and creating images*

We also focused on: a) the things her son wanted to do in the future; b) the positive outlook and self-confidence she would like him to have when he was sixteen.

Bearing these things in mind, we explored many potential solutions and then settled on an action plan. She chose to take the following steps.

- 1) *To encourage her son to build on his strengths.*

To follow his passions – such as climbing and outdoor sports – and continue to develop;

To encourage him to pursue the other activities he enjoyed doing and, when appropriate, for him to work towards achieving his chosen goals;

To provide opportunities for him to spend time in places that he found stimulating and helped him to develop.

- 2) *To invite him to, if possible, choose his preferred secondary school.*

To invite him to visit the three local secondary schools and choose the one he would prefer to attend (it might then require some skills to make this happen);

To then establish good relationships with the key teachers who would be helping her son and agree with them about the goals to achieve;

To help him to learn how to make the most of his time at school – such as to focus on what he enjoyed and to manage the more difficult issues;

- 3) *To encourage him to be positive and build on what he strengths whilst also finding ways to manage things that were more difficult.*

To encourage him to develop his confidence by doing things he loved inside and outside school and not allow the system to affect his self-esteem;

To encourage him to, if he wanted, gather more information from the websites dedicated to focusing on the strengths of dyslexic people;

To encourage him to begin taking more decisions about what he wanted to do in the future and learn that each decision has consequences.

She saw this as quite a list but one theme stood out. This was to help her son to build on his strengths. He would then be more likely to keep developing and achieve success.

She recognised that there was more work to do. The approach would require a positive attitude and perseverance. She looked forward to moving into action, however, and continuing to help her son.

Person B

Whilst being a member of the C-Suite, he did not look forward to the next year. He liked helping customers but spent too much time acting as an implementer for the CEO.

Whilst loyal to the company, he found it increasingly difficult to deal with the CEO's style. That style had consequences. Some of the best people were thinking of leaving.

Many had been attracted by the company's previous culture. This had been to hire self-managing people. They had been encouraged to follow the company's principles but also use their creativity to deliver the goals. This was now a thing of the past.

Looking to the future, we explored the possible positive solutions. We also needed to factor in certain challenges.

First, the CEO would not change his behaviour. His business model was to issue instructions and expect people to act as implementers. His style also involved telling people they were valuable but then criticising them – sometimes publicly.

Second, Person B might be able to develop skills for managing the CEO but this could be exhausting. It may also lead to him taking his frustration home and it affecting the family.

Bearing these things in mind, we explored the possibilities. This resulted in him settling on the following action plan.

- 1) *To focus on his long-term career goals and do something towards these each day.*

Looking back on his career, he want to have done the following things:

To have played to his strengths and done satisfying work that helped people to achieve success;

To have built positive cultures that enabled people to grow;

To have, at some point, built his own business that helped people to achieve success.

- 2) *To do his best to manage the CEO's style of behaving and at the same time to retain his sanity.*

To keep being proactive by meeting regularly with the CEO, clarify the outcomes the CEO wants to achieve and then aim to deliver those outcomes;

To provide air cover for his people by communicating the desired outcomes in ways they could receive and then giving them the support required to deliver the outcomes;

To recognise which aspects of the CEO's behaviour may send him into a downward spiral and learn how to manage these triggers.

- 3) *To set aside time each week to take proactive steps toward finding or creating the next role in his career.*

To clarify his strengths and how he could use these to help potential employers to achieve success;

To meet with former colleagues, clarify the challenges they were facing and share ideas that could help them achieve success – this could eventually lead to a new role;

To create a back-up plan involving setting up his own business and providing services that helped organisations to deliver customer success.

Some of these steps were relatively straightforward but others were more challenging. Managing the CEO's behaviour was the hardest. We devised a strategy where he would aim:

To proactively contact the CEO towards the end of each week to clarify the outcomes the CEO wanted to achieve in the next week;

To put forward some ideas about what the CEO might want but also ask about what the CEO wanted delivered;

To recognise the CEO might simply issue a series of tactics or orders but he aimed to stay calm, take notes and then follow his own way of delivering these results.

Whilst this approach worked for a while – mainly because the CEO was micromanaging others in the company – it was not sustainable.

Developing a sense of urgency, he began contacting former bosses with whom he could work. This eventually led to him taking a role where he could deliver success for both that company and their customers.

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 positive solutions 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 Solutions 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 then 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 Alive, Alert And Achieving Things Approach



There are many ways to live life. One approach is to do the activities where you feel alive, alert and achieve things. Let's explore these themes.

Alive

What are the specific activities where you feel alive? You may feel this when caring for your loved ones, playing a sport, doing a creative project, performing satisfying work or doing other activities.

People want to feel alive. Some reach a point in their career where they are no longer doing satisfying work. They feel stodgy and part of a big system.

This is a topic that some people raise during mentoring sessions. Whilst it is not always possible to change everything straight away, we often find

ways they can do satisfying work. We also focus on how they can do other things to regain their zest for life.

Alert

What are the activities where you feel alive and alert? You may do this when you are in your element – doing activities where you feel at ease and yet able to excel.

Going into the situation, you use your antennae to gather information. Scanning the situation, you may look for patterns, see possibilities and the potential challenges.

Great workers often take this approach. They use their strengths and experience to clarify what is happening. They then settle on their chosen strategies for achieving the desired picture of success.

Achieving Things

People often like to set and achieve goals. Bearing this in mind, what are the activities where you feel alive, alert and also achieve things? These could be in your personal or professional life.

You may get satisfaction from encouraging a person, cooking a meal or renovating a building. You may get it from solving a problem, completing a creative project or sharing knowledge that helps other people.

Joseph Campbell, the professor of mythology, was sometimes approached by people who were looking for meaning in life. He said:

"I don't think people are really seeking the meaning of life. I think we're seeking an experience of being alive. We want to feel the rapture of being alive"

Can you think of a specific activity where you feel alive, alert and achieve things? How can you continue to do this activity? 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 Alive, Alert And Achieving Things Approach

*The specific activity where I feel
alive, alert and achieve things is:*

*

*The specific things I can do to
continue doing this activity are:*

*

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*

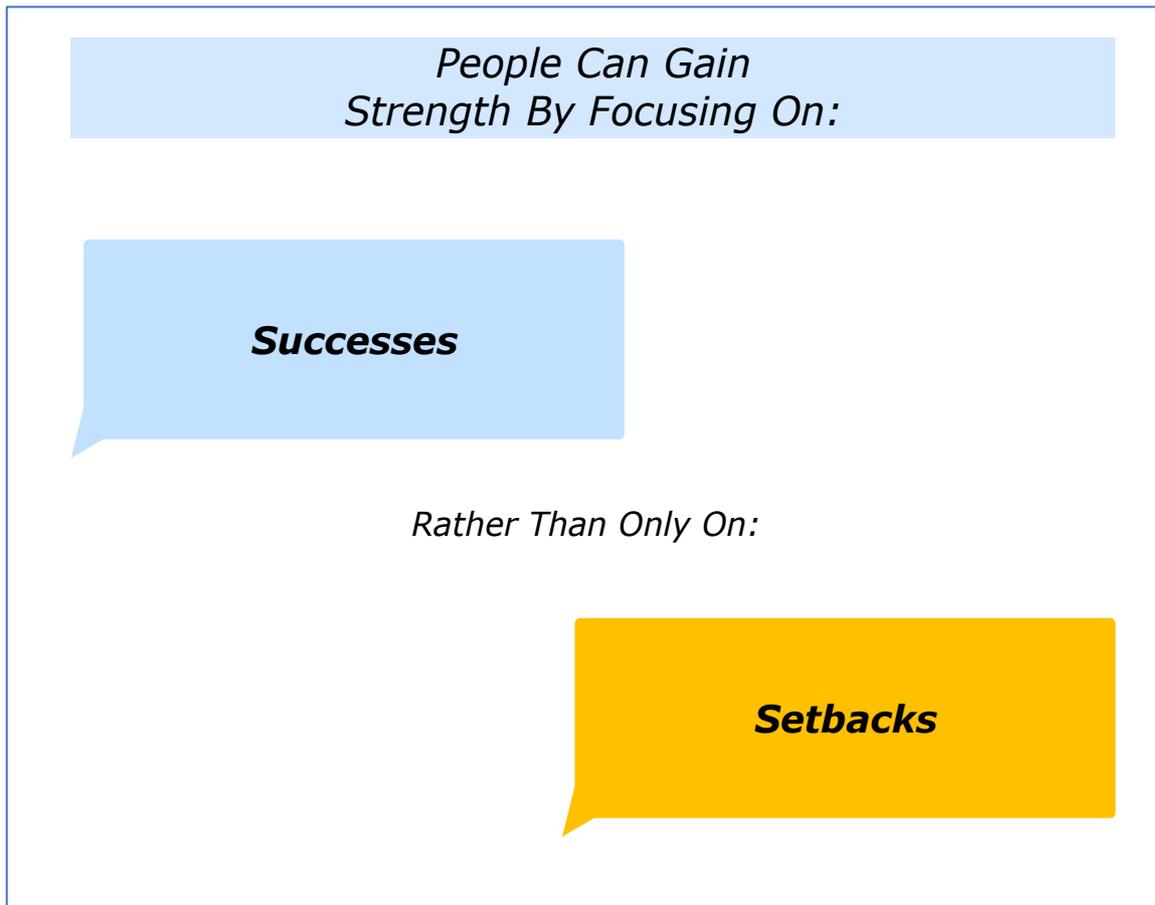
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Staying Strong By Focusing On Successes Rather Than Setbacks Approach



Different people choose different ways to gain strength, support other people and do superb work. One approach is for them to focus on successes rather than only on setbacks. People can be uplifted by aiming:

To focus on the positive work in different fields and studying success;

To focus on the principles people followed to achieve success;

To focus on how they can follow these principles to achieve success.

People who take this approach are often positive realists. They are not starry eyed. They focus on successes and solutions to challenges rather than become bogged down in depression.

Paul Rogers, the Professor of Peace Studies at Bradford University, referred to this approach in an interview he gave during the Peacekeepers Live event in 2023.

Asked about how he got inspiration, he referred to studying successes. These included:

The non-violent work for women's suffrage ... The civil rights movement in the USA ... The peaceful revolutions in parts of Europe after the Cold War.

Paul recognises that - even if people are following positive principles - some changes can take a long time. On the other hand, some changes can happen quickly. These include the following examples:

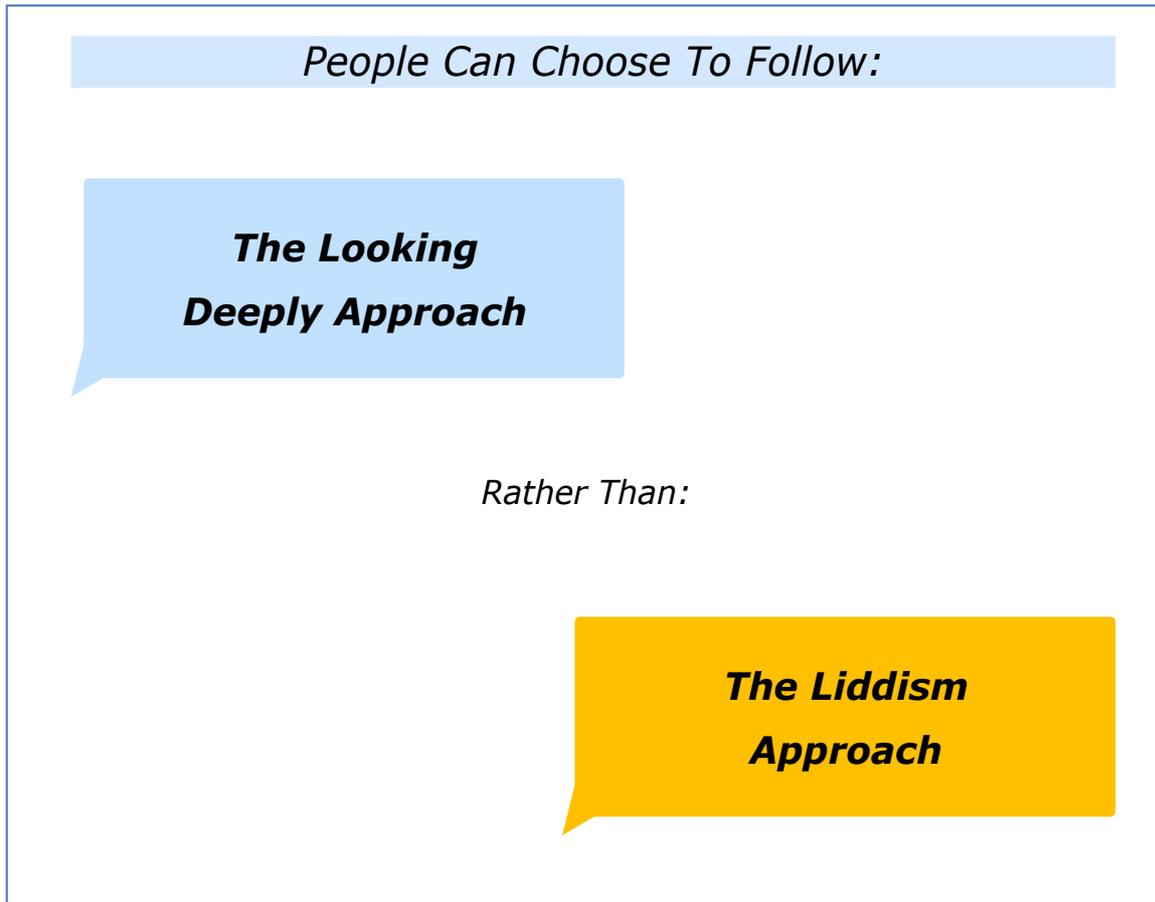
The global efforts for closing the hole in the ozone layer ... The action in the 1950s to clear up the thick London fogs ... The rapid production of a vaccine for Covid-19.

People can be decisive, pool their resources and find solutions. They sometimes only do this when being reactive. They may need to be proactive, however, to shape a positive future.

Paul says that people want security. Bearing this in mind, their first response to feeling threatened is to reach for a method of suppressing the threat. Sometimes this is necessary but it does not always provide a long-term solution.

Paul says it is vital to show people a new paradigm – a new way of thinking – for finding security. This may involve finding positive solutions that create prosperity for many people not just for a few. This is more likely to create long-lasting security.

This calls for looking deeply at the causes of challenges and finding solutions. Such issues will not be solved by what Paul calls Liddism – trying to put the lid on problems by military or other means.



Looking deeply sometimes involves studying success. People can then focus on how to follow these principles to make things work and shape a positive future.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific activity where you 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 Focusing On Success Approach

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

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

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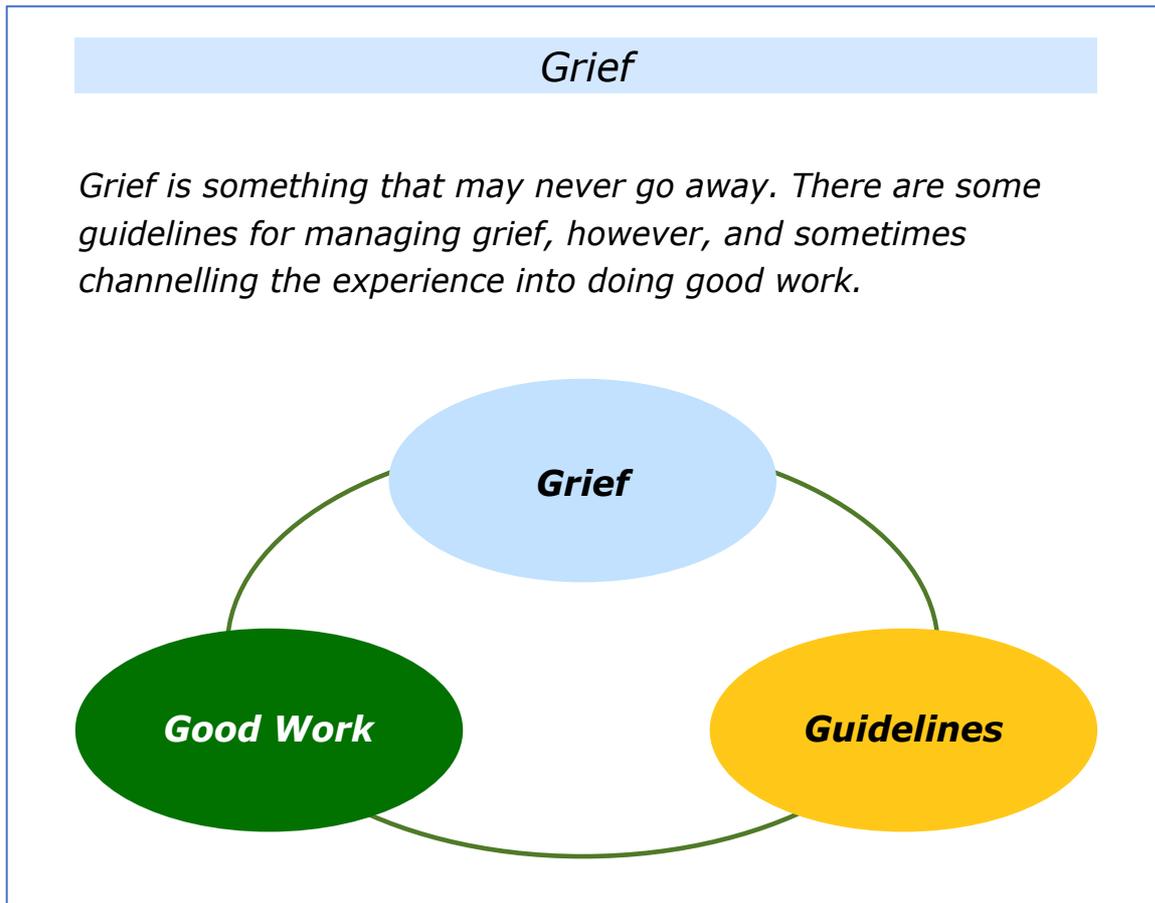
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be

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The Good Work After Experiencing Grief Approach



Grief is something that may never go away. There are guidelines for managing grief, however, and sometimes channelling the experience into doing good work. Let's explore these themes.

Grief

Grief comes in many forms. It may involve losing a loved one, experiencing a life-changing event or lacking a sense of purpose. It may involve seeking redemption after causing harm to another person.

Some people now experience ecological grief. They feel pain because of what human beings are doing to the planet. This can be combined with a sense of helplessness regarding their lack of power to make a positive difference.

Grief is personal and each person will experience it in their own way. There are some themes, however, that grief counsellors and other focus on to help people who are experiencing such feelings.

Guidelines

People who experience grief sometimes feel great pain in their gut. This can affect their whole being. Sometimes this results in them feeling unreal, losing their appetite or having other symptoms.

They want to feel in control and for things to be as they were before. Panu Pihkala highlighted this reaction in a piece he wrote for the BBC website when describing people's responses to climate change. Here is an excerpt from his article.

Grief researchers William Worden and Thomas Attig defined that one of the key tasks in a grief process is "the adjustment to a new environment". They depicted the whole grief process as "relearning the world".

Something has profoundly changed, something or someone is either lost or in the process of going away, and grief can help to us adjust.

Worden and Attig often had in mind the loss of a loved one, usually a human being. But these definitions match the needed scale of climate grief.

The world around us has changed, and is changing still.

We need to adjust to a new kind of social and ecological environment, with ongoing social disputes around climate politics and the ongoing physical effects of climate change.

We need to relearn the world: it is not like it was, or like we thought it was.

Grief counsellors offer people both practical and psychological guidelines for managing their experiences. Some focus on the following themes.

Mourning

Mourning can play a crucial part in managing sorrow. A person's immediate reaction can be focus on what has been lost. They may react by feeling numb, crying or retreating into themselves.

It can be vital to go through a period of mourning. Some people may do this straight away. Others may be so occupied with practical tasks – such as arranging a funeral or managing other issues – that the mourning is delayed.

Mourning is also a personal issue. Some people quickly try to resume parts of their normal life. They return to work or do other things where life is more predictable. This helps them to cope with the unpredictable nature of what may have happened.

Many people also experience flashbacks. They may be reminded of a loved one by seeing somebody who looks like them. They may also recall events when they could have behaved differently and regret their behaviour.

Mourning can involve many aspects. These may include aiming: a) to mourn the person's passing; b) to celebrate what they did during their life. The latter sometimes helps to cope with the feelings.

Deborah James was someone who did this in her own life. Here is an excerpt from a piece that Rachel Aroesti wrote in the Guardian about a TV programme about Debbie's approach.

Dame Deborah James was a remarkable cancer patient.

After she was told she had stage 3 bowel cancer in 2016, aged 35, the then-deputy head teacher threw herself into raising awareness of its symptoms and sharing the reality of such a diagnosis.



Initially via her blog Bowelbabe; then a column in the Sun; a lively and hugely popular social media presence; and the hit BBC podcast You, Me and the Big C, which she hosted alongside fellow cancer patients Rachael Bland and Lauren Mahon.

James did all this with equal parts glamour and candour – no easy task when you have “the poo cancer,” as she christened it on the podcast. “There’s nothing pink about my cancer,” she continued wryly. “It’s just brown.”

Though clearly distraught, she signs off with her final broadcast with here humour undimmed. “Come on, I can’t leave on any other word apart from: check your poo.”

Different people go through a period of mourning in different ways. Such feelings never go away, but it may be possible to manage these. This sometimes involves focusing on the next step.

Managing Their World

People want to feel in control of shaping their future. Grief can shatter their world and it takes time to put back some of the pieces. One

approach is for a person to take charge of managing their world. This can involve inviting them to focus on the following themes.

They can begin by taking charge of their diary. People often feel best when they follow a certain structure. This can help them to establish a set routine and also cope with other events.

The person can map out their days, weeks and month. They can put in the times when they will get up, do certain practical tasks, go for walks or do other activities. They can then follow this plan to create more predictability in an uncertain world.

Managing Their Emotions

People who experience grief may veer between being sad, lost, exhausted, out of control and other feelings. They can be helped to learn how to manage these emotions, however, rather than let the emotions manage them.

One approach is to help them to manage triggers that may send them into a negative spiral. They may experience flashbacks or suddenly feel depressed about what has happened. It is possible to help them:

To recognise the potential triggers;

To, when appropriate, avoid the potential triggers;

To manage the triggers if, despite their best efforts, these still happen.

People who experience grief can feel consumed by negative emotions. It can be vital to help them to rebuild their strength.

One approach is to encourage them to do things that give them positive energy. These can be simple things – such as walking, cooking, playing music, spending time with encouraging people or doing other activities.

People who do things that give them positive energy are more likely to develop the strength to deal with other emotions. They may then be more able to move forwards with their life.

The sadness may still remain, but they may feel more able to shape their futures. Whilst it can take a long time, they begin to recover aspects of their zest for life. Some may also explore another step.

Good Work

Some people translate their grief into doing good work. Some use it to support others who go through similar experiences. Some use it to do practical work to help other people or care for the planet.

One approach is for them to focus on what they still have rather than what they have lost. They can then use these assets to help themselves and other people.

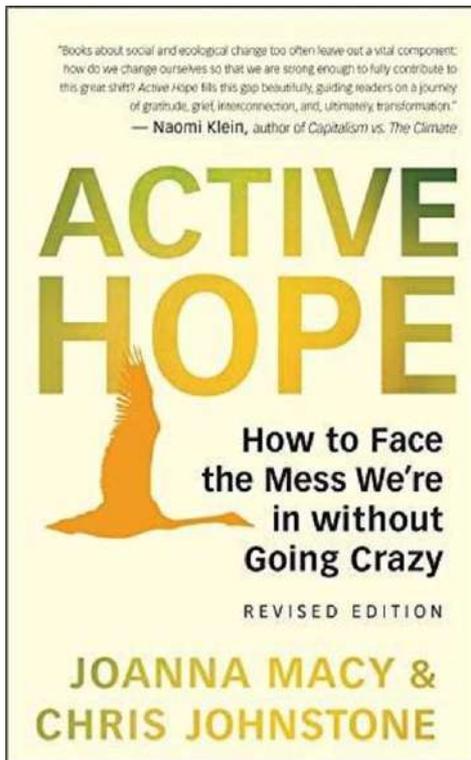
Joanna Macy has devoted much of her life to helping people to manage their grief about climate change. She and Chris Johnstone produced the book *Active Hope: How to face the mess we are in without going crazy*. Here is an excerpt from the *Introduction*.

Whatever situation we face, we can choose our response. When facing overwhelming challenges, we might feel that our actions don't count for much.

Yet the kind of responses we make, and the degree to which we believe they count, are shaped by the way we think and feel about hope.

Most books addressing global issues focus on describing either the problems we face or the solutions needed.

While we touch on both of these, our focus is on how we strengthen and support our intention to act, so that we can best play our part, whatever that may be, in the healing of our world.



Active hope is a practice. Like tai chi or gardening, it is something we do rather than have. It is a process we can apply to any situation, and it involves three steps

First, we take a clear view of reality;

Second, we identify what we hope for in terms of the direction we'd like things to move in or the values we'd like to see expressed;

Third, we take steps to move ourselves or our situation in that direction.

The structure of the book follows the four stages of: Gratitude, Honoring our Pain for the World, Seeing with New Eyes and Going Forth.

The journey through these stages has a strengthening effect that deepens with every repetition. Since Active Hope doesn't require our optimism, we can apply it even in areas where we feel hopeless. The guiding impetus is intention: we choose what we aim to bring about, to act for, or express.

Rather than weighing our chances and proceeding only when we feel hopeful, we focus on our intention and let it be our guide.

Different people manage grief in different ways. Sometimes they use the experience to be grateful for what has been given in the past. They then use this experience to appreciate life and give to others in the future.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow some elements of the themes we have explored? How can you do this in your own way? Here is an exercise on this theme.

Good Work After Experiencing Grief

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 then to follow this approach in my own way are:

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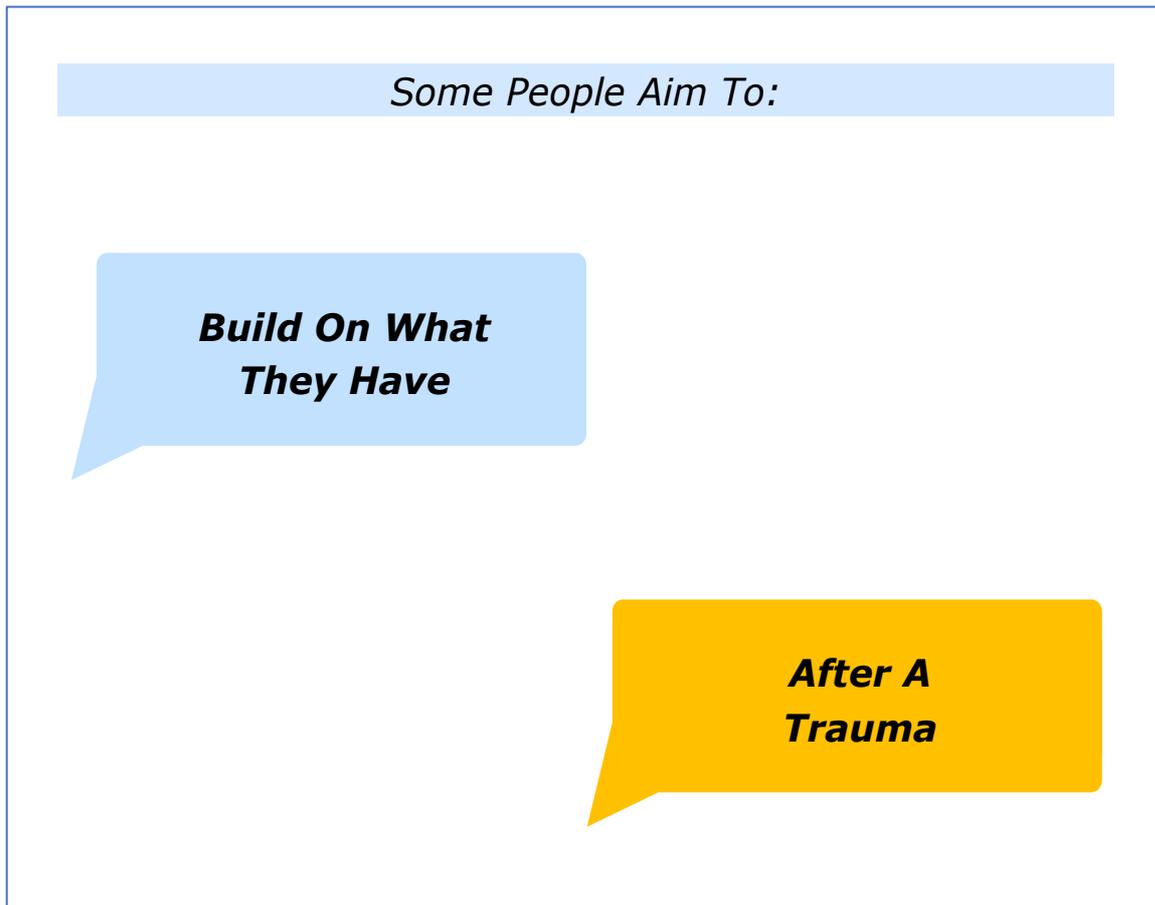
The specific things that may happen as a results of taking these steps may be:

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The Building On What You Have After A Trauma Approach



Some people build on what they have after a trauma. They may have experienced an injury, a loss or a life-change event. Such people often go through a process of mourning. At a certain point, however, they decide to move forwards with their life.

Different people do this in different ways. Some ask themselves the following questions.

"What have I learned from the experience? What do I still have? What are the strengths, assets and other things that I have? What is it that I can do rather than can't do? What do I want to do in the rest of my life? How can I use what I have to shape a positive future?"

Nowadays there are many stories about people who have taken this approach. Such people build on what they have rather than don't have. They may then do their best to help themselves and other people.

The following section provides excerpts from two such stories on the Thrivenet website. The site was inspired by Al Siebert's books on *The Survivor Personality* and *The Resiliency Advantage*. It also provides practical tools that people can use to thrive after traumatic experiences.

Robert's Story

Robert M. Hensel was born in Rota, Spain in 1969. Currently a resident of Oswego, NY, he is an international poet-writer. He was honoured when the mayor of his home town declared a week for the disabled, "Beyond Limitations Week," in his name. Here are excerpts from his story.

I grew up with a birth defect known as spina bifida, a disability that affects my sense of balance, causing me to walk with a limp. Not only does it affect the function of the legs, but it also has an impact on the kidneys, causing them to deteriorate.

The disability has had its ups and downs. As a young child, I can remember the way other children would look at me and stare because of the way that I walked.

Now that I am an adult, I have noticed that the stares and names have begun to fade, and judgments that once were negative have begun to turn toward acceptance.

Now I look beyond what I can't do and focus on what I CAN. I have learned that limitations open doors that have been closed, showing other ways to meet our needs.

I have always looked at life as a challenge, grasping each obstacle with open arms.

People often feel sorry for those who were born with some type of disability. But their compassion is misplaced.

Yes, I may not be able to run as fast or perform certain tasks, but my disability gives me a better look at life and all that's around me. I want to be seen not as a disability but as a person who has, and will continue to, bloom.

I decided to become an advocate on behalf of disabled Americans, to fight for our rights that for so long have been ignored.

I feel that it only takes one powerful voice to change the minds of many nations, and as long as I have a mouth to use and a mind to think I will continue to work to bring peace upon the disabled community. May the words that flow between the lines connect us to a world of peace.

To all of my Friends with disabilities, I leave you with a few words of encouragement in hopes that you too may find the courage needed to reach beyond your own Limitations.

Live life to the fullest of your ability. Focus on the things that are within your reach, and go after them. Grasp hold of your dreams and don't let go. Use your own experiences in life to help those that may be in need of encouragement.

Rhonda's Story

Rhonda Peterson's motto is 'the greatest strength comes from within'. She followed this approach after surviving a stroke. Here are excerpts from her story.

When I hear people say, "You don't look like you've had a stroke," I am perplexed. I am not sure whether to begin teaching stroke education or to accept the remark as a tribute to my arduous journey through stroke recovery.

After all, it's almost been ten years since the event turned my life upside down. Over time, my brain has formed new pathways of adaptation and my spirit has endured through the loss of employment, divorce, and financial disaster caused by this catastrophe.

Now, at the age of fifty-two, I view the stroke as a part of who I am. Now, I prefer to view my assets instead of my deficits. I choose to look at what I have learned through the experience.

In 1992, I had two strokes within days of each other. One stroke rendered the left side of my body numb to the touch, heavy, and extremely uncoordinated.

After the second stroke, machines aided life support and the doctors decided to operate immediately. I had run out of time. Before the heart surgery, I wasn't concerned with life beyond the hospital walls. I was concentrating on staying alive!

The stroke had severely curtailed my independence. Without my autonomy, my spirit would eventually shrivel like a plant without water.

Nevertheless, I was determined to begin to take control of my life. It would take time for my brain to heal, but time seemed to be an enemy once again.

Our twenty-two year marriage ended in divorce and I began living independently. Because of the stroke, I was having frequent seizures, I couldn't read, write, or comprehend newspaper headlines.

But because of the stroke I found inner-strength, spirituality, a sense of humour, and an attitude about living in the moment that said,

"I cannot change what has happened but I can literally make change!"

It was a statement of fact. It was my first statement of self-determination, like a Declaration of Independence. It was the realization that I could not change what had occurred but I was healing. I laughed for the first time in months.

After a long period of treatment, I began classes at the local community college. I learned to tell time again and learned how to take the bus to and from school. I tape-recorded the few classes I attended and repeatedly listened to the lectures. I had all the time I needed to learn.

In 2000 I began Peterson Press, a small business that supports others who are reaching out towards independence and adaptability while living with the effects of stroke.

The Peterson Press provides speaking presentations to organizations regarding a stroke survivor's perspective of Life after Stroke. Also, we publish a humorous monthly newsletter entitled, The Ramblings.

The Ramblings is not only aimed at stroke survivors, but anyone and everyone who enjoys a bit of entertaining humor. Humor is extremely important to me. The ability to laugh at faux pas in life grounds me in reality. It indicates my growth in recovery.

Hope is terribly important to hang on to. My readers and presentation audiences come from all walks of life but everyone needs a good dose of hope.

Stroke, or any disease for that matter, is not a laughing matter. However, it is how we deal with the things that have happened to us that is either our making or breaking.

I do not print articles that may cause pain to any religious, ethnic, or social group. Attacks are not humorous. But everyday living situations can be spun into tales of entertaining wisdom. I challenge the reader and my speaking audiences to take the negative and flip it to the positive.

Audiences look forward to my stories and the hilarious antics they bring. Some of the most hilarious stories are those about my particular stroke recovery.

Eight years after the strokes, I regained the ability to drive. So if you're out on the roadways watch for the Peripheral Visionary. I'm the one who now doesn't look like she's had a stroke.

Helping People Who Have Experienced Trauma

Al Siebert helped many people to shape their futures after experiencing trauma. He also educated caregivers who offered support to such people. Here are excerpts from a piece in which he provided tips for such caregivers.

Caregiver Resiliency

It takes exceptional emotional strengths to be a caregiver.

You must be able to maintain your own inner stability while interacting with others who may be distressed, emotionally injured, or unstable - and do this in ways so that they can gradually develop their own emotional strengths and coping skills.

Here are useful questions to ask yourself if you are a caregiver to traumatized people or an emergency worker.

*What qualities make someone a good caregiver with traumatized people?
What are people like who are not suited to be caregivers?*

Why do you want to help others? Why do you do this work? How do you sustain your health, positive energy, and well-being when exposed to pain in others? How are you able to extend positive, healing energy to others without taking on their pain, distress, and negative energies?

The best caregivers have compassionate empathy for victims while avoiding becoming traumatized by exposure to pain in others that comes from too much sympathy.

A sympathetic reaction means to experience what the other person is feeling or has gone through. This can have drawbacks.

Sympathy can force traumatized people to have to deal with the emotional reactions of the listener, and sympathy can make the caregiver vulnerable to developing bystander PTSD, professional burnout, or worse.

Emotionally resilient people hold up well under pressure and can gain strength from rough emotional experiences. Here are qualities and attitudes found in caregivers and emergency workers who hold up well.

Expect good outcomes.

Be curious, ask questions and want to know how things work.

Constantly learn from experience.

Be emotionally flexible.

Enjoy solid self-confidence and self-esteem.

Develop a self-concept of professionalism.

Let your actions be guided by conscious choices.

Sustain good friendships and loving relationships.

Deeply resilient people let themselves be transformed by their experiences. When life handles you an extreme challenge, you will never be the same again. You can emerge exhausted, bitter, and traumatized, or you can emerge stronger and better.

You have it in you to determine which way it will be.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a situation where you may experience trauma? How can you deal with this in your own way?

What may you learn from the traumatic experience? How can you focus on what you can do? How can you build on what you have and aim to shape a positive future? 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 Building On What You Have After A Trauma 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 then to follow this approach in my own way are:

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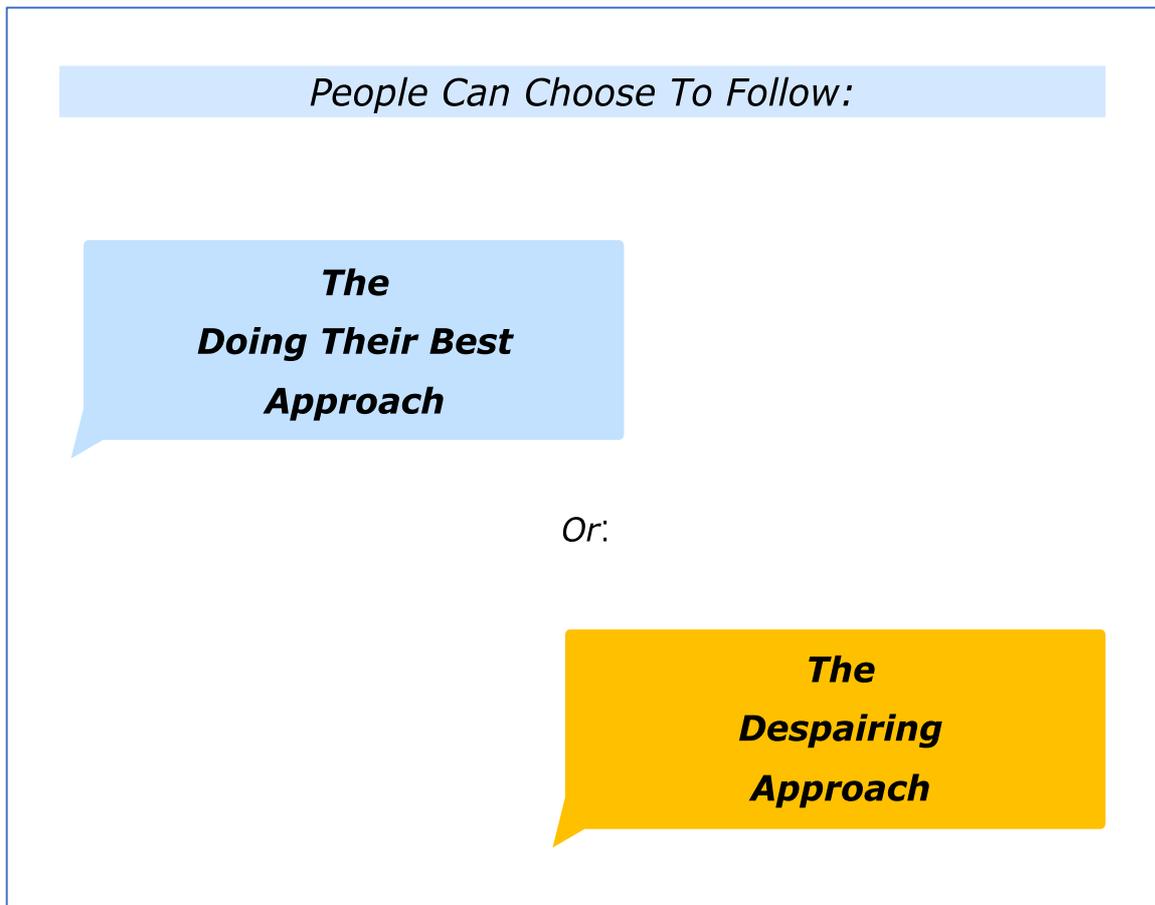
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Doing Your Best Approach Rather Than The Despairing Approach



People choose to respond to events in different ways. Some may focus on how they can do their best in the future. Some may go into a spiral of despair. Let's look at some examples.

People choose different ways to respond to the climate crisis. Many television programmes now describe the practical things that some people are doing to care for the planet. They act as beacons of hope.

Some individuals who take this approach experience a sense of grief about what is happening to the world. They focus on what they can control, however, and translate this feeling into doing something useful.

Different people have different motives for taking this route. One person expressed this in the following way.

"Certainly we face huge crises. But my approach is to do what I can and, if possible, give hope to other people. The alternative is to sit around and mope."

Some people look at the climate crisis, however, and have the equivalent of a broken heart. They have a sense of despair. Sometimes they transmit this to others. Unfortunately this does not help anybody.

Different people choose to do their best for different reasons. Here are some things they may say when asked about their motives.

"My parents taught me to do what I could do – such as being good at sports, theatre and leadership - rather than worry about what I couldn't do. This gave me the confidence to set up and run my own social enterprise."

"My inspiration has been learning from female leaders in poorer countries. Many have led community initiatives and empowered other women to shape their futures. I try to follow these paths in my own way."

*"My turning point was reading books like *The Whole Earth Catalogue* and *Small Is Beautiful*. These encouraged me to focus on planting seeds of hope. As the saying goes, I try to do positive things in a mad world because I would go mad if I didn't."*

Looking back, can you think of a time when you did your best rather than lapse into despair? What did you do right then? What happened as a result of taking these steps?

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you can follow similar principles? What may be the specific situation? How can you do your best in the situation? What may 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.

Doing My Best

*The specific situation where I
may choose to follow the
doing my best approach may be:*

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*The specific things I can do then
to do my best in the situation are:*

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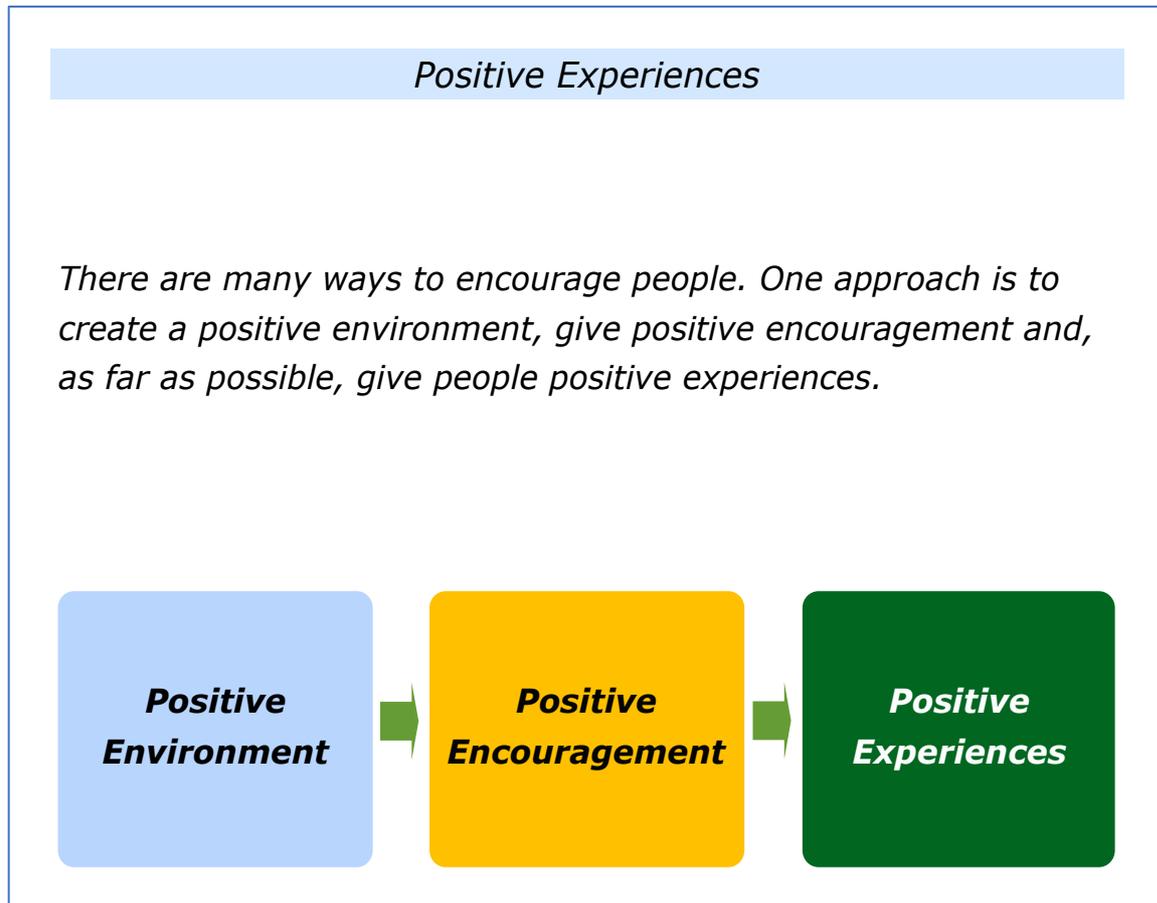
*The specific benefits – both for
myself and for other people –
of taking these steps may be:*

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The Positive Experiences Approach



There are many ways to encourage people. One approach is to create a positive environment, give positive encouragement and, as far as possible, give people positive experiences.

Different people follow these principles in different situations. They may do so in the family, school, sports team, hospital, hotel, business, hospice or another part of society. One mentor I learned from expressed this in the following way.

"I began my career as an educator. After a while I realised this called for much more than teaching classes for students.

"It called for being able: a) to create an environment in which people felt safe and able to share their goals; b) to pass on knowledge in a way that enabled them to reach their goals.

"It was then that I realised my vocation. It is to provide positive experiences that enable people to grow. Since then I have aimed to express this vocation in various ways on the way towards doing valuable work."

Imagine that you want to follow some of these principles to offer people positive experiences. Let's explore these themes.

Positive Environment

One approach is to start by creating a positive environment. It is to create a welcoming atmosphere in which people feel at ease. This is an approach followed by many educators, people workers and organisations.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you want to create a positive environment? You may wish to do this when caring for a friend, teaching a class, helping a customer, leading a team or doing another activity. How can you do this in your own way?

The Macmillan Cancer Support centres, for example, aim to follow this approach. The centres are well designed and welcoming. The staff are compassionate, professional and show respect towards the patients. They aim to, as far as possible, make the treatment a positive experience.

Positive Encouragement

Imagine that you have created a welcoming environment. When appropriate, you may want to give people encouragement. Different people do this in different ways.

Some do it by providing practical support. Some do it by providing psychological support. Some do it by helping a person to achieve their goals and shape a positive future.

Good coaches, for example, may combine all these elements when encouraging people. They may do this when working with them in education, sports, business or other fields. Here is one approach they may take to help a person to reach their goals.

Good Coaches

They try to pass on knowledge in a way that helps a person to achieve their goals.

This often involves watching the person in action or seeing a piece of their work. It then involves focusing the following themes.

- *What are the person's goals? What are real results they want to achieve? What will be the benefits of achieving these goals? 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 in the future and how?*
- *What are the positive models and practical tools that I can pass on to help them? What are the key messages I want to give them? How can I pass on this knowledge in a way they can accept and use to achieve their goals?*

Positive Experiences

Many people try to offer people positive experiences. They may do this when acting as a parent, friend, educator or in another role. They may do it when working in education, sports, business or another professional field.

Whatever route they take, they sometimes aim to create experiences that give people positive memories for life. Some people take this approach from an early age. They then try to spread happiness in their daily lives and work.

Some take it after suddenly become aware of their mortality. They may then learn from people who have been through similar experiences. Such people may give the following messages.

Make the most of each day ... Appreciate life ... Be grateful ... Encourage other people ... Enjoy the moment ... Create positive experiences ... Focus on what is important in life.

Eugene O'Kelly described this approach in his book *Chasing Daylight*. The *You Exec* website introduces the book in the following way..

Eugene O'Kelly attained his professional success after he landed his dream job as CEO of KPMG.

He was happily married to a woman he loved, had a daughter he adored, and seemed to be living a life that many would aspire to for themselves.

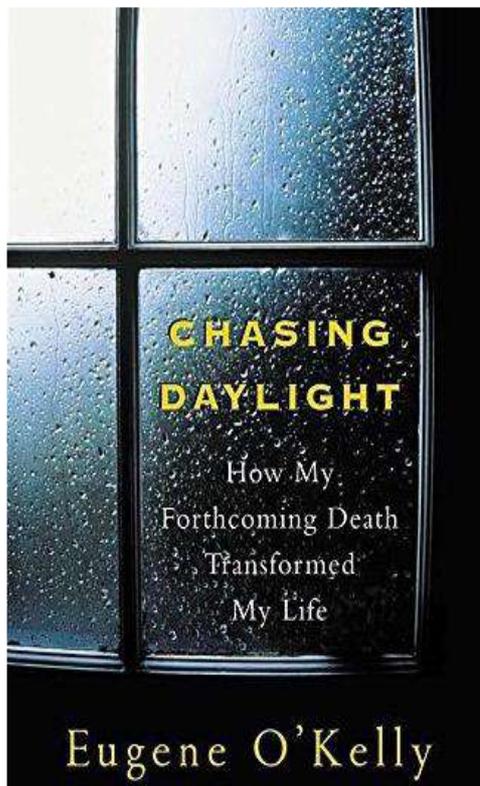
Yet, when he was told that he only had three months to live, O'Kelly said he "felt blessed."

O'Kelly explains that the diagnosis and the wake-up call of his impending death inspired him to "unwind" his relationships. He saw his situation as a chance to finally take a step back and see his life from a unique perspective.

O'Kelly had been given the gift of knowing how much time he had left on this earth and to self-reflect and focus on the things that mattered most to him.

Once the shock of his unexpected diagnosis had settled in, O'Kelly and his wife, Corinne, put together a plan for living his last three months as fully as possible.

Eugene and his wife focused on how to create perfect moments. Here he describes his view of why the message was a blessing.



I felt blessed. I was told I had three months to life. The verdict turned out to be a gift. Honestly.

I was forced to think more deeply about life than I had ever done. In short, I asked myself to answer two questions.

Must the end of life be the worst part? Can it be made a constructive experience – even the best part of life? No. Yes. That is how I would answer those questions. Respectively.

I was able to approach the end while still mentally lucid (usually) and physically fit (sort of), with my loved ones near.

As I said: a blessing.

Eugene's ideas echo many of those described by people who are aware of their mortality. They focus on what they believe is important in life.

Bronnie Ware's life changed when she worked in palliative care. She found that many people experienced a sense of peace before they died. Learning from them, she discovered that some had regrets.

She found these often followed certain themes. Bronnie began writing about these in a blog, which she later expanded into her book *The Top Five Regrets Of The Dying*. Here are excerpts from her work.

People grow a lot when they are faced with their own mortality. I learnt never to underestimate someone's capacity for growth.

Some changes were phenomenal. Each experienced a variety of emotions, as expected, denial, fear, anger, remorse, more denial and eventually acceptance.

Every single patient found their peace before they departed though, every one of them.

When questioned about any regrets they had or anything they would do differently, common themes surfaced again and again. Here are the most common five:

"I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me ... I wish I didn't work so hard.

"I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings ... I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends ... I wish that I had let myself be happier."

Life is a choice. It is YOUR life. Choose consciously, choose wisely, choose honestly. Choose happiness.

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 positive experiences approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

You may want to do this with a person or a group of people. How can you create an encouraging environment? How can you give them encouragement? How can you do your best to give them a positive experience?

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

The Positive Experiences 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 then to follow this approach in my own way are:

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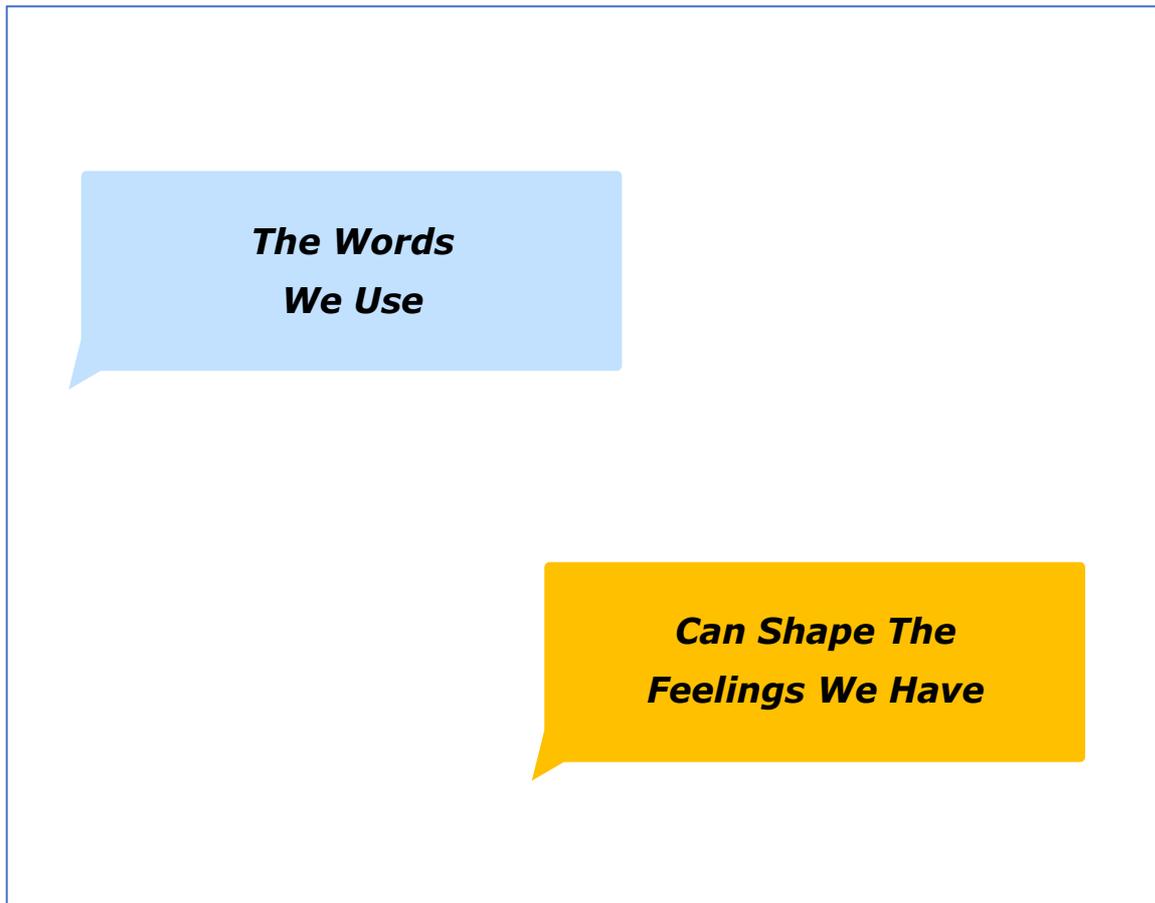
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Words We Use Can Shape The Feelings We Have Approach



There are many views on how we shape our feelings. Some say that our attitude plays a big part. Some call this our mindset or mental model. We then interpret our experiences through this filter.

Another view focuses on the words we use to describe situations. This includes the phrases and language we use. For example: Do we label something as a challenge or as a problem? Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to remember that:

The words we use can shape the feelings we have.

Many articles have been written about how the words we use can produce different emotional responses. These also highlight how people can learn positive scripts or negative scripts. Here are some examples.

Person A may say: "This is a challenge." Person B may say: "This is a problem."

Person A may get news they have cancer and say: "I have reframed this as a project." Person B may say: "I have defined this as a battle."

Person A may say: "I want to build on my strengths and tackle areas for improvement." Person B may say: "I need to focus on my weaknesses."

The language we use can also affect how we perceive people and situations. One mediator explained this in the following way.

"My work involves helping people: a) to build on what they have in common; b) to find ways to manage any differences. I use the word differences rather than conflicts.

"Building on what they have in common, we aim to get some early successes. This helps to build confidence. We then help them to find healthy ways to manage any differences."

Let's return to your own life and work. How do you phrase things in certain ways to shape your feelings? If you wish, try answering some of the following questions.

What are some of the positive phrases you use to describe situations and shape your feelings?

What can you do to try to phrase things in a positive way when faced by challenging situations?

How can you continue to use phrases that help you to do things in a positive way?

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

The Words I Use To Shape My Feelings

The positive phrases I use to describe situations and shape my feelings are:

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The specific things I can do to phrase things in a positive way in challenging situations are:

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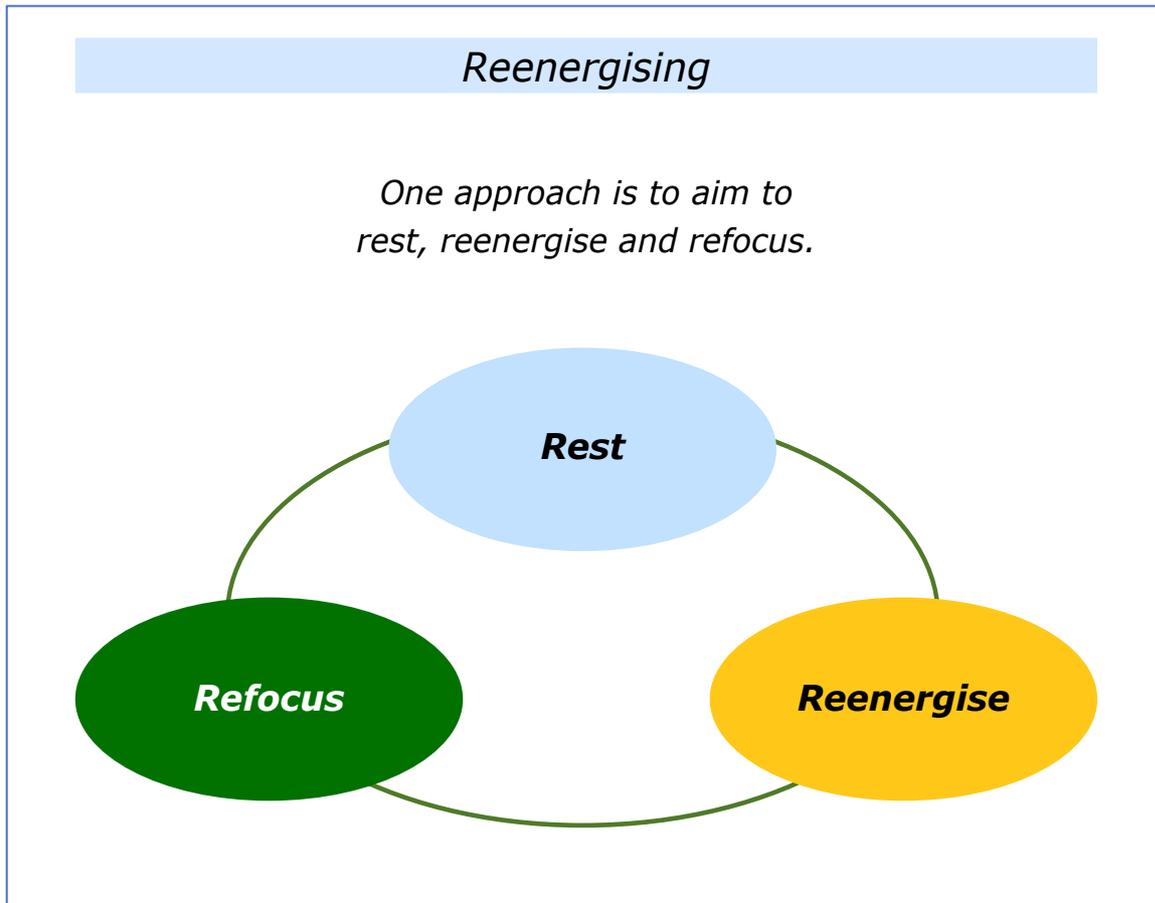
The specific things I can do to continue to phrase things in a positive way are:

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The Reenergising Approach



Different people reenergise themselves in different ways. Some do practical things to go through the following steps. They rest, reenergise and refocus. Imagine that at some point you may want to follow this approach in your own way. Let's explore how you can take these steps.

Resting

How do you rest? You may aim to relax, sleep or do other things to heal your body and soul. One person described their approach in this way.

"I listen to my body and then, when appropriate, take time to rest and relax. Sometimes I take a short nap; sometimes I take a walk; sometimes I listen to music."

Different people rest in different ways. Much depends on the kind of work they do. A writer will have different opportunities to rest compared to an athlete, medic or broadcaster.

Great workers aim to find time to relax and rest. They pace themselves properly so that, when necessary, they can rise to the occasion and deliver peak performances. Sometimes this also involves the next theme.

Reenergising

Different people reenergise themselves in different ways. Some take time out to reflect; some do activities they find stimulating. Here are some ways they describe.

I reenergise myself by:

Listening to music ... Encouraging other people ... Refocusing on my principles ... Looking at how I can translate these into action ... Focusing on what I want to give to people.

Let's return to your own life and work. Sometimes it can be useful: a) to set aside time to rest; b) to do things that reenergise you. When appropriate, you may move on to the next stage.

Refocusing

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you refocused on a specific activity? What did you do then to click into action? How did you continue to be fully engaged?

Some individuals set aside a block of time to take this step. Following their chosen ritual, they move into doing deep work. Concentrating fully, they may then flow, focus and finish.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may aim to rest, reenergise and refocus? 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 Reenergising 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 then to follow this approach in my own way are:

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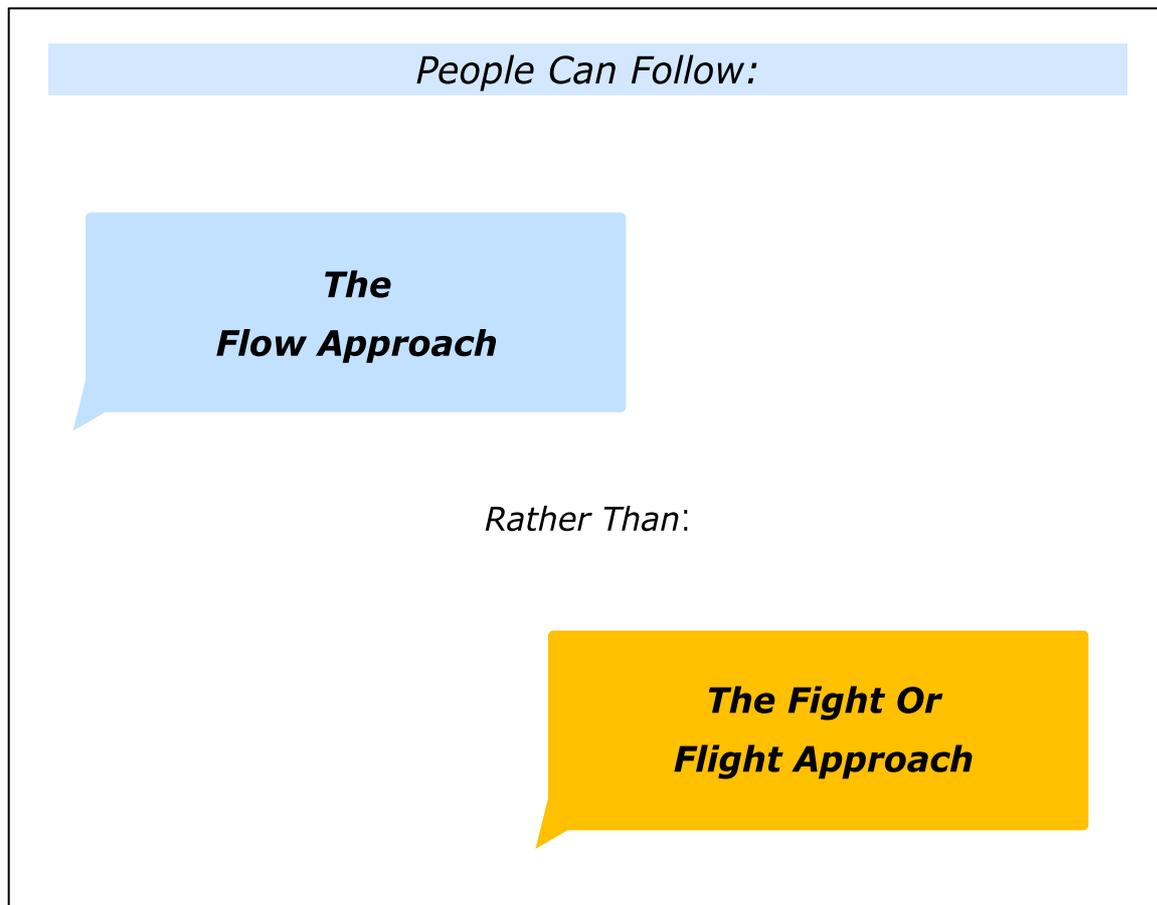
The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:

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The Flow Approach Rather Than The Fight Or Flight Approach



There are many ways to behave in challenging situations. One theory is that a person may go into fight or flight mode. This theory has become part of common parlance over the years.

There is another approach. Some people choose to flow in the challenging situation. They then focus and do their best to find fulfilment. Let's explore this approach.

Flow

Different people take this approach in different situations. They may be playing a sport, doing creative work, giving a speech, tackling a challenge or doing another activity.

Such people often make a conscious decision to take this approach. One person expressed this in the following way.

"My first step is to acknowledge my feeling about a situation. I may feel excited, concerned or have another feeling. It is important for me to recognise the reality of what I feel.

"My next step is to choose to channel the feeling by aiming to flow in the situation. I make friends with the feeling. Paradoxically, this has the effect of almost removing myself and looking down on the situation from above.

"The next step is to follow my own technique for being able to flow in the situation. This sometimes involves being able to relax, rehearse what I am going to do and then follow my chosen rhythm."

Some people aim to flow in extremely challenging situations. One person did this when embarking on a programme of medical treatment. They chose:

To do things that gave them positive energy;

To encourage themselves each day;

To focus on the goal of prolonging their life.

The person knew what they wanted to do in their life – both in the present and in the possible future. They saw the treatment as a chance to do some of these things now rather than put them off to the future.

Focus

People like to have a sense of purpose. Many also recognise the old rule that 'what you focus on you become'. Bearing in mind what they can control in a situation, some people take the following steps.

They focus on a positive goal. They may aim to encourage other people, perform superb work or do their best to achieve a compelling picture of success.

They focus on the benefits of achieving the goal. This can help them to stay motivated, even in the darkest hours. Focusing on the benefits – both for themselves and other people – can provide extra strength on the journey.

They clarify their action plan for achieving the goal. One approach is to clarify the key strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success. They then translate this into a clear action plan.

Fulfilment

Such people then click into action and do their best to achieve their goals. This can lead to them – and sometimes also other people – having a sense of fulfilment. Some people do this by taking the following steps.

They aim to do fine work. They build on their strengths, follow strategies that work and focus on continuous improvement. They then aim to achieve the picture of success.

They aim to finish properly. Some do this by finding and following their successful pattern for finishing. They then aim to flow, focus and do their best to finish successfully.

They may, as a by-product, sometimes find fulfilment. Achieving their goals, they have a deep sense of satisfaction. They may also do work that enables other people to experience fulfilment.

There are many ways to behave in challenging situations. One approach is to flow rather than go into fight or flight mode. Sometimes, of course, you may have to channel your fighting spirit to flow successfully.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may aim to flow, focus and do your best to find fulfilment? 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 sentence.

The Flow Approach

The specific situation where I may want to follow the flow approach - rather than the fight or flight approach - may be:

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The specific things I can do then to flow, focus and do my best to find fulfilment are:

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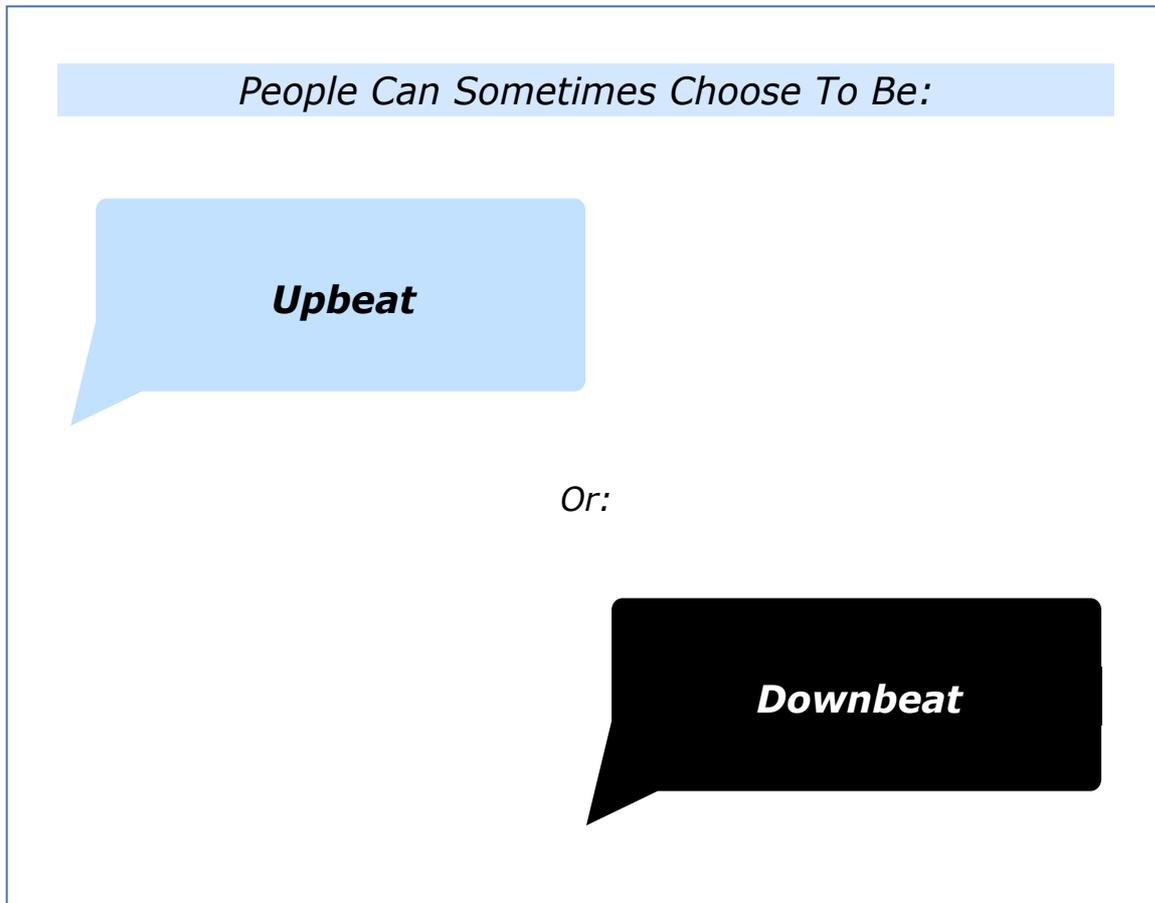
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Upbeat And Downbeat Approaches



There are many ways to live life. This section looks at how people can sometimes choose to be upbeat rather than downbeat. One person in their seventies expressed this in the following way.

"I seem to get more upbeat as I get older. Maybe I am just following the curve that shows that some people get happier from around fifty-five onwards.

"Perhaps it is because I appreciate life and focus on what I can control. I also see ways that, if people want to, they can solve some of the challenges in the world."

The world is full of ideas about how people can live fulfilling lives. Many of these return to the principles of being grateful, generous and making a good contribution.

We will explore some of these later – particularly those described in the Harvard University course on being happy. The key, however, is to translate these principles into action.

There are also many views about how people can develop their personalities. These often reflect the perennial arguments about nature and nurture.

One view is that an individual is born with a certain kind of personality. They can learn to channel their personality – rather than change their personality – but it plays a key part in shaping their moods.

A second view is that individuals who are given support are more likely to thrive. They may also learn key life skills from their parents, teachers and significant people in their lives.

A third view is that individuals can choose their attitude in certain situations. They can also become lifelong learners and develop their ability to shape their futures.

There are, of course, many other views. Bearing these in mind, people can sometimes choose to be upbeat rather than downbeat. Here are some definitions for these terms.

Upbeat – to focus on hope and happiness;

Downbeat – to focus on the lack of hope and happiness.

Some individuals who take the upbeat approach are often positive realists. They aim:

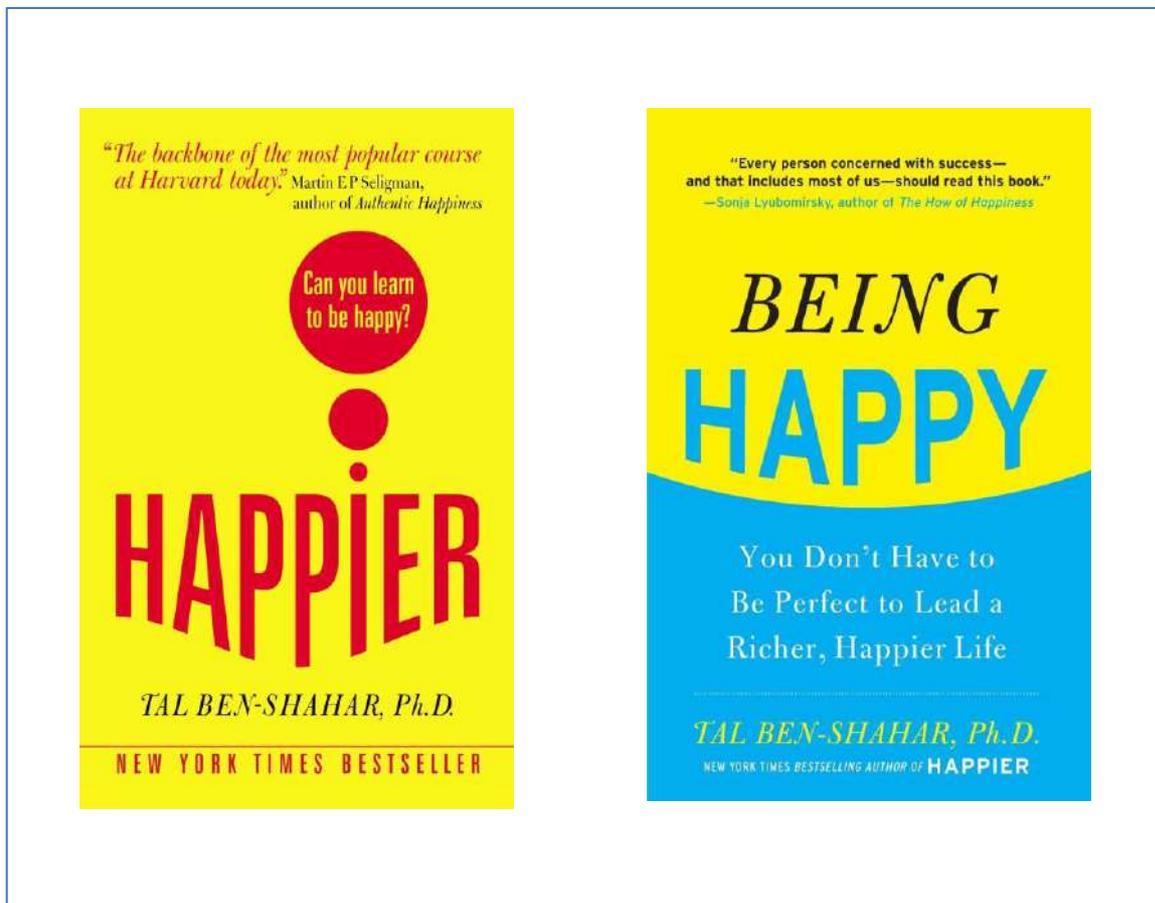
To have a positive attitude but also be good at reading reality;

To be a positive model and encourage other people;

To focus on the positive things in life and find possible solutions to challenges.

As mentioned earlier, there are many views on how people can increase the likelihood of being upbeat and happy. Tal Ben-Shahar described some of these in the programme he ran at Harvard University.

Here is an introduction to this approach. This is taken from both Tal's and the Harvard websites plus his books on happiness.



*Harvard's most popular course
was a class on how to be happier*

Tal Ben-Shahar loves teaching and his Harvard University course on *How To Be Happy* attracted over 800 students.

Why teach such a course? Tal recalled his own days as a student. Even though he was an outstanding achiever, something was missing. So later he created the kind of course he was looking for as a student. This aimed:

To provide an introduction to the research in the field of happiness;

To provide practical ways the students can apply these ideas in their lives and communities.

The course was based on research from positive psychology. This is the study of humanity at its best and the conditions that enable people to flourish.

So how can people be happier? Tal says some of the messages can sound corny but the secret is in actually translating these into action.

It is for people to do these things rather than just think about doing them. Here are some of the messages.

Accept painful emotions

These are part of being alive. The only people who don't feel pain are psychopaths and those who are dead.

Spend time with people you care about

This quality time is enjoyable and also gives us energy to do other things.

Enjoy time affluence

Appreciate life and the specific thing you are doing. Enjoy the moments, rather than try to do several things at once.

Simplify your life

This makes it easier to appreciate life. At the moment we are trying to cram more and more into our days.

Exercise

This is equivalent to some of the most powerful drugs that deal with depression or anxiety.

Breathe

Learning to breathe deeply and properly can improve our sense of well-being.

Cultivate gratitude

Research shows that people who keep a *Gratitude Journal* are more positive. This involves spending a few minutes each night writing down five things for which they are grateful. Such a simple exercise increases their optimism and even their health.

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that you want to follow some elements of the upbeat approach. How can you do this in your own way? What may 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 Upbeat Approach

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

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The specific things I can do to translate these ideas into action are:

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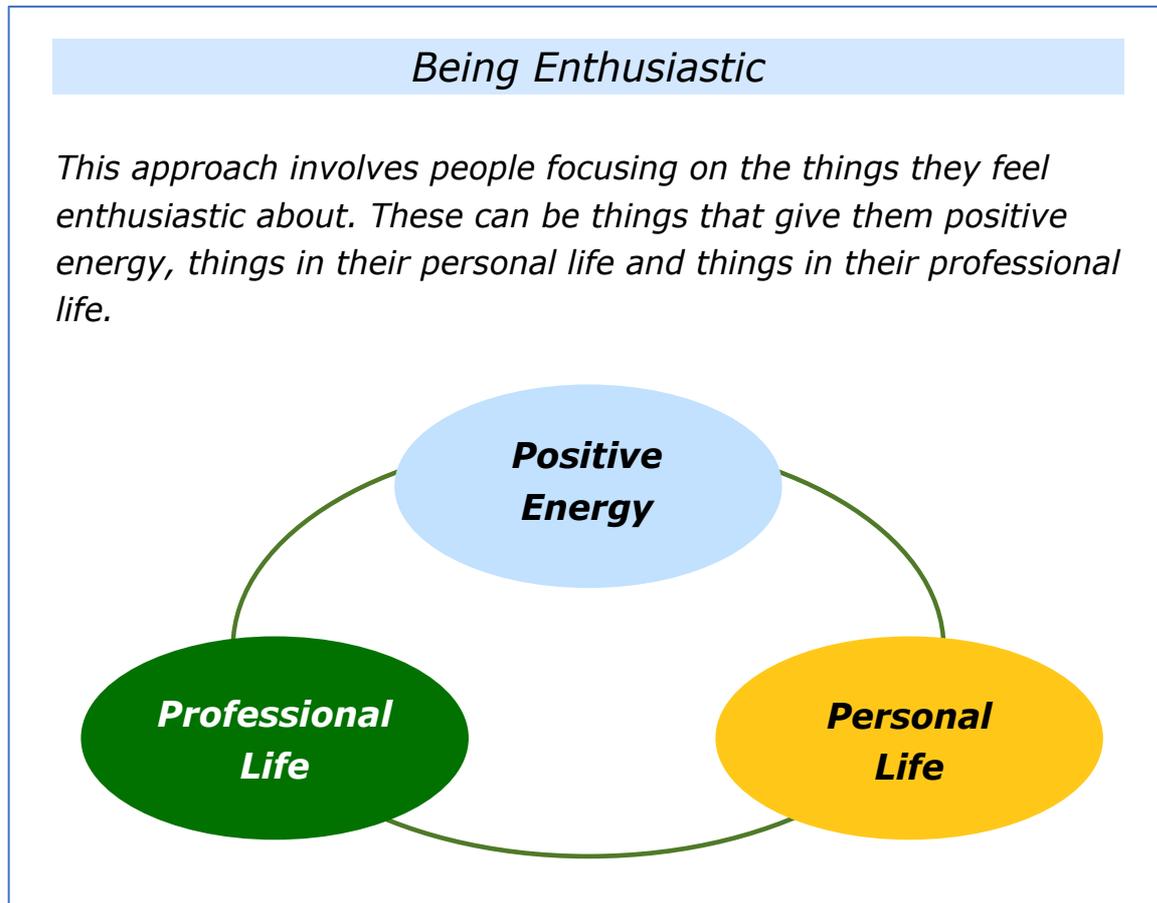
The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:

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The Enthusiastic Approach



There are many ways to live life. One approach is for people to focus on the things they feel enthusiastic about.

Enthusiasm is a key driver in life. Here are some of the many quotes about this topic.

"The secret of genius is to carry the spirit of the child into old age, which means never losing your enthusiasm." Aldous Huxley

"Watch how your enthusiasm can light up another's fire. This is how we wake up the world." Amy Ippoliti.

"Enthusiasm is one of the most powerful engines of success. When you do a thing do it with all your might. Be active, be energetic, be enthusiastic and faithful, and you will accomplish your objective." Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Different people have different things they feel enthusiastic about. One approach is to focus on the things that give them positive energy, things in their personal life and things in their professional life. Let's explore these themes.

Positive Energy

What are the things that you feel enthusiastic about that give you positive energy? Here are some answers that people may give to this question.

*The things I feel enthusiastic about
that give me positive energy are:*

Encouraging people ... Solving certain kinds of problems ... Making things work ... Rock Climbing ... Doing stimulating work ... Studying success ... Sharing knowledge.

This is a theme that is sometimes followed by educators, therapists and others who work with people. When appropriate, they invite a person:

To describe the things they feel enthusiastic about that give them positive energy;

To do more of these things in their daily life and work;

To focus on the benefits of doing these things.

People who do such things are more likely to feel alive. They may also get into the habit of feeling stronger, setting goals and achieving success.

Imagine that you have explored following some of these ideas in your own life. If appropriate, you may then move on to the next theme.

Personal Life

What are the things that you feel enthusiastic about in your personal life? Different people give different answers when exploring this theme. Here are some things they may say.

The things I feel enthusiastic about in my personal life are:

Being with my children ... Encouraging my partner ... Caring for my parents ... Living where we are ... Walking with my dogs ... Doing yoga ... Cooking ... Playing five a side football ... Singing in the choir.

Let's assume that you have explored some of these things. If appropriate, you may then move on to the next theme.

Professional Life

People love to keep developing in their professional lives. Some see this in terms of moving up the ladder and sitting in the C-Suite. Some focus on continuing to do stimulating work and making a different kind of career contribution.

Imagine that you want to encourage a person to consider this approach. This involves inviting them to explore the following questions.

What are the kinds of work you feel enthusiastic about doing? How can you find or create opportunities to do such work? What will be the benefits – to yourself, to your customers or to your employers - of doing such work?

This approach encourages a person to continue doing work they find stimulating. It also involves helping them: a) to find or create such opportunities; b) to show the benefits; c) to do the work and deliver success.

People who feel enthusiastic about their work are more likely to encourage both themselves and other people. This can bring benefits for all the stakeholders.

Let's return to your own situation. What are the things you feel enthusiastic about in your life and work? How can you continue doing these things? What will be the benefits? If you wish, try tackling the tackling the exercise on this theme.

The Enthusiastic Approach

*The specific things I feel
enthusiastic about are:*

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*The specific steps I can take to
focus on doing these things are:*

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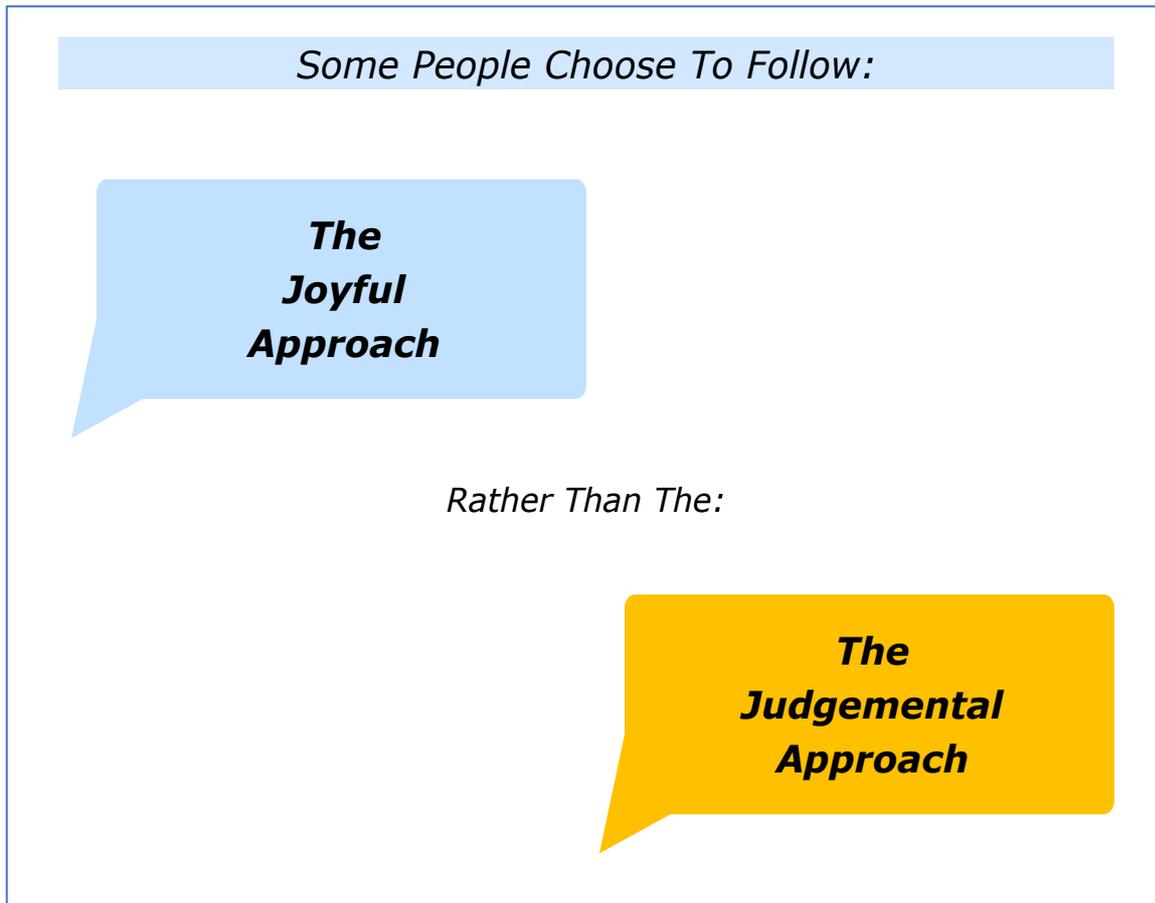
*The specific benefits of
doing these things may be:*

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The Joyful Approach Rather Than The Judgemental Approach



Different people choose to follow different approaches to life. The route they follow can have consequences – both for themselves and other people.

Some people follow the joyful approach. They may aim to do things that give joy to themselves and other people.

Some people follow the judgemental approach. They may be judgemental towards other people. Some may be judgemental towards themselves.

Some people follow the joyful approach but are also good judges of situations. They focus on how to help themselves and others to thrive.

Different people follow these approaches in different ways. Let's explore these themes.

The Joyful Approach

People love to experience a sense of joy. They often find this comes as an outcome of doing certain things, however, rather than making joy an end in itself. Different people achieve this feeling in different ways.

Looking at your own life, what are the things you do that may lead to feeling joyful? Here are some answers that people have given to this question.

*The specific things I do that
may lead to a sense of joy are:*

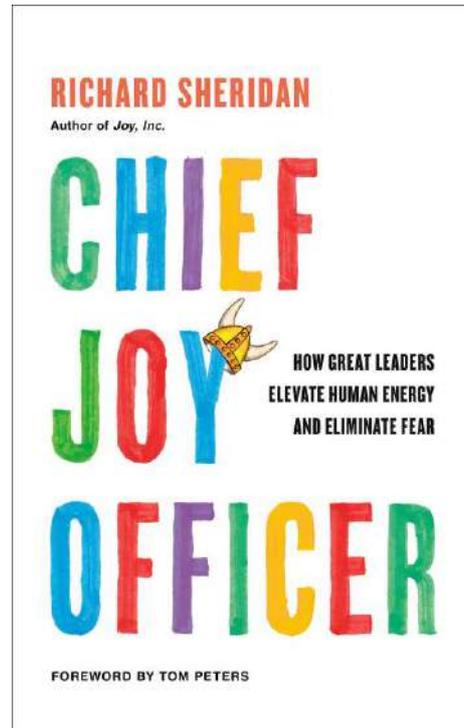
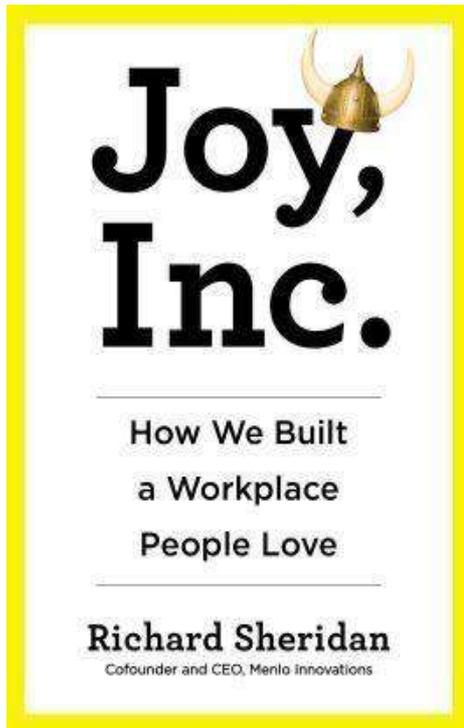
Giving to other people ... Counting my blessings ... Listening to music ... Singing in a choir ... Nurturing my garden ... Cooking for other people ... Being with our children ... Caring for animals.

Doing stimulating projects at work ... Making wood sculptures ... Coaching athletes ... Being a trusted advisor to my clients ... Helping people to solve problems ... Giving myself time to appreciate life.

Many people enjoy helping others to experience joy. They may do this as a parent, partner, friend, educator, chef, artist, performer, medic or in another role.

Some people focus on doing work they enjoy that brings joy to others. Some do it in the obvious roles when caring for people. Some do it in less obvious roles. Let's look at one example.

Richard Sheridan leads Menlo Innovations, a software company in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The company aims to build an intentionally joyful culture. Richard has published two books about the work they do. Below are excerpts from the organisation's website.



Our Way

It's all about JOY

At Menlo, we do more than design and build great software. Not that great software is a small thing. It's rare. But we aim for something higher. Our processes, our culture, our work ethic—they all aim toward a single goal: joy.

So what does JOY look like at Menlo?

Joy is what happens when people use our software with ease, even excitement. It's what happens when we exceed our project sponsors' expectations. It's what happens when our teamwork brings out the best in each other and in what we create.

Our Mission

Being intentional about restoring JOY to technology. Since 2001, Menlo has pursued returning joy to technology. Our mission is to end human suffering in the world as it relates to technology.

Who are we serving? We've learned that our stakeholders fall into one of three groups: end users of technology, project sponsors, and project teams.

What will delight them? We champion the importance of quality through every part of our process. It takes a high-functioning team using the right tools. Paired programming, open-space collaboration, frequent client feedback, short iterative work cycles - in the end, they're all about quality.

Some people believe it is important to spread joy. Some take another route. Let's explore this approach.

The Judgemental Approach

Many people have strong views on how to live life. Some express these in a judgemental way. They believe their approach is the only way to live and are intolerant of people who are different.

Such people sometimes see themselves as superior to others. They may criticise, attack or aim to suppress those who think or behave differently. Some get a kick out of trying to make others feel small or afraid.

Some people have a different approach to being judgemental. They are judgemental towards themselves. Maybe because of their upbringing, they may have negative scripts. They keep criticising themselves or feel that whatever they do will never be good enough.

Such people may link their own self-esteem to how other people judge them. They may seek constant affirmation or aim to get accolades. Such responses may work for a while. But they then embark on another round of aiming to be judged as worthwhile in other people's eyes.

The Joyful But Being A Good Judge Of Situations Approach

Some people follow the joyful approach but are also good judges of situations. They are often savvy. They have lots of life experience and take the following steps:

They continue to do things that help themselves and other people to experience joy;

They have the ability to read situations, recognise patterns and see the potential consequences;

They are good at making decisions that will enable themselves and other people to thrive.

Such people are good at reading reality. They may also have built a repertoire of tools they can apply in both personal and professional situations. They then aim to apply this knowledge to get the desired positive results.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific situation where you may want to follow elements of the joyful 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 Joyful 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 then to follow this approach in my own way 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 Potentially Challenging Journey To Getting Positive Results Approach



There are many ways to develop. One approach is to pursue a potentially journey towards getting positive results. Looking back, when may have you pursued such a journey?

This could have been in your personal or professional life. You may have made a transition, had treatment for an illness, completed a triathlon, overcome a setback or tackled another challenge.

What was your motivation for the journey? What were the results you aimed to achieve? How did you prepare properly? How did you pursue the journey? What happened as a result?

Imagine that you want to follow similar principles in the future. Let's explore the steps you can take.

Positive Results

The first step will be to focus on the desired positive results. Much will depend, of course, on your chosen journey.

A person seeking asylum may aim to reach a safe country and build a new life. A person embarking on a course of treatment may aim to restore their quality of life and health. A person leading a mountain rescue team may aim to get everybody home safely.

Can you think of a potentially challenging journey you may embark on in the future? What may be the positive results you want to achieve? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

The Potentially Challenging Journey

The potentially challenging journey I may choose to embark on in the future may be:

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The positive results I may want to achieve by embarking on this journey may be:

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Preparing For The Journey

Different people prepare in different ways. Much depends on journey they aim to undertake. Some prepare in a practical, physical and psychological way. Here is how one person took this approach.

"I spent 6 months preparing for a 100 mile run. The physical preparation was relatively simple. It involved eating the right food and slowly building up my endurance.

"The psychological part was more complex. It involved talking with my partner and discussing the practical implications for us as a family. They gave me their full backing, however, otherwise I would not have committed myself to the run.

"The next step was to consider the pleasure and pain involved. My work as a medic means helping people to deal with pain. How could I increase the pleasure and manage any pain on the physical and psychological journey?"

"I am the kind of person who likes models. I find it easy to manage emotions if I have a framework: a) for making sense of what is happening; b) for then channelling my emotions in a positive way.

"I found several models to manage both my physical and psychological health. These helped me to prepare properly and also complete the run successfully. I now sometimes apply these in my daily work as a medic."

Imagine that you have prepared for your chosen journey. It will then be time to move onto the next stage.

Pursuing The Journey

Different people pursue different kinds of journeys. They may pursue a physical journey, a psychological journey or a combination of both. Sometimes there may be ups, sometimes there may be downs.

How to deal with these challenges? Some people keep focusing on the positive results to achieve. One person described their approach in the following way.

"I was fortunate to get early warning signs about cancer. As my consultant saying: 'The good news is that, because we have caught it early, you will make a good recovery.'

"The total treatment would take around six months. Bearing this in mind, I created a structure I could follow each day. This helped me to follow a routine and, when necessary, deal with random events.

"The first three months involved taking hormone tablets which led to putting on weight. I tried to counter this by increasing my walking to 12,000 steps a day. Sometimes this was tiring, but my dogs enjoyed the extra activity.

"The next stage was having 35 sessions of radiotherapy. It involved driving for an hour each day to hospital, having an enema and getting the treatment.

"Sometimes this was challenging. As I told the consultant, however, it was a choice between 35 enemas and death. So I chose to focus on the goal – which was to regain my health and live longer.

"There was plenty of time to reflect on the journey. You learn to have a sense of perspective and focus on what is important in life. I now try to carry these lessons into my daily life."

Imagine that you are pursuing your chosen journey. This can sometimes be helped by the next stage.

Positive Results On The Journey

Different people choose different ways to encourage themselves and others on the journey. Much depends on the kind of journey they are undertaking.

They may aim to compete well in sport, rescue people at sea or renovate a house. They may aim to manage a transition, turnaround a company or tackle another challenge.

People who aim to retake charge of their lives, for example, sometimes work towards developing a healthy lifestyle. Bearing this in mind, they may aim:

To do positive things and get some early successes – this creates momentum and builds confidence;

To keep a positive diary – such as: a) what they have done well and how they can do more of these things; b) what they can do better and how;

To keep focusing on the positive results they want to achieve – such as their picture of success.

You will have your own way of encouraging yourself on your chosen journey. One approach is to get successes on the way towards achieving your positive goal.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a potentially challenging journey you may want to tackle? This could be in your personal or professional life.

How can you clarify the positive results you want to achieve? How can you prepare properly? How can you pursue your chosen journey? How can you do your best to get positive results?

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

The Potentially Challenging Journey To Getting Positive Results 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 then to
follow this approach in my own way are:*

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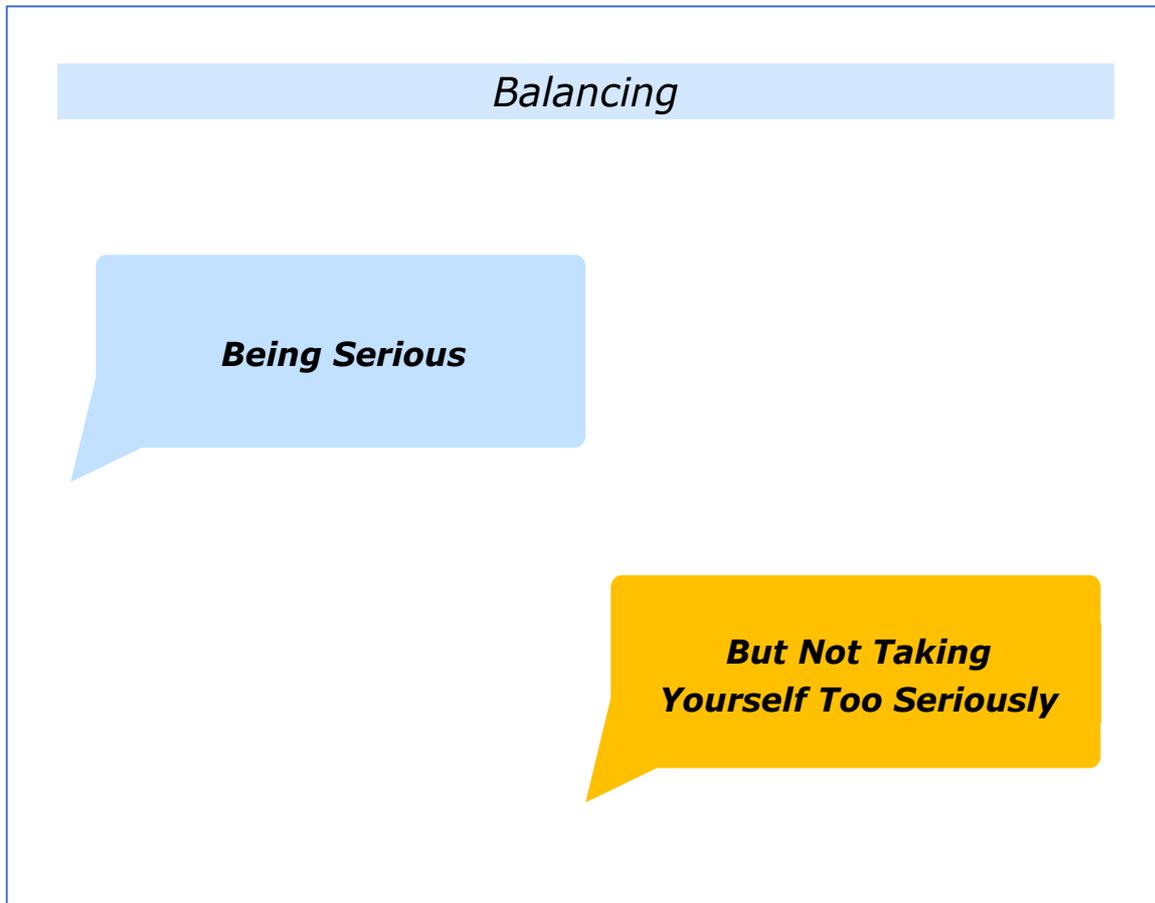
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Being Serious But Not Taking Yourself Too Seriously Approach



There are many ways to live life. Some people aim to be serious about the work they do. At the same time, however, they do not take themselves too seriously.

Some people have even put a number to this approach. They may call it Rule 6 or Rule 66. The philosophy is the same, however, which is:

Do your best in life but also see things in perspective.

Don't take yourself too seriously.

Sages sometimes take this approach. They start by immersing themselves fully in their chosen route. They may do this when following a spiritual practice, pursuing a vocation or doing a piece of work.

Such people aim to do their best. They take their work seriously, for example, but they do this in a positive way. They are grateful for the abilities they have been given and aim to use these in their work.

Sages have a sense of perspective, however, and see the big picture. They see the work they do as important but do not see themselves as important. They recognise that they are small in the great sweep of history.

Some people go another route. They believe in their own importance and take themselves extremely seriously. They focus on what they call their personal brand and want to promote themselves.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific activity where you want to do serious work but in a positive way? How can you do such work? What will be the benefits?

Bearing this in mind, however, how can you see things in perspective? When appropriate, how can you not take yourself too seriously? 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.

Being Serious But Not Taking Myself Too Seriously

*The specific activity where I may
aim to do serious work may be:*

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*The specific things I can do to be serious
in a positive way when doing this work are:*

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*The specific things I can do to
not take myself too seriously are:*

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The Making The Most Of Life Whilst Managing Challenges Approach



There are many ways to live life. One approach is to make the most of life whilst managing challenges. It is to build on what you have and find solutions to other issues. Let's explore these themes.

Making The Most Of Life

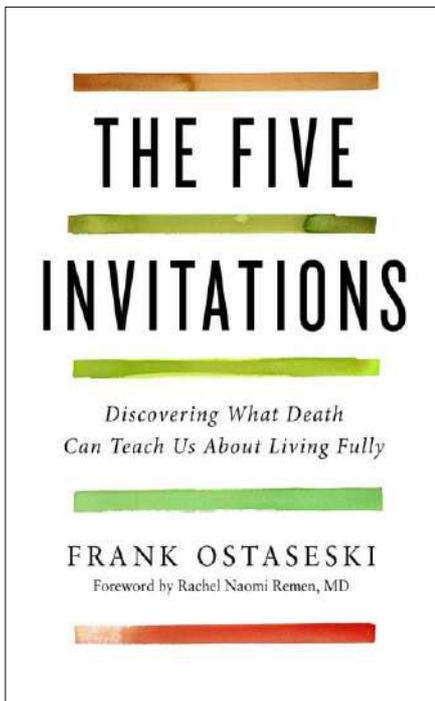
People who take this approach often have certain characteristics. They often aim:

To have a positive attitude ... To be grateful ... To appreciate their assets ... To build on what they have ... To make the most of each day ... To encourage other people ... To make a positive contribution.

During my life I have met many such people. They often appreciate life but are aware that it is transitory. They therefore aim make the most of each day.

Today there are many books on the theme of 'What the living can learn from the dying'. These often highlight similar themes. Frank Ostaseski explores these in his book *The Five Invitations*.

He works in a hospice and is also director of the Metta Institute – an educational centre devoted to end-of-life care in America. Here are excerpts from an interview he did with Sean Illing.



Frank Ostaseski describes what we can learn from people who are dying.

He underlines what most of us know intuitively. One of the key lessons is:

"Love just as hard as you can.

"Because in the end that is what matters most."

The Five Invitations

- *Don't Wait*
- *Welcome Everything, Push Away Nothing*
- *Bring Your Whole Self to the Experience*
- *Find a Place of Rest in the Middle of Things*
- *Cultivate Don't Know Mind*

We aim to do several things in a hospice.

First, to make sure that a person's pain is well managed, that their symptoms are under control, that they're not suffering.

Second, we try and find out what really is important to them.

For some people, it's relationships. For others, it's about looking back on their lives and seeing what legacy they're leaving behind. For others, it's about discovering a kindness or forgiveness that they were looking for their whole lives.

I think this work is really about companioning. It's really about being in a relationship with this person and walking hand in hand with them as they approach their death.

When we come close to the end of our life, what's really important makes itself known. It isn't whether or not we have two Mercedes or whether or not we spent more time at the office.

For most people, it's about relationships. It's about answering two questions:

"Am I loved?" and "Did I love well?"

So much of what happens around the end of life boils down to those two questions.

If those questions are important then, why aren't they important to us now? Why should we wait until the time of our death to discover the answers to those or even ask ourselves those questions?

That's the first thing that comes to mind. The second is that I think that when we begin to keep death close at hand, we understand just how precarious this life actually is.

And when we see that ... then we come to see just how precious it is, and then we don't want to waste a moment. Then we want to jump into our life.

We want to tell the people we love that we love them. We want to live our life in a way that's responsible, meaningful, purposeful.

Death is not just happening to us at the end of a long road. It's always with us. It's in the marrow of every passing moment.

I call it "the secret teacher that's hiding in plain sight" that helps us to discover really what matters most. It's all changing. Live in harmony with that. Be grateful for what's here in front of us.

And love as hard as you can. Love just as hard as you can, because in the end, that's what matters most.

You will make the most of life in your own way. Sometimes this may also involve focusing on the next step.

Managing Challenges

Everybody has strengths. Everybody also has challenges. Different people behave in different ways when encountering difficulties.

Some people have a positive attitude and use words like 'challenges' rather than 'problems'. They may also have learned from positive models who helped them to develop their skills for dealing with difficult situations.

Some people actually relish challenges. They actively seek ways to test themselves in certain situations. They then use these skills to develop as people or professionals.

Many people make the most of life whilst also managing the challenges. Some take this approach when having treatment for cancer or tackling other issues.

They define themselves by who they are – their centre – and continue to do things they give them positive energy. They do not define themselves by an illness.

Everybody has their own way of managing challenges. Some people follow the Three C approach. When tackling an issue, they explore the following themes.

Clarity

What is the challenge? What are the things I can control in the situation? What are the real results I want to achieve - the picture of success? What will be the benefits of achieving these goals?

Creativity

What are the choices going forwards? What are the consequences – the pluses and minuses - of each option? What is the attractiveness of each option on a scale 0-10? Are there any other potential creative solutions?

Concrete Results

What is the route – or combination of routes – I want to follow? What is the action plan? How can I get some quick success and encourage myself on the journey? How can I do my best to achieve the picture of success?

Different people have different models for tackling challenges. One person explained their approach in the following way.

"I understand that some of the issues are connected but I often aim to box off the challenges. This helps me to feel more in control of the situation.

"I aim: a) to focus on one challenge at a time; b) to do my best to solve that challenge; c) to box off that challenge and then move on to the next challenge."

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific situation where you may want to make the most of life whilst also managing challenges?

What may be the specific situation? What can you do then to make the most of life? What can you do to manage any potential challenges? 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.

Making The Most Of Life Whilst Managing Challenges

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 then to make the most of life are:

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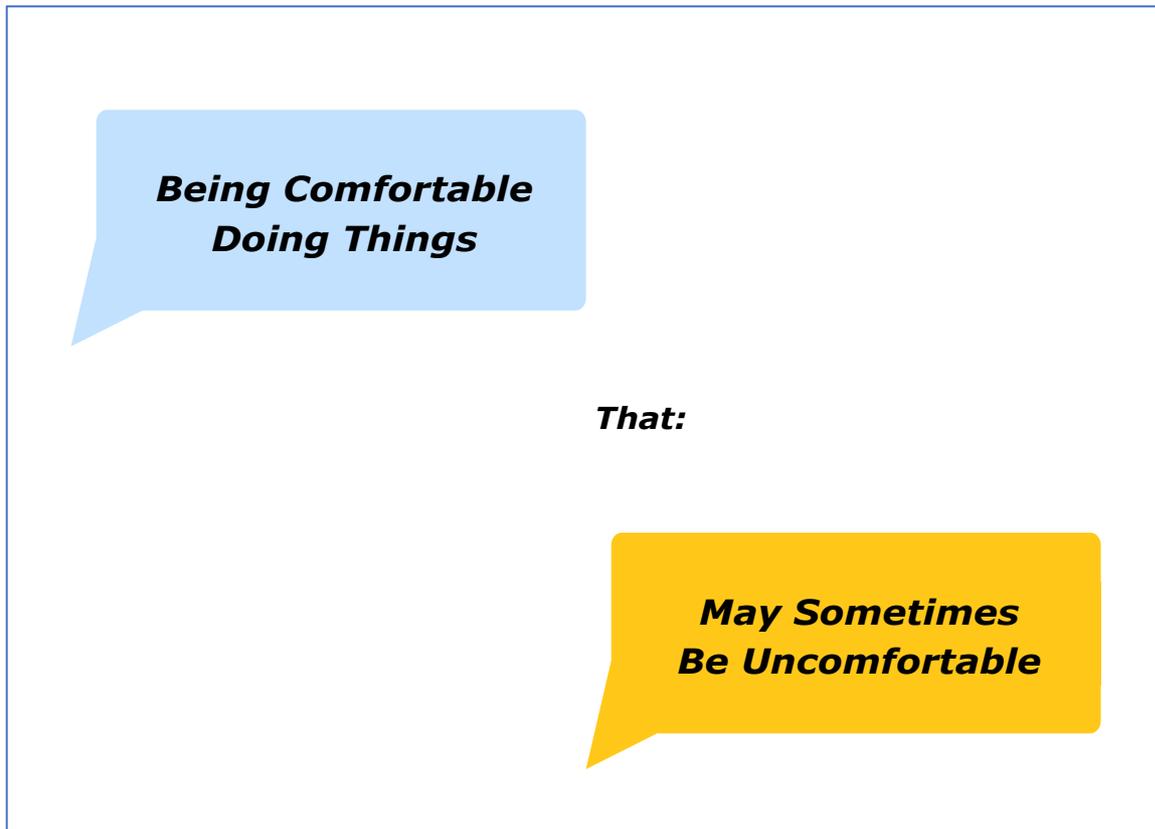
The specific things I can do then to manage the potential challenges are:

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The Being Comfortable Doing Things That May Sometimes Be Uncomfortable Approach



Great workers take this approach. They are comfortable doing things that may sometimes be uncomfortable.

They may do this when embarking on a course of medical treatment, climbing a mountain, leading a team or doing another activity. They choose to take this approach because they want to achieve a particular goal.

Different people follow it in different ways. Let's explore the steps that some people take.

*They clarify the benefits of
achieving the picture of success*

Such people begin by clarifying their goal. They may aim to take care of their health, play in a sporting event, pursue a particular career, tackle a challenge or do another activity.

Bearing in mind their aim, they clarify the benefits of achieving the picture of success. They keep focusing on these benefits to motivate themselves during the journey.

*They clarify what may be the comfortable and
uncomfortable things on the way to achieving success*

Such people are often positive but realistic. They clarify both the pluses and minuses involved in working to achieve the goals.

They clarify the specific things they may find comfortable. They may be doing something where: a) they will be playing to their strengths; b) they will find it satisfying; c) they will get successes.

They clarify the specific things they may find uncomfortable. They may need to manage physical, psychological or other challenges. They focus on how they can manage these events.

Such people then look at the whole picture. Bearing in mind the goal they want to achieve, they clarify whether they are prepared to accept the whole package. If so, they move on to the next stage.

*They do the comfortable and uncomfortable
things on the way to achieving success*

Great workers move into action. Some take the following steps: a) they do the comfortable things; b) they manage the uncomfortable things; c) they do their best to achieve the picture of success.

Much depends, of course, on the specific issue a person is tackling. One leader described their approach in the following way.

"Looking at my professional life, I am comfortable doing many things in my role as a leader. These include making decisions, setting the direction and guiding the team to success.

"I am also comfortable doing some things that could be uncomfortable. These include making tough decisions, managing my financial backers and rebuilding the team.

"Looking at my personal life, I followed a similar approach when doing a course of radiotherapy. This involved starting by clarifying the goal – which was regain my health and live longer.

"There were things I was comfortable doing during the treatment. I also decided to be comfortable with some of the more inconvenient aspects. This helped me on the way towards achieving the goal."

You may have encountered similar scenarios in your own life or work. Bearing in mind the goal to achieve, you may have decided: a) to build on the comfortable things; b) to manage the uncomfortable things; c) to work towards the picture of success.

Looking ahead, can you think of situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

What may be the specific situation? What may be the goal you want to achieve? How can you build on the comfortable things and manage the uncomfortable things? What may be the benefits of achieving the picture of success?

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

Being Comfortable Doing Things That May Be Uncomfortable

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 then to follow this approach in my own way are:

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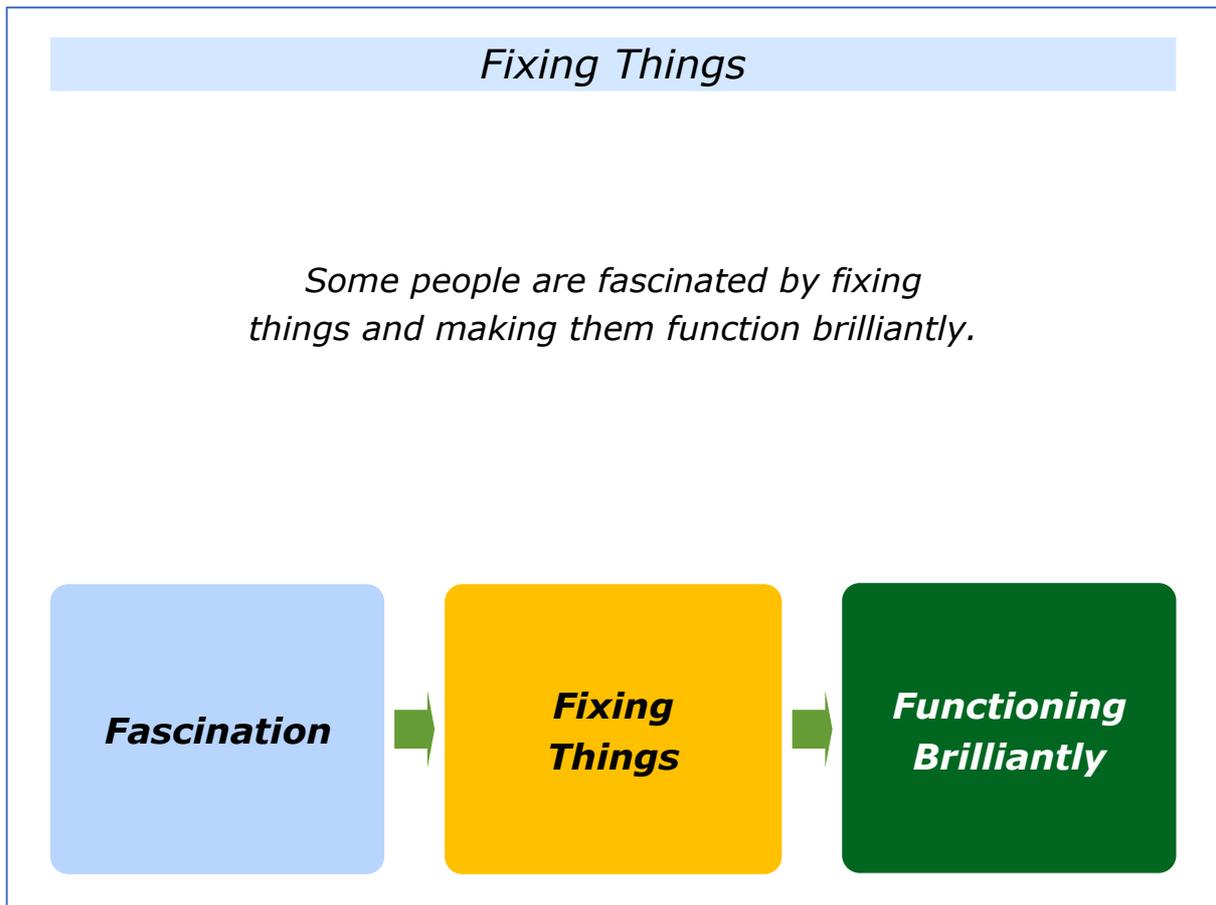
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Fixing Things Approach



Some people are fascinated by fixing things and making them function brilliantly. This is a route taken by restorers, medics, engineers and people in other fields. Let's explore these themes.

Fascination

Different people are fascinated by different things. A medic on the TV programme *24 hours In A&E* described their approach in the following way.

"When I was young I became fascinated by biology and how the human body worked. This inspired me to become a doctor."

"Working in Accident and Emergency you don't know what is coming in next. You have to stay calm, stabilise the person and then help them to begin their recovery.

"I still find the job fascinating. But one day I may move on to specialising in another area for helping people to be healthy."

Imagine that you are fascinated by how things work and how they can be improved in a certain activity. You may then also focus on the next theme.

Fixing Things

Many people love fixing things. They may do this when solving problems, repairing engines, helping people to heal, renovating houses or making order out of chaos. They get satisfaction from making things work.

Different people do this in different ways. Several years ago I worked with leader who loved fixing things. He expressed this in the following way.

"I have always loved solving problems. This now includes turning around companies. I am often called in to help troubled companies that have a real chance of becoming successful.

"I like to take a company from 3/10 to 8/10. Sometimes it may reach 10/10. At that point I tend to get bored and look for the next challenge. I like making things work better."

Imagine that you like fixing things in a certain activity. Sometimes this may also involve focusing on the next theme.

Functioning Brilliantly

Some people like to go beyond fixing problems. They like to keep improving things until these function brilliantly.

This approach is exemplified in the TV programme *The Repair Shop*. People bring along broken or neglected furniture, toys, watches or other items.

The craft workers go beyond fixing the problems. They restore the pieces to their former glory and, when dealing with mechanical things, make sure these work superbly.

This is an approach followed by many people. They love to keep improving systems until these can be relied upon to continually deliver peak performances. They combine science and art to make them function brilliantly.

Let's return to your own life. Can you think of a specific activity where you may want to follow elements of the fixing approach? How can you do this 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.

The Fixing Things Approach

The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of the fixing things 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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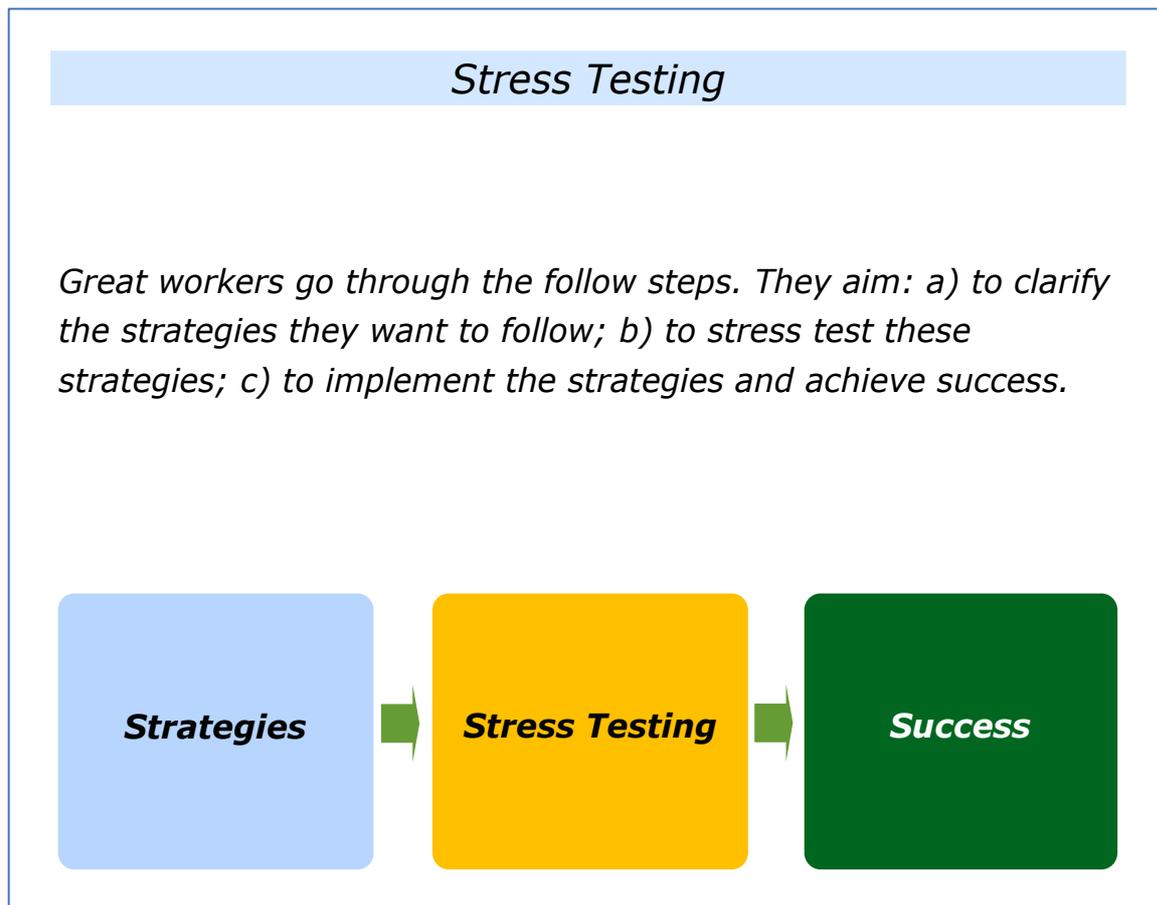
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps are:

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The Stress Testing The Strategies Approach



Great workers are often positive but realistic. Such people start by clarifying the real results they want to achieve. They then aim:

To clarify the strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success;

To stress test the strategies by simulating the possible things that could happen when translating these into action;

To implement the strategies and do their best to achieve the picture of success.

Such people take this approach when building flood defences, designing space rockets, leading a company, rehearsing difficult conversations with employees or other activities.

Some people call this the pre-mortem stage as opposed to the post-mortem stage. They aim to see how something will react when subjected to certain conditions.

The stress testing part is crucial. Such people see how their chosen strategies will work in every conceivable scenario. Sometimes this leads to confirming the strategies. Sometime it leads to making adjustments. Sometime it leads to starting again.

People then do the work. Keeping a constant eye on what is happening, they build on what is working and find solutions to challenges. People keep going until they achieve success.

Looking at your own life, can you recall a time when you stress tested the strategies you planned to follow? You may have done this when preparing for an interview, leading a project, tackling a tough challenge or doing another activity.

What did you do to stress test the strategies? How did you clarify the potential difficulties? How did you make plans to deal with the challenges? What happened as a result of taking these steps?

Stress Testing Can Lay The Foundations For Achieving Success

Some organisations refuse to explore challenging scenarios. When problems occur, they try to pass the buck or say that such events were unpredictable. It also often emerges that the leaders had failed to take heed of previous warnings.

Great organisations stress test their chosen strategies before implementing these fully. Some may also invite outsiders to give a view and think the unthinkable.

McKinsey & Company have produced an excellent article on this theme called *Have you tested your strategy lately?* Below are just a few of the questions they ask.

Does your strategy beat the market? Does it tap a true source of advantage? Does it embrace uncertainty? Does it balance commitment and flexibility? Is your strategy contaminated by any bias? Is there conviction to act on your strategy? Have you translated it into an action plan?

Many years ago I worked with a yachting team that took part in a round-the-world race. After answering questions similar to those listed above, they then practiced implementing the strategies.

The crew began by getting the basics right in icy but relatively good conditions. They then kept increasing the difficulties by, for example, rescuing a man who had fallen overboard.

Wasn't that risky? Certainly it was dangerous. But it would have been more dangerous to set out without knowing how to rescue somebody in a heavy sea.

Great teams settle on their chosen strategies and get the basics right. They then increase the stress levels to ensure they can perform brilliantly when under pressure.

Looking at my own work with organisations, we have often clarified the strategies we can follow to give ourselves the greatest chance of success. Looking ahead, we have then explored the following themes.

Are we serious?

Bearing in mind the pluses and minuses involved, do we really want to implement the strategies? If so, how can we build on the pluses and minimise the minuses?

What are the challenges we may face? How can we prevent some of the difficulties happening? How can we manage them if they do happen?

Let's take a reality check. On a scale 0 – 10, how high would we rate our chances of achieving success?

What can we do to maintain or improve the rating? What else can we do to give ourselves the greatest chance of success?

Great individual workers ask similar questions. They then rehearse how to translate the strategies into action. Sometimes they do this in real conditions; sometimes they may use mental rehearsal. Whatever method they use, however, they aim to rise to occasion when it matters.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking to the future, can you think of a situation when it would be useful to stress test your strategies?

This could be a personal or professional situation. You may be aiming to take an exam, rebuild your team, deal with a potential crisis, have a difficult conversation with people or do another activity.

Imagine you have settled on the key strategies you can follow to achieve success. How can you stress test these strategies? How can you, if appropriate, make the necessary adjustments? How can you then translate these strategies into action?

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

The Stress Testing 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 then to follow this approach in my own way are:

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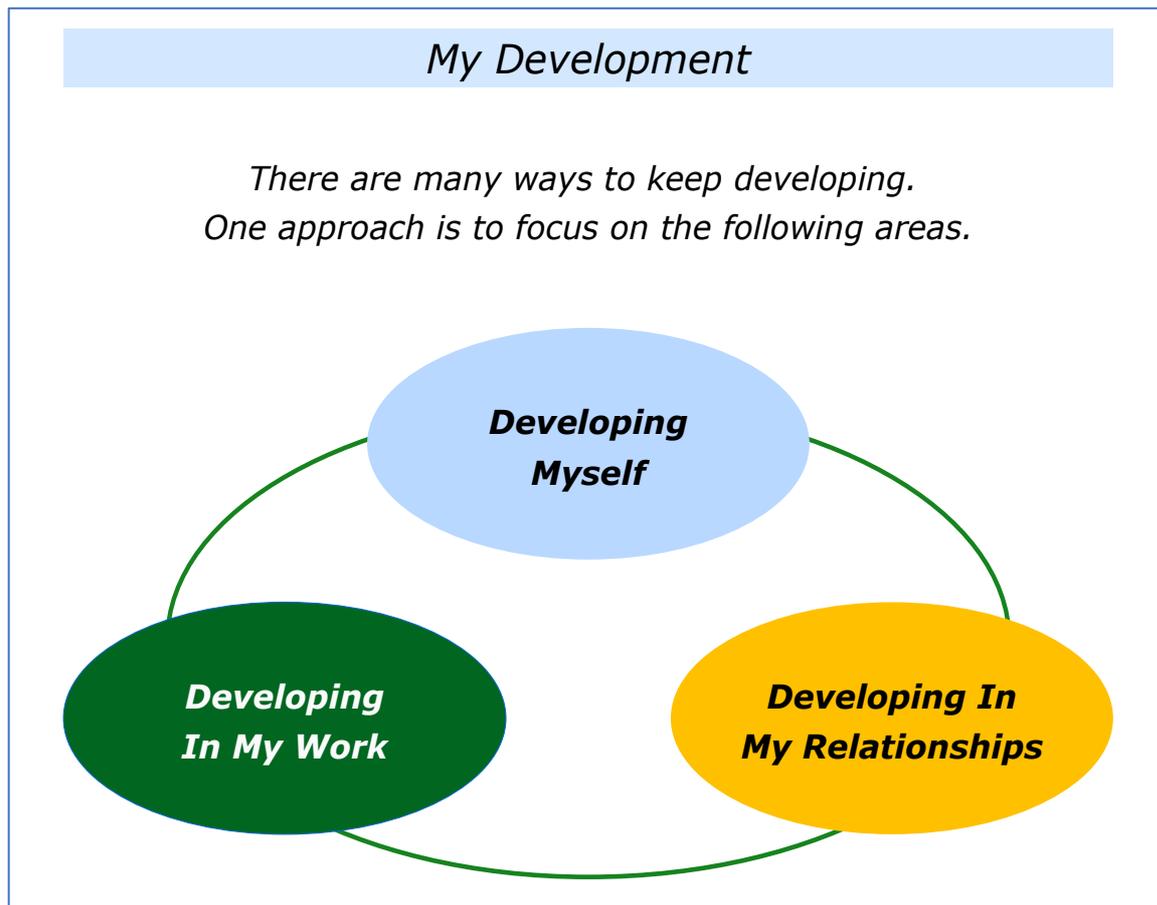
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Managing Your Development Approach



There are many ways to develop. One approach is to stay healthy and continue to develop yourself, to develop in your relationships and to develop in 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 your daily life.

Developing Myself

Different people have different approaches to development. One person described their situation 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?"

After exploring various options, he chose to improve his health and encourage people in his relationships. Like many people who develop new 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;

To relearn how to breathe deeply and feel more relaxed.

Different people use different ways to develop themselves. They may choose to become fitter, learn a language, develop a new skill, embark on an adventure or do another activity.

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

Describe the rating you would give in terms of being healthy and continue to develop yourself. Do this on a scale 0 - 10.

Describe the specific things you can do to maintain or improve the rating.

Describe the specific benefits - both for yourself and other people - of doing these things.

Myself

The rating I would give regarding being healthy and continuing to develop myself 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 – both for myself and other people – will be:

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*

Developing In My Relationships

The person mentioned above moved on to describing another area where they wanted to develop. They expressed this in the following way.

"Although I can develop myself, the most critical area 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 experiencing problems at school, so I must give him more encouragement. I would also like to rebuild relationships with some old friends."

Bearing these thoughts in mind, he made plans for sharing quality time with people. He aimed:

To set aside 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 re-join his old five-a-side football team.

Different people focus on different things to develop their relationships. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to do the following.

Describe the rating you would give in terms of being healthy and continue to develop in your relationships. Do this on a scale 0 - 10.

Describe the specific things you can do to maintain or improve the rating.

Describe the specific benefits - both for yourself and other people - of doing these things.

My Relationships

*The rating I would give regarding
being healthy and continuing
to develop in my relationships 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
– both for myself and other people – will be:*

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Developing In My Work

Many people are familiar with the idea of developing in their work by improving their skills. On some occasions, however, it may involve refocusing on doing work they find satisfying.

This was the step being taken by the person mentioned earlier. They described their situation in the following way.

"I seemed to enjoy my work more before I got to the C-Suite. On several occasions, for example, I led pioneering projects that helped companies to stay ahead of the field.

"Now I spend my time trying to operate a big engine and make it work properly. This is vital but it does not play to my strengths."

Bearing these thoughts in mind, he took the following steps in his work. He chose:

To move to another role in the company where – after making the business case for each one – he could lead pacesetting projects;

To start his own website where he was able to, within the bounds of confidentiality, pass on his knowledge to other people;

To move away from the capital to a smaller town where the family had a better quality of life.

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

Describe the rating you would give in terms of being healthy and continuing to develop in your work. Do this on a scale 0 - 10.

Describe the specific things you can do to maintain or improve the rating.

Describe the specific benefits - both for yourself and other people - of doing these things.

My Work

*The rating I would give regarding
being healthy and continuing
to develop in your work is:*

_____ / 10

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

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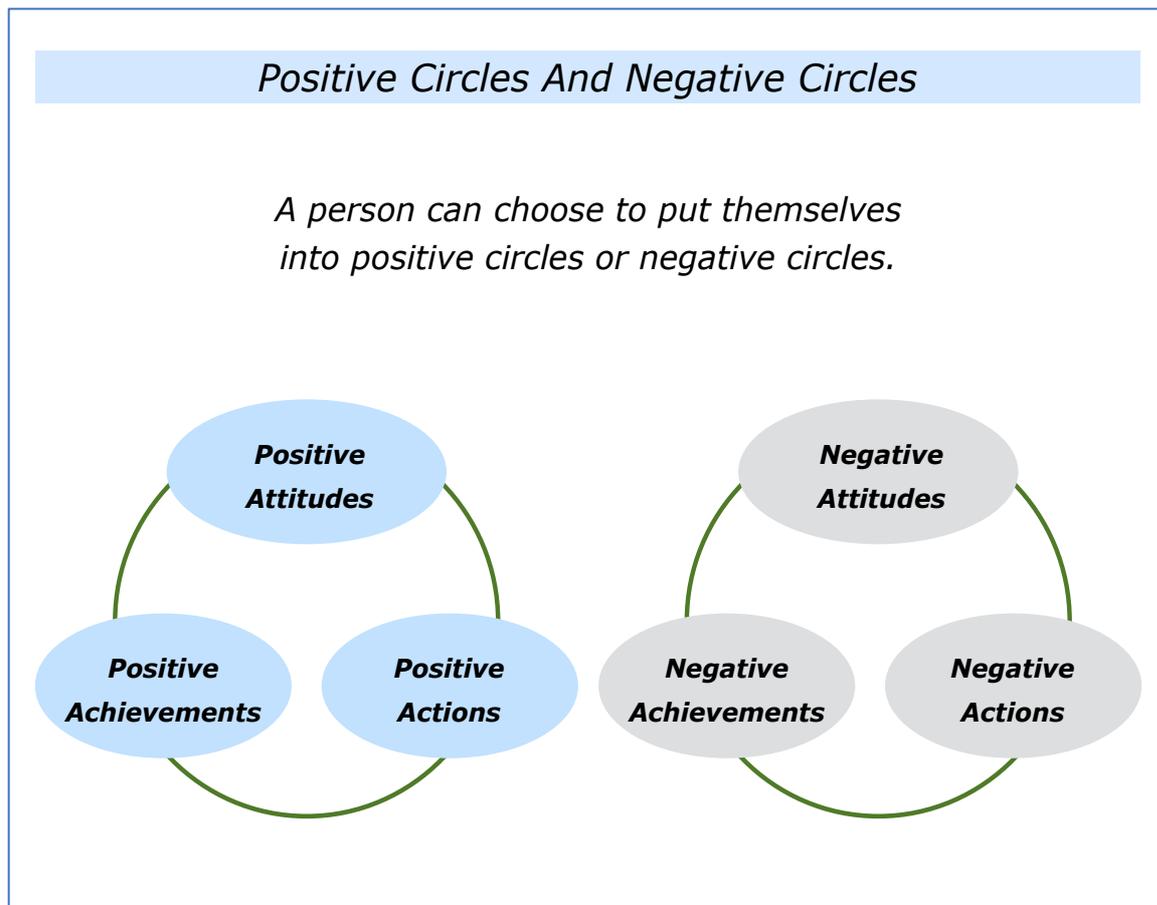
*The specific benefits of taking these steps
– both for myself and other people – will be:*

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The Positive Circles Rather Than Negative Circles Approach



There are many ways to live life. One view is that a person can choose to put themselves into positive circles or negative circles. Let's explore this view.

Positive Circles

Looking back, can you think of a time when you put yourself into a positive circle? You may have chosen to have a positive attitude, translate this into positive actions and, as a result, achieve positive things.

You may have been changing your lifestyle, recovering from a setback, tackling a challenge or doing another activity. This may have led to you encouraging both yourself and other people.

Different people follow this approach in different ways. Here are some of the ways that people may describe how they follow positive circles rather than negative circles in their life and work.

Positive Circles - I Can Choose:

To take responsibility for shaping my future ... To follow a structure in my daily life ... To do something each day towards achieving my life goals ... To eat nutritious food ... To walk several times a day ... To do things that gave me positive energy ... To spend time with positive people.

To get an early success each day ... To do more of the work that gives me satisfaction ... To set goals and get a sense of success ... To be kind ... To build on who I am rather than worry about who I am not ... To reflect on the positive things that have happened that day.

Somebody who puts themselves into positive circles may find these can lead to a tipping point. They may reach a stage where the habits they follow can lead to a transformational effect. They may get into the habit of living a positive life.

Negative Circles

Some people put themselves into negative circles. They may have a negative attitude, translate this into negative actions and, as a result, achieve negative things. They may hurt themselves or other people.

Different people take this approach in different ways. Here are some of the ways that people may describe how they follow positive circles in their life and work.

Negative Circles - I Can Choose:

To not take responsibility ... To see myself as a victim ... To say the world is to blame ... To let myself drift rather than follow a structure in my life ... To fail to exercise ... To eat poor food ... To stop doing the things that I enjoy.

To compare myself to other people ... To feel stuck in a job and not plan how to do something better ... To focus on what is wrong in the world ... To not manager triggers that can lead to me going into a downwards spiral ... To feel there is no hope.

Somebody who puts themselves into negative circles may reach another kind of tipping point. They can get to a point where they fall into a constant state of negativity, cynicism or depression.

Positive Circles In The Future

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that you want to put yourself into positive circles in the future. How can you make this happen?

You may want to maintain a sense of gratitude and encourage other people. You may want to create and follow a structure in your life. You may want to do things that give you positive energy.

You want to build on your strengths and do satisfying work. You may want to be the best you can be rather than compare yourself to others. You may something each day towards achieving your life goals.

How can you react if you find yourself getting into a negative circle? One approach is: a) to recognise what is happening; b) to do something to put yourself in a positive circle; c) to get a quick success. It is then to build on this momentum and get positive results.

You will have your own approach to putting yourself into positive circles rather than negative circles. Taking these steps can sometimes benefit both yourself and other people.

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

Positive Circles In The Future

*The specific things I can do to put myself
into positive circles in the future are:*

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

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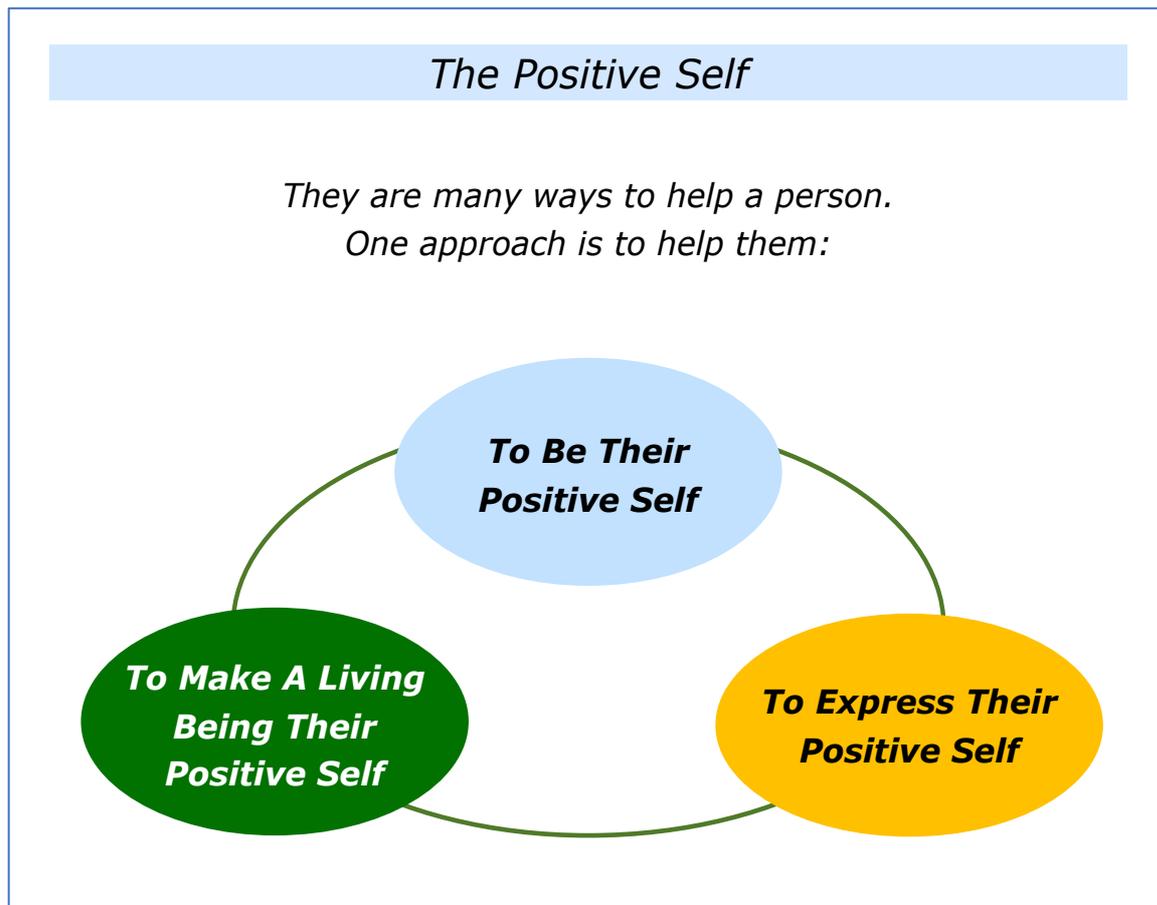
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The Being Your Positive Self Approach



Imagine that a person is feeling down and has asked for your help. One approach is to encourage them to be their positive self.

Many individuals know how to be their positive self. They know it is important to plan ahead, take care of their health, do things they enjoy, spend time with encouraging people and do satisfying work. They know the rewards of developing such healthy habits.

Many individuals also know how to be their negative self. They know how to let things drift, feel sorry for themselves and hope things will change. They know the consequences of developing such unhealthy habits.

Imagine that you want to explore this approach in your own life before helping another person. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

My Positive Self And Negative Self

*Positive Self. The specific things
I can do to be my positive self are:*

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*Negative Self. The specific things
I can do to be my negative self are:*

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*The specific consequences of
following each of these routes are:*

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Let's return to helping a person who is feeling down. One approach is to encourage them: a) to be their positive self; b) to express their positive self; c) to, if appropriate, making a living being their positive self. Let's explore these themes.

Being Their Positive Self

A person can choose to be their positive self rather than their negative self. They can do the things that are more likely to help themselves to be happy. Some people may object to this approach. They may say:

"This sounds too simple. You don't always have a choice in these matters."

People do not always choose what happens to them. But they can choose their attitude to how they respond to such events. They can do things to put themselves into positive rather than negative circles.

If appropriate, you can invite a person to describe: a) the specific things they can do to be their positive self; b) the specific rewards of doing these things. They can then aim:

To translate their ideas into action ... To get some quick successes ... To maintain the habit of doing these things.

Imagine that the person has begun to explore these ideas. If appropriate, you can help them to move on to the next stage.

Expressing Their Positive Self

There are many ways a person can express their positive self. They may do things they find stimulating or where they can use their strengths.

Different people do this in different ways. They may express their positive self through:

Writing ... Drawing ... Dancing ... Exercising ... Cooking ... Singing ... Playing music ... Playing a sport ... Pursuing a craft ... Helping people ... Fixing certain problems ... Or other activities.

The keys are for them to feel alive, express themselves and, if appropriate, to get a feeling of success. This can help to generate positive energy and feeling good.

They may also get a feeling of affirmation. They may get this by simply being true to themselves. They may sometimes get it from other people appreciating what they have done. This can build their self-confidence.

Imagine that the person has done some of these things. If appropriate, you can help them to move on to the next stage.

Making A Living Being Their Positive Self

Some people make a living by being their positive self. They may do this by building on their strengths, doing satisfying work and delivering success.

They may do it by helping people, doing certain projects, fixing problems or doing other activities. They may do it by working as an individual, team member, leader or in another role.

This book describes many ways to take path. One approach is for a person to follow their passion, translate this into doing professional work and delivering positive results. It is also developing the ability to get paid for following their passion.

Imagine that you are helping a person to take this path. Bearing this in mind, it can be worth exploring the following questions.

What does the person enjoy doing? What do they care about? What are their passions? What are their strengths? What are the specific things they can deliver for other people?

Who may be the kinds of people they may be able to help – such as their perfect customers or employers? What are the challenges these people may face? What may be their goals?

How can the person use their strengths to help these people to achieve success? How can they get paid for doing some of these activities? How can they eventually make a living doing satisfying work?

Imagine that you have helped a person to take some of these steps. When appropriate, it may also be useful to explore the following topic.

Building On The Positive Self And Managing The Negative Self

A person can build on their positive self but life can also bring challenges. Bearing this in mind, they may say:

"How do you manage negative emotions? Do you just ignore them?"

They may find it useful to recognise the warning signs. These may include feeling out of control, having negative self-talk, suffering recurring illnesses, experiencing long periods of lethargy or other symptoms.

Some people become numb to the warning signs or sink into negative cycles. Some people learn how to manage these triggers, however, and do something to put themselves into positive rather than negative cycles.

One approach is to return to building on their positive self. It is to plan ahead, do something positive and get a success. It is then to keep following these habits to maintain the positive cycle.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of the positive self approach. You may want to do this when helping a person or in your own life. 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 Being Your Positive Self 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 then to
follow this approach in my own way are:*

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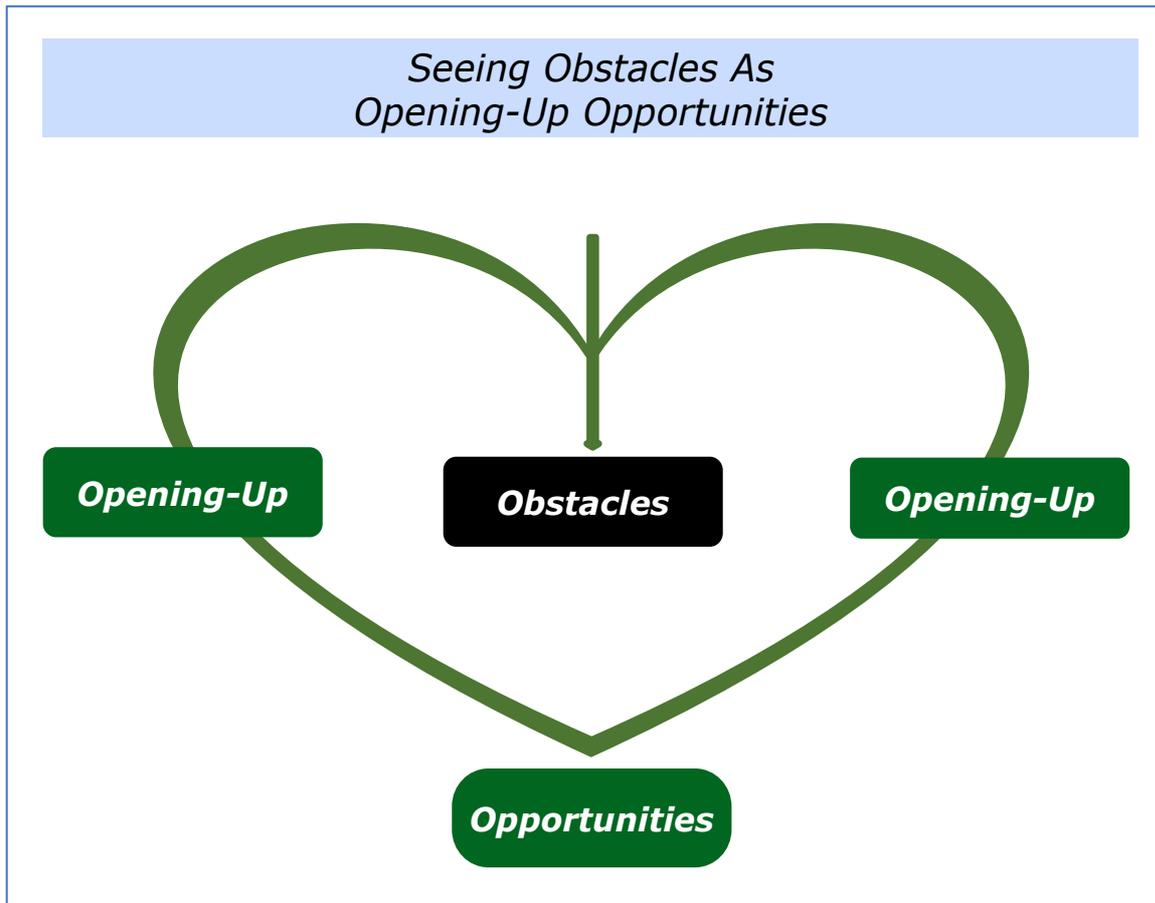
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Seeing Obstacles As Opening-Up Opportunities Approach



Different people see life in different ways. Some people see obstacles as opening-up opportunities. Let's explore this approach.

Person A was not suited to school, worked in a variety of jobs and eventually developed a rewarding role in social work. They specialised in helping people to recover from addictions.

After several years they reached a point where they felt the need to study and go to university. This eventually led to them being accepted as a mature student.

The first months went well but, being both principled and pragmatic, they found the academic work to be frustrating. They found it difficult to write

in an academic style and this led to them failing the end of first year exams.

Person A had a choice. They could choose: a) to try overcome the obstacle of learning to write in a certain way; b) to set-up their own business providing training for staff in recovery programmes for addicts.

They chose the second option. Building on their contacts from the therapeutic network, they got their first two projects. They set-up a business that provided practical ways to help recovering addicts.

Person B faced a long series of treatment sessions to tackle an illness. At first they felt depressed. They did not look forward to the thirty five sessions spread over seven weeks.

They then began to reframe the situation. Here is how they described their approach.

"First, I started by focusing on the overall goal – which was to be healthy and live longer. It was more heartening to focus on that one goal rather than making a list of thirty five sessions that had to be attended.

"Second, I organised my days so that I could do creative work in the morning and go for treatment sessions in the afternoon. This helped me to feel more in charge of my days. I got the creative kicks in the morning and the health help in the afternoon.

Third, I reframed the two hours of driving – plus the two hours of treatment – as a chance to reflect and explore ideas. This helped me to make good use of the travelling and treatment times."

Person C was a talented footballer I met when he was eighteen. Spotted at an early age, he spent time in the academies of several clubs. A resilient yet sensitive person, he was often made captain of the various teams.

During our mentoring session he expressed doubts about following the professional player route. He described this in the following way.

"I could probably make a living in the game but I do not like the culture in some clubs. Some coaches are good but some still seem in the stone age. They bully people and cause harm. I am strong enough to survive but I want to go a different route.

"After lots of research, my agent has got me a soccer scholarship in America. This involves playing for the university team but also studying sports psychology. I want to keep playing but also begin taking my coaching badges."

Person C took this route. Whilst captaining the university team, they began coaching young people in the area. This led to the university offering them the chance to do an MA and also take a paid part-time coaching role for younger players.

Different people have different ways of seeing obstacles as possible opportunities. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach?

What may be the situation? What may be the potential obstacle? What may be the potential opportunities? How can you follow these in your own way? 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.

Seeing Obstacles As Opening-Up Opportunities

*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 then to
follow elements of this approach are:*

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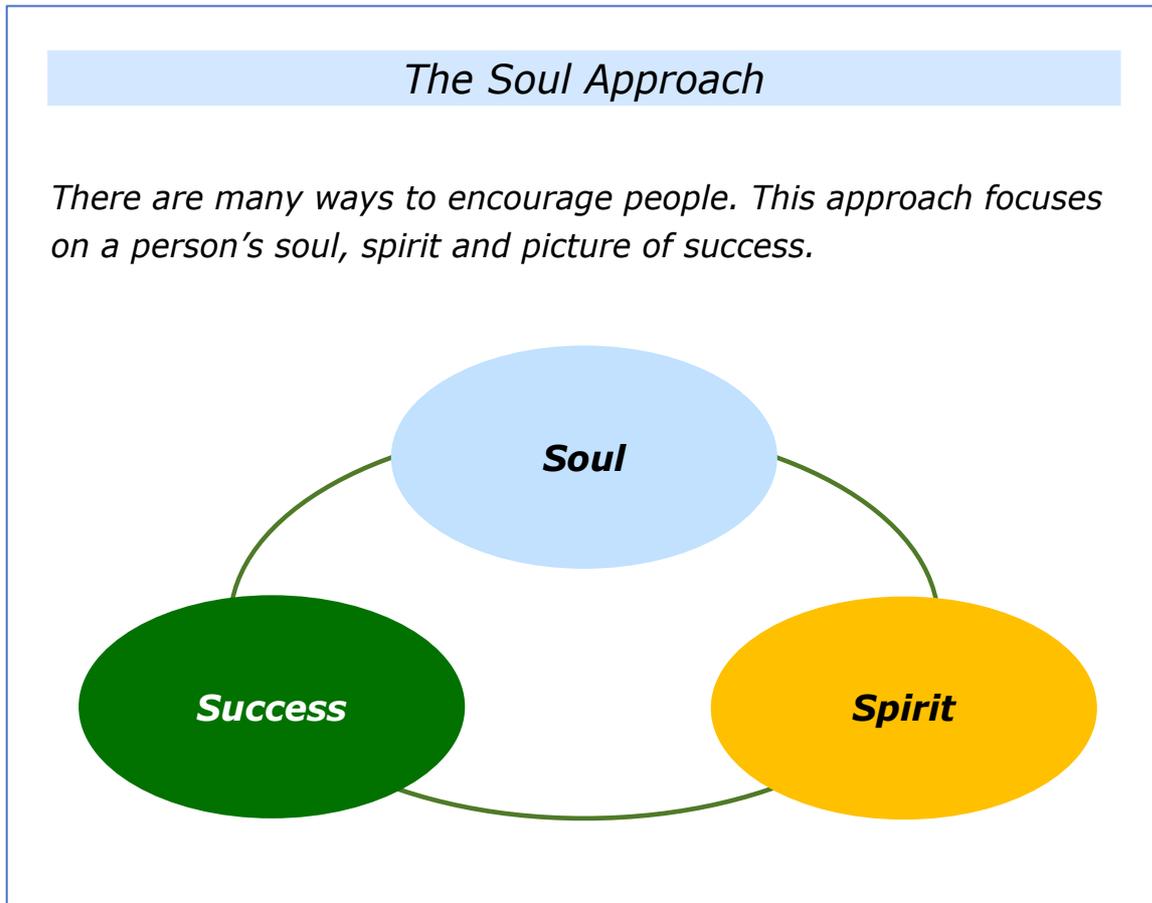
*The specific things that may happen as
a result to taking these steps may be:*

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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:*

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*The specific things I can do then to
follow elements of this approach are:*

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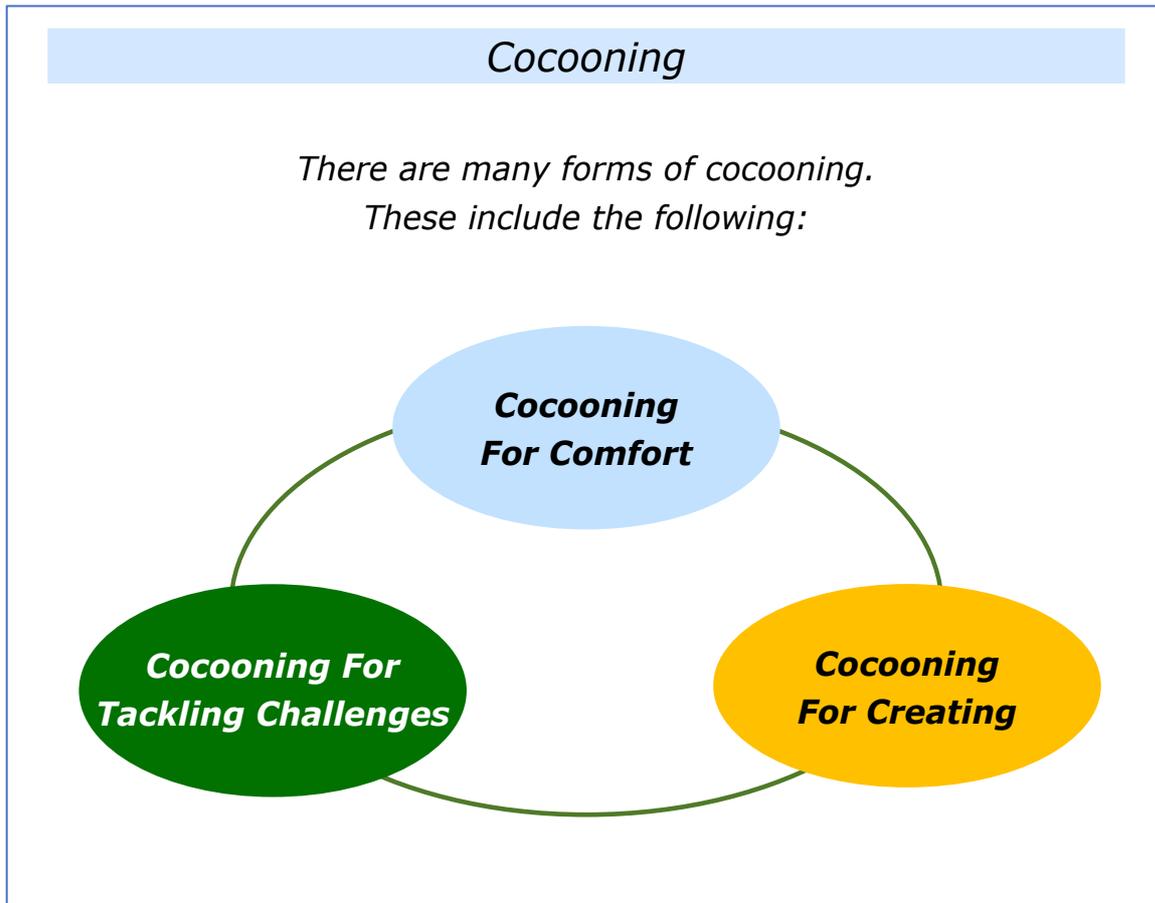
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Cocooning Approach



There are many forms of cocooning. Whilst Faith Popcorn popularised the term in the 1980s, it is an approach that has been followed by many people throughout history. Different people do cocooning in different ways.

Some do it by going into a sanctuary to gain comfort. Some do it by cutting off outside noise when doing creative work. Some do it by concentrating fully when tackling a challenge. Let's explore these themes.

Cocooning For Comfort

Some individuals follow the cocooning approach to find comfort. They may rest, sleep or spend time in their chosen sanctuary. They may gain comfort by cutting out the world, staying home or doing other things that bring solace to their soul.

Many people take this step to recentre. They may do it for hours, days or even years. Spending time in the cocoon can help them to refresh themselves. There may come a time, however, when they want to emerge.

Such individuals may then go out into the world to learn, do a stimulating project or aim to achieve a specific goal. They may go through the process of absorption, adventure and achievement.

They may sometimes return to their sanctuaries to make sense of what is happening and regain their strength. They may then alternate between spending time in their cocoon and being creative in the world.

Cocooning For Creating

Some people follow the cocooning approach when doing creative work. Many writers, painters, sculptors, designers, thinkers and others have taken this route throughout history.

Such individuals aim to focus fully when pursuing their work. Bearing this in mind, they aim to cut out various kinds of noise and other things that may be distracting.

Some sensitive people may aim do work that helps to build a better world. They may therefore cocoon themselves by focusing on what they can control. They stop exposing themselves to negative things happening in the world.

People who take these steps are more likely to be creative and make their best contribution. They may then pass on the fruits of their labours and hope these help to build a better world.

Cocooning For Tackling Challenges

Some individuals take the cocooning approach when tackling challenges. They often start by gathering lots of information before settling on their

strategy. They then focus fully on following their chosen process for working to achieve their goal.

Many athletes, golfers and other sports people describe how they follow this approach. They talk about being in their bubble but also being present in the moment.

Such individuals follow their chosen principles. They also aim to keep reading reality but cut out any distracting noise. They aim: a) to build on what is working; b) to tackle areas for improvement.

They may have a positive mantra they say to themselves to keep focusing on the task in hand. They stay in the present rather than get ahead of themselves. Such individuals then do their best to 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 the cocooning approach?

You may want to spend time in a sanctuary and regain strength. You may want to cocoon yourself so you can do creative work. You may want to concentrate fully when tackling a tough challenge.

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

The Cocooning Approach

The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of the cocooning approach may be:

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The specific things I can do then 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 Testing Yourself Approach



There are many ways to keep developing. One approach is to take initiatives to test yourself and aim to do top class work.

Some people test themselves in personal way. They may choose to develop a healthier lifestyle, run a marathon, climb a mountain or do another activity. This may involve using both their physical and psychological qualities.

Some people test themselves in a professional way. They put themselves into situations where they need: a) to build on their strengths; b) to develop their skills; c) to stretch themselves to achieve success.

Looking back, can you think of a time when you chose to test yourself? How did 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.

Testing Myself In The Past

*The specific situation when I took
the initiative to test myself and
aim to do top class work was:*

*

*The specific things I did then to
follow elements of this 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 different ways to take the initiative to test themselves. Some do it in a proactive way. Some do it when choosing their response to challenges. Some go through the following steps.

People Who Take The Initiative To Test Themselves

They sometimes take the following steps:

- *They clarify the goal they want to achieve and the benefits of achieving this picture of success;*
- *They clarify the strategies they can follow to do their best to achieve the picture of success;*
- *They clarify their action plan – including how to build on the pluses and manage the minuses – to achieve the picture of success.*

Some people take this approach because they see the benefits of aiming to achieve a specific goal. They may aim to improve their health, develop their skills, build a business or achieve another aim.

As mentioned, some individuals do this in a proactive way. They may have the desire to keep improving and adding to their repertoire of skills. They may aim to do this as a person or as a professional.

Some individuals do it in a more reactive way. They may encounter a setback, have an illness or face a particular problem. They may take time to reflect, consider their options and then decide to take the initiative to tackle the challenge.

People like to feel in control of shaping their future. Bearing in mind what they can control, they make a plan. They aim to make things as predictable as possible whilst also managing any unpredictable events.

Such people clarify their key strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success. They then translate this into a clear action plan. This often includes focusing on the specific things they can do:

To follow the key strategies;

To encourage themselves on the journey;

To build on the pluses and manage any potential minuses.

Different people choose different ways to test themselves and do top class work. Let's look at how one person took these steps.



Richmond Stace is a Pain Coach whose work is described elsewhere in this book.

He also likes to do ultraruns which consist of running over 100 miles.

The follow pages provide excerpts from one of his blogs.

They describe how ultraruns help him to explore new dimensions in terms of pain and hope.

Ultrarunning To Understand Pain And Share Hope

There is a purpose for my ultrarunning, and it is mainly to share hope.

Running for long distances means being on your feet for hours, moving along. On the journey, you discover much about yourself - you find out what is under the hood.

Under normal circumstances, we use our resources to deal with challenges as they arise.

Life is full of uncertainty (more than certainty), twists and turns. That is the way. What we can do is to focus on controlling the controllables. What can we control? Our approach and attitude.

Suffering comes from the way that we think about any given situation. Prior to this, it is merely a situation. This has long been realised by philosophers and others.

Life is a journey - cliché yet true. How do you approach the journey? How do you deal with things when they don't go your way? The style that you use will determine whether you see it as an opportunity (to learn) or an obstacle?

Ultrarunning is the same. You set out on a journey that will be full of unknowns.

When you are trotting along and feel great, it is wonderful. What about when you are in pain, feel sick, are hit with fatigue and hunger and thirst and more? How do you respond? How do you keep going?

The concept of the pain cave describes the place you can go. It is dark. But, there is ultimate learning about oneself in the pain cave to the point that many embrace the experience.

Pain Is Inevitable On An Ultrarun

You become your own experiment as you examine your perceptions and thoughts shaped by the very actions you are making.

When you change the way you move, your thinking changes - embodied cognition at work.

Thoughts are very much grounded in the state of our body, and the state of our body is determined by the focus of our attention. Expectations also play a significant role - we see the world that we expect to see.

As inevitable pain emerges, the opportunity arises to closely examine the sensations and how they change.

Different perspectives and different language all shape the experience.

Noticing a shift in running pattern, perhaps leaning forward or the head dropping, one can lift and be taller to notice the change in perspective.

What is the story I am telling myself in these moments? If I alter the words, what happens?

Bringing my purpose to mind, or a loved one and there can be a sudden transformation of state.

Heavy moments are normal. Body, legs, head suddenly feel like sacks of wet sand — have you ever tried to move one?

But you know that this will pass, like all perceptions. Nothing is permanent. This insight alone pulls me back from the mire of thoughts.

Our perceptions and bodily sensations are dynamic - always changing. Life is not static, instead fluid and moving onwards. It is the story that stays the same. The one we have been conditioned to believe is true.

Then you realise that there are infinite stories and possibilities. Freedom. Ultrarunning teaches you about freedom. I can examine my own experiences under duress and elucidate my resources my journey continues. The finish line is of course the beginning of the next.

Sharing Hope

My message is one of hope. Both the knowledge of pain and what we can do to guide, support and encourage people to live fulfilling lives has grown enormously.

We have much better answers to the questions. What is pain? Why do we feel pain? What is the purpose of pain? What can we do to improve our lives?

Many of the strategies, practices and techniques to transform and overcome pain are taken from the skills of being well, peak performance and strengths based coaching. Over the past 10 years or so, I have called this Pain Coaching.

There Is A Simple Principle

The more you focus on the pain and try to treat it, the worse the outcome. The more you focus on the person and how they want to shape their life, the better the outcome.

Focus on what you want, not what you don't want.

As soon as you are saying, 'I don't want this pain', we focus right back on the pain. Instead, re-focus on your pictures of success and the steps you can take right now in that direction.

This is an approach and an attitude. You will need some help, it will be up and down, but there is great hope for many. This is my message.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you would like to take the initiative to test yourself and do top class work? 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.

Testing Myself In The Future

The specific situation where I may want to take the initiative to test myself and aim to do top class work may be:

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

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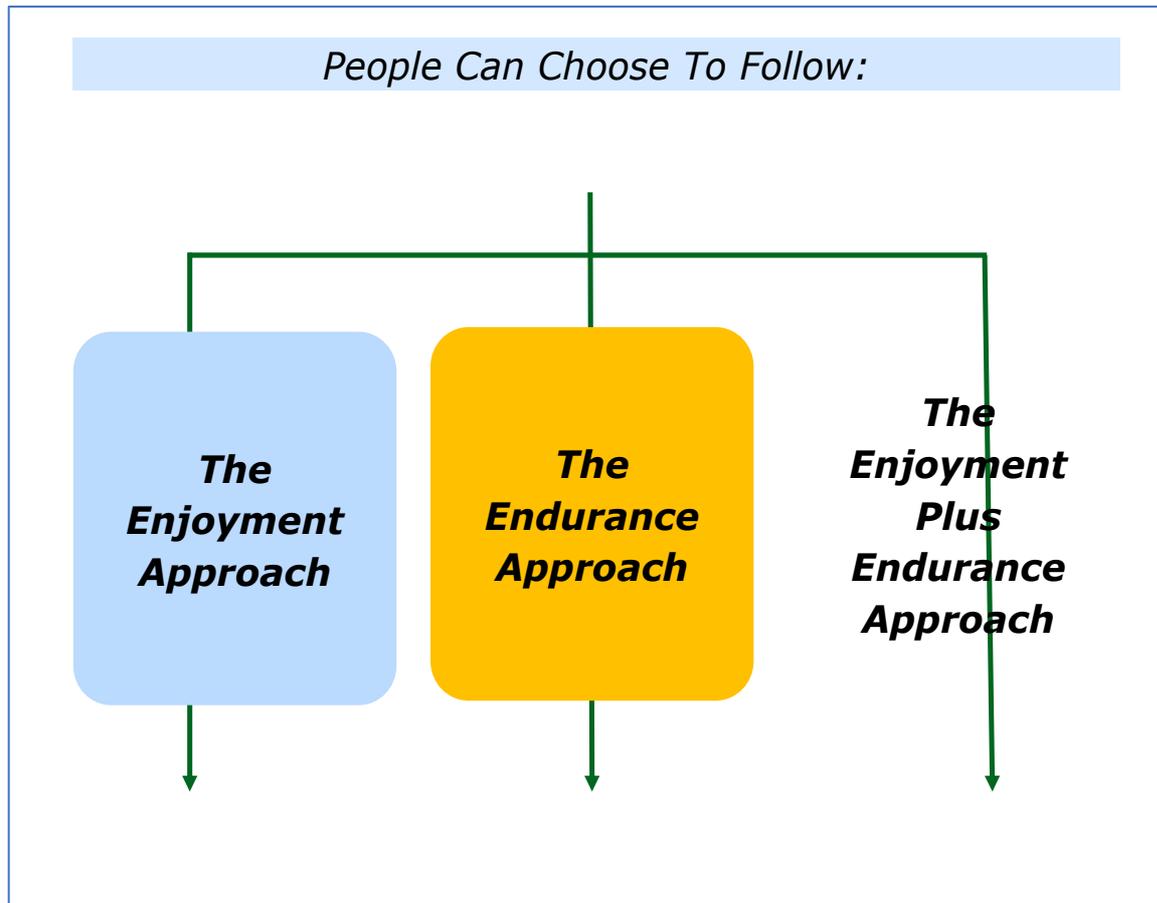
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Enjoyment Plus Endurance Approach



People sometimes choose to take these approaches in their professional lives. Let's explore these themes.

The Enjoyment Approach

Some individuals take the enjoyment route when shaping their career. This approach sometimes involves them taking the following steps. They may aim:

To focus on the specific activity they enjoy doing where they have the ability to deliver excellence;

To translate this into a specific service or product that helps certain kinds of people, customers or employers;

To perform excellent work that helps these people, customers or employers to succeed.

Such people love their work. They look forward to their day and often enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal. This can lead to a feeling of satisfaction.

The Endurance Approach

Some individuals take more of an endurance approach to shaping their career. This can involve them taking the following steps. They may aim:

To follow a specific route that they believe will pay a high salary or will eventually lead to them achieving certain professional status;

To accept the upsides and downsides that come with being part of a big organisation or climbing the career ladder;

To be prepared to endure certain kinds of boring work or difficult managers but also to have the endurance required to reach their long-term goals.

Such people may enjoy some aspects of their work. But they may experience certain side-effects when climbing the career ladder or working towards their long-term goal.

The Enjoyment Plus Endurance Approach

Some individuals aim to do enjoyable work and also combine aspects of the endurance approach. This can involve them taking the following steps. They may aim:

To do work they enjoy and also demonstrate endurance on the way towards achieving their chosen goal;

To follow their chosen rhythm for working, get some quick successes and encourage themselves on the journey;

To perform superb work, find solutions to challenges and do their best to achieve their chosen goal.

Great workers sometimes take this route. They believe in doing work they enjoy but also recognise the need to show certain qualities on the way towards achieving their aims.

These include the ability to plan ahead, pace themselves properly and have problem-solving skills. They may also need to demonstrate resilience to achieve their goals.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you want to follow elements of the enjoyment plus endurance approach? You may want to change your lifestyle, do a creative project, tackle a challenge or achieve a specific goal.

What is the enjoyable activity you may want to pursue? How can you translate this into a specific goal? How can you plan ahead and prepare properly?

How can you get an early success? How can you maintain the momentum? How can you track your progress? How can you reflect on: a) the specific things you have achieved so far; b) the specific things you want to do next?

How can you manage your energy on the journey? How can you build in times for rest and recovery? How can you find solutions to challenges? How can you do your best to achieve your picture of success?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe how you can follow the enjoyment plus endurance approach in your own way. Here is the exercise.

The Enjoyment Plus Endurance Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

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The Chance To Do Your Best When Tackling A Challenge Approach



Different people tackle challenges in different ways. The route they take can have consequences for themselves and other people.

Some people see it as a chance to do their best when tackling a challenge. Some people aim to learn and grow when tackling a challenge. Some people avoid tackling a challenge.

Looking back, can you think of a time when you did your best to tackle a challenge? This could have been in your personal or professional life.

How did you make plans to tackle the challenge? What were the steps you then took? How did you translate these into action? 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.

Tackling A Challenge In The Past

*The specific situation in the past when
I did my best to tackle a challenge was:*

*

*The specific things I did then to do
my best to tackle the challenge were:*

*

*

*

*The specific things that happened as
a result of taking those steps were:*

*

*

*

Imagine that you may face a challenge in the future. You will have a choice regarding how to choose to tackle it. As mentioned earlier, different people take different approaches in such situations. Let's explore these themes.

*Some people see it as a chance to
do their best when tackling a challenge*

This is an approach taken by some people when facing a challenge in their life, work or other areas. One person expressed this in the following way.

"At first I was to be a bit daunted by the challenge. After a while, however, I began to see it as a chance to do my best and potentially reap benefits. This led to me thinking that I had lots to gain and little to lose.

"The big gain was to be true to myself. The real loss would have been not to tackle the challenge. Bearing this in mind, I planned how to do my best when tackling the challenge."

This is an approach that is followed by many coaches in sports. They encourage athletes to be the best they can be throughout their careers.

They remind athletes that performing at their best is the main thing they can control. That is because there are many random things that can happen in sports.

Many individuals aim to follow this principle in their daily lives and work. They may also embody elements of the next approach.

*Some people aim to learn and
grow when tackling a challenge*

This is an approach taken by some people who are not necessarily sure about the outcome. They see the challenge as a learning experience and an opportunity to grow. One person expressed this in the following way.

"Nowadays I work as a psychologist helping young people who experience difficulties. I have always wanted to work with people but at first I was not sure about in which field.

"During my twenties I therefor immersed myself in many different kinds of social work. This led to working with people who were homeless, people with addictions and people in criminal psychiatric units.

"Some of the work was exhausting – both physically and emotionally. I learned a lot, however, and it helped me to develop. Eventually I landed on working with young people, which is extremely rewarding."

Many individuals take this route. They choose to tackle challenges that will help them to learn and grow.

Some people avoid tackling a challenge

Sometimes this approach can be the most sensible thing. It may not be necessary to throw yourself into tackling every issue.

Sometimes this can veer into denial, however, or there can be unfortunate consequences from avoiding tackling a key challenge. Different people take this approach in different ways.

Some refuse to read reality ... Some turn a blind eye and hope the problem will go away ... Some avoid taking a medical test, for example, because they prefer not to know the results ... Some feel paralysed by the scale of the challenge.

Some avoid the issue and distract themselves by doing other activities – sometimes these are helpful, sometimes they are harmful ... Some use confirmation bias – they see what they believe rather than believe what they see.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may see it as a chance to do your best when tackling a challenge? How can you do this in your way? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

Tackling A Challenge In The Future

*The specific situation in the future
when I may aim to do my best
when tackling a challenge may be:*

*

*The specific things I can do then to
do my best to tackle the challenge are:*

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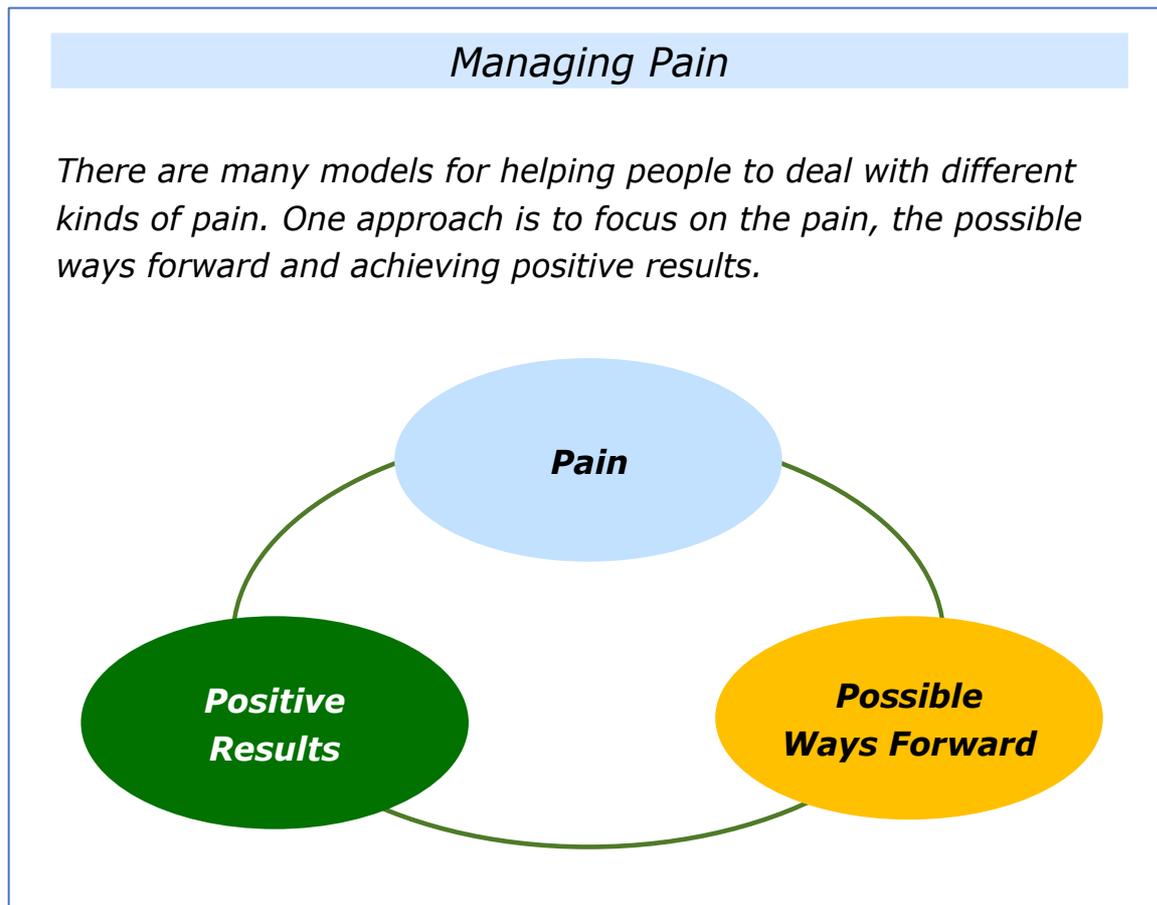
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Managing Pain Approach



There are many models for helping people to deal with different kinds of pain. This section describes one approach to helping people to deal with psychological pain rather than physical pain.

There may be times, of course, when physical and psychological pain are connected. But it is still vital for a person to consult with medical professionals regarding any physical issues.

During the past fifty years I have worked with many people who have been experiencing psychological pain. One approach we have used is to focus on the pain, the possible ways forward and achieving positive results. Let's explore some examples of this approach.

Christine – Feeling Out Of Control

The CEO of a company contacted me about Christine, who was one of their key players. She was normally an upbeat person but was experiencing periods of uncertainty and depression.

Christine had expressed the desire to talk with somebody about her mood swings. During our session she explained what was happening in the following way.

"The past three months have been difficult. Up until I loved my job, which was sales director. This gave me the chance to meet clients, sell and then maintain an ongoing relationship.

"The company is under financial pressure, however, so asked me to also take on parts of a general management role. This is something I did earlier in my career, so I thought it would be relatively simple.

"The team I took over has problems and some individuals don't demonstrate the required attitude. This has resulted in me spending most of my time dealing with the team's issues.

"I don't want to let the company down so I have stuck to the task. I am working 12 hours a day but still feel like I am always trying to catch up.

"I have always been a person who likes to exceed targets – whether this was at school, playing sports or in my career. But now I feel exhausted and not able to do any of my jobs properly."

Christine and I explored the feelings she experienced. She was in a position where:

She was not feeling in control ... She was not spending enough time doing what she did best – working directly with clients ... She was not leading a team of motivated people ... She was not achieving her targets and felt depressed ... She was not making her best contribution to the company.

Bearing these point in mind, we explored the possible ways forward. We also looked at the pluses and minuses of each option. These included the following.

She could continue in the present mode and hope things worked out;

She could continue with her sales role, rebuild the challenging team with new hires and then hand it over to a successor;

She could return to focusing solely on what she did best – working with clients and leading a motivated team;

She could spend time encouraging herself by taking care of her wellbeing and doing things that gave her positive energy;

She could leave to join another company or take time out to reflect and then reboot her career.

Christine recognised she wanted to feel more in control. Being duty driven, she had taken on the extra role in order to help the business. This had resulted in difficulties for both herself and the company.

Bearing in mind the potential ways forward, we focused on how to get positive results. Christine took the following steps.

She chose to return to the role she found most rewarding. This included selling, spending time with customers and also leading her small team of motivated people.

She chose to take more care of her wellbeing. This included doing more of the activities that gave her positive energy – such as painting, visiting art galleries and playing music.

She chose to develop her leadership skills. This included building on her successful style as a leader but also spending time with leaders she admired to learn from their experiences.

Christine's CEO provided complete backing. The company recognised the importance of playing to her strengths rather than asking her to spread herself too thin. This led to Christine returning to the sales and customer facing role.

The CEO chose: a) to appoint a former colleague to manage the challenging team on an interim basis; b) to then make key decisions about that team's future. This eventually resulted in some of the team staying and the work being done more effectively.

Christine treated herself to a holiday after the Covid restrictions were lifted. She went to Paris to enjoy the art galleries and food. Returning invigorated, she continued to enjoy her work and help both her customers and colleagues to achieve success.

Derek – Feeling Pain About The Planet

Derek was somebody I worked with over a number of years. A highly sensitive person, he felt most at home doing creative work as a graphic designer.

During one of our sessions he talked about what he called 'pain by proxy' and his way of dealing with these feelings. He described this in the following way.

"I worry about how what we human beings are doing to the planet and how tyrants are hurting people. I realise that this is self-indulgent but I sometimes get depressed.

"This leads to me getting into cycle of negativity and feeling paralysed. Seeing the devastation in Ukraine and other parts of the world is terrible, but I feel powerless.

"Many people are suffering real pain and I am in a relatively comfortable position, but I still get down. This can lead to me feeling paralysed. Have you any suggestions?"

Derek and I explored the feelings he experienced. As an empathetic person:

He felt depressed about the pain that others were experiencing ... He was uncertain about what he could do to help them and build a better world ... He sometimes felt bad about what he called his self-indulgence in feeling depressed when others were in real pain.

Bearing these factors in mind, we explored the possible ways forward. These included the following.

He could continue to go round in circles and feel depressed;

He could worry about the actions of tyrants - but then they had won by getting inside his head;

He could use his inner strength and professional skills to help other people;

He could give money or do other things to help organisations that were caring for refugees and other people experiencing pain;

He could use his skills as a graphic designer to do work for organisations that were helping to build a better world;

Derek decided to pursue the latter options. After giving money to charities, he moved on to exploring how he could use his professional skills to help organisations he admired.

Giving money provided immediate help, but it took several months before he found the right niche for using his professional skills. This eventually led to him reshaping his career. Derek chose:

To continue to use his graphic design skills to help commercial companies;

To use his skills to help some social enterprises and charities;

To rejig his budget so that he could spend an increasing amount of time doing work for the social enterprises and charities rather than commercial companies.

Derek focused on being proactive rather than paralysed. He wanted to do positive work rather than let the tyrants take control of his thoughts. He aimed to do his best to build a better world.

There are many models for managing psychological pain. Whatever model is used, however, the aims are often to help a person:

To clarify some of the causes of the pain;

To clarify the possible ways forward;

To clarify how they can do their best to achieve positive results.

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

What might be the kind of pain you may experience? What can you do to clarify the possible ways forward? How can you then do your best to get positive results?

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

Managing Pain

The specific situation where I may want to clarify the pain, the possible ways forward and then get positive results may be:

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The specific things I can do to follow elements of this approach are:

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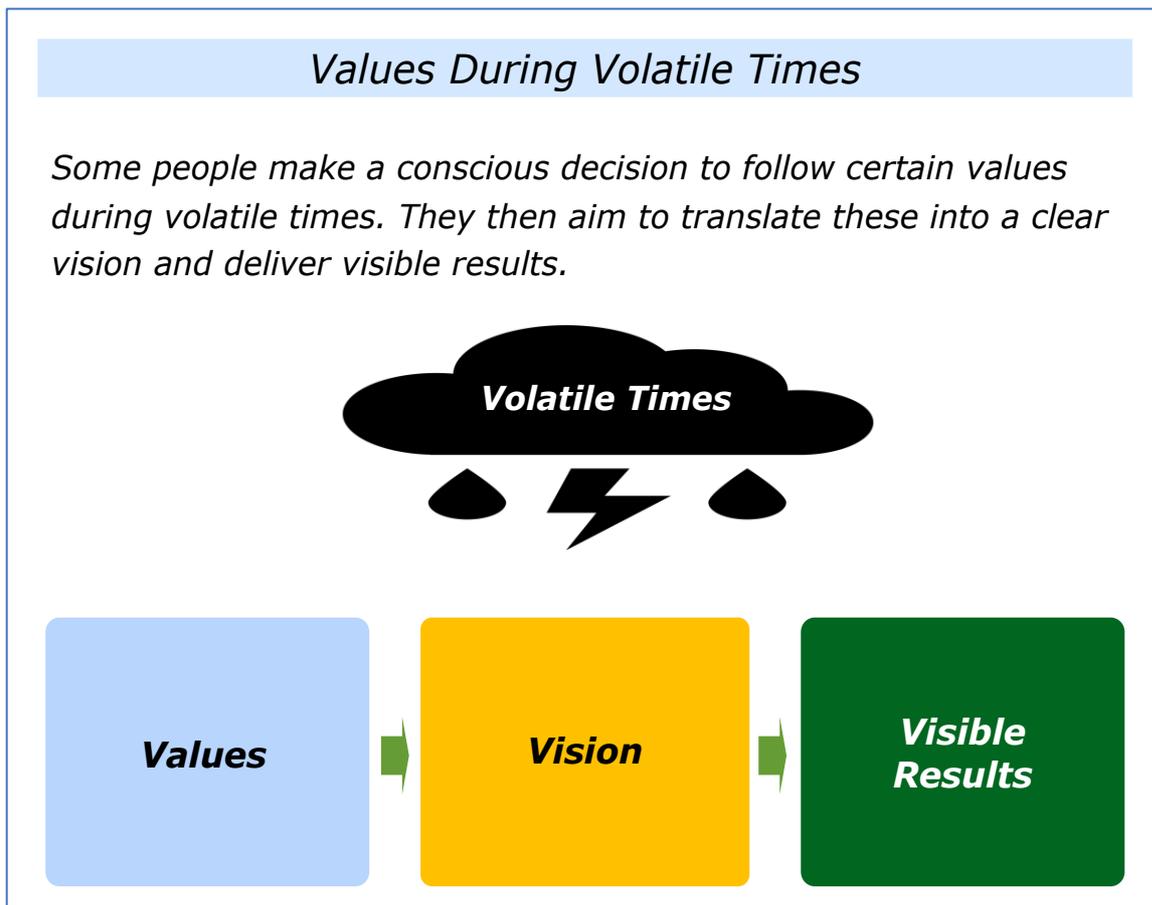
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Following Your 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:

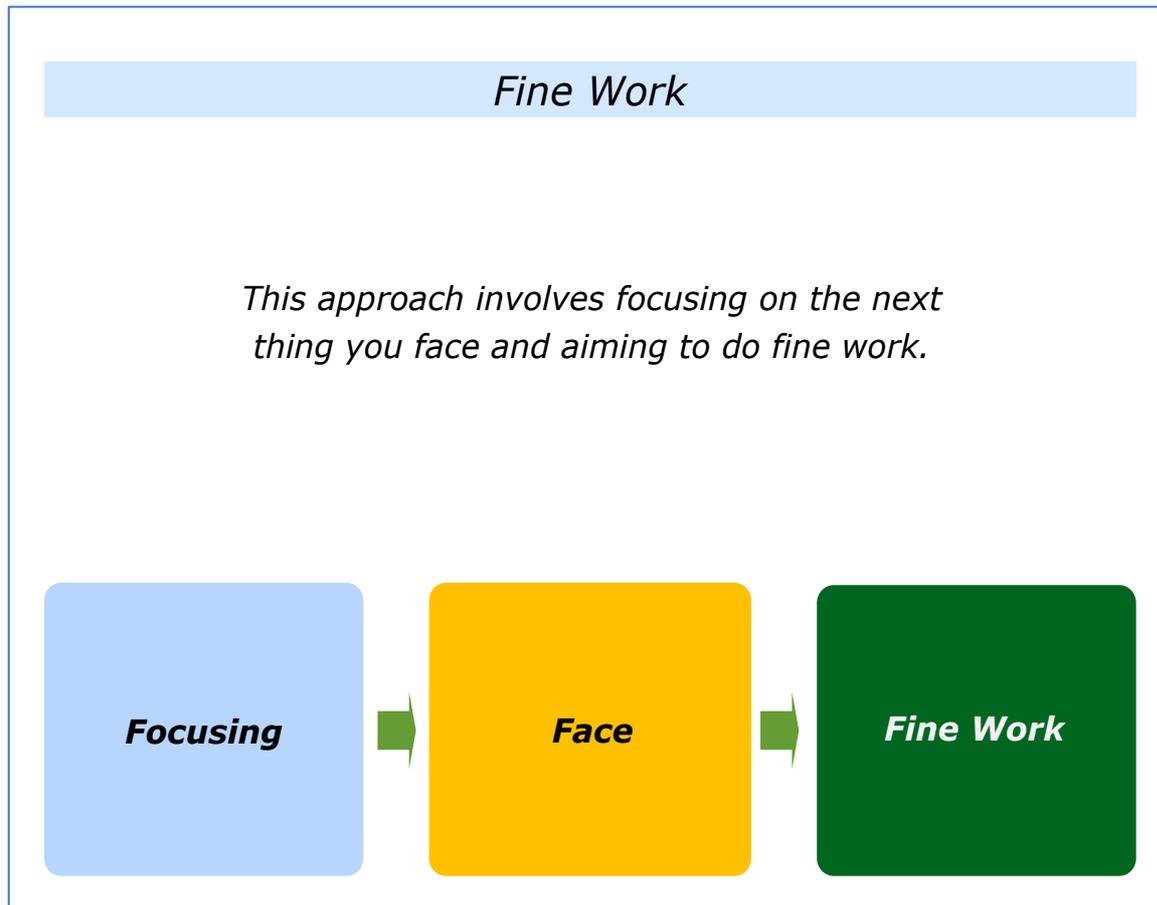
"How do we cope in such a world?"

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.

The Focusing On The Next Thing You Face And Aiming To Do Fine Work Approach



This approach involves focusing on the next thing you face and aiming to do fine work. Different people follow this approach in different ways. Let's look at some examples.

The Radiotherapy Team Doing Fine Work

I saw this approach in action when getting radiotherapy for prostate cancer. The team at Hereford Hospital were brilliant. They treated around 30 patients a day and took the following approach.

They aimed:

To prepare properly for each person's treatment by planning and rehearsing what needed to be done;

To set up the radiotherapy machine to treat each person's particular kind of cancer;

To welcome the person, put them at ease and explain what would happen in the session;

To be caring and customising their approach to make sure the patient was comfortable and the treatment would be effective;

To do a scan at the start of the session before moving to the actual treatment and keeping the patient informed about what was happening;

To give each patient the choice of music whilst they were having the treatment – one patient chose to listen to heavy metal by Metallica;

To be highly skilled in giving the treatment and solving any challenges that arose during the session;

To complete the session, make sure the patient was okay, reminding them of their next appointment and then completing all the data entry;

To set up the machine for the next patient and repeat the process.

The radiotherapy team did this around thirty times a day. They were positive and professional. They got great feedback from patients who were full of praise for their work.

The Rugby Player Doing Fine Work

There are many ways to focus on the next thing you face and perform superbly. This is an approach that is used in sport to win the next moment.

There are different views on winning. In this context, winning means focusing on what you can control and doing your best. Some people expand this to winning the next moment, the next hour and the next day.

Paul O'Connell, the former Irish Rugby Union player, described this approach in a talk he gave to a Pendulum Summit in 2018. He called the approach 'mindfulness for dumb rugby players'.

The team's coach Joe Schmidt kept giving his players the following message. Forget the mistake you have made, forget the try you have scored. Be fully present and win the next moment in front of your face.

Paul O'Connell – Mindfulness For Rugby Players



"Win the moment in front of your face."

Joe Schmidt

Different people apply the winning the next moment approach in sport and in different areas of life. They may aim:

To focus on one shot or one game at a time when playing a sport ... To perform the next task superbly ... To stay healthy one day at a time when recovering from an addiction ... To do their best to encourage people in the next moment, week and year.

The Rhythm Approach To Doing Fine Work

Some people follow a certain rhythm when doing a long series of tasks. They may be doing coaching sessions, running workshops or performing operations. They may be tackling multiple challenges, managing crises or doing other activities.

This is an approach I followed doing lots of mentoring sessions and workshops. Sometimes this involved doing thirty one-to-one sessions in a week. When doing these it was vital:

To prepare properly ahead of time ... To set up the sessions to succeed ... To contact each person ahead of time to, if possible, clarify the topics they would like to explore.

To get to the venue at 7.30 in the morning ... To have the first session at 8.30 ... To create a positive environment in which the person could feel at ease ... To provide practical tools they could use to achieve their goals.

To have a short break before the next person arrived ... To rehearse what they may want to explore in the session ... To again do my best to help them to reach their goals ... To follow this rhythm throughout the day.

To return to my hotel ... To look forward to the next day's series of one-to-ones (or the workshop to run) ... To rehearse ways to help people in the sessions ... To then relax

It was an approach I found useful for the fifty years that I was on the road. The key was to follow a rhythm that worked for the people I met and for myself.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to focus on the next thing you face and aim to do fine work? 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.

Focusing On The Next Thing You Face And Aiming To Do Fine Work

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 then to follow this approach in my own way are:

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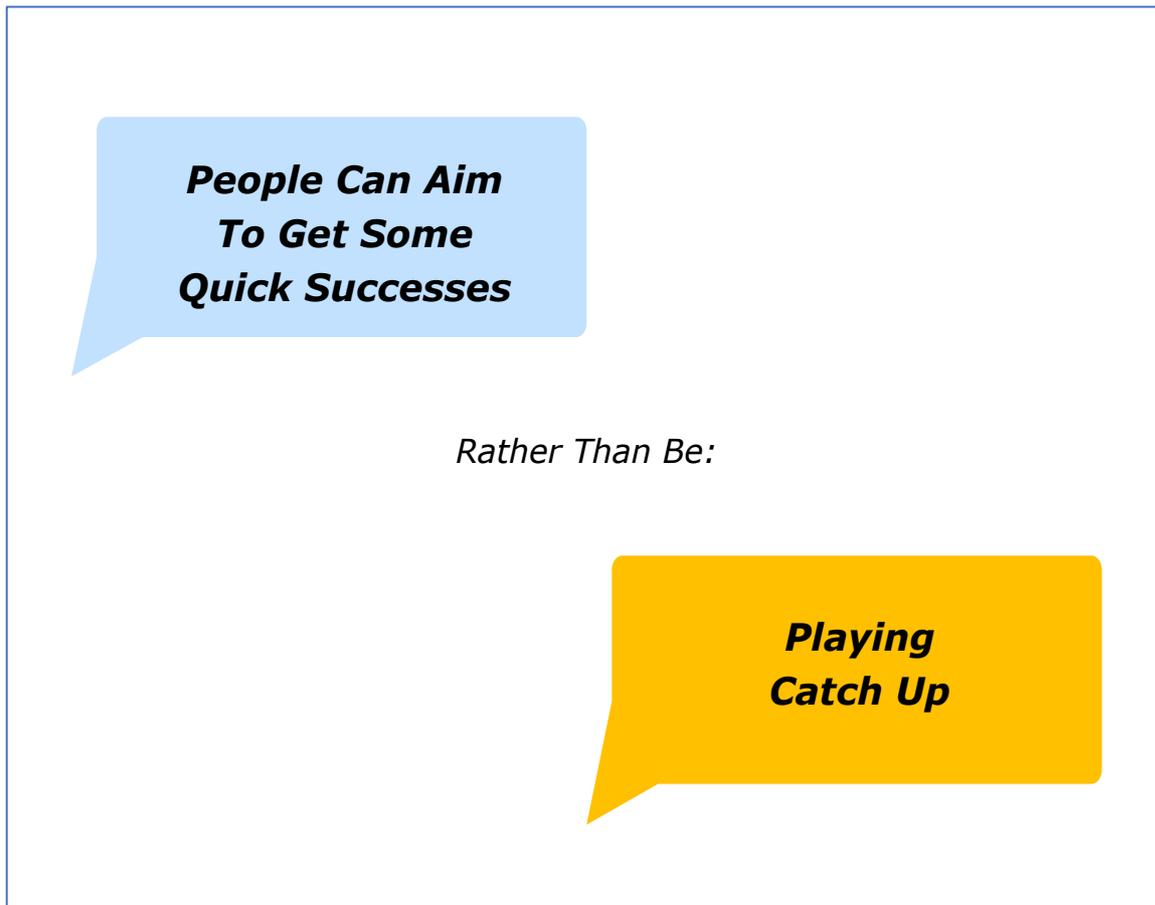
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The People Getting Quick Successes Rather Than Playing Catch Up Approach



Some people take this positive approach in their personal and professional lives. They aim to get some quick successes rather than be playing catch up. Different people do this in different ways.

A person may do something early in the day to get a quick success. They may count their blessings, encourage another person or do something to work towards their life goals. They then feel in charge of shaping their day.

A mentor will aim to make a mentee feel welcome. They will clarify what the person wants to explore and the results they want to achieve. They may then quickly offer a practical tool that the person can use to achieve their goals. This can provide the basis for a successful session.

A freelance worker may start their financial year by getting lots of work. Feeling more secure, they can then be selective about the other work they do during the year. They feel they are ahead of the game.

A leader who is taking over a team may set a positive tone by meeting with individuals. They may focus on the team's purpose, principles and picture of success. During the one-to-ones they may also encourage the individuals to share their ideas about:

The specific things they believe could be added to the picture of success;

The specific things they would like to do to build on their strengths and contribute towards achieving the picture of success;

The specific other topics they would like to explore during the session with the leader.

Such a leader may then build on the positive people and enable the team to get some quick successes. They will follow up maintaining the momentum towards achieving the picture of success.

A football team may aim to quickly take control of a game. They may attack, press the opposition, win back the ball and play the game in the other team's half. Such a team may also aim to get a quick success after scoring or conceding a goal. They will regain their rhythm and aim to dominate the match.

Looking ahead, how can you get some quick successes in your personal or professional life? How can you, when appropriate, encourage other people to get quick successes? What may be the benefits of taking these steps?

You may aim to do these during a day, a week or another time frame. You may aim to do some in your role as a partner, parent, educator, coach, freelancer, employee, manager, leader or in another role.

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

People Getting Quick Successes

The specific things I can do to get some quick successes in my personal or professional life are:

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The specific things I can do to, when appropriate, encourage other people to get some quick successes are:

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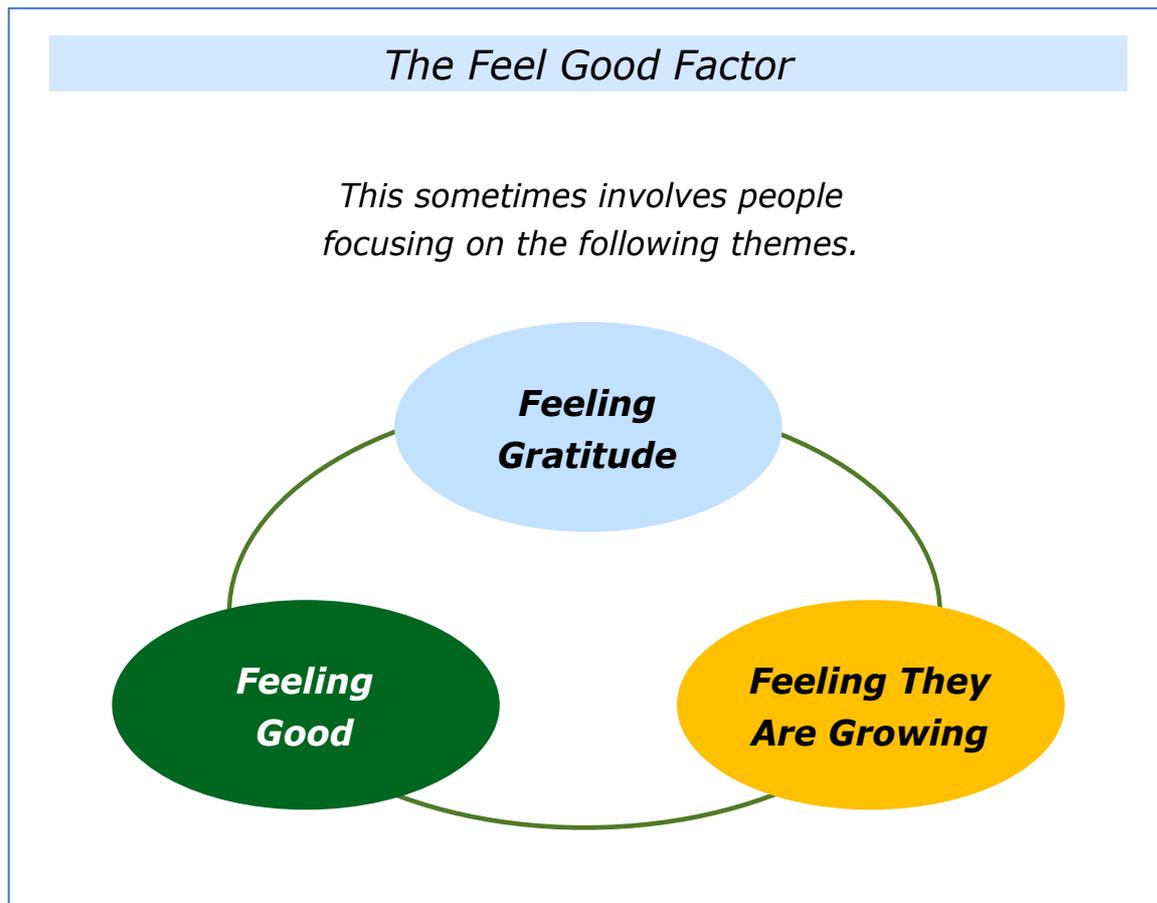
The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:

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The Feel Good Factor Approach



There are many definitions for the feel good factor. These include the following that can apply to individuals or people in teams, organisations or societies.

People feeling positive and optimistic about the future ... A wide-spread feeling of wellbeing and security ... A quality in something that makes people feel happy and positive about their lives.

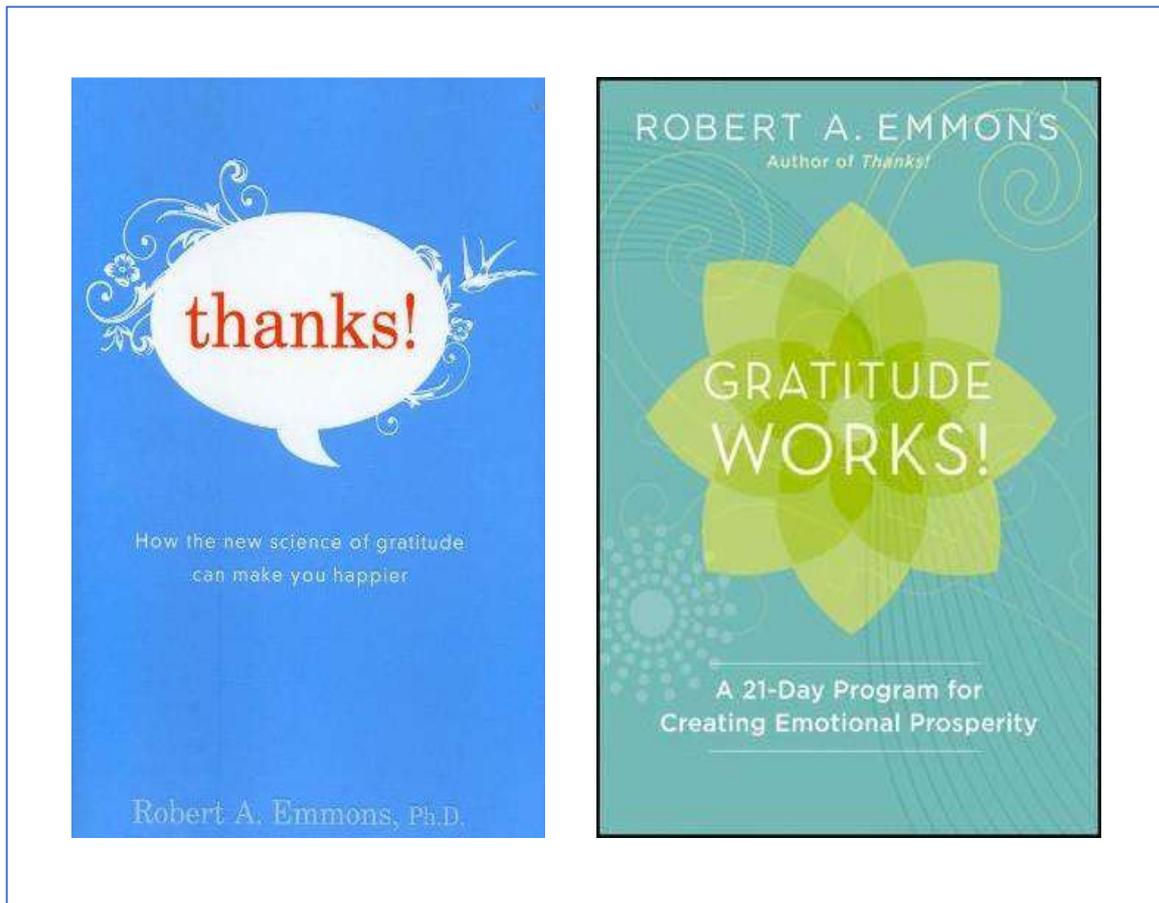
There are also many views about what it takes for people to feel good. The following pages explore one approach that relates to individuals.

Some of these themes can be multiplied, however, to increase the feel good factor in a society. This can be done by providing the conditions that increase the likelihood of improving people's wellbeing.

Imagine that a person wants to maintain or increase their feel good factor. They may be able to do this by focusing on the following themes.

Feeling Gratitude

Robert Emmons has written several books on gratitude. The research done by him and his colleagues has found that developing a sense of gratitude is good for people's bodies, health and relationships. Here are excerpts from an article he wrote for the Greater Good Science Center.



The Benefits Of Gratitude

We've studied more than one thousand people, from ages eight to 80, and found that people who practice gratitude consistently report a host of benefits.

- *Physical.*

Stronger immune systems ... Less bothered by aches and pains ... Lower blood pressure ... Exercise more and take better care of their health ... Sleep longer and feel more refreshed upon waking.

- *Psychological.*

Higher levels of positive emotions ... More alert, alive, and awake ... More joy and pleasure ... More optimism and happiness.

- *Social.*

More helpful, generous, and compassionate ... More forgiving ... More outgoing ... Feel less lonely and isolated.

What Good Is Gratitude?

- *Gratitude allows us to celebrate the present.*

It magnifies positive emotions. Gratitude makes us appreciate the value of something, and when we appreciate the value of something, we extract more benefits from it; we're less likely to take it for granted.

- *Gratitude blocks toxic, negative emotions - such as envy, resentment, regret - that can destroy our happiness.*

There's even recent evidence that shows gratitude can reduce the frequency and duration of episodes of depression. If you're grateful, you can't resent someone for having something that you don't.

- *Grateful people are more stress resistant.*

Studies show that in the face of serious trauma, adversity, and suffering, people who have a grateful disposition recover more quickly. Gratitude gives people a perspective from which they can interpret negative life events and help them guard against post-traumatic stress and lasting anxiety.

- *Grateful people have a higher sense of self-worth.*

When you're grateful, you have the sense that someone else is looking out for you. Someone else has provided for your well-being. Once you recognize the contributions that other people have made to your life - and seen the value in you - you can transform the way you see yourself.

Let's return to your own life. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. We will then explore the next step that some people take to develop their feel good factor.

Feeling Gratitude

The specific things that I feel grateful for in my life and work are:

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The specific things I can do to maintain a sense of gratitude are:

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Feeling They Are Growing

People like to feel they are growing. They like to learn, develop and achieve things in their personal and professional lives. Taking these steps can enable them to increase their feel good factor.

Each person is responsible for taking this approach. At the same time, there are many things that parents, educators and others in society can do to encourage people to keep developing.

Action For Happiness is an organisation that focuses research and practical steps that people can take to be happy. One of their models is summarised in the headline GREAT DREAM. This outlines ten themes that people can focus on in their lives and work.

Ten keys to happier living

GIVING	 Do things for others	DIRECTION	 Have goals to look forward to
RELATING	 Connect with people	RESILIENCE	 Find ways to bounce back
EXERCISING	 Take care of your body	EMOTIONS	 Look for what's good
AWARENESS	 Live life mindfully	ACCEPTANCE	 Be comfortable with who you are
TRYING OUT	 Keep learning new things	MEANING	 Be part of something bigger

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

The following section expands on theme of Trying Out which relates to continuing to grow. Here are some of the suggestions.

Trying Out - Keep Learning New Things

- *Fuel for fun, fulfilment, confidence and creativity.*

Learning is not just for school but for life – in fact, evidence shows that continuing to learn, even later in life, can help us feel good and function well.

- *Exploring, learning and happiness.*

Trying new things and learning can have a positive impact on how happy we feel in a range of different ways.

In the short term, it can be pleasurable or fun. In the longer term, it can be a source of meaning and fulfilment, boosting our confidence and helping us develop and fulfil our potential.

- *Get curious and creative.*

Curiosity is associated with happiness and fulfilment. Curious people may even live longer. Cultivating our curiosity can help us think and act more flexibly and stretch our familiar boundaries, which can boost our resilience.

- *Human beings have a core psychological need for mastery.*

It's integral to our wellbeing. It means feeling a sense of competence by developing our skills and capabilities. Learning throughout life generates new brain cells and new neural connections, strengthening our brain. Whilst this may be slower as we get older, it still continues and is associated with a happier, healthier old age.

Let's return to your own life. How can you continue to grow? What may be the benefits of taking these steps?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. We will then explore the next step that some people take to develop their feel good factor.

Feeling I Am Growing

The specific things I can do to feel I am growing are:

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The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:

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Feeling Good

Many people know how to make themselves feel good. They know how to do this both physically and psychologically.

They can eat good food, exercise and care for their body. They can follow their values, encourage themselves, do rewarding work, continue to develop and work towards their life goals.

Many people also know how to increase the likelihood of helping others to feel good. They can be kind and generous. They can also do their best to encourage people to succeed.

Many also know to make themselves and others feel bad. They can do the opposite of the things mentioned above. This can have consequences for both themselves and other people.

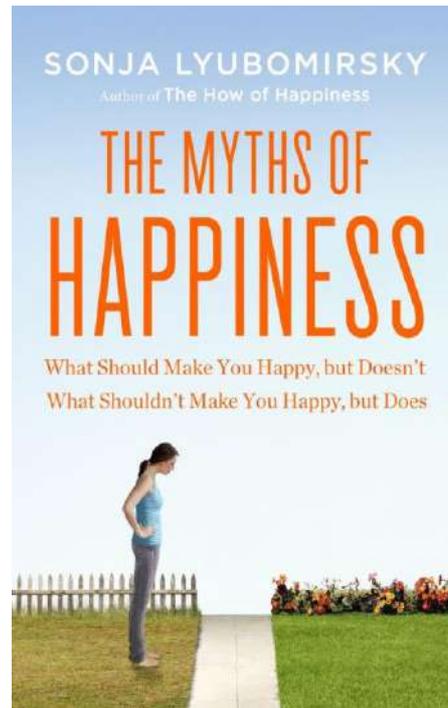
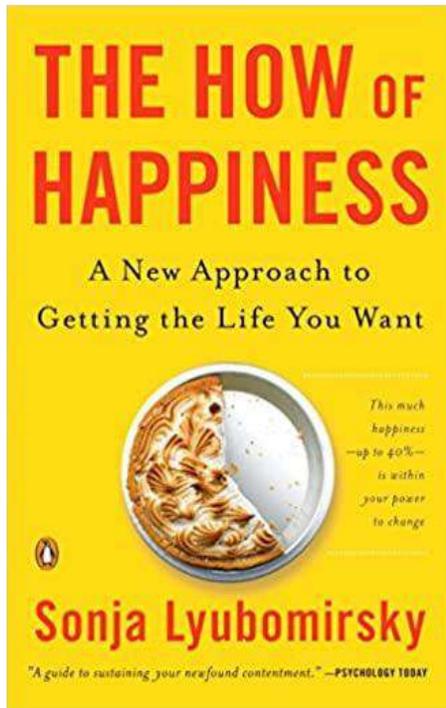
People can do their best to help themselves but they need help along the way. This highlights a crucial point. Any discussion about happiness needs to acknowledge that:

People need access to the basic materials for life.

The annual report on *World Happiness* shows that countries that offer people a basic safety net record the highest levels of wellbeing. People then have the resources they can use to shape their future lives.

Imagine that a person has access to the basic materials for life. How can they do their best to maintain their wellbeing?

There are many books on this topic. Sonja Lyubomirsky highlights some of the key themes in her books *The How Of Happiness* and *The Myths Of Happiness*. The following pages provide excerpts from her research on happiness.



The How Of Happiness

Sonja is frequently asked how people can increase their happiness. She often answers by saying that she is a scientist and tends to avoid self-help books.

Nevertheless, she says, the research seems to show that some of the advice passed down through the ages often hold true. These include some of the following activities.

- *Developing Gratitude.*

Research shows that people who set aside time to count their blessings increase and maintain their happiness.

- *Being Kind.*

Giving to others creates a good feeling in both oneself and, hopefully, in others. This creates a positive circle in one's life.

- *Having A Positive Attitude.*

Developing positive scripts. Reflecting on positive experiences, recalling times of overcoming difficulties, talking to oneself in a positive way regarding future opportunities.

- *Focusing On Life Goals.*

Listing and taking action on small steps towards these goals.

- *Being Forgiving.*

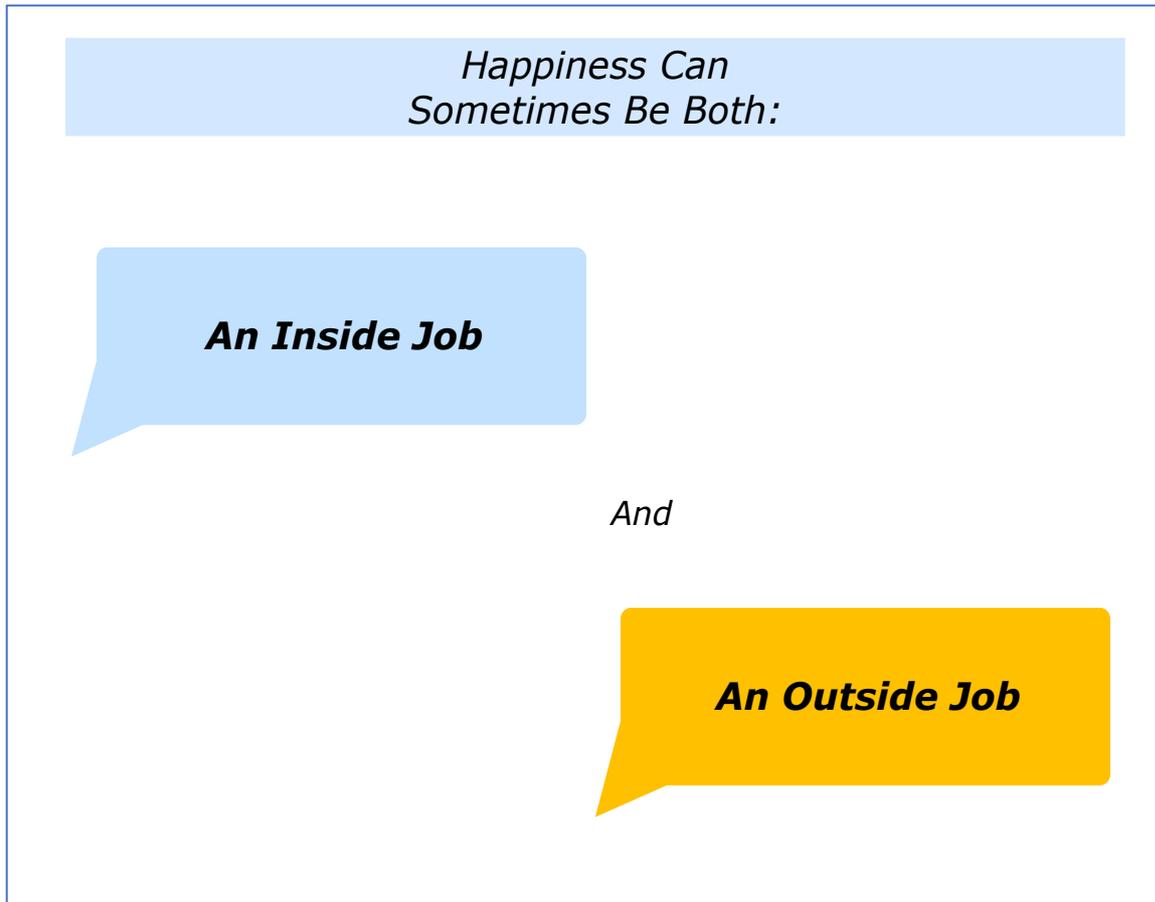
Forgiving people in one's life, but not at the expense of becoming a victim.

- *Savouring Positive Experiences.*

Such as using one's five senses to relish daily moments.

- *Using One's Signature Strengths In New Ways.*

Continuing to develop by doing the things one does best.



There are many views on how people can be happy. Some people believe it can be an inside job. It is also vital, however, to have certain outside conditions that provide support.

One view is that individuals can start from inside themselves. They can pursue some of the principles that people often follow to increase the likelihood of being happy.

As we have seen from the worldwide studies of happiness, however, people often need to be provided with the basic materials for life. Those societies that do not provide these often see lower levels of wellbeing in their populations.

Let's return to your life and work. How can you continue to feel good plus help others to feel good? Here is the final exercise on this theme.

Feeling Good

*The specific things I
can do to feel good are:*

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*The specific things I can do to do
my best to help others feel good are:*

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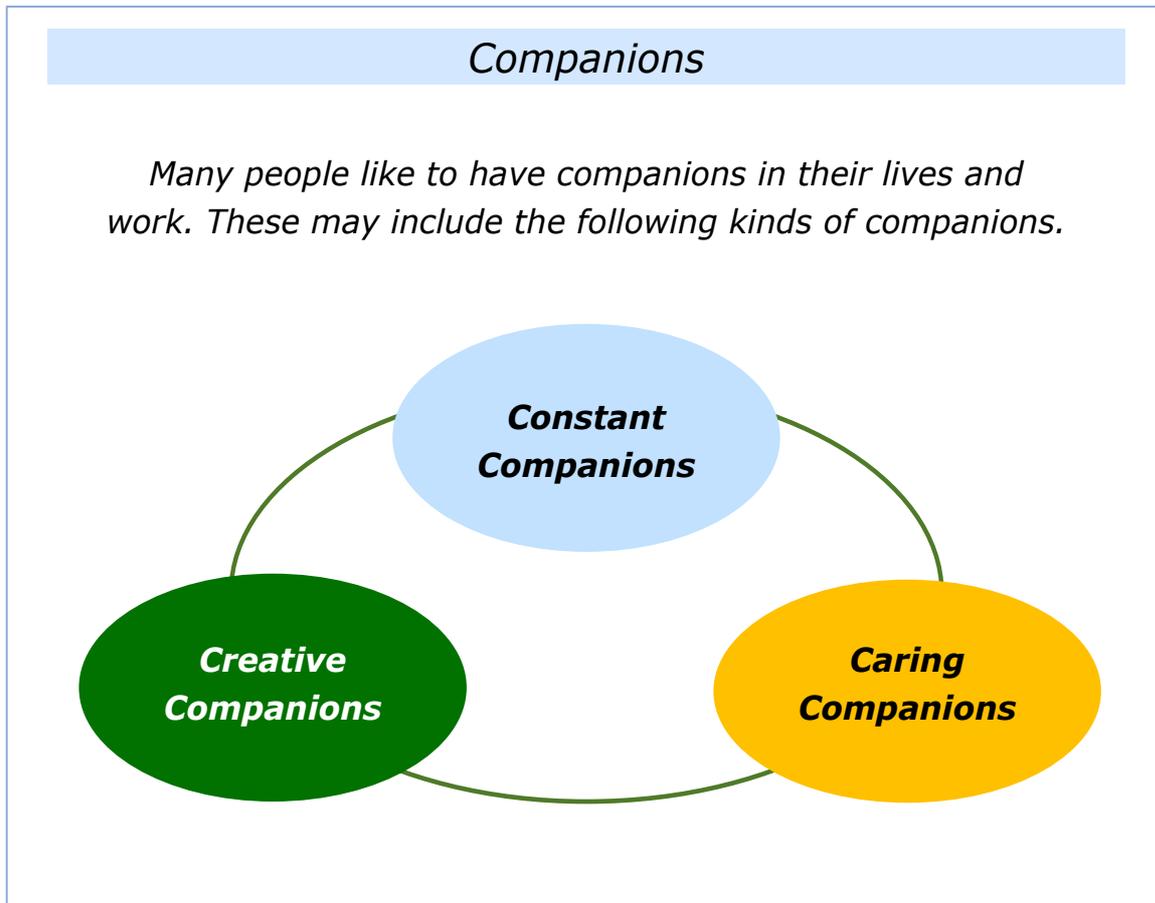
*The specific benefits of
taking these steps may be:*

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The Companions Approach



Many people like to have companions in their lives and work. There are, of course, different kinds of companions. Let's explore some of these.

Constant Companions

Some people like to have relatively constant companions. These may be a partner, friend, kindred spirit or another person. They may simply enjoy being with the person, having conversations or getting support.

Some people may fulfil this need in other ways. They may have a wider network of people or even a pet who offers companionship. This can provide them with social support.

Some people may have philosophical companions. They may follow a spiritual faith or philosophy that offers them support. Such individuals may draw strength from this guiding compass on their life journey.

Caring Companions

Some people may have close caring companions. They may have a partner, friend or another person who gives them love or encouragement in their daily life.

People in loving relationships often keep these alive by focusing on affection, acceptance and adventure. They continue to show affection and accept each other. They also enjoy both shared and separate adventures.

Many people love to give and receive caring. They sometimes get a helper's high by giving to others and it can also be nurturing to receive caring. People are more likely to thrive if they have caring companions.

Creative Companions

Some people get stimulation from having creative companions. They may enjoy talking or working with kindred spirits. Sometimes simply sharing ideas can provide them with support and positive energy.

Some individuals like to work with colleagues who have a similar world view and complementary strengths. They enjoy combining their talents to work together towards a compelling goal.

Some gain strength by learning from creative people they admire – such as those who have done great work in their chosen field. Such icons may provide stimulation and motivation. They then get more energy to keep doing creative work.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of how you may want to follow elements of the companions approach in your own way?

You may want to spend time with a constant, caring or creative companion. Alternatively, you may want to play one of these roles with other people.

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

The Companions Approach

The specific way in which I may want to follow elements of the companions 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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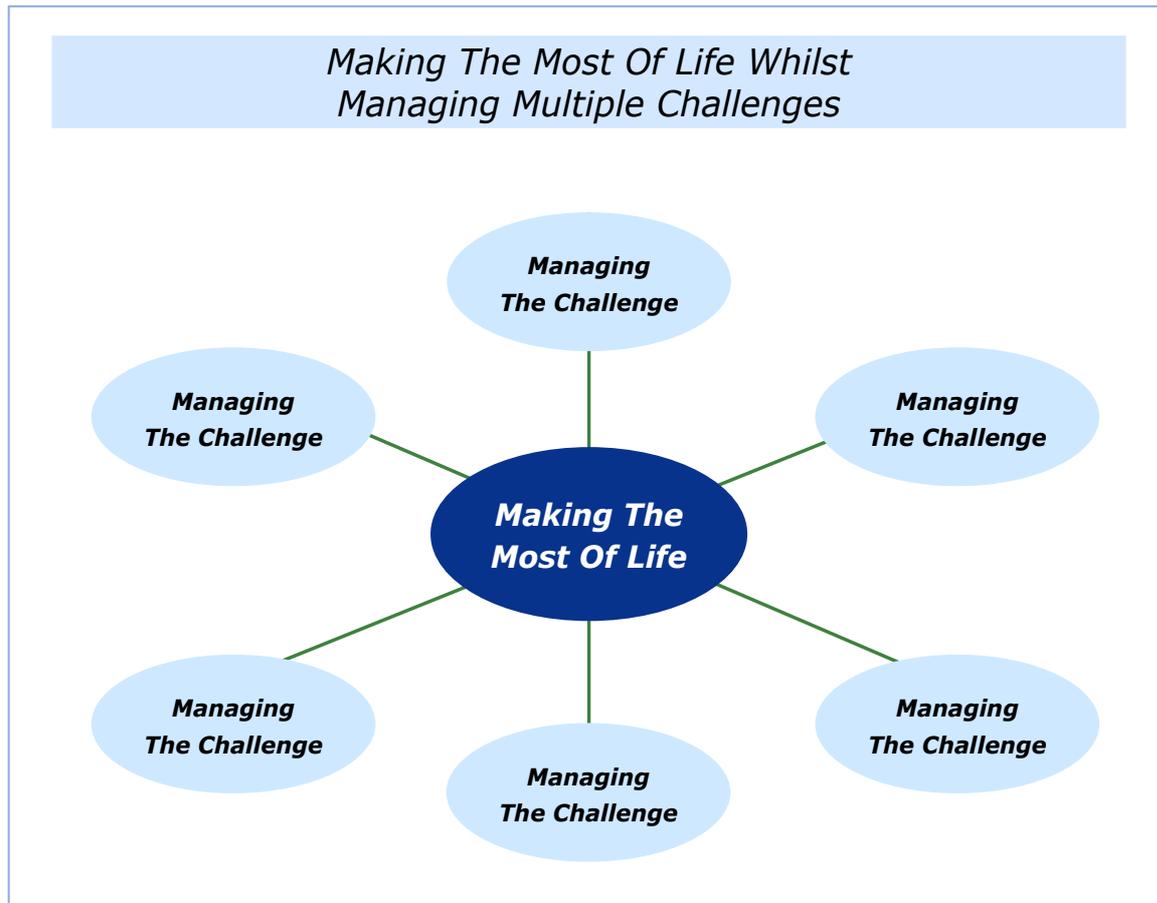
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Making The Most Of Life Whilst Managing Multiple Challenges Approach



Many people want to make the most of life. There may be times, however, when they need to manage multiple challenges. These challenges can take many forms.

A person may be going along happily in life but then face difficulties. They may lose their job, have an illness, fall into debt or experience other setbacks. They may also be affected by events happening to people that they love.

Some people are able to continue with much of their life when experiencing one difficult issue. There may be times, however, when they face multiple challenges. These can be overwhelming and have a profound effect on a person.

Different people manage such situations in different ways. One approach is to try to make the most of their lives whilst also managing each of the challenges. Let's explore this approach.

Managing Each Challenge

Many individuals would prefer to get on with their normal life but they often choose to tackle the challenges. They want to regain the feeling of being in control.

A person may aim to do this is by finding solutions to each of the challenges. They feel that, once they have managed the challenges, they will be able to return to pursuing their normal life.

Different people will obviously face different issues. They may aim to regain their health, find a new job, help a loved one or aim to tackle another challenge.

Some people take the following approach to managing the issues. Bearing in mind the things they can control in the situation, they go through the following steps.

They focus on the first challenge they want to tackle and clarify the real results they want to achieve.

They clarify the strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success and translate these into a clear action plan.

They follow their chosen strategies, get an early success and then do their best to achieve the desired results.

A person may immerse themselves in tackling one challenge at a time. One person explained this in the following way.

"Several years ago I needed to deal with several challenges. These included attending hospital visits with my partner, helping my son to manage his dyslexia at school and also trying to find a more satisfying job for myself.

"This meant organising things properly so that I could devote myself to tackling each challenge. Sometimes the issues overlapped but I tried to immerse myself the specific issues..

"I did my best to tackle each one challenge. When there was no more I could do, I aimed to box off that challenge. I then moved on to the next challenge. Sometimes this proved difficult, but I found it to be the best strategy in the circumstances."

Some individuals have the ability to move from challenge to challenge. This can be rewarding and can help to solve some of the challenges.

There may come a point, however, where a person needs to return to their centre to rest and refresh themselves. They may do this by simply taking time out before then moving back into tackling each of the challenges.

There is another model for regaining energy, however, so let's explore this approach.

Making The Most Of Life

Some people gain strength by making the most of life. They devote time to doing things that give them positive energy. They may choose, for example:

To focus on what they believe is important in life ... To count their blessings ... To spend time with people who encourage them ... To eat nourishing food ... To play their favourite music.

To take care of their health ... To exercise ... To walk with their dog ... To give themselves treats ... To do creative projects ... To reflect on the positive things they have done that day.

Such individuals are then more able to define themselves by the things that give both themselves and other people joy. They do not define themselves by their challenges.

Different people take these steps in different ways. One person expressed this in the following way.

"Some time ago I was faced by a number of challenges. These included caring for people I loved plus tackling problems in my own life.

"At first I gave everything to dealing with these issues. At a certain point, however, I began spending time doing gardening and other activities that I found healing.

"At first I felt guilty about doing these things. But then I realised they gave me strength to deal with the various challenges. They also helped to me to continue to enjoy life and give to other people."

Let's return to your own life. Can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach? What may be the multiple challenges you may need to tackle?

You may need to recover from an illness, live on less money, care for a loved one or help somebody who is facing difficulties. You may want to change your job, manage a micromanaging boss, deal with a conflict or tackle another issue.

How can you continue to make the most of life? How can you do your best to manage each of the challenges? 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 The Most Of Life Whilst Managing Multiple Challenges

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 then 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 Assets, Adversity And Achievement Approach



There are many models for doing fine work. This approach involves building on their assets, managing adversity and do your best to achieve their aims.

Imagine that you want to take these steps in the future. Let's explore how you can translate this approach into action.

Building On Your Assets

What are your assets? Different people have different assets. Let's consider what you may be able to build on.

What are your personal strengths? You may have a positive attitude, a strong drive and be resilient. You may be able to think clearly and find

solutions to challenges in specific situations. You may also have certain interpersonal skills.

What are your professional strengths? You may have the ability to deliver As – rather than Bs or Cs – when doing specific activities. You may have a successful pattern that you follow to do fine work. You may also work well with certain kinds of people and help them to achieve success.

What are your other assets? You may have a loving family, a home and other things that give you positive energy. You may have money, tangible goods and a professional network. You may have other resources that you can use in your life and work.

How can you build on your assets? How can you translate these into setting certain aims? What are the aims you may want to achieve? What are the specific things you can do to do your best to achieve these aims?

This is an approach that can be taken by individuals, teams or organisations. Bearing in mind their strengths, the aims are to encourage people:

To build on who they are – such as their assets - rather than who they are not;

To translate these assets into focusing on achieving certain aims;

To clarify how they can do to do their best to achieve these aims.

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

Building On My Assets

The specific assets that I have are:

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*The specific things I can do to
build on these assets and
translate these into certain aims are:*

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*The specific things I can then do to
do my best to achieve these aims are:*

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*

*

Managing Adversity

Imagine that you have clarified how to build on your assets and work towards achieving certain aims. Embarking on the journey, you will focus on following your chosen strategies.

You will aim to do superb work, get some quick successes and keep improving. Sometimes things will go well, but sometimes you may need to deal with challenges. Bearing this in mind, it may be important:

To clarify the potential adversities you may encounter on the journey;

To clarify how you can prevent some of these adversities happening;

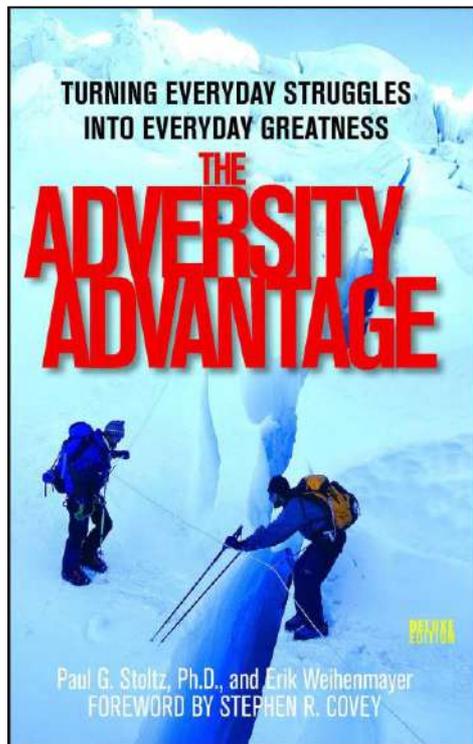
To clarify how you can manage some of these adversities if, despite your best efforts, they do happen.

Bearing these factors in mind, it can be important to clarify your successful pattern for overcoming setbacks. Looking back, when have you managed setbacks successfully? What did you do right then? How can you follow similar principles to manage setbacks in the future?

There are many books written about how people can overcome such challenges. These include Al Siebert's books *The Survivor Personality* and *The Resiliency Advantage*. These provide practical tips that people can use to manage and even grow from such situations.

Paul G. Stoltz and Erik Weihenmayer wrote *The Adversity Advantage*. This shows how overcoming setbacks can fuel a person's ability to produce greatness.

The following pages provide an introduction to the book and some of the suggestions the authors offer for managing adversity. You will, of course, adapt these in your own way.



Paul originally gained public attention with his work on AQ - Adversity Quotient. This enabled people to measure and improve their ability to overcome adversity.

Erik became the first blind person to climb Everest. A journey he chronicled in his book *Touch The Top of The World*.

After seeing Erik featured on the front of Time Magazine, Paul sought him out. Building on what they had in common, they provided the following ideas regarding adversity.

- *Take It On*

Learn how to overcome frustration, helplessness and anger. Also learn how to benefit from adversity.

- *Summon Your Strengths*

Challenge the conventional wisdom that natural strengths drive success. Exceed expectations of what you and others can, or should, attempt to do.

- *Engage Your CORE*

Learn how to handle adversity better and faster. Engage your CORE and learn how to turn adversities into advantages. (CORE stands for Control, Ownership, Reach and Endurance.)

- *Pioneer Possibilities*

Devise signature systems for turning the impossible into the possible. Learn to create strategies that others fail to see.

- *Pack Light, Pack Right*

Learn how packing poorly cripples you, but how choosing the right things, people, obligations, and pursuits strengthen you. Spring clean, so you can rise up, rather than crumble, under the weight of adversity.

- *Suffer Well*

Character is forged in the flames of adversity. Done right, suffering can fuel greatness.

- *Deliver Greatness, Every Day*

This summit, the culmination, weaves together the most important ideas of the book, providing a coherent, portable package of practices that you can apply anywhere, anytime.

As mentioned earlier, you will have your own approach to managing setbacks. Bearing this in mind, you may want to do the following exercise.

This invites you to clarify how you can anticipate and manage any adversities you encounter on the journey. You can then apply these ideas on the way towards achieving your goals.

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

Managing Adversity

The specific kinds of adversities I may meet on the way towards achieving my aims are:

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The specific things I can do to prevent some of these adversities happening are:

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The specific things I can do to manage some of these adversities if they do happen are:

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Achieving Your Aims

Imagine that you have built on your assets, done superb work and managed setbacks. Different people have different approaches as they move towards achieving their aims.

Some people believe that doing eighty percent of the work is simply the precursor to delivering the goods when it matters. They then aim to find and follow their successful way of finishing.

Some individuals keep following good habits. They keep doing the right things in the right way. They believe this increases the likelihood of delivering the right results. They take this good habits approach rather than seeing the finish as a great drama.

Some try to buy time before making a final push. They rest, recentre and rehearse what they are going to do. They then follow their ritual for clicking into action, being fully present and working towards the picture of success.

Some move into a different mindset when reaching what they see as the denouement. Choosing to be more cerebral, they focus on what they can control. They then – in an almost cold way – carry out their chosen strategies for doing their best to achieve the desired results.

Some go into another dimension when nearing the finishing line. They aim to go into their equivalent of the zone. Staying calm, they then aim to flow, focus and finish.

Imagine that you are nearing your aims. How can you continue to do superb work? How can you follow your successful pattern for finishing? How can you do your best to achieve your aims? What may be the benefits of reaching these goals?

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

Achieving My Aims

*The specific aims I
want to achieve are:*

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*The specific things I can do to do
my best to achieve these aims are:*

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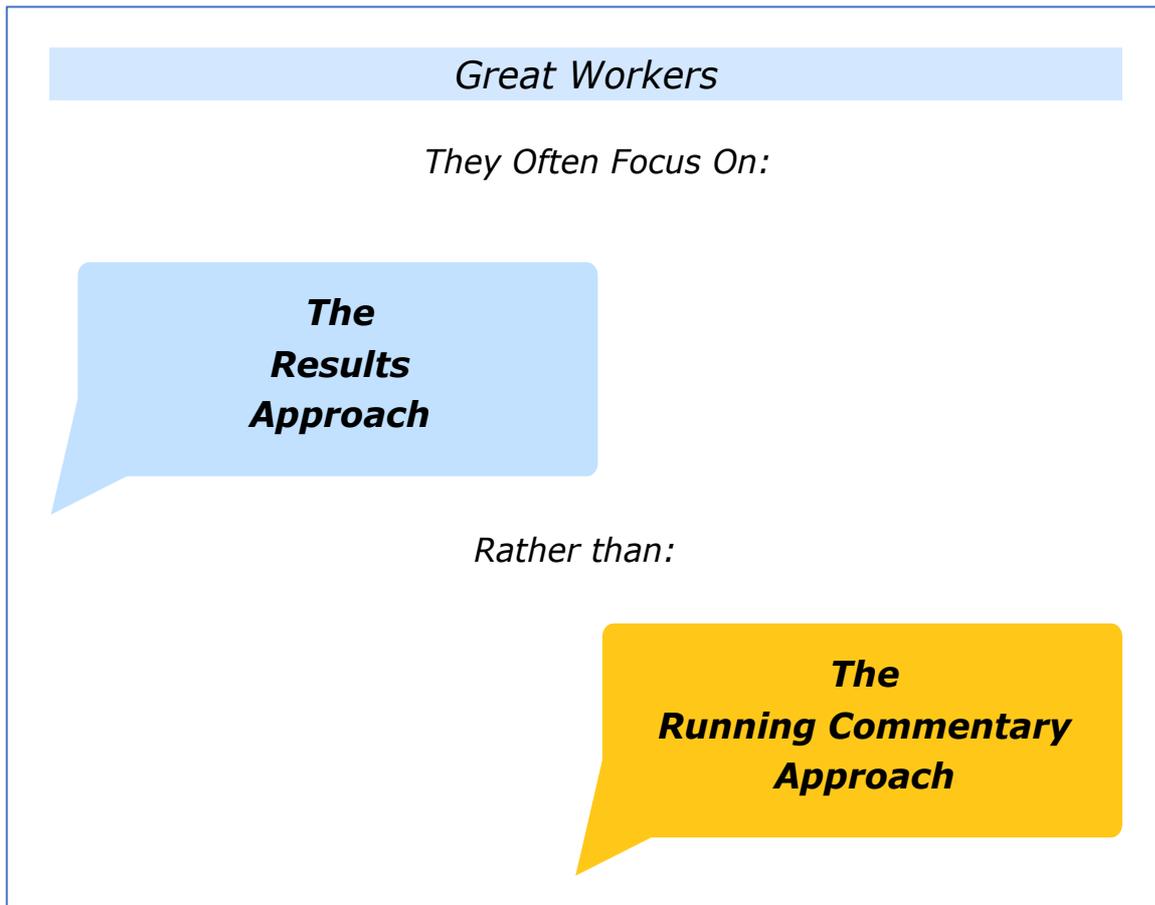
*The specific benefits of
achieving these aims may be:*

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The Results Approach Rather Than The Running Commentary Approach



Great workers focus on the results to achieve and cut out irrelevant noise. This sounds easy in theory but it can be harder in practice.

Observer critics, the press, bloggers and many others want to provide a running commentary. They want to express their views about what is happening.

Sometimes this can be helpful and provide a reality check. But sometimes it is possible to get diverted by people who have other agendas, especially they are provocative.

Looking back, can you recall a time when you focused on achieving a specific goal and cut out the running commentaries? You may have aimed to pass an exam, launch a web site, complete a project or do another activity.

What did you do right then? How did you maintain your concentration? How did you keep focusing on the picture of success? How did you filter the running commentaries? What happened as a result of taking these steps?

Imagine that you want to do a piece of work in the future. Let's explore how you can stay concentrated and not be side-tracked. One approach is to focus on the following themes.

*You can clarify the
results to achieve*

J.K. Rowling focused on her specific vision, even when experiencing severe difficulties during her twenties. Recalling her early years of writing, she said:

"I had a daughter I adored, a typewriter and a big idea."

She aimed to produce an epic for young readers that chronicled the adventures of Harry Potter. She was clear on the road map, the milestones and the feelings each book should evoke. She explained this in the following way.

"I just wrote the sort of thing I liked reading when I was younger and still enjoy now."

Certainly there were ups and downs along the way but she pursued her daily disciplines to reach the goal. J.K. Rowling chose to focus on the things that were vital in her life. As she later wrote in *Harry Potter and The Chamber of Secrets*:

"It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."

Looking ahead, can you think of a piece of work you want to do? You may want to write an article, do a creative project, build a prototype or do another activity. What are the real results you want to achieve?

How motivated are you – on a scale 0-10 – to achieve the goal? What can you do to maintain or improve the rating? How can you encourage yourself on the journey?

Imagine that you have explored these questions. You can then move on to the next theme.

You can clarify the potential running commentaries

Great workers are dreamers who do and deliver. They are, by definition, extremists. They focus on a few things and do these extremely well. But doing great work sometimes creates waves.

Some people will appreciate their efforts but others will criticise them. This is especially so if their work is in the public eye - such as in sports, the arts or other fields.

Great workers learn to focus on the results rather than get distracted by other people's running commentaries. One entrepreneur expressed this in the following way.

"Customer feedback is vital because I want to a reality check and keep improving. I also like to learn from people I respect. They give me honest suggestions about how to get results.

"I have little time for observer critics or those with other agendas. It is vital to listen to constructive suggestions. But it is important not to get dragged down by complainers."

Let's return to the piece of work you may want to do. Are there any potential running commentaries that may occur? Who might give these running commentaries?

What might such people be saying? Will they be constructive, critical or a combination of both? What might be the agendas of such people? What might be the other kinds of commentaries, noises or diversions?

*You can clarify how to focus on
the results to achieve rather
than the running commentaries*

Great workers seem to exist in their own space - their own zone, tunnel or bubble. Some athletes, for example, often have physical rituals they use to brush off criticisms, heckling, mistakes and other disruptions.

Concentrating on the concrete results to achieve, they cut off other distractions. They keep following their chosen principles towards achieving the picture of success.

Wise people seem to have an inner compass they follow rather than get caught in other people's agendas. The Dalai Lama, for example, aims to follow his philosophy in many situations. He explains this in the following way.

"My religion is kindness. I find hope in the darkest of days and do not judge the universe.

"Our prime purpose in this life is to help others. And if you can't help them, at least don't hurt them."

Let's return to your chosen piece of work. How can you keep focusing on the results to achieve? How can you listen to people you respect? How can you get reality checks and keep improving?

How can you encourage yourself on the journey? How can you avoid getting distracted by unhelpful running commentaries? 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 Results Approach

The specific piece of work I want to do is:

*

*The specific results I want to achieve
when doing that piece of work are:*

*

*

*

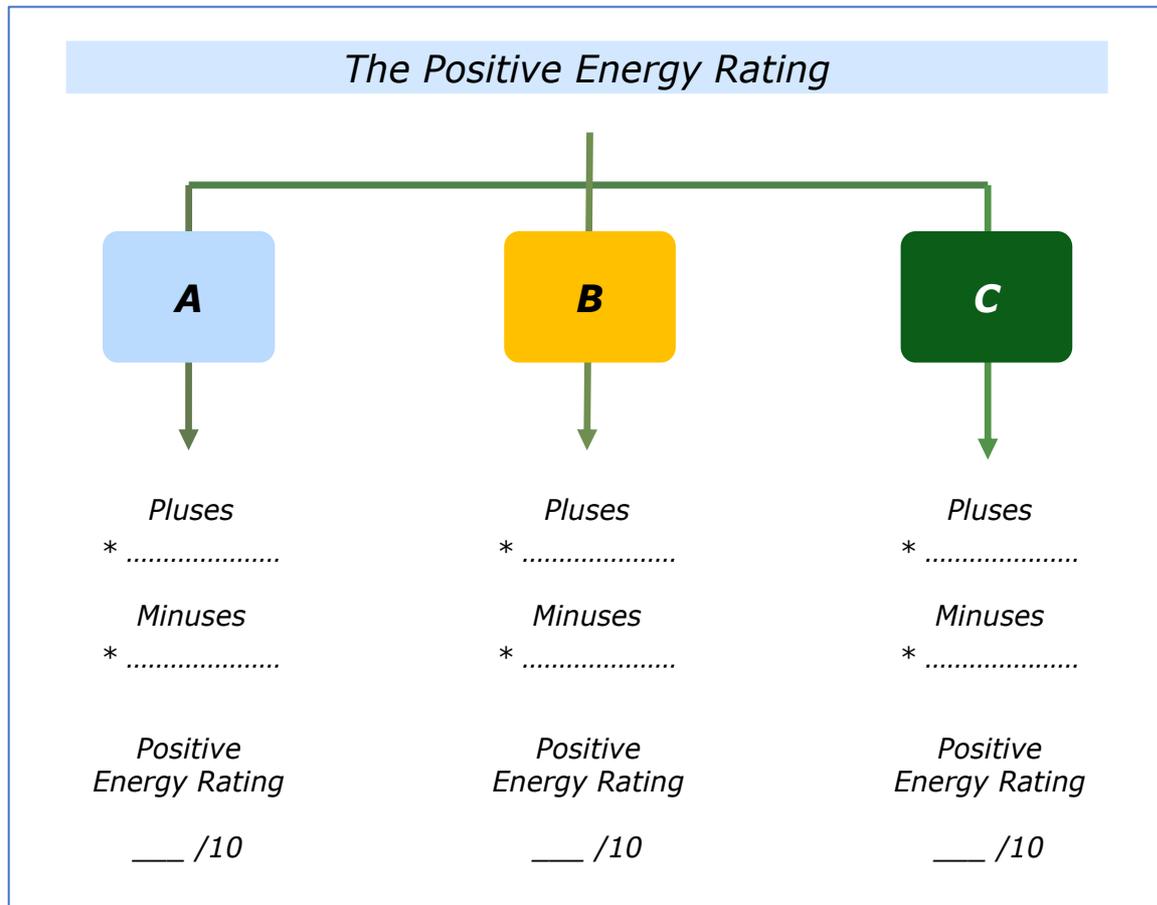
*The specific things I can do to focus on
achieving those results rather than be
distracted by running commentaries are:*

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The Positive Energy Approach To Making Decisions



There are many models for making decisions. Some invite a person to buy time and be cerebral. Others invite them to be more feeling and use their intuition.

Some models invite a person to stay calm and clarify their goals. The person then aims to consider their options, the consequences of each route and any potential creative solutions. They are then more likely to make a considered and calculated decision.

Some models invite a person to use their strategic intuition. Drawing on their experience and previous successful strategies, they rehearse following these – plus adding other skills – to tackle the present challenge. They then pursue the strategy that they believe has the greatest chance of success.

This section explores how you can use the positive energy approach when making decisions. The example relates to career choice, but you can apply this approach to any type of decision in your personal or professional life.

You can clarify the possible options for going forwards

Imagine that you are focusing on the next step you want to take in your career. Looking ahead, describe the potential routes you can follow in the future. Take time to reflect and describe all the possibilities.

Option A Is:

* *To ...*

Option B Is:

* *To ...*

Option C Is:

* *To ...*

Every person is different so will have different options. Imagine a scenario, however, where you may be able:

- a) to stay in your present operational role;*
- b) to work towards getting promotion – maybe to a role with more pay and responsibilities;*
- c) to lead a new part of your organisation;*
- d) to follow one of your previous bosses to another company;*
- e) to go freelance and do consultant work.*

d) to do something else – such as change career, study or do other things.

It is important to brainstorm all the possibilities. Do not worry about how to make any of these happen. Just get all the options out into the open.

The same rule applies to any situation in your personal or professional life. Dare to outline all the possibilities. The next stage will be to look at the implications.

You can clarify the pluses and minuses of each option and the positive energy rating of each option on a scale 0-10

Imagine that you have outlined the various options. You can then aim to do two things.

First, to describe what you see as the pluses of each option. Second, to rate the extent to which each option gives you positive energy – even when you think about it. Do this on a scale 0-10.

Option A Is:

* *To ...*

The Potential Pluses Are:

*
*
*

The Potential Minuses Are:

*
*
*

The Positive Energy Rating Is:

_____ / 10

Option B Is:

* *To ...*

The Potential Pluses Are:

- *
*
*

The Potential Minuses Are:

- *
*
*

The Positive Energy Rating Is:

_____ / 10

Option C Is:

* *To ...*

The Potential Pluses Are:

- *
*
*

The Potential Minuses Are:

- *
- *
- *

The Positive Energy Rating Is:

_____ / 10

Different people list different pluses and minuses under each of the options. Much will also depend on the stage they are at in their life and work.

One leader I worked with in a large company, for example, was fed-up with reporting to the head office in another country and being micromanaged. Whilst the pay was good, there were negative side-effects. Their positive energy rating for continuing in their present role was 6/10.

They had the opportunity to take the COO role in another company, but this would mean putting in masses of hours to build credibility. They were also at a stage of life where they had other priorities. Bearing this in mind, the positive energy rating for this option was 6/10.

The option that appealed most was heading a new venture in their present company. The pluses included the following. They would be able shape something, build a team and use the company's resources to do pacesetting work in a new field.

The potential minuses included the following. They would step down from the C-suite, miss out on getting extra shares and may be seen to lose some of their status.

Looking at the pluses and minuses, the leader still felt excited about the challenge that would give them a new lease of life. The positive energy rating was 8/10.

They decided to take this route. Despite the apparent loss of status, they reported that several of their colleagues felt admiration and respect for them pursuing this option.

Imagine that you have given a positive energy rating for each of your options. It will then be time to move on to the next stage.

You can clarify the option – or the combination of options – you want to pursue

There are several things to consider when choosing the route to follow. One of the key factors to bear in mind is that we are feeling beings. This should not need saying, but it is important to recognise this factor when making decisions.

The positive energy approach is one that I have used many times with individuals who feel in a dilemma when making a decision. A person may say things like:

"I have done all the intellectual work regarding the pluses and minuses of each option. I still can't make up my mind, however, about the best way forwards."

On these occasions it is sometimes helpful to invite them to do a positive energy rating. There are several reasons for taking these approach.

First, to recognise that energy is life. It is important for people to do things that give them positive energy. They are then more likely to feel alive and creative. This can also have a positive effect on other people – such as their loved ones or family.

Second, to recognise that choices have consequences. Certainly a person can take a higher paid job or study for a degree that may one day lead to them being well paid. Making decisions based only on money, however, can have both pluses and minuses.

Third, to consider both positive energy and their longer-term big picture of success. Doing what gives them positive energy can lead to them

feeling more alive. It can also increase the chances of serendipity and finding even more positive opportunities.

At the same time, they may also want to bear in mind their life goals. They may choose to pursue an option that will enable them to work towards their longer-term picture of success.

Whatever route a person chooses to take, they need to plan properly. If appropriate, they can aim:

To clarify their strategies and action plan for pursuing their chosen route;

To clarify how they can build on the pluses and minimise any potential minuses;

To clarify how they can get some quick wins, encourage themselves on the journey and do their best to achieve their picture of success.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the positive energy approach? This could be when making a decision yourself or when helping somebody else to make a decision.

Looking at the specific situation, what may be your potential options going forwards? What may be the pluses and minuses of each option? What may be the positive energy rating for each option? How can you then use this information to make your decision?

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

The Positive Energy Approach To Making Decisions

*The specific situation where 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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*

*

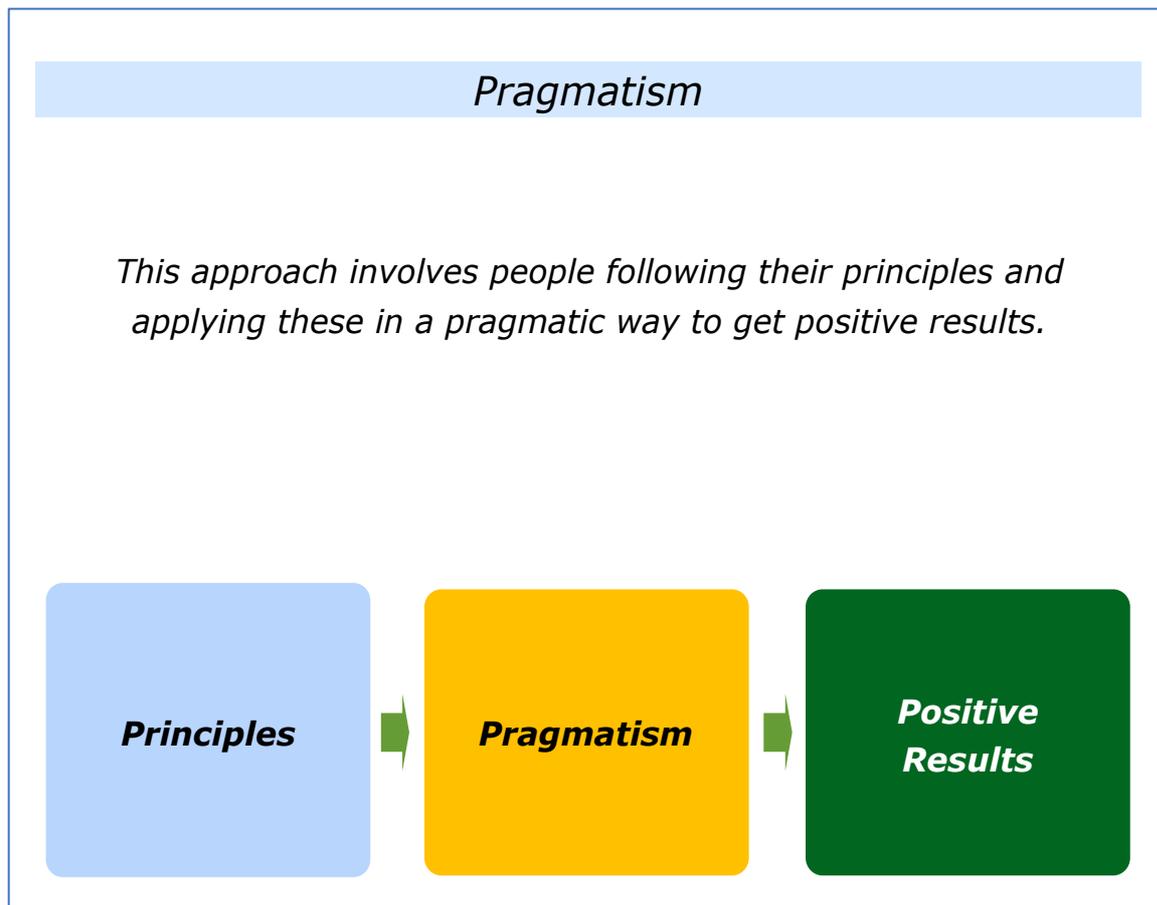
*The specific things that may
happen as a result may be:*

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The Principles, Pragmatism And Positive Results Approach



This approach can be used by individuals, teams and organisations. It involves people following their principles and applying these in a pragmatic way to get positive results.

There are many definitions for being pragmatic. Here is one that we are using here:

Doing things in a practical and realistic way that works.

Some definitions of being pragmatic ignore following principles but here we are saying that principles are vital. These provide the basis for making key decisions and translating these into action.

People can keep following their principles because these may be the only constants in a changing world. The ways they apply these principles may call for being pragmatic, however, to get the desired positive results.

Bearing this in mind, people can explore certain themes when faced by a challenge. They can ask themselves the following questions.

What are the principles we want to follow? How can we follow our principles in this situation? How can I apply these in a pragmatic way in this situation to get positive results? How can we check we are really following our principles?

This is where some mentors, for example, earn their corn. They can pass knowledge that helps people to see potential ways they can be true to themselves and achieve their picture of success.

Such mentors often have a wide repertoire of experience, knowledge and tools. They then draw on these resources to share ways that people can follow their principles and get positive results.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach? You may want to apply it in your own life or when helping other people.

Looking ahead, how can you apply this approach in the situation? How can you clarify the principles to follow? How can these principles be applied in a pragmatic way to get positive results?

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

The Principles, Pragmatism And Positive Results 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 then focus on the chosen principles and apply these in a pragmatic way to get positive results are:

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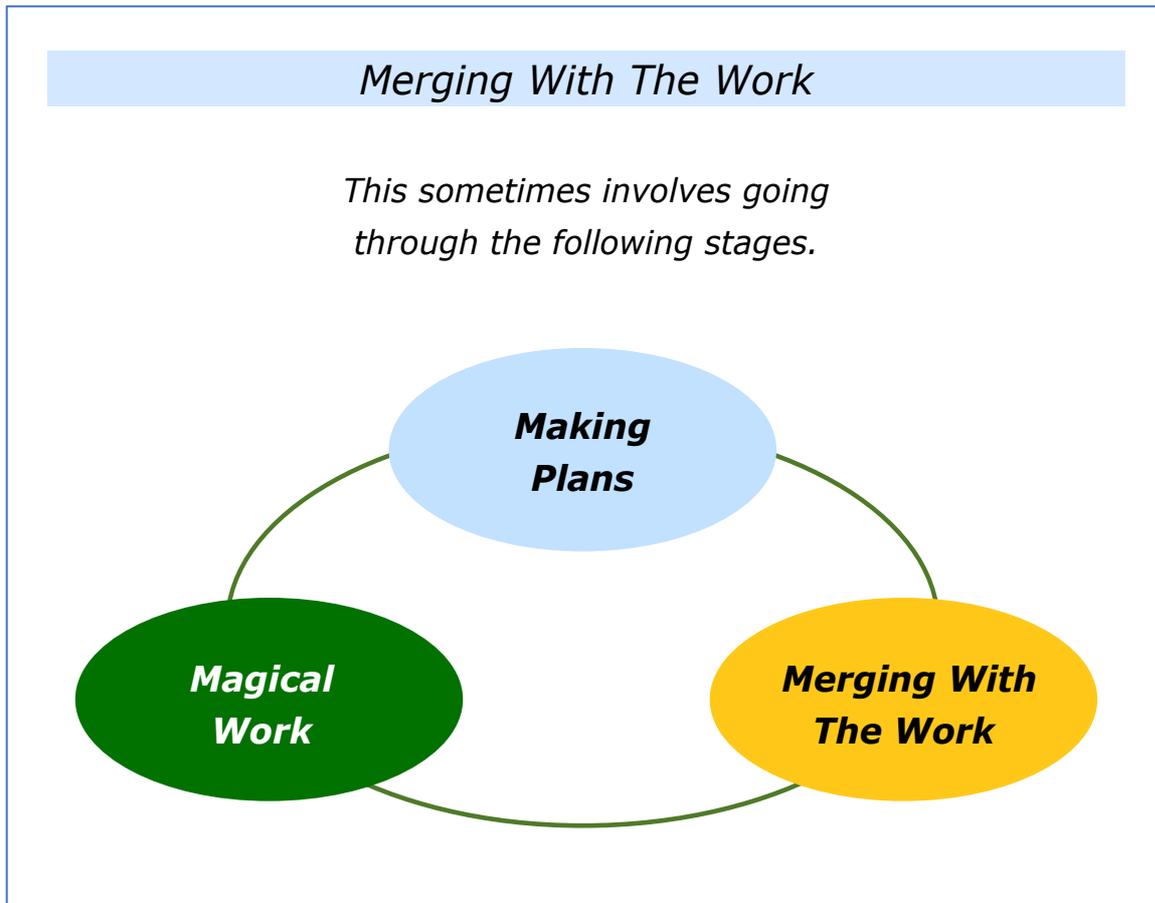
The specific things that may happen as a result may be:

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The Merging With The Work Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach involves a person becoming totally absorbed in what they are doing and merging with the work. This can sometimes result in them doing magical work.

Great workers focus on the specific activity where they may have the ability to do superb work. They then take the following steps.

Making Plans

Such workers plan properly before doing a piece of work. They do this before running a seminar, playing a sport, acting in a play, mediating in a conflict, leading a rescue mission or doing another activity. They believe that planning properly provides a platform for success.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you took this step? What did you do: a) to clarify the results to achieve; b) to clarify the strategies to follow; c) to rehearse dealing with potential scenarios? How did you translate your strategies into a clear action plan?

Great workers try to make things as predictable as possible. They build on what they can control and plan how to manage what they can't control – including the potential unpredictable events. They then move onto the next stage.

Merging With The Work

Such workers move into action and often merge with the work. They become as one with the activity they are doing. They may do this when working as an artist, potter, climber, crisis manager or in another role.

They often focus on the process of absorption, adventure and achievement. One mentor explained this in the following way.

"I love encouraging people. Much of the work these days involves doing virtual mentoring sessions.

"Before the session I find out everything I can about the person – their life, work and interests. The next step is to imagine what they may want to talk about – their agenda, challenges and goals.

"If appropriate, I also invite the person to let me know ahead of time if there are any particular topics they may want to explore.

"Looking ahead, I rehearse the session many times. I also clarify the possible things I can do to help them to achieve their aims. Then I relax before the session.

"I get into position at least fifteen minutes before the start and again rehearse what may happen. Moving into the session, I feel calm and clear. Then something else clicks in.

"I focus only on the person and the topics they explore. I am not aware of myself. But I am aware of the ways it may be possible to help the person to achieve their goals.

"During the session I feel like an artist must do when merging with their art, music or work. The session has a life of its own and I aim to channel it towards helping the person to achieve their goals.

"After the session I send the person any pieces of material they may be able to use in their own way. Then I come out of the bubble and move on to the next activity in the day."

You will have your own way of merging and become one with the work. Sometimes this can lead to the next stage.

Magical Work

Great workers do all the necessary maintenance work. They make sure the basics get done in order to create the platform for achieving success.

The practical tasks they do will depend on the person's chosen activity. They may be working as an artist, surgeon, theatre director, leader or in another role. Doing these tasks sometimes provides the springboard for moving on to the next stage.

Great workers sometimes go into another dimension. A footballer produces a great piece of skill. A mediator provides a creative breakthrough solution. A surgical team performs a remarkable operation. They sometimes do magical work.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach? What can you do then to make plans? How can you merge with the work? How can you then do your best to do magical work?

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

The Merging With The Work 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:*

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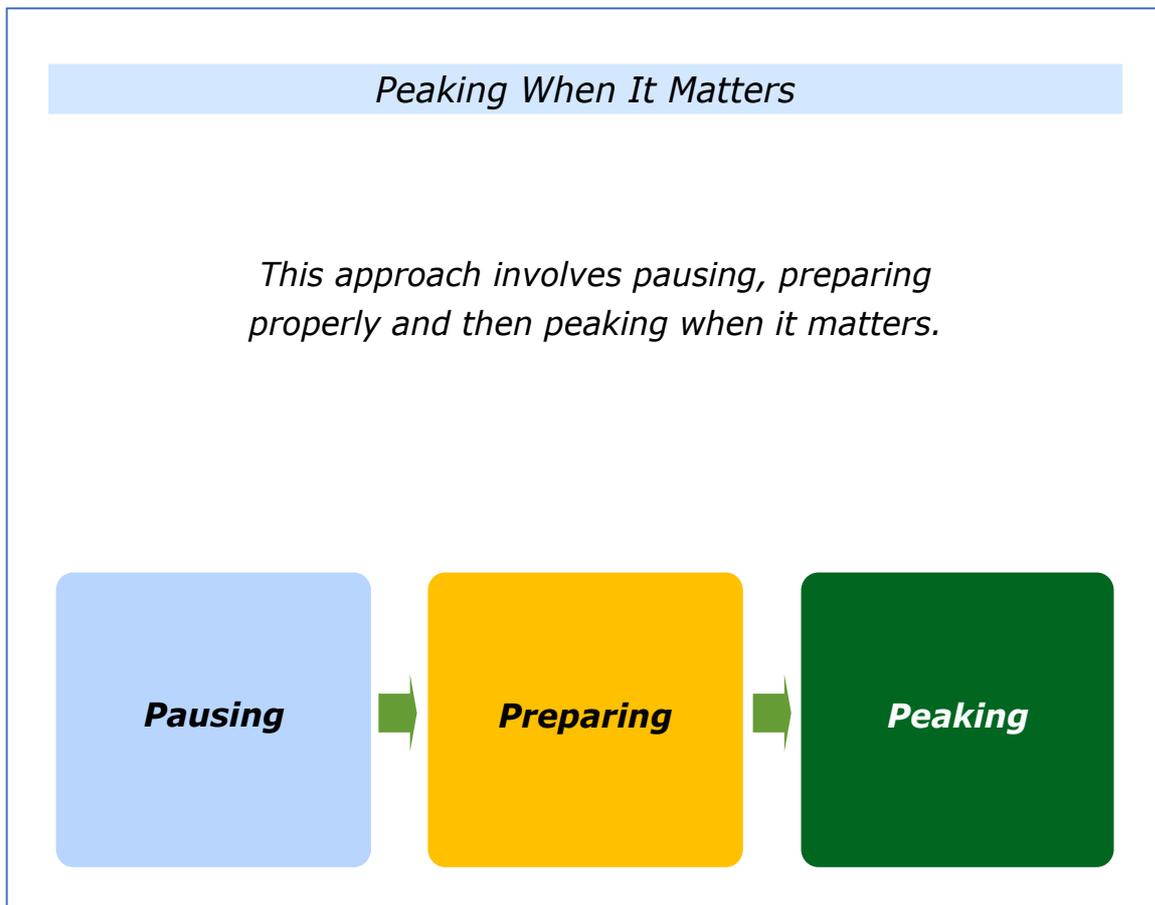
*The specific benefits of
taking these steps may be:*

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The Peaking When It Matters Approach



There are many models for doing fine work. One approach is borrowed from sports but can be applied in many situations. This involves pausing, preparing and then peaking when it matters.

Peaking can mean different things in different situations. Much depends on the person and what they want to achieve in the situation.

For an athlete it may mean delivering peak performances in competitions. For a crisis manager it may mean making good decisions at crucial moments. For a mentor it may mean being fully present and helping the mentee to achieve success.

There are different ways to peak when it matters. One approach is to go through the following steps.

Pausing

This involves pausing for a certain period of time. Sometimes this could be for a short time, sometimes for a long time. The process often involves being still, recentring and exploring possible routes you can take in the future.

Some people pause many times during a day. They aim to relax, refocus and rehearse what they are going to do next. Some people may pause for longer times in their lives. They may take time out to recover from a crisis, reassess their life goals or prepare before making a transition.

Looking at your own life, when do you take time to pause? You may do this when you are aiming:

To refresh yourself ... To relax and recentre ... To explore ideas ... To refocus on your life goals ... To make a key decision ... To rehearse what you are going to do next.

What is your preferred way of pausing? Some people reflect, sleep, walk or do other activities. Some do exercises – such as deep breathing. Some buy time to think before making a decision.

Imagine that you are following your preferred way of pausing. You may then move on to the next stage.

Preparing

This involves preparing properly for what you have decided to do. The steps you take will obviously depend on the activity you aim to pursue and the picture of success.

An athlete who is preparing to compete, for example, will prepare both physically and psychologically. They may aim:

To commit themselves fully ... To seek advice regarding how to be at their best physical condition ... To follow disciplines regarding food and training ... To pursue a specific competition schedule.

To prepare themselves psychologically ... To accept the pluses and minuses involved in committing themselves fully ... To, if appropriate, make sure they manage their family life as well as their athletic life.

To encourage themselves ... To build on what they do well and tackle areas for improvement ... To manage their body and recover from injuries ... To mentally rehearse before competing ... To do their personal best on the day.

You will prepare in your own way before doing a specific activity as a counsellor, chef, artist, singer, leader or in another role. It will then be time to move on to the next stage.

Peaking When It Matters

This involves doing your best and peaking when it matters. Different people may do this at different times and in different ways. Much depends on the kinds of activity where they are aiming to perform at their best.

Great athletes, for example, continue to follow their disciplines and produce high quality performances. They may also focus on peaking at certain events. Doing their best on the day, they may then do something special to deliver the goods at the denouement.

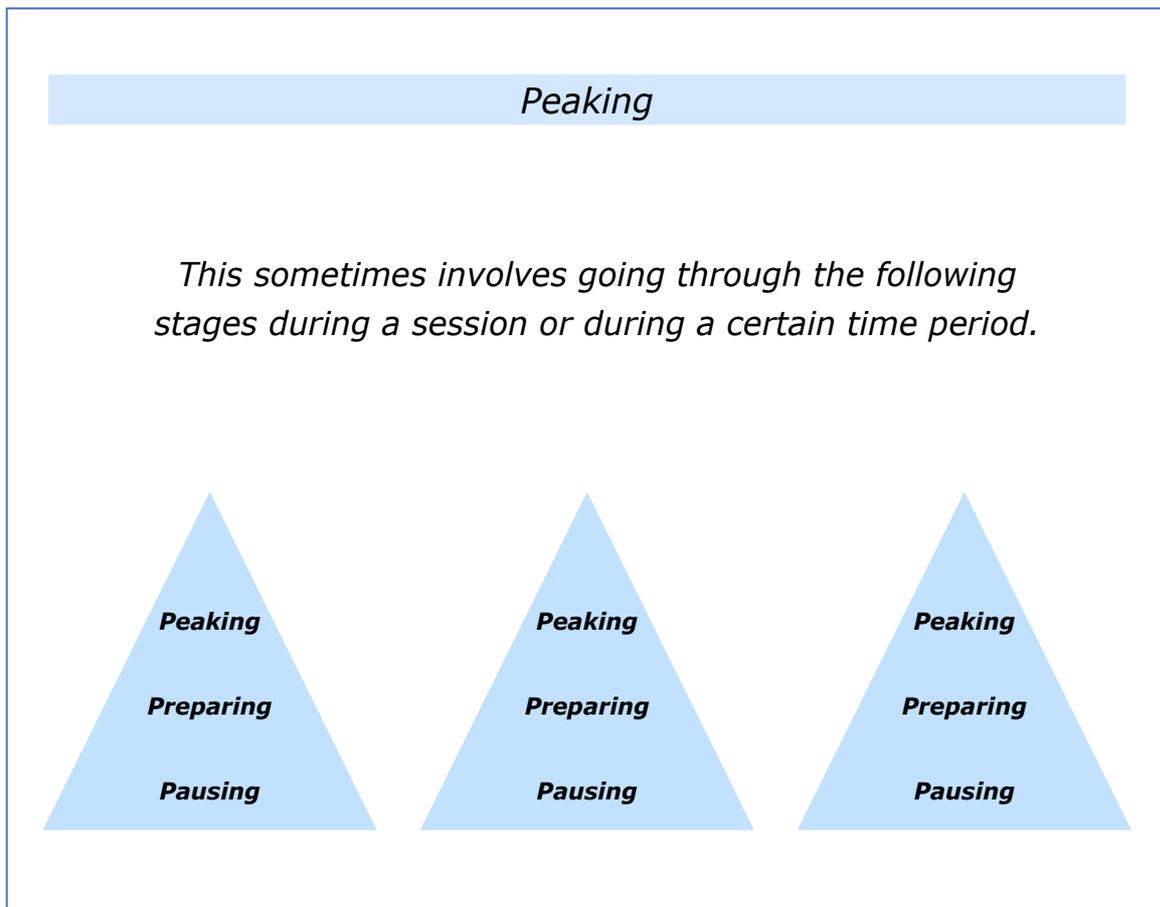
Some workers follow a different rhythm. Looking at my work as a mentor, for example, I aim to do a certain number of sessions each day. This increases the chances of peaking.

Between the ages of 50 and 70 I could do around six face-to-face sessions during a day. These days I work from home doing virtual mentoring.

This involves preparing for sessions with individuals around the world. It is vital to consider the topics they may want to explore and then to rehearse the sessions.

The actual sessions involve becoming totally absorbed, focusing on the person and helping them to achieve their goals. Below is how the day

may look in practice. This calls for doing my best and aiming to peak when it matters.



Looking ahead, can you think of a specific situation where you may want to follow element of the peaking approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

If appropriate, how can you go through the stages of pausing and preparing? How can you then do your best and peak when it matters? What may happen as a result?

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

Peaking When It Matters

The specific situation when I may want to follow elements of the peaking when it matters approach may be:

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The specific things I can do then to go through the stages of pausing, planning and peaking are:

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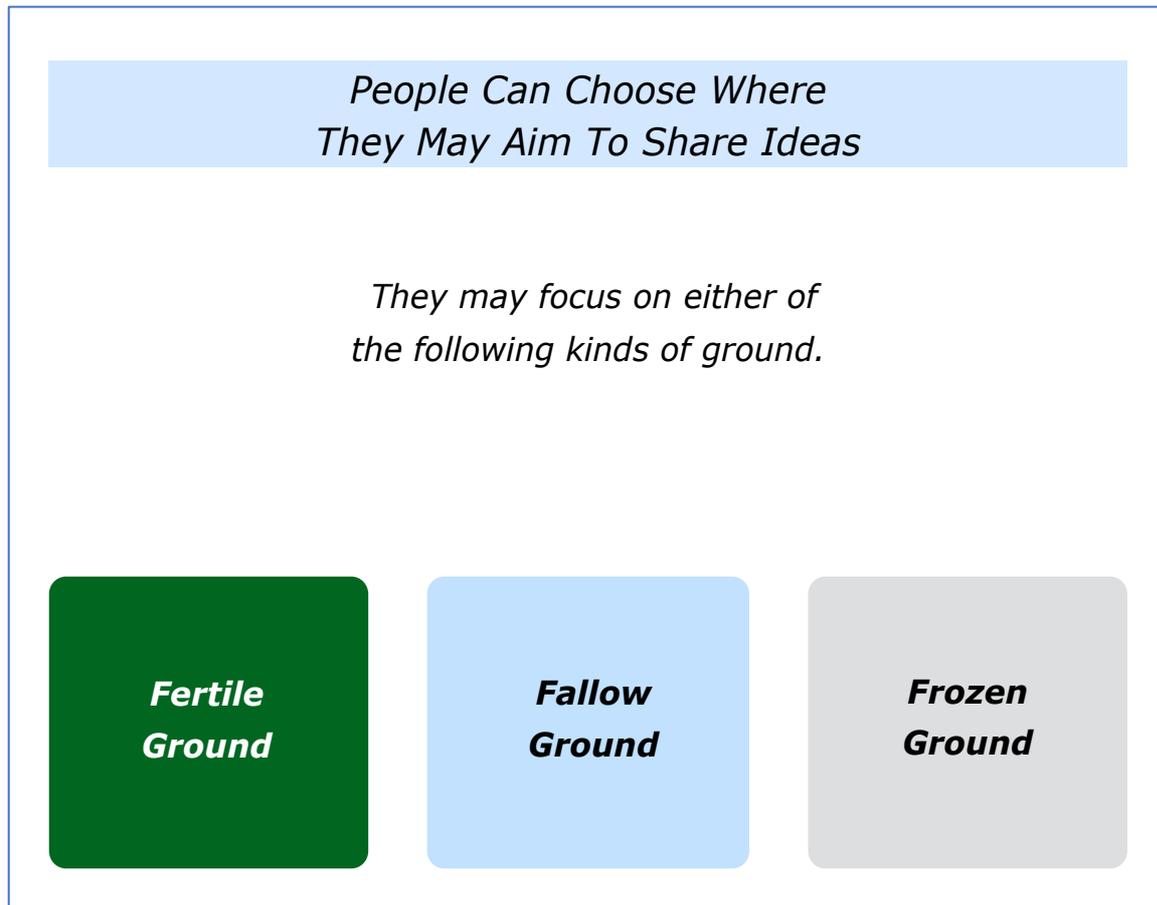
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Fertile Ground, Fallow Ground And Frozen Ground Approaches



Many people want to help others succeed. Sometimes this may involve passing on knowledge that people can use in their own ways to achieve their goals.

Imagine that a person has ideas, models or practical tools that work. It may be important for them to know where to plant these seeds.

They can identify the potential fertile ground. These may be the kinds of people, places and cultures that are more likely to be open to such ideas. It can be useful for them the focus on these areas.

The person may also find it useful to identify the fallow ground. This may include people who are not necessarily looking for new directions but they may be open to things that spark their interest.

The person may need to avoid the frozen ground. These are places where people have rigid beliefs and are not necessarily open to other ideas.

Imagine that you want to pass on knowledge. Let's explore how you can identify the various kinds of ground.

The Fertile Ground

Looking around, where might be the most fertile ground for passing on your knowledge? Here are some questions it can be useful to explore when considering this theme.

Who are the kinds of people with whom you work best? What are the personality characteristics of these people? What are the reasons why they may be open to what you offer?

What are the kinds of work places – cultures and environments – that may be open to what you offer? What are the characteristics of these places? How can what you provide help these people to achieve success?

Imagine that you have something of value to offer. The reality is that some people – some target groups or audiences – will be more open to such ideas than other groups.

This rule holds true whether you are working as a counsellor, therapist, singer, artist, sports coach or in some other role. You may find it useful to focus on the most fertile ground.

Looking at my own work, I have tended to focus on working with positive achievers. Such people have a positive attitude but also want to achieve certain results.

This has often involved working with pioneers in education, business, sports and other fields. Such people have also sometimes been pacesetters or peak performers.

This is an approach that I have also taken when running therapy sessions or working with challenging organisations. The aim has been to appeal to the positive achiever parts of individuals, teams or organisations.

Later we will focus on your chosen fertile ground. Before then, however, let's look at another possibility.

The Fallow Ground

The fallow ground is an option that is sometimes worth exploring. These are situations where people may be resting or are relatively happy with their present lives or work.

Such people may not necessarily be looking for new ideas or directions. They may have their interest piqued, however, by stimulating things that show them how they can achieve success.

Imagine that you want to offer knowledge to such people. It can be important: a) to share ideas in a way that respects people and may help them to achieve their goals; b) to not to try to sell anything to them.

Sometimes you may find it surprising when offering knowledge to such people. Some may find that it resonates with them and what they want to do in the future. Sometimes the seeds you plant begin to grow.

Let's move on to another area that you may consider but much will depend on your approach to this option.

The Frozen Ground

Everybody is different. People like different kinds of foods, music, art and other things. They may also have different mind sets. Some may not be open to the ideas you want to offer. So, for you, this may be the equivalent of frozen ground.

Some individuals decide they want to target these groups. They deliberately aim to reach others who are sceptical or have rigid opinions. They aim to open their minds to other ideas and possibilities.

There are many views about how to relate to sceptics. One view is that people will only change their thinking if they see how doing so will bring them more benefits.

Some individuals therefore try to show others the benefits of changing their lifestyle, company culture or behaviour. This may work, but the odds are not in favour of the recipients of the messages actually changing.

Let's return to your own life and work. What are the kinds of ideas, models and tools you would like to pass on to people? Where do you believe would be the most fertile ground?

What are the kinds of people or places that would be most open to these ideas? How can you reach these in a way that fits your values system? How can you pass on knowledge in a way that helps them to achieve success?

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

The Fertile Ground

The specific kinds of knowledge that I would like to share with people are:

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The specific kinds of people and places that may be open to this knowledge are:

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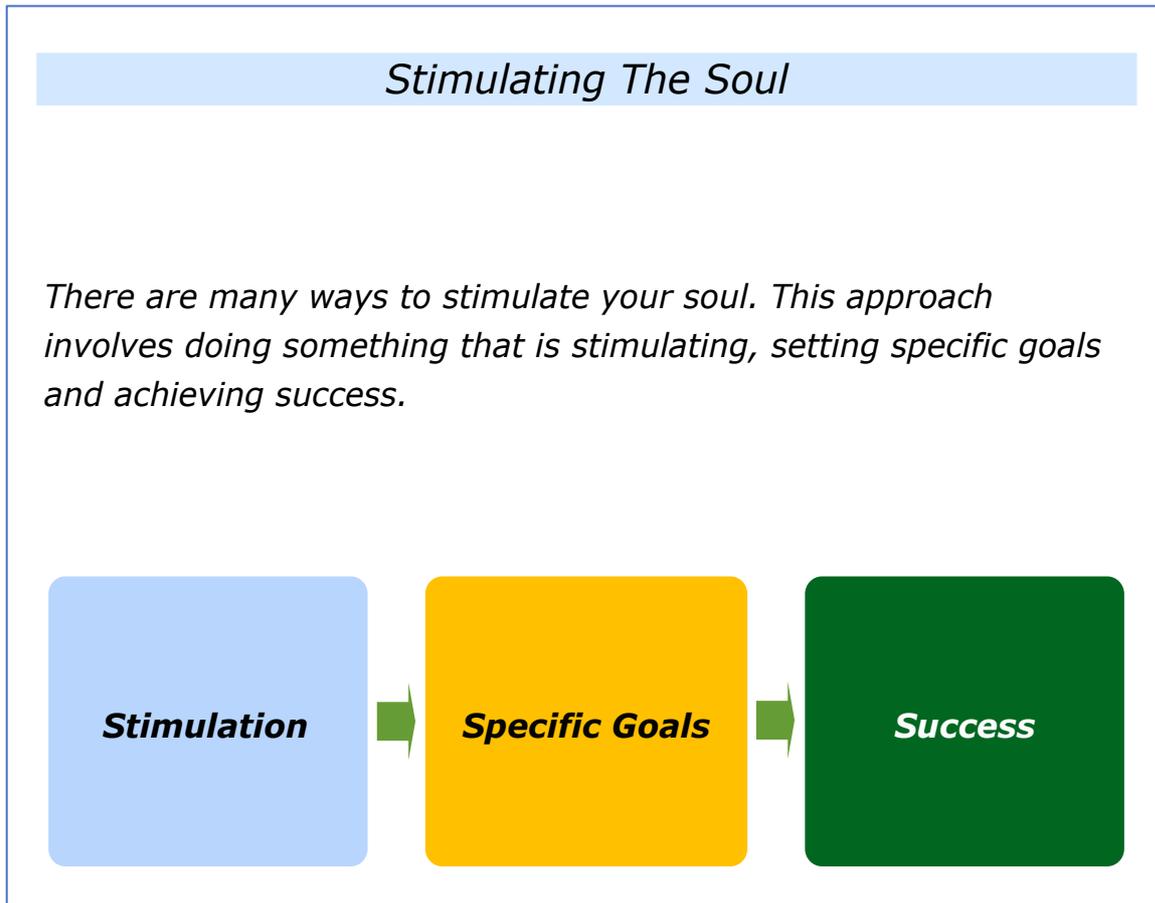
The specific things I can do to pass on knowledge to people in this fertile ground are:

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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:*

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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:

*

*

*

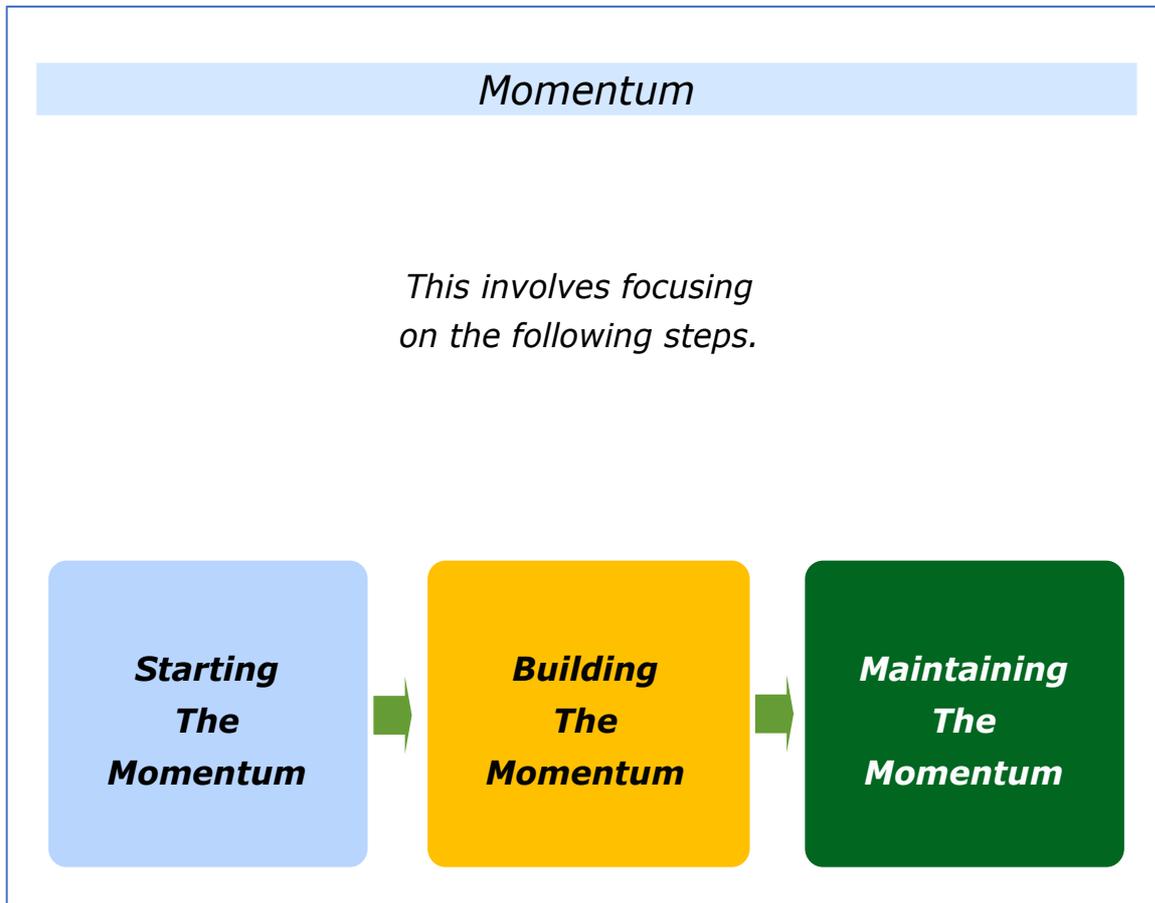
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

The Momentum Approach



There are many ways to live life. Some people make plans but find it hard to get going. Some people start but then fall way. Some people move into action and maintain the momentum.

Looking back, can you think of a time when you followed elements of the latter approach? This could have been in your personal or professional life.

You may have been aiming to develop a healthy lifestyle, raise money or find a new job. You may have been doing a creative project, leading a team or doing another activity.

What did you do to move into action? When did you do to get some early successes and increase the movement? What did you do to maintain the momentum? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

Momentum In The Past

*The specific situation in the past
when I followed elements of
the momentum approach was:*

*

*The specific things I did then to follow
elements of the momentum approach were:*

*

*

*

*The specific things that happened as
a result of taking these steps were:*

*

*

*

Imagine that you want to follow a healthy lifestyle. If appropriate, you may want to follow elements of the momentum approach.

This is an approach I have seen adopted by people ranging from recovering addicts to peak performers. The keys have been for the person:

To make the internal decision that they want to follow certain habits that will enable them to achieve specific goals;

To start, follow and build habits that will enable them to achieve their specific goals;

To get successes every day and maintain the momentum towards achieving their specific goals.

The momentum approach is used in many fields. It is often used in sports, for example, to describe when a player or a team generates energy and gets positive results.

It is then important to build on their achievements. They need to maintain rather than lose the momentum. Making this happen can help them to recover from a deficit or build on their successes and achieve their goals.

The momentum approach is one that I have seen used many times to encourage people to follow certain principles in organisations. It is different from trying to put people through a change programme. Let's look at one example.

During the early 1990s I worked with a company that wanted to encourage its people to follow certain principles to deliver success. Bearing this in mind, we aimed:

To find examples of when people in the company were following these principles and achieving success;

To publish success stories that highlighted the specific things that people were doing to follow these principles and achieve success;

To produce success stories every month to maintain the momentum and encourage people to keep following the principles to achieve success.

Different people choose to maintain momentum in different ways. You will have your own approach to making this happen.

Some people choose to keep a log that describes: a) the good habits they have followed that day; b) the good habits they aim to follow they next day. This helps them to keep following the habits that will help them to reach their goal.

Some people choose to follow a positive mantra. They keep reminding themselves of this mantra by repeating it or looking at during the day. They may do this when recovering from an addiction or aiming to achieve peak performance.

Some aim to get some quick successes and encourage themselves on the journey. They recognise the danger of 'declaring victory too early.' They believe in following good habits – which is their victory each day on the way towards achieving their goals.

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 momentum approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

You may aim to do this when developing a healthy lifestyle, making a transition or helping other people. You may aim to do so when doing a creative project, leading a team, tackling a challenge or doing another project.

What can you do to move into action? How can you continue to follow your chosen habits? How can you maintain the momentum? What may happen as a result?

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

Momentum In The Future

The specific situation in the future when I may want to follow elements of the momentum approach may be:

*

The specific things I can do then to follow elements of the momentum approach are:

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Balancing The Cave And The Campfire Approach

Balancing The Cave And The Campfire



What is your preferred way of living and working? Are you an introvert, extrovert or a mixture of both?

Sometimes you may like to spend time in your cave to reflect. Sometimes you may want to spend time beside the campfire with certain people. Sometimes you may want to get the right combination of both. Let's explore these different modes.

Spending Time In The Cave

When do you like to spend time in your version of a cave? Sometimes in your professional life you may need to do solitary creative work without interruption. Perhaps when you are writing, problem solving or pondering a tough decision.

Sometimes in your personal life you may need individual time to do some slow thinking. Sometimes you may simply want to make sense of experience before moving forwards.

There are many different kinds of caves. Perhaps you have favourite physical spaces where you withdraw from the world. These may be a studio, a bed or even the corner of a coffee house.

Sometimes you may withdraw into your own psychological space. You may want to listen to music, go for a walk or find other ways to reflect. Taking this time can help to recentre and then refocus before going out into the world

Spending Time Around The Campfire

When do you like to spend time around your version of the campfire? What do you get from being in these places?

Looking at your personal life, you may like to share ideas with a few kindred spirits. You may enjoy talking with them, getting stimulation and finding solutions together. How can you spend more time with these people?

Looking at your professional life, who are the specific people with whom you like to share the campfire? Who are the customers and colleagues with whom you enjoy working? Do you have any favourite places where you like to meet? How can you spend more time in these situations?

Balancing The Cave And The Campfire

What for you is the right balance between the cave and campfire? Do you need to spend more time alone? Or do you need to spend more time getting stimulation from the real world?

Everybody is different and it may be impossible to get the perfect combination. But it can be good to clarify how much time you want to spend in the different places.

Everybody is a mixture of introvert and extrovert. A person who is an introvert, for example, may like to spend time reflecting and composing their thoughts. Such a person may then switch into professional mode when going out into the world.

They may go into role as a medic, trusted advisor or as another kind of specialist. Going into role provides a chance to follow clear guidelines and enable other people to succeed.

Let's return to your own life and work. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on these themes. This invites you to do the following things.

First, describe the various caves where you like to spend time. These include the places where you can rest, reflect, recentre, get stimulation or feel at peace.

Second, describe the various campfires where you like to spend time. These include the places where you get encouragement from other people or where you do stimulating work with people.

Third, describe the specific things you can do to keep getting the right balance between spending time in the caves and around the campfires.

Here is the exercise on these themes. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

The Caves And The Campfires

*The various caves where
I like to spend time are:*

*

*

*

*The various campfires that I would
like to spend time around are:*

*

*

*

*The specific things I can do to get the balance
between the caves and the campfires are:*

*

*

*

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.

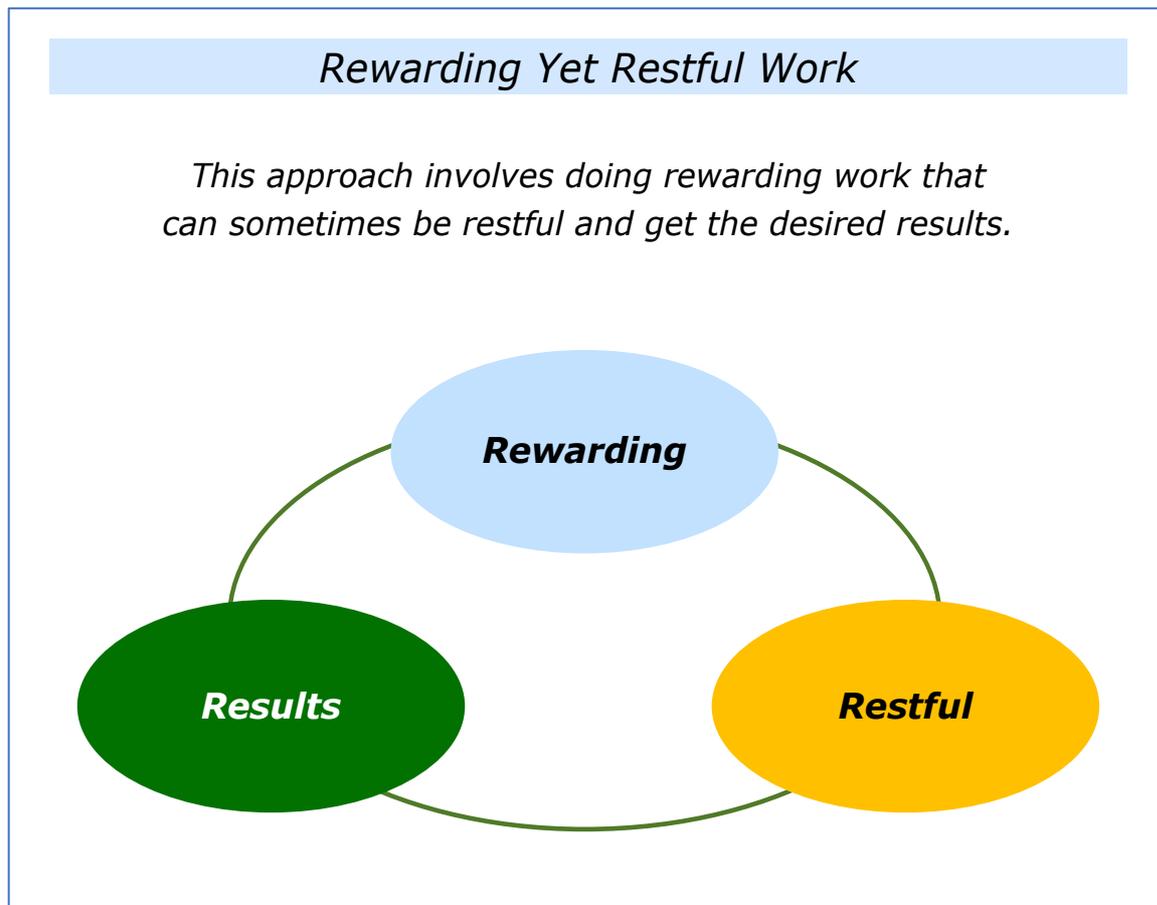
Reshaping The Future

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 Rewarding Yet Restful Work Approach



This approach 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.

A nurse working an Accident & Emergency unit may feel calm in the midst of acute demands. They feel alive, alert and yet also at peace. They feel 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:

*

The specific things I can do to continue to do this in the future are:

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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 to reflect and, if appropriate, reappraise your priorities? What can you to do 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:*

*

*The specific things I can do
then to renew myself are:*

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Apprentice, Achiever And Advisor Approach

The Apprentice, Achiever And Advisor

Some people go through the following stages.

- *The Apprentice – They learn what works;*
- *The Achiever – They do what works;*
- *The Advisor – They share what works.*

Some advisors also continue to see themselves as apprentices who continue to learn about what works.

There are many ways to continue to develop. Some people go through the stages of being an apprentice, achiever and advisor.

Imagine that you want to build on one of your strengths and go through these stages in your own way. Let's explore these themes.

The Apprentice Stage

There are many ways to be an apprentice. One approach is to go through the following steps.

You can identify one of your strengths that you want to develop

You may have the ability to do superb work when encouraging people, writing, playing a sport, fixing technical problems or doing another activity. Bearing this in mind, you may want to consider completing the following sentence.

The specific strength I would like to develop is:

*

The specific reasons why I would like to develop this strength are:

*

*

*

The specific benefits – for myself and for others - of developing this strength would be:

*

*

*

*You can clarify how you can develop
this strength by being an
apprentice and learning what works*

Imagine that you have focused on a specific strength. The next step is to learn how to develop and apply it to achieve success. Different people take this step in different ways.

One approach is to be a good apprentice. It is to be curious and to learn about what works.

It is also to follow your way of learning. You may learn best by focusing on the specific strength you want to develop and then:

By focusing on something you want to achieve and setting a specific goal;

By reading, studying positive models, learning from experts or doing other things on the way towards achieving the specific goal;

By learning about what works, applying the lessons and continuing to develop on the way towards achieving the specific goal.

One of the keys is to focus on what works in your chosen field. It is: a) to study what works; b) to apply what works; c) to develop your way of making things work.

You can follow this approach if you are learning to be a counsellor, mediator, leader or another role. Bearing in mind your strengths, the aim is to develop the skills required to achieve the specific goal.

Some people see themselves as lifetime apprentices, which is a theme we will return to later. For the moment, however, let's explore the next step you may take when building on your strengths.

The Achiever Stage

Imagine that you have been able to build on your strength and develop skills that you can use to achieve success. Great workers sometimes go through the following steps to make this happen.



Imagine that you want to follow this model in your own way. One approach is to go through the following steps.

You can build on your strengths and set specific goals

Great workers do what they do best and do their best. Bearing this in mind, you may focus on a specific activity where you can build on your strengths and do satisfying work.

You may want to do this when running a counselling session, writing an article, managing a crisis or doing another activity. Bearing in mind the

results you want to achieve, you can translate this into a clear picture of success.

*You can follow strategies that work
and do your best to achieve success*

You will have clarified the real results to achieve. Bearing these in mind, you can follow the strategies most likely to achieve the goals. You can translate these into action, perform superb work and get some early wins.

You can commit yourself to continuous improvement. Bearing in mind the results to achieve, you can build on what is working and find solutions to challenges. You can then do your best to achieve the picture of success.

The Advisor Stage

Great workers often develop a track record of success. This sometimes leads to them being approached by people who would like them to pass on their knowledge.

Whilst they may be happy to take this step, it is be important to do this in a way that works. Bearing in mind their strengths, they may choose to share ideas through teaching, coaching, mentoring or acting as trusted advisors.

Whatever route they take, they often prefer to act as educators rather than giving direct advice. They like to give people an overview of the different options and then, when appropriate, offer practical ways forward.

They emphasise, however, that it will be up to the individuals to do what works for them. Bearing this in mind, they may aim:

To clarify what the learners want to learn and the specific goals they want to achieve;

To advise people that there may be many ways to move forwards and they will share ideas that people can use in their own ways;

To pass on knowledge, models and practical tools that people can use to achieve their specific goals.

Good advisors get a kick from passing on knowledge that helps others people to succeed. Such people always remember their roots, however, and love to continue learning. They see themselves as lifetime apprentices.

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 this approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

What may be the strength you want to develop? How can you be a good apprentice and develop this ability? How can you then apply it to achieve specific goals? How can you then, if appropriate, act as an advisor who offers people knowledge in a way they can use to achieve success?

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

The Apprentice, Achiever And Advisor Approach

*The specific situation in the future
where I may want to follow elements
of this approach in my own way may be:*

*

*The specific things I can do then
to follow it in my own way are:*

*

*

*

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

*

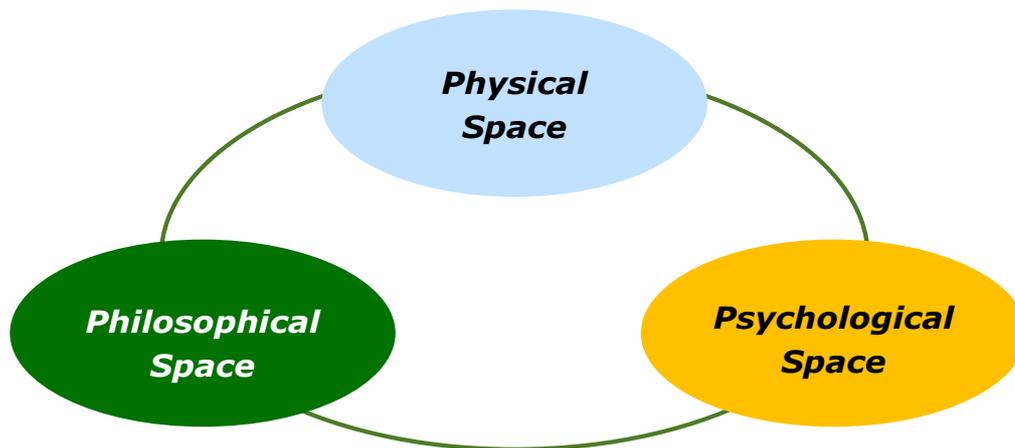
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The Creating Space In Your Life Approach

The Space Approach

Every living thing needs space to live and grow. Human beings are more likely to develop when they feel they can be themselves and have the physical, psychological and philosophical space to grow.



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 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.

15

Began to hang out with different types of people – artists, bikers and others.

Fighting with my step parent. Began to show symptoms of stress.

20

School suffered, but enjoyed feeling free with these people. Got into a few scrapes.

Left home.
Went to Uni.
Had a series of relationships.

25

Did not follow my instincts about what to study at Uni. Left after a year.

Had a three year relationship that eventually became restrictive.

Moved to London. Lived in a squat. Sold tickets on a theatre box office. Eventually managed to get a few roles.

Joined what proved to be a cult.

30

Got a job organising events. Enjoyed it – because it combined theatre and outdoor activities.

Left the cult.
Built a relationship with a partner who encouraged me.

35

Became a project manager and then director for an arts company. Love my job.

We adopted children. This meant we were busy, but I loved it.

40

Making plans to take care of my Mum as she gets older. She has always encouraged me.

Had a health scare. The treatment took time, but now okay.

Feel a new lease of life. Looking forward to the future.

45

50

55

60

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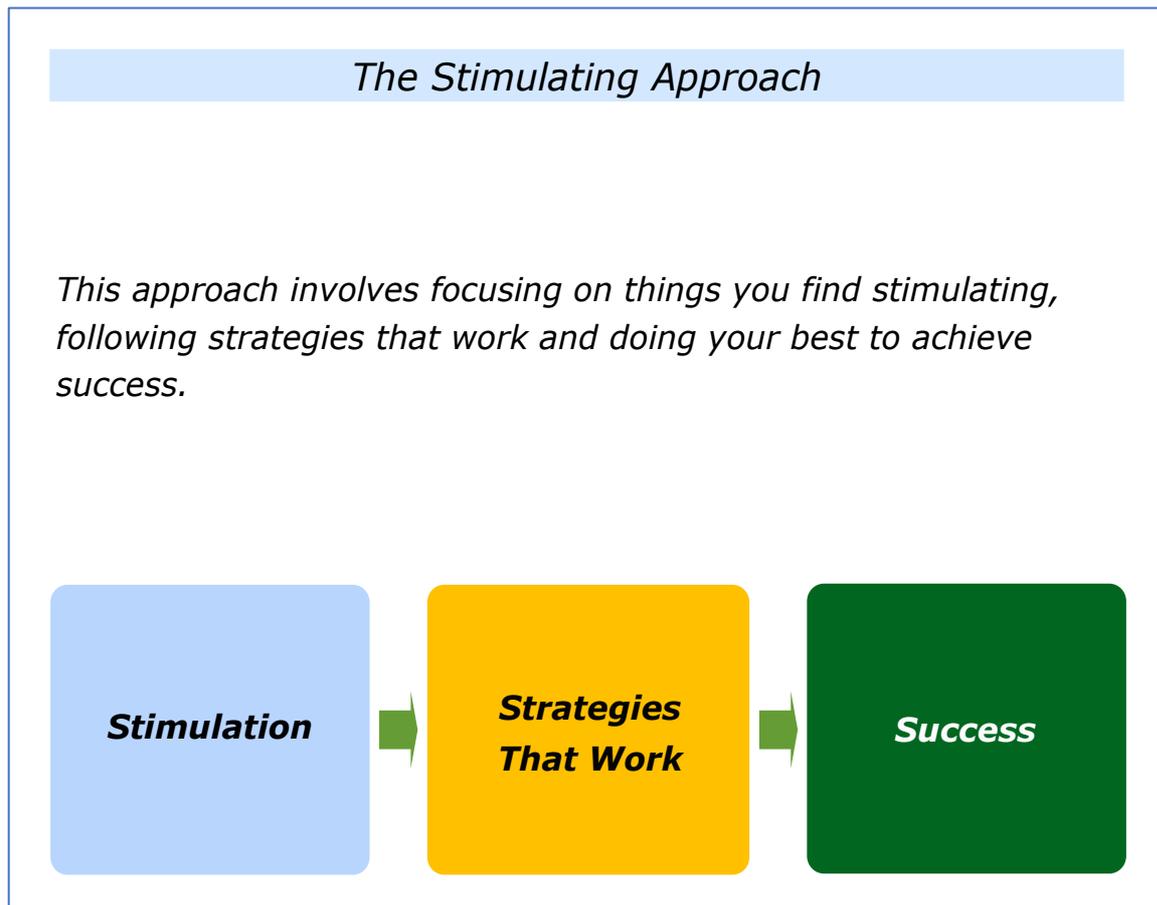
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85 And Onwards

The Stimulating Approach



This approach is used by people who want to maintain their zest for life, be creative or find a new purpose. It is 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. That is possible to do for a short time but doing so for longer can cause damage.

Different people pursue the stimulation approach in different ways. One model involves pursuing the following steps.

Stimulation

Stimulation

*The specific things that I find
stimulating in my life and work are:*

*

*

*

A person may start by focusing on the things that they find stimulating in their life or work. They may also do 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 where things can sometimes start. This can lead to them getting ideas about what they do 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 question.

What are the specific activities where you are more likely to get stimulation?

You may be listening to music, walking, appreciating beauty, studying success or experiencing other things. 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 activities I do where I sometimes get stimulation are:

*

*

*

The specific situations where I sometimes get stimulation are:

*

*

*

The specific steps I can take to do more of these activities or to put myself into more of these situations are:

*

*

*

Let's look at one person who focused on doing things she found stimulating. Katrina Sutcliffe was about to move to Bali to set up a yoga centre but this was stopped by Covid.

Running sessions via Zoom, she began combining these with her love for netball. This led to running yoga sessions for netball teams. These 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.

Strategies That Work

Imagine that a person wants to 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 and following strategies that work. Bearing this in mind, they may 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.

How to clarify the strategies that will work? One approach is to study success. Bearing in mind the results they want to achieve, the person can explore the following themes.

*They can learn from
their own positive history*

Looking back, they can recall when they have tackled a similar challenge successfully. What did they do right then? What were the principles they followed? How can they follow similar principles – plus maybe add other skills – to tackle their chosen project successfully?

*They can learn from
other people's positive history*

Looking around the world, are there any people who have done similar work successfully? What did they do right then? What were the principles they followed? How can the person follow similar principles in their own way to tackle their chosen project successfully?

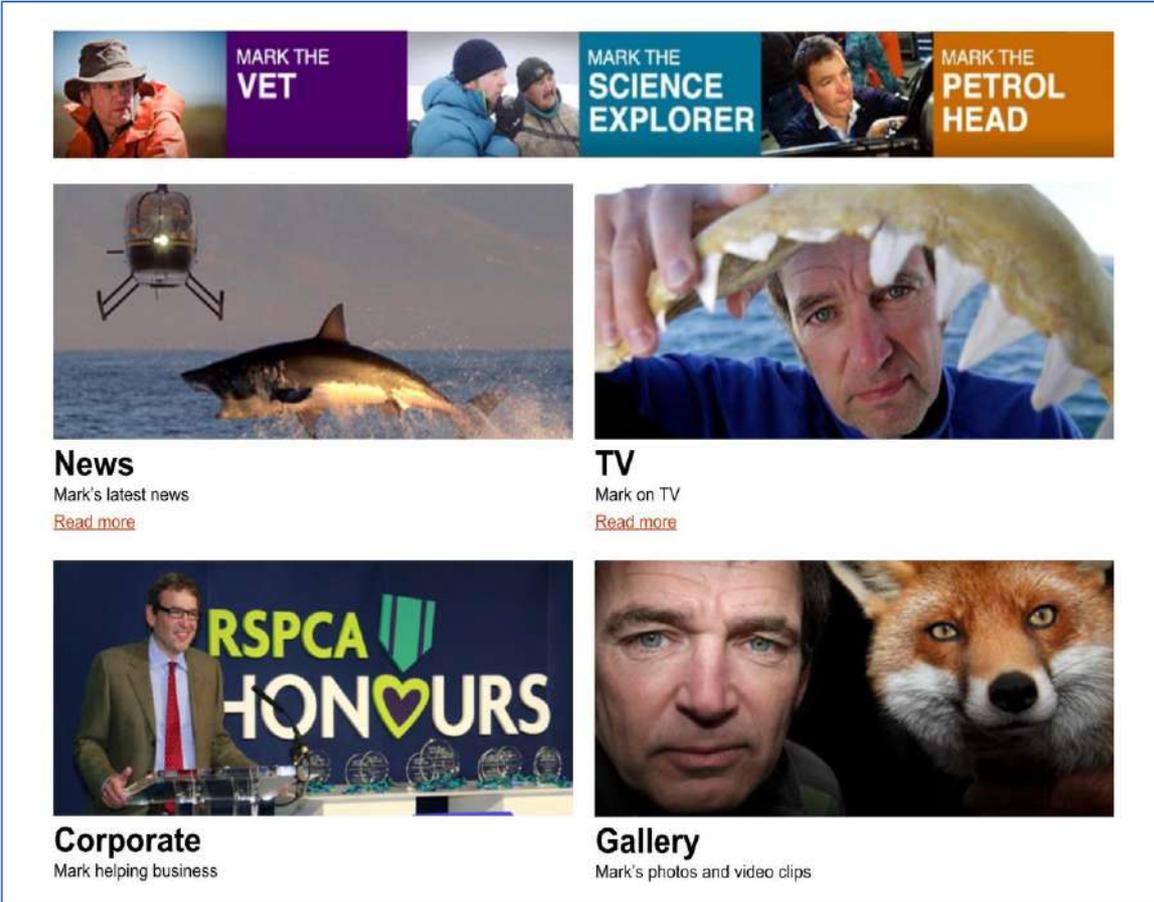
They can think strategically

Looking at their chosen project, they can ask themselves the usual strategic questions. These are the following.

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? How can I translate this into a clear action plan and do my best to achieve the picture of success?

Different people choose to follow different strategies that work. Many build on their strengths and follow their successful patterns. Let's look at one person who took this route.

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.

Mark chose to make a series of TV programmes about renovating vehicles. Being savvy, he followed the strategies that work. These involved him aiming:

To follow his passion and translate this into doing a stimulating project;

To turn this project into something that would be attractive to potential backers – such as a TV company – and a specific target audience that watches TV;

To make top class TV programmes that appeal to the target audience and also provide good returns for the backers.

Mark has continued to do things he find stimulating and follow strategies. People who take these steps are more likely to move on the next stage.

Success

Different people follow their strategies in different ways on the ways towards success. 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.

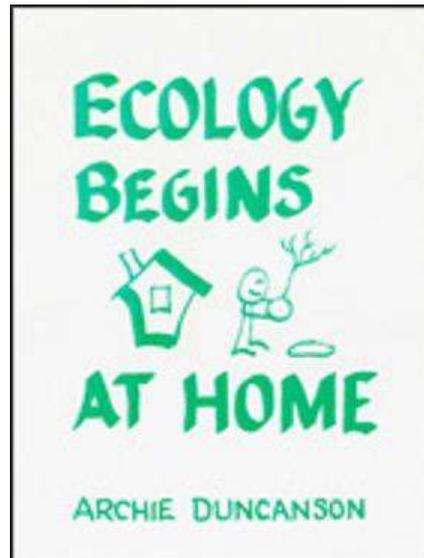
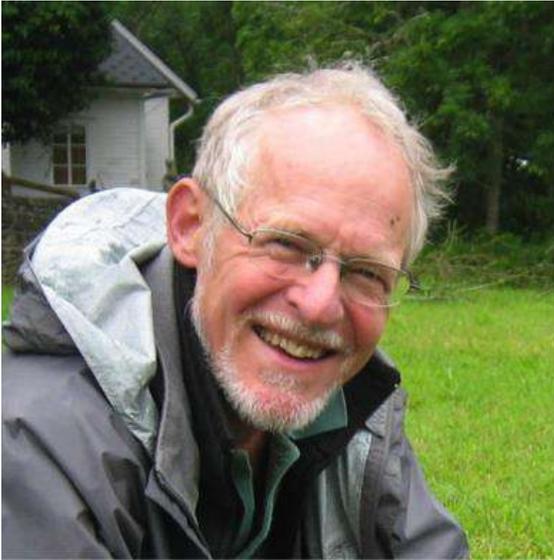
Archie Duncanson and I met more than 40 years ago when he attended a workshop in Sweden. He later translated his passion about the environment into publishing a book.

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.

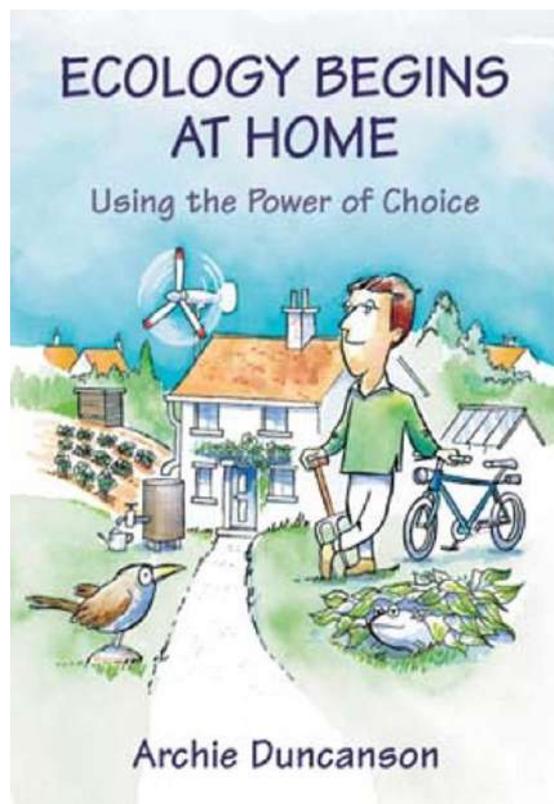
And like a seed, the gift may grow, providing ever more joy and satisfaction, as it did with my first letter titled Ecology Begins at Home and sent out to a hundred friends.

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 Approach

The specific situation where I may want to follow the stimulating approach may be:

*

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

*

*

*

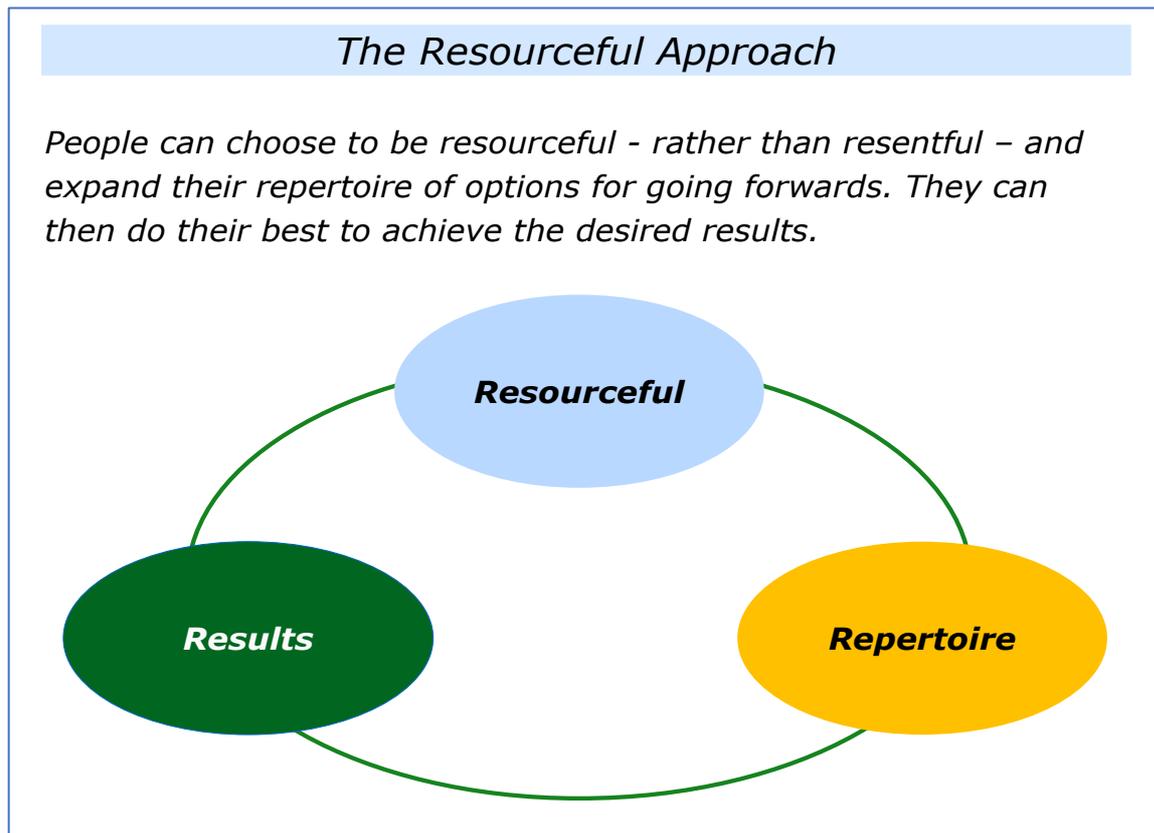
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

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.*

The Learning From Your Own Experiences Approach

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?

The Learning From Other People's Experiences Approach

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 AI. 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. AI 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. Al 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.

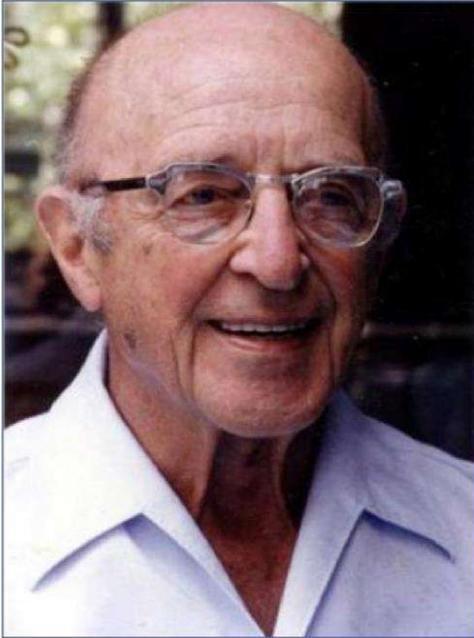
Such people often grow from the experience. They continue to expand their resilience and repertoire, but they also develop a sense of perspective about life. Al described them in the following way.

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.

The Facts Are Friendly Approach



Carl Rogers, the psychotherapist, said:

"The facts are always friendly.

"Every bit of evidence one can acquire, in any area, leads one that much closer to what is true."

Carl Rogers believed that people grew by facing reality. We should welcome information, he said, even if the new evidence shows that our previous views were mistaken.

Whatever the revelation, the facts are friendly. Let's explore how you might employ this approach in your life and work.

You can gather information by recognising the facts are friendly

Gather information with an open mind, we are told, even though this might challenge your present views. This can be difficult, because it highlights a key issue.

Do we believe what we see or do we see what we believe?

People sometimes have a paradigm – a way of looking at the world – that means they only focus on things that support their present position.

As we know, this is called confirmation bias. This can be reassuring for them, but sometimes it means they refuse to read reality. Such an approach can be dangerous for them and also for other people.

Peak performers are positive realists in the fields where they excel. They have a positive attitude but also quickly read reality. This enables them to see patterns and anticipate what might happen.

Looking back on your life, can you think of a difficult situation where you adopted the approach that the facts were friendly? You may have lost a client, been concerned about an illness or faced another challenge.

Whatever the situation, you wanted to know the truth. How did you keep an open mind, even though you might have been going through difficulties? How did you gather the data? How did you then use the information to move forward?

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

The Facts Are Friendly In The Past

*The specific situation when I
followed elements of the
facts are friendly approach was:*

*

*The specific things I did then to follow
elements of this approach were:*

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*The specific things that happened as
a result of taking these steps were:*

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*

*

You can make decisions by recognising the facts are friendly

Let's assume you know the facts about a tough situation. The next step is to decide your way forward. As we know, one approach is to use the Three C model for making decisions. This involves focusing on clarity, creativity and concrete results.

Clarity

Looking at the challenge you face, what are the real results you want to achieve? You may want to achieve several aims. If so, list these in order of priority. What are the things you can control in the situation?

Creativity

The next step is to focus on creativity. What are the choices you have for trying to achieve the goals? What are the consequences – the pluses and minuses of each option? Are there any other potential creative solutions?

Concrete Results

What is the route – or combination of routes – you want to follow? How can you translate your chosen route into action? How can you get some early successes? How can you encourage yourself on the journey?

Good decision makers often base their decisions on the consequences of the options, rather than the options themselves. Such people can therefore be said to choose the consequences. They then aim to build on the pluses and minimise the minuses.

Let's consider a tough example. Imagine that you contract a life threatening illness. You will start by gathering lots of information. This may involve scouring the web, reading and consulting with experts. You will then go into decision making mode.

Clarity will be the first step. What are the real results you want to achieve? You may want to live as long as possible, whatever the

treatment. Or maybe you prefer to have less invasive treatment and a reasonable quality of life.

Gathering information, you will explore the various options. These may include mainstream or alternative treatments. You will also look at the consequences.

You may be able to prolong your life for 3 years but with difficult side effects. Alternatively, without extensive treatment, you may be able to live for 18 months, with most pain coming near death.

Facing the facts may not at first sight appear friendly. But it is vital to get as much information as possible. This will enable you to consider the various choices, consequences and other creative solutions. You will then be in a better position to choose your way forward.

*You can keep doing reality checks by
recognising that the facts are friendly*

Imagine that you have embarked on pursuing your chosen route. You will do your best to work towards your chosen goals.

It will also be important to focus on facts. Bearing this in mind, how can you keep doing reality checks: a) to see what is working and do it more; b) to find solutions to things that are not working? How can you do everything possible to achieve your goals?

Let's return to your present life. Looking ahead, can you think of a potentially tough situation where you may need to gather all the facts to make a good decision?

How can you embrace the attitude that the facts are friendly, even if some are uncomfortable? How can you choose your way forwards? How can you keep doing reality checks? How can you build on what is working and find solutions to any other challenges?

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

The Facts Are Friendly In The Future

*The specific situation when I may
want to follow elements of the
facts are friendly approach may be:*

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

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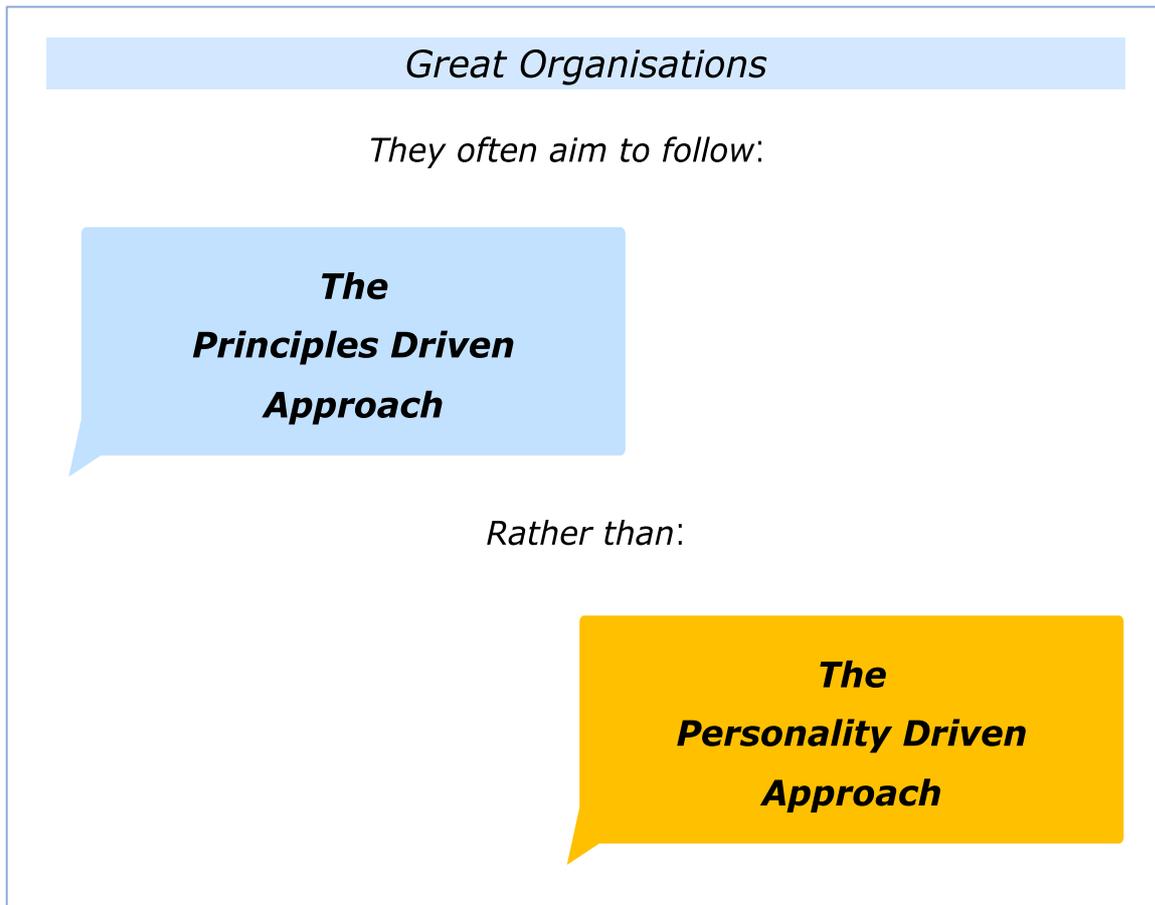
*The specific things that may happen
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Principles Driven Approach Rather Than The Personality Driven Approach



Many organisations start by being personality driven. They may have a charismatic or inspiring founder who creates a movement, idea, product, service or cause. They attract others with the power of their idea or the force of the personality.

Such organisations may only thrive in the long-term if they become principles driven. One approach is for them to clarify and communicate their principles. They then encourage their people to follow these principles to achieve ongoing success.

Some leaders have strong personalities. This can have both pluses and minuses. People may feel inspired and energised. They may sometimes feel intimidated, however, or rely on the leader for everything.

Great organisations often focus on clarifying and communicating their principles. These provide a guiding compass. People can then use their personalities to follow these principles in their work. This is an approach that I have seen work in many organisations.

Different organisations take this approach in different ways. One way is for them to go through the following steps.

Great Organisations Are Often Principles Driven

- *They clarify and communicate the principles they would like their people to follow - together with the reasons for these - and encourage people to translate these into action to deliver success.*
- *They continually reinforce the principles by sharing success stories that highlight how people have followed these to do superb work, find solutions to challenges and deliver success.*
- *They make the principles the basis for everything they do - such as decision making, customer service, recruitment and promotion - and find ways to express these in the modern world to deliver ongoing 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 principles driven approach?

You may want to do this when working as an individual, leading a team or leading an organisation. What may be the benefits of following this approach?

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

The Principles Driven 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 then to follow this approach in my own way are:

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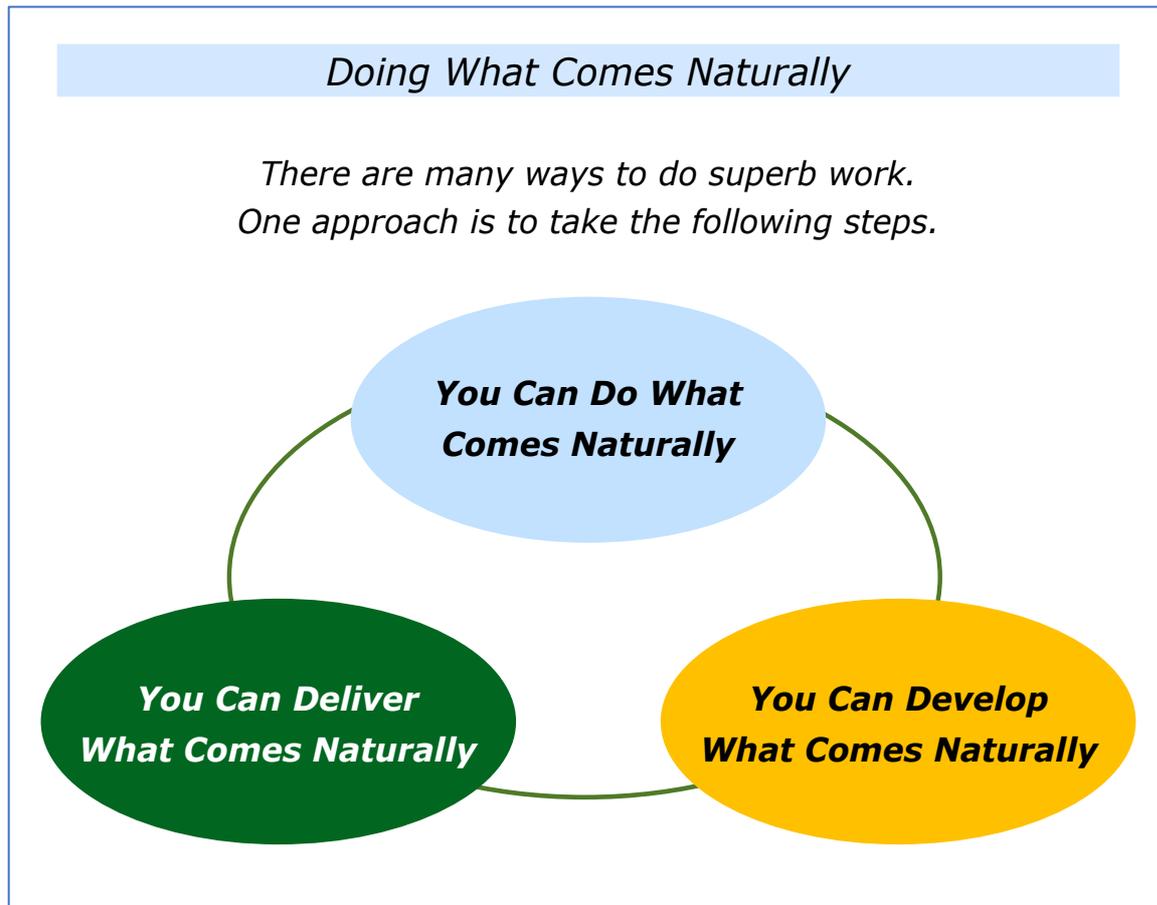
The specific benefits of follow this approach may be:

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The Doing What Comes Naturally Approach



There are many ways to do superb work. One approach is to focus on a specific activity where things come naturally. It is then to develop and deliver superb work when doing this activity. Let's explore these steps.

You Can Do What Comes Naturally

When are the things that come naturally to you? What are those were you make complicated things look things simple? The Gallup Organization used to ask individuals a question when exploring their strengths. This was:

"What are the things you cannot help but do?"

What are the activities where this happens for you? Looking at these activities, where you do fine work and deliver the goods?

You may find this happens when gardening, cooking, counselling, playing a sport, writing technical articles, organising events or doing other activities. One leader explained their approach in the following way.

"I am fascinated by how to help people to succeed. During my teenage years I devoured books about sports people and inspiring leaders. Then I switched to studying great teams.

"Nowadays I try to create environments that encourage people to do their best. The theme is the same whether I am in my role as a business leader, providing people with training or, hopefully, nurturing my family.

"I want to be a positive models and help to create culture that enable people to succeed."

Imagine that you have identified the specific activity where things come naturally. If appropriate, you may want to take the next step.

You Can Develop What Comes Naturally

During my early career I spent time with great educators. Some said that many people had talents but did not make full use of these gifts. There were various reasons why this happened.

Some people found it hard to overcome setbacks. They were used to being the first pick in sports, singing auditions or other activities. They were not prepared to be second pick or sweat to achieve success.

Some fell for temptations and became addicted to diversions. There were occasions when they showed glimpses of brilliance but then they fell back into unhelpful patterns.

Some people do focus on developing their talents. Being gifted in a certain activity, they find it relatively simple to get to 7/10. They are then prepared to make the exponential climb towards 10/10.

How can you develop your talent? How can you add positive models and practical tools to your repertoire? How can you apply this knowledge in your chosen activity?

How can you continue to learn? How can you embody the ethic of continuous improvement? How can you build on what you do well? How can you tackle areas for improvement?

You Can Deliver What Comes Naturally

People who do what comes naturally often merge with the work. They see it as a vocation. And you never retire from your vocation.

Bearing this in mind, however, they set aside blocks of time to do what they do best. They then go through the process of absorption, adventure and achievement. They aim to do deep work and deliver the goods.

Different people follow these steps in different activities. They may be working as a counsellor, educator, architect, athlete, medic, scientist or in another field. They may be working as an individual contributor, team member, coordinator, leader or in another role

How can you follow some of these principles in your own way? What is the activity where things come naturally? How can you translate this into doing a specific project or achieving a stimulating goal?

How can you set aside time to do it properly? How can you move into action? How can you absorb yourself fully? How can you do superb work? How can you do your best to deliver the goods?

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

Doing What Come Naturally

The specific activity where things come naturally for me is:

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The specific things I can do to develop this activity and deliver superb work are:

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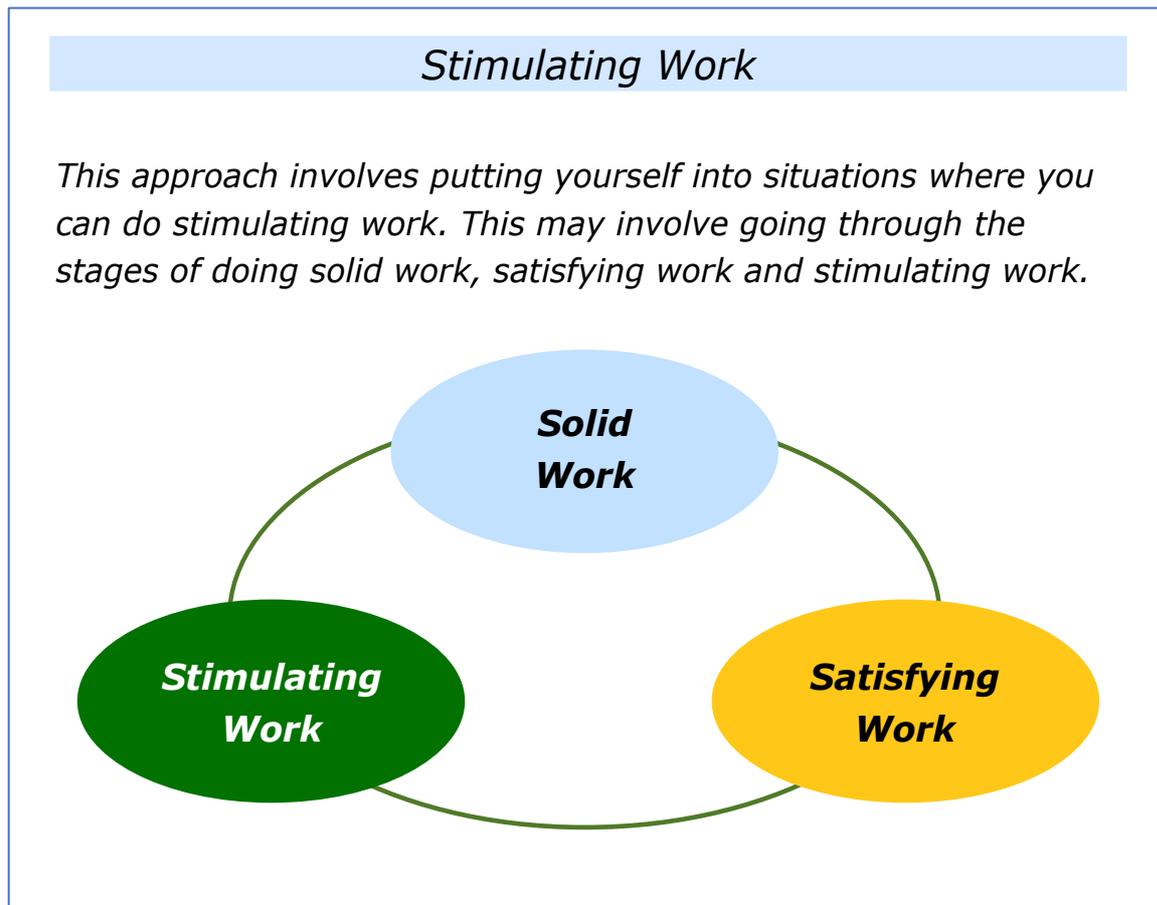
The specific things that may happen as a result may be:

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The Stimulating Work Approach



This approach involves putting yourself into situations where you can do stimulating work. It may then involve going through the stages of doing solid work, satisfying work and stimulating work.

This is an approach that can be used when helping people to shape their future careers. It is one that I used with a sales director who was wondering about exploring opportunities in other companies.

The person was adrenaline driven. They loved to do things they felt passionately about, set specific goals and work to achieve their picture of success.

They also enjoyed being a trusted advisor to pacesetting customers who were leaders in their fields. They could then provide services that helped these customers to tackle challenges and achieve future success.

Bearing this in mind, we explored whether it was possible to do more of these things in their present company. This led to them redefining the roles in their team.

They did this in a way that enabled people: a) to play to their strengths; b) to achieve the team's picture of success. This also released them to do what they did best.

The sales director is still with the company. They are doing stimulating work that creates wins for the company, wins for the customers and wins for themselves and their colleagues.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach. The first step is to clarify the kinds of work that you find stimulating. Different people give different answers when exploring this theme. Here are some of the things they mention.

*The situations where I do
stimulating work are when I am:*

Teaching motivated students ... Helping dyslexic children ... Solving specific technical problems ... Helping people to overcome pain ... Managing certain kinds of crises ... Giving keynote speeches ... Leading pioneering teams.

Imagine that you have identified and put yourself into a situation where you can do such stimulating work. Bearing this in mind, you may then focus on going through the following stages.

Solid Work

This involves doing the solid work that will provide the platform for doing the stimulating work. The kinds of solid work will depend on your chosen activity. Whatever you work you do, however, it may involve aiming:

To plan ahead ... To clarify your strategy ... To translate this into a clear action plan ... To put in place the right structure ... To organise the

resources to do the job ... To do the practical things required to set things up to succeed.

The athlete prepares themselves properly – both physically and psychologically. The actor learns their lines, rehearses and is ready to go on stage. The leader makes sure their team will be following the right strategy with the right people in the right way.

You will do the solid work in your own way. This may then lead to the next stage.

Satisfying Work

Many people focus on doing enjoyable and effective work that will help them to achieve their goals. This gives them a sense of satisfaction on the way towards doing stimulating work. Different people will obviously do different kinds of satisfying work on the way towards achieving their goals.

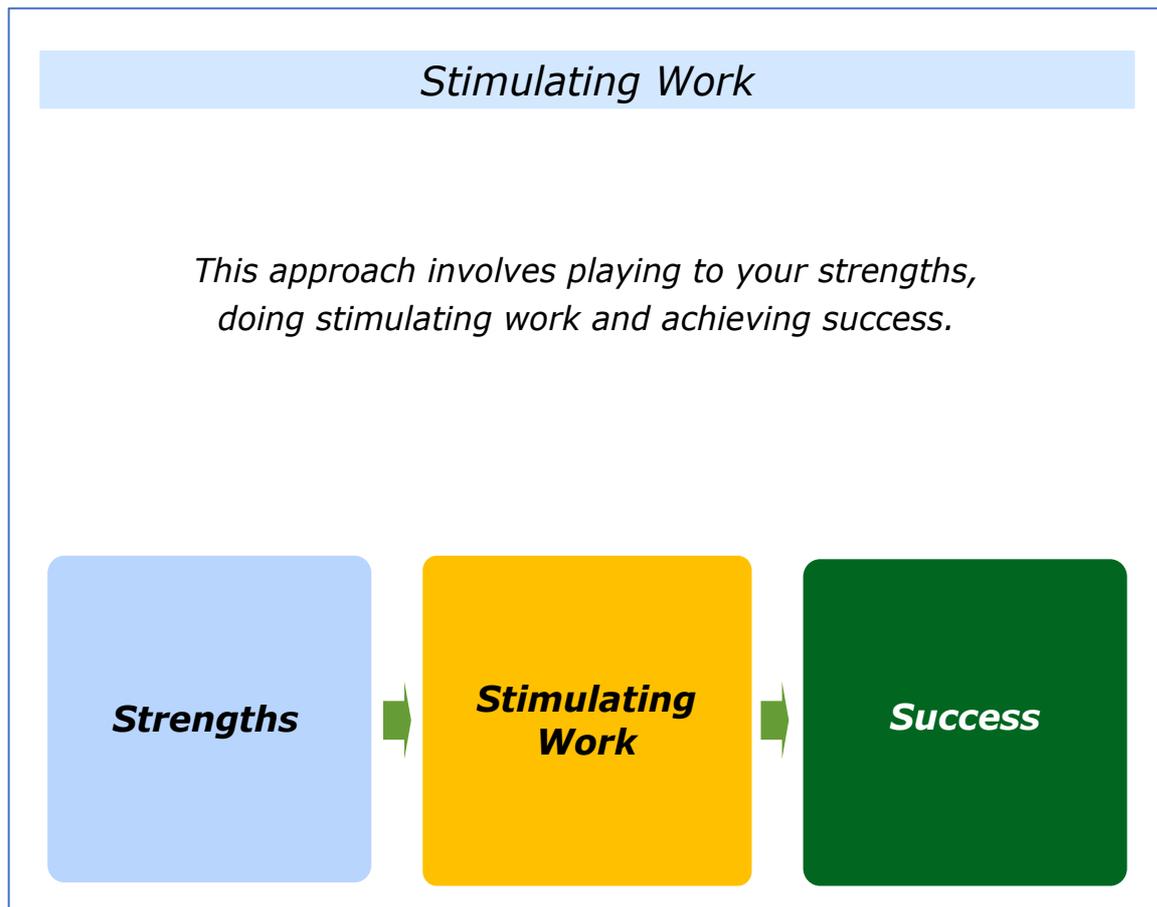
Looking at my own work, for example, in the past I used to run workshops for helping people to build superb teams. These were sometimes the precursor to doing mentoring sessions which was stimulating.

Doing the workshops often proved to be extremely satisfying. These involved planning ahead, meeting the key stakeholders to clarify the goals to achieve and designing the sessions.

It then involved running the workshops. This called for making the sessions enjoyable and effective. Based on what works, the workshops involved passing on practical tools that people could use to achieve their goals.

The workshops often enabled people to achieve success. This made them satisfying. As mentioned earlier, however, they provided a pathway to moving on to the mentoring. This was the kind of work I found most stimulating.

You will have your own approach to doing the satisfying work. When appropriate, however, this may then lead to the next stage.



This involves doing work that gives you positive energy. You play to your strengths, do stimulating work and achieve success.

You feel in your element – at ease yet able to excel – when doing such work. If you work for a company, it can be useful to do this in a way that creates wins for the company, wins for the customers and wins for your colleagues.

This approach echoes James Collins' view that it is important to put the right people in the right places on the bus. They can then make their best contribution towards reaching the desired destination.

Great teams apply this approach by coordinating people's strengths. They do this in a way that makes sure they are able: a) to do all practical tasks; b) to perform superb work; c) to achieve the picture of success.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you can follow elements of this approach? How can you do this in your own way?

How can you clarify the specific situation? How can you do the solid work and satisfying work? How can you then do the stimulating 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 Stimulating Work Approach

*The specific situation where I can
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 Great Organisations Doing What They Do Best Approach



There are many models for building great organisations. This section explores one approach.

Great organisations do what they do best. They also encourage their people to do what they do best. They then aim to keep performing at their best. Let's explore these themes.

They Do What They Do Best

Great organisations build on their strengths. This focus on where they deliver As rather than Bs or Cs. This often involves taking the following steps.

They focus on the things they do best;

They focus on the kinds of customers with whom they work best;

They focus on providing great service in the things they do best.

Such organisations continue to build on their strengths. This also involves taking the next step.

They Encourage Their People To Do What They Do Best

Great organisations build on their people's strengths. They put people in the places where they can deliver As rather than Bs or Cs. This often involves taking the following steps.

They communicate their organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success;

They make clear contracts with people about their best contributions towards achieving the picture of success;

They then encourage their people to perform superb and do their best to achieve the picture of success.

Some organisations don't encourage people to play to their strengths. Sometimes this is done with the best of intentions, but it can result in average performances.

One organisation told their best sales people to spend most of their time managing their team rather than being with customers. This was the equivalent of a football team taking their best goal scorers off the pitch. It led to a decline in sales and morale.

This produced a wake-up call. The organisation finally got round to putting its best leaders, organisers and specialists in the right places. They then coordinated people's strengths to achieve success.

They Keep Performing At Their Best

Great organisations continue to perform at their best. This calls for consistently delivering high professional standards and, when appropriate, being pacesetters. Some organisations do this by taking the following steps.

They continue to create a positive environment in which motivated people can deliver peak performances;

They continue to embody the concept of continuous improvement for individuals and the organisation;

They continue to be pacesetters by staying ahead of the game and achieving ongoing success.

Bearing in mind their strengths, such organisations may develop new approaches to doing what they do best. They then apply these to help both themselves and their customers to achieve success.

Let's return to your own work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach? You may want to do this as a leader, manager or in another role.

How can you focus on what you, your colleagues or your organisation does best? How can you translate this approach 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.

Great Organisations Doing What They Do Best

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 then to follow elements of this approach are:

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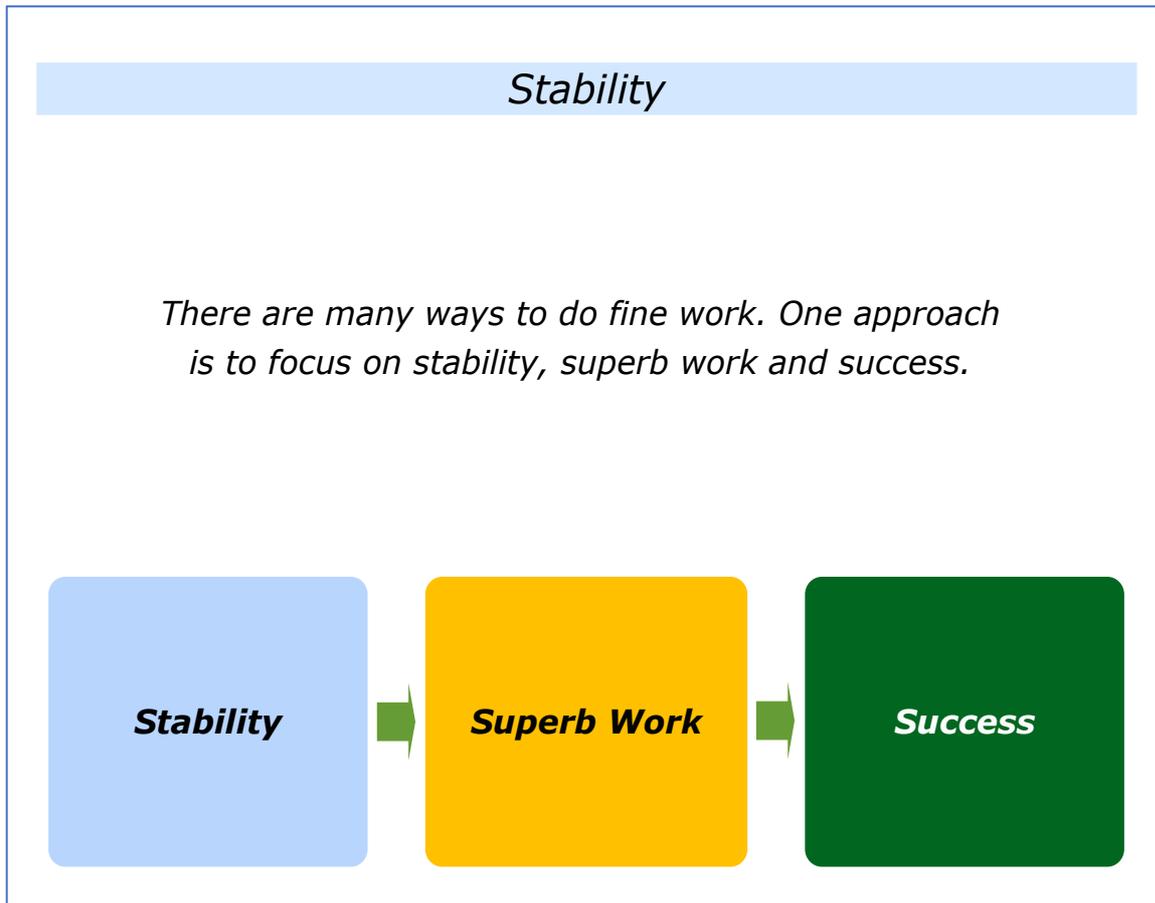
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Stability, Superb Work And Success Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. This is an approach followed by many individuals, teams and organisations. The approach sounds basic but, when done properly, it can also lead to achieve success. Let's explore these themes.

Stability

People want the feeling of stability. They want to feel in control, safe and able to shape their futures. They also want to feel that things are relatively predictable.

Many people take this approach in their daily lives. They focus on getting the basic materials for life – food, housing and a good income. This gives them a platform for shaping their futures.

Many also take this approach in their work. They aim to do satisfying work and follow a certain structure. They are then able to build on these foundations to do fine work.

Great teams also focus on stability. Bearing in mind Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, they often start by helping people to feel safe and valued on a human level.

They create an encouraging environment in which motivated people can do good work. They also offer a structure by communicating the team's purpose, principles and picture of success.

Many sports teams also build from a base of stability. Some football teams, for example, make sure they 'build from the back'. They have solid defenders who provide a strong platform that can enable others to express their skills.

Great teams also maintain stability by continually focusing on their principles. One leader expressed this in the following way.

"My role is to focus on managing the principles. These provide a stable framework that we can follow – especially during challenging times. I then aim: a) to help people to stay healthy; b) to follow these principles. This helps to provide continuity during crises."

People, teams and organisations like stability. This provides the platform for taking the next step.

Superb Work

There are many ways to do superb work. A person may aim to build on their strengths – the activities where they deliver As rather than Bs or Cs. They may then aim to follow strategies that work and do their best to achieve success.

Another person may aim to follow their vocation. This 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.

A team may focus on developing a clear purpose. It may then encourage its people to follow certain principles and work towards achieving a clear picture of success. It may also aim to leave a positive legacy.

Another team may encourage its people to keep focusing on their beliefs. It may then encourage them to keep doing the basics and, when appropriate, to add the brilliance.

People, teams and organisations often enjoy performing superb work. This provides the platform for taking the next step.

Success

Different people have different definitions of success. A counsellor may aim to help people to manage challenges and achieve their personal goals. An educator may aim to help students to develop skills they can use to shape their futures.

An artist, writer, singer or filmmaker may aim to make full use of their talents and do work that enriches people's lives. An athlete may aim to deliver peak performances and also win prizes.

A team may aim to pursue its purpose, follow its principles and achieve positive results. A society may aim to offer its people the basic materials for life and also enable them to maintain their health, hope and happiness.

Different people take different routes towards achieving their goals. One approach is for them to focus on stability, superb work and success. Can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach?

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

The Stability, Superb Work And Success Approach

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

*

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

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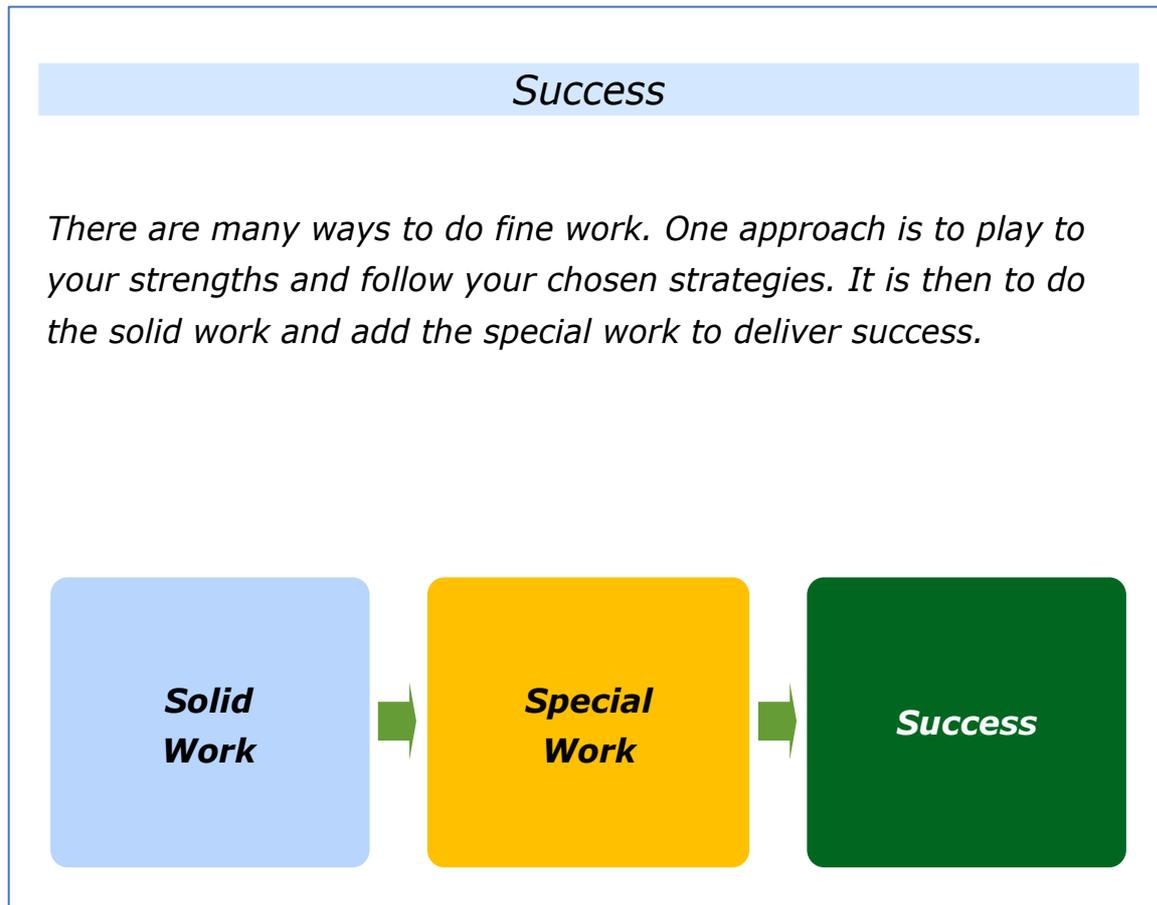
*The specific things that may
happen as a result may be:*

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The Solid Work, Special Work And Success Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is for people to play to their strengths and follow their chosen strategies. It is to do the solid work – such as delivering the required professional standards – and then sometimes add the special work to deliver success.

People may take these steps in their daily work, the arts, sports, medicine, sports, business or other fields. They may do so when working as individuals, in a team or in an organisation.

When have you followed this approach in your own way? You may have been helping a person, doing a project, leading a team, or doing another activity.

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

Solid Work, Special Work And Success In Past

The specific situation in the past when I followed elements of this approach was:

*

The specific things I did then to follow this approach in my own way are:

*

*

*

The specific things that happened as result of taking these steps were:

*

*

*

Imagine that you want to follow similar principles in the future. Let's explore how you can do this in your own way.

The first step will be to do a piece of work where you play to your strengths. You may aim to do this when encouraging a person, doing a creative project, leading a team or doing another activity.

The second step will be to clarify your chosen strategies. Bearing in mind the goals you want to achieve, you can focus on the key strategies you can follow to give yourself the greatest chance of success.

The third step will be to do the solid work required to pursue these strategies. Bearing these in mind, you can keep delivering high professional standards.

Great workers keep doing the basics and follow their chosen disciplines. Taking this approach often provides a good platform and gets them to 7/10.

The fourth step can be to build on your strengths and produce special work. You may aim to add that touch of class that takes the work into another dimension.

Great teams often embody this approach. They get the right balance between consistency and creativity. They follow their strategy, maintain high standards and sometimes do something special to deliver success. One soccer coach explained this in the following way.

"My teams are built on solid foundations. The goalkeeper, defenders and defensive midfielder are strong characters who deliver consistent performances. They provide the platform for the team.

"The attacking players must also play their parts in making sure the system works. Then, when necessary, they can add that touch of magic when it matters.

"My teams have the right combination of warriors and warriors who are also wizards. I have no time for wannabe-wizards who are not prepared to work hard and contribute to the game plan."

Let's return to the piece of work you are doing. The final step will be to do your best to achieve the goals. This may involve continuing to do the basics and then adding the brilliance that enables you to deliver success.

Imagine that you want to follow this approach by playing to your strengths and doing a piece of work. Bearing in mind the goals you want to achieve, how can you follow your chosen strategies?

How can you do the required solid work? How can you, if appropriate, add the special work? How can you do your best to achieve success? 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.

Solid Work, Special Work And Success In Future

*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
this approach in my own way are:*

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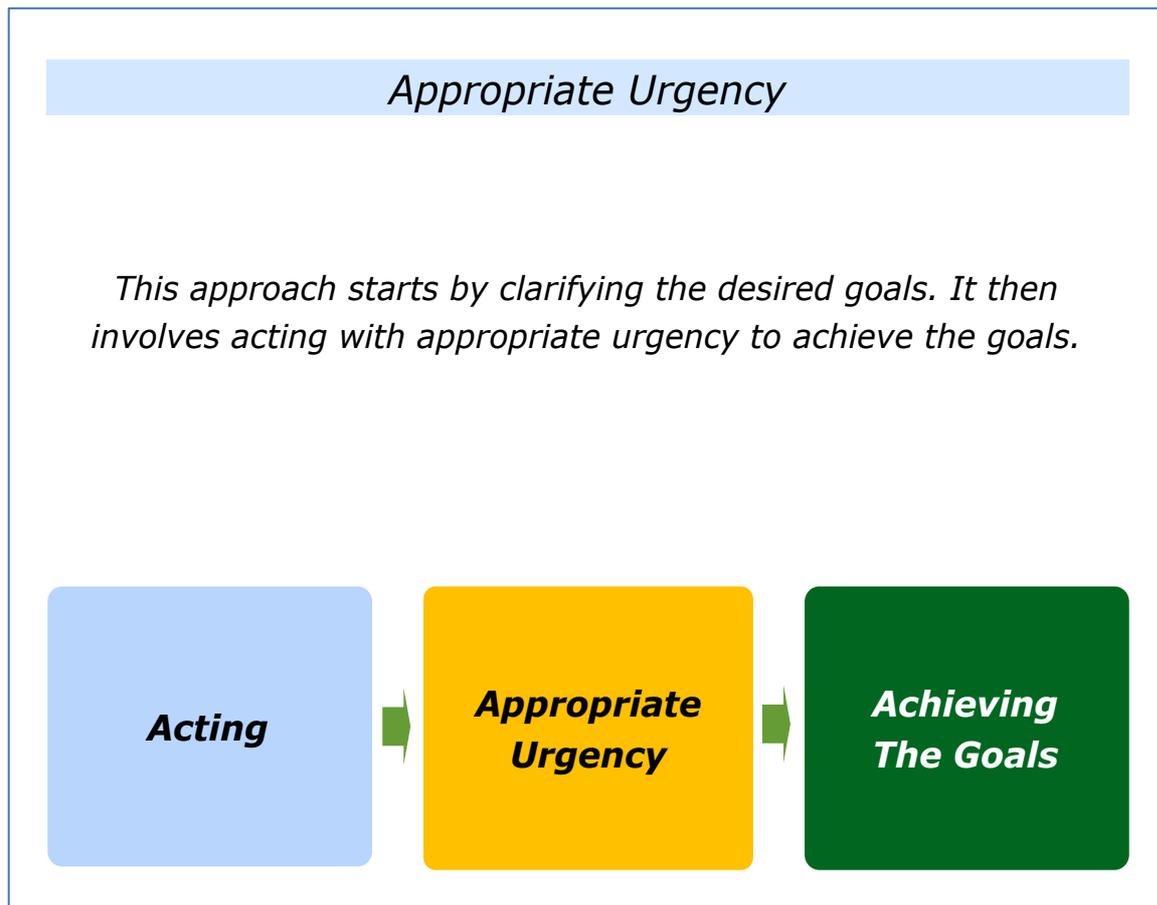
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Appropriate Urgency Approach



Some people act with appropriate urgency in their lives and work. They are proactive and make things happen. They anticipate challenges and, when necessary, react appropriately to unexpected issues.

Some people have a lower sense of urgency. They tend to drift rather than be decisive. They may also choose to ignore issues that could ultimately affect their lives or work.

Great workers often take the following steps in certain situations. First, they start by clarifying the goals to achieve. Second, they decide on their plan of action. Third, they then act with appropriate urgency and do their best to achieve the desired goals.

They aim to do things at the right pace in the right way. Sometimes they do things quickly. Sometimes they take time to reflect before acting. Sometimes they put things on the back burner and act when necessary.

Such people develop the habit of thinking ahead. They anticipate what will happen and clarify their strategy. Getting on the front foot, they aim to shape the future. They aim to make things happen rather than just react to what happens.

Different people pursue this approach in different ways. Pete Collins, the American Football Coach, has a mantra that he expects his players to follow. This is:

"Be Early."

This phrase means more than be early for training and meetings. It means:

"Be early in your thinking, your preparation and your actions. Be proactive in everything you do in order to stay ahead of the game."

Different people also use different techniques for applying appropriate urgency. The following sections introduces some of these approaches.

The Dwight Eisenhower Matrix

People who apply appropriate urgency often focus on priority management. They aim to be effective rather than just being efficient.

President Eisenhower had an approach that has since been adapted and developed by other people. One model was popularised by Stephen Covey in his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

The approach divides tasks into certain quadrants based on the importance and urgency. You can then look at each task and choose which action you want to take. Here is one adaptation of the model.

Dwight Eisenhower Matrix

There have been many adaptations of the model that Eisenhower used for deciding on the urgency of issues. Here is one approach.

Do It

This is important and also urgent. Do it now.

Decide When To Do It

This is important but not urgent. Decide when to do it.

Delegate It

This needs to be done but not necessarily by you.

Delete It

These are tasks that do not necessarily add value.

John Kotter - Maintaining A Sense Of Urgency

John Kotter has enabled many organisations to be proactive and stay ahead of the game. He explains this approach in the following way.

Winners first make sure that a sufficient number of people feel a true sense of urgency to look for an organisation's critical opportunities and hazards now.

Great organisations create strategies for shaping the future. This calls for communicating clear goals, building committed teams and empowering them to deliver the goods.

People are encouraged to get some early wins and build momentum. They continue to do fine work, refuse to declare victory too early and then make change stick.

Such organisations build a culture of constant improvement. This calls for then continuing to have an appropriate sense of urgency.

Let's return to your own life and work. How can you maintain an appropriate sense of urgency? If appropriate, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to focus on the following areas.

Do It. Describe the specific things you want to act on now.

Decide When To Do It. Describe the specific things you want to schedule and do in the future.

Delegate It. Describe the specific things you can delegate.

Delete It. Describe the specific things you can delete from your list of possible things to do.

Here is the exercise on this theme. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

Appropriate Urgency – My Action Plan

*Do It. The specific things
I want to do now are:*

*

*Decide When To Do It. The specific
things I want to do in the future are:*

*

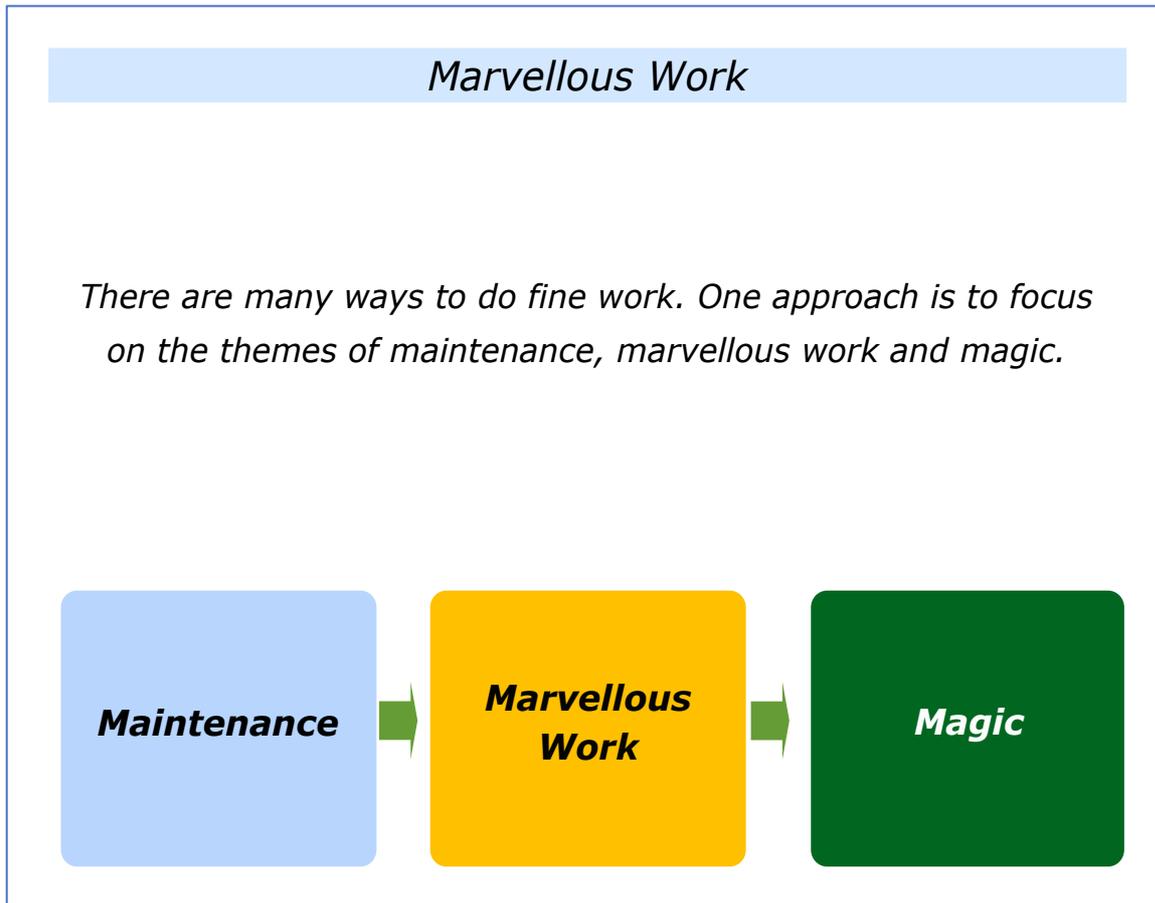
*Delegate It. The specific
things I want to delegate are:*

*

*Delete It. The specific
things I want to delete are:*

*

The Marvellous Work Approach



Some people focus on a specific activity where they may have the ability to do marvellous work. Different people do this in different activities.

They may take this approach when working in therapy, education, hospitality, medicine, sports, business or other fields. They may do it when working as an individual or when leading a team or organisation.

Such people often focus on a specific activity, set specific goals and settle on their chosen strategies. They then work through the following steps.

They do the maintenance work – they feel motivated to do the work and make sure the necessary tasks get done;

They do marvellous work – they maintain high standards and, when appropriate, aim to do marvellous work;

They do magical work – they sometimes move into another dimension and make magic.

Imagine that you want to follow these steps in your own way. You will start by focusing on a specific activity where you may have the ability to do superb work. If appropriate, you may then want to focus on the following themes.

Maintenance

Great workers make sure the maintenance work is done properly. They believe it is vital to prepare properly, do the necessary practical tasks and provide the platform for achieving success.

Such workers often enjoy making sure the maintenance is done. They like to like to think ahead, organise the practical tasks and make things as predictable as possible.

The maintenance work to be done will obviously depend on the kind of work a person aims to do. They may aim to facilitate a coaching session, run an inspiring even, lead a pioneering team, manage a football team, create a positive culture or do another activity.

Good leaders, for example, will aim to get the basics right in order to provide the platform for people to do brilliant work. They will aim:

To create the right physical and psychological environment;

To communicate the purpose of the work, the principles to follow that the picture of success;

To provide people with the practical support they need to achieve the picture of success.

Great workers make sure the required maintenance work is done. They are then more able to move on to the next stage.

Marvellous Work

Let's return to a piece of work you may want to do. Imagine that the maintenance factors are in place. Bearing in mind the strategies you want to follow, you may then move into action and aim to maintain high standards.

Sometimes you may also aim to do marvellous work. There are several definitions for the word marvellous. These include the following.

Something extremely good ... Something splendid ... Something wonderful.

Great workers often start by aiming to maintain high standards. Moving into action, such people sometimes merge with the work. They become as one with the activity they are doing.

They may do this when working as an artist, potter, climber, crisis manager or in another role. They often focus on the process of absorption, adventure and achievement.

Great workers continue to develop. The opera singer continues to care for their voice. The crisis manager develops their skills for tackling new potential disasters. The athlete aims to improve their personal best.

They aim to do their best whether they are playing at their equivalent of the village hall or the Carnegie Hall. This sometimes provides the springboard for moving on to the next stage.

Great workers sometimes rise to the occasion and do marvellous work. These include famous people such as Jacqueline du Pré, Marcel Marceau, David Attenborough, Abraham Maslow and many others.

Some people who do such work may not be well-known. They may work in education, medicine, science, technology and other fields. They use their talents to help people or make the world a better place.

Many people demonstrated this approach during the Covid pandemic. They may have focused on creating a vaccine, working in hospitals, acting as essential workers or doing other activities. They did marvellous work to care for other people.

Magic

Great workers may sometimes go into another dimension and do something magical. A footballer produces a great piece of skill. A mediator provides a creative breakthrough solution. A surgical team performs a remarkable operation.

There are several definitions for the word magic. These include the following.

Something enchanting and delightful ... Something extraordinary that is hard to explain ... Something remarkable and that causes great wonder.

Different people do this in different ways. They may include people such as Isadora Duncan, Maria Montessori, Alexander Calder, Seve Ballesteros, Pele or Roger Federer.

Sometimes the magic seems like a logical progression. The work has been building to this point and then moves into another dimension. Sometimes the magic seems to come out of nowhere and takes people's breath away.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific activity where you may want to follow elements of the marvellous work 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 Marvellous Work Approach

The specific activity where 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 Showing Love Rather Than Just Working Through Lists Approach

Showing Love And Working Through Lists

Different people behave in different ways.

- *Some people show love.*
- *Some people just work through lists.*
- *Some people show love
and also work through lists.*

Different people behave in different ways. This section looks at how some people behave at certain times.

Some People Show Love

Some people aim to show love in their daily lives and work. They may do this when caring for others as parents, friends, educators or in other roles. Their main motivation is to show love in whatever they do.

Such people may do this by showing affection, making food, listening or providing practical help. They may do it by caring for people or the planet in other ways.

Some People Just Work Through Lists

Some people have lists of the things they aim to do in their daily lives or work. They then concentrate on tasks, work through the lists and tick the items as they go along.

Such people focus only on the list and pay little attention to how their behaviour may be affecting other people. They get a sense of achievement from completing the list but may not be aware of any collateral damage.

Some People Show Love And Also Work Through Lists

Some people start from the position of wanting to show but also aiming to achieve certain goals. They try to be encouraging in whatever they do and, at the same time, aim to get things done.

Such people may start by focusing on their life principles. These may include, for example, encouraging other people, doing superb work and passing on a positive legacy.

Looking ahead, they plan how to follow their principles and also achieve certain aims. They then aim to show love as they work through their lists towards achieving their goals.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of situation where you may want to take this later approach?

How can you do this in your own way? How can you continue to show love whilst working through a list? 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.

Showing Love And Working Through Lists

The specific situation where I may want to show love whilst also working through a list may be:

*

The specific things I can do then to follow this approach are:

*

*

*

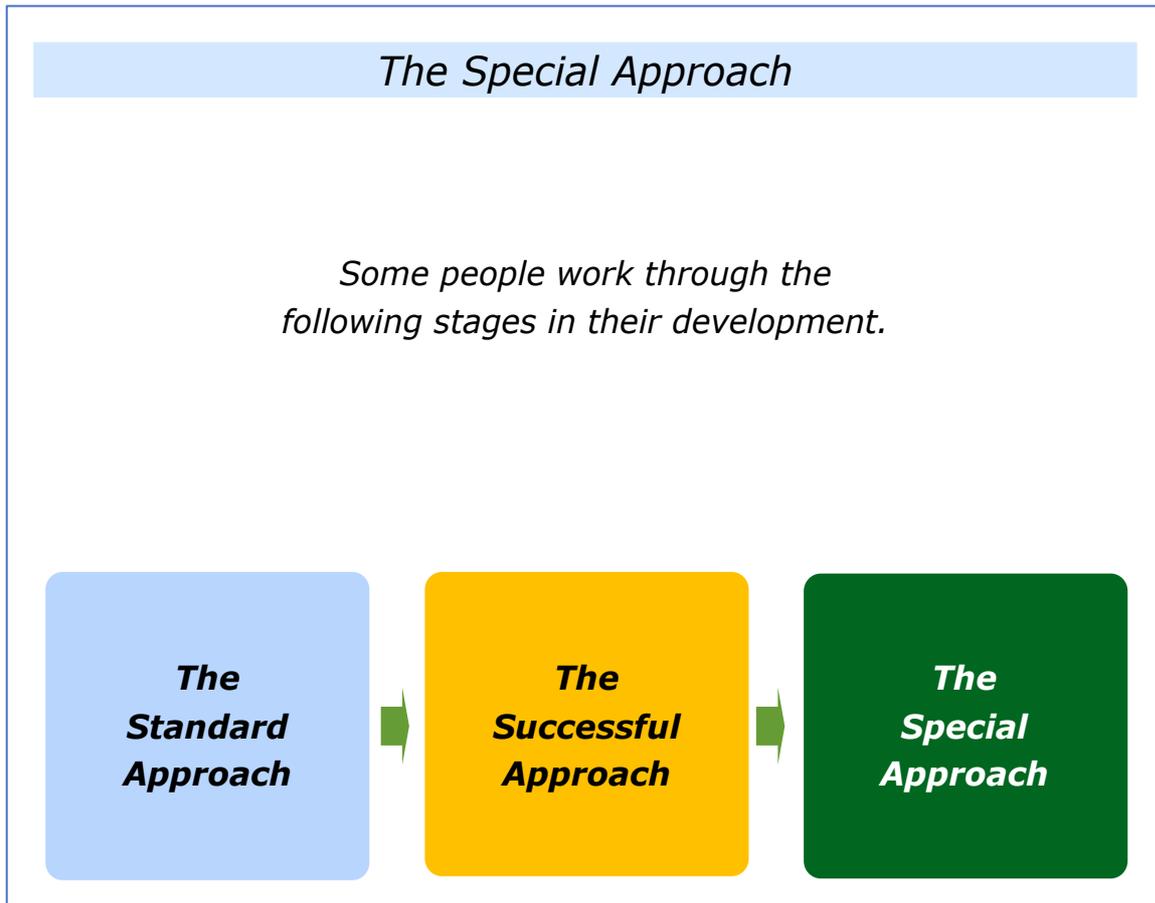
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Special Approach



There are many ways to do superb work. Some people work through the standard approach, the successful approach and then go on to the special approach. Let's explore these themes.

The Standard Approach

This is the approach that most people take when learning a skill or training for a profession. They aim:

To study the standard practice ... To develop the skills required to deliver the standard practice ... To consistently deliver the standard practice.

It is assumed that the standard practice is based on what works in specific fields. As we know, however, people continue to develop new methods and knowledge. This can have implications for the next stage.

The Successful Approach

People often build on the standard practice. They then add to their repertoire for delivering success. When doing so, they may aim:

To clarify the picture of success ... To clarify the established and newer ways to achieve success ... To clarify and pursue the methods most likely to achieve success.

Depending on their chosen field, different people will add different things to their repertoires. They will aim to continue learning, however, and develop their skills for delivering success.

The Special Approach

Some people move on to a special way of working. They may do this when acting as counsellors, therapists, coaches, artists, designers or in other professional roles.

Such people see things in a unique way and speak in specific language. Building on what works, they may aim:

To develop a special philosophy ... To practice special principles ... To produce special results.

Some who take this approach are seen as pioneers, pacesetters or peak performers. Some may be less known. Some may be considered cranks.

There may be times, however, when the ideas reach other people. These people may implement the ideas in a successful way and be seen to do special work.

Let's return to your own work. Can you think of a specific activity where you may be able to build on what works and add something special? 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 Special Approach

The specific activity where I may be able to build on what works and add something special may be:

*

The specific things I can do to add something special are:

*

*

*

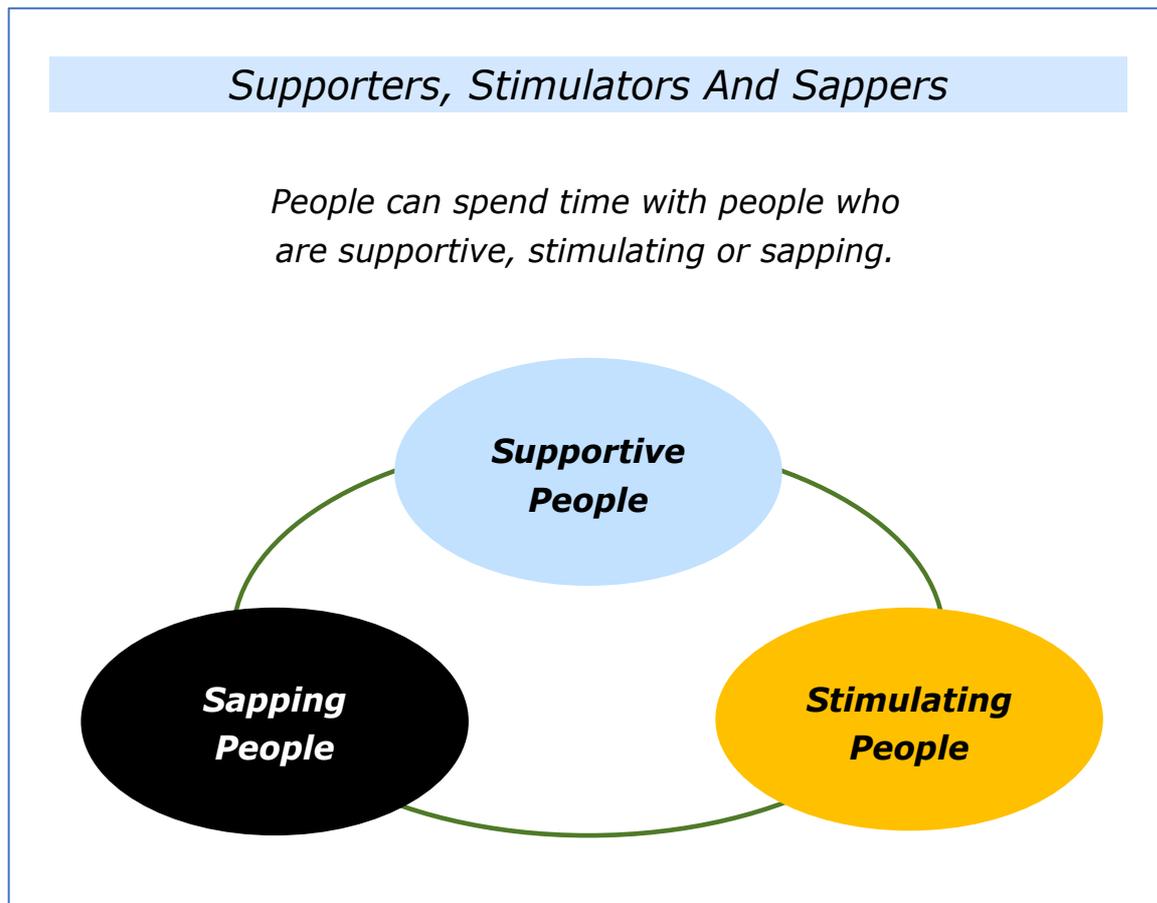
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Supportive People, Stimulating People And Sapping People Approach



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.

Supportive People 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.

Supportive People 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:

*

*

*

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 sapping?

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 sapping people 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 sapping? What do they do that has a negative effect?

How did you manage sapping people 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 sapping people 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.

Sapping People In The Past

The Person's Name:

*

The specific things they did that led to me feeling they were sapping were:

*

*

*

The specific things I did to aim to manage the situation and thrive were:

*

*

*

Sapping People In The Present

The Person's Name:

*

The specific things they do that lead to me feeling they are sapping 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 sapping?

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 sapping – 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.

Supportive, Stimulating And Sapping People In The Future

Supportive People

*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:

*

*

*

Sapping People

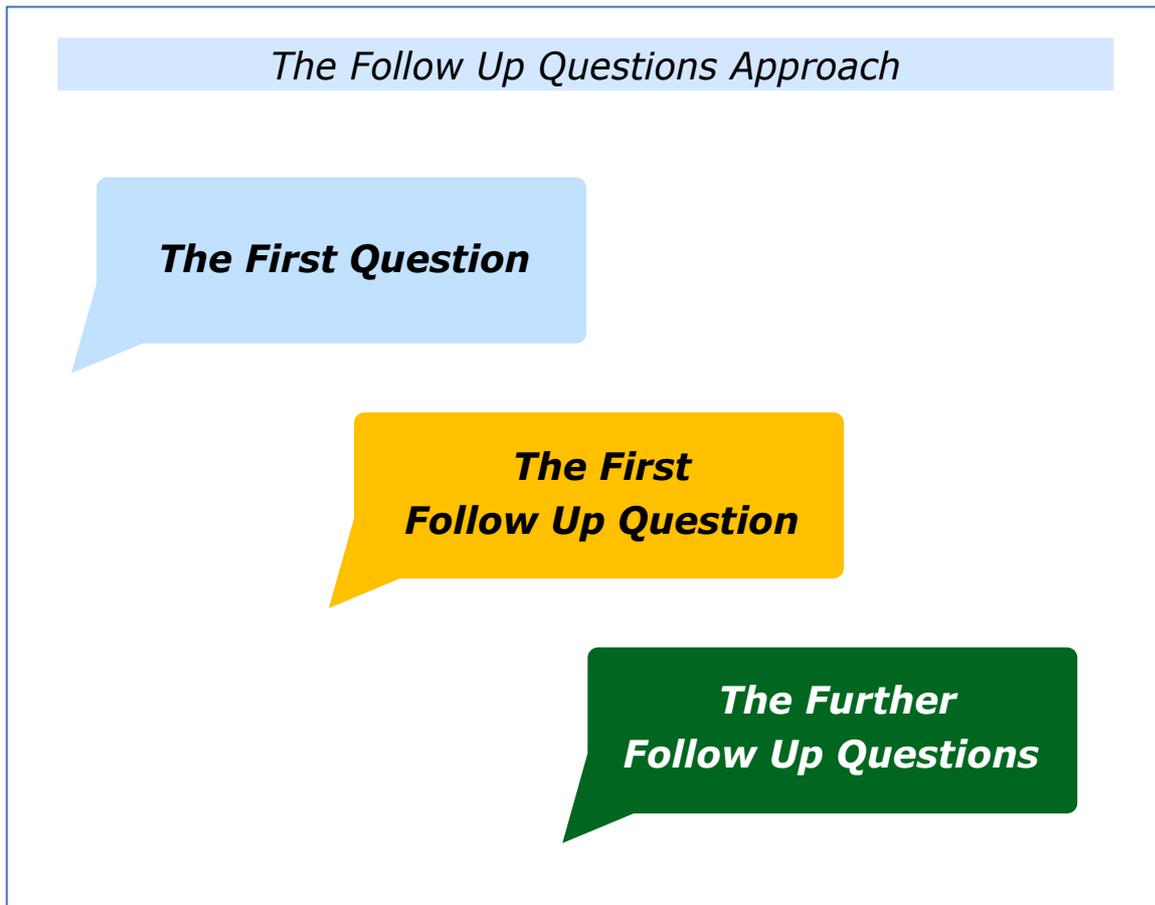
The specific things I can do to manage any people or situations where I experience sapping are:

*

*

*

The Follow Up Questions To Get To Know More About A Person Approach



Imagine you are going to have a conversation with somebody or you are interviewing them for a role. The first thing you say or the question you ask will set the tone for the conversation. You can then explore further by building on what they say or by asking follow up questions.

Good follow up questions can also help to provide a reality check to clarify what a person really means. This can be especially useful when interviewing candidates who apply for jobs or when talking with people who make sweeping statements.

Today's fast moving world has encouraged people to use sound bites or speak in generalities. Such concepts can be alluring but sometimes it is can be useful to invite them to give concrete examples.

Political leaders, for example, often speak in slogans. When asked to explain, they jump to giving another slogan. Sometimes it is important to stop them and explore the implications of what they are saying.

Good journalists, for example, invite the politician to explain how their idea would be translated into action. They also ask them to explain the consequences – the pluses and minuses - of making this happen.

When interviewing a politician who is talking in sound bites they may say something like the following.

Let's explore this with you a little further. As far as I understand it, you are suggesting doing the following ...? Is that right?

*I understand the principle, so let's look at how this may work in practice. How would you translate this principle into action? What would you actually **do** to implement the idea?*

What would be the consequences of taking these steps? What would be the pluses and the minuses? How would you deal with the consequences?

Follow up questions can help us to do a reality check. So let's explore this process of asking questions to find out more about a person.

Follow Up Questions In Interview Situations

Imagine that you are interviewing a person for a leadership role. They may have read books on leadership and come ready with various quotes.

Several years ago a company invited me to sit in on such an interview. At one point the candidate was asked about their leadership style. They come out with the following statement.

"I will communicate a clear vision and empower people to deliver it."

The interviewing panel seemed to like this and were ready to move on to the next theme. Before they did so, however, I asked if it was okay for me to ask a few questions. These were along the following lines.

"I wonder if it is okay to ask a few things. Please accept that these questions are designed to explore how you will translate the ideas into action rather than to catch you out.

"It is also okay to reflect and take your time when considering the questions. Let's start with a few questions about clarifying the team's vision.

*"What will you actually **do** to meet with the key stakeholders – such as your manager – and agree on the team's specific goals? How will you make clear contracts about how you will keep the stakeholders informed regarding the progress towards achieving the goals?"*

"Let's move on to working with the team. What will you do on your first day when meeting the team? What will you do to get to know each of the people and their strengths?"

"How will you present the vision and the reasons for working towards it? How will you get their input to add to the vision? How will you make clear contracts with the team members about their best contributions to achieving the goals?"

"How will you manage by outcomes rather than tasks? How will you make sure the team is on track when working towards the vision? What else will you do to build a successful team?"

"Those are a lot of questions. I would like you to reflect, pick up on a few of the questions and share how you might translate some of these themes into action. Is that okay?"

We gave the candidate some time to reflect and then respond. Unfortunately they still answered with generalisations and a few more clichés. They were familiar with the concepts regarding leadership. But

they found it hard to describe how they would translate these into concrete actions.

Later we met another candidate. They were able to describe some of the things they would actually do – in behaviour terms – to lead the team to success. This led to them being offered the role.

Follow Up Questions Can Uncover A Person's Successful Style

The follow up questions approach is one that can also be used to clarify a person's successful style of working. Let's look at one example.

Many years ago I was asked to interview a person who was applying for a leadership role. The company wanted to hire the person but was not sure if they would fit with the role that was advertised. Bearing this in mind, I invited the person to do the following things:

To describe when they had led a team successfully;

To describe the principles they followed when leading the team successfully;

To describe what they actually did – in behaviour terms - to translate these principles into action and lead the team successfully.

The person started by describing how they built a team from scratch, led a pioneering project and delivered success. At my request, they then described another project they had led to fruition.

The person's leadership style soon became clear. Looking at their successful pattern, they made his best contribution when they took the following steps.

They found a place where they could build a successful prototype;

They agreed on the goals with their key stakeholders;

They set a deadline to work towards – because that was how they worked best – and for this to involve some sort of public launch;

They got some quick wins that reassured their stakeholders;

They built a team of committed people who wanted to achieve the goal;

They explained the professional deal clearly to people before they joined the team – people needed to know what they could and could not expect - then decide if they wanted to join the team;

They played to their strengths – which was focusing on the strategy and partnering with customers – and had a coordinator who kept things on track;

They continued to act as the flag bearer by keeping the stakeholders informed and also communicating through the media;

they kept people’s eyes on the compelling goal and flagged up where the team were on the journey;

They hit the deadline and sometimes did a public launch that involved customers who shared how the team had helped them to achieve success.

The leader’s style was more suited to doing pacesetting work rather than the advertised role. Bearing this in mind, the company invited him to consider running a new part of the business it was about to set-up. This proved to be a much better fit. It produced a win for the person and a win for the company.

Let’s return to your own life and work. Can you think of a situation where you may want to use elements of the follow up questions 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 Follow Up Questions Approach

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

*

The specific things I can do then 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 Dispassionate Approach

The Dispassionate Approach

This approach sounds paradoxical but it can work. It is to be dispassionate when following your passion and then doing your best to achieve the desired results.



There are many ways to do fine work. This approach sounds paradoxical but it can work. It is to be dispassionate when following your passion and then doing your best to achieve the desired results.

Great workers recognise that their passion can provide positive energy and be a great help. At the same time, however, it can cloud their ability to make good decisions and affect their discipline.

Bearing this in mind, they may become calm and clear when pursuing things they feel passionately about. They channel their passion in a disciplined way and to deliver the desired results.

Looking back, can you think of a time when you followed elements of this approach? What did you do then to maintain perspective? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

The Dispassionate Approach In The Past

The specific situation when I aimed to be dispassionate when following a passion and did my best to achieve the desired results was:

*

The specific things I did then to follow this approach in my own way were:

*

*

*

The specific things that happened as a result of taking these steps were:

*

*

*

The Passion, Professionalism And Perspective Approach



Great workers sometimes go through certain stages in their careers. They get hired for their passion, promoted for their professionalism and build a reputation for being strategic and having perspective.

Passion

A person may pursue an activity they feel passionately about where they have the ability to do superb work. They convey this enthusiasm during interviews and get hired to do work where they can use their expertise.

Professionalism

The person produces fine work. Gaining a reputation for delivering high professional standards, they climb the career ladder. They may continue to specialise or move into a management or leadership role.

Perspective

The person begins to attend senior leadership meetings. Still feeling strongly about their chosen work, they may behave in either of the following ways.

They may convey their passion by communicating in ways that are not unhelpful. They may argue strongly for their chosen projects, defend their territory or may even criticise other departments.

Alternatively, they may choose to show they understand the big picture and have perspective. Whilst still passionate about their work, they see things from the whole company point of view.

They gain a reputation as somebody who thinks strategically and makes considered decisions. This leads to them being used as a trusted advisor by colleagues and maybe even by the CEO.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the dispassionate approach. This may be when pursuing individual work or as a leader. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

The Dispassionate Approach In The Future

The specific situation when I may aim to be dispassionate when following a passion and do my best to achieve the desired results may be:

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Creative Approach Rather Than The Complaining Approach

People Can Choose To Be Creators Or Complainers

The Creative Approach

What do I want to create today?

How can I find creative solutions to the challenges?

How can I do things that help people or the planet?

The Complaining Approach

What do I want to complain about today?

How can I find more problems to complain about?

How can I find reasons for not doing things that help people or the planet?

There are many ways to live life. Some people choose to be creators rather than complainers. The choice they make has consequences for both themselves and other people.

People who take the creative approach often have a positive attitude but are also realistic. Different people learn this in different ways.

Some learn from parents in the family. Sitting round the table, they hear their parents say things like:

"We have a good life ... We can count our blessings ... We don't have a lot of money but we have each other ... We can find solutions to problems ... We want you to be happy."

Some people learn it from significant individuals in their life. They may have a teacher, coach or another person who acts as a positive model. Such a person may provide encouragement and demonstrate creative ways of solving problems.

Some people learn from reading about inspiring individuals. They learn from the paths taken by people who are different. These may be inventors, athletes, entrepreneurs, singers, actors and others who do great work in their chosen field.

People who take the creative approach want to keep adding knowledge, models and tools to their repertoires. They also have a positive approach to challenges. They say things like:

"What is the challenge? What are the real results to achieve? What are the conventional ways to tackle the challenge? What do we know works? How can we follow these principles – plus add other skills – to tackle the challenge?"

"Are there any other potential creative solutions? When faced by a conflict, for example, how can we do our best to find win-win solutions? What are the strategies we can follow to give ourselves the greatest chance of success?"

People who take the creative approach often find it generates positive energy. It is then more likely to help themselves and other people. Those who take the complaining approach are more likely to generate negative energy. This seldom helps themselves or other people.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to take the creative approach? How can you follow this 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.

The Creative Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

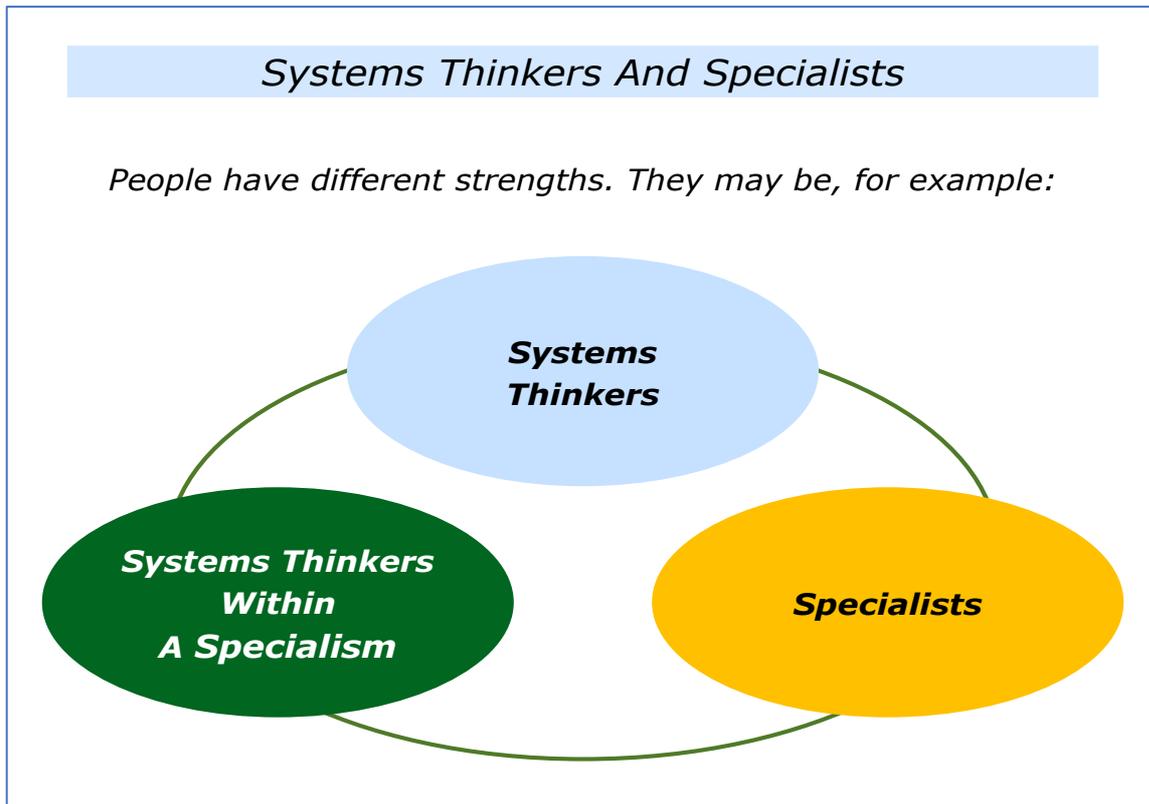
The specific things that may happen as a result may be:

*

*

*

The Systems Thinkers Approach

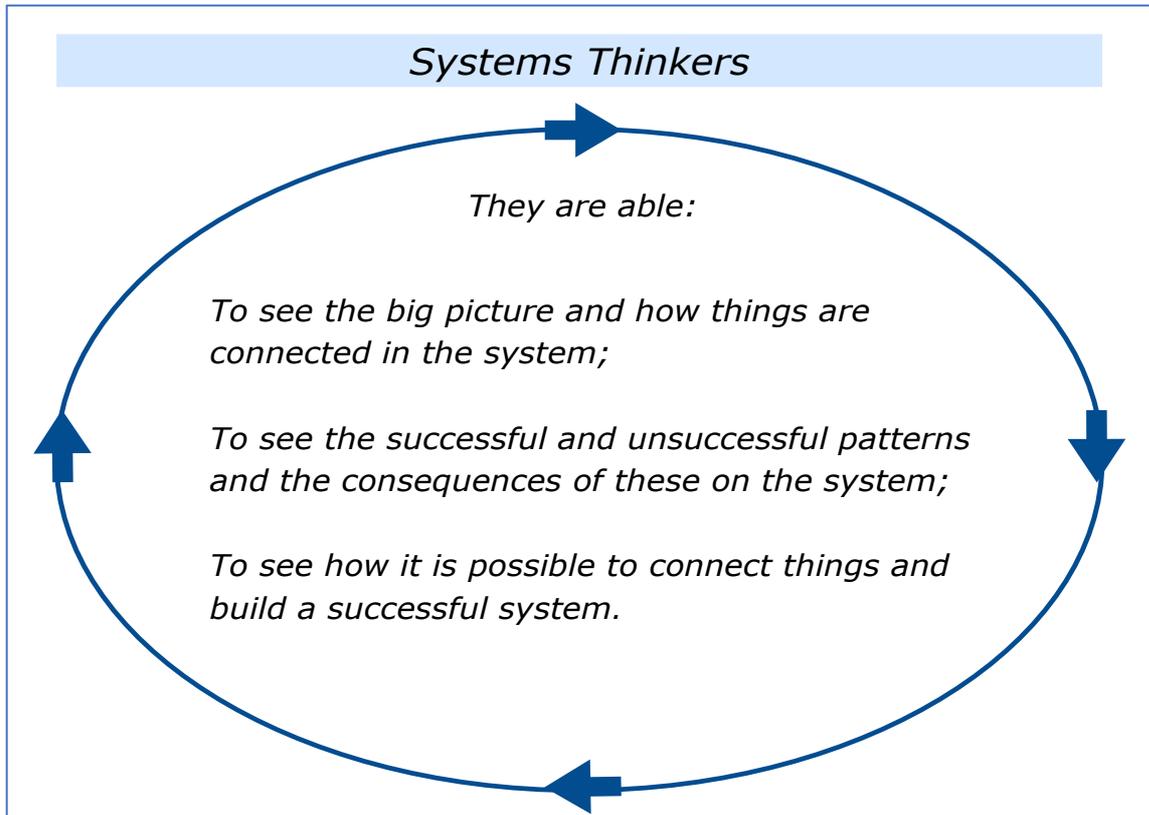


Different people see things in different ways. They may be systems thinkers, specialists or systems thinkers within their specialism.

Systems thinkers and specialists sometimes take different approaches to solving problems. Let's consider these themes.

Systems thinkers often take the strategic approach. They aim to gather information, see the big picture and see patterns. They consider the possible choices and potential consequences.

Such people then often use the strategic questions. They focus on the What, Why, How, Who and When. They then settle on their chosen way forwards.



Specialists often take the scientific approach. They aim to gather information about the facts, data and details. They like to feel they are making decisions based on solid ground.

Such people aim to see connections and use other ways to find solutions to the puzzle. They then use scientific methods – such as testing their hypothesis – to chart the way forwards.

Some people combine elements of both approaches. They aim to get the big picture, see patterns and make connections. They also like to get specific examples – in the form of facts and data – to ensure they are building on solid ground.

Such people clarify the real results to achieve and the potential strategies for going forwards. They consider the consequences of each option – the pluses and minuses – before deciding on their chosen strategy. They then clarify the specific action plan for translating the strategy into action.

The Strategic And Scientific Approaches To Solving Problems

Some people use the strategic approach, some use the scientific approach, some combine elements of both approaches.

The Strategic Approach

This often involves aiming:

To gather information about the big picture and see patterns;

To see the possible choices and the potential consequences;

To use strategic questions – such as What, Why, How, Who and When - to chart the way forward.

The Scientific Approach

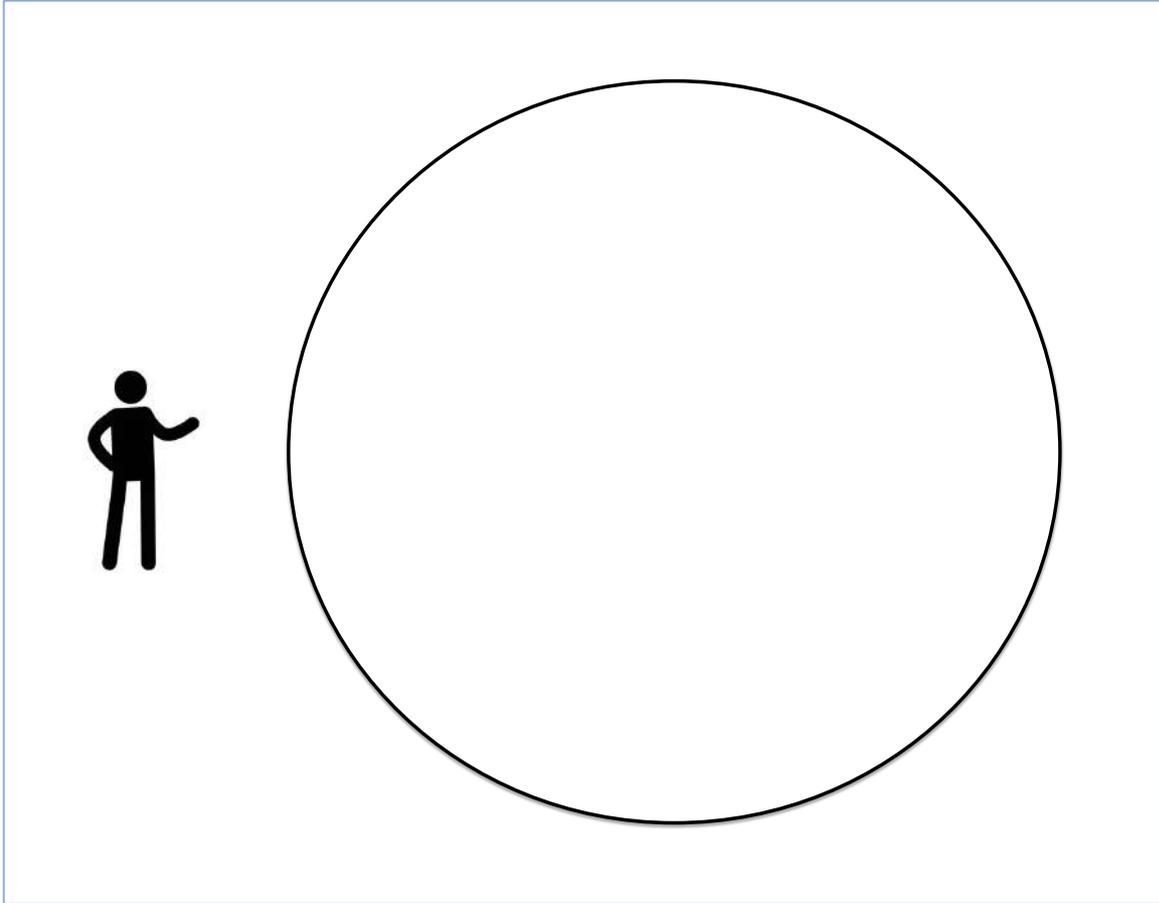
This often involves aiming:

To gather information about the facts, data and details;

To see connections and to find ways to solve the puzzle;

To use scientific approaches – such as testing hypotheses – to chart the way forward.

The Advantage Of Being An Outsider Approach



Every person is different. They have their own personality, experiences and perceptions. Some are encouraged to be true to themselves and continue to develop. Others may find this to be more difficult.

Some individuals may feel like outsiders. They may want to be part of a group but find it difficult to join in. The way they manage these emotions can shape their futures.

Victoria Wood described feeling like an outsider at school. Many years later she explained how this may have been an advantage in her work as a writer, comedian, actress and singer. Here is a precis of what she said about this becoming an advantage.

"I was never in the netball team or part of a group. I was often on the outside. But this helped me to observe things.

"I watched how people behaved, talked and interacted. This helped me when it came to writing sketches, plays and songs."

Some individuals who feel like outsiders turn this to their advantage. They may learn:

To see things from the outside and get an overview;

To see patterns in the way that people or things interact;

To see how things do or don't work well in systems.

Such individuals may learn how to manage their feelings in certain situations. They may then go on to use their observation skills in their work.

They may do this as a writer, therapist, coach, scientist, consultant, trusted advisor or in another professional role. They may pass on knowledge that can help other people to do superb work.

Some people find it more difficult to be outsiders. They may want to feel accepted as part of a group or gain recognition for their efforts. Some may even experience existential angst.

Colin Wilson described these emotions in his first book *The Outsider*. He explained how some individuals 'see too deep and too much'. They may then find it challenging to deal with the certain emotions.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a situation where can use the positive elements of being an outsider? 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 Outsider Approach

The specific situation where I may be able to use the positive elements of being an outsider may be:

*

The specific things I can do then to use the positive elements of being an outsider are:

*

*

*

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

*

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The Battle-Hardened, Brightness And Brilliant Work Approach



Imagine that you are about to build a team. You will have your own view about the qualities you will look for in the potential team-members.

This section explores one approach. It is to hire people who are battle-hardened yet still hungry, who exude brightness – such as positivity - and who are able to deliver brilliant work. Let explore these themes.

Battle-Hardened

Several years ago I worked with a leader who had been given the authority to build a new team. They began by hiring three people who would shape the culture.

When doing so, they brought in people who were battle-hardened. Such people were experienced and knew how to make things work. They were also still hungry.

The leader recruited one person they had worked with for many years. But they did not fall for the romantic idea of 'bringing the band back together'.

They took a more realistic approach. Whilst they rated some previous colleagues, many were now at a different stage of life and had different agendas.

They wanted people who were happy to put in the required commitment. This highlighted another quality they looked for in people.

Brightness

The leader recruited battle-hardened people who still exuded brightness – positivity. They would act as shapers and beacons for others in the company.

Such people had learned from experiences. They knew how to be positive models and create a positive environment. They also knew how to find solutions to challenges.

These people had retained their brightness and hunger rather than had become dulled. They were more likely to spread these feelings to other people in the company.

Brilliant Work

The leader made sure these people had the ability to do brilliant work in certain activities. Whilst it was important such people were positive, they also needed to deliver the goods.

Bearing in mind their own strengths as a leader, they needed people who had complementary skills. They started by hiring a coordinator they had

worked with in several companies. The coordinator had the following skills. They were able:

To make clear contracts with the leader about the outcomes to be delivered;

To coordinate people's strengths to deliver these outcomes;

To encourage people in the company to focus on continuous improvement.

The leader also hired people who could lead superb teams across the company. Some of these leaders were specialists, however, whose strengths lay in particular activities. They needed help in running their teams.

Such people were therefore given the option of hiring people with complementary skills. This ensured that the teams were able to do superb work and deliver the goods.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking to the future, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the battle-hardened, brightness and brilliance approach?

You may want to focus on these themes when working as an individual in your professional role. For example, what are the specific activities where you display these qualities? How can you pursue these activities more in the future?

You may want to focus on these themes when building or rebuilding a team. How can you reward, retain or recruit people who demonstrate these qualities? 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 Battle-Hardened, Brightness And Brilliant Work 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 then to
follow this approach in my own way are:*

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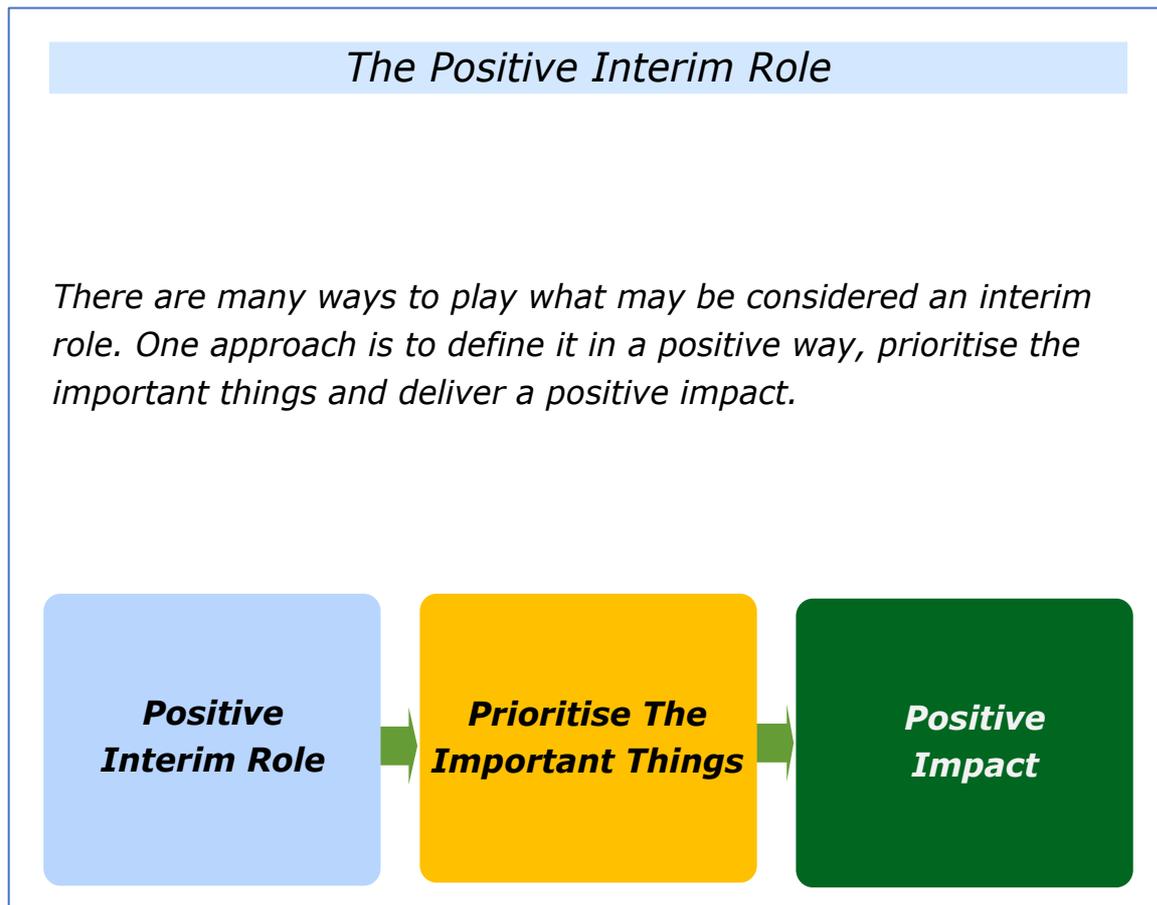
*The specific things that may
happen as a result may be:*

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The Positive Interim Role Approach



The positive interim role approach turns some ideas on their heads. One person expressed this in the following way.

"People may need to recognise that many things are interim rather than permanent. It is possible to do important work during that time, however, and aim to deliver positive results.

"Much depends, of course, on how long the interim period last. Some would argue that our time on Earth is interim. But we can each encourage people during our lives and aim to have a positive impact."

The positive interim role can be interpreted in many ways. People who work as therapists, mentors, coaches and trusted advisors, for example, may play an interim role in other people's lives.

Such professionals can have a positive influence, however, and do good work. This can sometimes have a relatively permanent effect on helping people to shape their future lives.

Imagine that you have been invited to do an interim role in an organisation. Whilst you would love the imaginary security of a permanent role, you are happy to take the position.

There are many ways to do the role. One approach is to focus on the following steps.

You Can See It As A Positive Interim Role

People can choose their attitude towards doing an interim role. They may choose to see it as either:

A chance to make a positive contribution;

A stopgap situation;

A way of getting a salary and nothing else.

Imagine that you frame the role in a positive way. Before rushing into it, however, it can be useful to work through the following steps.

You can clarify what you can control in the situation

You can control your attitude. You can be positive, professional and do your best to perform superb work. You can't control other people's attitudes, their management style or the overall strategy of the organisation.

Bearing these things in mind, you can clarify whether you want to do the role. If so, you can then aim to build on what you can control and manage what you can't control. This can lead to the next step.

*You can make clear contracts
about the outcomes to achieve*

Imagine that you have decided to take the role. It will then be important to make clear contracts with the key stakeholders. These may include the person you will be reporting to plus any other key people.

There are many way to make clear contracts. One approach is to focus on the following themes.

The Picture Of Success

You can clarify the specific results to deliver in the role. Bearing in mind what you can control, you can clarify:

The outcomes the organisation may want you to achieve in the role;

The outcomes you may want to achieve in the role.

You can translate these into a provisional picture of success. (See later illustration.) When appropriate, you can share this with the key stakeholders by saying something along the following lines.

"As far as I understand, the outcomes to achieve in the role are:

"To ...

"To ...

"To ...

"Are there any other outcomes you would like me to add or bear in mind?"

The Principles

You can also show that you are aware of the key principles the organisation like their people to follow in the culture. Bearing these in mind, you can highlight how you will aim to follow these principles.

There may, however, be one caveat. Some organisations may not actually make these principles clear to their people. If this is the case, you can be proactive.

You can explain the principles – such as the strategies, guidelines or the Dos and Don'ts – you will aim to follow to achieve the goals. You can highlight these in general terms rather than going into detail.

Your aim is to show that you will act in ways that align with the organisation's guidelines. You will, of course, use your own strengths to translate these principles into action.

If appropriate, you can show your understanding of organisation's approach by saying something like the following.

"As far as I understand, the principles to follow – the Dos and Don'ts – on the way towards achieving the goals are:

"Do ...

"Do ...

"Do ...

"Don't ...

"Don't ...

"Are there any other things to bear in mind?"

The Progress Reports

You may also wish to reassure the stakeholders that you will take responsibility for delivering the results. It is possible to do this in several ways.

One approach is to describe how you will proactively keep people informed about the progress being made towards achieving the goals. You may also want to describe how you will aim to get some early successes.

There are several reasons for taking this approach. It can help:

To show that you understand the world from their point of view;

To reassure them by showing you will proactively keep them informed about the progress being made;

To show you will get some quick wins – this will buy you time to get on with the real work.

Let's return to the contracting process. Imagine that you have worked through the themes mentioned above. You can then meet with the key stakeholders:

To share your view of the picture of success, the principles to follow and the progress reports;

To ask if they would like to see anything added and if they have any other suggestions;

To make clear contracts about the outcomes to be delivered and how you will keep them informed about the progress towards achieving the agreed picture of success.

There are many ways to prepare for such a session. If you wish, you may want to adapt the following exercise on your own way. You can then use this as a basis for making clear contracts about the results to achieve in the interim role.

The Positive Interim Role

One approach is to make clear contracts with the key stakeholders about the following themes.

The Picture Of Success

As far as I understand, the outcomes to achieve by ... are:

** To ...*

For example ...

** To ...*

For example ...

** To ...*

For example ...

The Principles

As far as I understand it, the principles to follow on the way towards achieving the picture of success are:

The Dos:

- * Do ...*
- * Do ...*
- * Do ...*

The Don'ts:

- * Don't ...*
- * Don't ...*
- * Don't ...*

The Progress Reports

The specific things I will do to proactively keep people informed about the progress towards achieving the picture of success are:

- * To ...*

For example ...

- * To ...*

For example ...

- * To ...*

For example ...

You Can Prioritise The Important Things

Imagine that you have made clear contracts about the results to achieve in your interim role. As mentioned earlier, it can be useful to get some quick wins. This can reassure the key stakeholders and also buy time.

You can also focus on pursuing the strategies most likely to deliver success. When doing this it will be important:

To act as a positive model, be professional and help other people in the organisation to achieve success – this can help to build goodwill;

To focus on the top priorities – the important things – you can do to increase the chances of achieving the picture of success;

To, when appropriate, build on the positive people in the organisation and work with them to achieve success.

Bearing in mind you are in an interim role, it can be useful to focus on the things you can control. One person described their experience of doing this in the following way.

"Because I was an interim, my approach was to use the mission as 'the persuader'. It was not about me trying to persuade people. It was about whether they wanted to work towards achieving the mission.

"During the first week I met with each person individually. In the sessions we focused on the key strategies we could follow to achieve the team's mission.

"I invited each person to describe: a) the specific things they would like to contribute towards achieving the team's mission; b) the specific support they would like to help them to make their best contribution.

"Taking this approach gave me a good idea about each person's style. I then built on the people who wanted to make a professional contribution

towards achieving the mission. This helped to produce some quick successes."

You will have your own views regarding the top priorities to focus on when working towards the goals. It will then be important to translate these into action and, where possible, get some quick successes.

You will have your own way of making this happen. If appropriate, however, you may start by using something like the following framework.

The Picture Of Success - The Top Priorities

The top priorities – the important things – to focus on and do to increase the chances of achieving the picture of success are:

** To ...*

For example ...

** To ...*

For example ...

** To ...*

For example ...

You Can Aim To Deliver A Positive Impact

Imagine that you have embarked on pursuing the top priorities. You can aim to get some quick successes, maintain the momentum and deliver the desired results.

Different people do this in different ways. One approach is to take the following steps. You can aim:

To keep reminding people of the outcomes to achieve – the picture of success;

To keep producing success stories that show how people are following the principles and delivering success;

To keep behaving in an encouraging way towards people throughout the organisation and make a positive impact by helping to achieve the picture of success.

Positive interim roles can provide the chance to encourage people and demonstrate excellence. Sometimes this involves aiming: a) to be a positive model; b) to perform superb work; b) to help people to achieve success and have a positive impact.

As mentioned earlier, many people long for something permanent but this is not always possible. A person may make a relatively permanent impression, however, by doing superb work and helping to create positive memories.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may follow elements of this approach? How can you do this in your own way? What may happen as a result of taking these steps?

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

The Positive Interim Role

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

*

The specific things I can do then 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 Managing The Pluses And Minuses Of Your Personality Approach



There are many views on what constitutes a person's personality. One view is that it is the essence of a person and how they express this in their life and work.

Below is a long definition that is drawn from psychology. This describes personality in the following way.

Personality is a characteristic way of feeling, thinking and behaving. It embraces a person's attitudes, moods and opinions and is most clearly expressed in interactions with other people.

A person's personality includes behavioural characteristics that are both inherent and acquired. These can be observed in the ways they behave with other people and in the situations they encounter in their life.

People tend to develop rather than change dramatically in their lives. Bearing this in mind, they may learn: a) to make good use of the positive parts of their personality; b) to minimise the consequences of the other parts.

Different people do this in different ways. One approach is for them to build on the pluses and manages the potential minuses of their personality. Imagine that you want to follow this approach in your own way. Let's explore these themes.

Managing The Pluses

Looking at your personality, what do you think may be the potential pluses? What may be the positive aspects of your attitude and actions? What are the things you do that help yourself or other people?

Different people obviously given different answers. Here are some of things that people may say.

The Potential Pluses Of My Personality

I Can:

Be kind ... Sometimes inspire people ... Focus on one thing deeply when I want ... Organise my personal and professional life ... Build on the strengths in my work, such as: a) ... b) ... c) ...

Be a good educator ... See both the big picture and the details in some activities ... Lead teams ... Be clear and calm in certain situations ... Help other people to succeed in the following areas: a) ... b) ... c) ...

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

First, describe the potential pluses of your personality. It is important to be as honest as you can when describing these. Second, describe the specific things you can do to manage and make good use of these parts of your personality.

My Personality – The Pluses

The potential pluses of my personality are:

** I can ...*

The specific things I can do manage and make good use of these parts of my personality are:

** I can ...*

Managing The Minuses

Looking at your personality, what do you think may be the potential minuses? What may be the not so positive aspects of your attitude and actions? What are the things you do that may not help yourself or other people?

Many brilliant workers, for example, have lopsided personalities. They are brilliant in some areas but are useless in other areas. This can have consequences for both themselves and other people.

Different people obviously give different answers. Here are some of things that they may say.

The Potential Minuses Of My Personality

I Can Sometimes:

React to certain triggers and go into a negative spiral ... Become depressed about the world ... Speak over people ... React badly when I feel out of control.

Try to win an argument rather than look for win-wins ... Be impatient with myself when I have a creative block ... Fail to take time to recentre ... Get upset about small things that are not really important.

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

First, describe the potential minuses of your personality. It is important to be as honest as you can when describing these. Second, describe the specific things you can do to manage and minimise the consequences of these parts of your personality.

My Personality – The Minuses

*The potential minuses
of my personality are:*

** I can sometimes ...*

** I can sometimes ...*

** I can sometimes ...*

*The specific things I can do manage
and minimises the consequences of
these parts of my personality are:*

** I can ...*

** I can ...*

** I can ...*

Managing My Personality In The Future

Imagine that you have clarified the potential pluses and minuses of your personality. You may have also done some work on how you want to make use of this information.

Great workers, for example, build on the pluses. They may aim to manage and make good use of their strengths, their drive and their ability to do superb work in certain activities.

Such workers may aim to apply these positive parts in ways that are most likely to help themselves or other people. Bearing this in mind, they choose to be selective to be effective.

They may focus on doing the specific things that give them positive energy. They may then make good use of the positive aspects to do superb work.

Great workers may also learn to manage the potential minuses of their personality. They may aim, for example, to recognise the triggers that sometimes lead to them going into a downwards spiral.

They may therefore aim: a) to avoid such situations; b) to buy time to think if, despite their best efforts, they find themselves reacting badly to a trigger situation. They may then aim to stay calm, clarify the potential ways forward and manage the situation successfully.

Let's return to your own life and work. If you wish, try exploring how you can continue to manage your personality in a positive way.

First, describe how you can manage and make good use of the positive parts of your personality. Second, describe how you can manage and minimise the consequences of any other parts. Third, describe the specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps.

Here is the exercise on this theme. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

Managing My Personality

The specific things I want to do to make good use of the pluses of my personality are:

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The specific things I want to do to minimise the consequences of the minuses of my personality are:

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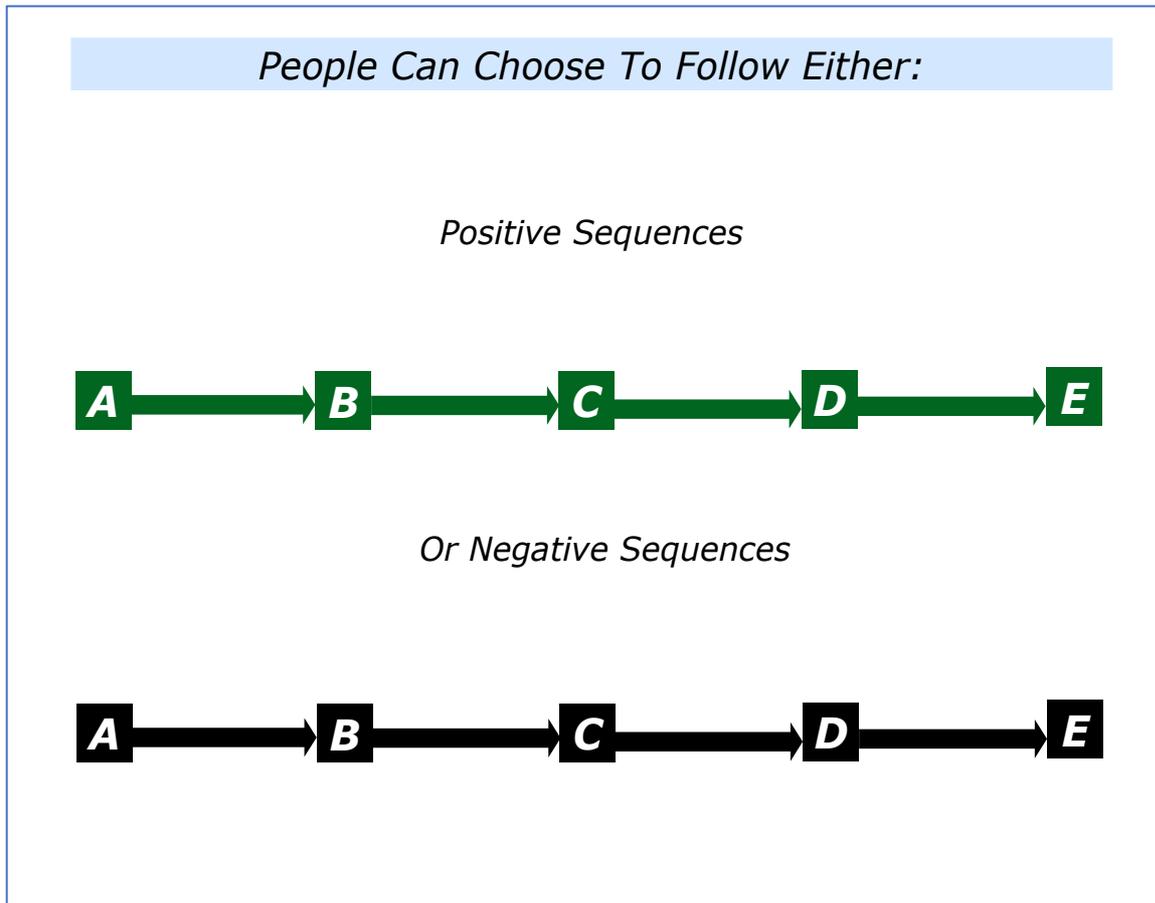
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Positive Sequences Rather Than Negative Sequences Approach



People often follow sequences of behaviour. They may follow certain patterns that result in positive or negative outcomes. Let's consider some of these situations.

A Negative Sequence

A person may feel depressed about something they see, hear or do. They may dwell on the situation, get angry or become resentful. Whilst they know what is happening, they continue with the sequence.

They may then become more depressed or lash out at someone. This doesn't help them or other people. They have chosen to continue the negative sequence.

People can choose to channel their energy in a positive rather than negative way. One approach is for them to take the following steps.

A Positive Sequence

A person may begin by recognising that they are on a negative path. They may then ask themselves:

"What is happening? Am following a negative sequence? What will happen if I continue on this route? What do I want to do instead?"

"How can I start on a positive sequence? What are the things I can do to give myself positive feelings rather than negative feelings? How can I translate these into action?"

A person may then choose to start a positive sequence. They may do deep breathing, do something they enjoy, encourage another person, go for a walk or do another activity that give them positive energy.

Different people choose to take these steps in different ways. The keys, however, are for them:

To recognise the negative sequence and the consequences of continuing to follow this path;

To stop what they are doing, buy time to think and decide what they want to do instead;

To do something to start their positive sequence, get a quick success and continue on this path.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a situation where you may want to follow a positive rather than a negative sequence? What can you do then to follow a positive sequence? 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 Sequences Rather Than Negative Sequences

The specific situation where I may want to follow a positive sequence rather than a negative one may be:

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The specific things I can do then to follow a positive sequence are:

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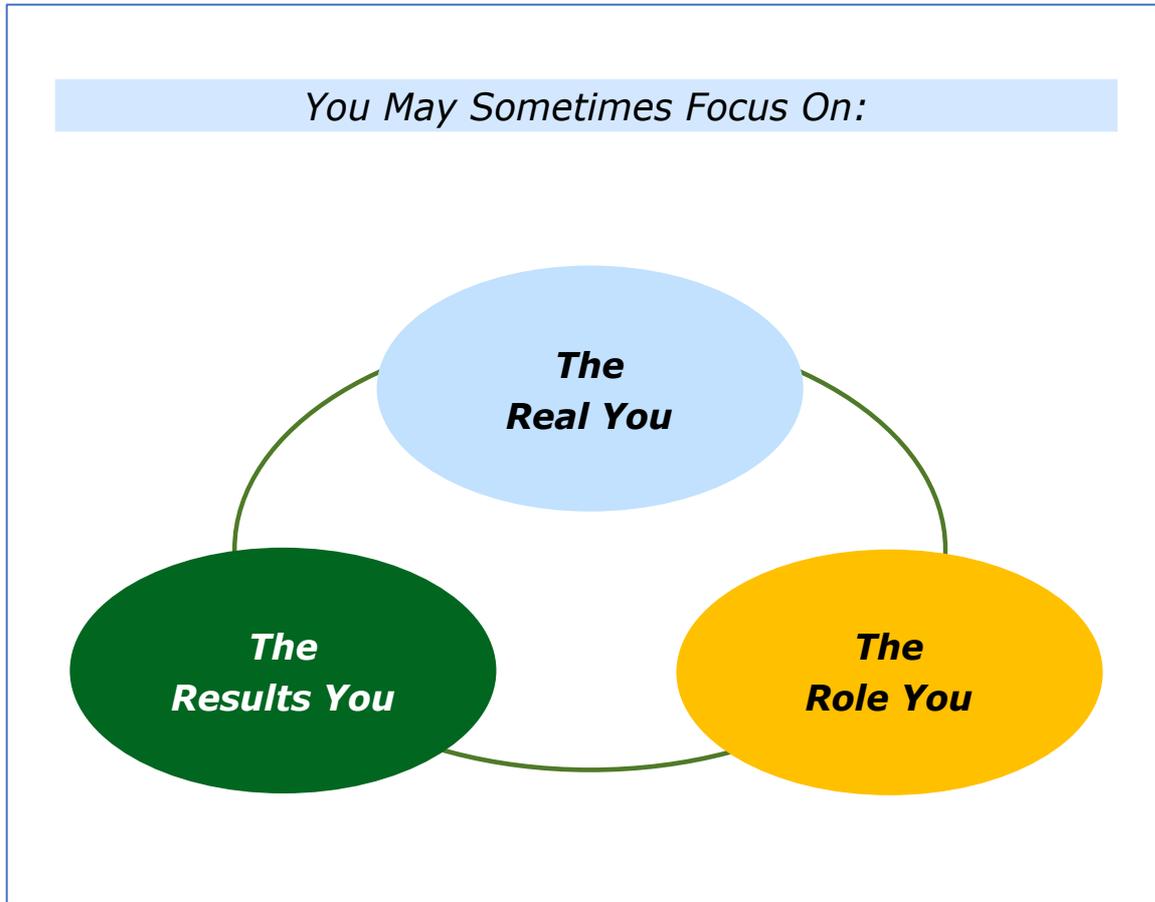
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Real You, The Role You And The Results You Approaches



There are many views about people's personalities. This piece looks at one approach. It focuses on the real you, the role you and the results you. Let's explore these themes.

The Real You

This is who you really are. It involves focuses on your personality characteristics. These include the following things:

Your personality style ... Your spirit, strengths and successes ... Your attitude, abilities and achievements ... Your emotions and experiences ... Your knowledge ... Your ability to manage your feelings in a positive way.

Your choices and the consequences ... Your successful and unsuccessful patterns ... Your self-talk ... Your belief system and how you translate this into behaviour... Your awareness of how your actions affect other people.

Your purpose, principles and picture of success ... Your life goals ... Your health, hopes and happiness ... Your potential contribution to people and the planet ... Your ability to do your best and feel at peace.

There will be times when feel able to be the real you. These may be when you feel safe or stimulated to express yourself in ways that are satisfying. Let's move onto another aspect of your personality.

The Role You

This involves you going into role in your personal or professional life. You may build on parts of your personality and express these by taking some of the following routes.

You may go into role as a parent, partner or friend. You may go into role as a counsellor, educator, coach, mentor or trusted advisor. You may go into role as an artist, writer, singer or other kind of performer.

You may go into role as a worker, gardener, carpenter, architect, nurse, doctor or technical expert. You may go into role as a team member, work colleague, manager, leader or in another role.

A person can still be real when going into role. They may build on their professional strengths, follow strategies that work and aim to deliver success.

Some introverts, for example, do good work by going into role. They rehearse ahead of time before moving into action. They then focus on the rules they aim to follow – such as the professional guidelines – and do their best to achieve the desired results.

There may be many times when you are able to be real or go into role. These can lead to the next stage.

The Results You

This involves focusing on the results you produce. These may include some of the following things.

You may behave in ways that lead to emotional results. These could lead to yourself or other people feeling certain things – such as feeling encouraged, excited, hopeful, happy or other emotions.

You may behave in ways that lead to tangible results. These may include doing certain kinds of work or creating services, products or other things that lead to yourself or other people achieving success.

“By their fruits you shall know them,” we are told. The emotions, experiences and other things we help to create can produce a certain kind of legacy.

Let’s return to your own life and work. When are you the real you? Who are the people with whom you feel safe enough to be yourself? What are the kinds of situations where you are able to express your real self?

When do you go into role? When do you find this rewarding? What do you do then to build on your strengths, apply your skills and achieve success? What may be the benefits for you and other people?

What are the results you may produce? When do you help people to enjoy positive emotions? When do you help to create positive experiences? When do you help to create other kinds of positive results?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe a situation when you may follow some elements of these approaches.

You may do this when being the real you. You may do it when choosing to go into a rewarding role. You may also sometimes encourage other people to be their real selves or to develop in their role. If you wish, try completing the following sentences.

The Real You, The Role You And The Results You Approaches

*The specific situation when I may want to
follow elements of these approaches may be:*

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*The specific things I can do then to
follow elements of these approaches are:*

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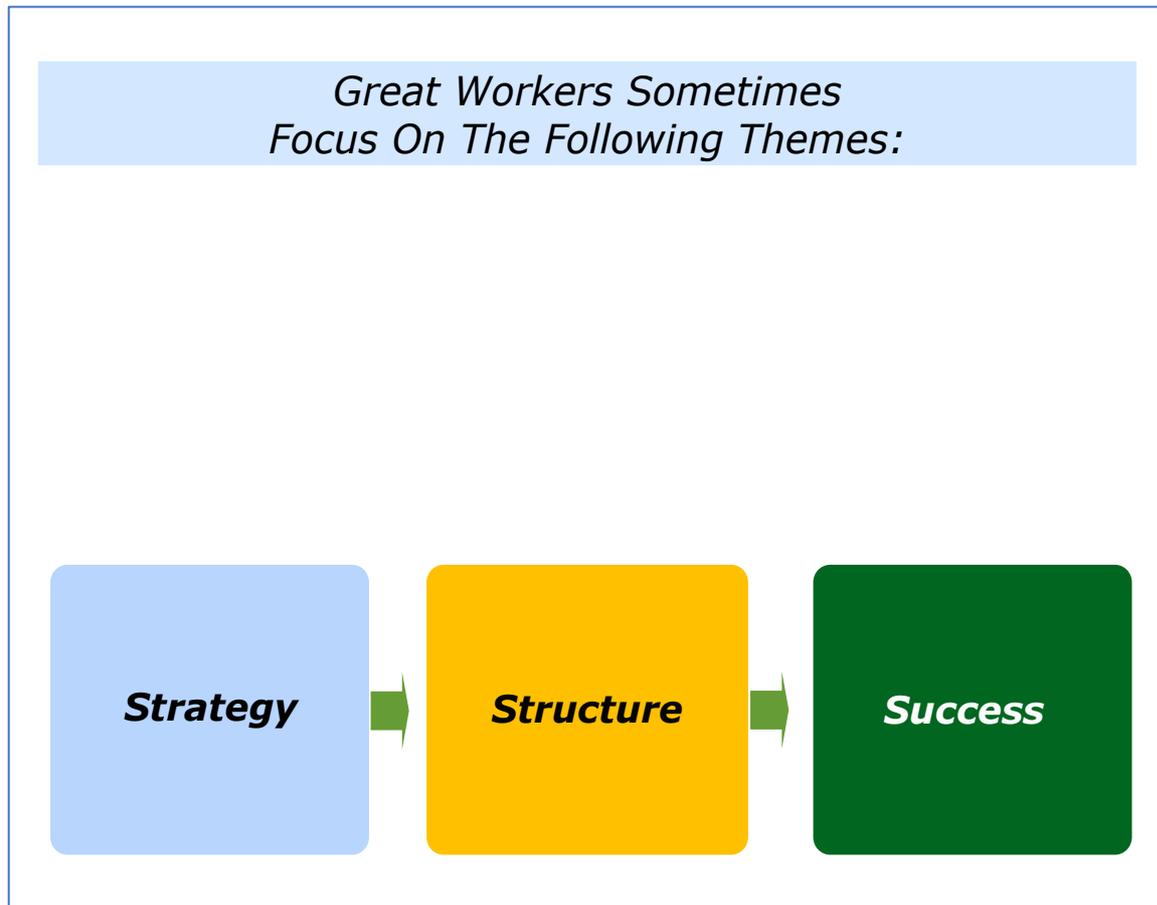
*The specific things that may
happen as a result may be:*

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The Strategy, Structure And Success Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to follow the right strategy and create the right structure that enables people to achieve success.

The term 'structure follows strategy' has passed into business folklore. It was coined by A.D.Chandler in the early 1960s.

He believed that it was vital for an organisation to clarify its strategy. It was then to create a structure that enabled its people and departments to follow the strategy and perform superb work.

Many organisations at the time started by creating a structure. They then told people to fit into it and do efficient work. If things did not work out, they changed the structure or the people.

Some organisations went further and believed that their structure was actually a strategy. This was seductive and gave leaders the illusion of control.

But the approach hit problems when technology or other events changed the world. Older style organisations still insisted on their people and customers following processes that were suited to another age. This sometimes led to their demise.

Great workers, teams and organisations start by clarifying their strategy. They then create a structure that enables people and departments to play to their strengths, follow the strategy and deliver success.

(You can explore more about how to follow this approach in the section of this book called *The Coordination Approach*.)

Structure

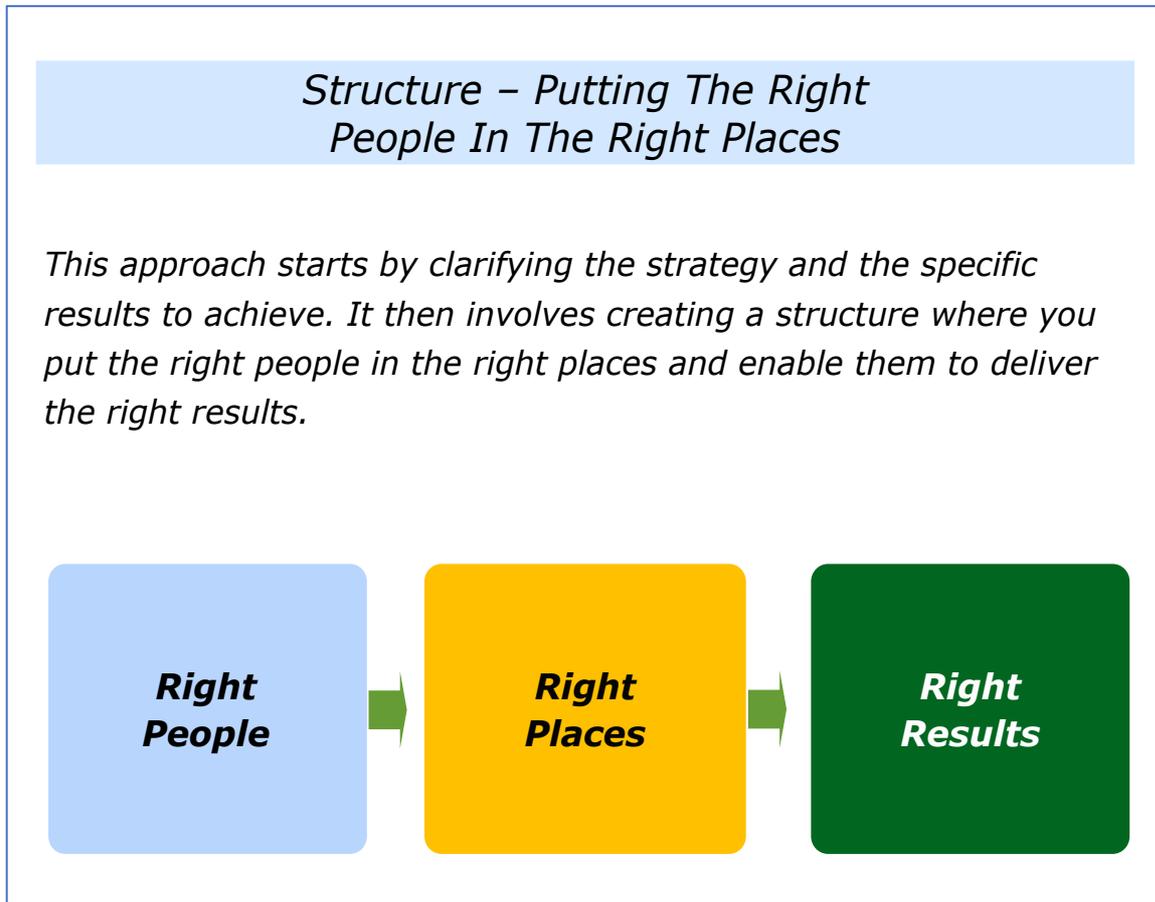
There are many ways to create a structure. One approach is to coordinate the strengths of people and departments so they follow the strategy and deliver success. You can aim:

- *To clarify the strategy and the picture of success;*
- *To clarify how to coordinate the strengths of people and departments to follow the strategy and achieve success;*
- *To create a structure that encourages people to follow the strategy, perform superb work and deliver success.*

Different organisations create such structures in different ways. One approach is to start by clarifying the strategy and the specific results to

achieve. It is then to put the right people in the right places. People are then more likely to perform superb work and deliver the right results.

One key point. You may need to put together people with complementary strengths. You may have a senior manager, for example, who has strengths in one area but not others. You may need to ally them with somebody who has complementary strengths to help them fulfil the role.



Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the strategy, structure and success approach?

How can you clarify the strategy? How can you create a structure that enables yourself or other people to play to their strengths? How can you then focus on doing superb work and delivering success? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

The Strategy, Structure And Success Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

*

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The Clarifying The Script You Want To Follow In A Challenging Situation Approach

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:

*

*

*

"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 Majority Gains Approach Before The Marginal Gains Approach

Majority Gains And Marginal Gains

Great performers focus on getting the majority gains right before then adding the marginal gains.

**Majority
Gains**

**Marginal
Gains**

Many people now focus on the importance of making marginal gains to improve performance. Here is one definition of this approach.

The principle of marginal gains is that small incremental improvements in any process amount to a significant improvement when they are all added together.

This approach can help people, teams and companies to have a competitive edge, but it is important to see this in context. One of the key rules in any activity is that:

Great performers get the majority gains right before then adding the marginal gains.

Such people start by getting the majority gains right. They do what works in their chosen field. This takes them to 8+/10. They then add the marginal gains to get to 10/10.

Different people have different views regarding what may be the majority gains in different fields. Here are some views about what may constitute such gains.

Great workers may take the following approach. They may aim to build on their strengths, follow strategies that work and do their best to deliver success. This provides the basis for doing superb work.

Great teams may take the following approach. They may aim to implement the right strategy with the right people in the right way. They then enable their people to do their best to get the right results.

Great organisations may take the following approach. They may encourage their people to focus on the organisation's purpose, follow its principles and do their best to achieve the picture of success.

Great workers aim to do what they believe in. They keep doing the basics and, when appropriate, they add the brilliance. They then sometimes reach their goal by adding that touch of class.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific activity where you want to follow some elements of majority and marginal gains approach?

What works in your chosen activity? What can you do to make the majority gains? How can you keep doing these things? How can you get to 8+/10? What can you do to add the marginal gains? How can you then do your best to get to 10/10?

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

The Majority Gains Before Marginal Gains Approach

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

*

The specific things I can do to get the majority gains – to do what works – in this activity are:

*

*

*

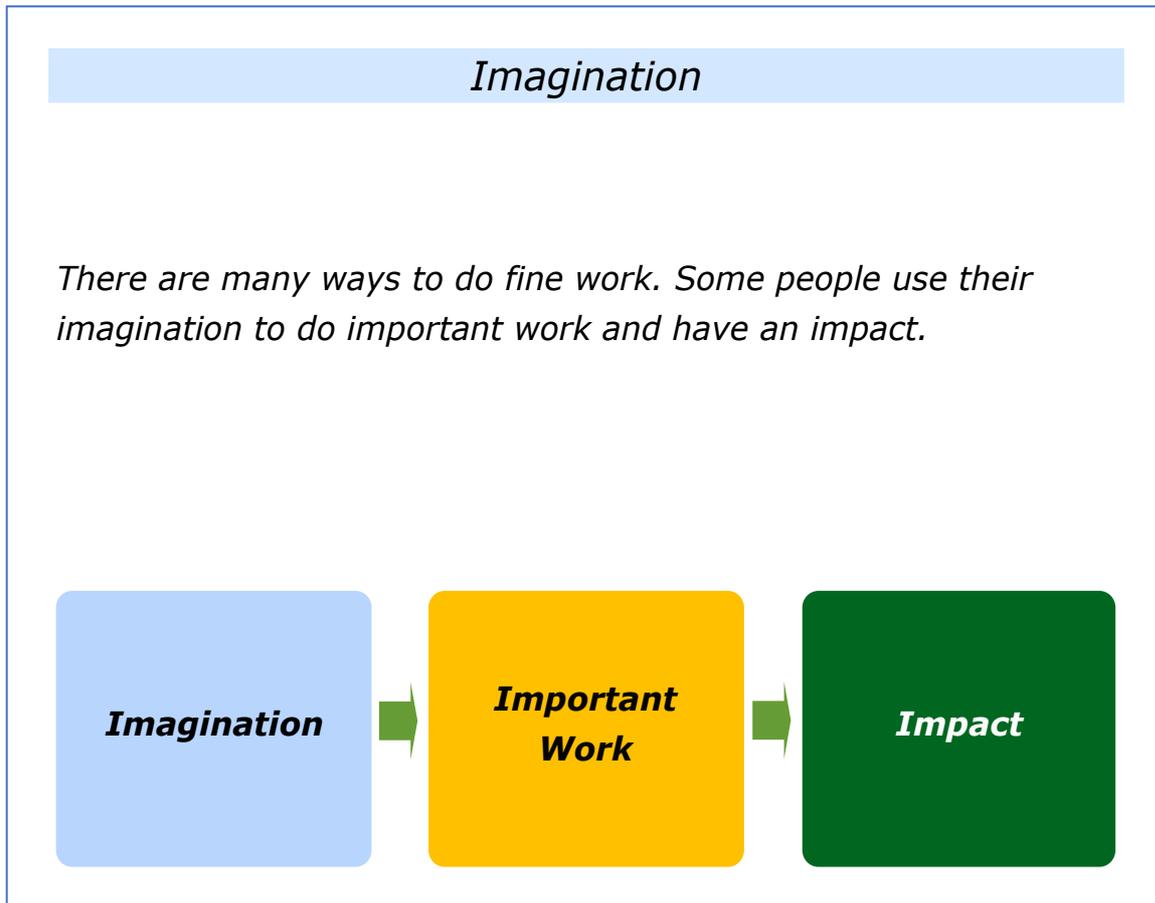
The specific things I can then do to add the potential marginal gains in this activity are:

*

*

*

The Imagination, Important Work And Impact Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. Some people use their imagination to do important work and have an impact. Let's explore these themes.

Imagination

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 explore a topic you find stimulating. You may explore lots of ideas and gather information. You may then focus on a specific activity and translate this into working to achieve a compelling goal.

Looking ahead, you may then go through the following steps. First, to imagine the goal. Second, to imagine the benefits of reaching the goal. Third, to imagine the different ways to reach the goal.

This leads to making a decision. Bearing these factors in mind, do you really want to work towards achieving the goal?

Imagination

This can involve focusing on the following themes. You can imagine:

- *The What - the goal;*
- *The Why - the benefits of achieving the goal;*
- *The How - the ways of achieving the goal.*

You can then decide if you 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:*

*

*The specific things I did then to use my
imagination to take these steps were:*

*

*

*

*The specific things that happened as
a result of taking these steps were:*

*

*

*

Imagining 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. They then translate this into a compelling goal.

Imagining The Benefits Of Achieving The Goal

Great workers often clarify the benefits of achieving a goal. 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 themselves or 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 Ways Of Reaching The Goal

Some people move on exploring ways to achieve a goal. 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.

"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?"

Many people see their imagination as a muscle they need to keep using. Michaela Cristallo describes some ways to take this approach.

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.

Great workers use their imagination to clarify a compelling goal. They may then make a decision.

Bearing in mind the potential pluses and minuses involved in doing the work, 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.

The decision they make often depends on whether they believe the goal is worth achieving. They are more likely to do this if they see the work as important. Let's explore this theme.

Important Work

Some individuals use their imagination to focus on what they believe may be important work. Different people have different definitions for what may constitute such work.

How to judge whether the work may be important? One approach is to ask the following questions.

Will the work help people? Will it have a positive impact? Will it contribute to helping to care for people or the planet?

Some kinds of work immediately fit the bill – such as working in health, medicine or education. Some kinds of work may help people to improve their quality of life or contribute to building healthy planet.

Some individuals translate their ideas into pursuing a particular project. Let's look at one person who took this route.

Arvind Gupta - iToys Into Trash



Here are excerpts from an article that Tithiya Sharma wrote for the website *The Better India*. It gives some background into Arvind's work.

Teaching Science by Creating Treasure from the Trash Can

When Arvind Gupta, an IIT Kanpur electric engineering alumnus, quit his job at Telco, his mother came to his defence stating 'good, now he will do something noble with his life'.

A prophetic statement from a woman who never had a day of formal education in her life but ensured that her four children excelled academically.

For almost 30 years now, Arvind Gupta has been taking his love for science and learning to the children of India. He's the dream teacher we all yearned for.

Gupta has travelled to over 3000 schools, demonstrating captivating science experiments to wide-eyed children. What sparks their imagination further is that Gupta uses only everyday garbage as the building blocks of these experiments.

"All teaching aids we use are handmade. It's important for children to see that you don't need fancy materials. Science can also help you look critically at materials that are often considered trash, there is a lot of learning in that itself".

An empowering lesson for his pupils who are of limited means.

They watch him in amazement as he explains everyday phenomenon like light and its laws of convergence and divergence with only used up ball-point pen refills, rubber slippers, empty tetra packs and anything else he can lay his talented hands on.

He takes trash and creates unforgettable experiments and experiences for children. An encore purpose for everyday trash is a wonderful by-product of his work.

Gupta believes that a love for science and the hunger to learn isn't just the prerogative of the English speaking elite. On his website Gupta hosts thousands of books on science, that are free to download.

Many of which he has painstakingly translated to Hindi himself. There are books in over a dozen regional languages too. The site also boasts over 700 science projects with videos, pictures and instructions. More than 6000 books are downloaded each day!

"I have an enduring passion for my work because it allows me to reinvent myself. Every child has a dream in their eyes, and each of them instils a hope in me about the future", he shares.

In true Gandhian spirit, Gupta signs off all his communication with the words 'with love and peace'. He certainly lives by them.

Different people translate their drives into doing different kinds of work. Some also focus on the next theme.

Impact

Some individuals aim to do work that has a positive impact. They aim to serve the work, serve the people or serve the planet. This is a more spiritual approach than focusing on themselves making an impact.

Such individuals sometimes put themselves in the background. They pass on knowledge about the work, however, and bring it to life with success stories. This enables others to follow the principles in their own ways and achieve success.

Different people do this in different ways. Let's look at one example of work that has inspired other people.

The Haller Foundation

Here is an introduction to the work done by the Haller Foundation. This description is taken from the organisation's website. The illustration below is just one example of the Foundation's work.



Laying the groundwork for sustainable living

There were once swathes of disused limestone quarry along Kenya's Mombasa coastline. Over decades they had been robbed of life by the region's cement factory. Until nothing grew.

Then, in 1970, Dr. Rene Haller – a Swiss environmentalist – began a series of natural experiments. He introduced new species of trees, nitrates and millipedes that could support one another in rejuvenating the infertile soil.

Before



After



Our work is based on the techniques of the award-winning environmentalist, Dr. Rene Haller, a UNEP Global Laureate renowned for his restoration of cement quarries in Kenya.

We use a similar model of environmental regeneration to bring economic security to poor, small-holder farmers living on inhospitable land. We address communities' basic needs through an integrated set of programmes in water, farming, education, health, alternative energy and nano-enterprise.

Haller's community partnerships are not quick fixes, rather they offer long term, life-skills training which empower farmers and their children to lead self-sufficient and sustainable lives.

Haller was set up as a charity in 2004 by Louise Piper and Julia Hailes MBE. They were inspired by the work of Dr. Rene Haller, who is most

famous for rehabilitating a barren cement quarry into a flourishing natural park – now known as Haller Park.

In 1970, 'Haller Park' was an industrial wasteland. The quarry floor was barren and hard as rock, the air temperature was 40°C and the groundwater was saline. Although reclamation of industrial wasteland was virtually unheard of in the 1970s, Dr. Haller set out to change that. He remembers:

"My vision was to establish a multitude of plants, providing food and shelter to a large variety of animals."

Through careful observation of how plants and animals interact, and a series of trial and error experiments, he transformed the industrial wasteland into a flourishing natural park – now known as Haller Park.

Over 1 million trees were planted in the quarry, and a range of insects, butterflies, birds and mammals were also introduced. Each plant, insect or animal had a purpose to keep the ecosystem in balance.

Haller Park is now home to a range of endangered flora and fauna, and is recognised by the Eden Project as one of the ten most effective environmental restoration projects in the world.

Dr. Haller's Principles

1. Passion And Belief

Live your passion and believe in what you do.

2. Think Big, Start Small

Think big but start small – this allows you to test your actions and learn from your mistakes without risking great damage.

3. Self-Sustaining Eco-Systems

Aim to create an eco-system where plants, animals and technologies are inter-dependent and self-sustaining.

4. Waste

In nature there is no waste – it is man’s invention. If you see waste, think how to reduce it and ultimately how to use it.

5. Biological Not Chemical

Use biological systems not chemical ones.

6. Animal Perspectives

Look at problems from an animal or plant’s perspective and imagine what is needed to make them grow and flourish.

7. Indigenous

Try to use indigenous plants and animals – foreign ones are likely to import problems.

8. Be Inventive

Be prepared to come up with and try out new ideas.

9. Local Knowledge

Find out what people in the area already know – learn from their wisdom, consult and involve them whenever possible.

10. Incentives

Provide incentives for people to do the right thing – for example, encouraging people to value wildlife and their habitat, both intrinsically and as a source of income.

11. Local

Don't get too big and centralised – it makes sense to have production close to the source of the material.

12. Economics

Make sure that whatever is done makes economic. One project on its own may not pay back but in conjunction with other projects it will.

There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to use your imagination and aim to do important work that has an impact.

Can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach? You may want to explore an activity that gives you positive energy and then translate this into doing a specific project.

How can you use your imagination? How can you focus on doing work that may be important? How can you help people or the planet? How can you increase the chances of the work having a positive impact?

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

The Imagination, Important Work And Impact Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

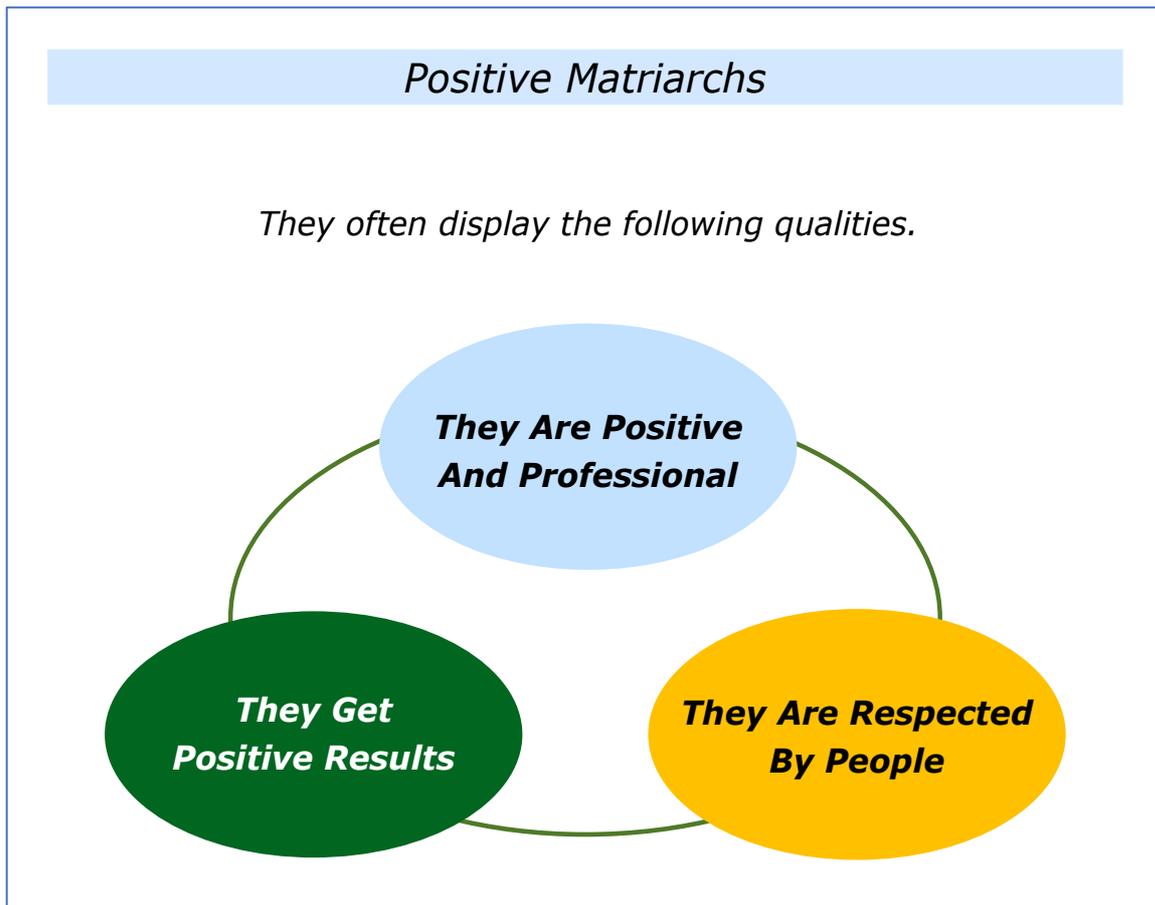
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

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 Clarifying What You Can And Can't Expect From A Culture Approach

<i>The Culture</i>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Can Expect</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The things I can expect from the culture are:</i></p> <p>* * * * *</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Can't Expect</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The things I can't expect from the culture are:</i></p> <p>* * * * *</p>

Many people do extensive research before joining an organisation. It is vital for them to enter with positive expectations but, at the same time, it can be good to do a reality check.

People can clarify what they can and can't expect in a particular culture. They then stand a better chance of building on the positives whilst also minimising the negatives. Imagine that you are about to join an organisation. It can be useful to consider the following steps.

You can clarify what you can and can't expect from the culture

Sometimes my work involves meeting with individuals who are applying for particular roles in organisations. Some of the discussion revolves

around how they can use their strengths to help the potential employers to achieve success.

At the same time, however, we explore the things they may experience in the culture. This involves lots of research and checking with people who are familiar with the organisation.

We often begin by explore what they can and can't expect from a culture. Here is the list we compiled when one person applied for a role in a particular company.

*Can Expect - The specific things
I can expect in the culture are:*

To work with good clients ... To have colleagues who are nice people – because people in the company are very 'civilised' ... To be paid reasonably well ... To work in a relatively modern environment.

To get little direction from the top ... To cope with 'decisions by committee' ... To spend lots of time on internal meetings ... To hit difficulties in a couple of years because the leaders are delaying the strategic decisions required to thrive in the market.

*Can't Expect - The specific things
I can't expect in the culture are:*

To get quick decisions ... To get immediate backing for the tough decisions I make about people ... To get lots of positive feedback – but that is okay providing I am left in peace to do my job.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to think about the culture in an organisation you may be considering joining. Alternatively, you can apply the approach to focusing on your present organisation.

Here is the exercise about what you can and can't expect in a particular culture. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

The Culture

The organisation I want to focus on is:

*

*Can Expect - The things I
can expect in the culture are:*

*

*

*

*

*

*Can't Expect - The things I
can't expect in the culture are:*

*

*

*

You can clarify how to build on to the positive things in the culture

The person mentioned earlier clarified the possibilities moving forwards. They expressed this in the following way.

"It helps to be clear on what I can and can't expect from both the organisation and my potential manager.

"In my twenties I got upset because the organisations I worked in did not always do what it said on the tin.

"Far from making me cynical, this kind of exercise provides the basis for seeing how I can do good work in the organisation."

Moving on, they clarified how they could build on the positive things in the culture. These included the following things.

Building On The Positive Things – I Can Aim:

To build on the other positive people in the organisation ... To quickly begin working with customers ... To align my aims with the aims of the business.

To manage my manager by describing the KPI's I will deliver ... To show how I will keep them informed ... To get satisfaction from helping customers ... To get some quick successes.

Let's return to your own work. Imagine that you are focusing on a particular culture. This could be the organisation that you work in at the moment or one that you may be considering joining.

What do you think may be the positive things in the culture? How can you build on these positive things? 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 Positive Things

*The positive things in
the culture may be:*

*

*

*

*The specific things I can do to build on
the positive things in the culture are:*

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

You can clarify how to minimise the potential negative things in the culture

The advice given to anybody who might be considering joining a team or organisation is to do their due diligence. It is to:

"Go in with your eyes wide open.

How to take this step? If possible, one approach is to talk with people who know the set-up and to ask the following questions.

What are the Dos and Don'ts for being successful in this culture? Can you give specific examples? What are the things I can and can't expect in the culture? What are the positive aspects? What are the possible negative aspects?

What is a particular manager's style? How do they behave? What are the things I can and can't expect from them? What are the things that people can do to work successfully with the manager?

Are there any other things I would know about the culture?

The person mentioned above did this research. One area of concern was getting backing for any tough decisions to be made about rebuilding the team. We explored how to position this during the interview.

They would start by reassuring the employer. Certainly they would deliver the team's contribution to the organisation's goals. They would also show how they would get some quick successes.

It would be important, however, to have team members who did their best to make this happen. If people didn't perform, she would recruit people who would deliver success.

Positive realism is a key to delivering peak performance. Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to approach a new culture – or to thrive in your present culture – by clarifying what you can and can't expect. You can

then build on the pluses and, if necessary, find ways to deal with any minuses.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to explore how you can deal with any possible negatives in a culture.

It is then up to you to decide whether the overall package – the pluses and minuses involved - is worth it. You can decide whether or not you want to contribute to that culture.

The Negative Things

The potential negative things in the culture may be:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to minimise these potential negative things are:

*

*

*

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

*

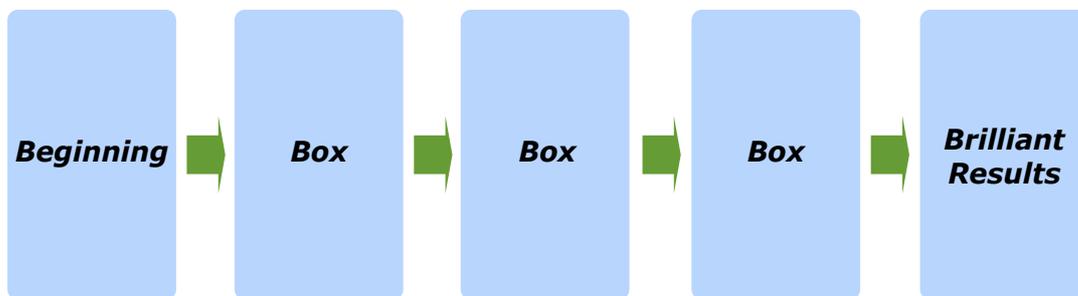
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The Box To Box Approach To Getting Brilliant Results

Moving From Box To Box

This approach involves beginning the journey and then defining it as moving from box to box on the way towards getting brilliant results.



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to begin the journey and define it as moving from box to box on the way towards getting brilliant results.

This is similar to the approach of chunking big jobs down into smaller parts. But it tends to focus more on the specific results to achieve in each box.

Some people follow this approach in other areas of life rather than just work. They may adapt it to following their life philosophy, helping other people or doing other activities.

Different people also follow this approach in different ways. Some take the following steps.

They begin by clarifying the results they want to achieve

They start by clarifying the destination. They may want to achieve certain results in their personal or professional life.

They may want to achieve these results in a certain time frame – such as in the next day, week or month. They want to achieve these over the course of a string of engagements, performances or other activities.

Bearing in mind the results they want to achieve, such people then move onto the next stage. This involves clarifying their action plan.

They plan the journey and break it down into boxes on the way towards achieving the goal

They plan ahead and map out the journey. They then break this down into various boxes on the way toward achieving the goal.

Different people do this in different ways. One person described how they planned their approach to delivering a day of work in London.

"I break it down into various boxes. The first box is driving to the station. The second is travelling down on the train.

"The third box is my first meeting with a client. The fourth is meeting with another client. The fifth is meeting with another client.

"The sixth box is returning on the train. The seventh box is driving home."

"This approach may seem very mechanical. But it helps me to break down the day into various slots on the way towards reaching my goals."

You will have your own way of clarifying the different boxes. This can then lead to the next step taken by people who follow this approach.

They aim to do their best in each box and then move from box to box on the way towards reaching the goal

Different people may aim to achieve different things in each box. Some may simply aim to enjoy the experience. Some may aim to encourage a person. Some may aim to be creative. Some may aim to do their best. Some may aim to do brilliant work.

Different people also have different ways of being positively engaged in each box. One person described their approach.

"I try to rest, relax and rehearse before going into each box. Looking ahead, I clarify the real results I want to achieve in the situation. I then rehearse the strategies I can follow to achieve these results.

"Moving into action, I aim to be fully present when doing the activity. This may mean helping another person, tackling a challenge or reaching a specific goal. I aim to do my best and finish properly in that box.

"Moving on, I take time to relax – even for a few seconds. Looking ahead, I rehearse what I want to do next and move onto that box. I repeat the process of going from box to box on the way towards achieve the goal."

You will have your own way of planning your day, week, month or a string of activities. It is important to follow the approach that works for you.

Imagine that you want to follow some elements of the box to box approach. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow this approach?

What may be the specific situation? How can you clarify the real results to achieve? How can you break down the journey into boxes on the way towards achieving the goal? How can you aim to do your best in each box?

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

The Box To Box 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 then 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 Best Contribution Approach



There are many models for doing fine work. One approach is to do what you do best, do the basics and then add the brilliance. Let's explore these themes.

You Can Do What You Do Best

Great workers do what they best. They also do what they believe in and then aim to do their best. Bearing this in mind, you may want to do a piece of work where you can do some of the following things.

You can build on your strengths – the activities where you have the ability to deliver As rather than Bs or Cs;

You can do work where you are in your element – the activities where you are at ease and yet able to excel;

You can do something you feel passionately about where you have the ability to deliver peak performances.

Belief is also crucial. It be important: a) to do work you believe in; b) to follow the principles you believe in. It is also important to believe in the benefits of doing the work.

Imagine that you have chosen to do a piece of work. The next step will be to do your best. This can involve focusing on the next theme.

You Can Keep Doing The Basics

Great workers keep doing the basics that are required to provide the platform for doing brilliant work. Such workers often take the following steps.

They clarify the real results to achieve and translate these into a clear picture of success;

They clarify the key strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success;

They keep delivering high standards on the way towards achieving the picture of success.

Great workers translate the strategies into action. They aim to be positive, professional and perform superb work. The steps they take to make this happen depend 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.

Imagine that you are continuing to do the basics when doing a piece of work. If appropriate, you may wish to take the next step.

You Can Add The Brilliance

Great workers sometimes add the brilliance. A footballer may use their skills to make a defence-splitting pass or score a remarkable goal. A surgeon may use their gifts to perform a life-saving operation in difficult circumstances.

Different people add the brilliance in their own ways. One approach is for them to keep delivering high standards. It is then to use their strengths to do something special to achieve the picture of success.

Great workers sometimes go beyond doing brilliant work. They may also aim to make it beautiful. There are many definitions of beauty. Some people follow the principles of great design.

They aim to create something that is simple, satisfying and successful. It is simple – but in a profound way. It is satisfying both an aesthetic and practical level. It is successful. It works and helps people to get positive results.

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine you want to do a piece of work where you follow elements of the best contribution approach. How can you do this in your own way?

How can you do what you do best? How can you do what you believe in? How can you do the basics and add the brilliance? If appropriate, how can you then make it beautiful?

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

The My Best Contribution Approach

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

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*The specific things I can do then
to what I do best, do the basics
and then add the brilliance are:*

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

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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



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.

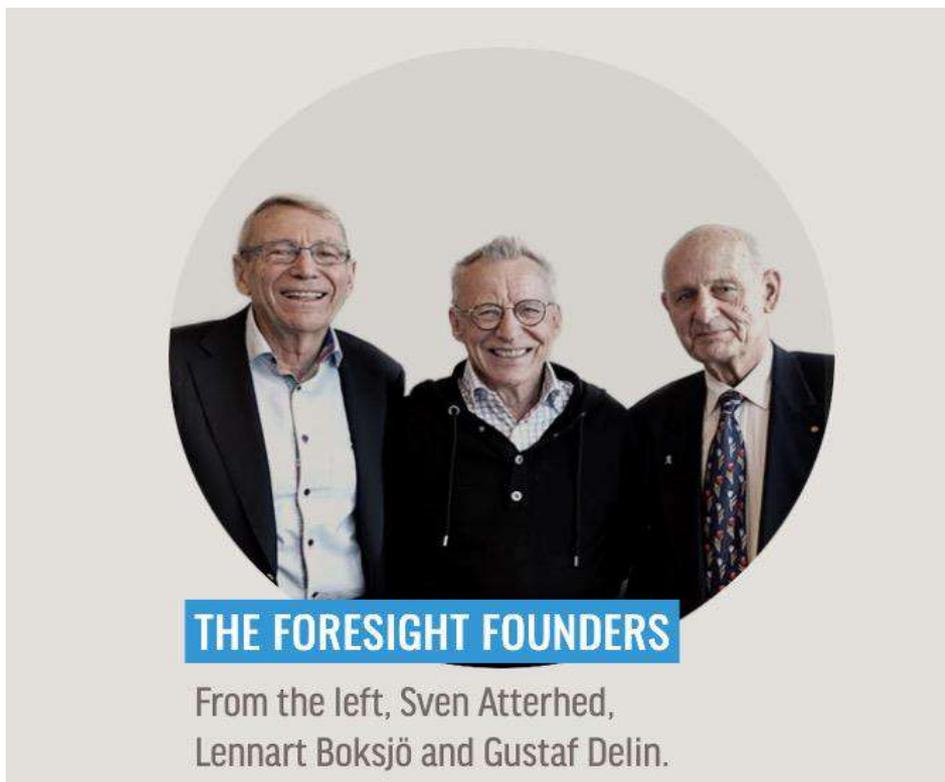
They set up the world's first school for intrapreneurs. This resulted in many people applying their creativity to get wins for their companies and for themselves. Here an introduction from the present company's website.

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.

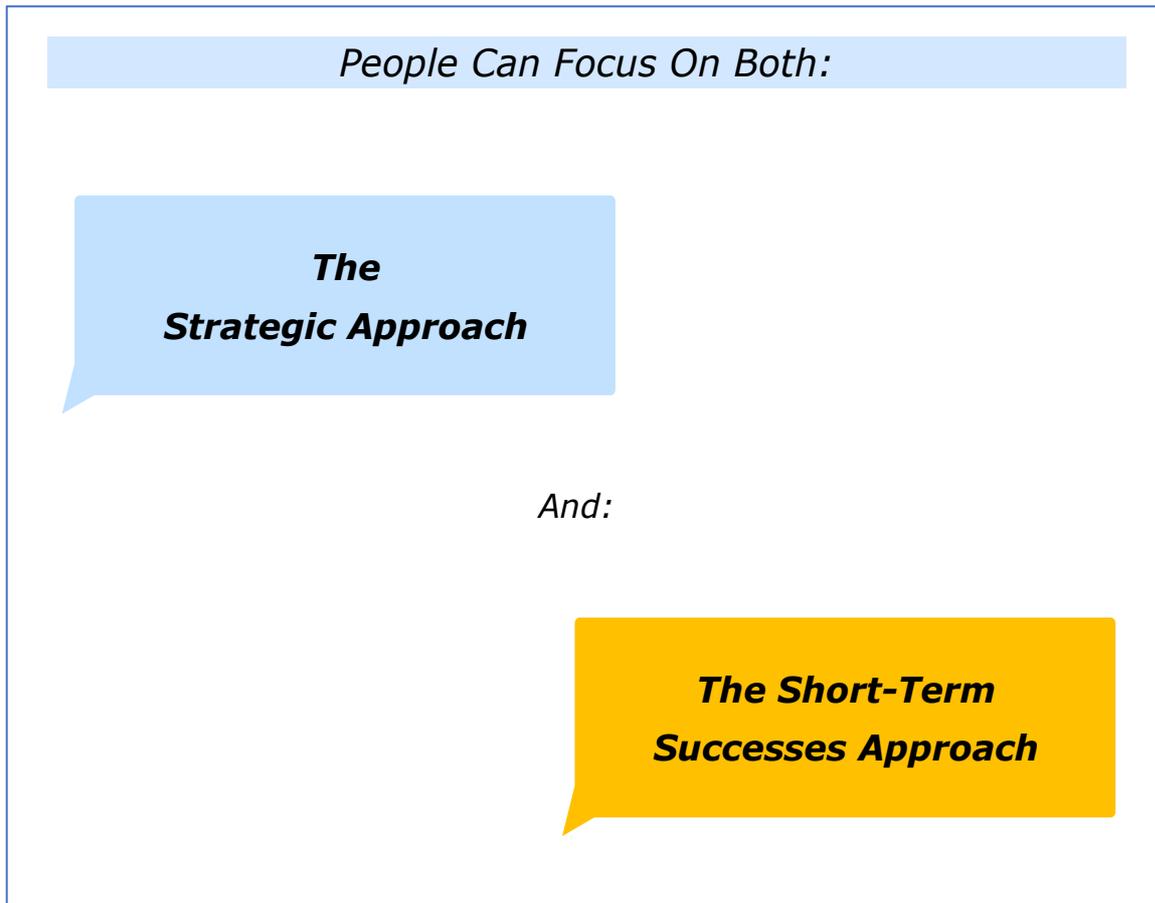
The ForeSight methodology helped companies to speed up the process of bringing new ventures, products and services to market and of implementing internal projects.

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 following pages explore many models for helping people, teams and organisations to grow. You will, of course, apply these in your own way.

The Strategic And Short-Term Successes Approach



Imagine that you have been asked to take a leadership role and turnaround an organisation. You have done your due diligence and believe it is possible to make this happen. Bearing this in mind, it will be important:

To clarify and communicate the strategy for achieving the picture of success;

To make clear contracts with people about their specific contributions towards achieving the picture of success;

To get some short-term successes and maintain momentum on the way towards achieving the picture of success.

Taking this approach can buy time. It can also create the space to ensure the organisation is following the right strategy with the right people in the right way.

Some organisations do so-called strategic reviews but fail to ask the real strategic questions and simply focus on changing the structure. One Premier League football club, for example, avoided relegation with one match remaining. The board then gave the following messages.

"We are going to do a strategic review ... We need to do a root and branch restructure of the club ... We must not be in this position again."

The so-called strategic review was done by the board - the people who had created the mess at the club. As a result, they decided:

To retain their own positions on the board ... To restructure many elements of the organisation below them ... To retain the head coach and their staff ... To hope they could survive by not getting the goal-scorers needed to win matches.

The review did not translate into success on the field. Six months later they again found themselves in the relegation places. Stung into action, they replaced the coaching staff.

Let's return to the theme of clarifying an organisation's strategy and then getting some short-term successes. We can begin by focusing on the following theme.

The Strategic Approach

Imagine that you have been invited to turnaround an organisation. Different leaders take different approaches when aiming to make this happen.

As mentioned earlier, the first step is to do their due diligence to make sure it is possible to achieve the desired goals. Some people then take the following steps.

They make clear contracts with the key stakeholders about the picture of success

They show they understand the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success. They show how they will get some quick successes and do their best to achieve the goals. They make clear contracts about the support required to achieve the picture of success.

They clarify the strategy for achieving the picture of success

They will have already clarified some elements of the strategy for achieving the goals. They will also have agreed with the stakeholders on the key principles to follow. Bearing these in mind, they will clarify the strategy they aim to pursue.

Different leaders clarify the strategy in different ways. One approach is for them to explore the following themes.



What

What are our goals? What the real results we want to achieve? Bearing in mind what we can control, what may it be possible to achieve? What is the picture of success? What will be happening that will show we have achieved the results?

Why

Why do we want to reach the goals? What will be the benefits for the various stakeholders? What will be the pluses? What may be any potential minuses? How can we build on the pluses and manage the consequences of any minuses?

How

How can we do our best to achieve the goals? What are the key strategies we can follow to give ourselves the greatest chance of success? How can we perform superb work? What are the kinds of support that people need to achieve the results?

Who

Who are the kinds of people we need to work towards the goals? What are the attitudes and abilities they need to demonstrate? How can we employ people with such strengths? How can we make clear contracts about their best contributions? How can we then coordinate their strengths to work towards the goals?

When

How can we translate the strategies into a clear action plan? What is the road map with the milestones along the way? How can we get some quick successes? How can we keep doing reality checks about what is working and what can be improved? How can we reach the goals and then add that touch of class?

They communicate the strategy and make clear contracts with people about their contributions to picture of success

Good leaders communicate the strategy and explain how to get some quick successes. They show how people can contribute to the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success.

They then give people time to decide if they want to contribute. If so, they make clear contracts with people about their contributions towards achieving the picture of success.

They encourage and enable people to work towards achieving the picture of success

They encourage people to follow the agreed principles and perform superb work. They manage by outcomes rather than by tasks. They educate people to focus on continuous improvement and do their best to achieve the picture of success.

The Short-Term Successes Approach

Good leaders keep communicating the strategy but also aim to get some quick successes. This helps to build momentum on the way towards achieving the picture of success. Let's look at one example.

The Premier League football club eventually reached a critical point. At that juncture they decided to appoint a head coach who had a record of turning around clubs.

The head coach make clear contracts with the board about: a) the outcomes to be delivered; b) the strategies to follow; c) the support required to deliver the goods. They also had the autonomy required to make this happen.

The head coach communicated the overall strategy to all the key people in the club. They then aimed to get some short-term successes both on and off the field.

The players welcomed this approach. They felt more comfortable following a consistent strategy rather being subject to constant changes. Bearing this in mind, the coaching staff encouraged the players:

To follow a clear game plan – this involved playing to their strengths and getting the basics right;

To prepare properly for games – this involved giving 100% in training and practicing following the strategies when under pressure;

To have a positive mentality – this involved focusing on improving their performance rather than worrying about results.

The head coach believed that the squad had certain strengths. They also recognised that most of the goals would need to come from set pieces – corners or free kicks – plus some from midfield. They encouraged the players to follow a certain game plan. This involved aiming:

To build from a solid base – a strong defence;

To maximise the opportunities to score from set pieces and midfield;

To stay calm in situations whilst also doing their best.

The approach resulted in the team winning their first game – which was against the league leaders. There were then several ups-and-downs but the team aimed to continue to follow the agreed principles.

The Premier League team managed to avoid relegation by winning on the final day. The head coach then expressed the view that, whilst this was a relief, the next months should involve continuing to focus on and evolve the strategic plan.

Let's return to your own work. Can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the strategic and short-term successes approach? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

The Strategic And Short-Term Successes 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 then to follow
this approach in my own way may be:*

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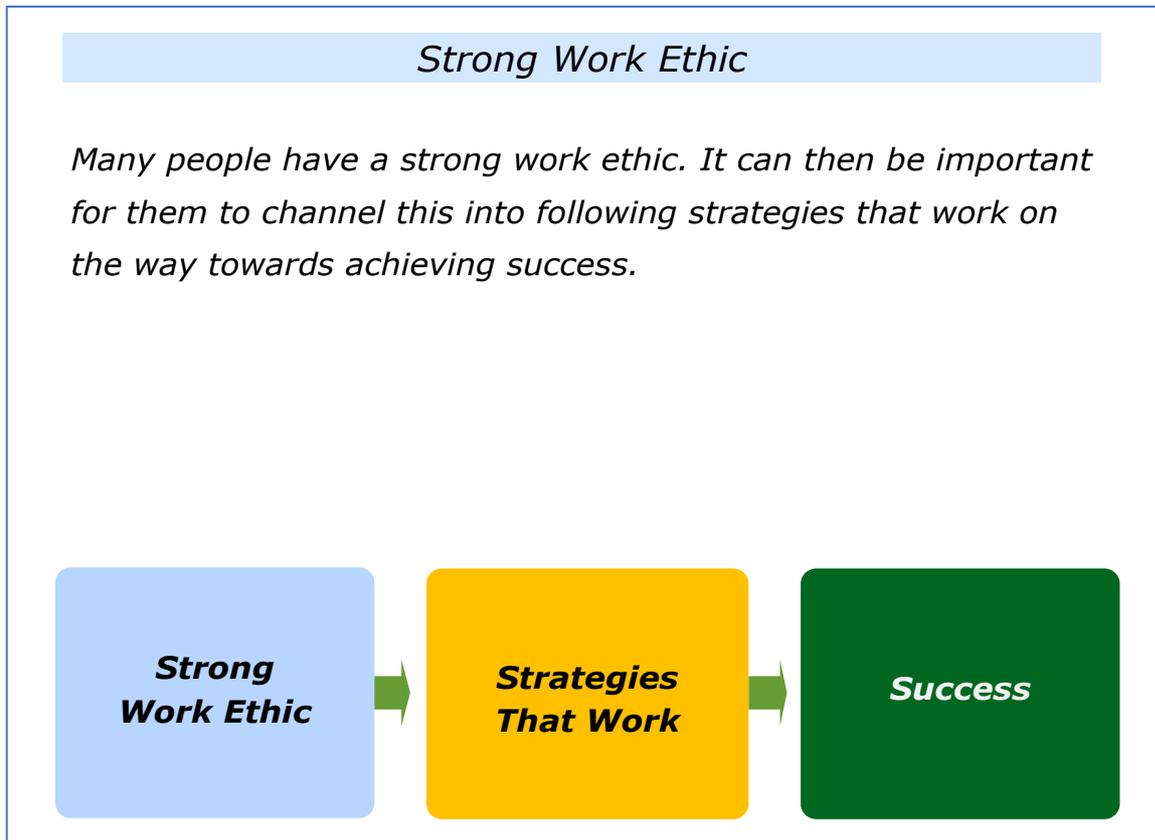
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Strong Work Ethic Approach



Many people have a strong work ethic. It can be important for them to channel this into following strategies that work. They can then do their best to achieve success.

The strategies part is vital. Some people have a strong work ethic but do not follow such strategies. This can lead to them feeling tired or not reaching their goals. Let's explore these themes.

Strong Work Ethic

Different people develop such an ethic in different ways. These may include the following approaches.

The Strengths Approach

Some people develop a strong work ethic as the result of playing to their strengths. They aim to do what they do best and do their best. Here are some things that people mention when describing this approach.

"My parents taught me to follow my passion but also put in the effort required to do good work. This is a rule that I have tried to follow in my life."

"I was encouraged play to my strengths and aim to do superb work. The work I do sometimes feels like play. But it is serious play that aims to get positive results."

The Satisfying Work Approach

Some people develop a strong work ethic as the result of doing satisfying work. Here are some things that people mention when describing this approach.

"I love to do work that it is satisfying. People say that I work hard but I do not seem to notice it. Sometimes I can work for hours and the time just flies away."

"I look forward to doing my work each day. Since my early twenties I have followed the rule that 'work is something you do rather than a place you go to'. And I am lucky to get paid for doing satisfying work."

The Sweat Approach

Some people develop a strong work ethic by aiming to sweat. There are, however, different kinds of sweat.

Some people focus on positive sweat. They may do what they enjoy, apply themselves fully and work to achieve their picture of success. They may feel tired afterwards but this is a positive exhaustion.

Some people focus on painful sweat. They may do something they endure, strain themselves and work to achieve a goal that others say will help them to achieve success. They may experience negative exhaustion.

Some people develop a strong work ethic by combining elements of these approaches. They may build on their strengths, do satisfying work and be prepared to sweat. This may also involve focusing on the next step.

Strategies That Work

Many people have a strong work ethic but sometimes need to channel this in an effective way to achieve success. Some people believe that sweat will be enough to deliver the goods but this does not always work. Some people take another approach.

They clarify their picture of success;

They clarify the strategies most likely to achieve the picture of success;

They follow the strategies most likely to achieve the picture of success.

Different people follow these steps in different ways. Bearing in mind their strengths and specific situation, they often explore the following themes.

What are the real results I want to achieve? What are the key strategies I can follow to increase the chances of success? How can I translate these into action?

The following section describes how one person aimed to follow the strategies most likely to work for them. Other people would probably follow other approaches.

Anna had a strong work ethic and wanted to do more satisfying work. Her eventual aim was to follow the human resources path and support people in organisations. She was introduced to me by her father who described her in the following way.

"Anna is a great worker. She is a practical person rather than an academic and got a weekend job at the earliest opportunity. She then took the route of working in shops rather than going to university. Nor did she want to incur £50,000 of student debt.

"Now in her early twenties, Anna wants to work in hospitality. She sees this as a way of having more contact with people. At a certain point, however, she also wants to move into HR. Have you any clients who may be able to help?"

Anna was good with people and also able to organise things. She also wanted to develop and, at some point, begin part-time study in the HR field. Some traditional companies in the hospitality field may or may not provide such opportunities.

Bearing in mind Anna's strengths, we explored the strategies she could follow towards achieving her aims. It would be important to find a place where she could demonstrate her work ethic and also shine.

This led to me contacting the Managing Director of an events company that had a superb service ethic. Would she be willing to have an informal meeting with Anna? The meeting went ahead and, one week later, the MD sent the following message.

"Anna would certainly fit here for helping to host some of our events. I have offered her the opportunity to assist on a forthcoming event for one of our clients. She really wants to do this and will be using five days of her annual holiday to work on the event."

The event led to Anna being offered a permanent role. She took it immediately – even though it involved getting up each day at 5.30 to commute into London.

She worked with the events company for the next three years. This provided a great grounding in the service business. She also gained some initial qualifications in the HR field.

The company supported Anna in these ventures. It also encouraged her to apply the knowledge in the different roles she did during her three years with them. She then moved on to the next stage of her career.

Anna got a job working in the HR department of a hotel chain whose headquarters was closer to her home. Within twelve months she was promoted to become an HR Partner to practitioners in the business. She also continued to gather qualifications in the field.

Two years later she moved to a key HR role in another company. The head of HR liked Anna's work ethic, pragmatism and ability to find solutions to problems.

Anna followed strategies that worked for her. Bearing in mind her strengths, it made sense for her to start from the ground up. She then developed the savvy required to provide great service and also help people to succeed.

Different people will follow different strategies. Bearing in mind their specific situation, the key is to follow the strategies most likely to achieve success. It is then to focus on the next theme.

Success

People who have a strong work ethic believe in applying themselves fully to following strategies that work. They often have a certain attitude:

They believe in the philosophy of earning things ... They don't believe in the philosophy of entitlement.

Such people aim to do superb work and focus on continuous improvement. They aim: a) to keep building on what is working; b) to keep tackling areas for improvement. They also enjoy finding solutions to challenges.

There are many ways to do fine work. Some people have a strong work ethic, follow strategies that work and apply themselves in a way that involves positive sweat. They then do their best to 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 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 Strong Work Ethic 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 then 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 Choosing To Tackle A Challenge Approach

The Challenge

There are many ways to tackle challenges. One approach is to go through the following steps.

- *You can choose to tackle the challenge;*

- *You can focus on clarity, consistency and creativity when tackling the challenge;*

- *You can aim to achieve the desired concrete results when tackling the challenge.*

Looking back, when have you chosen to tackle a challenge? You may have chosen to improve your health, climb a mountain, write a book, lead a team, transform an organisation or solve a particular problem.

What motivated you to tackle the challenge? What did you see as the pluses and minuses involved? How did you do your research and due diligence? What did you then do to commit yourself?

Embarking on the work, what did you do to focus on clarity – the real results to achieve? How did you consistently deliver high standards and, when appropriate, add creativity? What did you do to do your best to deliver the desired concrete results?

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

Choosing To Tackle A Challenge In The Past

The specific challenge I chose to tackle in the past was:

*

The specific things I did then to do my best to tackle the challenge successfully were:

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*

*

The specific things that happened as a result were:

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*

There are many ways tackle a challenge. The following section describes one approach. If appropriate, you may follow elements of this in your own way.

You Can Choose To Tackle The Challenge

Some people say they like to be challenged but this may not always be the case. There may be some challenges they find stimulating but there may be others they find debilitating.

The difference involves a person's level of control. People like to feel they are choosing to tackle a particular challenge. There are many times, however, when life produces its own challenges.

A person can then choose to tackle the problem or ignore it. They may choose to take responsibility for tackling it, however, because the consequences of not tackling it may be more damaging.

Let's relate to this to your own life and work. Looking ahead, you may choose to tackle a specific challenge because:

You believe that tackling the challenge will be stimulating ... Or ... You believe that not tackling the challenge will cause problems.

Imagine that you are considering tackling a challenge. You may spend some time gathering information, reflecting and rehearsing doing the work. It will also be important to clarify the pluses and minuses involved in working to achieve the goals.

At some point, you may cross an emotional line where you commit to tackling the challenge. It will then be time to move on to the next stage.

You Can Focus On Clarity, Consistency And Creativity When Tackling The Challenge

Imagine that you have embarked on the challenge. You may be writing an article, doing a keynote speech, leading a mountaineering team, operating on a patient or doing another activity.

There are many models for doing your best to tackle the challenge successfully. One approach is to work through the following steps.

You can focus on clarity. This involves aiming: a) to clarify real results you want to achieve; b) to clarify the key strategies you can follow to tackle the challenge successfully.

If you are leading a mountaineering team, for example, your aim may be enable people:

To get up and down the mountain safely;

To set specific goals, work as a team and follow certain strategies when climbing the mountain;

To enjoy the experience, develop their mountaineering skills and have a positive memory for life.

Imagine that you are crystal clear on the goals you want to achieve when tackling your chosen challenge. It will then be time to embark on the journey.

Great workers aim to deliver consistently high standards. Some individuals show flashes of talent early in their careers but their performance can vary.

Some continue to improve, however, and develop a high level of consistency. Those that do so often demonstrate the following characteristics:

They care deeply about the work and clarify their specific goals;

They concentrate fully before doing the work, rehearse pursuing their strategies and clarify how to manage any difficulties;

They maintain consistently high standards, focus on continuous improvement and apply their creativity to find solutions to problems.

Imagine that you are following these principles in your own way. It may then be time to move on to the next step.

*You Can Aim To Achieve The
Desired Concrete Results
When Tackling The Challenge*

How will you know when you have achieved success? Much will depend on the kind of challenge you are tackling and the results you want to achieve.

If appropriate, you can complete the following framework. You can then do your best to achieve the desired results.

The Challenge

The specific challenge I want to tackle is:

*

*The specific results I want to
achieve when tackling this challenge are:*

*

*

*

*The specific things I can do to do
my best to achieve these results are:*

*

*

*

The specific things that will be happening that will show I have achieved the desired results will be:

*

*

*

There will be times during the journey when you need to rest, reflect and rehearse what you are going to do next. You can then do your best to achieve the desired results.

Let's return to your life and work. Looking ahead, what may be a challenge you want to tackle? This could be in your personal or professional life.

How can you follow elements of the principles we have explored? How can you do this 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 steps.

Choosing A Tackle A Challenge In The Future

*The specific challenge I may
choose to tackle in the future may be:*

*

*The specific things I can do then to do
my best to tackle the challenge are:*

*

*

*

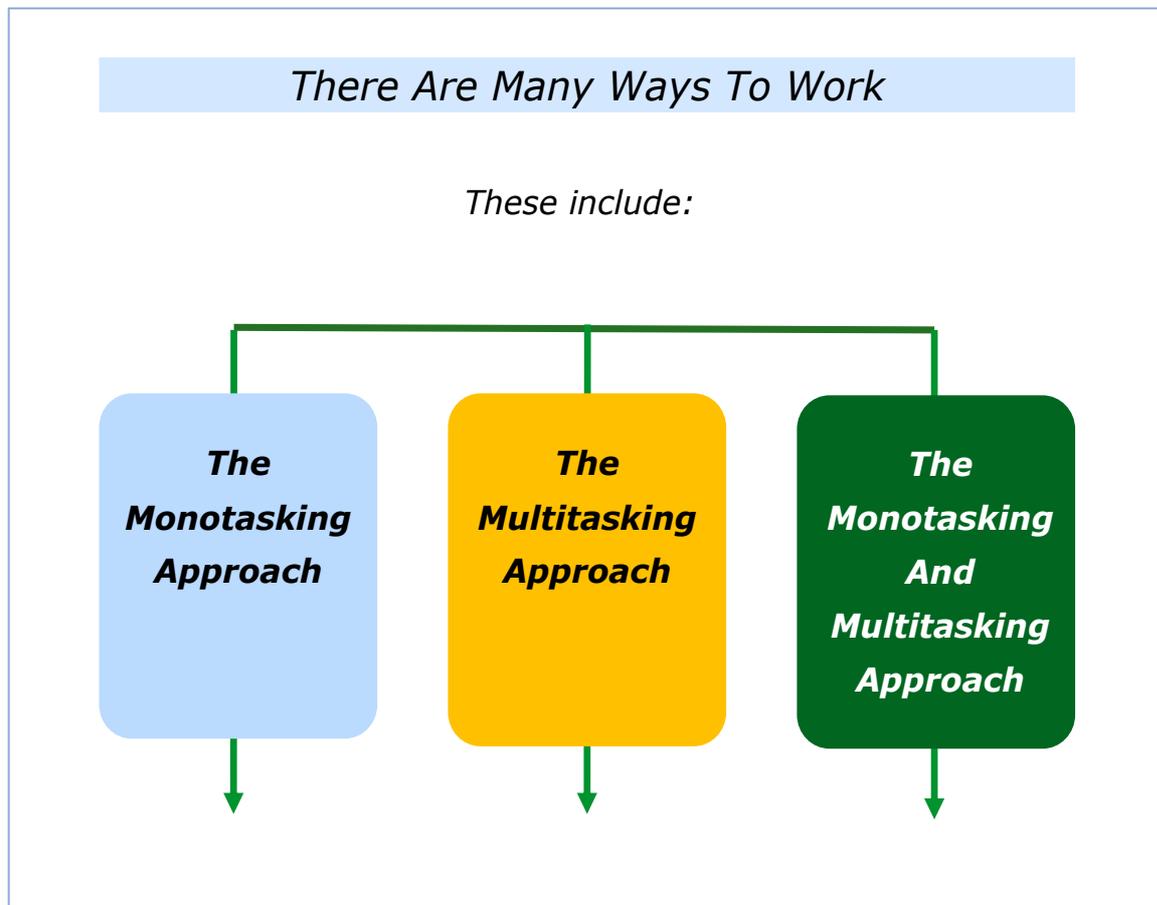
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

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. You can then 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:

*

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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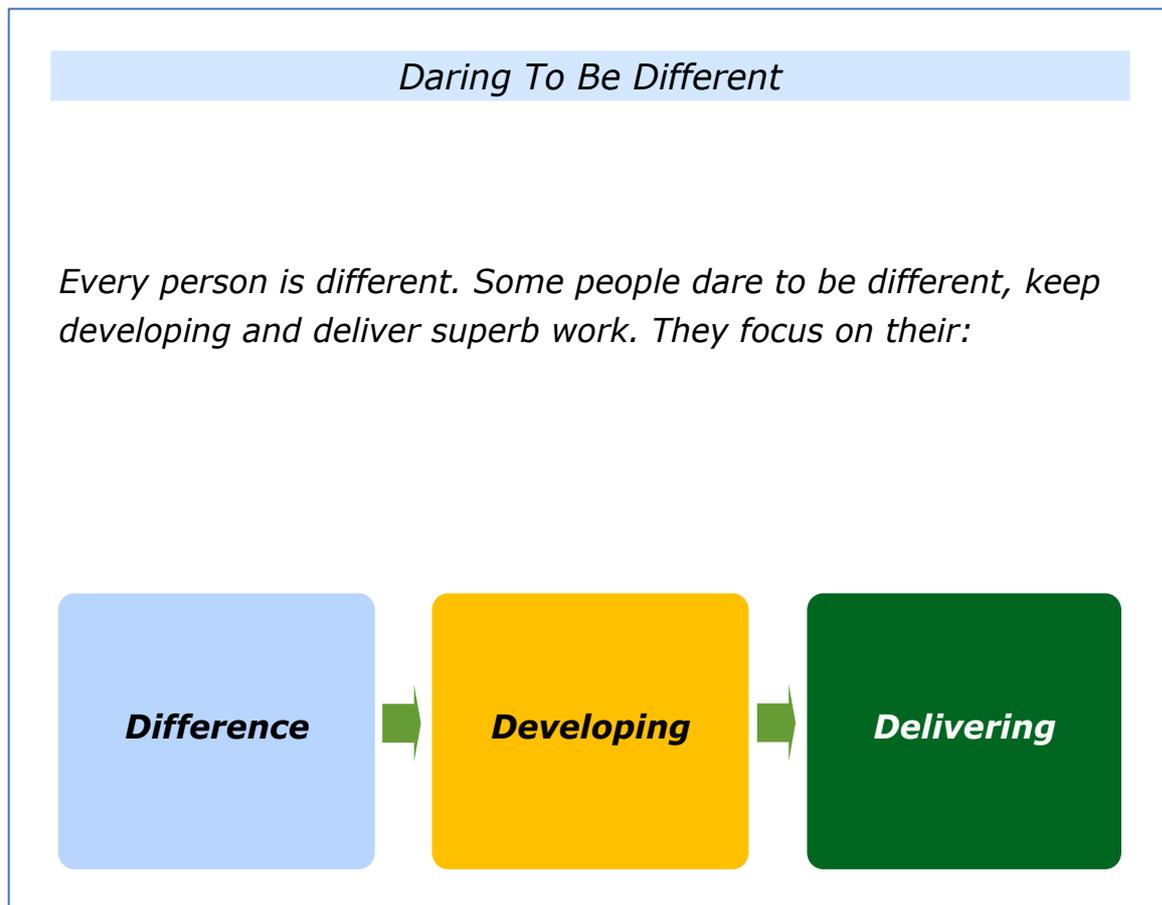
The specific things I can do to encourage myself when taking this approach are:

*

*

*

The Daring To Be Different Approach



Every person is different. They have different feelings, strengths and perceptions. The key is knowing how to manage their differences in a positive way.

Some individuals take the following steps to make this happen. They dare to be different, keep developing and, when appropriate, deliver the goods.

Imagine that you want to take these steps in your own way. This can involve focusing on the following themes.

Daring To Be Different

You may be similar to most people in many ways. Most people want to be healthy, hopeful and happy. They want to be fulfilled in their personal and

professional lives. You may share some of these similarities with other people.

You may also be different to people in other ways. Every person has their own feelings, perceptions and strengths. They also have different styles of living, learning and working towards their goals.

Some people may be different in ways that are accepted, encouraged and understood. They may also use their differences to do superb work that is recognised and even lauded.

Some may be different in ways that are not always understood. They may experience dyslexia, autism, ADHD, Bipolar extremes or other personality traits.

Some people learn to manage these characteristics. They learn to channel their personalities rather than change their personalities. They may also apply their uniqueness to do outstanding work.

Some people who feel different are given support. They are encouraged to focus on what they can do rather than what they can't do. This can help them use their strengths to achieve success.

Some who feel different are shunned or not understood. Some may be given labels that define them for life. Some may experience difficulties when forced to learn or work in ways that do not recognise how their brains function.

Let's return to your own life. What are the ways in which you may be similar to other people? What are the ways in which you may be different from other people?

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

Daring To Be Different

Similarities. The ways in which I may be similar to other people may be:

*

*

*

*

*

Differences. The ways in which I may to be different from other people may be:

*

*

*

*

*

Developing

People who recognise they are different may choose to keep developing. This sometimes calls for finding ways:

To build on their strengths ... To keep developing as a person or as a professional ... To manage the consequences of any weaknesses

Today there is more recognition that people who seem to be different have certain strengths. Here are some of these characteristics.

People With Dyslexia: They may be good problem solvers, creative, resilient, observant, empathetic, good at making connections and seeing the big picture.

People With ADHD: They may be energetic, spontaneous, proactive, inventive, driven, hyper-focused, good at leading and continually wanting to improve.

People With Autism: They may have attention to detail, good memories, mathematical and technical skills, be honest and great ability in niche activities.

People With Bipolar Characteristics: They may be strong in the areas of insight, empathy, creativity, spirituality, tenacity and learning how to manage their emotions.

People Who Are Late Developers: They may not be good at school but shape their own careers by being driven, resilient, disciplined, lifelong learners and wanting to improve.

Let's return to your own life. What are the ways in which you may be able: a) to build on your strengths; b) to keep developing; c) to manage the consequences of any weaknesses?

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

Developing

The specific strengths I may have are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to build on these strengths and keep developing are:

*

*

The specific things I can do to manage the consequences of any weaknesses are:

*

*

*

Delivering

People who are different sometimes do outstanding work. They may apply their strengths as artists, designers, innovators, entrepreneurs, athletes or in other fields.

Some individuals who take this approach become well-known. These include Stephen Fry, Greta Thornburg, Albert Einstein, Cher, Pablo Picasso, Muhammad Ali, Steve Jobs, Lewis Hamilton, Jamie Oliver, Hans Rosling, Whoopi Goldberg and many others.

Some people who dare to be different are less well-known but may aim to do superb work. Bearing in mind their strengths, such individuals sometimes take the following approach.

They focus on a specific activity they find fascinating, translate this into a specific piece of work they want to do and clarify their picture of success;

They follow their successful style of operating, perform superb work and find solutions to challenges;

They encourage themselves on the journey, keep developing their work and do their best to achieve the picture of success.

Let's return to your own life. When appropriate, how can you keep building on your strengths and dare to be different? How can you translate this into doing a specific of work?

How can you do superb work? How can you keep developing and improving the work? How can you do your best to deliver the goods? What may be the benefits of achieving the desired results?

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

Delivering

Bearing in mind my strengths, the specific piece of work I would like to deliver is:

*

The specific things I can do to do my best to deliver the piece of work are:

*

*

*

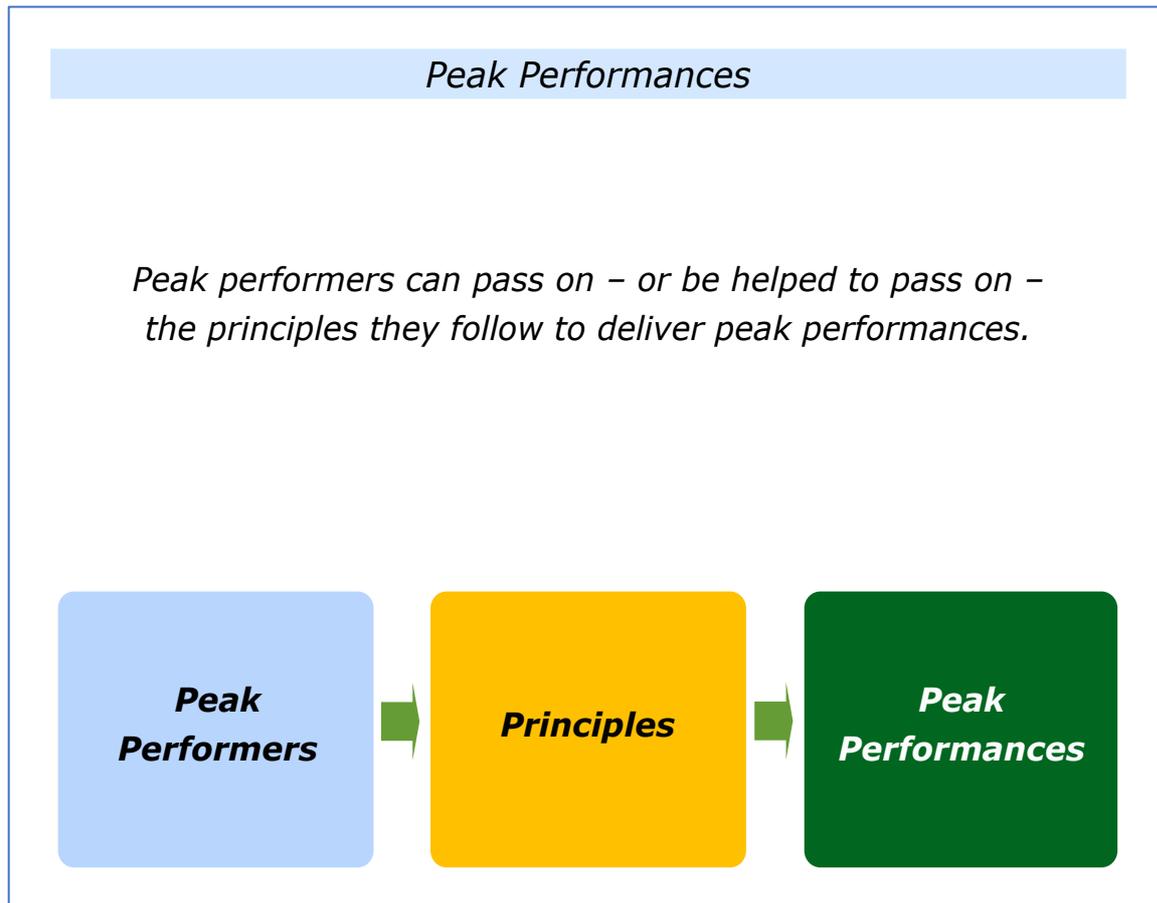
The specific benefits of delivering the piece of work may be:

*

*

*

The Peak Performers Passing On Principles For Achieving Peak Performance Approach



Peak performers can pass on – or be helped to pass on - the principles they follow in their work. They can share this knowledge in a way that enables other people to deliver peak performances.

Some people may do this by playing to their strengths. They may act as positive models, leaders or coaches. They may give keynote speeches, write books, make films or use other media.

During the past fifty years I have been helped to learn from many peak performers. Sometimes this involved studying them. Sometimes it involved watching them in action or working with such people.

Some peak performers find it easy to pass on the principles they follow to do fine work. Some may invite others to help them to translate what they do in ways that help others to achieve peak performance.

Much of my own work has involved translating what such people do to perform superb work. It has been to study what works, simplify what works – hopefully in a profound way – and share what works.

Imagine that a peak performer wants to pass on the principles they follow. They may want: a) to clarify this knowledge themselves or; b) to get help to translate what they do to perform fine work.

How to take this step? One approach is for the person to revisit their positive history and recall when they performed superb work. They can then focus on the following themes.

Passing On The Principles

The peak performer can revisit their positive history and recall when they performed superb work. They can clarify what they did right then and aim:

- *To clarify the principles they followed - and how they translated these into action - to achieve peak performance;*
- *To clarify how to package these principles – such as by providing positive models and practical tools - to help other people to achieve peak performance;*
- *To clarify how they can play to their strengths when passing on these principles and help people to achieve peak performance.*

Trevor Mumby is somebody who has taken this approach. The Mumby family organisation provides positive care for people as they get older. This includes specialist help for people experiencing dementia.

I first met Trevor in 1968 when I was working in a therapeutic community where he educated many of the staff. We went different ways before

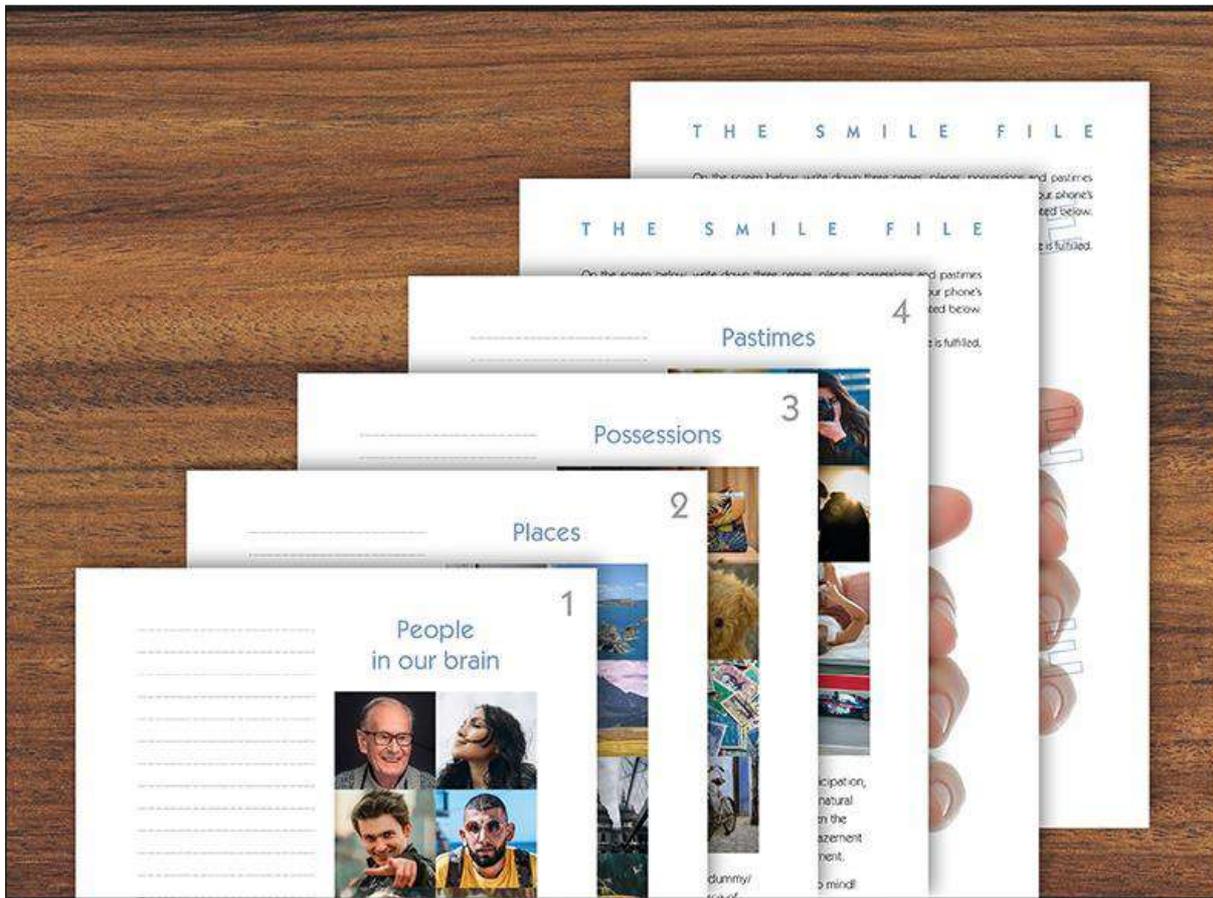
reconnecting some 50 years later. He had gone on to found Mumby Homes and Homecare Support.



Trevor passes on knowledge through seminars, education and books. He has also created a specific programme called The SMILE File that helps carers to invoke happy feelings within people. Here is the description.

The Smile File is a tool which aims to help those supporting elderly people, by triggering neurological reflexes and bringing back positive memories.

Developed by Trevor Mumby, the Smile File focuses on collecting information about "4 P's": People, Places, Possessions, and Pastimes. It then invites the carers to make a list of the things that are bringing a smile on the faces of the people they support.



The Smile File – Some Background

Memory loss in old age is NOT about an accumulation of damaged cells but, that cells lose their ability to retain information.

By using a process called "cellular processing", they revitalized cells. They proved that the cure for the aging process is not about repairing damaged cells, but rebooting existing ones.

Supported by undeniable scientific proof, the Smile File taps into the enduring memory of cells. Although unrelated to the existing Harvard procedures, this technique is rooted in Sigmund Freud's Free Association theory, gently encouraging unfiltered expression to address hidden distress.

Sigmund Freud's theory of Free Association is a method of psychoanalysis that involves encouraging the patient to speak freely and without censorship about their thoughts, emotions, and experiences.

The Smile File simplifies the same concept, focusing on four areas of observation, which when sensitively approached, cause a spontaneous facial expression of pleasure. They are People, Places, Pastimes, and Possessions (the Four 'P's).

A Guide to Using the Smile File

Employ astute observation and validate its efficacy by trying it with a friend. Free association requires you to let the cared-for person freely express whatever is coming to their minds at ANY time:

You are not interrupting, contradicting, or offering your own opinions. You are providing pleasant smiling responses and approval. Use this opportunity "nonchalantly".

You do not appear to be snooping. The time is pleasant and both you and the cared-for person will have enjoyed it. The fact that this process results in instant pleasurable feelings becomes obvious to anyone within sight of the person involved.

There is a spontaneous facial expression of pleasant surprise and an outflowing of animated conversation related to what has been revitalised. It confirms the scientific evidence that "cellular processing" is working.

Remarkably, this response will occur each time a subject from the four 'p's is visited. To the elderly depressed and withdrawn person, the Smile File presents an escape from their gloom.

1

People in our brain



All you have to do is float freely through your life from the earliest days and write on the list any name which 'pops' up. Don't judge. Just let the name arrive and write it down.

There is no hurry! give yourself a couple of days. It is surprising how people from our past pop into our mind. There are 24 lines to fill in.

Please press hard enough on each line for the name to appear on the sheet attached.

"When we escape the grip of our conditioned selves, it brings great pleasure into our daily lives. There is a beautiful natural flow in all of us and we avoid the destructive moods flooding through society"

2

Places



Google uses millions of computers across the Earth to gather information. We have also been receiving trillions of influences from every location we have ever occupied.

Their impact is in our neural network and can be gathered in the same way a computer gathers data from millions of other computers. Write on the list any place which 'pops up.'

"A single human brain has more switches than all the computers and routers and internet connections on Earth"

3

Possessions



Every object from our first dummy/ pacifier has been the source of some feelings, many associated with those that oral pleasures provided.

Your possessions will range from the five senses they stimulated: taste, touch, colour, sound and physical stimulus.

"The distinction between the past, present and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion"

4

Pastimes



Movement, exploration, participation, observation or all primary natural activities which have been the source of pleasure, fear, amazement excitement and achievement.

Schoolyard games come to mind!

"When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change"

An expert using Smile File will be able to surface at least a dozen moments when the cared-for person spontaneously reacts with pleasure from the people, places, pastimes, and possessions which have been revealed.

*It is vital that these responses which are without any doubt, caused by the cellular processing reaction, are **written and placed in a highly visible location** where everyone who is in close contact can use them as revitalisers.*

In fact, The Smile File is designed to be displayed on your fridge, with the help of a customised magnet.

It is a process which requires a thoughtful, sensitive, and intelligent approach. No one should assume that it is about stimulating memories.

It is free-floating where questions are rarely used. Wait for something to arise which seems to lift feelings. Engage in conversation, avoiding judgments, opinions, and interrupting.

Spotting the rises and expressions which would indicate a pleasant feeling has been touched, sensitively and reaffirming them. It is an on-going process which can arise at any time.

You are not trying to get them to remember things. You are simply revitalising happy memories and trying to evoke a smile. You are not counselling them. You are just discussing their lives with them.

All you need to do is to explore with them any of the Four Ps. You will see their face will respond to something that has evoked feelings in them.

You can see what gives them happiness write it down and put it on the fridge door. When appropriate, you can mention to the person one of the things you see on the fridge. You will often see it brings a smile.

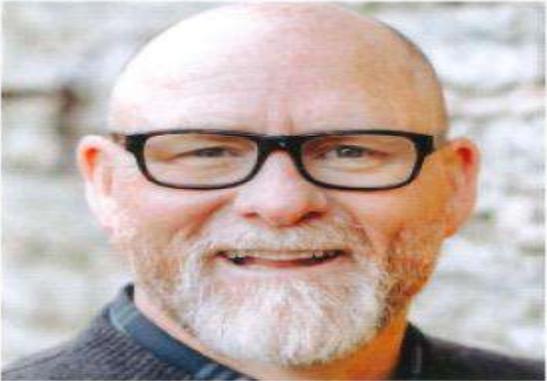
T H E S M I L E F I L E



Please remember:
This is a neurological reflex of our brain, NOT some gimmicky trick.

We now know through worldwide neuroscientific research how to restimulate the happiness we have experienced from our earliest years. **It works!**

The Smile File is an invaluable tool for anyone visiting elderly people because mentioning words off the fridge will make greeting them more of a pleasure because now they will invariably smile back.



Trevor is one of many people who share the principles people can follow to do fine work. Charles Garfield described some of these in his book *Peak Performers*. Brené Brown highlighted how people could aim to be their true selves in her book *Daring Greatly*.

There are also many models for doing great work. One approach is for a person to focus on a specific activity where they have the ability to do such work. It is then for them to aim:

To do their personal best ... To follow certain principles ... To deliver peak performances.

Imagine that you want to pass on knowledge about this topic. One approach is to take the following steps. You can study a person – or a group of people – who deliver such work. You can then aim:

To clarify what they do right - the principles they follow – to deliver peak performances;

To clarify how you can translate these principles into positive models and practical tools that other people can use to deliver peak performances;

To clarify how you can communicate these ideas to people in a way they can use to achieve peak performances.

Imagine that you want to share this information. One approach is to use the *What, Who, Why, How* and *When* model that is described in the following pages.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements this approach? You may want to follow this framework to write an article, run a workshop, teach a class or use another media.

Who may be the people you want to reach? What may be the challenges that such people face? What may be the goals they want to achieve? How can you pass on this knowledge in a way that helps people? When do you want to take this step?

If you wish, take a look at the following framework. If appropriate, you can then adapt this in your own way to pass on the principles that people can follow to achieve peak performance.

Passing On Knowledge About Peak Performance

There are many ways to pass on knowledge to people. One approach is to focus on the What, Who, Why, How and When. This involves exploring the following themes.

What

What is the knowledge about peak performance that I want to pass on to people? What may be the principles, positive models and practical tools that I may want to pass on to them?

Who

Who are the people I would like to reach? What are the kinds of work they do? What is happening in their world? What are the challenges they face? What may be the goals they want to achieve?

Why

What are reasons why I would like to pass on this knowledge? What would be the benefits for people? How may it help them to tackle their challenges and reach their goals?

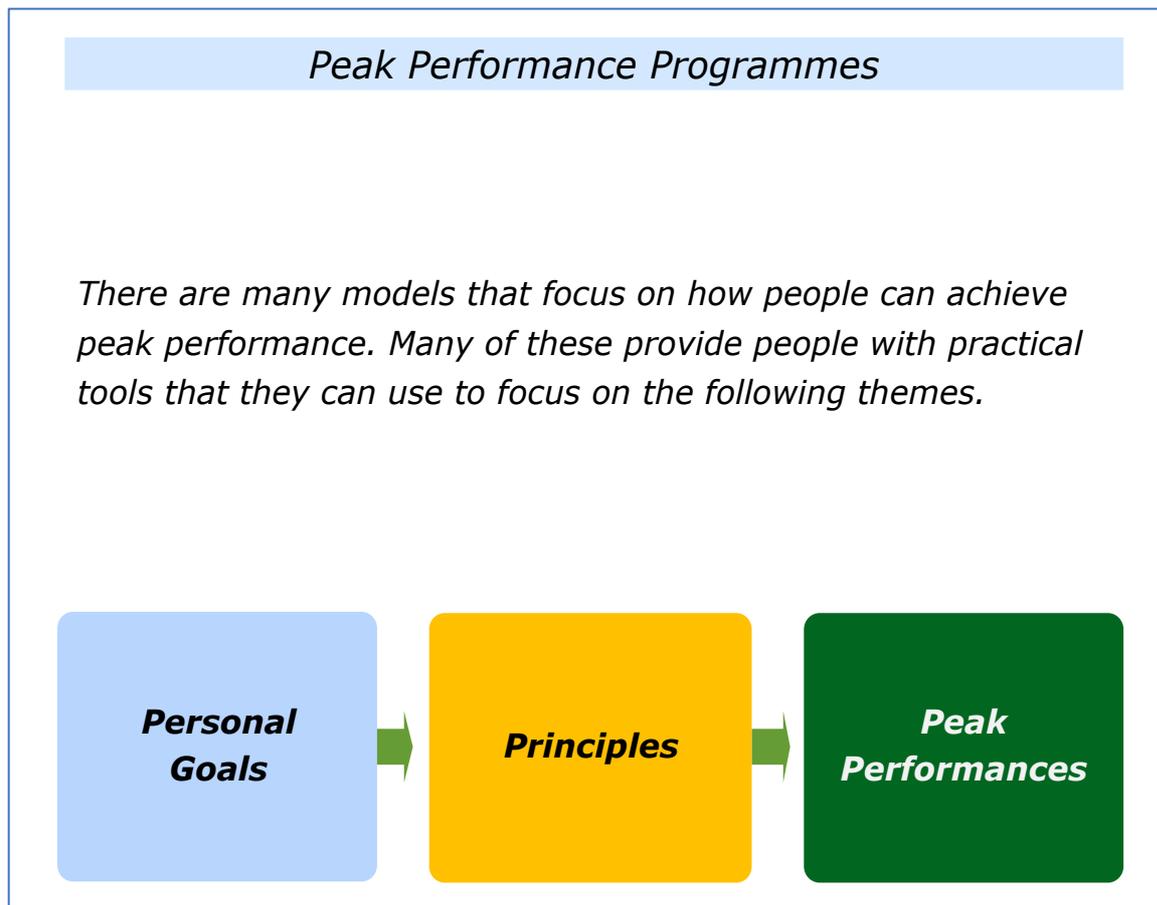
How

How can I play to my strengths when passing on the knowledge? Do I want to act as a mentor, coach or educator? Do I want to write articles, create websites, make videos or use other media?

When

When do I want to pass on this knowledge? How can I bring it to life by giving examples that resonate with people? What are the actual things I would like people to be saying after the session?

The Peak Performance Programmes Approaches



During the past fifty years there have been many books and programmes that focus on how people can achieve peak performance. Whilst each of these tend to emphasise their own approach, many of them provide practical tools on the following themes.

Personal Goals

This involves focusing on a person's goals – these can be both their personal and professional goals.

Principles

This involves focusing on the principles a person can follow – and how they can translate these into practice – to achieve their goals.

Peak Performances

This involves focusing on how a person can do their best to deliver peak performances on their way towards achieving their goals.

Some programmes also focus on how teams and organisations can translate these themes into action. They then provide tools that people can use coordinate their talents to achieve peak performance.

The Modern Interest In Peak Performance

Much of the modern interest in peak performance stems from the work done by people in sports, business and other fields. As we will see later, however, many of these principles have been followed by people throughout history.

*Charles Garfield inspired people to pursue these themes. Writing in his 1986 book *Peak Performers* 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 goal. 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 deliver 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:

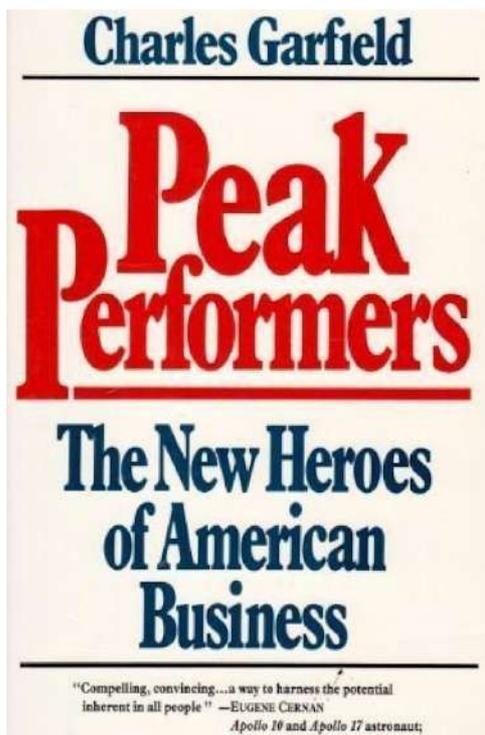
"Staying alive these days is my peak performance."

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.'



People want to feel proud of themselves, to achieve something, to leave a mark and a contribution.

They want to follow their plans for doing all that purposefully and tenaciously. That is what I – and many others I knew – wanted.

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 Different Definitions Of Peak Performance

There are many definitions for peak performance. These include the following:

Being the best you can be ... Being the best version of yourself ... Doing extraordinary work ... Producing optimal performance ... Getting a Perfect 10 (this from a previous measures of performance in gymnastics).

John Wooden, the basketball coach, described something similar in terms of competitive greatness. He explained this in the following way.

Be at your best when your best is needed. Success is peace of mind attained only through self-satisfaction in knowing you have made the effort to do the best of which you are capable.

There are several dictionary definitions of peak performance, some of which are exceptionally long. Several of these can be summarised in the following way.

Peak performance involves being fully focused and applying your abilities to achieve the highest possible level of performance.

There are many philosophical and psychological approaches to delivering such work. Here is one that is drawn from spiritual philosophies but is also applied in sports and other fields.

Peak performance involves going in your equivalent of the zone, following the principles of effortless effort and delivering exceptional performances.

As mentioned earlier, there are several definitions of peak performance. For the moment, let's focus on a short version. This is:

Being the best you can be.

This definition has its shortcomings but it can be a useful starting point. There is also an interesting paradox when it comes to defining peak performance. This can be explained in the following way.

Doing your personal best – your personal peak performance – may not equate to what others consider to be peak performance.

Let's look at one example. This is one from sports but it can apply in other fields.

You may run 100 metres in 9.4 seconds - which will be your personal peak performance - but the winner may run it in 9.3 seconds.

You can still aim to be the best you can, however, and continue to improve. This involves focusing on the following themes.

You can do your best to achieve peak performance.

You can recognise that other people's natural talents may sometimes lead to them achieving higher levels of performance.

You can continue to improve, however, and aim to achieve your highest level of peak performance.

The Historical Approaches To Peak Performance

Many writers, researchers and practitioners have contributed to our understanding of this field. Some refer back to Eastern and Western philosophies that describe ways of being that are akin to what we now call flow. Pursuing these paths can contribute to peak performance.

Alison Coleman describes these in a piece she wrote for the Iwoca website. Here is an excerpt from her article.

It's been called many things over the centuries in both Western and Eastern philosophical writing, but the concept of being 'in the flow state' or 'in the zone' is almost universal across civilisation.

The ancient Japanese martial artists are credited with coining the term 'mushin' which originates from 'mushin no shin'. This is a Zen term for 'mind of no mind'.

It describes a heightened state of awareness where thoughts or emotions no longer get in the way of achieving peak human performance. This concept still remains central to Japanese martial arts today.

In Chinese history, the philosophy of flow is referred to as 'wu wei', which means effortless action or effortless doing. In some traditions of ancient India the concept of samyama is a form of flow state, sharing many similarities with mushin and wu wei.

The scientific study of flow began early in the 20th century when Harvard researcher William James began exploring and recording how the human brain can alter consciousness to improve performance.

One of his students, physiologist Walter Bradford Cannon, discovered a link between mind and body that helped to explain how the brain is able to reach a state that amplifies performance.

The ScienceDirect website refers back to Greek historical thought and describes the concept of eudaimonia. It defines this in the following way.

Eudaimonia and concepts of the good life and human flourishing have been of central concern for philosophy and not least with reference to Aristotelian thought.

This is a state attained by an individual living their life with the moral boundaries set by their virtues and fulfilling their roles and attaining their goals in life.

Catherine Moore explores the concept of eudaimonia in an article she wrote for the Positive Psychology website. Here is how it is defined.

Eudaimonia is a process of fulfilling or realizing one's daimon or true nature. It is fulfilling one's virtuous potentials and living as one was inherently intended to live.

The Self-Help And

Self-Improvement Influences

Some of the early self-help and self-improvement literature influenced later approaches to peak performance. These encouraged individuals to have a positive attitude, take responsibility and fulfil their potential.

Many people are familiar with writings of people such as Norman Vincent Peale. There were other writers, however, who preceded his work. Let's look at one such person.

James Allen was born in Leicester in 1864 and spent much of his life in the manufacturing industries. In 1902 he moved to Ilfracombe, Devon, and devoted the rest of his life to writing.

He believed we could control our thoughts. We could then spread goodness by translating these thoughts into action. Here are some of the things he wrote. (As you will see, he used the term 'man' when referring to both men and women).

A man sooner or later discovers that he is the master-gardener of his soul, the director of his life.

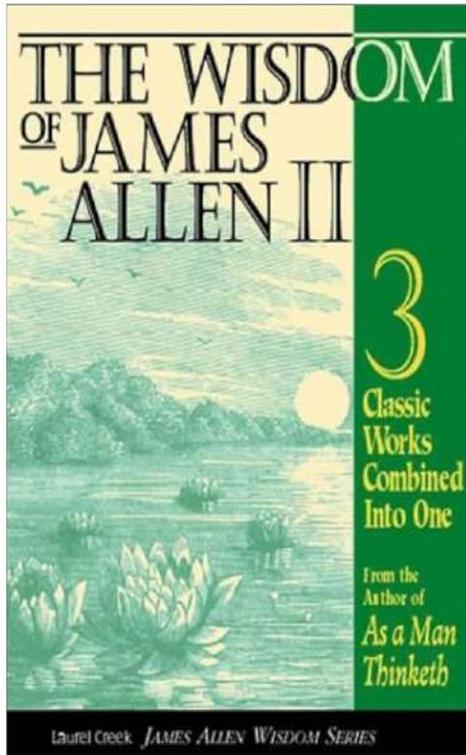
All that you accomplish or fail to accomplish with your life is the direct result of your thoughts. Our life is what our thoughts make it.

Good thoughts bear good fruit, bad thoughts bear bad fruit. No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks.

The law of harvest is to reap more than you sow. Sow an act, and you reap a habit.

Sow a habit and you reap a character. Sow a character and you reap a destiny.

The more tranquil a man becomes, the greater is his success, his influence, his power for good.



Calmness of mind is one of the beautiful jewels of wisdom.

Work joyfully and peacefully, knowing that right thoughts and right efforts inevitably bring about right results.

A man should conceive of a legitimate purpose in his heart and set out to accomplish it.

He should make this purpose his supreme duty and devote himself to its attainment.

The More Recent Approaches To Peak Performance

Charles Garfield inspired people with his work on peak performance. Many other writers and practitioners focused on these theme. Different people did this in different ways.

Some learned from their own experiences of delivering great work. Some studied great performers in sports, business and other fields. Some produced their own models for delivering high performance.

Many people have since produced books on this topic. Such books often focus on one or more of the following themes - Positive Models, Personal Journeys or Practical Tools. Some combine all three elements.

Books On Peak Performance

There are many books on peak performance. These sometimes focus on one or more of the following themes.

- *Positive Models*

These books provide positive models that people can use to achieve peak performance

- *Personal Journeys*

These books describe people's personal journeys when aiming to do their best and, in some cases, achieve peak performance.

- *Practical Tools*

These books provide practical tools that people can use to achieve peak performance.

Positive Models

Some of these books aim to study peak performance and pass on positive models that people can use in their own ways. Let's consider some that fall under this heading.

During the 1970s and 80s there was increased interest in sports psychology and how it could increase performance. This often involved helping athletes:

To revisit the times when they had performed superbly and clarify the principles they followed to deliver peak performance;

To clarify how they could follow these principles in the future to deliver peak performance;

To mentally rehearse following these principles in a forthcoming situation and then do their best to deliver peak performance.

Willi Railo, a Norwegian sports psychologist, wrote an influential book on the topic. Published in 1983, it was called *Bäst när det gäller* – which roughly translated means *Best When It Matters*. This provided a positive model that sports people could use to perform at their best.

Tim Gallwey helped athletes to develop by focusing on what he called the inner game. From the early 1970s he published many books on this theme. These included *The Inner Game of Tennis*, *The Inner Game of Golf*, *The Inner Game of Skiing* and *The Inner Game of Work*.

Tim said individuals had two selves within their inner game. Self 1 was the negative or critical self that a person may have learned over the years. This could create noise and stop the person performing.

Self 2 was the positive and creative self. It embodied the passionate, curious and non-judgmental approach they may have had as a child. This could be revitalised to enable them to perform superbly.

Different people applied Tim's ideas in different fields. One coach summarised how they used it in the following way.

The Inner Game And The Outer Game

People who play sports may focus on both their inner game and the outer game. The inner game is played within the person and involves have a positive or negative approach. The outer is played in an external arena and involves aiming to reach an external goal.

The inner game can be played in a positive way. It is for the person to have a positive attitude, be present in the moment and do their best. It is to focus on the process and be non-judgemental.

The inner game can also be played in a negative way. It is for the person to be negative, fearful and unfocused. This can lead to self-doubt and poor performance.

My role is to help people to develop their positive inner game and do their best when playing the outer game. They are then more likely to achieve peak performance.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi did much of the pioneering work on flow. He described this in his books *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience* and *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention*.

Mihaly studied individuals, artists, doctors and other people who had what he called flow experiences. Such people followed certain principles.

They chose to work towards a stimulating goal. They concentrated fully and used their skills to do fine work. They became so absorbed in the activity that time went away. They reached the goals and had a sense of fulfilment.

Mihaly provided a framework people could follow in their own way. Here is a summary of this approach which could lead to peak performance.

The Flow Approach

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi passed on a model that you could follow in your own way. This involved taking the following steps.

- *You can focus on a stimulating task that you have a chance of completing and set clear goals.*
- *You can become fully engaged, feel a sense of control and apply your skills in a way that gets immediate feedback.*
- *You may experience a deep and effortless sense of involvement and feel that time goes away.*
- *You may find that your sense of self disappears but afterwards your self emerges stronger.*
- *You can find solutions to challenges, complete the task and may experience a sense of fulfilment.*

Many other people created models for achieving peak performance. Some chose, however, to focus on the following theme.

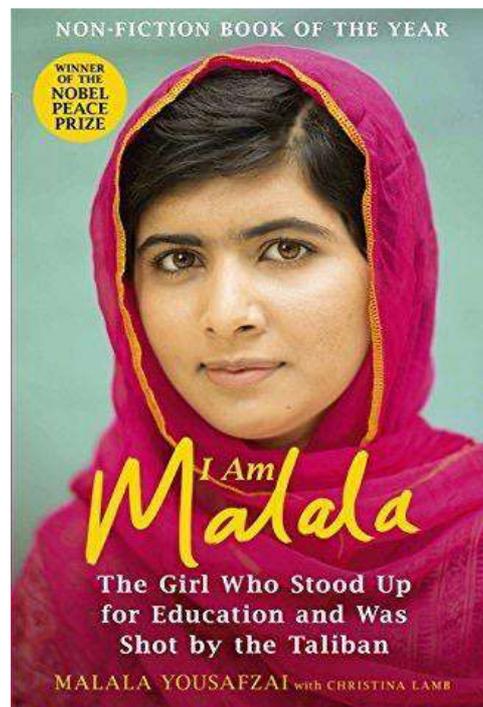
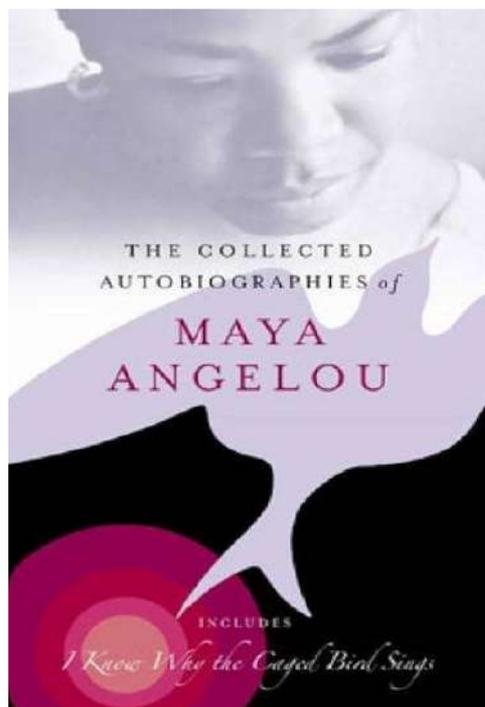
Personal Journeys

Some people describe their personal journeys towards doing their best. They aim to show rather than tell and share experiences from their lives and work.

Many such books are written by or about women. They describe the journeys taken by women artists, explorers, scientists, mountaineers and change makers.

People often feel inspired and learn from such stories. They feel encouraged to be their authentic selves and follow their chosen path in life. They then aim to be the best they can be.

Here are two of the most well-known autobiographies – from Maya Angelou and Malala Yousafzai.



Brené Brown reached a wide audience with her TED talk on vulnerability and her book *Daring Greatly*. She also explored the following theme.

What are the qualities demonstrated by people who live wholeheartedly?

She found that such people are prepared to be real and live with their imperfections. They focus on joy and gratitude. They give themselves to life and are prepared to live with uncertainty.

Brené went on to offer what she called Ten Guideposts that people could follow in their own way. Here is an overview of those themes.



*Ten Guideposts For
Living Wholeheartedly*

- *Cultivating Authenticity: Letting Go of What People Think*
- *Cultivating Self-Compassion: Letting Go of Perfectionism*
- *Cultivating a Resilient Spirit: Letting Go of Numbing and Powerlessness*
- *Cultivating Gratitude and Joy: Letting Go of Scarcity and Fear of the Dark*
- *Cultivating Intuition and Trusting Faith: Letting Go of the Need for Certainty*

- *Cultivating Creativity: Letting Go of Comparison*
- *Cultivating Play and Rest: Letting Go of Exhaustion as a Status Symbol and Productivity as Self-Worth*
- *Cultivating Calm and Stillness: Letting Go of Anxiety as a Lifestyle*
- *Cultivating Meaningful Work: Letting Go of Self-Doubt and "Supposed To"*
- *Cultivating Laughter, Song, and Dance: Letting Go of Being Cool and "Always in Control"*

Practical Tools

Some writers and practitioners aim to offer practical tools that people can use to achieve peak performance. Some focus on a specific activity whilst others take a more wholistic approach.

Alan Lakein, for example, encouraged people to channel their energies towards achieving their life goals. In 1973 he published *How To Get Control Of Your Time And Your Life*. This book offered many tools that people could use to achieve their goals. It also spurred a growth in people offering course in Time Management and Priority Management.

Stephen Covey popularised these and other tools in his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. He also introduced people to other techniques for being effective and doing excellent work.

John Whitmore and his colleagues produced the practical GROW Model. This encouraged a person to focus on: a) their goal; b) the realities; c) their options; c) their will to do the work involved to reach the goal. This became the basis for many coaching programmes.



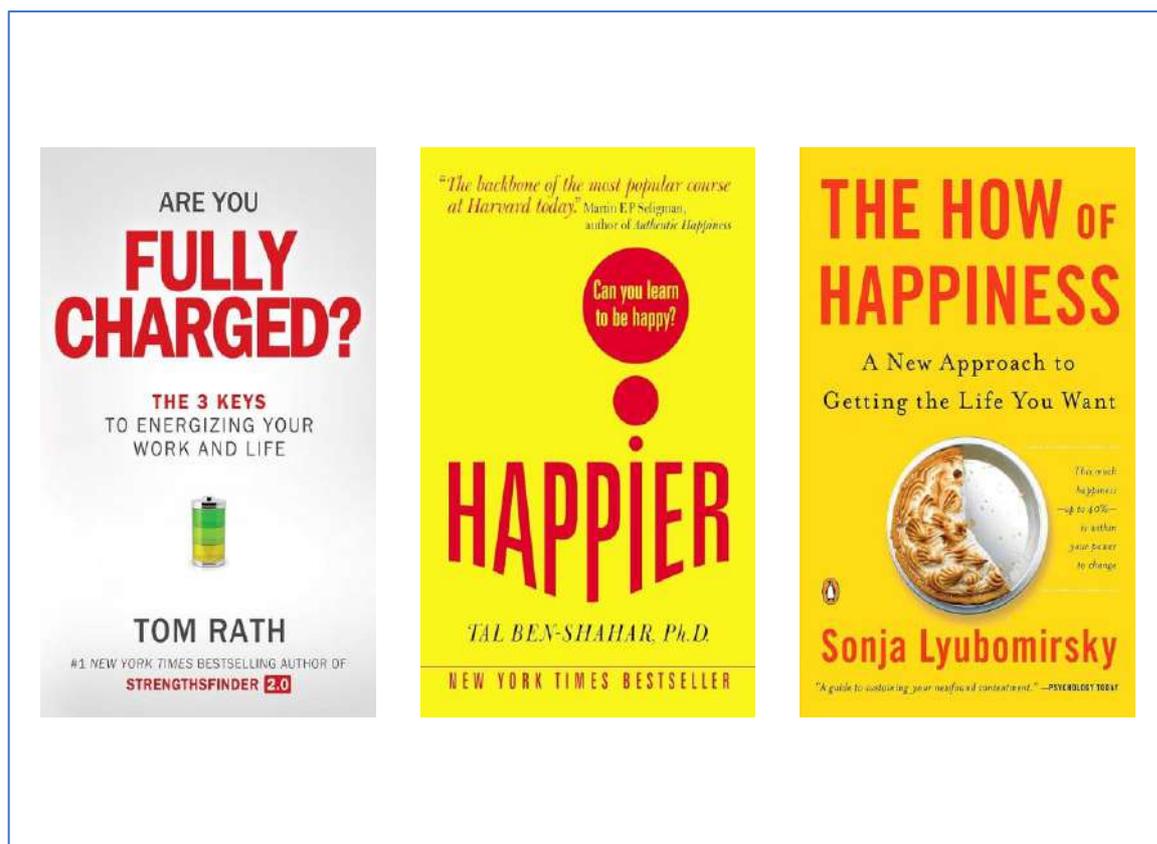
Some practitioners pursued the strengths approach. They provided practical tools that people could use to build on their strengths, follow strategies that worked and achieve their picture of success.

Tom Rath headed the Gallop Organization's approach to helping people to build on their strengths. He then moved on to providing practical tools that people could use to take care of their wellbeing. These can be found in his books *Eat Move Sleep* and *Are You Fully Charged?*

The rise of positive psychology has led to many books and programmes that provide practical tools that people can use to flourish. Some of these focus on the topic of happiness.

Tal Ben-Shahar ran one of Harvard's most popular programmes which provided tools people could use to focus on happiness. He described some of these in his best-selling books *Happier* and *Being Happy*.

Sonja Lyubomirsky made a scientific study of people who were happy. This led to her producing the book of practical ideas called *The How Of Happiness: A New Approach To Getting The Life You Want*.



Steve Peters is a psychiatrist who has enabled many athletes to deliver peak performances. He describes the brain as comprising of three interacting parts. These are the human, the computer and the chimp.

The chimp can get out of control and produce negative thoughts. Steve shows people how can do great work by managing their chimp and rising to the occasion when it matters. He describes the techniques for doing this in his books such as *The Chimp Paradox*.

The past twenty years has seen a rise in programmes that encourage people to focus on their purpose. Many owe their origins to Viktor Frankl's work and his book *Man's Search For Meaning*.

Some programmes help people to clarify their purpose. They then provide them with practical tools they can use to follow their principles and, when appropriate, achieve peak performance.

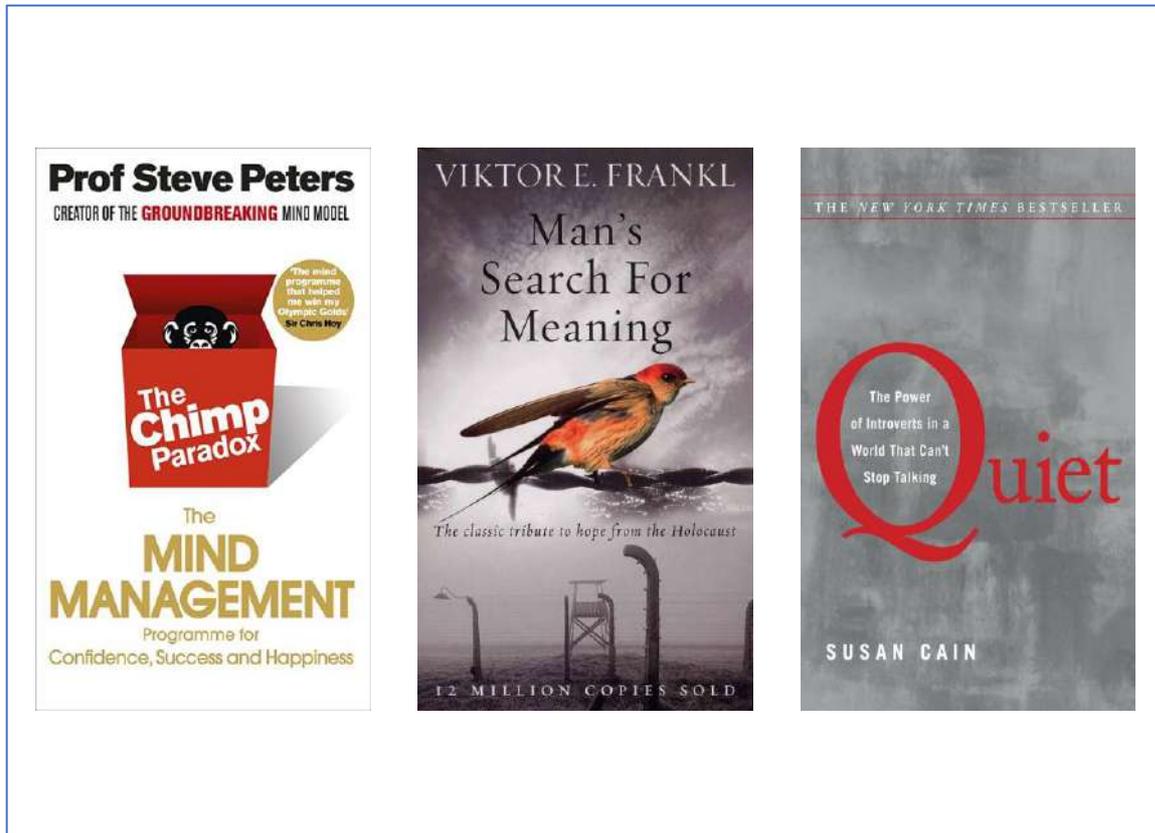
There are now programmes that help people to manage the challenges of what has been called a VUCA World. This is a world that is full of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity.

The acronym VUCA has become a cliché but people may still need help to manage such situations. One approach is to provide them with tools they can use to follow their values and thrive in such an environment.

Some writers and practitioners encourage such individuals to build on their unique strengths. They provide tools that people can use to channel their personalities rather than change their personalities.

People are different. Some are introverts, some are extroverts, some move between these ways of operating. Some behave in ways that could be considered bipolar, autistic or having elements of ADHD.

Susan Cain provided many such tools for people who may be considered to be introverts. She wrote *Quiet: The power of introverts in a world that can't stop talking*. This enabled many introverts to continue to build on their strengths and do superb work.



Running Peak Performance Sessions

There are many ways to run such a session. Different mentors, for example, will have different philosophies about the principles people can follow to achieve peak performance.

Whatever their views, however, they will prepare properly. Different people will do this in different ways. One approach is for them to explore the following questions.

Preparing For The Session

Here are some of the basic questions to explore.

- *Who is the person I am going to meet? What is happening in their world? What may be the challenges they face? What may be their personal or professional goals? What may be their picture of success?*
- *What may be the topics they want to explore in the session? Looking at each topic, how can I clarify the real results they want to achieve? How can I pass on knowledge that will help them to achieve their goals?*
- *What are the actual words I would like them 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?*

The mentor will aim to create a positive environment in which the person feels at ease and able to explore. They may then focus on the following steps to when helping them to achieve peak performance.

Personal Goals

This step involves focusing on a person's goals. These can be personal, professional or peak performance goals. Different mentors will help the person to do this in different ways.

One approach is for the mentor to welcome the person to the session and explain the approach they will use. They may do this by saying something along the following lines. They will, of course, do this in their own way.

Welcome to the session. As you know, we can explore any topics you wish. These can be things you want to focus on as a person, as a professional or as somebody who wants to achieve peak performance.

For example: How to build on your strengths ... How to tackle specific challenges ... How to achieve peak performance ... How to achieve your picture of success ... Or any topics.

We will start by clarifying the various topics you want to discuss. We will focus on the first one you want to explore and clarify the real results you want to achieve.

We will then clarify the principles you can follow to do your best to achieve these aims. If you wish, I can also share practical ideas that you can use in your own way to achieve your picture of success.

We will then move on to the action part. If appropriate, we will focus on how you can translate your chosen principles into action and work towards your goals.

We will clarify how you can follow strategies that work to achieve the aims. This can include how you can deliver peak performances on the way towards achieving your picture of success.

Are you okay with taking these steps? Are there any other things you would like us to cover?

Different mentors have different philosophies but most will begin by explaining their approach. They will also invite the person to describe the topics they would like to discuss. They will then aim:

To focus on the first topic the person wants to explore and invite them to give some background about the specific situation;

To clarify the specific things the person can control in the situation – such as their attitude, professionalism and other things;

To clarify the person's specific goals – the real results they want to achieve – and translate these into a clear picture of success.

Imagine the mentor has taken these steps. They will then double check they are clear on what the person wants to achieve. Sometimes this can involve focusing on both their short and long-term aims.

Some mentors then underline the point that Steve Peters often makes to the people with whom he works. The person is encouraged:

To focus on what they can control in the situation and to do their best to achieve the goals.

Bearing these in mind, the mentor may say something along the following lines to make sure they understand the person's picture of success.

As far as I understand, the goals you want to achieve are:

To ...

To ...

To ...

Is that right? Are there any other things you want to achieve?

Imagine that the mentor has clarified the goals the person wants to achieve. They may then move on to the next theme to help them to reach their goals.

Principles

This step involves focusing on the principles the person can follow to achieve their goals. Before exploring this step, however, it is important to recognise a key factor that will influence this part of the process.

Different mentors will have different philosophies about the principles that a person can follow achieve their aims. They may also have different approaches to helping a person to translate these principles into action.

There is also another factor to bear in mind. Depending on their approach, the mentor may aim either:

To encourage the person to clarify their own view of the principles they want to follow to achieve peak performance;

To pass on knowledge about some of the principles the person may be able to follow to achieve peak performance.

Some mentors combine both approaches. They help the person to learn from their own experiences and, with their permission, also pass on knowledge the person can use in their own way to achieve their goals.

Imagine that the mentor wants to combine these approaches. Let's look at how they may take these steps.

The Mentor Clarifying The Person's Successful Principles

Everybody has a positive history of tackling challenges or reaching specific goals. It can therefore be useful to help a person to clarify their successful style of achieving their aims.

One approach is to borrow from sports psychology. It is: a) to clarify the principles a person has followed to do superb work in the past; b) to clarify how they can follow those principles – plus add other skills – to do superb work in the future.

Bearing this in mind, the mentor may say something along the following lines to the person.

Let's start by focusing on your strengths and successful style. We can then explore how to build on these in the present situation.

Looking back, when have you tackled a similar challenge successfully in the past? What did you do right then? What were the principles you followed? How did you translate these into action?

Looking ahead, how can you follow some of these principles to tackle the present challenge? How can you translate these into action? What other skills may you need to add to achieve the picture of success?

This is an organic approach to helping a person to develop. It is encouraging the person by explaining that: a) they already have successful patterns; b) they can build on these – plus add other skills – to achieve their goals.

The Mentor Passing On Knowledge About Successful Principles

Many mentors have studied what works. They may also, when appropriate, pass on this knowledge about what works. Before doing so, however, the mentor will probably have explored the following questions.

What are the real results the person wants to achieve? What do we know works in these kinds of situations? Bearing this in mind, what is the knowledge I can pass on to help them to achieve their aims?

What are the principles they can follow? What are the positive models they can use? What are the practical tools I can share that will help them to achieve their aims?

How can I pass on this knowledge in a way that they can accept and use? How can I bring it to life with specific examples? How can I do this in a way that resonates with them and helps them to achieve their goals?

Imagine that the mentor wants to share some ideas. Before doing so, however, it is important to get the person's permission to take this step. They may therefore say something along the following lines.

Bearing in mind the goals you want to achieve, is it okay to share some ideas that we have seen work in similar situations? You can take the ideas you like and use them in your own way.

The person will probably agree. The mentor will then try to pass on this knowledge in a way that the person can accept and use.

Different mentors may, of course, share different ideas. Much depends on their philosophy about the principles people can follow to achieve peak performance. They may believe that it can be useful for a person to do some of the following things:

To focus on a clear purpose, follow their principles and aim to achieve peak performance;

To build on their strengths, follow strategies that work and work to achieve their picture of success;

To focus on their beliefs, do the basics and, when appropriate, add the brilliance;

To follow their values, translate those into a clear vision and deliver visible results;

To aim to do work where they enjoy the journey, be effective and deliver excellence;

To aim to flow, focus, do fine work, finish and, as a by-product, find fulfilment;

To use their personal radar – their ability to see patterns quickly - apply their repertoire and deliver the desired positive results;

To channel their inner champ – focusing on the principles they have followed in the past to perform brilliantly – and manage their inner chimp;

To demonstrate certain characteristics, deliver consistently high standards and add that touch of class;

To follow their passion, be professional and do their best to achieve their picture of success;

To follow other principles to perform superb work and deliver peak performances.

The mentor will then aim to pass on ideas the person can use to achieve their goals. When doing so, it will be important to see which of these ideas resonate with the person.

Sometimes this can be easy because the person may show their interest in a particular topic. If the person is an introvert, however, it can be useful to give them chance to reflect. They may time to process the information and, if appropriate, focus on the ones that resonate.

Imagine the mentor has created such a time for reflection. When appropriate, they may then say something along the following lines.

Looking at the ideas we have mentioned, are there any that it would be good to explore further? We can then look at how to apply these in your particular situation.

Imagine that the mentor has helped the person to clarify the principles they want to follow. They may then move on to the next stage.

Peak Performances

This step involves focusing on how the person can translate their chosen principles and specific plans into action. The person can then do their best to deliver peak performances.

Every person has their own way of making action plans and the mentor will respect their approach. When appropriate, however, they may offer practical ideas the person can use to follow their chosen principles. They may help the person:

To clarify the key strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success;

To clarify the specific things they can do to follow these strategies, get some quick successes and do superb work;

To clarify the specific things they can do to find solutions to challenges, keep improving and do their best to deliver peak performances.

As mentioned earlier, different people have different definitions of peak performance. Whatever their view, however, many people aim:

To be the best they can be.

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 peak performance programmes approach? How can you do this in your own way?

You may want to follow some of these principles in your own life or work. Alternatively, you may want to follow them to help another person to achieve peak performance.

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

The Peak Performance Programmes Approaches

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

*

The specific things I can do then to follow these in my own way are:

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Clarifying A Person's Potential Future Performance Approach

A Person's Potential Future Performance

There are many ways to clarify a person's potential. One approach is to clarify their successful patterns – plus what they can improve – in their past and present performances. It is then to project what they may be able to achieve in their future performances.



There are many models for assessing a person's ability to perform superb work in the future. This include focusing on a person's attitude, ability and desire to achieve certain goals.

This article explores one approach. It is to clarify a person's successful patterns – plus what they can improve – in their past and present performance. It is then to focus on their potential future performance.

Imagine that you are interviewing a candidate or considering a person for promotion. You will explain to them:

The specific goals to achieve in the role – the picture of success;

The specific principles to follow to achieve the picture of success.

You will then invite them to describe the steps they would take to achieve the goals.

Bearing these things in mind, however, you may also want to consider the person's strengths and successful style of work. This can give clues to their attitude and ability to deliver the goods.

As mentioned earlier, one approach is to focus on their past, present and potential future performance. Let's explore these themes.

The Person's Past Performance

People often follow certain patterns in their lives and work. They may have both successful patterns and unsuccessful patterns. It can therefore be useful for a person:

To keep building on their successful patterns;

To manage any unsuccessful patterns;

To keep improving as a person and as a professional.

People develop and add to their repertoire, of course, but they often follow their chosen patterns. When considering a person for a future role, it can therefore be useful to explore their successful and potentially unsuccessful patterns.

How to take this step? One approach is to focus on the person's past performances. When doing so, it can be useful to explore the following themes.

What have been the person's successes? What have been the projects, results and other things they have delivered successfully? What have been the benefits of delivering these results?

What may be the person's successful patterns? What did they do right to deliver the successes? What were the principles they followed? How did they translate these into action?

What may be the person's strengths? What may be their successful style of working? What do other people – their colleagues, customers and others – say about the person?

What may be the person's limitations? What may be their potential weaknesses? Do they recognise these? How do they try to manage the potential consequences?

What have been the situations in which they have delivered the successes? What have been the circumstances around them? What support were they given? Are there any other things it is worth noting?

Imagine that you are aiming to explore some of a person's patterns. You will, of course, do this in your own way. If appropriate, however, you may want to use aspects of the following framework.

The Person's Past Performance

Their Successes In The Past

The specific successes they have delivered in the past have been:

*

*

*

Their Successful Pattern

The specific things they did right then to deliver some of these successes were:

*

*

*

*

*

The specific things it may be useful to consider about some of these situations are:

*

*

*

The Person's Present Performance

Imagine that you have explored a person's past work. It can then be time to focus on the present performance. Bearing this in mind, it can be useful:

To clarify the person's recent successes;

To clarify their successful pattern – what they did right – to deliver the successes;

To clarify any of the person's areas for improvement and also the person's view of how they can improve in the future.

You will, of course, do this in your own way. If appropriate, however, you can use aspects of the following framework.

*The Person's
Present Performance*

*The specific successes they have delivered
in their most recent work have been:*

*

*

*

*The specific things they did right then to
deliver some of these successes were:*

*

*

*

*

*

*The specific things that the person can improve in their
work – and their view of what they can improve – are:*

*

*

*

The Person's Potential Future Performance

Imagine that you have explored the person's patterns. When considering them for a future role, it can be useful to explore the following themes.

*What are the specific results we want a person in this role to deliver?
What is the attitude, ability and application a person must demonstrate to deliver success?*

Looking at the person's patterns, do they demonstrate some of the required qualities? If so, how can they build on their successful patterns to deliver the goods? How can they compensate for any weaknesses?

Bearing these factors in mind, on a scale 0-10 how would we rate the chances of the person delivering the goods? If appropriate, what could they and we do to increase the probability of them achieving the goals?

It will be important for the probably of success rating to be at least 7+/10. If appropriate, you can explore how to increase the probability of the person delivering the goods.

People can develop but they seldom make radical changes. Bearing this in mind, it is vital understand their successful and unsuccessful patterns. You can then decide whether they may be able to deliver the goods. If appropriate, you can work through the following framework.

The Person's Potential Future Performance

*The specific results a person needs
to deliver in the specific role are:*

*

*

*

The specific attitude, abilities and application a person needs to demonstrate to deliver these results are:

*

*

*

Bearing in mind the person's patterns, the probability of them delivering these results and achieving success in the role is:

_____ / 10

If appropriate, the specific things that they and we can do to increase the probability of them achieving the desired results are:

*

*

*

Let's return to your own work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may use elements of this approach? This may be where interviewing a candidate or consider somebody for promotion.

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

The Person's Potential Future Performance

*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:*

*

*

*

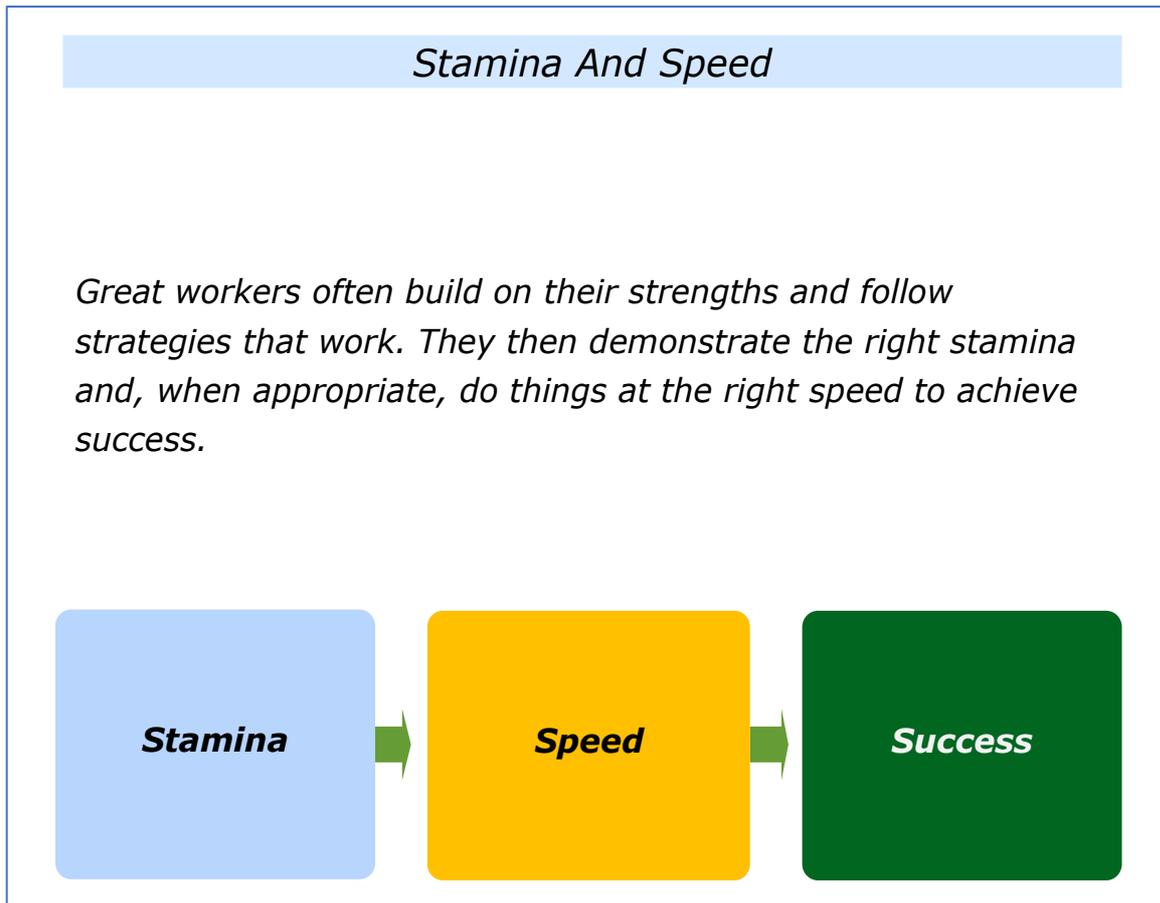
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

The Stamina And Speed Approach



Great workers often build on their strengths and follow strategies that work. They then demonstrate the right stamina and, when appropriate, do things at the right speed to achieve success.

This piece focuses mainly on the stamina and speed aspects. But it is important to start by getting the basics right before moving into action. Let's explore these themes.

Strengths

Great workers often build on their strengths. They focus on the specific activities where they deliver As rather than Bs or Cs. They aim to do what they do best and do their best.

Strategies That Work

Great workers focus on strategies that work. They sometimes do this by exploring the following themes.

What is the strength I want to build on? What is the piece of work I want to do by building on this strength? What are the real results I want to achieve? What is the picture of success? What will be the benefits of achieving these goals?

What are the strategies that work when aiming to achieve such goals? Bearing these in mind, What are the key strategies I can follow to give myself the greatest chance of success? How can I translate these into action? What will be happening that will show I have achieved the goals?

Such workers then move into action. This sometimes involves focusing on the following theme.

Stamina

Great workers develop the required stamina. They may do this when aiming to pursue their career, perform certain kinds of work or achieve the desired positive results.

Some workers demonstrate this stamina during careers and get better over the years. They may be pursuing a passion, following certain principles and aiming to achieve peak performance.

They may be working as artists, musicians, conductors or delivering other kinds of performances. They may be working as educators, therapists, mentors, trusted advisors or in other fields.

Such people who demonstrate such stamina are often following their vocation. Seeing each day as an opportunity to do their best, they believe in the philosophy that:

You never retire from your vocation.

Some people demonstrate the stamina to superb work over a short, medium or longer period. They may aim to write a book, run a marathon, lead a project, compete during a sporting season or do another activity over a period of time.

Different people maintain their stamina in different ways. Some start by getting the physical things right. They get the right food, the right amount of sleep and make sure they are fit to do the work. They then take the following steps.

They prepare properly. They plan ahead, organise their time and make sure all the practical things are in place. They also prepare themselves physically and psychologically.

They rehearse properly. They rehearse following their chosen strategies and managing any potential challenges along the way. They do this until they feel satisfied they have covered all eventualities.

They organise their time in blocks and make full use of their prime times – the times when they have most energy. They then follow their chosen rhythm for working.

They set achievable goals for a session, move into action and follow their chosen strategies. They do deep work, get some early successes and aim to do superb work.

They manage their energy properly. They continue working until they feel ready to break. They then take time to relax, revitalise themselves and rehearse what they are going to do next.

Great workers sometimes employ their second wind. This can be a physical or psychological second wind. It lead to getting a new burst of energy and going into new dimensions. They then do whatever is required to get over the line and achieve success.

Such workers often follow a certain routine. They map out their day, week, month or year and try to organise their time in blocks. This helps them to do good work and also regain their energy.

Great Workers Follow A Certain Rhythm To Build And Maintain Their Stamina

They prepare properly and organise their time in blocks. They follow this pattern whether they are planning a day, a week, a year or another length of time.

They often start by following their chosen ritual. They may aim to relax, refocus and rehearse what they are going to do next. They then move into action and aim to deliver the desired results.



Imagine that a person has developed their stamina. Sometimes they may also focus on the next theme.

Speed

Great workers pace themselves properly. They pursue strategies that work and aim to do these at the right speed. Such an approach invites the question:

What is the right speed?

Great workers focus on the results in achieve in a situation. They then follow the rule that:

The right speed is the one that gets the right results.

Bearing this in mind, they may do things at what appears to be a slow, medium or fast pace. Let's explore these different approaches.

Great Workers Do Things At The Right Speed

Great workers aim to do things at the appropriate speed. They follow the rule that: The right speed is the one that gets the right results. They may therefore choose to follow the slow, medium or fast speed approaches.



The Slow Speed Approach

Great workers know when to do things in a relatively slow and measured way. They may do this when making key decisions. Going into a situation, they gather information and take the following steps:

They clarify what is actually happening, fix any immediate issues and clarify the real results to achieve – the picture of success;

They clarify the potential options going forward – together with the pluses and minuses of each option – and settle on their chosen option;

They clarify the key strategies they can follow to pursue their chosen option, create an action plan and do their best to achieve success.

Such workers often have knowledge bank that is based on making previous decisions. This may have been built slowly over time. But, when appropriate, they can access it and act quickly to make good decisions.

Some great workers may also have had a relatively slow start to their careers. They may have spent time following their passions before settling on a path they wanted to pursue.

They may then have absorbed themselves deeply in building up their knowledge. This created a firm base which they built on in future years. Such an approach is in contrast to people who may have been shooting stars early in their careers.

Different people go at different speeds when doing different tasks or at different stages of their careers. Sometimes they operate in the following way.

The Medium Speed Approach

Great workers sometimes follow the medium speed approach. They follow a rhythm where they do things in a measured but effective way. They aim to follow this routine and do fine work.

Some writers, craft workers and artists take this approach. They follow a consistent rhythm that enables them to follow good habits when doing their work. Sometimes this can also lead to flashes of inspiration where they then do things quickly.

Looking back, can you think of a time when you followed elements of this approach? You may have been studying for an exam, following an exercise programme, leading a project or doing another piece of work.

What was the routine you followed? How did you work at a consistent and effective way? When appropriate, how did you work more quickly? What happened as a result of taking these steps?

The Fast Speed Approach

Great workers sometimes do things at a fast pace. Some do this physically, some do it psychologically. Some do it in other ways – such as by using their strategic intuition to make creative breakthroughs.

Great footballers, for example, often do these simple things quickly – such as playing the simple pass. They are continually scanning the field to see patterns, picture and possibilities. They then use their strategic thinking and skills to execute the desired pass, shot or movement.

Such players know when to do the simple things well. They then, when appropriate, use their unique skills to do something special that helps their team to succeed.

Great workers follow a similar pattern in their chosen field. Sometimes they use what is called their strategic intuition. They are able:

To quickly see patterns, focus on the possible ways forward and clarify the desired picture of success;

To reach into their repertoire of experience, knowledge and tools to select and rehearse their chosen strategy for achieving success;

To apply their chosen strategy, keep reading reality and do what is required to achieve the picture of success.

Great workers may go into another dimension and move into their equivalent of the zone. They appear to do things slowly yet more swiftly than other people. Such workers then do something special to deliver the goods. This takes us to the next theme.

Success

Great workers aim to do things at the appropriate speed. They may do things at a slow, medium or fast pace. Sometimes they combine these elements to achieve success.

Such workers sometimes focus on the following steps. They aim: a) to build a solid base; b) to do superb work; c) to use their strategic intuition to do something special to deliver success.

William Duggan, author of the book *Strategic Intuition*, has described how such intuition works. He explained this in the following way.

*Flashes of insight are so important that scholars have written about them for centuries. The best description comes from an early classic of military strategy, **On War** by Carl von Clausewitz.*

Clausewitz gives us four steps.

First, you take in 'examples from history' throughout your life and put them on the shelves of your brain. Study can help, by putting more there.

Second comes 'presence of mind,' where you free your brain of all preconceptions about what problem you're solving and what solution might work.

Third comes the flash of insight itself. Clausewitz called it coup d'oeil, which is French for 'glance.'

In a flash, a new combination of examples from history fly off the shelves of your brain and connect.

Fourth comes 'resolution,' or determination, where you not only say to yourself, "I see!", but also, "I'll do it!"

There are many ways to do fine work. Great workers sometimes aim to build on their strengths and follow strategies that work. They then demonstrate the right stamina and speed to deliver success.

Looking ahead, can you think of situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach? How can you follow 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.

The Stamina And Speed 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 then to follow this approach in my own way are:

*

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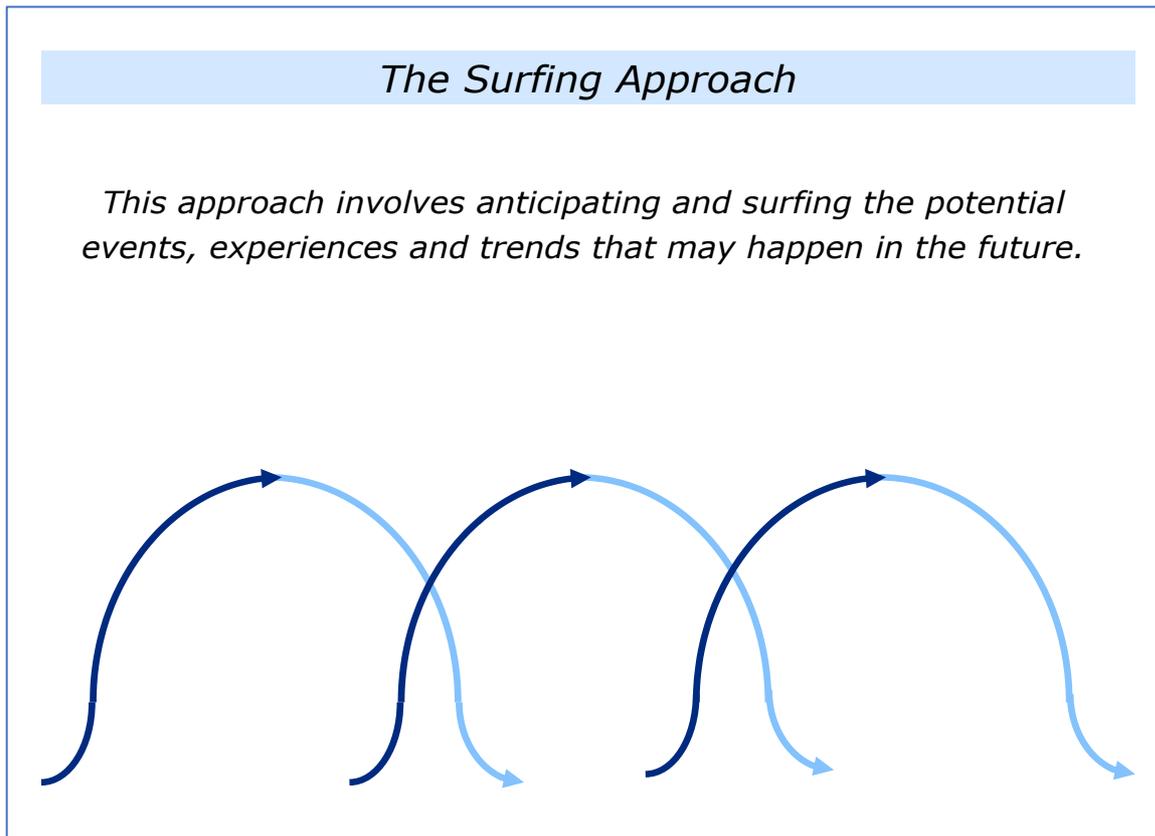
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Surfing The Future Rather Than Being Submerged By The Future Approach



There are many ways to live life. One approach is to aim to surf the future rather than be submerged by the future. This involves being able to look ahead and manage events successfully.

Some people apply their strategic thinking and senses to take this approach. They anticipate the potential events, experiences and trends that happen in their personal or professional life. They then explore how they can manage or make good use of these events.

Some people find it difficult to look ahead. They can then find themselves submerged by events and feeling overwhelmed.

Surfing The Future – Anticipating Possible Events

How to anticipate future events that may affect you? One approach is to do the following exercise.

*Surfing The Future – Looking
Ahead And Anticipating Events*

Personal Life

*The specific events, experiences or trends that I may encounter
in my personal life in the future may include the following:*

*

*

*

Professional Life

The specific events, experiences or trends that I may encounter in my professional life in the future may include the following:

*

*

*

Different people describe different things when doing these exercises. Here are some of the topics they may mention.

Personal Life – The specific events I may encounter in the future may include the following:

The need to take care of my health as I get older ... The need to set aside enough money for the future ... The possible downsizing of our house ... The need to take care of our respective parents as they get older.

The desire to encourage my partner to continue to have a sense of purpose ... The need to keep doing things that give me positive energy ... The desire to help our children to move on and live their own lives.

Professional Life – The specific events I may encounter in the future may include the following:

The need to recognise how technology will affect things in my professional field ... The need to be proactive, build on my strengths and find ways to do satisfying work in this new world.

The need to employ my strengths in a way that earns money by helping colleagues and customers to achieve success ... The desire to develop more ways to pass on knowledge to other people.

Surfing The Future – Managing And Making Good Use Of The Potential Future Events

People who anticipate future events often apply strategic thinking. Looking ahead, they may explore the following themes when looking at each potential event.

What is the potential event that could happen? What may be the potential consequences of this event – both for me and for other people? What may be the potential challenges it creates?

What may be the potential pluses that could emerge as a result of the event? What may be the potential opportunities? How can I and other people build on these pluses?

What may be the potential minuses that could emerge as a result of the event? How is it possible to prevent some of these happening? How can I and other people manage the consequences of any potential minuses?

What are the things I can control regarding the potential event? How can I build on the things I can control? How can I manage the things I can't control?

What are the things I want to do regarding the event? What are the real results I want to achieve? What is the picture of success? What are the strategies I can follow to do my best to achieve the picture of success?

Such individuals focus on each event in turn. They then explore how to manage or make good use of the situation. Some take this step by doing the following exercise.

*Surfing The Future – Managing And
Making Good Use Of Potential Events*

Personal Life

*The specific events, experiences or trends that I may
encounter in my personal life in the future may be:*

*

*The specific things I can do to manage or
make good use of this potential event are:*

*

*

*

Professional Life

The specific event that I may encounter in my professional life in the future may be:

*

The specific things I can do to manage or make good use of this potential event are:

*

*

*

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific activity or situation where you may want to follow elements of the surfing the future approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

What may be the specific activity or situation? How can you look ahead and anticipate potential events? How can you then aim to manage or make good use of each event? 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 Surfing The Future Approach

*The specific event that may happen in
my personal or professional life may be:*

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*The specific things I can do then to manage
or make good use of the potential event are:*

*

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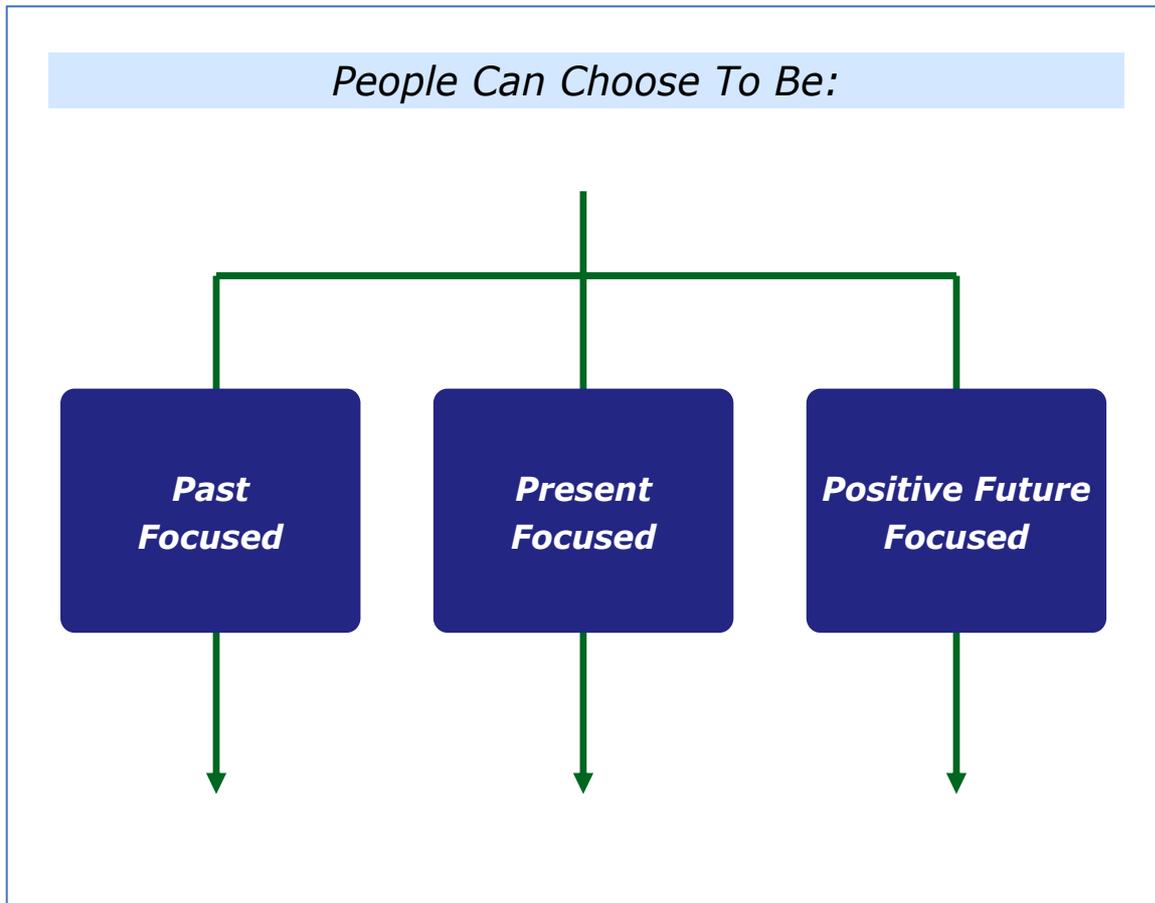
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Past Focused, Present Focused Or Positive Future Approaches



There are many ways to live life. Some people choose to have a positive attitude. Some may choose to be negative. Some may swing between being positive and negative.

People also choose their focus regarding how they manage their experiences. They may choose to be past focused, present focused or positive future focused.

The approach that people take to dealing with events can sometimes cause difficulties – such as when communicating with others. Let's look at one example where people who have different focuses when responding to a challenge.

A person who is past focused may want to go over past events that have led to the challenge. This can be useful to make sure certain things do not happen again. But it can also lead to paralysis by analysis.

A person who is positive future focused, however, will want to move onto the possible solutions to a challenge. They want to channel their energy into how things can be better in the future. They may say things like:

"How can we solve it? What are the goals we want to achieve? What is the picture of success?"

Each person may have positive intentions but are focusing on the challenge from different angles. This is neither good nor bad – but it can lead to difficulties in communication.

Let's explore the different focuses that people may have in life. The route they choose can have consequences for themselves and other people.

Past Focus

People who take this approach are often quite thoughtful. They like to understand the context and why certain things have happened. They may then feel more able to move on to shaping the future.

There are potential pluses to this approach. These include the following. Such a person may find it useful:

To understand the events that have led: a) to certain things happening, or; b) to them experiencing certain feelings;

To analyse why things may not be working well in a situation or in a relationship;

To, if they have a positive frame of mind, focus on the past to recognise their successful patterns and then follow these principles in the future.

There are also potential minuses to this approach. These include the following. Such a person may find that they tend:

To focus on diagnosis rather than cure and not move forward until they understand the past and can make guaranteed plans for the future;

To, if they have a negative approach, focus on regrets or what they see as failures in the past;

To, sometimes in relationships, fall into criticising others and blaming them for certain things in the past.

Present Focus

People who take this approach often live in the moment. They may immerse themselves in experiences and feel fully alive. They may also experience extreme highs and lows.

There are potential pluses to this approach. These include the following. Such a person may find that they are able:

To be fully present and enjoy experiences – such as food, music, nature, companionship and other events;

To apply their heart and head when doing an activity – such as a piece of work - and sometimes go into a state of flow;

To enjoy extreme positive emotions that can create wonderful memories for life;

There are also potential minuses to this approach. These include the following. Such a person may find that they tend:

To be open to negative influences – such as being depressed by events, difficult people or their own emotional swings;

To be so wrapped in their own feelings that they may not be aware of the consequences of their behaviour on other people;

To take themselves and their feelings too seriously and not be able to see things in perspective.

Positive Future Focus

People who take this approach are often upbeat and action oriented. They are quick to recognise what is happening in a situation and want to move towards shaping a positive future.

There are potential pluses to this approach. These include the following. Such a person may find they are able:

To maintain a positive attitude and, when appropriate, encourage both themselves and other people;

To keep focusing on the principles they want to follow in life and work towards their picture of success;

To be good at looking ahead, preventing problems happening and, when necessary, focusing on possible solutions to challenges.

There are potential minuses to this approach. These include the following. Such a person may find that they tend:

To get along best with people who have a similar approach but be impatient with others - which has implications for whom they work with and for their relationships;

To want to quickly move to making decisions – which can be difficult for people who have different styles of processing information;

To be so future focused that they keep striving forwards rather than appreciate their achievements and learn how to thrive.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific situation where you may want to recognise and make good use of these approaches? 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 Past, Present And Positive Future Approaches

*The specific situation where I may
want to recognise and make good
use of these approaches may be:*

*

*The specific things I can do then to recognise
and make good use of them may be:*

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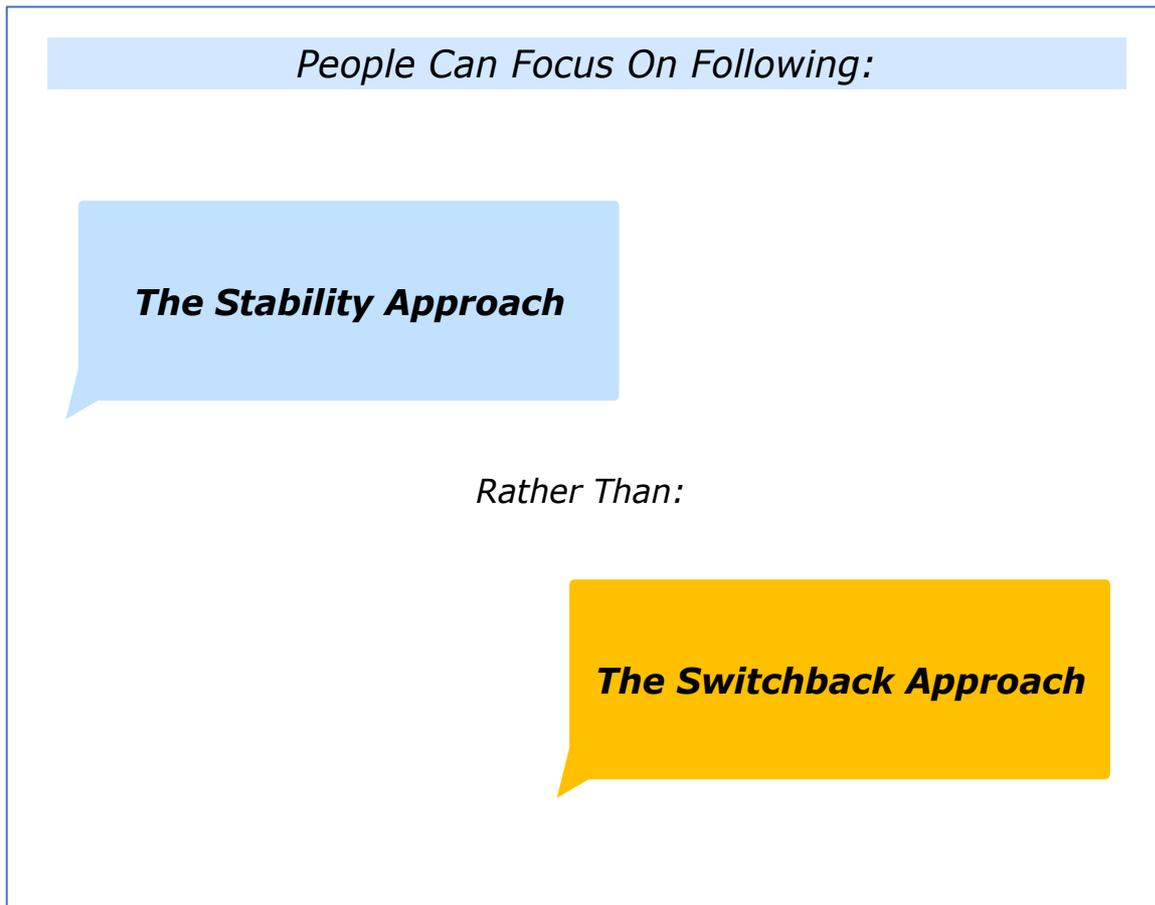
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Stability Approach Rather Than The Switchback Approach



There are many ways to live life. Some people choose to follow the stability approach rather than the switchback approach. They aim to provide people with support and help them to achieve success.

Such people provide stability during turbulent times. They are consistent, clear and aim to find solutions. They do not take people through a switchback of events or emotions. Let's explore these two approaches.

The Stability Approach

Good leaders, for example, are often like good parents. They are positive, predictable and aim to create an encouraging environment in which people can grow.

Leader A, who ran an organisation of 400 people, took this approach during the Covid pandemic. They had previously built a successful organisation by taking the following steps:

They created a positive environment in which self-motivated people could deliver ongoing success;

They communicated the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success;

They gave people the practical and psychological support they needed to do superb work and deliver their parts of the picture success.

They also ensured the organisation built a long financial runway. This paid dividends when Covid hit. Bearing these factors in mind, the leader took the following steps to manage the crisis and also shape a positive future.

*They provided people
with stability and support*

Leader A communicated with their people through a series of Zoom sessions. They followed up by sending emails to reassure people by giving them the following messages.

They explained that the organisation was in a good financial position and people would continue to be paid. If anybody had any particular difficulties, however, then certain kinds of help were available.

*They provided consistency by communicating the
organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success*

Leader A reiterated the organisation's purpose and principles. They also explained how these would be expressed in the present situation by translating them into specific goals. Looking ahead, they encouraged people to take the following steps:

To keep in touch with each other and, when appropriate, ask for or provide the required support;

To connect with their clients and provide practical support that would help them to manage the present situation and achieve their specific goals;

To, if they wished, get involved in task forces that would help the organisation to shape a positive future.

This final point was elaborated upon after the leader and their team took the following step.

They made particular decisions that would provide the platform for future success

The leader held several sessions with their leadership team. These involved refocusing on the organisation's aims by exploring the following questions.

Shaping A Positive Future

- *Bearing in mind our strengths, if we were starting the business again today what would we do? What would be the practical steps we would take to increase the chances of achieving success?*
- *Who would be the kinds of customers we would focus on? Who would be the present customers we would want to keep? What may be the challenges they will be facing? How could we help them to achieve success?*
- *Bearing in mind the potential changes in the market, who may the kinds of customers that may thrive in the future? What may be the challenges they will be facing?*

- *Which of these kinds of customers are we working with at the moment? How can we build on these relationships and help them to achieve future success?*
- *Who may be the similar kinds of customers with whom we do not have long-standing relationships? When appropriate, how could we connect with them in a positive way? How could we share ideas that may help them to achieve future success?*
- *Which parts of the present business would we keep and what would be their targets? Who would be the people we would put in these parts of the business? What support would we give them to deliver the goals?*

- *Bearing in mind our strengths, what may be the additional services and products we can offer to potential customers? What may be the new parts of the business we can develop to deliver success?*
- *Let's move on to the practical steps regarding shaping the future. What are the key strategies we can follow to give ourselves the greatest chance of success? How can we realign the business to focus on these strategies?*
- *Who are the people we want to put into each parts of the business to increase the chances of delivering success? How can we put these people in these places and give them the required support?*

- *Let's move on to a tougher question. What may be the parts of the business we don't want to keep? What are the practical steps we can take to, as far as possible, manage these challenges in a moral and positive way?*
- *How can we provide encouragement to the people who will continue to be part of the future organisation? How can we provide both practical and psychological support to people who may not contribute to the organisation in the future?*
- *Let's move on to the various responsibilities. My responsibility will be to drive the key strategies. We need mission holders, however, who will take responsibility for implementing parts of each strategy.*

- *Let me know if you would like to be one of these mission holders. If so, we can clarify the support you need to deliver the goods.*
- *Let's move on to communicating some elements of the future strategy to our people. This needs to be done in a caring way. Bearing this in mind, what are the practical things we can do:*
 - a) to get some quick successes; b) to communicate some of the steps we are going to take – but do this in a reassuring way; c) to involve people in helping to shape a positive future?*
- *Finally, what else can we do to help the organisation to achieve ongoing success?*

Leader A did a good job of communicating these things to the people in the organisation. They again focused on aiming:

To provide stability and support for people;

To build on the organisation's principles and translate these into specific goals;

To invite people to contribute to shaping the strategies for achieving future success.

The organisation evolved during the next two years and many of its people remained to shape the future. They continue to maintain high morale and also deliver success for both the business and its customers.

Some people moved on for various reasons. Some received offers of senior roles elsewhere. Some changed their lifestyles after the pandemic. Some were given lots of practical help to move on after their roles disappeared.

Good leaders – and other people – often aim to follow the stability approach. They do this when encountering both successes and setbacks. Some leaders take another route.

The Switchback Approach

Leader B ran an organisation of several hundred people. Whilst they could be inspiring on occasions, they also had mood swings and could be intimidating. This approach came to the fore during the Covid pandemic.

The leader believed in 'going with their gut'. This sometimes worked well during the company's early days but became a liability as it acquired businesses and grew.

They focused on driving profits. They had a style of issuing orders and micromanaging people. They could be charming – especially when wanting something – but often veered into criticising people.

Leader B reacted to the Covid pandemic by using lots of military analogies. They defined it as a war the company could win. At the same time, they said there were battles ahead.

The leader initially attempted to rally the troops. When the reality of Covid sank in, however, they retreated into their bunker. Sometimes they emerged to issue contradictory statements about the future strategy.

Several key members of staff decided to buy time by staying in their present roles. They also aimed:

To take care of their loved ones and themselves;

To do their best to support their people;

To prepare the ground for moving on from the organisation.

Leader B and their organisation did come through the pandemic but the business was much diminished. It lost key managers who had previously shielded people from the leader's behaviour. This put the organisation into a downward spiral.

Different people have different ways of managing situations. Some follow the stability approach, some follow the switchback approach. The route they choose has consequences – both for themselves and other people.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of situation where you may want to follow elements of the stability 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 Stability Approach

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

*

The specific things I can do then to provide stability, support and, when appropriate, stimulation are:

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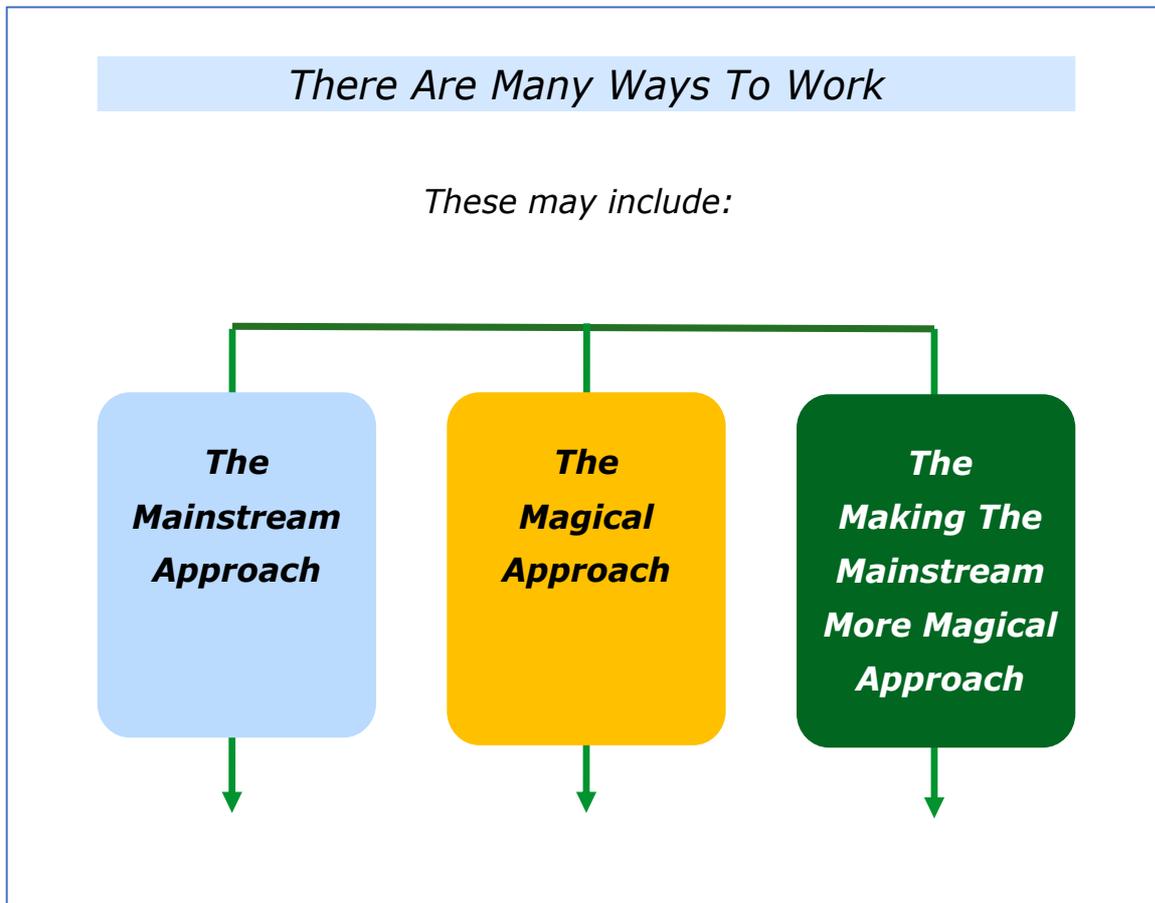
The specific benefits of taking this approach will be:

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The Mainstream Approach, The Magical Approach And The Making The Mainstream More Magical Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. Some people are good at following the mainstream approach. Some aim to follow a magical approach. Some aim to follow the making the mainstream more magical approach. Let's explore these themes.

The Mainstream Approach

Some people are good at doing superb work within the mainstream approach. They may do this by making a positive contribution when working in education, medicine, science, business or other fields.

People who take this approach demonstrate certain qualities. They may have skills that enable them: a) to play to their strengths; b) to be savvy about how to do fine work in mainstream organisations.

Such people may recognise there are both pluses and minuses to this approach. They may need to learn to build on the pluses and manage the consequences of the minuses.

The pluses may include:

Being able to apply their strengths and skill set, being part of an organisation that may be doing good work, getting a regular wage, maybe feeling relatively secure, sometimes seeing the result of their efforts..

The potential minuses may include:

Being a small part of an organisation, needing to find ways to get things done inside a system, getting handed down work from above, sometimes not seeing the point of that work, the role not being as secure as it seemed to be in the past.

The Magical Approach

Some people aim to do work that is magical. During my life I have met many people who aimed to follow this approach. These included people who worked in therapy, education, business and other walks for life.

There are several definitions for the work magical. These include the following.

Something that is enchanting and delightful in a way that is removed from what happens in everyday life.

Something that is extremely enjoyable, pleasant or exciting and gives people positive memories for life.

Something that is extraordinary and takes people into a new and magical dimension.

Some therapists I met aimed to create a stimulating sanctuary where individuals could slow down and explore different themes. They then passed on practical tools that people could use to achieve their goals.

Some educators focused on inspiration, implementation and integration. They created an inspiring environment and passed on implementation tools that worked. They then enabled people to integrate the ideas in their own ways.

Some leaders created a positive environments in their work places. They encouraged motivated people to play to their strengths, do superb work and achieve success. Such leaders built pacesetting work places that enabled people to achieve peak performance.

People who follow the magical approach need to demonstrate certain qualities. They need to have a strong sense of belief, do the basics and then add the brilliance. They may also need to be seen to deliver success.

Such people recognise there are both pluses and minuses to this approach. They may learn to build on the pluses and manage the consequences of the minuses.

The pluses may include:

Being true to themselves, building on their strengths, doing brilliant work, helping other people to succeed, showing another way of doing work in a particular field, sometimes getting recognition.

The potential minuses may include:

Sometimes feeling alone, needing to find ways around the system, attracting criticism, maybe finding it hard to get funding, not necessarily being recognised for the good work that is being done.

The Making The Mainstream More Magical Approach

Some people may aim to get parts of their magical approach adopted into the mainstream way of doing things a particular field. Sometimes this can work, sometimes the approach gets diluted or driven out.

Some great workers have seen their pacesetting ideas adopted by organisations. Sometimes this has helped to revolutionise ways of doing things in particular fields.

Jurgen Klopp, the football coach, oversaw many of these methods being adopted at Liverpool. The work he did highlights some of the conditions necessary to make such an approach work.

The Liverpool Board chose Klopp because they believed: a) that he had a successful track record; b) that his style fitted the kind of culture they wanted to build and maintain. They then aligned their efforts to make this work throughout the club.

Some great workers have a different kind of experience. They may be invited to join an organisation after being given the following messages.

"We really like what you are doing. We need your energy and enterprise in our organisation. We want you to come in and help us to transform the way do things around here."

Such workers focus on ensuring the magical approach becomes the mainstream way of working. Sometimes this can work but it calls: a) for backing from the top; b) for being savvy on how to make it happen; c) for getting some quick success.

Some people find another way of doing magical work inside organisations. They get the backing: a) to build successful prototypes; b) to produce success stories that show the principles they followed; c) to coach other people that want to follow these principles to achieve success.

Some workers find, however, that they are greeted with enthusiasm but then their efforts meet resistance. The prevailing system prevents the pacesetting approach being put into practice.

The organisation may implement a few of the ideas. But, by and large, the system reverts to the old way of doing things. This leads to the worker moving on.

Great workers may recognise that there are both pluses and minuses to this approach. They may need to learn to build on the pluses and manage the consequences of the minuses.

The pluses may include:

Being able to get the magical approach implemented in an organisation, getting more resources to make this happen, being savvy enough to start with some quick successes and then rolling out the approach, having a positive effect on more people, being able to deliver ongoing success.

The potential minuses may include:

Being made promises that are not kept, meeting resistance from people in the organisation who have their own agendas, finding it tiring to try to persuade people to try another way, experiencing issues with their own wellbeing.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow one of these approaches? How can you do this in your own way?

You may aim to good work in the mainstream, do something magical or make the mainstream more magical. How can you follow your chosen 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.

The Mainstream, Magical And Making The Mainstream More Magical Approaches

*The specific situation where I may want
to follow one of these approaches may be:*

*

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

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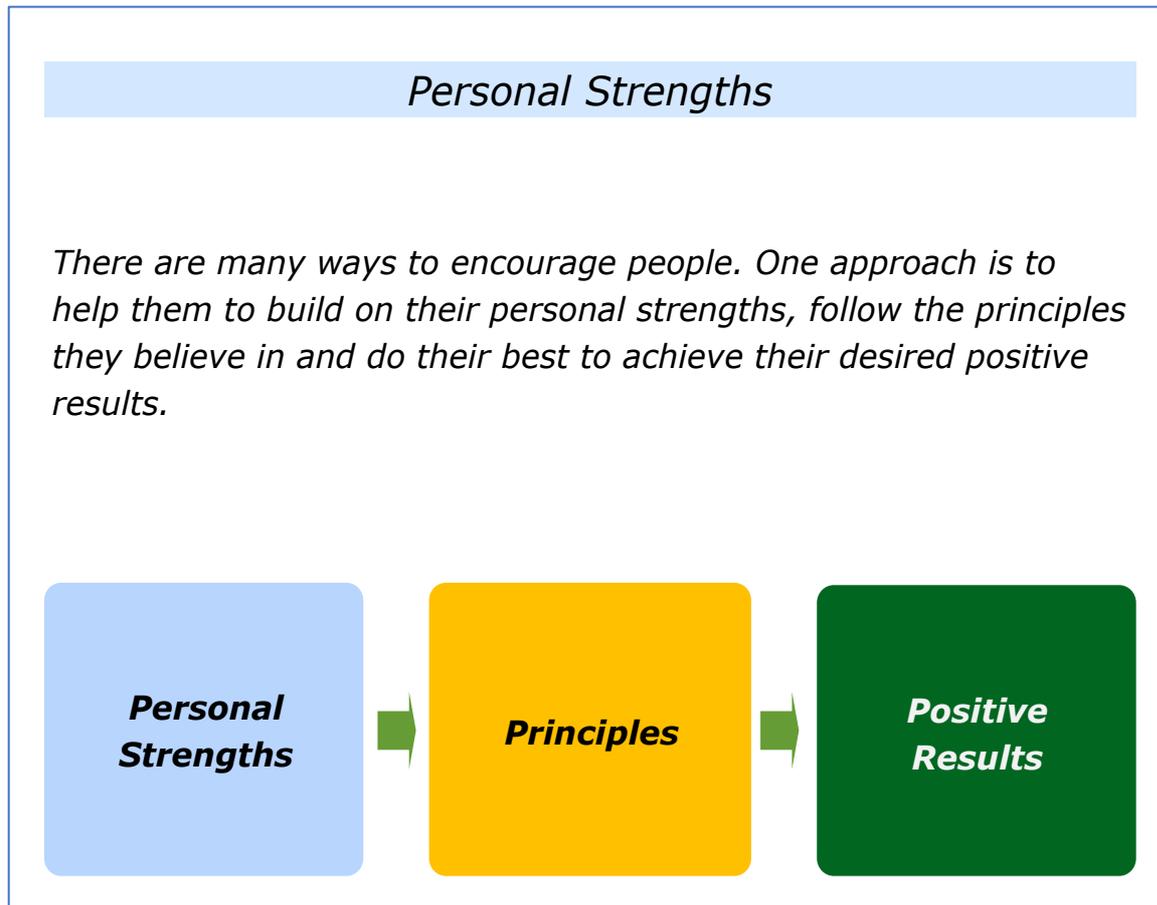
*The specific things that may happen
as a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

The Personal Strengths, Principles And Positive Results Approach



There are many ways to encourage people. One approach is to help them to build on their personal strengths, follow principles they believe in and do their best to achieve their desired positive results.

Imagine that a person has asked you to help them to develop. They may have a specific challenge they want to tackle or specific goals they want to achieve.

If so, it may be more appropriate to use the Three C Model described in the section called *The Mentoring Approach*. You can then help them achieve their aims by focusing on Clarity, Creativity and Concrete Results.

It may be, however, that they simply want to explore ways they can continue to develop. If so, then one approach is to help them to focus on their personal strengths, principles and positive results.

Let's assume this is the case. You may then want to explore the following themes with the person.

Personal Strengths

Imagine that you have created an encouraging environment in which the person feels at ease. Asked about the topics they want to explore, they say they want to keep developing. Bearing this in mind, you may say something along the following lines.

"There are, of course, many ways to develop. One approach is to build on your strengths and follow your principles to achieve positive results. If you are interested, this is an approach we can follow.

Imagine the person says they would like to pursue this route. If appropriate, you may want to invite the person some of the themes related to strengths.

You will, of course, create lots of space for them to respond to the various points. When doing some, it can be important:

To see which of these themes the person enjoys talking about;

To see when they come alive and show positive energy;

To see which of these themes they would like to explore further.

Bearing these things in mind, you may want to cover some of the following themes with the person.

"Let's start by focusing on the things you enjoy doing. We can then move on to those where you may be able to deliver excellence.

"When do you come alive? What are the things that give you positive energy? When are you in your element – at ease and yet able to excel? When do you flow, focus and finish?"

"What are the activities where you enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal? What are the things you feel passionately about where you may be able to achieve peak performance?"

"What are the activities where you see the destination quickly? What are those where you go A, B ... and then leap to Z? What are the activities where you are good at seeing patterns?"

"Looking back, what have been one or two satisfying projects in your life? What made each of these satisfying? What were the principles you followed? How did you translate these into action?"

"What may be your strengths? What may the specific activities where you have the ability to deliver As rather than Bs or Cs? What may be your personality strengths – such as being resilient, being creative or demonstrating other strengths?"

Imagine that you have invited the person to explore some of these themes. When appropriate, you may then want to help the person to focus on some of their strengths. You may want say something along the following lines.

"Looking at the things you have mentioned, which of these specific activities would you like to focus on? What are some of the activities you enjoy doing where you may have the ability to deliver excellence? We can then look at how you would like to build on some of these."

Imagine that the person has described some of these things. When appropriate, you may want to invite them to explore the following framework.

Personal Strengths

The specific activities I enjoy doing where I may also have the ability to deliver excellence may be:

*

*

*

Let's assume that you may have gone through some of these steps with the person. It may then be useful to explore the following theme.

Principles

Imagine has clarified some of the person's strengths. One approach is to simply focus on how they can build on these strengths and work towards achieving certain goals.

Some people take another approach that involves focusing on their principles. This is more likely to help them to be in harmony with themselves and also achieve their aims. This approach involves aiming:

To clarify their personal strengths;

To clarify the principles they want to follow when building on these strengths and to set specific goals;

To clarify the specific things they can do to follow these principles and do their best to achieve the desired positive results.

People who take this approach gain strength in several ways. First, by building on their strengths. Second, by following the principles they believe in. Third, by feeling in harmony with their true selves. These things can maintain their energy to reach their goals.

If appropriate, you can focus on these themes. You may say something along the following lines.

"Let's move on to the next stage. You have clarified some of the strengths you want to build on.

"Bearing these in mind, it can be useful to explore some of the principles you want to follow when translating these into action.

"Great workers sometimes take this approach. They aim to build on their strengths and also follow the principles they believe in. They can then keep focusing on these principles to perform superb work."

Imagine that the person says they would like to explore this approach. If appropriate, you can then invite them to explore the following themes.

"Let's spend a bit of time exploring the principles you believe in. There are several ways to take this approach."

"Some individuals focus on the personal principles they want to follow in their lives. They may aim, for example, to encourage other people, to be kind and help others succeed."

"Some focus more on professional principles they want to follow in their work. They may aim, for example, to do work they enjoy, deliver consistently high standards and achieve excellence."

"Whatever approach they take, however, the key is to focus on following principles they believe in. This gives them strength to do their best to achieve their goals."

"Let's return to your situation. I am going to invite you to explore a few questions. It is okay to take time to think. There is no need for quick answers. We can then aim to summarise the themes you highlight."

"What are the principles you believe in following in your life or work? If you wish, you can brainstorm ideas under the following heading."

*"The principles I want to follow
in my life or are these. I want:*

"To ...

"To ...

"To ...

Imagine that the person has outlined some of the principles they want to follow. Bearing in mind their strengths, you can then invite them to focus on the following themes.

The specific activity they want to focus on where may have the ability to deliver excellence;

The specific principles they want to follow when pursuing this activity;

The specific goal they want to achieve by building on their strength and following their principles.

Imagine that you have explored these themes with the person. If appropriate, you may invite them to complete something like the following framework. They could then follow this to continue their development.

Personal Strengths

*The specific activity that I want to focus on where
I may have the ability to deliver excellence is:*

*

Principles

*The specific principles I want to follow
when pursuing this activity are:*

*

*

*

Positive Results

The specific goal I would like to achieve when building on this strength and following these principles is:

*

The specific benefits of achieving this goal would be:

*

*

*

Imagine that the person has chosen to create such a plan. It can then be time to move on to the next theme.

Positive Results

This step involves the person translating their ideas into action. Different people will do this in different ways. If appropriate, you can invite them to consider some of the following themes.

"Let's move on to your action plan. What is the specific activity you want to do? What are the results you want to achieve when doing these activity? What will be the benefits of achieving these goals?"

"How can you follow your principles when doing this activity? What are the strategies you can follow to give yourself the greatest chance of success? How can you translate these into action? How can you get some quick successes?"

"How can you build on your strengths when doing the activity? How can you follow your successful style of working? How can you deliver consistently high standards? How can you compensate for any weaknesses?"

"How can you focus on continuous improvement? How can you build on what is working? How can you tackle areas for improvement? How can you find solutions to challenges?"

"How can you do your best to reach your goals? How can you follow your successful pattern for finishing? How can you deliver the goods? How can you, if appropriate, add that touch of class?"

You can continue to encourage the person. It will be up to them, of course, to do their best. You can help them along the way, however, by passing on knowledge that can help them to achieve their goals.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the personal strengths, principles and positive results approach?

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

The Personal Strengths, Principles And Positive Results Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Positive Differentiator Approach

The Positive Differentiator Approach

This is an approach that can be used to help a person to develop their positive differentiator and deliver success.

- *They can build on their strengths to develop their positive differentiator.*
- *They can deliver success based on their positive differentiator.*
- *They can share knowledge based on their positive differentiator.*

There are many ways to help a person to shape their career. Sometimes it can involve helping them to do satisfying work and earn a salary that supports their chosen lifestyle.

Sometimes it involves going another step and helping them to develop a positive differentiator. This can increase their chances of them being considered for doing stimulating work and delivering success.

The following pages describe how this approach works. Let's explore how a person can be helped to take the following steps.

They can build on their strengths to develop their positive differentiator

Imagine that you are helping somebody who is presently in work but wants to develop a more satisfying career. One approach is: a) to clarify

the person's strengths; b) to clarify how to develop these into being a positive differentiator.

How you do this will depend on the person's strengths and specific goals. The following pages describe how this approach worked with one person I mentored. They worked in sports but similar principles can be followed to help people in other fields.

Dave, a highly qualified football coach, had hit a major obstacle. Finishing playing at the age of 22, he worked in club academies and threw himself into gaining coaching badges. Six years later he got the highest possible qualification recognised by FIFA.

Continuing on an upwards spiral, Dave's career saw him take academy roles in top clubs. Then came a shock. The new manager taking over his current club decided to replace the academy staff with his own friends.

Dave applied for many jobs but suffered disappointment. Some clubs did not reply, some said he was over-qualified, some chose to recruit retired players with few coaching qualifications.

Needing to make ends meet, Dave began offering specific coaching sessions to lower league and amateur clubs. This bore some fruit – mainly through being hired by people in his network – but produced little money.

Dave and I then began working together. The first step was to get more work to pay the bills. This proved to be testing but he managed to get enough to pay the mortgage and feed his family.

The second step was to work towards achieving his long-term goals. Bearing these in mind, we began by clarifying Dave's strengths. These included the following:

He was positive, personable and professional;

He was a great practitioner and got rave reviews for the coaching sessions he led in the classroom and on the field;

He was a good writer who could produce articles that described practical tools that players and coaches could use to achieve success.

How to build on these strengths? After some discussion, the approach we took was for him to publish articles in coaching magazines and on websites such as Linked In. At first he was uncertain about this approach. He expressed this view in the following way:

"But I will be giving all my secrets away."

Dave needed a shop window, however, to show his knowledge. Whilst some people may steal the ideas, publishing articles was one way he could reach a wider audience. It would also help to develop a positive differentiator.

He produced around ten articles over the next six months. These focused on topics such as:

How to set the tone when taking over as a coach ... How to translate a playing style into action on the field ... How to make good use of set-pieces ... How to learn from the world's most successful academies.

Dave continued to apply for full-time jobs in clubs. This proved dispiriting and he began to lose confidence. One key issue was that he needed to reach a certain target audience. These were modern thinkers in the game who would be more likely to appreciate what he offered.

The breakthrough came twelve months after leaving his former club. An international football consultancy called to see if he may be interested in doing freelance work. They positioned this in the following way.

"We like the articles you have published. The themes you describe relate to the workshops we run for football clubs across the world.

"Would you be interested in working as a freelancer and contributing to these workshops? We provide coaches with many frameworks, but you could bring these to life with your experiences.

"We anticipate you would do around six days a month for us at a rate of £500 a day plus expenses. The workshops would be in Europe, USA and South America. Would you be interested?"

Dave would have preferred a full-time role in a club but this was a great opportunity. Whilst the money was welcome, the bonus was working with famous clubs across the world.

The previous twelve months had been difficult, but developing his positive differentiator had paid off. This led to the next step that is often taken by some professionals.

They can deliver success based on their positive differentiator

Dave threw himself into contributing to the workshops but there was a challenge. The consultancy company majored on certain themes when running sessions for coaches. They therefore wanted Dave to relate his input to these themes.

He found this difficult at first. During one of our conversations he expressed this in the following way.

"I am not sure I can fit in with their approach. The frameworks they give are good but theoretical. I feel cramped trying to follow that approach."

During our sessions we discussed how he could take certain steps. Eventually he found it was possible:

To build on several of key themes that the company focused on during the workshops;

To complement these with specific football examples and practical tips that resonated with the coaches;

To get permission from the company to translate the themes into action by adding several on-field sessions to the workshop.

The company began to recognise that Dave's expertise helped to differentiate them from others in their field. They offered him more work - though still in a freelance role - including leading practical workshops for football academies across the world.

Dave's work went well for eighteen months but then came Covid. Whilst the company tried to adapt - such as offering virtual mentoring sessions for coaches - it eventually decided to cut costs. This led to his role disappearing.

He had built savings from his freelance work but he worried about the future. Whilst the football world closed down, he chose to publish more articles on social media and in coaching magazines. This helped to position what he could offer after Covid.

Dave managed to land some project work when the restrictions were eased. The football authorities in his country advertised a role that involved auditing their academies. It was not his ideal job but his track record qualified him for the role.

Being fully professional, Dave did a fine job on the project, but he worried about how his career was developing. He wanted to get back into full-time work with a club. This is when events provided fresh opportunities.

Many football clubs had taken a big financial hit during the pandemic. This led to some rethinking their approaches. Whilst the elite clubs could still pay huge transfer fees, some others needed to produce their own players. This called for investing in their academies.

Dave's fortunes then changed dramatically. A person he had worked with in the past was recruiting academy staff for a Premier League club. The club had decided:

To clarify the club's philosophy and playing style;

To employ coaches who would translate this playing style into action in the academy;

To produce players who could play for the first team or make a living in football.

The club wanted somebody to oversee this process at academy level. The ideal candidate would be highly qualified, a good practitioner and have experience working in different cultures. Would Dave be interested?

Dave performed well at the interview stage and was offered a permanent position. He is now heading the process of encouraging the academy coaches and players:

To follow the club's philosophy and playing style;

To translate this into practice both on and off the field;

To continue to develop as people and professionals.

This sounds like a fairy tale but it actually happened. Dave realises it may take years for the approach to bear fruit, however, so he is also taking the next step that is followed by some professionals.

*They can share knowledge based
on their positive differentiator*

Dave has learned valuable lessons over the years. Bearing these in mind, he is following a three-pronged strategy for shaping the future. He is continuing:

To perform superb work helping to produce players for the Premier League club;

To speak at football seminars and publish articles that highlight what academies do to develop their coaches and players;

To run occasional guest coaching sessions for international under-21 teams.

Dave does all this with the blessing of the club. They ask him to follow certain guidelines when doing outside work, however, such as not disclosing confidential information. But they also see benefits.

These include building the club's reputation for being a great place for coaches and young players. They also want to make the club attractive to parents of promising youngsters.

Today some people in the football world have become more open about the principles they aim to follow. Whilst it may seem counter-intuitive to share knowledge, they recognise the old adage:

Many people will be interested in the principles you follow but few of them will be serious about actually putting these into practice.

Dave's presentations are well-received at seminars. Afterwards he is sometimes approached by young coaches who want to know how he planned his career. He describes this in the following way.

"They say things like: 'Your career seems to have proceeded in a logical way. How did you manage to plan it to get to your present role?' If only they knew."

Different people craft their careers in different ways. One approach is to build on their strengths and develop a positive differentiator. It is then to be savvy, do superb work and deliver 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 positive differentiator approach?

You may want to do this when helping another person or maybe when shaping your own professional life. How can you apply this approach 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.

The Positive Differentiator Approach

The specific situation where 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 Putting A Name To The Professional Role You Play Approach

You Can Put A Name To The Professional Role You Play To Help People Or Deliver Positive Results

This is an approach that people can find useful when describing the professional role they play. Some may describe the work they do in terms of a well-known role. They may say, for example:

"I Am A ... Nurse ... Gardener ... Engineer ... Teacher ... Chef ... Counsellor ... Footballer ... Journalist ... Theatre Director ... Campaigner ... etc."

Some people may find it harder to describe the work they do. This may be because: a) they work in a new field; b) they combine elements from different roles; c) they can't find a title that describes what they do.

Imagine that you want to put a name to the professional role you play. One approach is to focus on the work you do to, for example, help people or deliver positive results. It is then to explore the following themes.

*You can describe the work you love to do
that helps people or delivers positive results*

What is the work you love to do? You may enjoy encouraging people, shaping environments, passing on knowledge, solving technical problems, orchestrating things, doing pacesetting work or doing another activity.

*You can find a theme in the work you love to
do that helps people or delivers positive results*

You may find several themes. If so, try to find one that stands out. Don't worry if this seems a generic theme – such as creator, healer, architect, builder, etc. You can be more specific later on.

Looking at my own work, I love to be an encourager. The way I do this is by helping people to build on their strengths, follow strategies that work and achieve their picture of success.

Different people will have different themes. Here are some examples.

"I often act as an orchestrator. Bearing in mind the company's aims, I then orchestrate people's strengths to achieve the goals."

"I enable people to become architects of their own lives. I pass on knowledge that they can use to shape their futures."

"I am a mediator. I help people to build on what they have in common and find solutions to conflicts."

Imagine that you have found a theme in the work you do. You can then move on to the next stage.

*You can try to put a name to role you play when
aiming to help people or deliver positive results*

This step involves lots of brainstorming and creativity. Looking at the positive work you do, try to think of a name for the role you play.

As mentioned earlier, a person may work as an encourager, orchestrator, mediator, healer or in another role. Some people invent a name that provides an indication of what they do when performing their chosen work.

Richmond Stace, for example, sees himself as a Pain Coach. He provides practical help that enables people to manage pain and go on to live positive lives.

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

The Work I Love To Is:

* *I love to ...*

*The Possible Name I Can Put The Role I Play When
Aiming To Help People Or Deliver Positive Results Is:*

* *I aim to act as ...*

This is not an easy task. But some people find it liberating to put a name to the role they play when aiming to do positive work.

Imagine that you have found a name that you are reasonably comfortable with. If you wish, try tackling the further exercise on this theme.

Describe the possible name you can put to the role you play when aiming to help people or deliver positive results.

Describe the specific things you do to translate this role into action.

Describe the specific benefits – to all the various stakeholders – of doing this kind of work.

Here is the exercise. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

Putting A Name To The Professional Role I Play

The possible name I can put to the role I play when aiming to help people or deliver positive results is:

*

The specific things I do to translate this role into action when doing the work are:

*

*

*

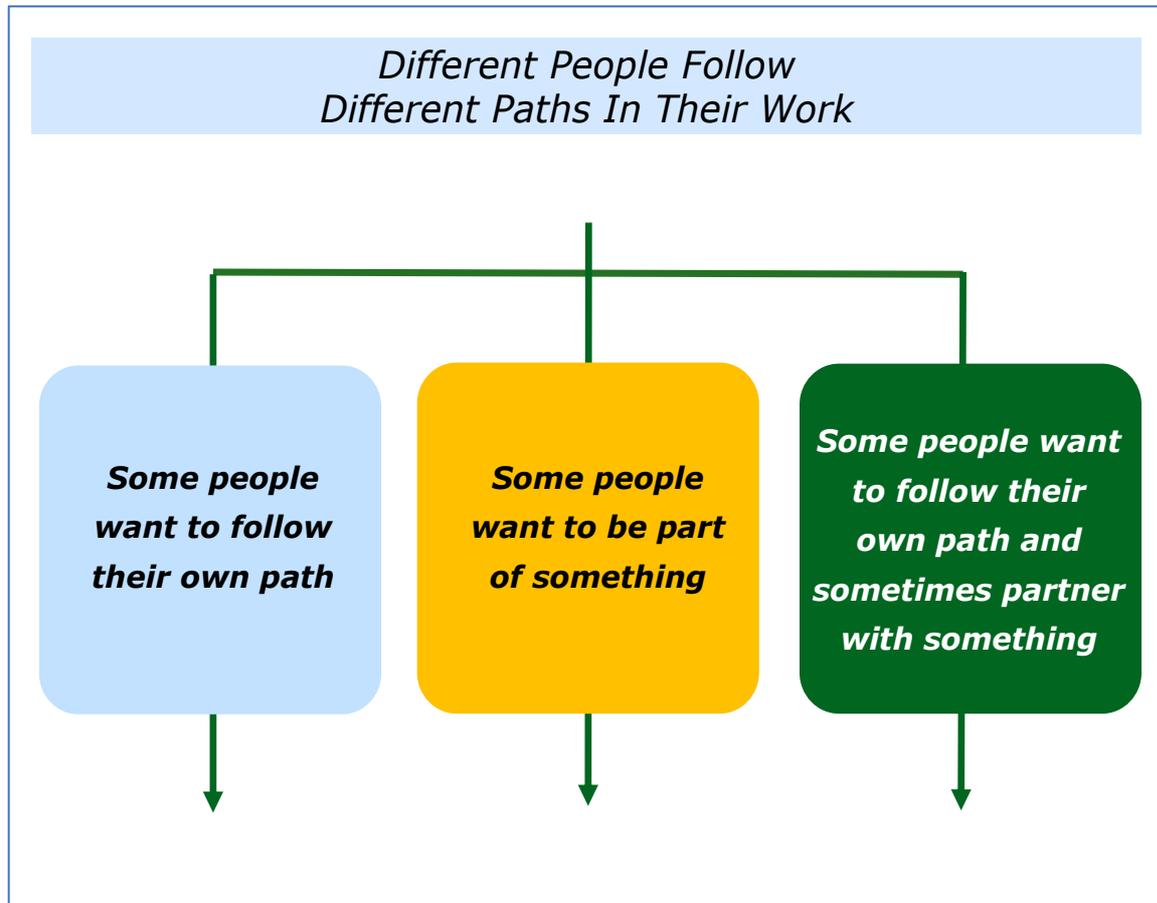
The specific benefits – to the various stakeholders - of doing this work can be:

*

*

*

The Different Paths People Follow In Their Work Approach



Different people choose to follow different paths in their work. Sometimes they may also choose to pursue a combination of paths. Let's explore some of the routes they may take.

Some people want to follow their own path

Some people like to pursue their own path. They like to build on their own strengths, follow their own strategies and work in their own way towards achieving success.

Such individuals like to feel in control. Whilst they may get stimulation from within and from outside sources, they like to make their own decisions.

People who follow this path may work as artists, writers, singers, craft workers or certain kinds of specialists. They may work as therapists, trusted advisors, knowledge workers or in other fields.

Such individuals may have started following this path relatively early in life. One person expressed this in the following way.

"I have always been happy learning by myself. Sometimes I found ways to stay at home from school so that I could do things I enjoyed. I loved to invent games, read and explore.

"Sometimes I had an odd reaction to groups. Most of the time I seemed to observe them from the outside. But at other times I jumped in to take the lead.

"Nowadays I do lots of specialist work by myself. This also involves me making presentations to groups of senior leaders who need to make key decisions.

"My approach is to be more like an educator than an evangelist. It is to share knowledge and offer them options for going forwards. This seems to work and I continue to get work.

"Fortunately I continue to learn. It is enjoyable to add to my knowledge base and also develop ideas that I can pass on people."

Some people want to be part of something

Some people like to be part of something. They like to be part of a group, a cause, a team, a company or another entity. They may also get energy from being part of a group that is working towards a specific goal.

Some pursue this approach in their personal life. They may play a team sport, sing in a choir, join a study group, work for a cause or do another communal activity.

Some pursue this approach in their professional life. They may work in a team, organisation or company. They may be part of an academic, government or other institution.

Different people may take this approach for different reasons. They may enjoy a sense of belonging, feel more secure, believe in the mission or see it as a good way to enhance their careers.

Some people recognise the pluses of this approach. They may like the collegiate environment, get stimulation and enjoy working towards specific goals.

They also recognise the potential minuses of this approach. They may have limited autonomy, experience challenging cultures or be at the mercy of changes in the market. They may also be institutionalised.

Some people want to follow their own path and sometimes partner with something

Some people combine elements of different approaches. They may spend much of the time following their own path, for example, but also sometimes partner with other people, teams or organisations.

This is a path that may be followed by some specialists, researchers, scientists and knowledge workers. It may be followed by some creative workers, singers, performing artists and people in other fields.

They enjoy being in charge of their own work. There may be times, however, when they want to contribute to a project, team, organisation or other entity.

Such individuals often do their due diligence before taking this step. They then aim to build on their strengths, make clear contracts and make their best contribution towards achieving the picture of success.

Let's return to your own work. Looking to the future, what may be the path – or combination of paths – you want to follow? How can you do this in your own way? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

My Chosen Path

*The specific path – or combination of paths –
I want to follow in my work in the future is:*

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Opportunities Approach



Some people have a positive frame of mind and apply it in many situations. They are good at reading reality and exploring the possible scenarios. Such people may then aim:

To focus on the opportunities and options ... To take ownership of pursuing their chosen option ... To do their best to deliver the desired outcomes.

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 these have to do with their background. Sometimes it depends on how they choose to view life.

Some people reach to a point in their lives where they choose to take the positive route. This involves them focusing on the following themes.

Opportunities

Everybody encounters both successes and setbacks in life. The attitude they take can influence both their own and other people's futures. Let's look at examples of people who focus on the opportunities in situations.

Person A – Focusing On Opportunities

During a mentoring session the CEO of a company outlined the following challenges. Here is a summary of what they described.

"The headline is that things are going well for the company. We made lots of changes during the Covid pandemic and those have helped us to be successful.

The changes involved going back to basics. We chose: a) to focus on what we did best; b) to focus the customers with whom we worked best; c) to create the best kind of working environment for our people.

"Since then we have managed to improve both our customer service and our profits. The internal morale score has also gone up. These are all good signs.

"But now there are several challenges. During the past month the following things have happened.

"First, the people from whom we rent the office have said that our ten-year lease is going to be cut to five years. We could try to fight this but I am not sure it is worth.

"We have a hybrid working system but many people still enjoy coming into the office. Some do this only a few days a week but we try to put on special events that provide inspiration for people.

"Second, two of our senior leaders have been headhunted. This is good for them but presents us with a challenge. I think we can turn this into an opportunity but would like to explore the possibilities.

"Third, one of our top clients is going to be taken over. They enjoy working with us and the service we provide. But it is likely that future decisions about their spend with us will be reviewed.

"My guess is that the company acquiring them will put the contract out to tender or bring in their own preferred supplier. It will then be up to us to choose how we respond."

Looking ahead, we explored the opportunities in each situation. These included the following options.

*The Work Place Move –
The Potential Opportunities Are:*

To review whether we really need such a big work place ... To save money ... To use the move as a Trojan Horse for creating a new way of working ... To move to an even better work place.

To explore with our staff what they do and don't want in a work place ... To involve our staff in helping to design the work place ... To use the move to hold a series of launch events with our clients.

*The Senior Leaders Moving On –
The Potential Opportunities Are:*

To make positive changes to the leadership team ... To have a core leadership team rather than one that has kept growing as we have taken over more companies ... To give those leaders more autonomy to run their parts of the business.

To promote some of the positive people in our company ... To use this as an opportunity to move some people into places where they are more able to play to their strengths ... To continue to build our reputation as a company where people can develop and move on in their careers.

*The Top Client Being Taken Over -
The Potential Opportunities Are:*

To continue to deliver great service to the client ... To connect with the key people in the acquiring company and show we understand their goals ... To show how we would like to continue to help them to achieve success.

To plan how to potentially replace this client ... To have a dedicated task force that will take urgent action to develop ways to make up for any potential loss of income ... To devote even more time to the clients who love us and maybe get more repeat business.

Different people will obviously explore different options depending on the situation. Whatever options they produce, however, they may then go on to the next stage.

Ownership

Imagine that a person has considered the potential options for going forwards. They may then take ownership for pursuing their chosen option or a combination of options.

Different people will do this in different ways and much depends on the specific situation. The following section looks at the route taken by one person who faced a challenging issue.

*Person B – Taking Ownership
For Pursuing Their Chosen Option*

Everybody encounters both successes and setbacks in life. Their attitude they take can influence both their own and other people's futures.

Person B chose to reframe an illness as opportunity to pursue their chosen option. This sounds challenging but here is a summary of how they explained the situation.

"During one of my annual health checks I got warning signals about a possible cancer. This led to more tests and confirmation of the illness. At the time this was scary.

"Looking back, however, it provided a wake-up call. I would not wish the illness on anybody, but it helped my partner and I to focus on what is important in life.

"I recognise it is my responsibility to take care of my health. Bearing this in mind, I gathered information from reputable sources about the treatments available.

"This meant I was reasonably well-informed when meeting to discuss the ways forward. The consultant was excellent. They outlined the possible options, the chances of success and the possible side effects.

"My initial thought had been to go for the most radical option. It came with potential side effects, however, such as incontinence. This seemed too big a risk.

"Bearing this in mind, I chose to follow the route of radiotherapy. This stood a good chance of success. It also had the potential for limited side effects.

"So what was the opportunity? My partner and I talked about our aims – both as individuals and as a couple. This enabled us to clarify what we wanted to do in the rest of our lives.

"Looking back, the illness helped us to develop a sense of perspective. We now do more of the things we love and see each day as a bonus. We also have an increased appreciation of life."

Person B was helped by medics who believed in the principle of body autonomy. There are many times when it is vital to listen to the opinion of specialists. But it still the person's right to take ownership for their own decisions. Here is how this described by the British Medical Association.

In medical practice, autonomy is usually expressed as the right of competent adults to make informed decisions about their own medical care.

The principle underlies the requirement to seek the consent or informed agreement of the patient before any investigation or treatment takes place.

Looking back at your own life, can you think of a situation where: a) you explored the potential opportunities; b) you took ownership for pursuing your chosen option? You may have then focused on the next theme.

Outcomes

Different people explore different opportunities and pursue different options. Whatever the route they take, however, many do their best to achieve the desired outcomes. Let's look at an organisation that supports people who take this approach.

Echoing Green – Supporting People Who Do Their Best To Achieve The Desired Outcomes

Echoing Green supports people who pursue opportunities whilst others may focus only on obstacles. It was founded in 1987 by leaders of General Atlantic. Since then it has supported thousands of social entrepreneurs who have worked to improve life on the planet.

The name comes from William Blake's poem *Echoing Green*. The poem combines the joy of life with the realisation that we are only here for a short time. We can nurture and care for the Earth so that others may enjoy it in the future.

Echoing Green therefore supports people who aim to encourage both present and future generations. Below are some excerpts from its website.

Echoing Green

The organisation supports social entrepreneurs who aim to make a positive impact in the following areas.



Climate Change



Education



Health



Human Rights



Poverty



Racial Justice

About Us

Our mission is to unleash next generation talent to solve the world's biggest problems.

We believe positive change is only possible when you live boldly, taking responsibility for finding your unique role in making the world a better place.

Echoing Green's premier program is its highly competitive global Fellowship, which provides more than \$2 million in seed support to a diverse group of emerging social entrepreneurs every year.

From thousands of applicants, typically fewer than one percent are ultimately selected to receive up to \$90,000 over two years to support the launch of their new organizations.

DISCOVERING VISIONARY LEADERS

We find and support people with the best ideas to positively impact the world. Through our intensive 18 month fellowship program and beyond, we provide the tools they need to bring their solutions to life and lead transformative change.

901

leaders who have kickstarted ideas with our help

86+

countries in which they're making a difference

\$54M

total invested in Fellows

80%

of Fellows remain in the social sector



There are many ways to live life. Some people choose to have a positive frame of mind and apply it in many situations. They focus on the opportunities, pursue their chosen option and aim to deliver the desired outcomes.

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? 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 Opportunities Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

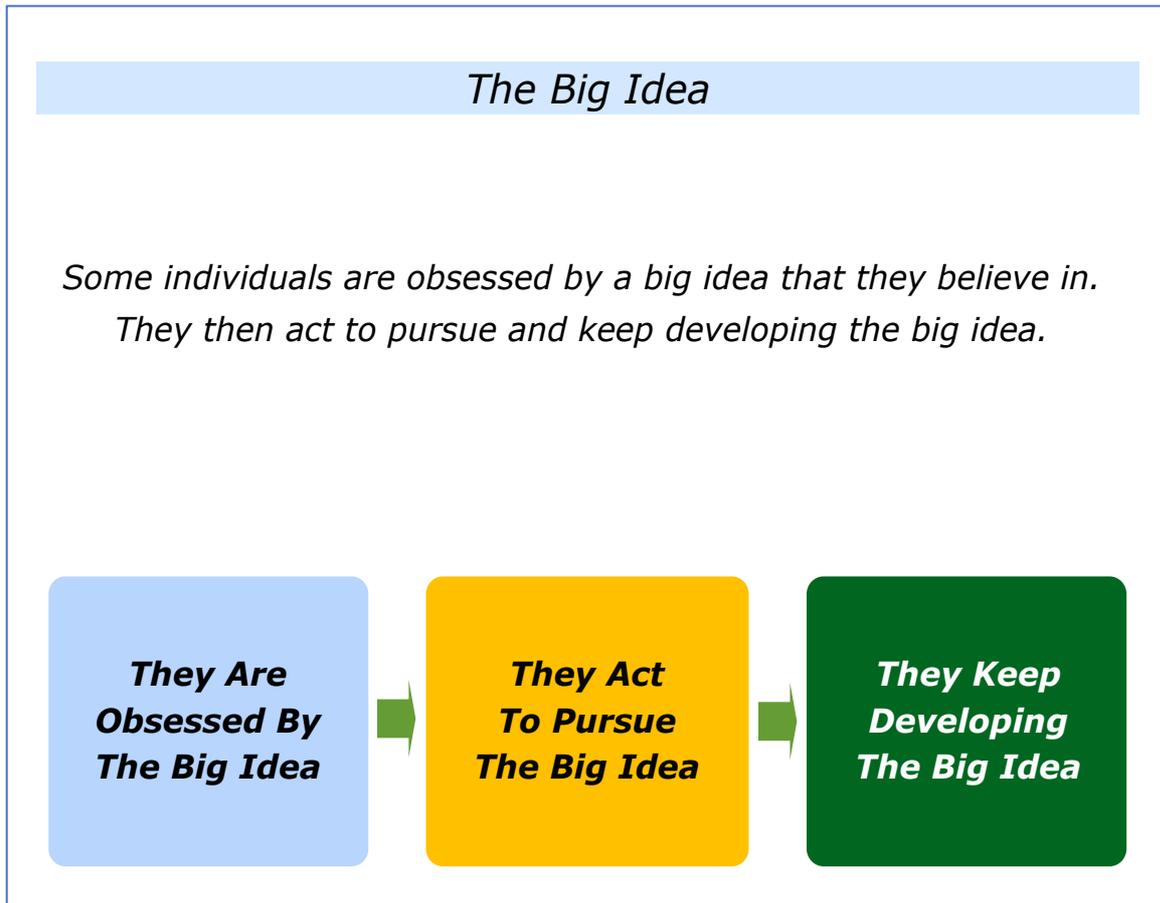
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Big Idea Approach



Some people follow elements of this approach in their lives and work. Some do this by focusing on the following themes.

They Are Obsessed By The Big Idea

Some individuals are obsessed by a big idea. They are single-minded and cut out the other things happening around them. They may aim to follow a certain philosophy, pursue certain principles or do a certain project.

Some translate this into aiming to achieve a specific goal. They may aim to write a book, take political action, find a medical cure, invent a product, win an Olympic Gold Medal or achieve another aim.

Some people manage their obsession in positive ways. They may be able to balance caring for their loved ones with exploring their big idea. Whilst

encouraging other people, they may also encourage themselves by setting aside blocks of time to pursue their compelling passion.

Different people are obsessed by different ideas. Here are some of the ideas they may mention.

The Big Idea That I Am Obsessed With Is:

How to encourage people ... How to help people to take care of their health ... How to make music that inspires people ... How to help people with a certain kind of cancer.

How to find solutions to conflicts ... How to produce software that simplifies people's lives ... How to do sustainable farming ... How to inspire people to take care of the planet.

Some individuals go further than being obsessed by an idea. They move on to the next stage.

They Act To Pursue The Big Idea

Some individuals want to translate their big idea into action. Different people do this in different ways. Let's look at some examples.

Penny Brohn wanted to help women to have more options for taking care of themselves when being diagnosed with cancer. This led to her setting up the Bristol Cancer Help Centre.

Susan Cain wanted to help introverts. This led to her writing *Quiet: The power of introverts in a world that can't stop talking*. Her work has helped many people to channel their introversion in a positive way.

Wangari Maathai believed in helping to heal the Earth. She chose to focus on planting trees and starting the Green Belt Movement. This has led to people planting many millions of trees in Kenya.

Different people pursue their obsession in different ways. This can then lead to the next stage.

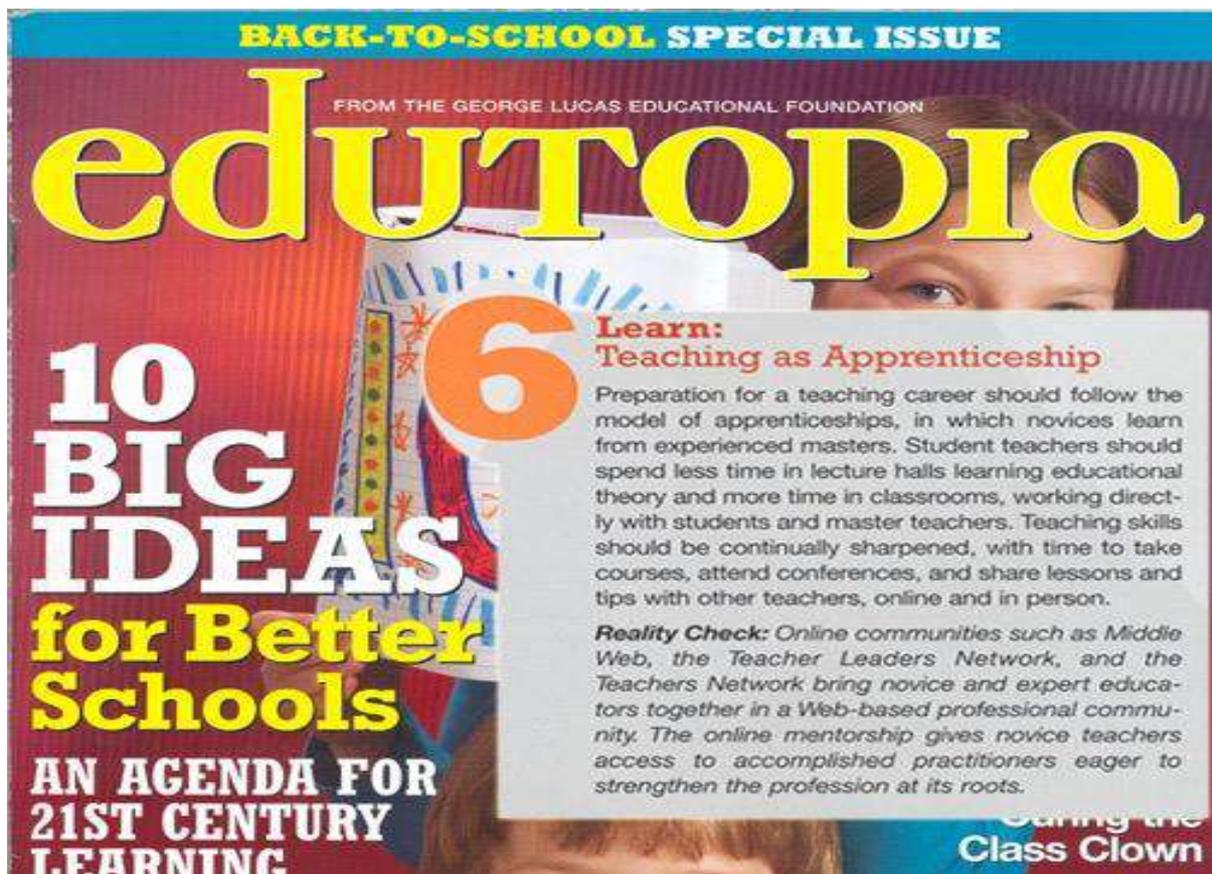
They Keep Developing The Big Idea

Some individuals love to keep returning to their big idea. They love to find ways to polish and improve it. Sometimes this can become a lifetime obsession. They find different ways to express and develop the big idea.

Some do it through writing articles, publishing books and teaching seminars. Some do it through refining the service, product, medicine, invention or other things they offer. Some do it by adding to the knowledge they aim to pass on to people.

George Lucas is somebody who took the latter approach. Best known for his films, he also wanted to provide educators with ideas and tools they could use to inspire their students.

He founded the website *Edutopia – What Works In Education*. Here is an introduction.



OUR VISION

We believe that improving education is the key to the survival of the human race.

We envision a new world of learning, one 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, policymakers, 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, the evidence, and the community connections to make it a reality.

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



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to focus on a big idea. Some people find such an idea, some people may find that the idea finds them. They may then pursue and keep developing their obsession.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a big idea you would like to pursue? If you wish, try brainstorming under the following heading.

The Big Idea That I Would Like To Pursue Is:

How to ...

Looking ahead, how can you pursue this idea in your own way? How can you then keep developing the big idea? 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 Big Idea Approach

*The big idea that I
would like to pursue is:*

*

*The specific things I can do to pursue and
keep developing this idea in my own way are:*

*

*

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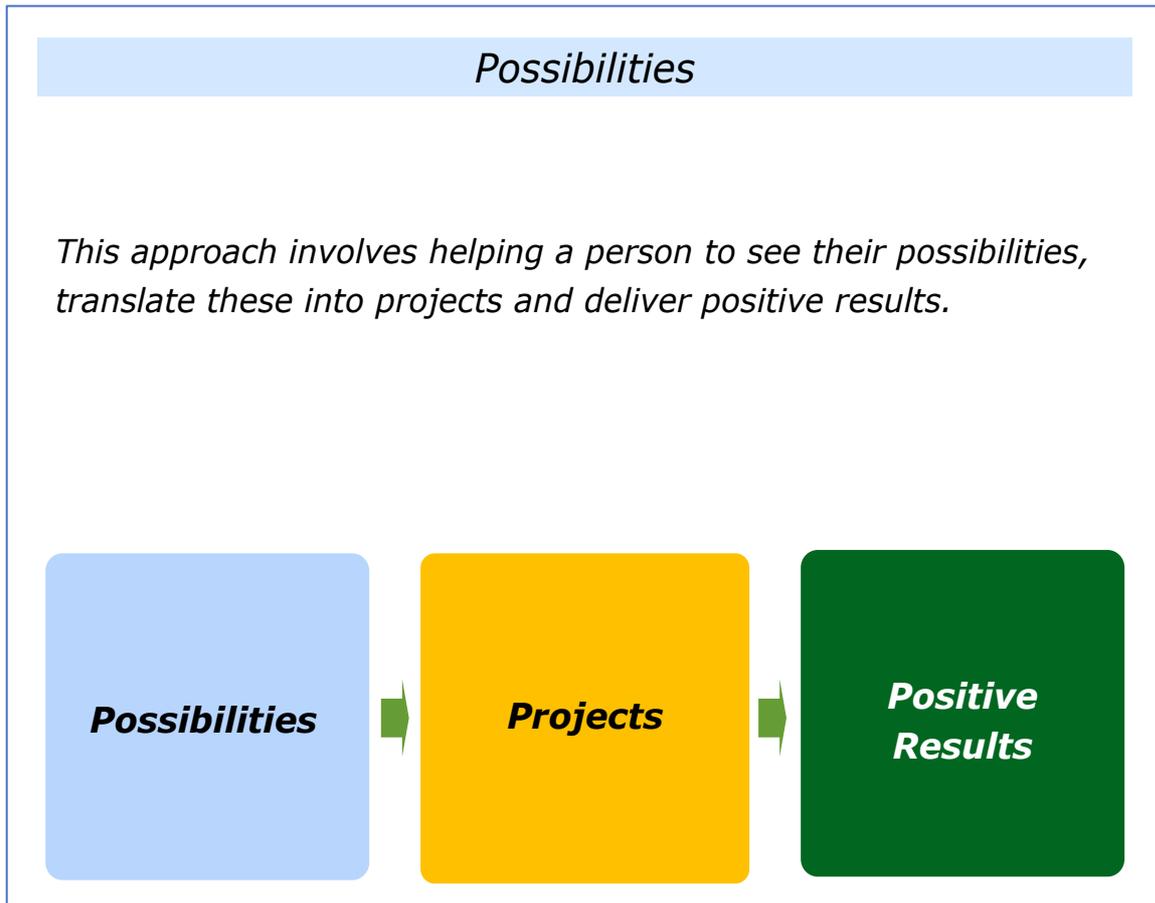
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The 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:

*

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

*

*

*

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

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*

The People Who See Success Approach



Pioneers and other people have specific abilities in certain situations. They see strategies and solutions to achieve success. They then use their skills to do good work themselves or help others to achieve their goals. Such people often take the following steps.

They See Success

Some individuals go into specific situations and quickly see the picture of success. They may do this when encouraging a person, pursuing a specific activity or tackling certain challenges.

Such a person aims to gather information. Sometimes they have the ability to hover above the situation and see patterns. They then focus on the real results to achieve and translate these into a clear picture of success.

They See Strategies For Success

Such an individual explores the possible ways forward. Drawing on their experience of what works, they consider various scenarios for achieving the desired results.

Sometimes the person buys time to think. Reflecting on the various options, they explore any other possibilities. They then focus on the potential strategy for achieving success.

They See Solutions For Success

Such a person is good at finding solutions in certain situations. Sometimes they begin by rehearsing their chosen strategy, anticipating challenges and finding solutions.

They are also good at managing unexpected events. When these happen, they again buy time to think and explore the possible solutions. Settling on their chosen strategy, they clarify how it can be translated into action to achieve the desired results.

Some people are good at such strategic thinking and then passing on this knowledge to other people. Some may also have the skills required to translate the strategy into action.

Let's return to your own work. Can you think of a specific situation where you can see the strategies and solutions required to achieve success? How can you make use of this ability in the future?

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

The Seeing Success Approach

The specific situation where I may have the ability to see the strategies and solutions required to achieve success may be:

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The specific things I can do to make use of this ability in the future are:

*

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*

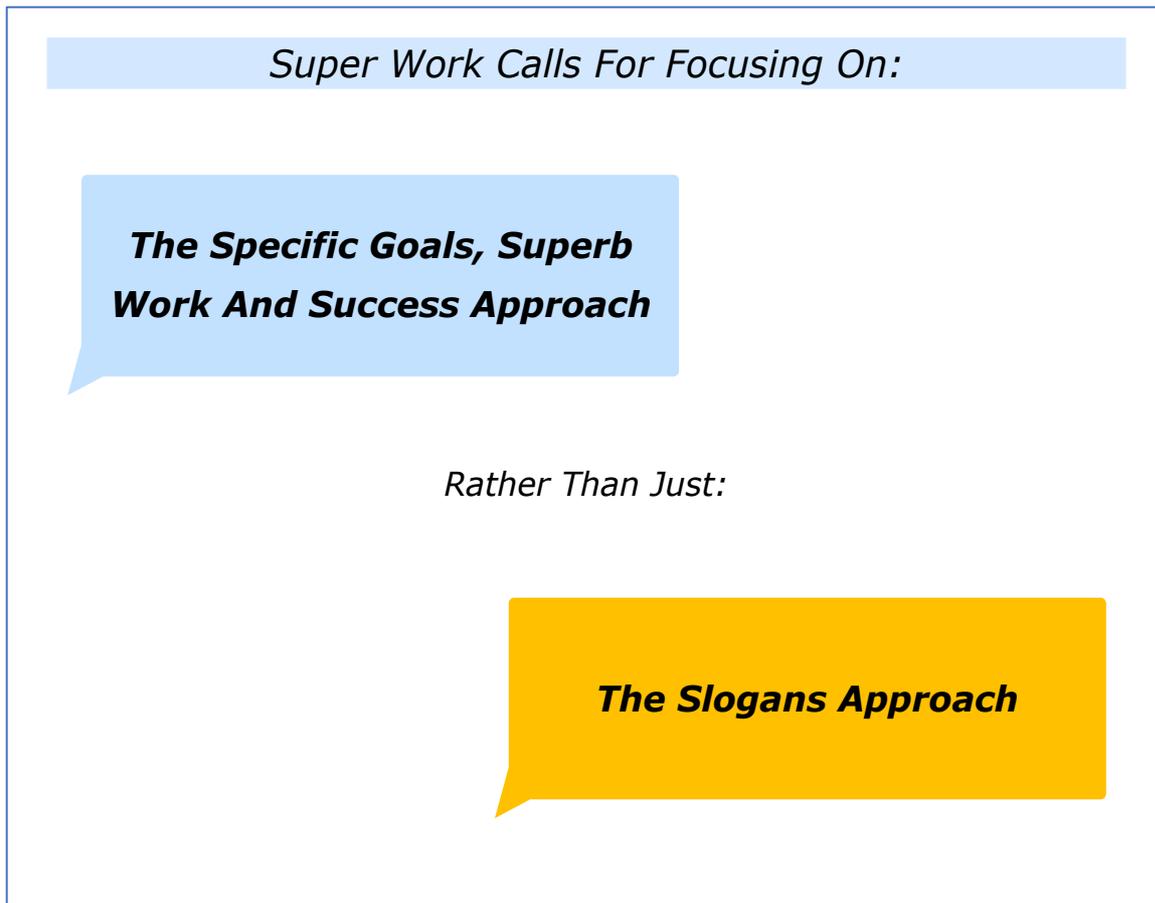
The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:

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*

*

The Superb Work Approach Rather Than Just The Slogans Approach



Great workers often build on their strengths and are serious about delivering the goods. They focus on setting specific goals, doing superb work and delivering success.

Some people have a different approach. They keep repeating slogans but seldom do substantial work. Some politicians, for example, remain in campaign mode even after gaining office. They are interested in grabbing attention rather than doing the work of governing.

Some workers are prepared to do substantial work, however, and see this as the key to delivering success. They may do this by focusing on the following themes.

Specific Goals

Great workers often start by building on their strengths and setting specific goals. Let's explore these themes.

Such workers build on who they are rather than try to be something they are not. They follow the usual steps for building on their strengths. They focus on the specific activities where:

They get positive energy and have ability to perform superb work;

They translate one of these activities into doing a specific project;

They clarify the real results they want to achieve and translate these into a clear picture of success.

They realise there is a lot of work to do going beyond the catchy slogan or sound bite. Bearing this in mind, they clarify the pluses and minuses involved in doing the work. They may then commit to the project and move on to the next stage.

Superb Work

Great workers love to do work that involves their heart, head and – in its widest meaning – their hands. They love to do superb work that brings something into being.

Different people do this in different ways. Some aim to pursue the following themes:

They clarify the strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success;

They translate the strategies into a clear their action plan and get some early successes;

They embody the ethic of continuous improvement and continue to perform superb work on the way towards achieving success.

Such workers learn to encourage themselves on the journey. They often do this by organising their time in blocks, doing deep work and working towards deliverable goals. This can then lead to the next stage.

Success

Great workers aim to do superb and substantial work that goes beyond any catchy slogan. They like to do work that is solid, satisfying and, in some cases, may even be spectacular.

Different people do this in different ways. Some aim to pursue the following themes:

They follow their chosen strategies, keep improving and continue to perform superb work.

They buy time to find solutions to challenges and unexpected events that may occur on the journey;

They do their best to reach the goals and may also add that touch of class that enables them to achieve the picture of success.

There are many ways to do fine work. Some people choose to follow the superb work approach rather than following the simply repeating slogans approach.

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 superb work 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 Superb Work Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Destination Approach

The Destination Approach

This approach involves starting from the destination. It involves clarifying the real results the person or the group of people want to achieve.

It then involves helping them: a) to choose the direction they want to pursue towards achieving their goal; b) to do what works; c) to do their best to reach their destination.



There are many models for helping people to reach their goals. This approach involves starting from their destination and clarifying the real results they want to achieve.

It then involves helping them: a) to choose the direction they want to pursue towards achieving their goals; b) to do what works; c) to do their best to reach their destination. Let's explore these themes.

Destination

Imagine that a person has asked you to help them to develop. It can be useful to clarify the topics they want to explore during the session.

There are several ways to take this approach. One way is to invite them to reflect and, if they have chance, to let you know some of these themes ahead of time. Looking at my own work, I send something like the following email to a person before our first session.

Hello ...

Looking forward to our session on ... As you know, we can explore any topics you wish.

For example:

How to build on your strengths ... How to do satisfying work ... How to build superb teams ... How to manage various stakeholders ... How to find solutions to specific challenges ... How to keep developing as a person and as a professional ... How to achieve your picture of success.

We can, of course, explore any other topics. The aim will be to focus on what is most relevant for you. We can then look at some of the practical tools you can use to achieve your goals.

If you get chance before the session, let me know if there are any particular themes or challenges it would be good to explore. Otherwise we can settle on these at the start of the session.

We will focus on each of the topics in turn and clarify the real results you want to achieve. If appropriate, I will then share some positive models and practical tools that you can use in your own way to achieve your goals.

These tools will be based on what works. You can then decide which route you want to follow towards achieving your aims.

We will keep going in the session until you feel you have enough ideas you can use in your own way to achieve your goals.

Looking forward to our session together.

The person may or may not have chance to outline the topics they want to explore. Whatever the person's response, however, it will be important to prepare properly for the session.

This may involve doing some research about the person. When doing so, it can be useful to focus on the following themes.

The person's present situation, the challenges they may face and their possible personal or professional goals;

The possible themes the person may want to explore during the session and the goals they may want to achieve;

The specific knowledge, models and tools you may be able to offer to help them to reach their goals.

Bearing these things in mind, it can be useful to mentally rehearse the session and make sure you have prepared properly. It will then be time to move on to the actual session. One approach is to focus on the following theme.

Clarifying The Destination

You may start the session by making the person feel welcome and the centre of your world. You may aim:

To create a positive environment where the person feels at ease and able to describe the themes they want to explore;

To focus on the first theme they want to explore and get more information about the situation;

To clarify the real results they want to achieve – the destination – and translate these into a clear picture of success.

When appropriate, you can focus on the first topic the person wants to explore. Bearing in mind what the person can control in the situation, it can be useful to invite them to consider the following questions.

What are the real results you want to achieve? What is the picture of success? What would be the benefits of achieving these goals? What will be happening that will show you have achieved the picture of success?

Let's assume you have explored these questions with the person. If appropriate, you can help them to clarify their aims in the following way. They can summarise their main goal in a headline and then complete the other parts to give a full picture.

Destination

*The specific goal
I want to achieve is:*

* *To...*

*The real results I want to
achieve by reaching this goal are:*

** To ...*

** To ...*

** To ...*

*The specific benefits of
achieving these results will be:*

** To ...*

** To ...*

** To ...*

Let's assume that you have taken this step and the person is clear on the destination. This has focused on 'What' they want to achieve and 'Why'. You can then move on to exploring the 'How'.

Direction

This step involves helping the person to focus on the direction they want to take towards reaching their destination. There are many ways to explore this step. One approach is to help the person:

To clarify the various possible routes they can take towards achieving their goal;

To clarify the pluses and minuses of each option and the attractiveness of each route;

To clarify the route they want to take and the strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success.

Bearing these things in mind, you may want to start by helping the person to explore the possible options. At some point you can focus on the strategies most likely to achieve success.

If appropriate, you may also ask the person if it is okay to share some ideas. They will probably say yes - but it is important to get their psychological permission.

You can then aim to pass on knowledge, models and tools they can use to achieve their goals. It will be up to the person which of these they want to use in their own way.

You can conclude this part of the session by inviting the person to settle on the direction they want to take - the route they want to follow - to work towards their goals.

Imagine that the person has worked through these stages. If appropriate, they may then summarise their thinking in the following way.

Direction

*The specific goal
I want to achieve is:*

** To...*

*The possible routes I can follow
towards achieving the goal are these:*

Option A Is:

** To ...*

The Pluses Are ...

The Minuses Are ...

The Attractiveness Rating Is ___ /10

Option B Is:

** To ...*

The Pluses Are ...

The Minuses Are ...

The Attractiveness Rating Is ___ /10

Option C Is:

** To ...*

The Pluses Are ...

The Minuses Are ...

The Attractiveness Rating Is ___ /10

Option D Is:

** To ...*

The Pluses Are ...

The Minuses Are ...

The Attractiveness Rating Is ___ /10

*The specific route I want to follow
to work towards achieving the goal is:*

** To ...*

*The specific strategies I can follow to give myself the
greatest chance of success when following this route are:*

** To ...*

** To ...*

** To ...*

Doing What Works

This step involves helping the person to translate their strategies into action. They then aim to get some early successes and encourages themselves on the journey. One approach is to help the person:

To clarify what works and rehearse following their chosen strategies towards their goal;

To follow their strategies, perform superb work and focus on continuous improvement;

To buy time to find solutions to challenges on the way towards achieving their goal.

Imagine the person has settled on their chosen strategies. If appropriate, you can help them to clarify how to translate these into action. One approach is to say something along the following lines.

Let's start by focusing on the strategies you want to follow. Looking at these strategies, let's explore what we know works.

Looking at the first strategy, when have you done something similar and achieved success? What were the principles you followed? How did you translate these into action? How can you take similar steps in the future?

When have other people followed similar strategies successfully? What were the principles they followed? How did they translate these into action? How can you follow some of these in your own way?

How can you prepare properly before moving into action? How can you rehearse following your chosen strategies? How can you rehearse anticipating and managing any challenges?

Let's look at when you move into action. How can you perform superb work? How can you get some early successes? How can you follow good habits? How can you follow your preferred way of working?

Let's focus on continuous improvement. How can you clarify what is working and continue to do these things? How can you clarify what you can do better and how? How can you implement these ideas?

How can you manage unexpected challenges? How can you buy time to think? How can you explore the potential solutions? How can you then settle on your chosen option and keep working towards your goals?

Imagine that the person has explored some of these themes. They have settled on what they want to do: a) to build on what works; b) to perform superb work; c) to focus on continuous improvement.

The person may then clarify the key things they can do to keep following these disciplines. One approach is to translate these into a positive mantra they want to keep reminding themselves of when doing the work. They may therefore do the following exercise.

Doing What Works

*The specific goal
I want to achieve is:*

** To...*

The specific things I want to keep focusing on doing – the mantra I want to follow – when aiming to do superb work are:

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

Destination

Imagine that the person is doing superb work. The final step involves encouraging and enable them to do their best to achieve their aims. One approach is to help them to focus on the following themes:

To clarify their successful pattern for finishing and follow it in this situation;

To do their best to achieve their aims and, when appropriate, add that touch of class to reach their destination;

To celebrate in their own way and, when appropriate, clarify what they have learned from the experience and how they can use this in the future.

Imagine that you are helping a person to explore some of these themes. One approach is to say something along the following lines.

Let's focus on your successful pattern for finishing. Looking back, when have you finished something similar successfully? What did you do right then? How can you follow similar principles in the future?

How can you keep doing superb work? How can you keep doing the basics and add the brilliance? How can you do your best to achieve the goal and, if appropriate, add that touch of class to reach the destination?

How can you celebrate in your own way afterwards? How can you, when appropriate, take time to reflect? How can you clarify: a) what you did well; b) what you could do even better in the future?

Imagine that the person has explored some of these themes. If appropriate, they may want to do the following exercise.

Destination

*The specific goal
I want to achieve is:*

* *To...*

*The specific things I can do to do
my best to reach the destination are:*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

There are many ways to help a person to develop. Bearing in mind the results they want to achieve, one approach is to clarify their chosen direction, do what works and then do their best to reach their destination.

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? You may wish to do this to help a person or to apply the ideas in your own life.

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

The Destination Approach

The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of the destination approach may be:

*

The specific things I can do then to follow elements of this approach are:

*

*

*

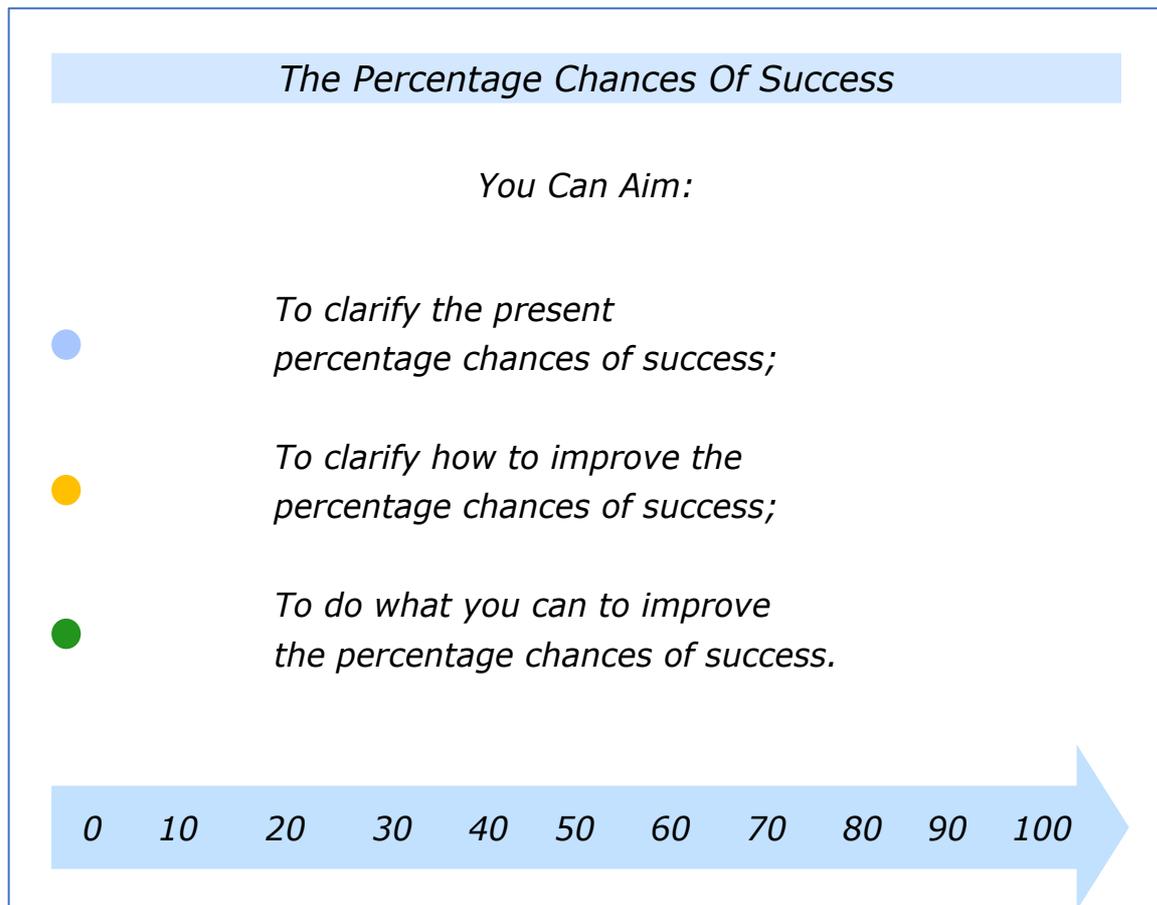
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

*

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The Percentage Chances Of Success Approach



This is an approach that is used in sports but it can be applied in other fields. It involves doing your best to improve the percentage chances of success.

Imagine that you want to follow this approach in your own work. You may be aiming to facilitate a mentoring session, run a project, lead a team, transform a culture or do another activity.

Let's assume that in this instance you are going to be leading a team which needs to deliver a particular project. Before applying for the role you did your due diligence.

You began by doing lots of research. Bearing in mind what you would be able to control, you rated the percentage chances of achieving success as 70% Plus. This led to you taking the next steps.

You Set Things Up To Succeed

You met with the key stakeholders and made clear contracts about: a) the results to achieve; - the picture of success; b) the support required; c) the things you would do to proactively keep them informed.

You then clarified the key strategies you could follow to achieve the picture of success. You also rehearsed following these strategies and managing any challenges along the way.

You also put the right people in the right places in the team. You also made clear contracts with each of them about their best contributions towards achieving the picture of success.

Let's assume that you have taken these steps. You have begun the work and got some idea of the reality facing the team. Bearing these factors in mind, you may explore the following themes.

You Can Clarify The Present Percentage Chances Of Success

Imagine that you have been leading the team for several months. The team has got some early successes and the work seems to be going reasonably well.

There may have been some events, however, that could begin to affect the team's performance. These could include some of the following:

Changes in the market – such as new competitors arriving and being able to move quicker than your company;

Changes in personnel – such as your manager, who was a key backer, moving on and being replaced by somebody who is an unknown quantity;

Changes in financial conditions – such as your organisation cutting costs and creating uncertainty;

Changes in your team – such as some people not performing as expected or some leaving for personal or other reasons;

Changes in other things you can't control – such as key customers leaving or changes in technology that are embraced by your competitors but not by your company.

Bearing these factors in mind, you can do a new reality check. Some of the findings may be challenging but you can then move towards finding solutions. You may want to explore the following questions.

How high would I rate the present percentage chances of achieving success?

Try to be as objective as possible when answering the question. Once you have given a percentage rating, then answer the following question.

What are some of the reasons why I have given this present percentage rating?

Imagine you have listed these reasons. Although you will get into more detail in the next section, it can be good to begin to lift your spirits by starting to explore the follow question.

What are the things we can do to maintain or improve the percentage chances of success?

Let's assume that you have explored these questions. It will then be time to move on to the next stage.

You Can Clarify How To Improve The Percentage Chances Of Success

Imagine that you have rated the chances as 70%. Bearing in mind what you can control in the situation, you can then brainstorm ideas under the following heading.

The specific things we can do to improve the percentage chances of success are:

To ...

To ...

To ...

Dare to describe lots of ideas – even those that may seem improbable. You can then move on to being selective and focusing on the actions you believe in.

As a leader, you may be able to implement some of these ideas without consulting with your key stakeholders but there may be others where you need their backing. Here are some of the ideas you may brainstorm.

We can aim:

To get some more quick success stories to show what is working and then go to our stakeholders to get more backing;

To be more selective by focusing on the specific areas where we stand the greatest chance of success rather than by spreading our resources too thinly;

To make changes in the team that will increase the chances of us achieving success;

To focus on the practical things we can do to build on what we can control and manage some of the things we can't control;

To produce several potential strategic options for going forwards - together with the pluses and minuses of each option - such as:

a) to pursue our present strategy with either our present resources, with added resources or fewer resources;

b) to pursue a more selective strategy – such as focusing on certain specific targets – and in this way improving the chances of success;

c) to pursue a potentially different strategy that builds on our strengths and will stand a good chance of achieving certain successes.

d) to meet the key stakeholders to outline the potential options – together with the pluses and minuses of each – plus any other options they can suggest and agree with them on the route going forwards.

Let's assume that you have explored the various options. This takes you to the next stage.

You Can Do What You Can To Improve The Chances Of Success

You may then take time to see the big picture and consider the potential options going forwards. Looking ahead, you may believe that, providing you and the team do your best, there is still a good chance of achieving success.

You can then aim: a) to focus on the potential actions that lie within your area of autonomy; b) to have translate some of these into action and get some early successes. This will create positive momentum.

You may then work with the team to keep focusing on the things that are in the Green, Amber and Red Zones. This will involve people doing the exploring exercises.

The Picture Of Success

*The specific goals we
want to achieve by ... are:*

** To ...*

** To ...*

** To ...*

*The specific benefits of
achieving these goals will be:*

** To ...*

** To ...*

** To ...*

The Green Zone

*The specific things that are going well in terms
of working towards the picture of success are:*

*The specific things we can
do to build on these are:*

The Amber Zone

The specific things where there are warning signs in terms of working towards the picture of success are:

*

*

*

The specific things we can do to move these into the green zone or take other actions are:

*

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*

The Red Zone

The specific things where there are real issues in terms of working towards the picture of success are:

*

*

*

The specific things we can do to make decisions about these and then manage the consequences are:

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*

Imagine that the team is doing superb work but there are still challenges. Some of these may be surmountable but others may pose more existential threats.

You can again rate the team's percentage chances of success and how to improve the chances. But you may reach a point when there needs to be a more radical appraisal.

You may look at the big picture and consider the possible ways forwards. This may lead to preparing to have a one-to-one session with your key stakeholder – the person who can make executive decisions. The stakeholder may want you to brief them ahead of time, however, because they may not like surprises.

Bearing this in mind you can prepare properly. This will involve giving the context and aiming:

To revisit the original picture of success and the benefits to the company;

To give an update on the successes so far and the potential challenges;

To outline the possible ways forward – together with the pluses and minuses of each option;

To invite the stakeholder to add any other possible options and, if they ask you, to offer your recommendations;

To invite the stakeholder to consider which route they would like you and the team to take in the future.

It will be vital to present this in a professional way – as if you were an outside consultant – and focus on what may be best for the company. It is important to take this approach rather than get into fights.

The stakeholder may agree to following one of the options that you believe in. Or they may produce one that you feel it is possible for you to pursue. You can then focus on how to implement the strategy.

Let's anticipate a potential difficulty. What happens if the stakeholder insists on pursuing a route that you may not believe in? It can then be useful:

To stay calm, listen and show you understand what they are saying;

To buy time to think and, in a professional way, say you want to explore the possibility;

To finish the meeting in a positive way and say when you will get back to them with a plan.

Taking time to reflect, you can consider your possible options going forward. Looking at each of the options, you can clarify the pluses and minuses for you personally and for the team. The options may include the following:

To go with what the stakeholder suggests;

To build on some of the positives in the suggestion and find ways to manage the minuses;

To offer another possible route – or combination of routes – to the stakeholder and outline the benefits to the company;

To decide to move on from the role because you no longer believe it is possible to do satisfying work or achieve success;

To suggest other possible ways forwards.

Imagine that you have explored all these options and have made a decision. Whatever route you choose to go, it will be important to behave in a professional way.

You may choose to stay in the role and do your best to increase the chances of success. You will have taken this decision as a responsible adult, however, and not by choosing to be a victim.

Alternatively, you may choose to move on. If so, you may aim to do this in a way that creates, as far as possible, wins for you, for your family and for the company.

There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to do your due diligence. It is then to set thing up to succeed, do superb work and keep focusing on how to increase the percentage chances of success.

Here we have explored how to take these steps when leading a team. The approach can be applied in other situations, however, such as when working as an individual. It can also be adapted to aspects of your personal and professional life.

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? 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 Percentage Chances Of Success Approach

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

*

*The specific things I can do then to
increase the chances of success are:*

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Lopsided Personality Approach

Lopsided Personalities

Some people have lopsided personalities. They may be brilliant in some areas but totally blank in others. Some may then aim.

- *To recognise they have a lopsided personality;*
- *To build on the strengths of their lopsided personality;*
- *To manage the consequences of the weaknesses of their lopsided personality.*

Some people have lopsided personalities. They may be brilliant in some areas but totally 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."

A person with a lopsided personality 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 see a thing.

Great workers sometimes demonstrate characteristics that may be labelled as aspects of autism, OCD, savant qualities or another name. Some individuals learn how channel those characteristics in a positive way. Let's explore how they may take this approach.

Some individuals recognise they may have a lopsided personality

Some individuals get to a point where they recognise they may have a lopsided personality. Different people do this in different ways and at different stages of their lives.

Some people take this step through raising their own awareness. They may learn about other people who demonstrate such characteristics. They may read books, watch films or gather knowledge about people who behave in certain ways and go on to do great work.

Some people take this step through others helping them to recognise their strengths. A parent, teacher, coach or another person may help them to see they have great abilities in some areas but not in others.

Today it is more common for individuals who have elements of dyslexia, synaesthesia, autism or other characteristics to be told to build on their abilities. Some talk about using their super strengths whilst also recognising they may have shortcomings in other areas.

Some individuals may also be considered to be twice-gifted or twice-exceptional. They may have great ability in some areas and also demonstrate great resilience to manage certain disabilities.

Can you think of ways in which you may have elements of a lopsided personality? What are the specific areas where you may have the ability to be brilliant? What are those where you may be totally blank?

One person described aspects of their personality in the following way.

"I am good at solving certain kinds of problems but am hopeless in other areas. My partner said it took years to understand this was the case.

"They could not understand why I was so good at managing certain kinds of crisis but that I am nature blind. I can anticipate what is going to happen in certain areas but cannot tell you about the trees and flowers in our garden."

Some individuals build on the strengths of their lopsided personality

Some individuals recognise that they excel in the intelligences that are rewarded by the school system. They may be good at writing, music, maths, art, science or other subjects.

Some may excel in other types of intelligence. They may be good at helping people, creative thinking, selling, inventing or in an activity that is not rewarded by academia.

Some individuals have parents, teachers or other people who help them to develop their talents. Many dyslexic young people, for example, have been helped by adults who supported their abilities in creative work, cooking, selling, dance, leadership or other activities.

Some individuals may get to a point where they experience a eureka moment. This leads them to saying something along the following lines.

"I am going concentrate on the areas where I am able to do stimulating work and deliver success."

Such people then sometimes aim: a) to do what they do best; b) to do their best; c) to make their best contribution towards helping other people to achieve success.

This approach can help them to make a living doing what they love. At the same time, it can be important for them to develop the following skill.

Some individuals manage the consequences of the weaknesses of their lopsided personality

Some individuals recognise that, whilst they can be brilliant in some activities, they can have blind spots in certain areas. They may get away with some of these if they are positive and treat other people with respect.

They may be like the classic mad professor who regarded fondly for their brilliance and their quirks. Such a person may get by because people see them as a great asset.

Some individuals may be totally blank in certain areas of life, however, and this can have consequences. It may result in them causing harm to themselves or other people.

They may be great at caring for strangers but sometimes neglect their loved ones. They be superb at teaching maths but have a gambling problem. They may be good at making decisions in their professional life but poor in their personal life.

Some individuals build on their strengths and learn how to manage their consequences of their weaknesses. The second part can be challenging, however, because they can become preoccupied and not notice they are behaving in a certain way.

One approach is for a person to recognise the triggers that show they may be drifting into difficult territory. They can then aim: a) to buy time to think; b) to consider the possible options going forward; c) to rehearse following their chosen option. They can then move into action.

Let's return to your own life and work. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on the themes we have considered. This invites you to explore the following themes

First, to describe the specific ways you may demonstrate elements of having a lopsided personality.

Second, to describe the specific things you can do to build on the strengths of this personality.

Third, to describe the specific things you can do to manage the other consequences of this personality.

Here is the exercise. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

The Lopsided Personality Approach

The specific ways in which I may demonstrate elements of having a lopsided personality may be:

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*

The specific things I can do to build on the strengths of this lopsided personality are:

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*

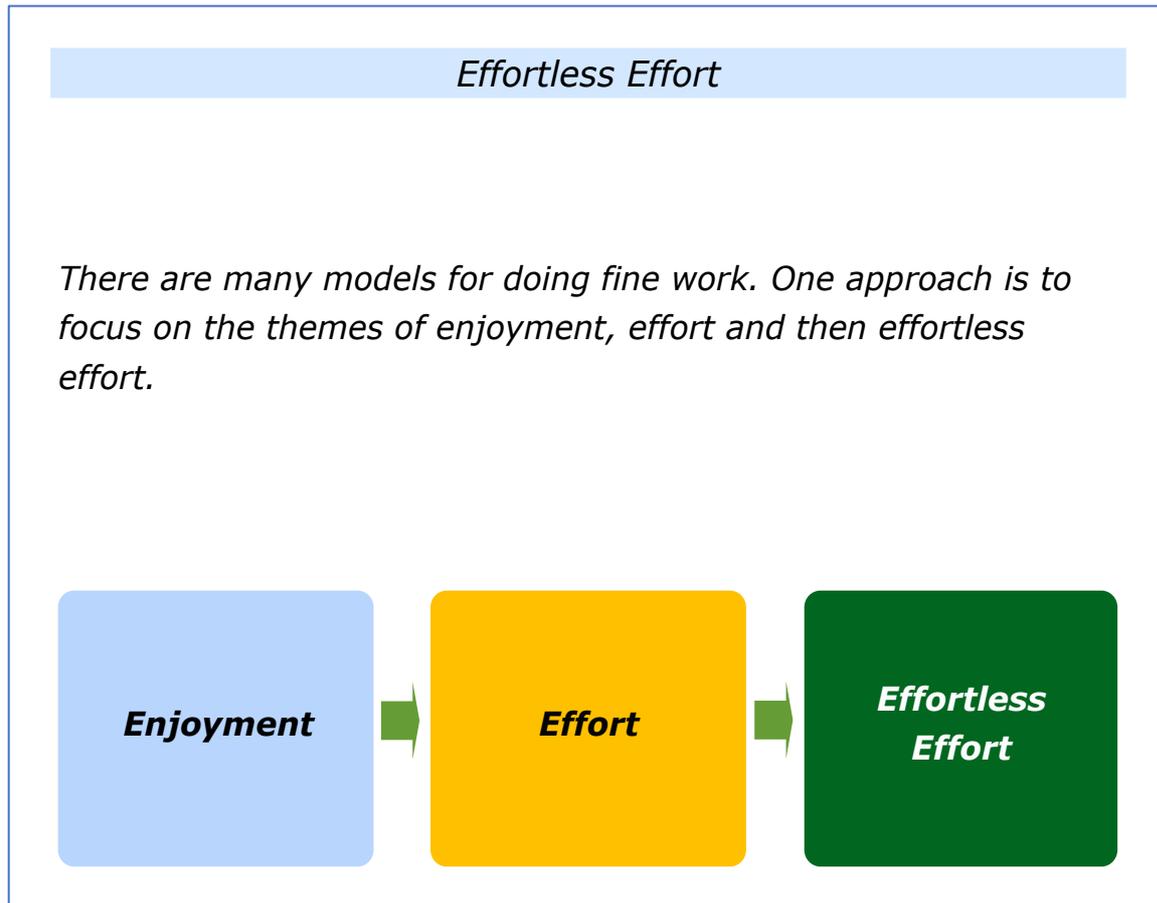
The specific things I can do to manage the other consequences of this lopsided personality are:

*

*

*

The Effortless Effort Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to focus on the themes of enjoyment, effort and effortless effort.

Some people aim to follow the Taoist principle of effortless effort that embodies the concept of wu wei. Here is one description from The School Of Life website.

Wu wei is a paradox. It means being at peace while engaged in the most frenetic of tasks so that one can carry these out with maximum skill and efficiency.

Something of the meaning of wu wei is captured when we are at one with what we are doing. This is likened to a state of profound concentration, flow or being in the zone.

Imagine that you want to do pursue the route of effortless effort. One approach is to focus on the following steps.

Enjoyment

The first step is focus on a specific activity you enjoy doing. It can be good to focus on one where:

You enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal;

You feel in your element – at ease and yet able to excel;

You can translate this into doing a piece of work or aiming to achieve a specific goal.

You may enjoy taking these steps when mentoring people, playing a sport or managing certain kinds of crises. You may do so when fixing technical problems, being on stage, climbing a mountain or doing other activities.

Imagine that you have settled on doing something where you will enjoy the journey and have the ability to deliver excellence. You may then want to focus on the next theme.

Effort

You may aim do special work by going a state of effortless effort. This does, however, highlight a paradox. You sometimes have to put in the effort before being able to go into that state.

There are many definitions for the word effort. These include the following.

The specific physical, psychological or intellectual activity required to overcome a challenge or achieve a specific goal.

Great workers focus on a specific activity and aim to maintain good habits. They practice, practice and practice. They practice until they can forget and the habit becomes part of their muscle memory.

This is why it is important to choose an activity where you will enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goal. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following framework.

Effort

The specific activity where I enjoy the journey and may also have the ability to deliver excellence is:

*

The specific things I can do to put in the effort required to deliver excellence when doing this activity are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to encourage myself on the journey and also keep improving are:

*

*

*

Great workers often love putting in the effort required to do superb work. They love to visualise potential scenarios, explore solutions and then translate some of these into action.

They enjoy pursuing their craft by focusing on Kaizen – the concept of continuous improvement. They love to keep building on what they do well, tackling areas for improvement and continuing to develop.

Imagine that you are taking these steps. There may come a time when you are able to move on to the next stage.

Effortless Effort

Some people do special work by going into a state of effortless effort. This step may involve doing different things when taking it in a spiritual or secular way.

The spiritual way can involve relaxing, breathing deeply and merging with life in a deep way. It can involve being in the moment, appreciating life and having a sense of wonder.

As mentioned early, the secular way may involve embracing a paradox. It may call for aiming:

To do superb work by putting in the required effort;

To then do something special by going into a state of effortless effort.

Great workers sometimes take this step. They commit themselves to doing their best and do what is required to perform superb work. They then go into a state of flow – sometimes embodying effortless effort – and deliver peak performances.

Such workers often make complicated things look simple. They seem to do things swiftly but slowly. They seem to have more time than anybody else. They then use their skills to produce something special.

Let's return to the specific activity where you may want to follow elements of this approach. How can you enjoy the journey? How can you put in the required effort? How can you go into a state of effortless effort? How can you deliver excellence?

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

The Effortless Effort Approach

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

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The specific things I can do then 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 Building Positive Leadership Teams Across The Organisation Approach

Positive Leadership Teams

Great organisations build positive leadership teams at senior level and across the organisation. Such teams are made up of people who demonstrate the following characteristics.

- *They consistently embody the organisation's principles;*

- *They have complementary professional strengths;*

- *They continually align their efforts to achieve the organisation's picture of success.*

Great organisations encourage their people to focus on the organisation's purpose, principles and picture of success. Different organisations do this in different ways. Let's look at one approach.

Some organisations build positive leadership teams at senior level and across the organisation. These teams then aim to follow the principles and make their best contributions towards achieving the picture of success.

Such leadership teams act as positive models. They are often made up of people who are positive and deliver high professional standards. They also demonstrate the following characteristics:

They consistently embody the organisation's principles;

They have complementary professional strengths;

They continually align their efforts to achieve the organisation's picture of success.

Such teams create an environment in which motivated people can perform superb work. They then ensure the team follows the principles and makes its best contribution to achieving the organisation's goals.

Imagine that you are the CEO of an organisation. How can you ensure that people continually focus on the purpose and follow the organisation's principles?

One approach is to put together good leadership teams at every level of the organisation. They can act as positive models and align their team's work to achieve the picture of success.

Let's consider how to build such teams. When doing so, you can select people who are positive, professional and want to lead teams. They then need to demonstrate the following characteristics.

*People need to consistently embody
the organisation's principles*

The team's leaders need to act as positive models. The way they behave will strongly influence the culture in their part of the organisation. Bearing this in mind, they need:

To embody the organisation's principles in their own professional behaviour;

To make decisions by basing these on the organisation's principles and how these can be translated into action in a specific situation;

To encourage their people to keep focusing on the organisation's principles and perform superb work.

Imagine that you are considering appointing a new leader or are focusing on the present leader. Bearing in mind the organisation's principles, you may wish to do the following exercise.

The Principles Theme

The principles the organisation wants people to follow when working to achieve the picture of success are:

*

*

*

The specific things the potential or present leader does to embody the principles in their work are:

*

*

*

The specific rating I would give the person – on a scale 0-10 – of embodying the principles would be:

___ / 10

Imagine that you believe the person you are focusing on embodies many of the principles. It will then be time to move on to the next stage.

People need to have complementary professional strengths

Great teams are often made up of people who have complementary strengths. It is common, for example, to have one person who is a visionary and another who is a coordinator. They can then combine their talents to guide the team to success.

One person must be seen to be in charge, of course, and it is important they play to their strengths. They may need to have one or more people around them, however, who compensate for any weaknesses. Tom Rath, an expert on strengths, expressed this in the following way.

Great leaders are not well-rounded but great leadership teams are well-rounded.

Imagine that you are appointing the leader of a team or focusing on the present leader. When doing so, you can aim:

To clarify the specific strengths they have – such as their leadership or management skills – that they can apply when following the principles;

To clarify the complementary strengths they may need to add by getting people who have other leadership or management skills;

To clarify the specific people they may be able to work well with when taking this approach and following the organisation's principles.

It will, of course, be important to work with the potential or present leader when taking these steps. It is also to recognise that teams evolve and you may need to revisit this exercise at various times in the future. Here is an exercise on this theme.

The Complementary Professional Strengths Theme

Person A – The Potential Or Present Leader

The specific strengths they have – such as their leadership or management skills – that they can use when following the principles are

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The specific complementary strengths they may need to add by getting people who have other leadership or management skills are:

*

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*

The specific people they may be able work well with when taking this approach and following the organisation's principles are:

*

*

Imagine that you have put together a leadership team that embodies the principles and have complementary strengths. It will then be time to move on to the next stage.

People need to continually align their team's efforts to achieve the organisation's picture of success

Great organisations encourage each team to align their efforts towards achieving the organisation's goals. They therefore take the following steps. They meet with each leadership team and aim:

To make clear contracts about the team's contribution – the outcomes they will deliver - towards achieving the organisation's picture of success;

To make clear contracts about the support they need to achieve the agreed goals;

To make clear contracts about how the team will proactively keep their stakeholders informed about their progress towards achieving the goals.

Imagine that you have made clear contracts with the leadership team about these things. They can then meet together and aim:

To focus on the specific outcomes they are to deliver and translate these into the team's picture of success;

To focus on how they can follow the organisation's principles and coordinate their team's strengths to achieve the picture of success;

To focus on how to communicate this information and make clear contracts about each person's contributions to achieving the picture of success.

Imagine that the leadership team has taken these steps and are ready to communicate their team. Different leaders will do this in different ways. One approach is for the a leader to say something along the following lines when communicating with their people.

Welcome To Today's Session.

I am going to start by giving an overview of our organisation's aims. We will then move on to the part that our team and you and individuals can play in contributing to achieve these goals.

Let's start with the big picture. You will be aware of most of these things but it can be helpful to remind ourselves of what we are working towards.

The Organisation's Purpose

The purpose of our organisation is:

** To*

The Organisation's Principles

The key principles we aim to follow to pursue our purpose and perform superb work are:

** To*

** To*

** To*

The Organisation's Picture Of Success

The specific goals that the organisation aims to achieve in the next financial year that will be an expression of our purpose are:

** To*

** To*

** To*

I hope this helps to give the big picture. Bearing this in mind, I now want to focus on how we can align our team's contribution to achieving the organisation's goals.

There are certain things we need to deliver for the organisation and we will share these with you. We have also translated these into our team's picture of success. We can also add other things if you wish.

The Team's Picture Of Success

The specific goals we aim to deliver by the end of the financial year are:

** To*

** To*

** To*

The specific principles we aim to follow – include the strategies, support and actions plans – when working to achieve these goals are:

** To*

** To*

** To*

The specific benefits of achieving these goals – for our organisation, for our customers and for ourselves - will be:

** To*

** To*

** To*

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 team's picture of success.

Imagine that the leaders have gone through these steps. They will have given people the big picture and also described the team's picture of success.

They may then also give their people chance to develop a sense of ownership – with parameters – for adding their ideas. They then make clear contracts with each person about their best contribution to achieving the team's picture of success.

The leadership team then coordinates and align people's efforts to achieve the goals. They often aim to manage by outcomes rather than by tasks. One approach is:

To encourage people to keep focusing on the outcomes to achieve – the picture of success;

To ensure people proactively report their progress towards achieving their agreed contributions to the picture of success;

To produce success stories that highlight how people have followed the principles to do superb work on the way to the picture of success.

They also proactively keep in touch with their key stakeholders – such as the senior team. They keep them informed about the team's progress towards delivering its agreed goals.

The leadership team continues to focus on the outcomes to achieve. They then ensure the team performs superb work and makes its agreed contribution towards achieving the organisation's goals.

Great organisations often aim to build such positive leadership teams across the organisation. They then aim to coordinate these teams and

channel their efforts to helping the organisation achieve its 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? 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 Building Positive Leadership Teams Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

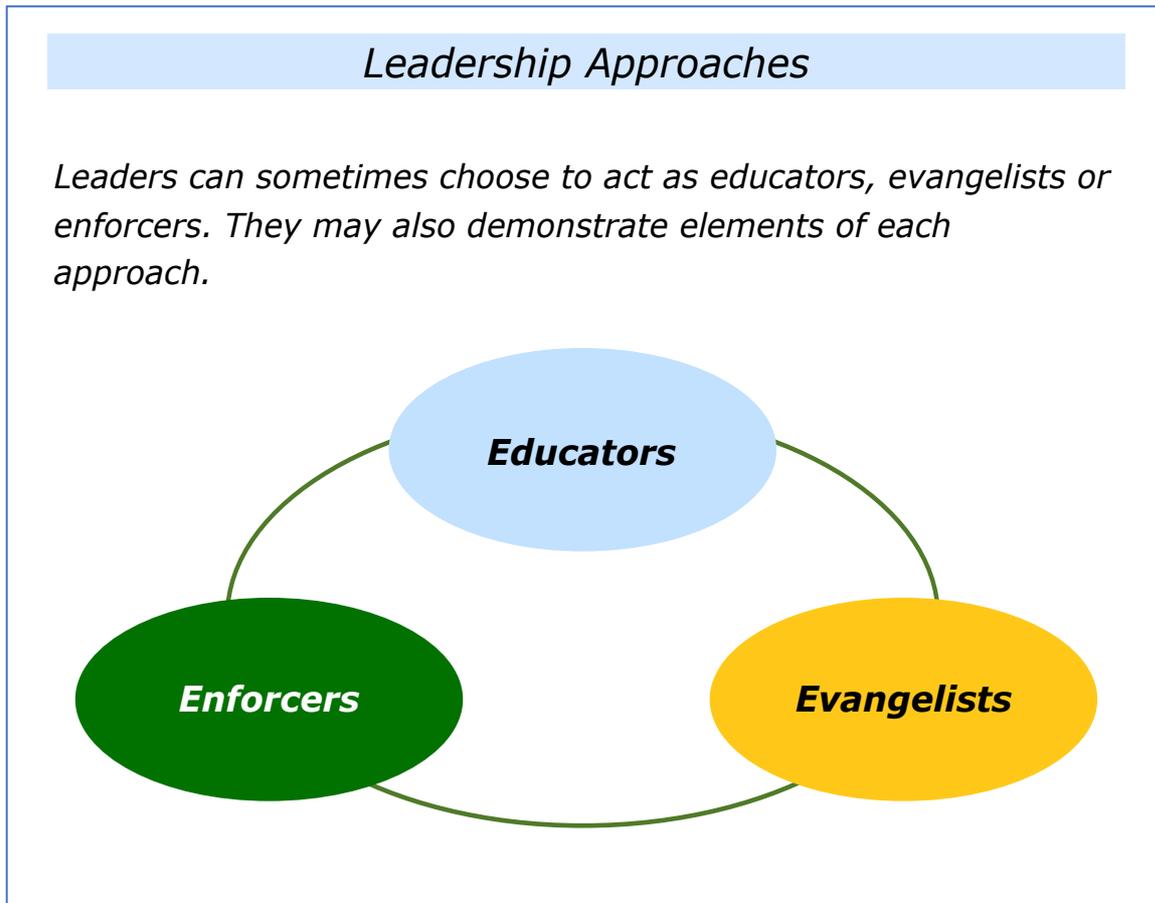
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Leader As Educator, Evangelist Or Enforcer Approaches



Leaders can choose to act as educators, evangelists or enforcers. They may also sometimes demonstrate elements of each approach. Let's explore these themes.

The Leader As Educator

Leaders who take this approach often display the characteristics of good educators. They are positive and predictable. They also aim to create in an environment in which motivated people can achieve peak performance.

Such leaders believe in giving people the big picture and treating them like adults. They may take the following approach when, for example, explaining the aims of an organisation.

They explain the purpose, principles and picture of success. They also explain the benefits – for all the various stakeholders – of achieving the picture of success.

They explain the professional deal. This involves describing the company's responsibilities and the individual's responsibilities in working to achieve the goals. This includes describing the required professional standards.

Such leaders then invite people to take time to decide if they want to opt in. They then make clear contracts about people's best contributions towards achieving the goals.

They often aim to manage by outcomes rather than by tasks. They also do their best to encourage, educate and enable people to do superb work on the way towards achieving the picture of success.

Such leaders believe it is vital for people to make their own decisions regarding opting in. They don't want people to feel they have been sold something and later feeling resentful.

They believe in giving people the big picture and explaining the purpose of the work. They then aim to work with people who want to deliver high standards rather than those who see themselves as hostages.

They believe in the work they are doing. They may therefore sometimes show elements of being an evangelist but they do not believe in persuading people. It is up to people to choose to opt in.

Such leaders are prepared to act as enforcers, however, in certain situations. They may take this approach to protect the culture if some individuals choose not to meet the required professional standards.

They then give the person an option. The person can choose to deliver the required professional standards or they can move on. It is there choice and there are consequences.

Good leaders sometimes take the educator approach. Like any approach, however, there are both pluses and minuses.

*The Potential Pluses Of This
Approach Can Include The Following*

The educational approach can create a positive environment, give people the big picture and provide the reasons for following certain principles. It works well with people who want behave like adults, deliver high professional standards and make their best contributions.

It can also encourages people to keep focusing on the principles. These provide a framework that they can use to become more self-managing and make good decisions. The approach also helps to build the foundations for achieving ongoing success.

*The Potential Minuses Of This
Approach Can Include The Following*

The approach involves doing a lot of work to explain the big picture and the reasons for following certain principles. It calls for a serious approach to recruitment in terms of employing people who are prepared to take responsibility.

It does not necessarily work with people who are used to following lists or being managed by tasks. It also calls for acting decisively if some people choose not to follow the desired professional standards.

The Leader As Evangelist

Leaders who take this approach often aim to inspire people to work towards achieving a specific goal. They can be energetic, enthusiastic and, in some cases, enterprising.

They may also be charismatic. They may communicate a compelling story and get people to sign up to making it happen. Some talk about:

"Selling a vision and getting people to buy in."

They can excite people but there can also be downsides. They may build a company that is personality driven. People may feel inspired to sign up but then rely on the leader to keep inspiring them in the future.

Such leaders sometimes focus more on the selling of ideas rather than the actual substance. They may also try too hard to persuade people or get offended if certain people do not sign up to the cause.

*The Potential Pluses Of This
Approach Can Include The Following*

The evangelist approach can create a positive environment. People can feel inspired by the story and want to contribute towards making it happen. This can sometimes give them strength when times get tough.

*The Potential Minuses Of This
Approach Can Include The Following*

The organisation may become personality driven and people become dependent on regular injections of inspiration. This can lead to a kind of institutionalisation where people look to the leader rather than make their own considered decisions.

People may also aim to copy the leader in the way they talk, dress and treat others. Depending on the leader's personality style, this can have either positive or negative effects.

The leader may also be perceived as trying to do things to people. They may try to persuade people rather than letting make their own decisions. Whilst people may sign up on the spot, they may later have buyer's remorse

The Leader As Enforcers

Leaders who take this approach often have strong personalities. They believe in their own view of the world and want to enforce it on other people.

Such leaders can be intimidating. They may issue commands and expect others to follow them. This can lead to creating fear and micromanaging people.

Some leaders who take this approach have good intentions. They want people to deliver high quality standards. The way they express this can sometimes come across as bullying, however, and create collateral damage.

*The Potential Pluses Of This
Approach Can Include The Following*

The pluses of this approach are heavily weighted in favour of the enforcer. They feel powerful and enjoy their status. They may intimidate people into delivering short term results but these seldom last.

*The Potential Minuses Of This
Approach Can Include The Following*

The minuses of this approach often affect people on the receiving end. They can feel intimidated and belittled. They may carry out the tasks but be continually criticised. This can lead to them experiencing different symptoms including physical or psychological pain.

Imagine that you are a leader. Can you think of a situation where, for example, you may want to follow elements of the educator 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 Leader As Educator Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

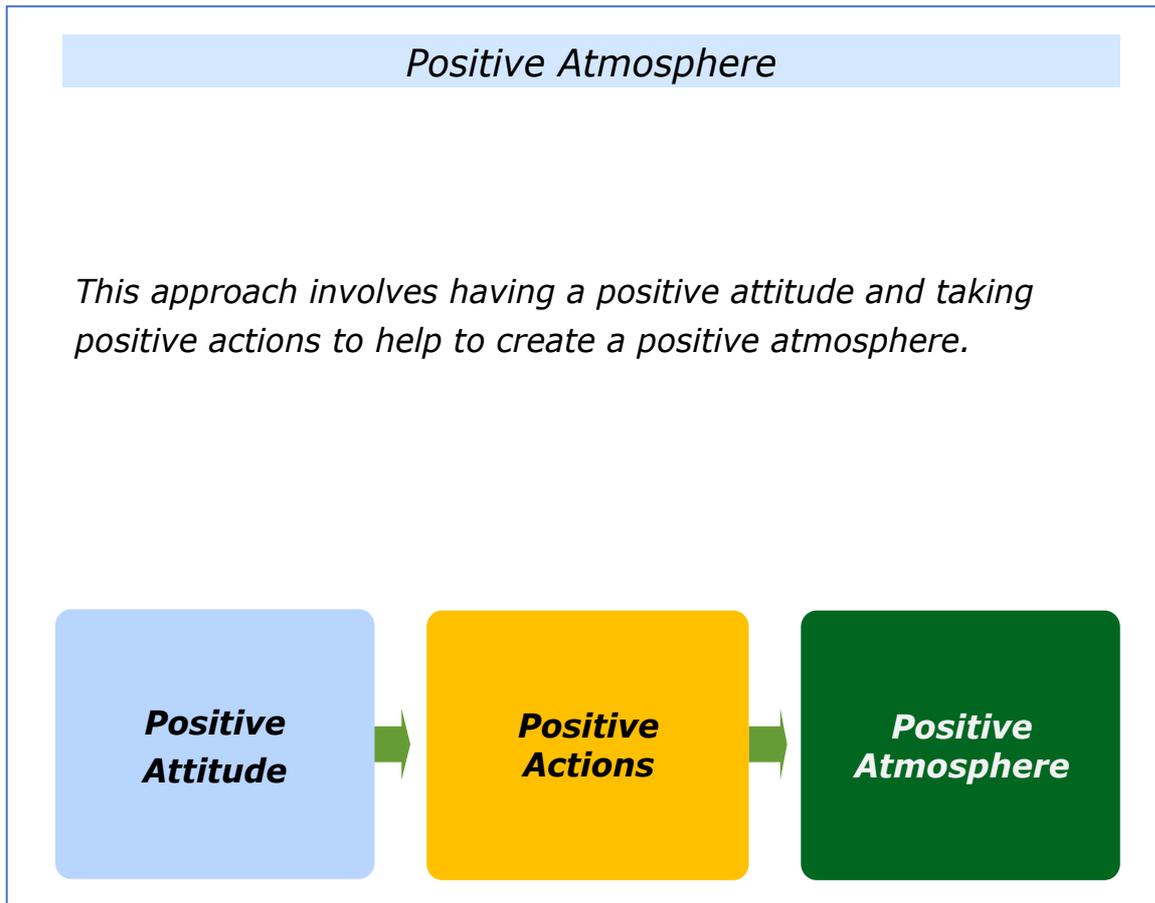
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

The Positive Atmosphere Approach



Imagine that you want to create a positive atmosphere in a particular situation. You may want to encourage people in your daily life and work.

Bearing this in mind, you may aim to have a positive attitude and translate this into action. Taking this approach may enable people to feel at ease and able to grow.

Some people are good at creating a positive atmosphere, whilst others are less skilled at achieving this aim. The following pages look at two kinds of leaders. These were football coaches who took over teams but some of the lessons can be applied in other fields.

Leader A was a positive person who was good at connecting with people. One simple example was when he arrived at the stadium for his inaugural press conferences.

Alighting from the car, he immediately walked across the forecourt to shake hands with the gathered fans. He believed in connecting with the people who provided great support to the club.

Leader A believed in setting things up to succeed and had already agreed with the Board on the club's strategy and goals. He then took the following steps to help to create a good atmosphere.

Meeting With The Key People

He set aside time to have individual sessions with key people in the organisation. These included the senior professionals in the team, the Academy coaches and the heads of departments in the club.

During these sessions he focused on the club's strengths, the strategies for going forward and the picture of success. Whilst sharing his vision – which we will explore later - he also invited people to contribute their ideas.

Focusing On A Positive Future

Leader A had set the tone by having one-to-ones with the key players. The next step was to meet with the entire playing and coaching staff. This involved a session with around forty people in a room.

Before the session the leader sent an email to everybody who would be attending. In it he outlined the topics he would be covering in the session. Here is a summary of the messages he gave to people.

Shaping A Positive Future

Dear ...

As you know, we will be having our first formal whole group session on ... During this session I will be focusing on how we can continue to shape a positive future.

I have found that it can be useful to let people have an overview of the topics we are going to cover before such sessions. This gives people time to prepare and be ready to make their best contributions.

The first part of the session will take around fifteen minutes when I will focus on the club's strengths, strategies and picture of success.

I will then invite you to share your ideas that can contribute to us being successful.

Here is an introduction to the topics I will cover in the first part of the session. Some people may say that it is risky committing these ideas to paper. They may also say that it is asking a lot of players to focus on these themes and then put these into practice.

My view, however, is that today's players are prepared to take responsibility and be super professional. These are the kinds of players who will help to make modern clubs successful.

We as a club need people who aim to have a positive attitude and do their best as professionals. It is up to each person to decide if they want to build on their strengths and demonstrate these qualities in their own way.

Bearing these things in mind, here is a summary of the topic we will cover. I will then ask you to contribute your ideas for focusing on how we can help the club to be successful.

*The Club's Strengths,
Strategies And
Picture Of Success*

Strengths

*The strengths of the club and the
people in it include the following:*

*

*

*

Strategies

The strategies we want to follow – including the club's playing style and the required professional standards – to achieve success are:

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*

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Success

The specific goals we aim to achieve this season are:

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As I mentioned, that part of the session will last around fifteen minutes. I will then invite you to contribute lots of ideas in the following exercise that you will do in groups and then present back.

Shaping A Positive Future

The specific things we want to take forward from the past to shape a positive future are:

*

The specific things we want to add, develop or do differently to shape a positive future are:

*

We will then aim to include some of these in our future planning. I look forward to seeing you at the session.

Leader A ran the whole group session which proved to be successful. They then maintained the positive tone by having follow-up meetings with key individuals in team.

The team kicked off the season with several wins. There came a point, however, where the leader needed to reiterate the required professional standards. This led to them taking the following steps.

First, they built on the senior professionals who acted as positive models. Second, they promoted several young players to the first team. Third, they released players who did not demonstrate a professional attitude.

The club had a successful season. The senior professionals played a big part in making this happen. They maintained high standards and created a positive atmosphere. This helped the team to achieve success.

Leader B believed they could drive people to achieve certain targets. They had got some success at previous clubs but had not been able to sustain it. They put this down to the shortcomings of the players.

They called a meeting with the playing staff in room where people sat in rows. They began by describing their own past achievements, some of which were laudable. The session seemed to be about their own qualities, however, rather than about the club or the players.

They pointed out where the team had failed in the past and how they intended to fix it. Whilst some players recognised these issues, others were not uplifted by this approach. They described their system of play. This was rather rigid and, some felt, was outdated. It was functional but lacked joy.

They then had one-to-one meetings with the players. These proved to be one-way directional sessions where the leader told individuals what they needed to do to address their shortcomings.

Leader B's team got some early wins but then things went wrong. The players went into a downward spiral. Many of them began to hide during matches and became fearful of making mistakes.

The leader blamed the players. Going into micromanagement mode, they became increasingly agitated. This did not help the mood and the atmosphere deteriorated.

The club's board backed the leader for the remainder of the fixtures. There was no improvement at the start of the next season, however, and the club asked the leader to move on.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you would like to create a positive atmosphere? 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 Atmosphere 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 then 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 Drive To Make Difficult Decisions And Deliver The Goods Approach



Some people have the drive to make difficult decisions in a certain field. When appropriate, they may then aim to translate these into action and deliver the goods.

They may be medics, parole officers, law makers or leaders in other professions. Such people may also feel a sense of duty to make such decisions.

They may have been on a long journey, however, towards choosing to take such responsibility. At a certain point, they may have asked themselves the following questions.

What are the difficult decisions to be made in this field? Who should make these decisions? If not me, then who? Am I prepared to make these decisions? If so, how can I make them in the best possible way?

Such people may also have met significant individuals who have had a strong impact on their lives. These may have been parents, teachers, mentors or others who acted as positive models. These have inspired them to take responsibility for making difficult decisions.

Different people then choose to apply these skills in different ways. They may focus on managing crises, helping troubled people or making decisions that have consequences for others in society.

Such individuals often have a strong moral compass. They also demonstrate some of the following qualities;

They enjoy taking responsibility ... They believe in following certain principles ... They have a strong feeling for a certain activity or profession ... They have in the past stepped up to take tough decisions in this area.

They actually enjoy taking tough decisions ... They are prepared to accept the consequences - the pluses and minuses involved - in making such decisions ... They continue to develop their skills in making such decisions.

They have a strong feeling for the activity but can also become quite cerebral when making tough decisions. Having a sense of perspective, they recognise what they can and control in situations. They then use their preferred model for making decisions.

Such people learn how to take care of their own emotions. They do things that give them positive energy and, when appropriate, know how to heal themselves. This increases their strength for being able to manage challenging situations in the future.

Let's return to your own life and work. 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? 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 Drive To Make Difficult Decisions And Deliver The Goods

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

*

The specific things I can do then 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 Decision Making About People Approach

Decision Making About People

There may be situations where you have to make decisions about people. One approach is to focus on:

***What People Actually
Do And Deliver***

Rather Than:

What They Say

There are many situations where you may need to make decisions about people. These can be in your personal or professional life. How to make such decisions?

One approach is to focus on what people actually do and deliver. It is to focus on how they behave rather than just what they say. This is because the way they behave has consequences for themselves and other people.

There are many times when you may need to make decisions about a person. Here are some examples.

You may be deciding whether or not you want to build a relationship with a person;

You may be a psychiatrist who is deciding whether or not to release a convicted criminal from a psychiatric hospital;

You may be a leader who is deciding whether or not to hire, fire or promote a person.

During my early career I often needed to make decisions about individuals in a therapeutic community. Many had responded to difficult circumstances by being depressed, taking drugs, committing crimes or becoming suicidal.

Each of the young people said they wanted to take responsibility for shaping their futures. This meant that we needed to continually make decisions about how to encourage them or help them change their behaviour in the future.

At the time there were many theories about how to help people to develop. These included interpreting why they did things, talking cures and other approaches.

Whilst many of these approaches had value, they could also be complicated. Working with the person, we decided:

To help them to focus on their goals;

To help them to focus on: a) the specific things they did that would help them to achieve their goals; b) the specific things they did that would not help them to achieve their goals;

To help them to focus on the specific things they wanted to do to work towards achieving their goals.

The young people found that it worked to build on their successful patterns and work towards achieving their goals. They also learned practical tools for managing situations where they had previously followed unsuccessful patterns.

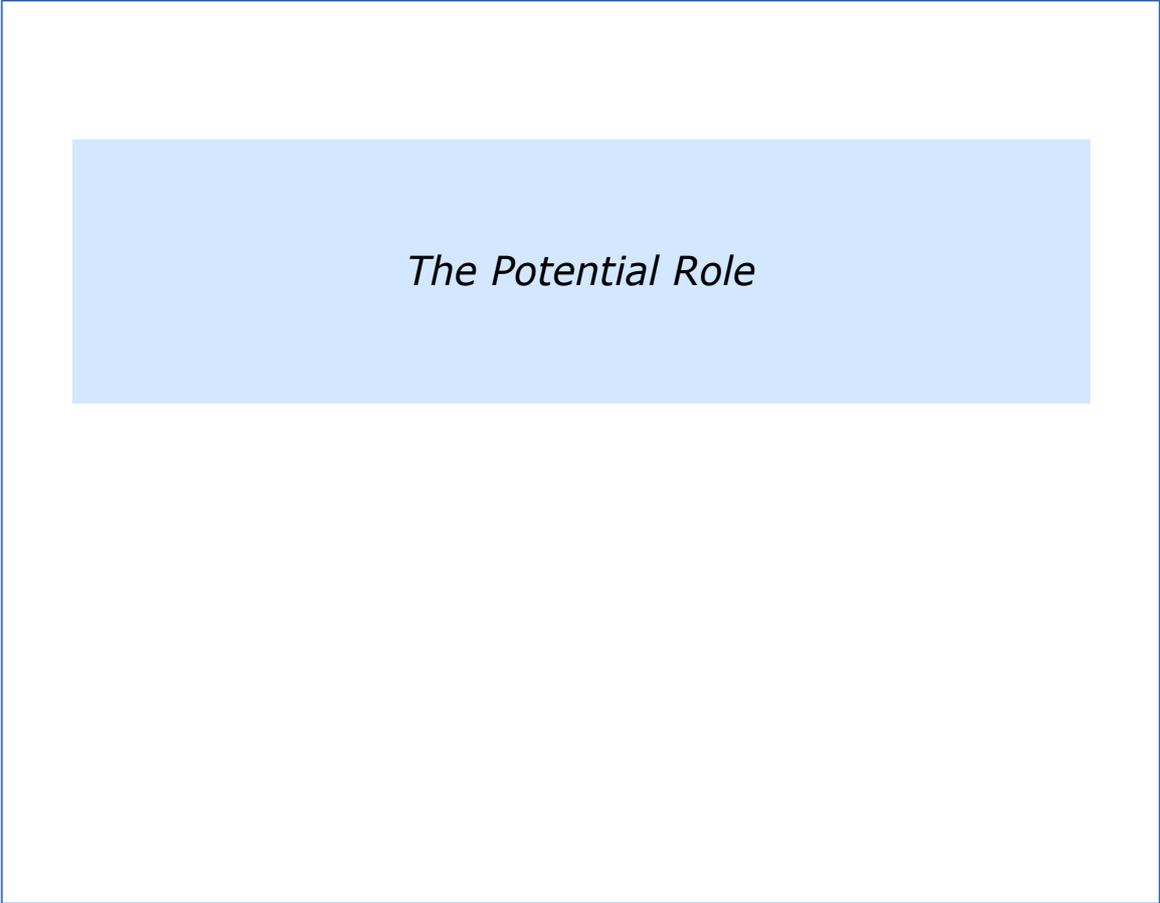
Let's look at another situation where it is possible to use elements of this approach.

*Decision Making – The Do And Deliver
Approach When Considering People For A Role*

During my work I am sometime asked to help organisations when recruiting and promoting people. The aim is to focus on what a person may need to do and deliver in a particular role.

Before interviewing individuals for the position, we send them information about the results we would like somebody in this role to deliver. We then invite them to make a presentation about what they would actually **do** to deliver those results.

Imagine that we are inviting people to apply for a leadership role. Here is the framework that we send to them ahead of the interview. They are then invited to make their presentation.



The Potential Role

Introduction

This is some background to an exercise that we would like you to present at the interview. The following slides cover the following themes.

** The Picture Of Success*

This describes the specific results we would like somebody in this role to deliver.

** The Principles*

This describes the principles we would like them to follow to achieve the results. You will, of course, use your strengths to follow these in your own way.

** My Positive Contribution*

This is the part we would like you to present at the interview. It invites you to describe the specific things you would do to do your best to deliver the desired results. It can be good to bring this to life by giving specific examples.

The Picture Of Success

The specific results – the outcomes – that we want somebody in this role to deliver are:

** To ...*

For example ...

** To ...*

For example ...

** To ...*

For example ...

The Principles

The specific principles we would like them to follow to do their best to deliver the desired results are:

- * *To ...*
For example ...

- * *To ...*
For example ...

- * *To ...*
For example ...

My Positive Contribution

The specific things I would do to do my best to deliver the desired results – together with some concrete examples - are:

- * *To ...*
For example ...

- * *To ...*
For example ...

- * *To ...*
For example ...

There are many ways to interview people. None of these are fool proof but the approach outlined here has proved helpful. It involves inviting the person:

To focus on the specific outcomes to be delivered in a particular role;

To describe the specific things they would do to do their best to deliver these outcomes.

The approach also calls for those interviewing the candidate to focus on the person's strengths and successful patterns. It is ask themselves the following questions.

What are the outcomes we want somebody in this role to deliver in terms of, for example, profits, product quality or people management? What are the principles we want them to follow to deliver these outcomes?

Looking back, when has the person delivered similar outcomes – even if this has been in a different context? What did they do then to deliver these outcomes? When have they followed some of the desired principles?

What are the person's strengths? What are their successful patterns? What may their potential areas of weakness? What may be their style of working? What may be the pluses and minuses of their style?

Looking ahead, what will they need to do to deliver the desired outcomes? What will be the principles they will need to follow? How will they need to translate these into action?

Let's move on to a success rating. Bearing in mind the person's strengths and style, on a scale 0-10 how high would we rate the person's suitability for the role? What are the specific reasons for giving this rating?

Great organisations on people who have similarity of spirit and diversity of strengths. They require people to follow certain professional standards but they are looking for characters rather than clones. The interviewers therefore need:

To clarify whether the person has the attitude and ability required to achieve the desired goals;

To clarify whether the person will make a positive contribution towards helping their colleagues and the organisation to achieve success.

This approach increases the chances hiring or promoting the right person, but nothing beats seeing a person doing the job. Bearing this in mind, it is often vital to build in a review period when:

The organisation can decide whether or not the person is demonstrating the ability:

To perform the particular role;

To apply their strengths to follow the principles;

To deliver the desired picture of success.

If appropriate, the person can be encouraged to build on their strengths and achieve the picture of success. On some occasions, however, it may be better for the organisation and the person for them to move on.

As mentioned earlier, there are many situations where we may need to make decisions about people. These can be in our personal or professional lives.

One approach is to focus on what people actually do and deliver. It is to focus on how they behave rather than just what they say. This is because the way they behave has consequences for themselves and other people.

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? 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 Decision Making About People Approach

*The specific situation where I may want
to make a decision about a person by
focusing on what they do or deliver may be:*

*

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

*

*

*

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

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*

The Defining A Person's Contribution By What They Do And Deliver Approach

Defining A Person's Contribution

There are many ways to define a person's contribution. One approach is to describe what they actually do and deliver. The results of their actions can have an effect on other people.



There are many ways to define a person's contribution. One approach is to describe what they actually do and deliver. The result of their actions can have an effect on other people.

Looking at your own life and work, there may be times when you focus on a person's contribution. These may include the following situations.

You may be focusing on your own contribution in your personal or professional life;

You may be focusing on another person's contribution in their personal or professional life;

You may be writing an article or doing another activity where you are focusing on the contribution made by a person, team or organisation.

How to clarify a person's contribution? One approach is to explore the following themes.

You Can Describe What The Person Actually Does Or Has Done In The Past

Imagine that you are looking at a person. If appropriate, you can ask the following questions.

What does the person actually do? What have they actually done in the past? How do they behave now? How have behaved in the past? What has been the effect of what they do or what they have done?

The answers to these questions will depend on the specific context. You may be looking at their personal life, professional life or a mixture of both.

It is important to look at what the person actually does rather than what they say. A person may proclaim they aim to do certain things, for example, but these remain words rather than deeds.

You will obviously describe different things about different people. Here are some of the answers that may be given about various individuals.

*Looking at several individuals, here are some of the things
they do or have done in their personal or professional lives*

*They are kind ... They encourage people ... They have a positive attitude ...
They have raised a happy family ... They have overcome adversities ...
They are good at helping people to develop.*

*They act in a professional way ... They are good at making decisions ...
They make a positive contribution to the work place ... They have
developed pioneering software ... They are a superb mentor.*

They talk a good game but seldom deliver ... They blame others ... They bully people ... They swear a lot ... They exhaust people ... They behave in a pompous way.

Imagine that you have described what a person does or has done. It will be important to give specific examples of their behaviour and describe this in a factual way.

You can then move on to the next stage. This is related to what a person does but focuses more on their tangible contribution.

You Can Describe What The Person Actually Delivers Or Has Delivered In The Past

Many people do lots of activities. Sometimes it can be helpful, however, to focus on the results of their behaviour. Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to explore the following questions.

What does the person actually deliver? What is the kind of environment they create? What are the tangible or intangible things they produce? What are the actual projects, services, products or other things they deliver? What may be the effects of delivering these things?

The answers to these questions will obviously depend on the person. Here are some of the things that various people may produce.

Looking at several individuals, here are some of the things they deliver or have delivered

They have helped to save many lives in their work as a paramedic ... They have helped hundreds of people in counselling sessions ... They have provided rewarding education for thousands of students.

They have helped many people to find satisfying work ... They have written several books that inspired people ... They have built three great teams that did pioneering work.

They have done fine work as a mediator and found solutions to conflicts ... They have coached two great sports teams ... They have created inspiring cultures that helped to give people positive memories for life.

There are many ways to define a person's contribution. One approach is to focus on what they actually do and deliver. Whenever possible, it is good to give specific examples. This helps to bring their contributions to life.

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 focusing on situations that may be relevant to your personal or professional life.

You may be deciding whether to spend time with somebody. You may be considering whether to employ or promote a person. You may be focusing on the impact somebody has on other people. You may be considering your own contribution during your time on the planet.

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

The Defining A Person's Contribution Approach

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

*

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

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*

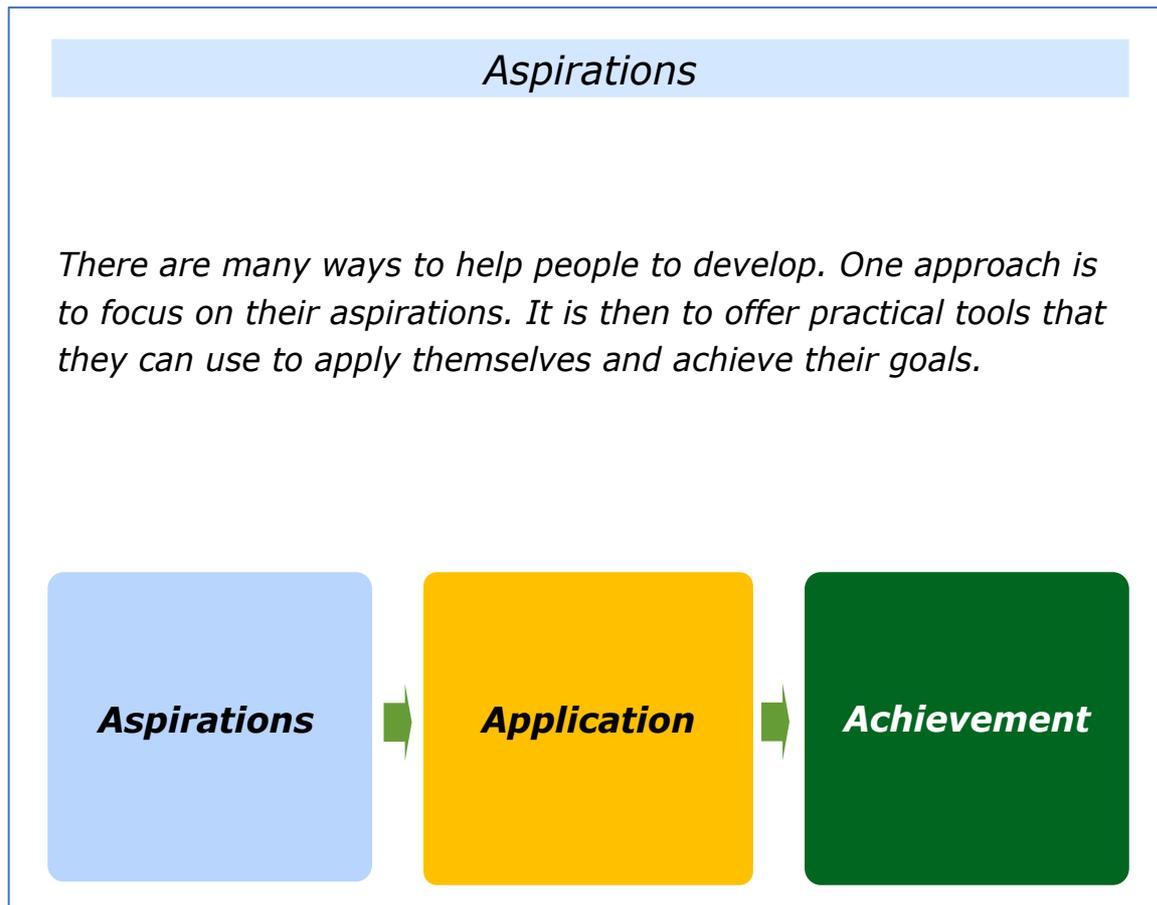
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The People's Aspirations Approach



There are many ways to help people to develop. One approach is to focus on their aspirations. It is then to offer them practical tools they can use to apply themselves and achieve their goals. Let's explore these themes.

Aspirations

Every person has aspirations. They may have passions they want to follow, challenges they want to solve or goals they want to achieve. They can be helped to translate these into action and achieve success.

There are many ways to help people to focus on their aspirations. One approach to help them to channel their energy in a positive way and also provide practical tools they can use to achieve their goals.

Here are some of the questions that I explore before meeting a person. These can be also adapted when working with a team or organisation.

Who am I going to meet? What may be happening in their world? What may be the challenges they face? What may be their top priorities at the moment?

What may be their short-term and long-term aspirations? What may they want to do in their lives and work? What may be their life goals? What may they want to do to be healthy and happy?

What are the things that give them positive energy? What may be their vocation? What would they do if they had a guaranteed income for the rest of their life? How can they focus on these things in the future?

What may be their strengths? What may be their successful style of working? How can they do satisfying work? How can they build on their strengths and get paid a reasonable salary?

What may be the specific challenges they face? What may be happening in these situations? Bearing in mind what they can control, what would they like to happen? What are the real results they want to achieve?

What may be their purpose in life? What may be the principles they believe in following? How can they pursue their purpose, follow their principles and achieve their picture of success?

There are many other themes it is possible to explore when focusing on a person's aspirations. Whatever route is followed, it is important:

To create an environment in which the person feels at ease and able to explore their aspirations;

To encourage the person to explore and then, when they feel ready, to settle on the goals they want to achieve;

To play back your understanding of the person's aims and make sure you are clear on their picture of success.

Let's assume that a person has clarified their aspirations. When appropriate, it can then be time to move on to the next stage.

Application

Imagine that a person has decided to work towards their goals. How to help them to take this step? One approach is to explore the following questions.

What are the person's goals? Looking at the first goal, what are the real results they want to achieve? What is their picture of success? What will be the benefits of achieving the goal?

What are their possible options for working towards their goal? What are the consequences – the pluses and minuses - of each option? Which is the option – or the combination of options – that is most attractive?

What are the key strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success? How can they build on their strengths – and compensate for any weaknesses - when following these strategies?

What is the route they want to follow to achieve their goal? How can they translate this into an action plan? How can they get the support they need? How can they get some early successes?

How can they prepare properly before moving into action? How can they rehearse following their chosen strategies? How can they rehearse managing any potential challenges?

How can they apply themselves properly when following their chosen route? How can they manage their energy? How can they organise their time in blocks? How can they set achievable goals and get successes?

How can I help them to help them to work towards their goal? What are the positive models and practical tools that I can share? How can I pass on this knowledge in a way they can accept and use to reach their goal?

Let's assume a person has begun applying themselves to work towards their goal. When appropriate, it can be time to move on to the next stage.

Achievement

Imagine that the person is following their chosen strategies. It is important for them to keep reading reality. They can build on what is working and also tackle areas for improvement.

A person is also more likely to reach their goals if they know their successful pattern for finishing. They can follow this – plus maybe add other skills – to achieve their picture of success.

How to help a person to take these steps? One approach is to focus on the following themes and help them to achieve their aims.

How can I help the person to keep following their chosen strategies? How can I help them: a) to build on what is working; b) to tackle areas for improvement?

How can I help them to manage their energy? How can I help them to take time to reflect, re-energise and refocus? How can I help them to rehearse what they are going to do next?

How can I help them to buy time when faced by unexpected events? How can I help them to anticipate challenges? How can I help them to explore the possible ways forward and find solutions?

How can I help them to follow their successful pattern for finishing? How can I help them to reach their goals? How can I help them to maybe also add that touch of class?

There many ways to help a person to develop. One approach is to help them to focus on their aspirations. It then to help them to apply themselves and achieve their goals.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

The People's Aspirations Approach

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

*

The specific things I can do then to follow this approach in my own way may be:

*

*

*

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

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*

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The Principles, Persistence And Positive Results Approach



There are many views on how people demonstrate resilience. Some talk about the importance of people showing grit or being able to manage setbacks.

Great workers demonstrate such qualities in the activities where they excel. Such people often show remarkable persistence. Let's explore how you can take this approach in your own way.

Imagine that you want to do a piece of work. You will start by having a positive attitude towards doing the task. This could be to write a book, do a creative project, run a business, lead a team or do another activity.

Looking ahead, you recognise it will be important to demonstrate resilience. One approach will be to follow the principles you believe in, be

persistent and do your best to achieve positive results. Let's explore these themes.

Principles

Great workers prepare properly before doing a piece of work. This includes clarifying how they can follow the principles they believe in. Taking this approach gives them the strength to be persistent.

Imagine that you want to follow this approach in your own way. Bearing this in mind, you may want to take the following steps.

*You can clarify the positive
results you want to achieve*

Start by clarifying the results you want to achieve. These will obviously differ depending on whether you aim to do a specific project, tackle a particular challenge or achieve a certain picture of success.

*You can clarify the principles you want
to follow to achieve the positive results*

Belief is vital. Bearing this in mind, describe the principles you want to follow to do your best to achieve the desired results. You can then keep focusing on how to apply these principles when doing the work.

*You can clarify how you can follow these principles
and do your best to achieve the positive results*

You can then make your action plan. Describe the specific things you can do to translate your principles into action. This can include how you can buy time to think, for example, when meeting certain challenges.

Imagine you want to clarify the principles you want to follow when doing a piece of work. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

Principles

The positive results I want to achieve when doing the piece of work are:

*

*

*

The principles I want to follow when doing the piece of work are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to follow these principles and do my best to achieve positive results are:

*

*

*

Persistence

Great workers demonstrate persistence. Building in mind the principles they believe in, they follow a certain rhythm. They aim to keep doing the right things in the right way. They then do their best to get the right results.

Imagine that you want to take this approach. If appropriate, you can take some of the following steps.

*You can plan how you want to
follow your principles that day*

One approach is to start by focusing on the results you want to achieve that day. If appropriate, you can rehearse how to follow your principles to do your best to achieve those results.

*You can follow your chosen rhythm for being
persistent when pursuing your principles*

You may then want to go through the following steps. First, you can follow your ritual for clicking into action. Second, you can follow a certain rhythm for being persistent when following your principles. Third, you can keep reading reality and perform superb work.

Great workers demonstrate persistence when focusing on continuous improvement. They keep reading reality to check: a) what is working; b) what can be done better and how. They then implement these ideas and perform superb work.

Some people love the process of being persistent. They believe in the importance of earning things rather than being entitled to things. They love the process of absorption, adventure and achievement. This can lead to the next step.

Positive Results

Great workers continue to follow their principles and perform superb work. When appropriate, however, they are prepared to be pragmatic and do what is required to achieve the desired positive results.

Imagine that you are doing fine work but then face a challenge or an unexpected event. One approach is to ask yourself the following questions.

What are the principles I want to follow? How can I apply these principles a pragmatic way in this situation to get positive results? What are the possible options going forwards? What are the pluses and minuses of each option?

Which option most fits with the principles I want to follow? How can I translate this into action? How can I build on the pluses and minimise the minuses? How can I then do my best to get positive results?

Let's return to the piece of work you described in the first exercise. You may have described aiming to do a specific project, tackle a challenge or do another activity.

Looking at this piece of work, how can you follow the persistence approach in your own way? How can you continue to follow your principles? How can you continue to be persistent? How can you 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.

The Principles, Persistence And Positive Results 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 this approach in my own way are:*

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Enjoying The Journey Approach

Enjoying The Journey

There are many ways to live life. One approach is aim to enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goals.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M O N P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

There are many ways to live life. One approach is to aim to enjoy the journey as well as reaching the goals.

This can be relatively easy when doing positive activities. Sometimes it can be more difficult when doing things that are less positive. Let's explore these themes.

Some people aim to enjoy the journey when doing positive activities

Different people do this when doing different things. They may enjoy the journey when:

Encouraging other people ... Nurturing their garden ... Writing articles ... Developing certain skills ... Organising events ... Solving technical problems ... Making things work ... Passing on knowledge to people.

What are the positive activities where you enjoy the journey? What may be the reasons why you enjoy these activities? What are the things that give you satisfaction?

You may be following a passion. You may enjoy adding to your knowledge and applying it to a real issue. You may be getting a sense of satisfaction from achieving positive results.

Different people do different things to encourage themselves when enjoying the journey. They may aim to:

Set an achievable goal ... Organise their time in blocks so they can do deep work ... Rehearse what they are going to do ... Move into action ... Do intense work ... Give themselves breaks along the way ... Keep going until they have reached their achievable goal.

Let's return to your own life. Looking ahead, can you think of a positive activity you would like to do? How can you enjoy the journey when doing this activity? What may be the benefits of taking those steps?

As mentioned earlier, it can be relatively easy to take this approach when doing activities you love. It can be harder in other situations. Let's consider this theme.

Some people aim to try to enjoy the journey when doing less positive activities

A person may take this approach when managing potentially challenging situations. They may be:

Having a course of medical treatment ... Dealing with depression ... Recovering from an injury ... Helping a loved one who is experiencing difficulties ... Working in a boring job ... Having to give people bad news ... Taking tough decisions to turnaround a company.

Different people encourage themselves – and other people – in different ways when taking such journeys. Let's explore some of these approaches.

Some people take the enjoyment approach. They aim to do things they enjoy, give themselves treats or do activities that give them positive energy. This helps to maintain their strength on the journey.

Some people focus on the things that give them hope. Looking at my own life, this is something I did when working in a factory for six years. I kept focusing on the things I wanted to do in the future. This helped to maintain my spirits.

Some people take the encouragement approach. They aim to do things that encourage themselves and, when appropriate, encourage other people. One person expressed this in the following way.

"I kept focusing on the benefits of the medical treatment – which was to prolong my life. I also aimed to encourage the medical staff. This helped me to stay positive on the journey."

Some people take the excellence approach. They see the challenging experience as a chance to deliver excellence. This is an approach taken by bomb disposal technicians, mountain rescue teams and others who do hazardous work. One person expressed this in the following way.

"I am quite cerebral in my work. Bearing in mind the challenge, I drain myself of emotion and redefine it as a task to be done. I rehearse it time and again in my mind to minimise the risk. I then go ahead and do my best to deliver the goods."

Let's return to your own life. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific activity where you may want to enjoy the journey? This could be when doing a project, tackling a challenge or working towards a goal. How can you aim to enjoy the journey in your own way?

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

The Enjoying The Journey Approach

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

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

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

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The Slowly, Speedily And Successfully Approach



There are many ways to develop and do superb work. Some people may do things slowly, then speedily and then successfully. Different people take these steps in different ways and for different reasons. Let's explore some of these approaches.

The Development Approach

Some people follow this approach in their development. They may start by appearing to do things slowly but then speed up and do superb work.

Such people often have what Carol Dweck called a growth mindset. They love the process of exploring, making sense of information and then translating it into action.

One person may be what some call a late developer. They may explore many topics before settling on the activity in which they wish to specialise. They may then increase the speed of their development.

Another person may immerse themselves deeply in a topic. They want to build from a solid base and study it in detail. They then feel more able to develop more speedily.

The Deliberate Approach

Some people deliberately follow the approach of going slowly and then speedily. Different people do this in different ways.

One person may slow down when making a tough decision. Buying time to think, they aim: a) to clarify the results to achieve; b) to clarify their options going forwards; c) to plan how to follow their chosen option.

Another person may slow down when preparing to do a piece of work. They may pause, plan ahead and rehearse pursuing their chosen strategy. They may then click into action and do things speedily.

Great workers may appear to do things slowly but more speedily than others. They focus on activity in which they excel and play scenarios of what could happen. They also have skills in the following areas.

Radar – They have the ability to scan what is happening, see patterns and predict what will happen before it happens.

Repertoire – They have built up a repertoire of strategies and skills they can use in various situations.

Results – They use the information from their radar and dip into their repertoire to apply the strategy that will deliver the desired results.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a specific activity where you may want to follow elements of the slowly, speedily and successfully approach? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

The Slowly, Speedily And Successfully Approach

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

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

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

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The Gut, Guidelines And Goals Approach



This is an approach followed by many people who do fine work. It starts by them focusing on what their gut wants to do. When appropriate, it then involves following certain guidelines on the way towards achieving their goals.

Different people follow this approach in different ways. Let's explore some of the steps they may go through on the way towards doing fine work.

Gut

Imagine that you are exploring several pieces of work that you may want to do in the future. There are many ways to decide which of these you want to pursue.

One approach is to start by checking your motivation rating for pursuing each of these routes. There are many times, of course, when we may need to do things out of necessity. There are other times, however, when it is vital to feel motivated in our gut to work towards a particular goal.

This motivation often comes from our gut. We may say something like the following.

"I really want to do this ... It is something I believe in ... I feel driven to reach a particular goal."

People often work best when they use their whole being. This motivation often starts in their gut and, when appropriate, they move on to the next stage.

Guidelines

Great workers sometimes follow their gut regarding the kinds of work they want to do. They then switch to using their intelligence to clarify the guidelines they want to follow to achieve their goals.

Different people do this in different ways. Bearing in mind the specific goals they want to achieve, they may use any of the following techniques.

They may explore their possible choices – and the possible consequences of each option - before then committing to their chosen way forward.

They may go into creative problem solving mode by focusing on clarity, creativity and then making their plan for achieving concrete results;

They may mentally rehearse pursuing several strategies and then settle on those they want to follow to achieve the specific goals;

They may recall when they have tackled a similar challenges successfully in the past and then follow those principles – plus add other skills – to tackle the present challenge;

They may focus on their purpose, the principles they want to follow and how they can do their best to achieve the picture of success.

Imagine that you have taken have settled on the guidelines you want to follow when doing a piece of work. It will then be time to focus on the next step.

Goals

Great workers move into action. They then aim to follow their chosen guidelines and give their best when working towards achieving certain goals.

There are many ways to take this step. One approach is to follow your successful style for working towards achieving success. This can involve revisiting your positive history.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you felt motivated in your gut and followed certain guidelines to reach your goals? This could have been in your personal or professional life.

What did you do right then? What were the principles you followed? How did you translate these into action? How can you follow similar guidelines – plus maybe add other elements – in the future? What else can you do to work towards achieving your chosen goals?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you imagine a situation where you want to follow elements of this approach in your own way. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

The Gut, Guidelines And Goals Approach

The specific situation when I may want to follow this approach in my own way may be:

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The specific things I can do then to focus on what my gut wants to do and follow guidelines to work towards certain 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 Awareness, Agility And Achievement Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. Some people focus on the following steps in the activities where they have the ability to deliver peak performances.

Awareness

They are aware of what is happening, what could happen and begin clarifying what they want to happen.

Agility

They clarify what they want to achieve, use their agility to explore the possible ways forward then settle on and rehearse their chosen strategy.

Achievement

They apply themselves fully, do reality checks to focus on continuous improvement and do their best to deliver what they want to achieve.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach. Let's explore how you can do this in your own way.

Awareness

Great workers keep developing awareness in their chosen field. They love to keep abreast of events, explore new information and make sense of experiences. This acts as a resource bank when pursuing their work.

They put themselves into situations where they can use this information. They then sometimes take the following steps.

*They make themselves
aware of what is happening*

Such workers aim to raise their awareness about what is happening in the particular situation. Going into a situation where they may excel, they do their version of scanning. They aim:

To see what is actually happening ... To see the successful patterns ... To see the potentially unsuccessful patterns.

They gather information to do a reality check these themes. They may then go on to the next stage.

*They make themselves
aware of what could happen*

Great workers look for patterns in situations. They then use their experience, knowledge and imagination to explore what may happen if these patterns continue.

Such workers aim to consider the possible consequences. The patterns may lead to positive consequences, negative consequences or a mixture of both. They explore many potential scenarios.

Bearing in mind this information – and the potential implications – they may then move to the next stage.

*They make themselves aware
of what they would like to happen*

Great workers may begin to clarify what they would like to happen – the potential picture of success. They also envisage the possible benefits of achieving these aims.

They often begin by exploring many potential possibilities before choosing to focus on one of these. They may then move on to the next stage.

Agility

Great workers have an agile mindset when working in situations where they excel. There are several definitions for agility. These include the following:

To be able to think clearly, explore potential ways forwards and apply this ability to achieve success in certain situations.

To, when doing project management, focus on continuous collaboration and improvement in order to deliver the required goals.

Depending on their strengths, different people apply this ability in different situations. Some take the following steps

*They clarify what they want to achieve
in the situation – the picture of success*

Great workers clarify the real results they want to achieve in the situation. These may include short, medium and long-term goals. They then translate these into a clear picture of success.

Such people spend a lot of time clarifying the vision. Some report they can see it, feel it and picture it in great detail. They also see the benefits of achieving these aims. This leads to the next step.

They use their agility to explore the possible ways forward to achieve the goals

Great workers reach into their repertoire to find possible ways to achieve the aims. They may do this by working through the following themes.

They recall when they have tackled similar challenges successfully and how they can follow these principles in the present situation;

They use their creativity to explore many possible ways to reach the goals;

They clarify the key strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success.

Such workers keep going until they feel ready to move to the next stage.

They settle on and rehearse their chosen strategy for achieving the goals

Great workers settle on the strategy that is most likely to achieve success. They then rehearse and stress test the strategy. They may do this by taking the following steps.

They rehearse following their chosen strategy and translating it into action;

They rehearse finding solutions to the possible challenges on the way towards achieving the goals;

They conclude by again rehearsing following their chosen strategy for achieving the goals.

Such workers may then take time to reflect. Regathering their energy, they then move on to the next stage.

Achievement

Great workers often follow their preferred way of working towards achieving the goals. Whatever approach they adopt, some take the following steps.

*They apply themselves fully
to work towards the goals*

Such workers may have a ritual for clicking into action. They then focus on being positively engaged and applying themselves fully to the tasks in hand. Some do this in the following way.

They organise their time in blocks so they are able to do deep work;

They aim to deliver consistently high quality work;

They set achievable goals in the time frame and sometimes get a sense of success from achieving those goals.

Such workers also encourage themselves on the journey. At the same time, they often focus on the following theme.

*They keep doing reality checks to see
what is working and what can be improved*

Great workers do reality checks and embody the ethic of continuous improvement. Bearing this in mind, they often focus on:

The specific things that are working and how to keep doing these things;

The specific things that can be improved and how.

Such workers then implement these ideas. They continue checking reality, however, in order to improve their work.

*They do their best to
achieve the desired goals*

Great workers deal with both the successes and setbacks. But sometimes challenges can throw them off-course. They then take time to think.

Looking ahead:

They clarify the potential ways forward and the possible consequences of each option;

They clarify the option they want to pursue and rehearse following this option;

They move into action, follow their chosen route and aim to tackle the challenge successfully.

Such workers continue to pursue the strategy most likely to achieve success. They do superb work and find solutions to challenges. They then do their best to achieve the picture of success.

Let's return to your own life and work. Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach in your own way.

How can you focus on the specific activity where you demonstrate awareness? What may be the goal you want to achieve in this activity? How can you continue to be agile to find ways forward? How can you do your best to achieve the goal?

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

The Awareness, Agility And Achievement Approach

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

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

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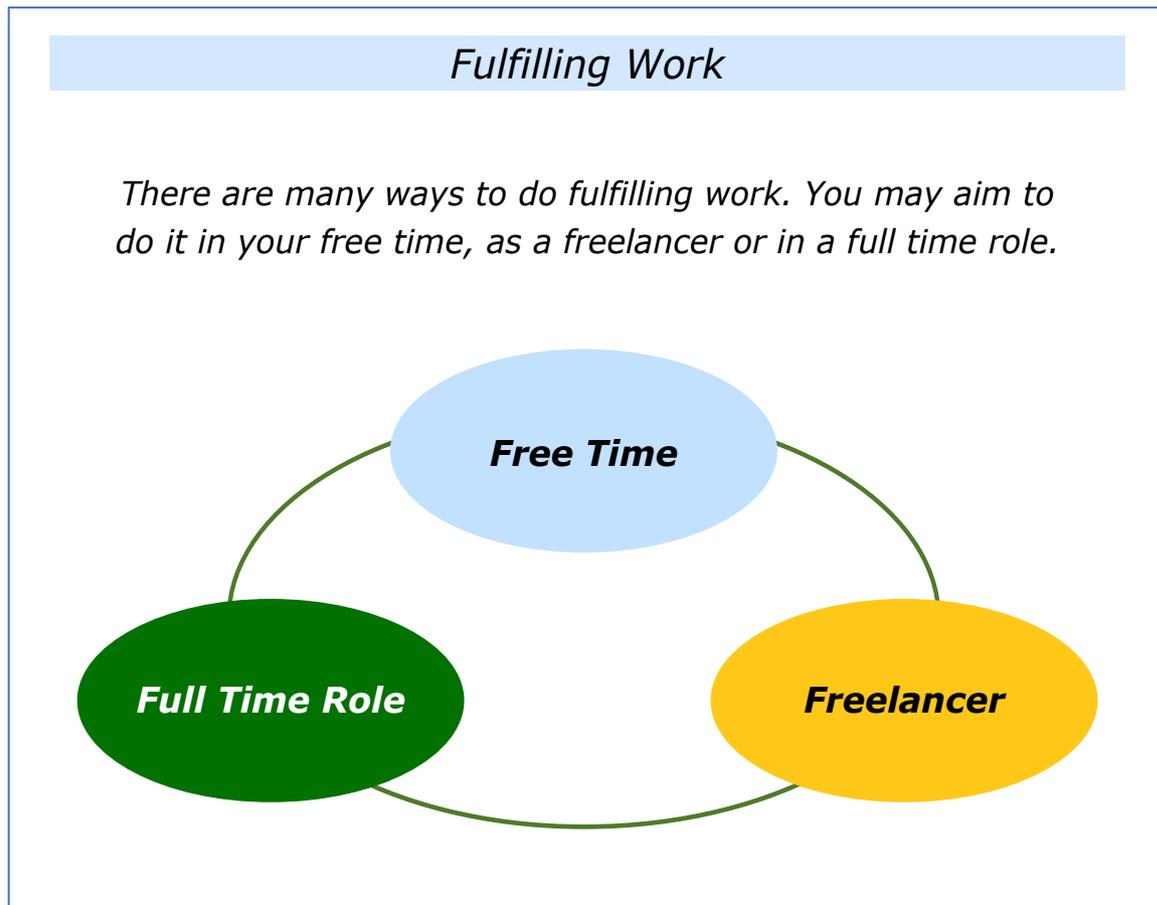
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Fulfilling Work Approach



There are many ways to do fulfilling work. You may aim to do it in a full time role, as a freelancer and in your free time. Let's explore these themes.

Fulfilling Work

People love to do fulfilling work. But some individuals may reach a point where they find it difficult to do such work in their full time role. One person expressed this in the following way.

"I used to love my work. At first it was a mission, then it became a career and now it is just a job. Much of my day is spent on work that is not satisfying. I would like to recapture the joy I had when looking forward to each day."

Imagine that you want to find ways to do fulfilling work. One way to start is by describing the kinds of work you find fulfilling. Here are some of the answers that people give when exploring this theme.

Fulfilling Work. The kinds of work that I find fulfilling are:

Encouraging people ... Passing on knowledge ... Helping people overcome setbacks ... Writing manuals ... Developing software ... Helping customers to succeed ... Solving certain kinds of problems ... Leading teams.

You will, of course, have your own approach to doing such work. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentence.

Fulfilling Work

The kinds of work that I find fulfilling are:

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Imagine that you have described the kinds of work you find fulfilling. You may then want to explore the different ways you can aim to do such work. Let's explore these situations.

Fulfilling Work In Your Free Time

Many people aim to do fulfilling work in their free time. They pursue a hobby, perform creative work or do other activities they find fascinating. They find this gives them strength to deal with other aspects of their lives.

Some people in full time work are now taking a three pronged approach to shaping their futures. Recognising that the world of work is changing, they are focusing on the following themes.

First, they are continuing to perform superb work in their day job. Acting as positive models, they are being super professional and making a great contribution to their employer.

Second, they are encouraging people in their network. They are being generous and passing on knowledge. They are not looking for anything in return but sometimes it can result in other benefits.

Third, they are spending time doing a side project. They may be developing an app, starting a small business, having their own web site or doing another activity.

Some see this side project as their play pen – a place where they can do things they love. Some see it as a place where they can share knowledge. Some see it as a potential shop window.

Such people get positive energy from doing the side project. Sometimes it can also lead to their work getting noticed and, in some cases, lead to them being hired or developing a new career.

There are many ways to doing fulfilling work. Some people can find more ways to do this in a full time role. Some make a living doing freelance work for different employers. Some do such work during their free time.

Imagine that you want to pursue the latter route. The final exercise invites you to complete the following sentences.

Fulfilling Work In My Free Time

*The specific kind of fulfilling work
I would like to do in my free time is:*

*

*The specific things I can do to
do this kind of fulfilling work are:*

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*

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*The specific benefits of doing
this kind of fulfilling work will be:*

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Fulfilling Work As A Freelancer

Some people see themselves as professional freelancers – even if they have a full time role. Seeing themselves on a rolling contract, they aim to build on their strengths, do superb work and deliver success. This increases the chances of the contract being extended.

Some people choose to do fulfilling work as an actual freelancer. Bearing in mind their strengths, they look for opportunities to do such work that will help people to succeed.

Some individuals focus on doing one main project – especially if it can provide a good financial platform. Some get their income from doing two, three or more projects.

Such people maintain a freelance mentality, however, and plant seeds for potential future projects. They believe in continually increasing their options for future work.

Different freelancers build their portfolios in different ways. One approach is for them to keep exploring the following themes.

What is the kind of fulfilling work I like to do? What are the specific things I can deliver? How would delivering these help people to reach their goals?

Who may be the specific kinds of people, employers or organisations that I could help? What are the challenges they face? How could I do fulfilling work and help them to succeed?

How can I keep helping my present customers? How can I continue to give great service? How can I continue to help them to succeed? How can I look for potential ways to help them in the future?

Imagine that you want to do fulfilling work as a freelancer. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

Fulfilling Work As A Freelancer

*The specific kind of fulfilling work
I would like to do as a freelancer is:*

*

*The specific things I could deliver to help
a customer, employer or organisation to
tackle challenges or achieve their goals are:*

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*The specific steps I can take to find
and do such work as a freelancer are:*

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Fulfilling Work In A Full Time Role

Some people grew up with the idea that they would be able to do their ideal work in a specific full time role. Sometimes this can be the case but there may be occasions when it is not true.

A person may find that much of their time is spent doing tasks that are unsatisfying. Whilst they try to play to their strengths, they may find it hard to squeeze in time to do satisfying work.

This can lead to frustration. Such a person may find their mind occupied by doing unrewarding tasks. They may also get out of the habit of doing what they do best.

How to tackle this challenge? One approach is to reverse the way in which they think about their role. It is to focus on the steps they can take:

To do fulfilling work in their full time role;

To do the other work in their full time role.

Certainly the other work needs to get done – because otherwise they might get the sack. It is important to start, however, by focusing on doing the kinds of work they find fulfilling.

This approach involves having a positive mindset. It encourages a person to focus on the things they can do: a) to rekindle joy in their job and make their best contribution; b) to find creative ways to do the other kinds of work.

Imagine that you want to take this approach. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to begin by focusing on the fulfilling work you can do in your full time role. It then invites you to clarify how to make sure the other work gets done.

The exercise calls for begin creative in your thinking and the answers may not come straight away. It is often possible to take these steps, however, and do fulfilling work in your full time role.

Fulfilling Work In A Full Time Role

*Fulfilling Work: The steps I can take to
do fulfilling work in my full time role are:*

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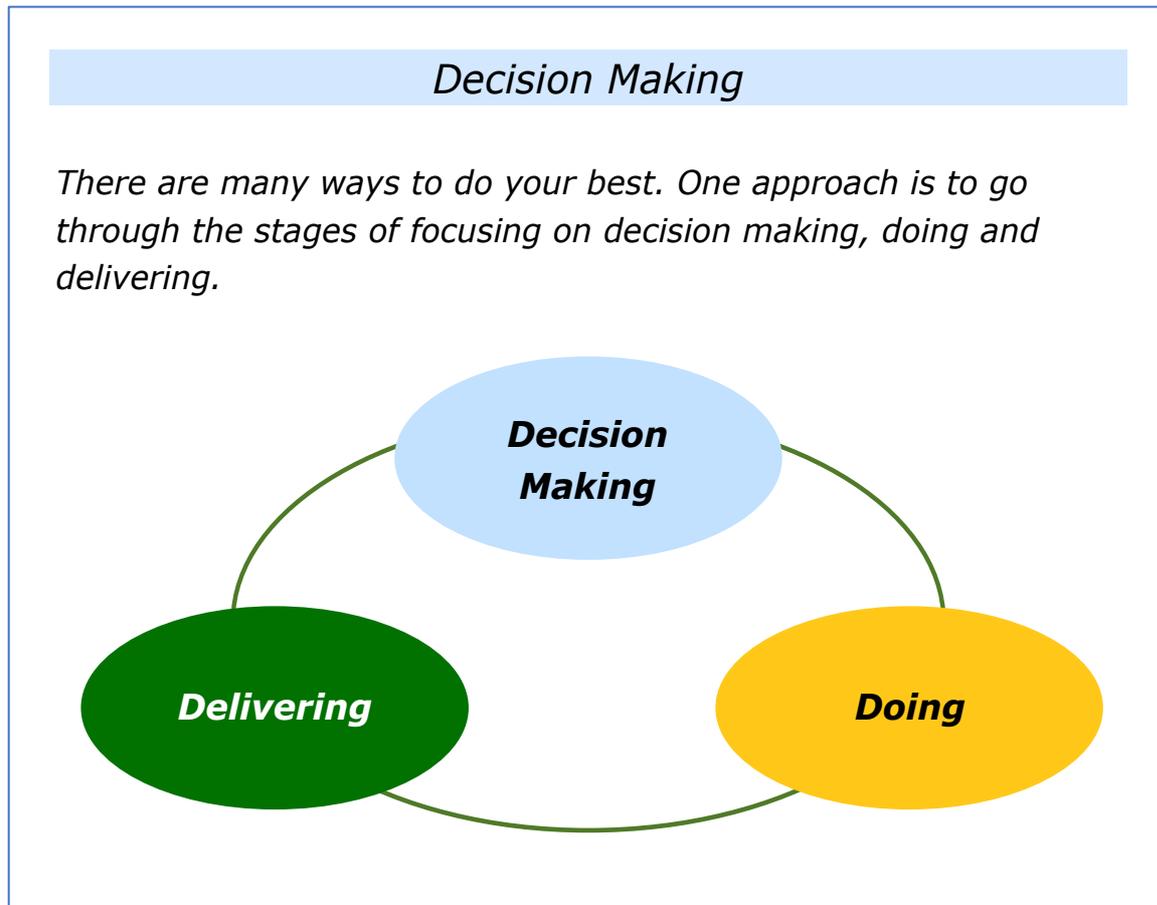
*Other Work: The steps I can take to do
the other work in my full time role are:*

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The Decision Making, Doing And Delivering Approach



There are many ways to do your best. One approach involves going through the stages of focusing on decision making, doing and delivering. Different people follow this approach in different ways.

Great workers, for example, go beyond making a decision. They translate this into action and do their best to deliver the goods. Let's explore these themes.

Decision Making

Imagine that you want to tackle a challenge or work towards a specific goal. You may want to shape your future career, decide on a certain course of treatment, make a tough decision at work or focus on another topic.

Different people make decisions in different ways. Bearing in mind what you can control in the situation, you may aim:

To clarify a decision you want to make, gather lots of information and clarify the picture of success

To clarify the potential strategies – together with the pluses and minuses of each option – for achieving the picture of success

To clarify the strategy you want to follow, translate this into a clear action plan and commit to working towards achieving the picture of success.

Imagine that you have worked through those steps. You may then be ready to move on to the next stage.

Doing

Great workers actually do what they have decided to do. You will do this in your own way. Bearing in mind the route you want to follow, you may aim:

To keep following your chosen strategy, get some quick successes and do superb work;

To keep following your daily disciplines by doing the right things in the right way every day;

To keep reading reality by building on what is working and tackling areas for improvement.

Great workers believe in follow strategies that work. They follow their chosen route but, as mentioned above, they keep doing reality checks. This enables them to keep doing what is working but also focus on continuous improvement.

Imagine that you are working through these steps and also encouraging yourself on the journey. You may then move on to the next stage.

Delivering

Great workers do their best to deliver the goods. You will do this in your own way. Bearing in mind the route you want to follow, you may aim:

To keep following your chosen disciplines, find solutions to challenges and manage any dramas along the way;

To follow your successful pattern for finishing and, if appropriate, flow, focus and finish successfully;

To do your best to deliver the goods and, if appropriate, add that touch of class on the way towards achieving the picture of success.

Great workers often redefine challenges as projects. They then aim to make the most of the journey as well as reaching the goal. This gives them the opportunity to learn, develop and sometimes do something special to achieve their goal.

There are many ways to do your best in life. One approach is to go through the stages of focusing on decision making, doing and delivering the goods.

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? 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 Decision Making, Doing And Delivering 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 then 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 Mission To Make Magic Whilst Managing The Other Things In Life Approach



This is an approach followed by some people. Different people do this in different ways.

Some may aim to create magical experiences in their daily lives. They may aim to encourage people, develop a certain quality of life or create experiences that provide people with positive memories for life.

Some people aim to create magical experiences in their work. They may aim to provide inspiring education, art, music, ideas, performances or other activities that take people into a positive dimension.

People who aim to make magic may also need to manage the other things in life. These can include managing their health, relationships, money other activities.

Some people are good at managing these issues. But some may neglect to manage them or need help from other people. Failing to manage these basics can sometimes get in the way of making magic.

Different people choose to follow the making magic approach for different reasons. Let's explore these possibilities.

Some People Follow This Approach After An Epiphany

Some people have a realisation that makes them reassess their priorities in life. It is then up to them to decide if they want to act on what they realised during the epiphany.

Sometimes the epiphany comes from a positive experience. The person may be on an inner journey, doing some slow thinking, witnessing something beautiful or exploring new ideas. The experience they have inspires them to make more magic in their lives.

Sometimes the epiphany comes during a challenging experience. The person may be experiencing an illness, setback or a life-shaking event. Vulnerability is a great teacher and can show what is really important in life. It can encourage a person to focus on making magic in their life.

Many people followed this approach after their experiences during the Covid. This was part of the great realignment. Providing they could cover their expenses, they chose to follow their values and what was important in life. This was more attractive than the daily commute.

Some People Follow This Approach As A Way Of Life

Some people adopted this approach relatively early in life. Different people may have taken this path for different reasons.

Some may have grown up in families where their parents encouraged them to focus on happiness. They may have been encouraged to do what

gives them positive energy, explore and keep developing. They may also have learned how to live their chosen lifestyle without going into debt.

Some may have aimed to do fulfilling work. They may then have developed the savvy to do what they loved and also find funding. They may have also developed the ability to do work that provides hope for people and for the planet.

Some People Follow This Approach To Pass On A Positive Legacy

Some people reach a point where they aim to pass on a legacy that helps both present and future generations. Different people do this in different ways.

Some aim to pass on a material legacy. They pass on money, housing, a business or other material gifts. They see this as a way of providing a platform for people to have a good quality of life and maybe make magic.

Some people aim to pass on an emotional legacy. They spend time with their loved ones, kindred spirits or other people they want to encourage. They aim to help these people to feel loved, affirmed and follow their chosen path in life.

Some people aim to pass on knowledge that helps people or the planet. They may share positive models and practical tools that people can use to live fulfilling lives. They may also pass on practical ideas that people can use to build a positive planet.

There are many ways to live life. Some people aim to follow a mission where they make magic. At the same time, they also aim to manage the other things in life.

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 Mission To Make Magic Whilst Managing The Other Things In Life

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

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

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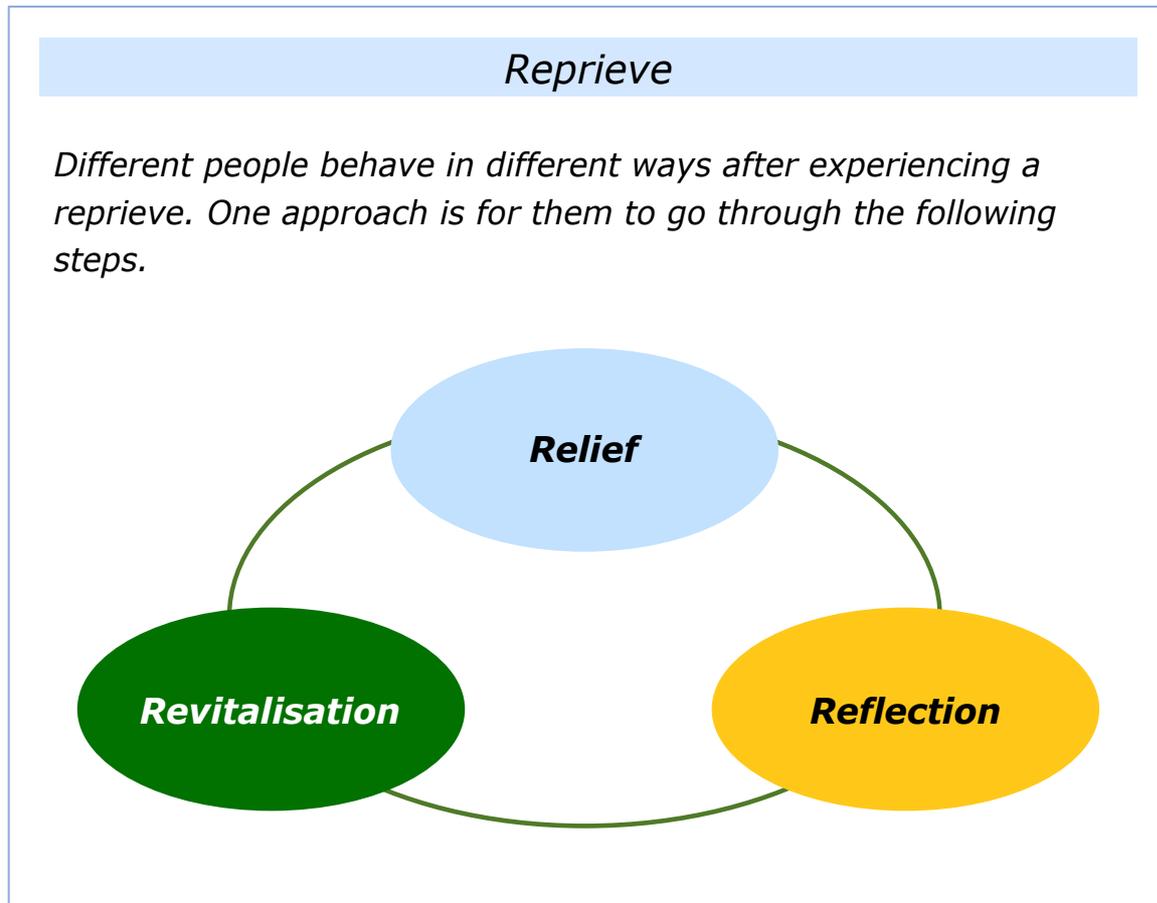
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Reprieve Approach



We are told that near death experiences focus the mind. This can also be the case when experiencing some kind of reprieve.

Different people behave in different ways after having such an experiences. Some go through the following stages.

They have a sense of relief;

They reflect on what is important in life;

They revitalise themselves and make the most of the reprieve.

Imagine that you have had a health scare and are awaiting the results of a blood test. This can be an anxious time and many potential scenarios may go through your head. The blood test comes back and the doctor says:

"Everything is normal. You can get on with living your life."

This can lead to a feeling of relief followed by a period of reflection. Looking ahead, you may focus on what is really important in life. You may also do things to revitalise yourself and enjoy life.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you experienced some kind of reprieve? What did you learn from the experience? How did you try to apply these lessons in your life? What happened as a result?

Different people experience different reprieves in their personal or professional lives. They may recover from an illness, be forgiven for a mistake, get a second chance or come through an existential challenge.

Some people then choose to reflect and revitalise their lives. They may do this through exploring the following questions.

"What have I learned from the experience? What have I learned about what is important in life? How can I focus on these things in the future?"

Some people then recognise their mortality and see every day as a bonus. They may aim to develop a sense of gratitude, appreciate life and help other people. They may also aim to pass on a positive legacy.

Let's return to your own life and work. Whilst it is hard to predict the future, can you think of a specific situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach?

This could be a reprieve concerning yourself in your personal or professional life. It could also be a reprieve that concerns somebody else whom you may want to support in some way.

What can you do in such a situation? How can you reflect on what is important in life? How can you translate these thoughts 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.

The Reprieve Approach

The specific situation where I may follow elements of the relief approach may be:

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The specific things I can do then to follow this 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 Encouragers And Stoppers Approach

Encouragers And Stoppers

You can aim to build with the encouragers

And:

You can aim to manage situations where you feel stopped

This is an exercise that I often used on strengths workshops. The aim was to help people to identify how they could encourage themselves and other people in the future. Here are the instructions for the exercise.

Encouragers

Who have been the people who have encouraged you in the past? They may have been parents, teachers, friends or other people. Write the names of these people and the specific things they did to encourage you.

Who are the people who encourage you now? These may be people in your family, work place or elsewhere. Write the names of these people and what they do to encourage you.

Encouragers

Encouragers In The Past

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Encouragers In The Present

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Stoppers

Who have been the people with whom you have felt stopped? Some of these people may have had the best of intentions but their style may have been difficult to manage. Write the names of these people.

Who are the people - or what are the situations - in the present where you feel stopped? You have a responsibility to do your best, of course, but you may feel disqualified or not valued in certain situations. This can be challenging.

Two other points are worth mentioning. First, some people will both encourage you and stop you. If so, describe how they encourage you and also how they may feel stopped.

Second, some people stop themselves. They may do this by following negative scripts or by not doing their best. If appropriate, describe how you may stop yourself in certain situations. Here is the exercise on stoppers.

Stoppers

Stoppers In The Past

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Stoppers In The Present

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Encouragers And Stoppers In The Future

Imagine that you have made a list of encouragers and stoppers. Looking ahead, you may want to consider the following themes.

Encouragers

Let's start with the people who are supportive or stimulating. How can you build with such people? One approach is to be an encourager yourself and aim:

To spend more time the encouragers;

To encourage the encouragers and other people;

To encourage yourself.

Stoppers

Let's move onto the situations where you may feel stopped. When appropriate, it can be good to stop putting yourself into such situations. If this is not possible, you may aim:

To rehearse what you are going to do when encountering such people or situations;

To recognise the specific things they do that trigger your emotions and also learn how to manage such triggers;

To, but only when you feel it is appropriate, suggest positive ways the person may want to consider behaving in the future – plus describe the benefits for both themselves and other people.

Here is the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to focus on how you can build with encouragers and manage situations where you may feel stopped.

Encouragers And Stoppers

Encouragers

The specific things I can do to build with the encouragers – and encourage other people - are:

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Stoppers

The specific things I can do to manage any situations in which I feel stopped are:

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The Spirit, Savvy And Success Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is for people to embody a certain spirit and demonstrate savvy on the way towards producing success. Let's explore these themes.

Spirit

Great workers sometimes embody a certain kind of spirit and aim to follow certain principles in their lives and work. They may also aim to serve something greater than themselves.

The principles they follow may be based on a spiritual faith, philosophy or guidelines about how to live a good life. They then aim to translate these into action on the way towards achieving their goals.

Some individuals remind themselves of these principles every day. They measure their life by the extent to which they follow these principles during their time on the planet. Sometimes this can lead to them having a sense of peace.

During my life I have met many such people. They have been carers, educators, therapists, gardeners, environmentalists, medics, artists and people in other professions.

Such people sometimes going being spiritual. Some also have another quality which may sound paradoxical. Let's consider this quality that they demonstrate in their life and work.

Savvy

Different people have savvy in different areas. They may then apply it when doing certain activities, dealing with certain challenges or working towards certain goals. There are several definitions for the word savvy. Here is one view:

Somebody with savvy has the ability to apply their experience and expertise to achieve success in certain situations.

Some people may demonstrate this in some areas but not in others. A person may have the savvy needed to thrive in academia, for example, but not in the commercial world. And vice versa.

Looking back, can you think of a person who demonstrated savvy in a particular activity? How did they apply their experience and expertise to deliver success? What happened as a result of them taking those steps?

Success

Different people have different definitions of success. Much depends on the person and the context.

A care worker may see it as helping a person to feel better. An educator may see it as helping students to develop skills they can use to shape

their futures. A leader may see it as building a culture that helps its stakeholders to succeed.

Looking back, can you think of a person who used their spirit and savvy to deliver success? How did they translate this into action? What happened as a result of them taking these steps?

People may show some but not all of these elements. Some people embody a certain spirit but have little savvy. Some have savvy but you are unsure about their spirit. Some combine each of these qualities and deliver success.

Can you think of a specific activity where you demonstrate elements of this approach? How you can you continue to follow your chosen spirit and demonstrate savvy when doing this activity? 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 Spirit, Savvy And Success Approach

*The specific activity where I show
elements of this approach is:*

*

*The specific things I can do to follow
my chosen spirit and demonstrate
savvy when doing this activity 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 Peak Performance Development Approach

Peak Performance Development

One approach is to focus on the specific activity in which you would like to develop. It is then:

- To study positive models when they do that activity and deliver peak performances;*
- To clarify the principles they follow – and how they translate these into practice – to deliver peak performances;*
- To follow these principles in your own way and do your best to deliver peak performances.*

There are many ways to improve. One approach is to clarify the specific activity in which you would like to develop. It is then:

To study positive models when they do that activity and deliver peak performances;

To clarify the principles they follow – and how they translate these into practice – to deliver peak performances;

To follow these principles in your way and do your best to deliver peak performances.

Imagine that you want take this approach. The first step is to clarify the specific activity in which you want to develop. Here are some of the topics that people mention.

*My Development. The specific activity
in which I would like to develop is:*

To learn how to make a superb omelette ... To make a living doing what I love ... To help troubled teenagers ... To write inspiring articles ... To make the transition from manager to leader ... To manage millionaires in a football team ... To build a superb organisation.

Imagine that you have clarified your chosen activity. It can then be time to take to the next step.

*You can study positive models when they do
this activity and deliver peak performances*

You may have chosen to develop a particular skill in your personal or professional life. Bearing this in mind, you may want to explore the following questions when learning from a positive model.

What is the skill I want to develop? Who is a person who may be good at this activity? How can I study what they do right when they are performing this activity? What may the person be doing to deliver peak performances?

Different people will aim to develop different skills. This will also lead to studying different kinds of positive models. During my early career, for example, I focused on the following theme:

I want to create positive environments in which people can develop and achieve their picture of success.

This led to studying therapists, educators, leaders and people in other fields. During this time I aimed:

To read about such people, watch them in action or interview them in person;

To clarify the principles they followed and pursue some of these in my own work;

To, when appropriate, teach others about the principles that such people follow – because sometimes the best way to integrate ideas is to teach about them.

You will have your own approach to studying positive models. When doing so, it may be useful to focus on the following theme.

*You can clarify the principles they follow
– and how they translate these into
practice - to deliver peak performances*

Imagine that you are studying a person doing the activity where you want to develop. If possible, watch the person in action. You can then explore the following questions.

What does the person do right when performing this activity? What are the positive results they are trying to achieve? What are the principles they follow to do their best to achieve these results?

*What do they actually **do** – in behavioural terms - to translate these principles into action? Can I see any recurring successful patterns? What else do they sometimes do to deliver peak performances?*

Looking at my own work, I found there were many recurring patterns in the people who helped others to develop. These included the following.

They had a clear philosophy and followed certain principles when helping a person to develop. They communicated this approach to the person before helping them in therapy, education or the work place.

They made the person feel welcome and clarified their goals. They made clear contracts about their own responsibilities and the person's responsibilities in working towards the goals.

They focused on the first theme to explore and clarified the real results to achieve. When appropriate, they passed on knowledge in a way the person could use to achieve the desired results.

Bearing these principles in mind, I clarified the specific things they did to translate these into action. I then focused on how to follow these in my own way. You will have your own approach to studying best practice. When appropriate, you may then move on to the next stage.

*You can follow these principles
in your own way and do your
best to achieve peak performances*

Imagine that you have clarified the principles you want to follow. You may want to do this when acting as a therapist, educator, trusted advisor, leader or in another role. If appropriate, you can then explore the following questions.

What is the activity I want to pursue? What is the specific situation where I want to pursue the activity? What are the real results I want to achieve in the situation?

What are the principles I want to follow? How can I follow these principles in my own way? How can I translate these into action? How can I do my best to get the desired positive results?

Great workers rehearse what they are going to do in a situation. Moving into action, they follow their chosen principles. They also keep checking: a) what is working; b) what they can do better and how. Sometimes they also do something special to deliver peak performances.

Looking ahead, can you think of a specific activity in which you would like to develop? How can you study positive models? How can you clarify what they do right? How can you follow these principles in your own way to deliver peak performances?

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

Peak Performance Development

*The specific activity in which
I would like to develop is:*

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*The specific things I can do to follow
the peak performance development
approach when focusing on this activity are:*

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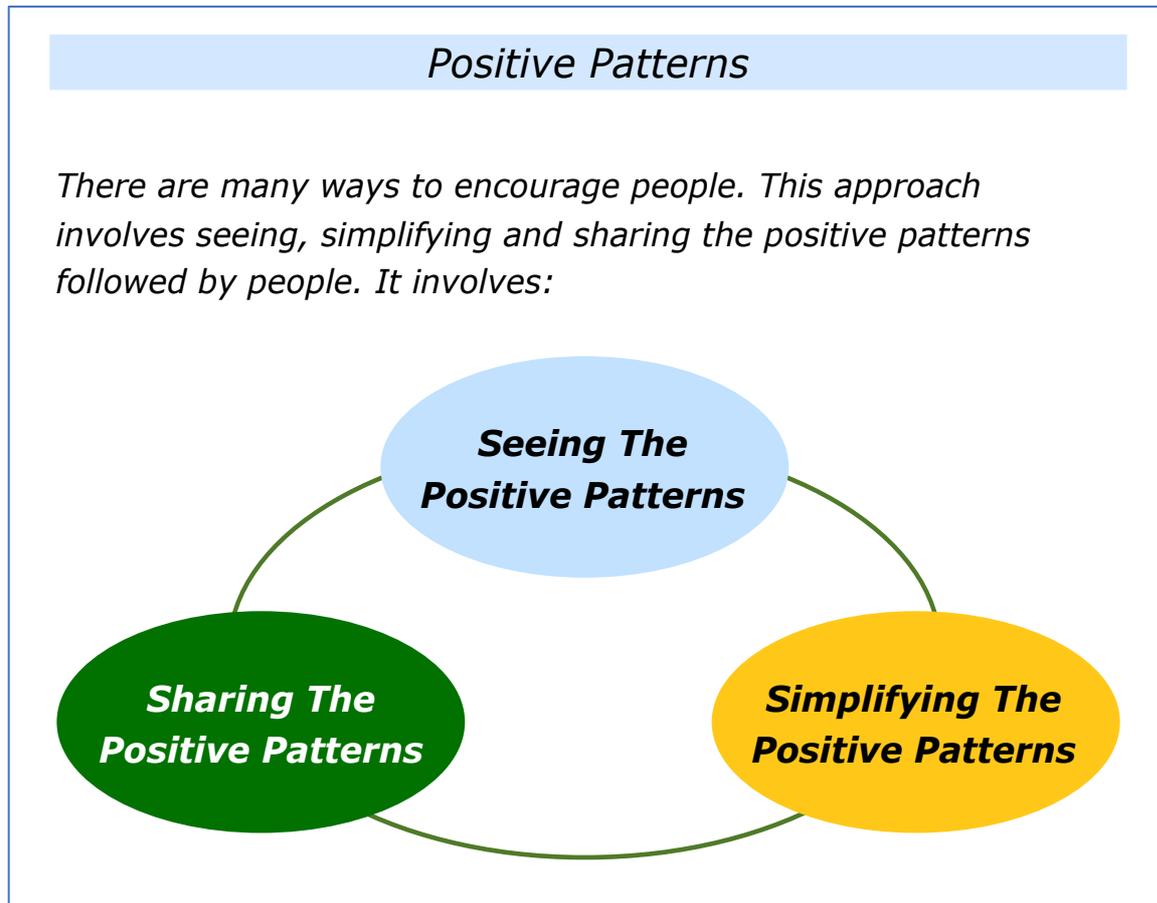
*The specific benefits of
taking these steps may be:*

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The Positive Patterns Approach



This approach starts by studying people who are doing positive things in their lives or work. It then involves seeing, simplifying and sharing the positive patterns that people follow.

Many educators take this approach. They also pass practical tools that can people can use to follow these patterns in their own ways. This involves focusing on the following steps.

Seeing The Positive Patterns

Great educators start by studying people who do positive things in their lives or work. They may aim:

To study people who encourage others, overcome challenges or work to achieve specific goals;

To study people, teams or organisations that build on their strengths, do superb work and achieve success;

To study people, groups or organisations who do positive work that cares for people or cares for the planet.

Great educators sometimes watch these people in action or see an example of their work. They then ask themselves some of the following questions.

What are the positive things that people are doing? What are some of the things that happen as a result? What may be the benefits – both for other people and for themselves?

What are people doing right when they do these activities? What are the principles they follow? How do they translate these into action? What may happen as a result?

Looking at what people do right, can I see any recurring patterns? Are there any common themes that people pursue? How do they translate these into action?

Such educators may then aim to summarise what they see by doing the following exercise.

Seeing Positive Patterns

*The specific activity I am studying
where people do positive things is when:*

** They ...*

*The specific things that people do right – some of the positive
patterns I see them following – when pursuing this activity are:*

** They ...*

* *They ...*

* *They ...*

* *They ...*

* *They ...*

Imagine that a person has gathered information about what people do right. They may have also begun to summarise these into describing some of the patterns. This can lead to the next stage.

Simplifying The Positive Patterns

Great educators then aim to simplify the positive patterns. Looking at the information they have gathered, some may do this by taking the following steps.

They clarify the positive patterns they have discovered;

They aim to summarise and simplify these patterns - but in a profound way;

They translate these patterns into a model or other media that they can share with people.

Different people do this in different ways. Some do it by exploring the following questions.

What do people do right when doing the specific activity? What are the positive patterns they follow? How do they translate these into action? What happens as a result of them taking these steps?

How can I summarise and simplify these patterns in a profound way? How can I translate these into an illustration, model or other media? How can I create something that is possible to pass on to people?

Great educators may then play with ideas, explore or do other things to, for example, create a model that summaries the patterns. They then take the following steps.

They keep testing the model to make sure it works in reality;

They keep clarifying how to bring the model to life with real examples;

They keep polishing the model until they feel it is both simple and profound.

Imagine that a person has been able to simplify the patterns in a way that can be helpful to people. This may lead to them taking the next step.

Sharing The Positive Patterns

Great educators often follow the philosophy that 'the learner learns what the learner wants to learn'. When appropriate, they take this approach when sharing the positive patterns with people.

Such educators prepare properly before meeting a person, teaching a class or running a workshop. This involves then exploring the following themes.

Who is the person or group of people I am going to meet? What is happening in their world? What may be the challenges they face or the specific goals they want to achieve?

What may be the topics they want to explore in the session? How can I make clear contracts with them about the goals to achieve in the session? How can I then do my best to run a successful session?

How can I create a positive environment? How can I focus on the first goal they want to explore? How can I clarify the real results they want to achieve? How can I clarify their picture of success?

How can I, when appropriate, pass on knowledge they can use to achieve their aims? How can I share some of the positive patterns they may wish to follow? How can I do this in a way they can use in their lives or work?

If appropriate, how can I clarify the route they want to follow to achieve their aims? How can I pass on practical tools they can use in their own way? How can I encourage, educate and enable them to achieve success?

There are many ways to encourage people. One approach is to share the positive patterns that some people follow in their lives or work. It is also to offer practical tools that people can use to follow these in their own way.

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 positive patterns 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 Patterns 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 then to follow this approach in my own way are:

*

*

*

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

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The Helping A Person To Follow Their Positive Patterns Approach

Positive Patterns

*There are many ways to help people to achieve their goals.
One approach is to help them:*

- To focus on their picture of success;*
- To focus on their positive patterns;*
- To focus on following their positive patterns to achieve their picture of success.*

There are many ways to help people to achieve their goals. One approach is to help the follow their positive patterns. Imagine you want to follow this approach in your own way. Let's explore these themes.

The Person's Picture Of Success

The first step is to make the person feel welcome and at ease. It is then to focus on the topics they want to explore. For example: They may want:

To take more control of their life ... To deal with a specific challenge ... To take the next step in their career ... To build a successful team ... To work towards their life goals ... To explore another topic.

Bearing in mind the topic they want to explore, it is important to clarify their aims. One approach is:

To clarify the real results they want to achieve ... To clarify their picture of success ... To clarify the benefits of achieving this picture of success.

Let's assume that the person has clarified their aims. It can then be helpful to move on to the next theme.

The Person's Positive Patterns

Every person has both successful and unsuccessful patterns. They behave in ways that may or may not help them to reach their goals.

There are many ways to see a person's patterns. As mentioned earlier, the first step is to clarify their goals – the real results they want to achieve. It is then to focus on the following themes.

Positive Patterns

One approach to finding a person's positive patterns is to explore their positive history and focus on the following themes.

- *Their Positive Pattern For Achieving Success*

When have they achieved a specific goal? What did they do right then? What were the principles they followed? How did they translate these into action? How can they follow similar principles – plus add other skills – to achieve a specific goal in the future?

- *Their Positive Pattern For Tackling Challenges Successfully*

When have they tackled a challenge successfully? What did they do right then? What were the principles they followed? How did they translate these into action? How can they follow similar principles – plus add other skills - to tackle challenges in the future?

The Person Following Their Patterns To Achieve Their Picture Of Success

The next step is to explore how the person can work towards achieving their goals. Bearing in mind their positive patterns, one approach is to work through the following themes.

If appropriate, you may want to say something along the following lines. You will, of course, do this in your own way with the person.

Let's revisit your aims. What are the real results you want to achieve? What is the picture of success? What will be the benefits of achieving these aims?

Looking back, when have you tackled a similar challenge or reached similar goals successfully? What did you do right then? What were the principles you followed? How did you translate those into action?

How can follow some of these principles in present situation? Can you think of any other skills you may need to add? Is it okay for me to share some ideas? If so, here are some you may wish to consider.

One possibility is to ...

Another possibility is to ...

Another possibility is to ...

Let's return to your aims. What are the key strategies you can follow to give yourself the greatest chance of success? How can you follow these in your own way? What else can you do to increase the chances of success?

There are many ways to help a person to reach their aims. One approach is to help them to build on their positive patterns plus add other skills.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

The Helping A Person To Follow Their Positive Patterns 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 then to follow this approach in my own way are:

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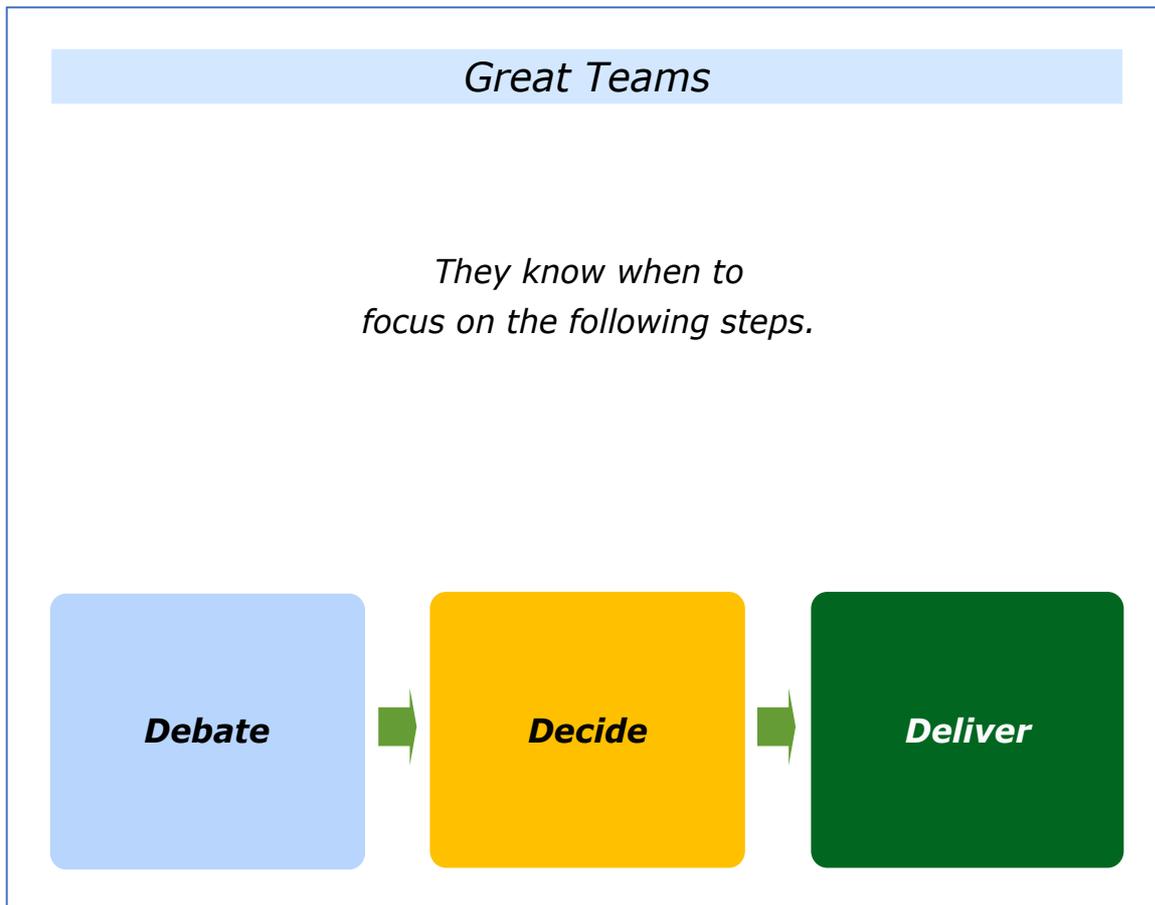
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Debate, Decide And Deliver Approach



Many years ago I worked with Alison who led a fast moving team that produced excellent results. This was surprising, because the team worked within an organisation known for its stodginess.

Alison put the team's success down to knowing when to debate, decide and deliver. She explained this in the following way.

"We begin by clarifying what we can and can't debate. There are some things, for example, that are not up for debate.

"We focus on the topic we can debate, discuss it and then decide the way forwards. The next step is to deliver. So we get on and produce the goods.

"Some teams get mixed up because they keep going back to the debate stage."

Imagine that you are applying this approach to your own team. Let's explore how you can use it to deliver the goods.

The Debate Stage

Good leaders give people clear guidelines about the freedom they have to operate within. People then know whether they are focusing on debating, deciding or delivering. Poor teams get the three parts mixed up.

Bearing this in mind, you may want to say something along the following lines to your people.

"Looking at the year ahead, there are some areas that we can debate and some that we can't.

"We can't debate the organisational targets we must deliver. These include targets regarding profitability, product quality and the morale of our people. We need to deliver this scorecard.

"What we can debate is how, within parameters, we use our strengths to achieve these targets. We can also debate the other stimulating projects we can do that will help the organisation to achieve success.

"Bearing this in mind, let's settle on the things we can and can't debate. We can then go forward and explore the first topic we can debate."

Imagine that you have gone through this step and your team are clear about the topics they can debate. You may then move on to the next step.

The Decide Stage

Different leaders use different approaches to, when appropriate, involving their people in contributing to making decisions. Some leaders take the following approach.

*They focus on the specific topic to be explored
and then go through the following steps.*

They clarify the real results to achieve – the picture of success;

*They clarify the potential choices, the consequences of each option and
any possible creative solutions;*

*They clarify the route they want to follow, translate this into a clear action
plan and get mission holders who will be responsible for delivering their
parts of the plan.*

You will have your own approach to making decisions in your team. The key is to conclude with a clear action plan plus mission holders who will be accountable for delivering their contributions.

The Deliver Stage

Good leaders ensure that their people deliver. Imagine that your team has embarked on doing the work. It is will be important for people to keep others informed about their progress towards delivering their part of the goals.

When appropriate, you can invite each mission holder – plus the people who are helping them – to present on the following themes.

*The Picture of Success – The specific results we aim to
deliver to contribute towards achieving the team’s goals are:*

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*

The Progress - The specific things we have delivered towards achieving these results in the past ... are:

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*

The Plans - The specific things we plan to deliver towards achieving these results in the next ... are:

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*

Different leaders have different ways of involving their people. People need to know the team's aims, however, and have a sense of ownership in making their part of it happen. They are then more likely to put their hearts into delivering the goods.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of the debate, decide and deliver approach in your own team. 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 Debate, Decide And Deliver 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 then to follow elements of this approach in my own way are:

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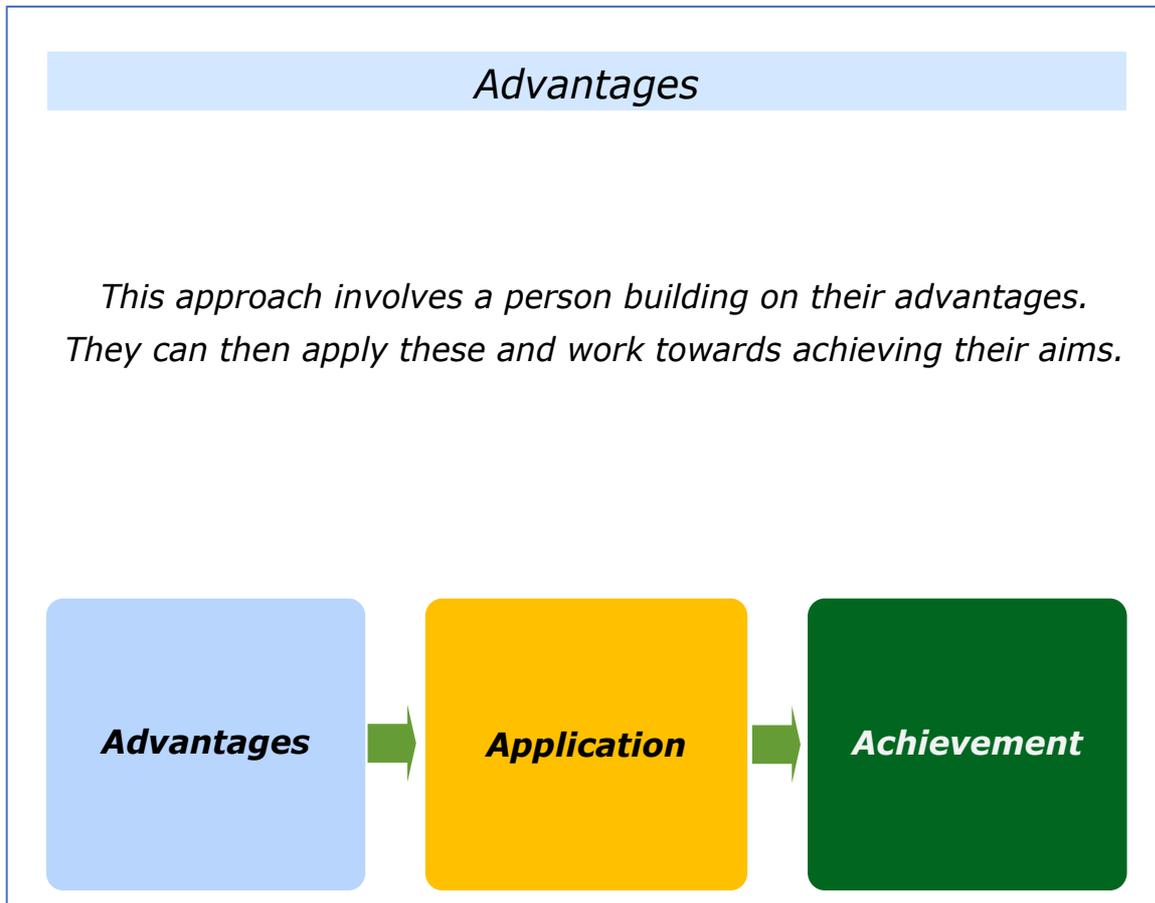
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Advantages Approach



This approach involves a person building on their advantages. These can include: a) the support they have been given; b) the strengths they have; c) the specific things they have learned from setbacks.

A person can then apply these advantages to work towards achieving their aims. Let's explore these themes.

Advantages

Imagine that you want to clarify some of the advantages you have in your life or work. One approach is to focus on the following themes.

Support

Some people have the advantages of being given stability and support early in their lives. One person expressed this in the following way.

"I had wonderful parents. They provided love, stability and also encouraged me to follow my passions. We did not have a lot of money, but we always had food on the table. They taught me to enjoy what we had in life."

Looking at my own life, I was adopted by lovely foster parents who provided ongoing support. We moved around a lot and, between the ages of 9 and 11, I went to 7 different schools. That did not matter much because I had already developed a pattern of learning by myself. And my parents always provided encouragement.

Later on I met several teachers and mentors who provided great support. These included people such as Alec Dickson, the founder of Community Service Volunteers. Some also provided practical support by opening doors to job opportunities.

Let's return to your life. What has been the support you have experienced that may be been an advantage? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

Advantages – Support

The support I have had in my life and work included the following things:

*

*

*

Strengths

Let's move on to your strengths. These may fall into two main categories – your personal and professional strengths.

Personal Strengths

You may have the ability to encourage people, be creative or see patterns in certain kinds of situations. You may be able to focus, be resilient and keep working until you achieve certain goals.

Professional Strengths

You may be able to deliver As rather than Bs or Cs when doing certain specific activities. These may be in the areas of encouraging people, education, medicine, science, technology, the arts, sport, leadership, coordination or another activity.

What are the strengths you have been given or developed? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

Advantages – Strengths

The strengths I have been given or developed in my life or work include the following things:

*

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*

Setbacks

Some people actually see it as an advantage to learn from setbacks. They then aim to apply the lessons in their lives or work.

One former professional footballer recalled being released by an elite academy when he was eighteen. The lessons he learned led to him setting up services for helping young players who have been released. His company is now used by many professional clubs.

Looking at my own life, I spent six years working in a factory. Whilst I was useless at the job, it gave me time to think and study at night school. It also fired me with the determination to find a job working with people and to never to go back to the factory.

What are the specific things you have learned from setbacks that may have added to your advantages? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

Advantages – Setbacks

The specific things I have learned from setbacks in my life or work include the following things:

*

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*

Application

Imagine that you have clarified some of the advantages that you have been given or developed. You may then want to apply some of these to work towards certain goals. There are many ways to take this step. If appropriate, you may want to explore the following themes.

Aims

What is the specific activity where I can build on some of my advantages? What is the specific piece of work I would like to do? What would be the results I would want to achieve? What would be the benefits of achieving this picture of success?

Action Plans

What are the key strategies I can follow to increase the likelihood of achieving the aims? How can I translate these into a clear action plan? How can I get some quick successes? How can I manage the potential challenges on the journey?

Application

How can I apply myself properly to doing the work? How can I keep following the strategies? How can I follow good habits? How can I keep doing the right things in the right way every day? How can I encourage myself on the journey?

Imagine that you are applying yourself fully to work towards your aims. It may then be time to move on to the next theme.

Achievement

Different people have different views about achievement. Here is one definition:

Something you did after working to make it happen that gave you a sense of satisfaction.

Some people may focus on an inner goal. They aim to be a better person, follow their principles and do their best each day. Achieving these aims may bring satisfaction and even a sense of peace.

Some people may focus on an outer goal. They may aim to gain a qualification, perform an operation, invent a product, win a prize or reach another picture of success.

Some people may focus on both an inner and outer goal. They may then build on their advantage and follow their principles to do work that helps people or the planet.

Some people are born with advantages. Some are given them. Some develop these qualities. Some choose to be aware of these attributes. They may then apply themselves and do their best achieve certain aims.

Some people do not recognise their advantages. Some are loosely aware of them. Some may choose to ignore or not make use of their advantages.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific activity where you may want to follow elements of the advantages 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 Advantages Approach

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

*

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

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*

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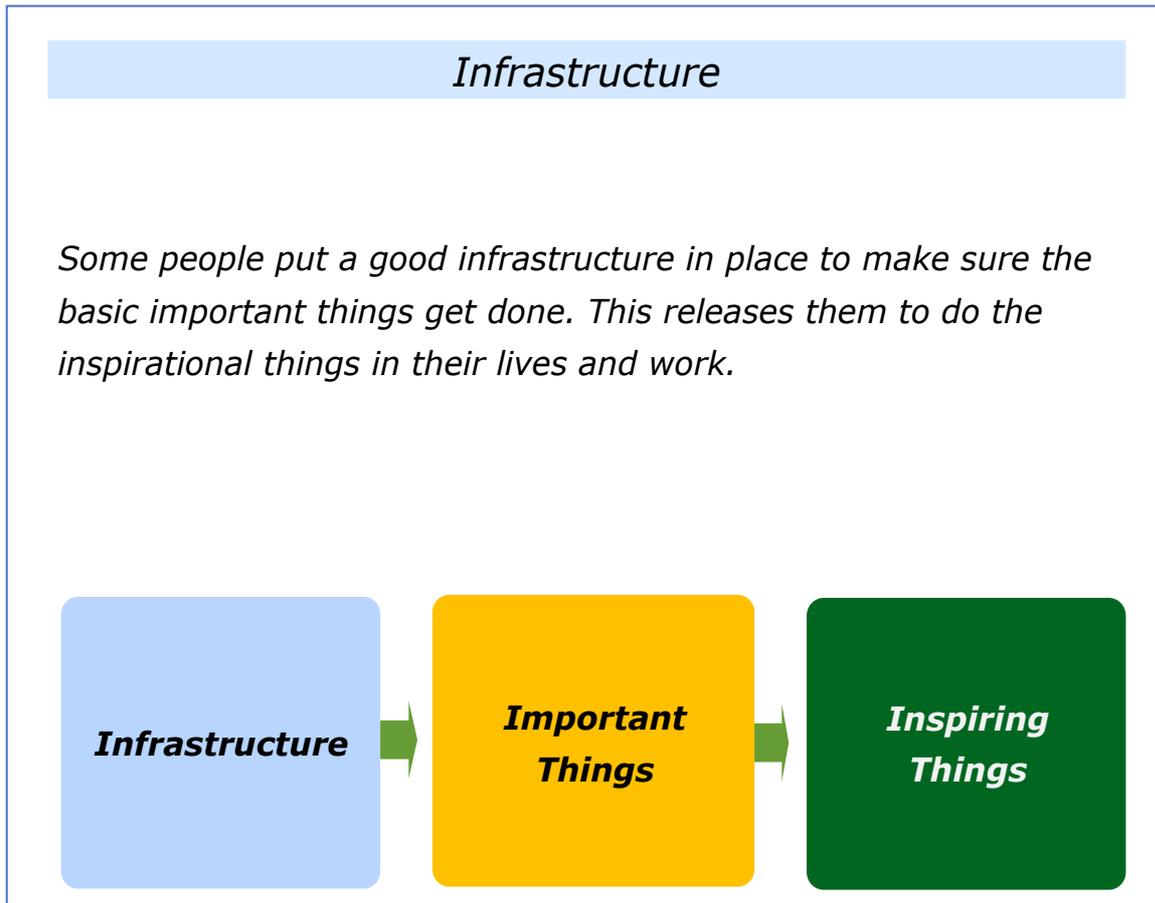
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Infrastructure Approach



Some people aim to put a good infrastructure in place to make sure that the basic important things get done. They may do when acting as parents, educators, leaders, decision makers or in other roles.

Getting this infrastructure right may not be the most glamorous of tasks but it provides a good platform. It takes care of the hygiene factors and makes sure the practical tasks get done.

People feel more secure when there is a predictable infrastructure in the family, school, work place or society. Getting this right releases people to do inspiring things in their lives or work.

Different people take this approach in different ways. Let's look at some examples.

An individual may take care of their health, get enough money and spend time with encouraging people. They may also follow a daily structure and manage their priorities. This provides a platform for them doing their best in life.

A couple may ensure all the practical tasks get done in a routine way. Sometimes this may also involve hiring domestic or other help. Putting these things in place can free them to care for their loved ones and also enjoy satisfying careers.

A leader may create a structure that ensures all the practical tasks get done. They communicate the organisation's purpose and principles. They then give people the support they need to make their best contributions towards achieving the picture of success.

A caring society puts an infrastructure in place that ensures all people have the basic materials for life. Providing such an environment increases the chances of enabling people to shape their futures and live healthy and happy lives.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to put a good infrastructure in place? This could be in your personal or professional life.

How can you put this structure in place? What are the practical steps you can take? What will be the benefits? How can you build on this infrastructure and, for example, do things you find inspiring?

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

The Infrastructure Approach

*The specific situation where I
may want to put a good
infrastructure in place may be:*

*

*The specific things I can do to put
a good infrastructure in place are:*

*

*

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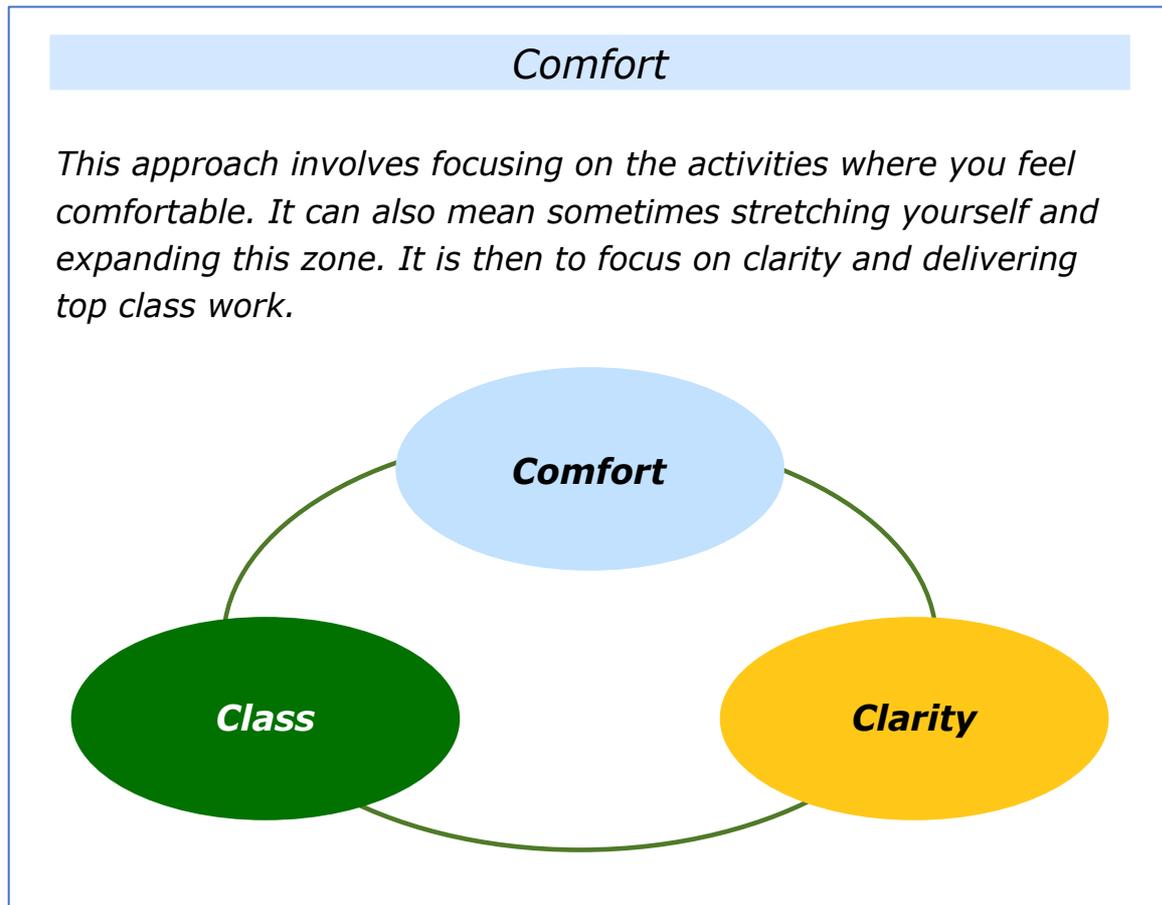
*The specific benefits of putting a
good infrastructure in place will be:*

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The Comfort, Clarity And Class Approach



This approach involves focusing on the specific activities where you feel comfortable. This can also mean stretching yourself and expanding this zone. It is then to focus on clarity and delivering top class work. Let's explore these themes.

Comfort

Great workers often put themselves into places where they feel comfortable. They feel confident that they can play to their strengths, pursue strategies that work and do their best to deliver success.

Such workers pursue the activities where they are in their element – at ease and yet able to excel. They also have the following qualities;

They have the competence to do fine work;

They have the ability to deal with crowdedness – many different things happening at once;

They have the desire to focus on continuous improvement.

Different people do this in different activities. They may be helping troubled people, fixing technical problems, playing a sport or performing on stage. They may be climbing mountains, doing surgery, solving conflicts or doing another activity.

Such people give different reasons for feeling comfortable when pursuing their chosen activity. They may describe it as being in their sweet spot. They may say, for example:

"I feel at home there ... I feel stimulated when looking forward to the activity ... I feel alive when doing the work ... I love to stretch myself and deliver success."

People who take this approach often start by exploring the activities that give them positive energy. After a while, however, they may focus on the activity where they can move from 7/10 towards 10/10.

A musician may begin by playing many instruments. They may then find the one where they feel most at ease and in their element. They may then aim to become the best kind of performer they can be with that instrument.

A psychologist may begin by exploring many ways of working with people. They may come a point, however, when they decide to do in-depth work on positive psychology, helping people recover from trauma in another niche area. They then aim to keep improving in that field.

A management consultant may be in a major consultancy firm and work with many different clients. They may eventually realise they work best with entrepreneurs, for example, rather than people in big organisations. They may then set up their own business working with such entrepreneurs.

Great workers also highlight one of the key themes regarding feeling comfortable when doing their chosen work.

They only feel comfortable when they are doing their best and continuing to develop;

They don't feel comfortable when they are not doing their best or not developing.

Great workers can develop by expanding their comfort zone. But we need to be clear on what this means. Many people urge others to behave in a certain way by saying the cliché:

"You need to get out of your comfort zone."

This sounds okay but it ignores the approach taken by many people who do superb work.

They only feel comfortable when:

They are following their principles ... They are doing their best ... They are delivering high quality work ... They helping people to succeed ... They are continuing to improve.

Great workers would feel uncomfortable not doing these things. They may aim to continue developing, however, by setting stimulating goals, stretching themselves and working to achieve success. They may then expand their comfort zone.

Imagine that such a worker has put themselves into a place where they feel comfortable and continue to develop. They then move on to the next theme.

Clarity

Great workers go into a situation in which they excel and quickly gather information. They may then do some of the following things to establish clarity.

Great Workers Establish Clarity

They go into a situation in which they excel and aim:

- *To clarify the specific things that are happening in the situation and also to see the big picture;*
- *To clarify the short, medium and long-term real results to achieve – the picture of success;*
- *To clarify the key strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success.*

This approach to establishing clarity is described in more detail elsewhere in the book. For example, you can find it in the piece about *The Decision Making, Doing And Delivering Approach*. Bearing this in mind, we will move on to the next stage.

Imagine that a person has clarified the strategies they aim to follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success. This takes us to the next theme.

Class

Great workers aim to translate their strategies into action. They sometimes do this by focusing on consistency, creative and class. Let's explore these themes.

Consistency

Such workers aim to deliver consistently high standards. They aim to do this whether performing at the Village Hall or the Carnegie Hall. They may

even enjoy doing aspects of the grunt work as well as doing the good work and the great work.

Every person has their own preferred working style when aiming to deliver consistency. One person expressed this in the following way.

"I love following a certain rhythm when doing the work. This involves rehearsing ahead of time, setting achievable goals and following my ritual for moving into action. I then aim to do superb work and achieve success."

Creativity

Great workers may go beyond delivering consistently high standards. They may also apply the right kind of creativity at the right time to get the right results. Creativity comes in many different forms.

Such workers often have great personal radar in their chosen field. They quickly see patterns and see the potential picture of success. They seem to know what will happen before it happens.

They also keep expanding their repertoire of skills for doing fine work and tackling challenges. Bearing in mind the results they want to achieve, they dip into their repertoire to find creative solutions and deliver success.

Class

Great workers aim to maintain consistently high standards and, when appropriate, be creative. They then do their best to deliver top class work.

Some 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.

Mark Emberton, a professor of urology, did this when treating me for prostate cancer. He aims to make every patient feel special. I saw this in action when waiting for my first appointment with him.

Mark has his own office upstairs and, whilst he has an incredibly busy schedule, he makes a point of coming down to escort each patient to his office. He has the personal touch.

Showing the patient their x-rays, he explains in a clear way the situation and the possible ways forward. Mark does this in a kind, honest and yet realistic way.

People leave his office feeling that they have been treated with respect and also given a full picture. They talk about how such a famous oncologist made them feel the centre of his world. Plus they have a realistic picture of the possible way forwards. He is a class act.

Let's return to your own work. Looking ahead can you think of a specific activity where you may want to follow elements of the comfort, clarity and class 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 Comfort, Clarity And Class Approach

The specific activity where 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 Improving By Working At A Higher Level Approach

A Higher Level

*There are many ways to keep improving.
These include the following ways.*

- You can work by yourself and deliver to a higher level;*
- You can work with other people who have high standards and deliver to a higher level;*
- You can work by yourself and with other people and deliver to an even higher level.*

Many people want to keep improving in their personal or professional lives. They may aim to be better at encouraging other people, managing challenges, doing superb work, leading teams or doing another activity.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach. Let's explore several ways it may be possible to deliver to a higher level.

*You can work by yourself
and deliver to a higher level*

Some people take this route when aiming to develop. They do things that give them positive energy, gather practical information and start putting into practice.

Some do this when aiming to improve in their personal lives. One person expressed this in the following way.

"I have had a rewarding career which has helped to create a good lifestyle for myself and my family. Looking back, I probably have only one regret.

"I could probably have been kinder in several situations. So I spent a lot of time studying people who were kind. This opened my eyes to several of the principles followed by people who took this route.

"First, I then followed the path taken by many people – which is to focus on being grateful. Counting my blessings helped me to see things in perspective and be more patient in certain situations.

"Second, I tried to be kinder in my actions. These could involve encouraging a person, spending time with staff members to explore their career aspirations or doing other things to lift people's days.

"Third, I learned to buy time before responding to triggers that sometimes made me angry. This involved recognising the warning signs, staying calm and then following my chosen response. This helped a lot."

Some people take the individual route in their professional work. They may follow the passion, focus on the principles they want to follow and aim to do their personal best.

A person may do this when working as an artist, writer, gardener, therapist, crafts person or in another role. They follow their drive, maintain a daily discipline and deliver high quality work.

Whilst learning from the masters of their craft, they take home these lessons and apply them as an individual. They focus on becoming the best kind of professional they can be.

Imagine that you have aimed to develop by yourself – albeit by also being eclectic in what you learn from others. At a certain point, however, you may want to explore the following stage.

You can work with other people who have high standards and deliver to a higher level

Some people develop by working with people who consistently operate at a higher level. This is a step taken by many athletes, artistic performers and people in other professions.

People sometimes take this step in an organic way as part of their natural physical, psychological or professional development. They then aim to perform well at the next level.

Some individuals stretch themselves to take a bigger step than would be expected at a particular stage. Such a person may take time to adjust but then begin to deliver the required higher professional standards.

Some individuals take this step because, whilst they are still doing good work, their career may have plateaued. A professional footballer described this in the following way.

"Two seasons ago the club I played for was relegated to the second tier. I stayed with them for their first season in the new division. I enjoyed playing but the standard was different.

"I also play for my national team and the coach said it would be better for me to play in the top division. He made the point that I would soon become regarded as a second tier player.

"My club understood this and we found a solution. The club got a good fee and I moved back to the top division. This has helped me to develop and perform at a high level."

Looking at my own work, I have been stimulated by working with people who embody high standards. During my early career I was invited to work with a team of superb therapists. They acted as positive models and expected us to deliver great work.

Many years later I learned a lot when running a creativity workshop for entrepreneurs. Much of my previous work had been with motivated educators and leaders in business.

Suddenly I was working with high energy people who wanted something extra. Many of the people in the room were more creative than I would ever be - but it was possible to find a solution.

During the sessions I offered them several practical frameworks they could use to help themselves and their staff to channel their creativity. This taught me something about my work.

The previous groups I worked with liked the creative inputs I provided, but my work was actually quite structured. The entrepreneurs preferred the structures I provided to help them channel their creativity.

This led to creating more frameworks that could be offered to creative people, knowledge workers and decision makers. These enabled them channel their talents to continue doing top class work.

Imagine that you have developed by working with people who embody high standards. You may also want to consider the following stage.

You can work by yourself and with other people and deliver to an even higher level

Some people reach a stage their career where they follow this path. They may do so for the following reasons.

They want to return to focusing on their individual area of expertise

A person may want to do this for certain reasons. They may have a strong desire to build on their strengths, focus on a specific niche and do superb work.

They want to devote the majority of their time to pursuing their particular interest. They may find it is difficult to do this if, for example, much of their working day is taken up by organisational or administrative matters.

They may behave in a professional way within an organisation but feel driven to focus on a specific activity. They may then move on to pursue their individual route but, at the same time, take the following step.

*They may collaborate with some people
and deliver on an even higher level*

Some individual workers like to spend some of their time working with stimulating people. This provides the inspiration to deliver work at an even high level. Different people follow this path in different ways.

Such a person may continue to do individual work but also do stimulating work with a small group, team or organisation. They may do this as an associate, consultant, contractor or in another role.

They may then aim: a) to use their strengths to make a positive contribution; b) to enable themselves and the people they work with to deliver great work.

Such a person may also continue to collaborate with kindred spirits. One person expressed this in the following way.

"I enjoy working alone but occasionally it is good to talk or work with people who share similar values. Sometimes we just share ideas but there are times when we work together.

"During the past two years, for example, we have collaborated on several stimulating projects. These have helped both our customers and ourselves to develop and deliver success."

Let's return to your own life. Can you think of a specific activity where you would like to follow elements of the higher level approach? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

The Improving By Working At A Higher Level Approach

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

*

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

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*

*

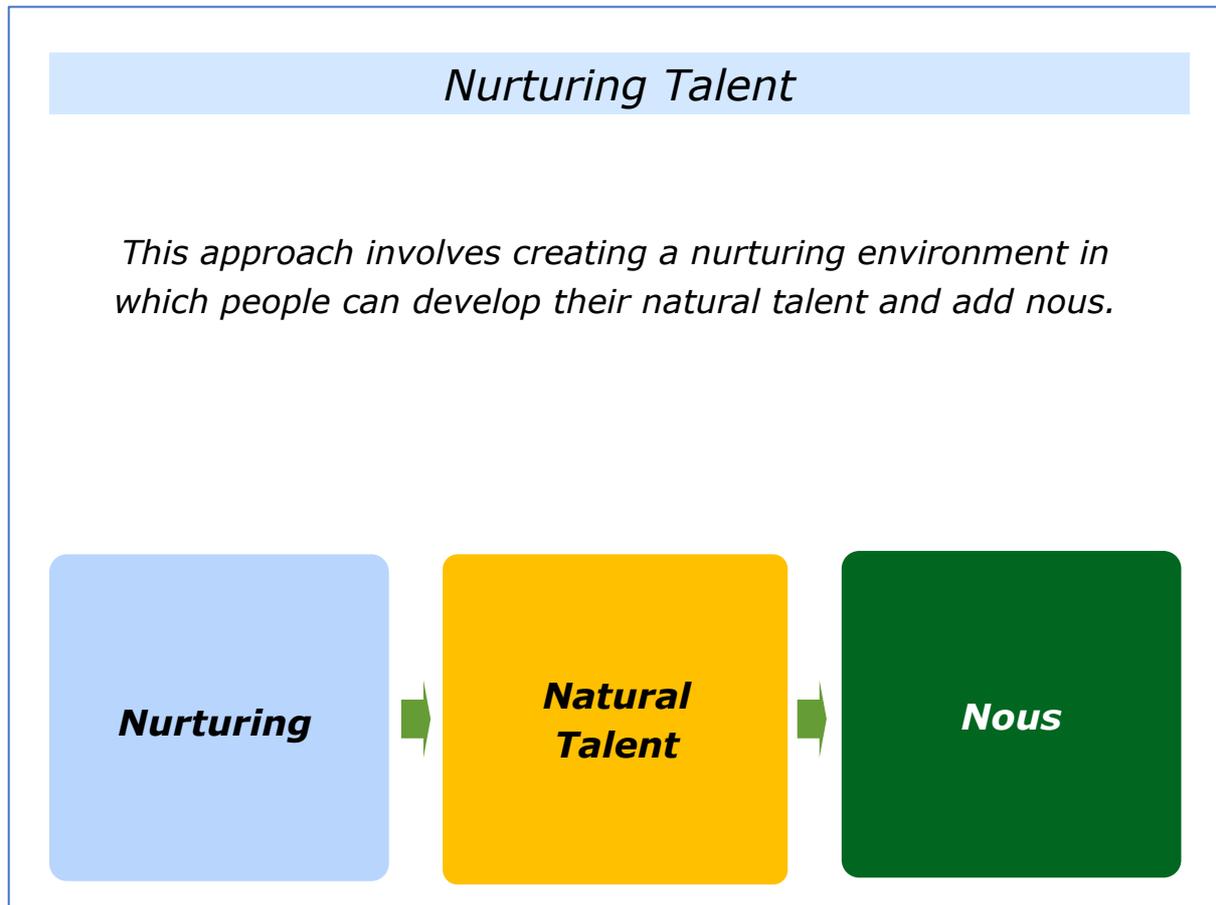
*The specific things that may happen as
a result to taking these steps may be:*

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The Nurturing, Natural Talent And Nous Approach



This is an approach followed by some schools, sports academies and other places that help people to grow. They aim to create a nurturing environment in which people can develop their natural talent and, when appropriate, add nous. Let's explore these themes.

Nurturing

The involves several aspects regarding nurturing. It involves aiming: a) to create an encouraging environment; b) to ensure the person knows how to encourage themselves on their personal or professional journey.

The first part is to provide a nurturing environment that is conducive to helping a person to develop their talent. This involves providing encouraging relationships 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.

Natural Talent

This involves focusing on 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.

The next step is for the person to work towards achieving specific goals. This often involves them making a professional development contract.

They then agree on this contract with the person who will act as their educator, coach, mentor or other support person. The person is invited to focus on the following themes.

First, the specific goals they want to achieve. Second, the specific benefits of achieving the goals. Third, their responsibilities in working to achieve the goals. Fourth, the help they would like to achieve the goals. Fifth, the measures that will show they have reached their specific goals.

Here is one example of such a contract. The educator, coach or mentor will then provide support, knowledge and practical tools to help the person on their journey towards achieving their goals.

The Professional Development Contract

The person starts by filling in the following pages. They then meet with their educator, coach or mentor to agree on the professional development contract for working towards their goals.

The Specific Goals. The specific goals I want to achieve are:

* *To ...*

For example ...

* *To ...*

For example ...

* *To ...*

For example ...

The Specific Benefits. The specific benefits of achieving the goals will be:

* *To ...*

For example ...

* *To ...*

For example ...

* *To ...*

For example ...

The Specific 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 in working towards achieving the goals are:

* *To ...*

For example ...

* *To ...*

For example ...

* *To ...*

For example ...

The Specific 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 ...

Nous

This step involves helping the person to add 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. The person can be helped to learn from experience by educators, coaches or mentors. They 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.

Sometimes a person may need good models they can learn from regarding nous. Some football clubs, for example, employ older seasoned professionals to participate as permitted over-age players in their under-21 teams.

Some companies employ mentors who can help people to apply their talents. Such mentors pass on knowledge and practical tools that people can use in real situations to get positive results.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow 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 nurturing, natural talent 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.

The Nurturing, Natural Talent And Nous Approach

*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*

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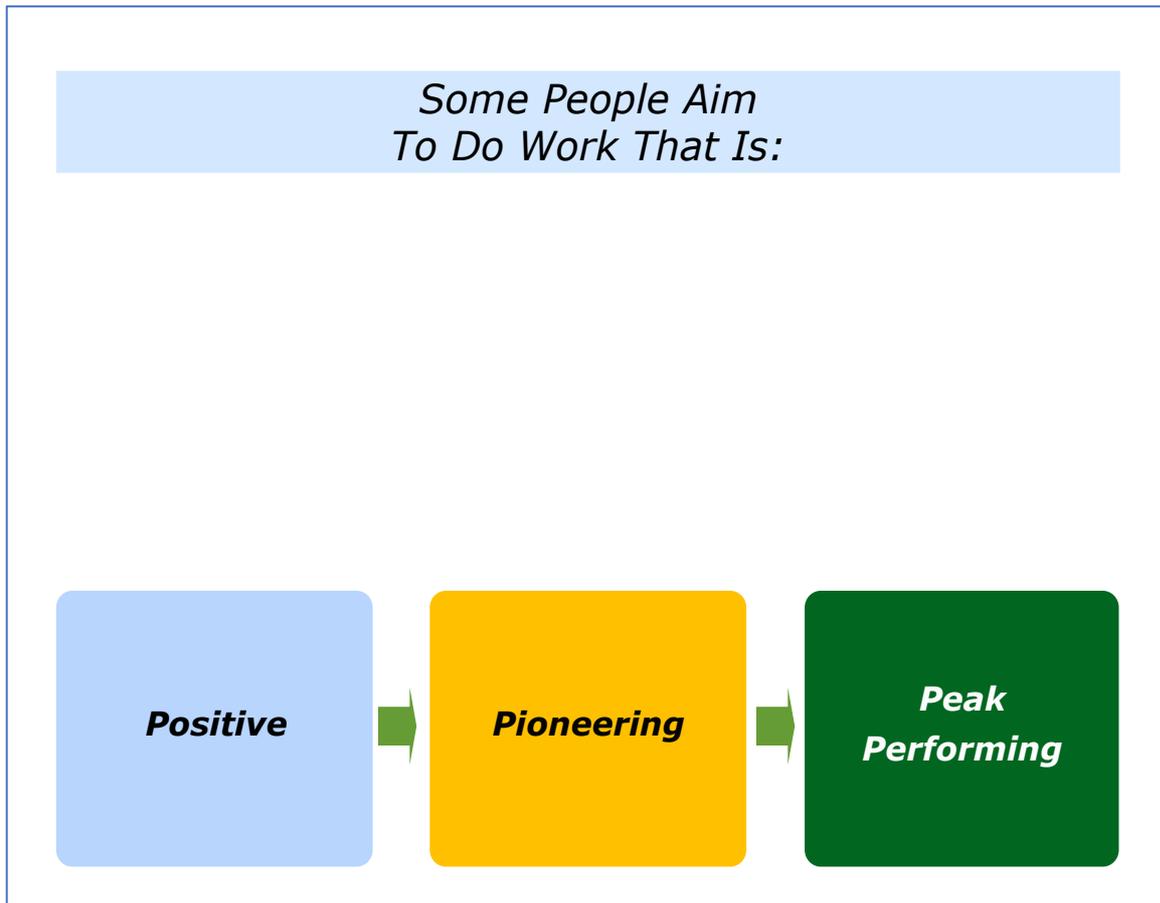
*The specific things that may
happen as a result may be:*

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The Positive, Pioneering And Peak Performing Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. Some people aim to do work that is positive, pioneering and peak performing. Let's explore these themes.

Positive

Such people have a positive attitude and aim to plant positive seeds during their lives. They do work that helps people or the planet. Different people follow this approach in different ways.

Elizabeth Kiss, President of Agnes Scott College, describes how some people take this approach in her talk as part of the Last Lecture Series at her college. She described how people could focus on Shining Things or Shiny Things.

Shining Things

These are the positive qualities the shine from within - such as being caring and compassionate. They are embodied in doing work that makes your heart sing and also enriches the lives of other people.

People who demonstrate these qualities often leave a positive legacy. They aim to encourage, educate and enable people to shape their future lives.

Shiny Things

These are shiny and attractive – such as material objects, prizes or status. But these become obsolete. They only shine in a particular context. They do not travel well.

Certainly it is okay to strive for some of them, such as working hard to reach a particular goal. But achieving them may not provide lasting happiness.

People who are positive may express this in different ways. Some do it by demonstrating the following quality.

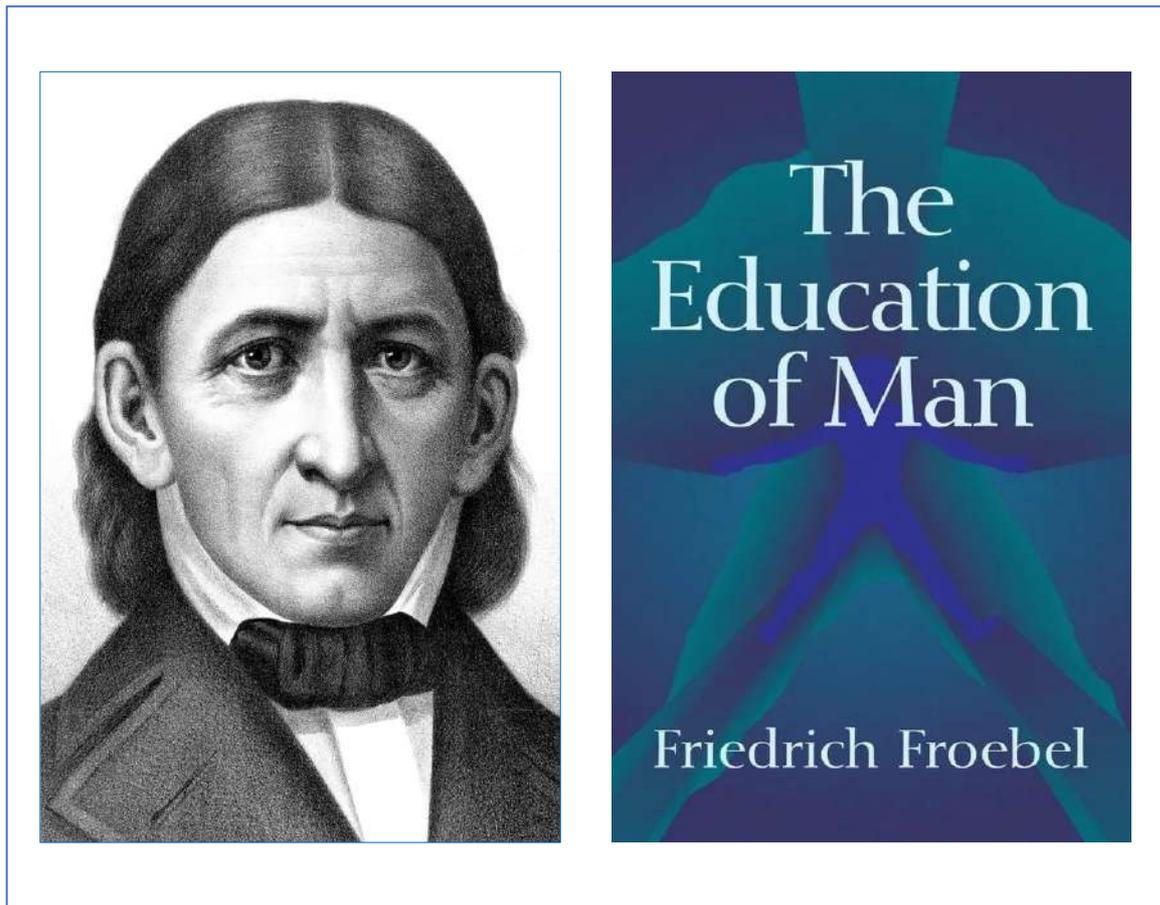
Pioneering

Some people do pioneering work by building on the best of the past. They then add new ideas or methods that other people can then use their own ways. Some start with a blank piece of paper and offer approaches that have not been used before.

Friedrich Froebel was an educational pioneer who lived from 1782 to 1852. He acknowledged the debt he owed to others who aimed to encourage children. These people inspired him to give birth to the kindergarten – the children’s garden.

Friedrich described this philosophy in his book *The Education of Man*. He believed children needed a place where they could be cherished and helped to flourish. He expressed this in the following way.

"Children are like tiny flowers; they are varied and need care, but each is beautiful alone and glorious when seen in the community of peers."



Human beings are creative, said Friedrich. He believed that each person was many sided and he used the analogy of a crystal. Shining a light on one side may or may not highlight their brilliance.

A loving environment was crucial, but children also wanted to learn. How could they be encouraged in this process? He focused on creating stimulating situations in which a child could feel safe, adventure and learn.

Friedrich also created what we would now call educational materials. He called these 'Gifts'. They encouraged the child to play, be creative and explore designs that mirrored the unity of the universe.

He believed that each child had their own rhythm. They would learn when they were ready to learn. The educator's role was to provide the stimulation to help them develop.

Play can be a starting point for creativity but progress does not always come easily. Doing what you love can involve overcoming tough challenges. Froebel wrote:

"A child who plays and works thoroughly, with perseverance until physical fatigue forbids will surely be a thorough, determined person, capable of self-sacrifice."

Friedrich championed the contribution of women to education and this led to many becoming educators. His ideas were also adopted by many ambassadors who spread the methods across the globe.

He made an enormous contribution to the positive approach to encouraging children. These included the following.

He saw each child as a creative being. His approach encouraged thousands of parents and teachers to focus on each child's passions and strengths.

He showed how to create a 'garden for children'. This helped many parents and teachers to provide stimulating sanctuaries where children could pursue their interests.

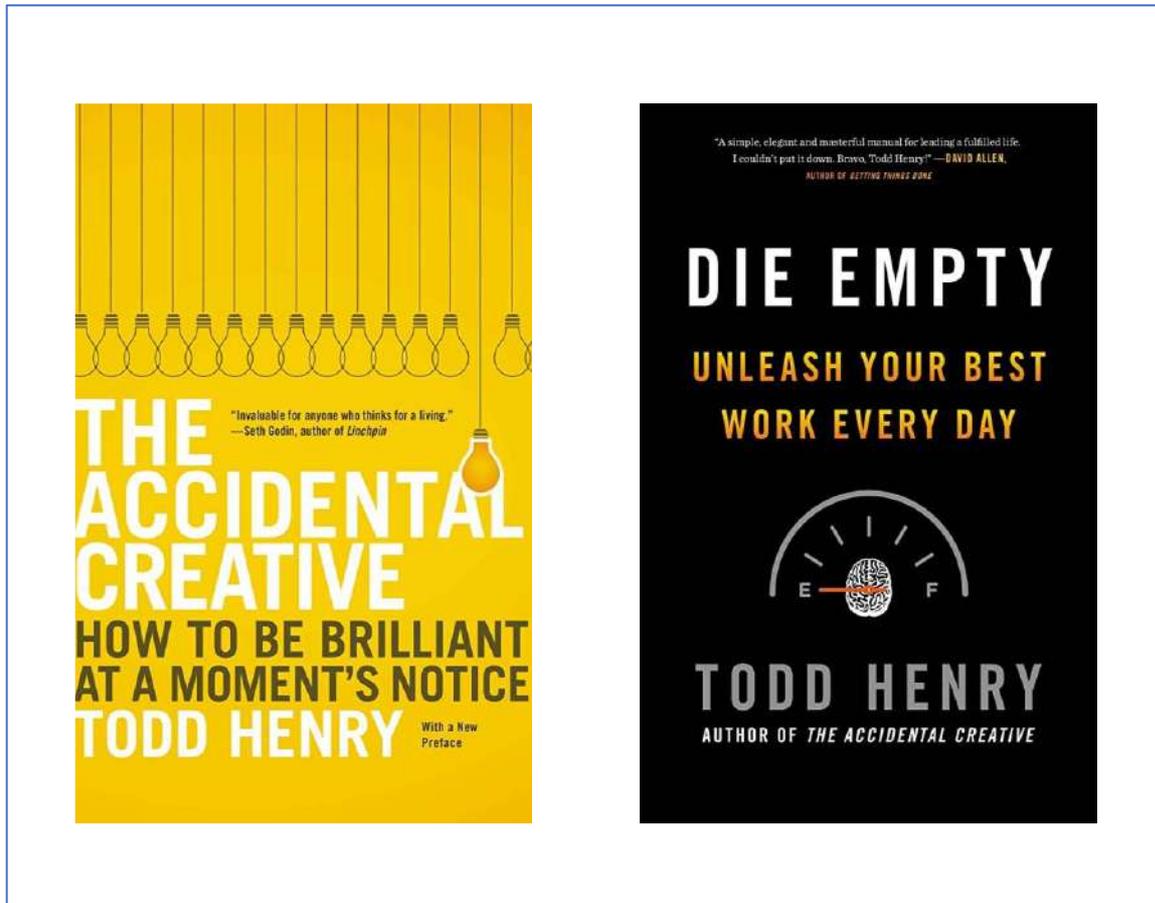
He carried the torch for nurturing and educating the human soul – rather than stuffing facts into children. His views encouraged parents and teachers to side with their children's potential.

People who are pioneering may express this in different ways. Some do it by displaying the following quality.

Peak Performing

Positive achievers aim to deliver peak performances. They may each do this by following their own chosen principles. There are, of course, many models for taking this step.

Todd Henry is somebody who offers people practical tools that they can use to perform at their best. He has described these in books such as *The Accidental Creative* and *Die Empty*.



Todd says that many people do their best work when focusing on a key narrative in their life. This could be a philosophy, vocation or mission.

People may sometimes lose this narrative because they get distracted by things overloading their system. He then suggests focusing on the following activities.

Focus On Outcomes

*The key to disrupting the pattern of distraction and anxiety is to deeply connect to a small set of outcomes that you **choose** to allow to drive your decisions.*

*Then, make small progress toward each outcome every day. As Teresa Amabile revealed in her research in **The Progress Principle**, small amounts of progress toward goals result in large motivational boosts.*

Whether your chosen outcomes are personal or professional, commit to engaging in those behaviors and activities every day until you see results. Or, adapt them as needed.

The key is consistency and progress each day. When we lose the larger narrative, the key is to re-claim the smaller ones. Here's a simple way to get started.

Focusing On Outcomes

- *You can choose 2-3 qualitative or quantitative outcomes that you'd like to pursue over the next month.*

These should be outcomes that within your sphere of influence, matter deeply to you and you are willing to work to achieve.
- *You can decide on 2-3 behaviors or activities that are likely to move you toward those outcomes.*

These should be practical things that you can actually do to work towards the outcomes.
- *You can track your progress on each of those behaviors or activities every single day.*

This is important. It will improve consistency and create a self-fueling well of motivation to continue to pursue the outcomes.

Let's return to your own life and work. One approach is to do work that is positive, pioneering and peak performing. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific activity where you would like to follow elements of this approach?

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

The Positive, Pioneering And Peak Performing Approach

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

*

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

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*

*

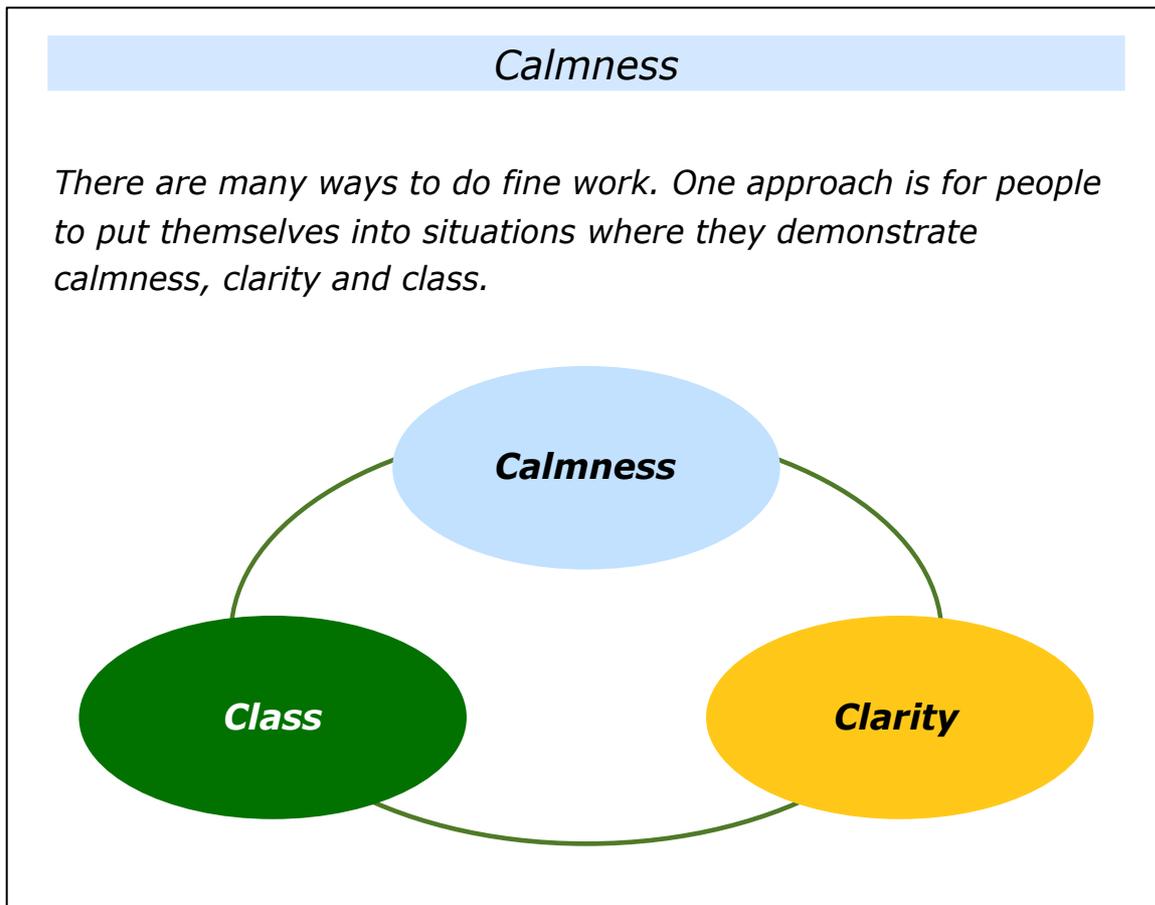
The specific things that may happen as a result to taking these steps may be:

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*

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The Calmness, Clarity And Class Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is for people to put themselves into situations where they demonstrate calmness, clarity and class.

Different people in different situations. They may be playing a sport, managing a crisis, performing surgery or doing another activity. Let's explore how they translate these qualities into action.

Calmness

Great workers sometimes stay calm in situations where they excel. They may be acting as a mediator solving a conflict, a paramedic caring for people at the scene of an accident or a football captain organising their defence. They may be playing another professional role.

There is an interesting point about people who demonstrate calmness in certain situations. Such people do not necessarily have calm personalities.

They are calm because they are confident they can deal with the situation.

What are the situations where you feel calm because you are confident you can deal with whatever may happen? You may be running a mentoring session, performing on stage, managing a specific kind of crisis or doing another activity.

Imagine that you have put yourself into such a situation. Looking ahead, you may then move on to the next theme.

Clarity

Great workers establish clarity in a situation. They focus on: a) what is happening; b) what they want to happen; c) how to make this happen. They ask themselves the following questions.

"What is actually happening? What are people actually doing? How are they behaving? What other things are happening? What are the successful and unsuccessful patterns? What are the consequences of these patterns?"

"What are the possibilities in the situation? What are the controllables? What are the real results to achieve? What is the picture of success? What will be the benefits of achieving these results?"

"What are the potential options for trying to achieve the desired results? What will be the consequences – the pluses and minuses – of each option? Are there any other creative solutions?"

"What is the strategy that will provide the greatest chance of success? How to follow this strategy? Who should do what and by when? How to translate this into a clear action plan?"

Imagine that you have gone through these steps. Bearing in mind the results to achieve, you will have clarified the strategies you can follow to increase the chances of success.

The next step will be to translate your strategy into action. Sometimes it may also involve the next theme.

Class

Great workers do their best to achieve the desired results. Some people aim to do this by focusing on the following steps.

They deliver consistently high standards. Remaining calm, they demonstrate a relaxed relentlessness. They keep doing the right things in the right way and perform superb work.

They do their best to deliver the concrete results. They embody the ethic of continuous improvement by building on what is working and tackling areas for improvement. They also find creative solutions to challenges.

Great workers also sometimes add that touch of class. Building on their strengths, they go into another dimension. They do something special that helps to achieve the picture of success.

There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to put yourself into situations where you demonstrate calmness and clarity. It is then to perform superb work and add that touch of class.

Imagine you want to follow this approach in the future? How can you do this 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.

The Calmness, Clarity And Class Approach

*The specific situation where I may
have the ability to demonstrate
calmness, clarity and class may be:*

*

*The specific things I can do to continue
to put myself into these situations are:*

*

*

*

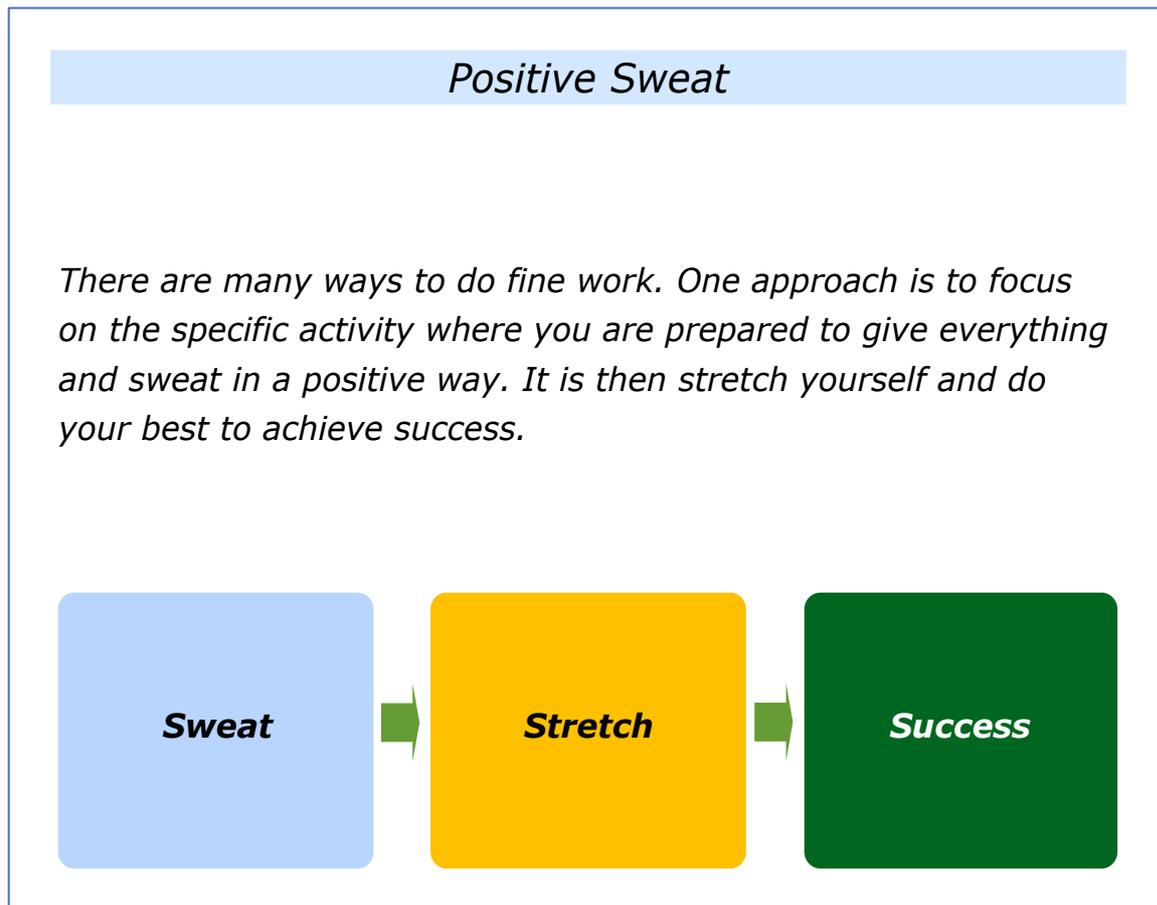
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

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*

The Positive Sweat Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to focus on the specific activity where you are prepared:

To give everything and sweat in a positive way;

To stretch yourself;

To do your best to achieve success.

The positive sweat part is interesting. It is when you really enjoy giving everything when doing a particular activity. You feel fully engaged and use your heart, head and other senses when tackling a task.

Sometimes there may be physical sweat. Other times it feels like there is a different kind of sweat. It feels as if your whole being is involved in

doing the piece of work. You may find the experience exhilarating and, in some ways, it is the equivalent of positive sweat.

When does this happen for you? You may feel fully engaged when writing, painting, gardening or practicing a craft. You may do so when pursuing your vocation, tackling a certain kind of challenge or aiming to achieve a particular goal.

You may also stretch yourself when doing the activity. This can involve stretching yourself in a creative, intellectual or psychological way. It may mean exploring other ways of doing things that lead to imaginative breakthroughs.

You will have an inner compulsion to keep improving when doing the activity. Being deeply absorbed, you will keep going until you have satisfied both an inner and outer goal. Your gut feels the work is finished and you feel satisfied with the final product.

Different people have different feelings after going through these steps. They may feel joy, exhilaration or the equivalent of positive sweat. This can lead to a sense of peace. Then, after a while, they set off on a new journey towards achieving their next goal

Looking ahead, can you think of a specific activity where you may want to follow elements of the positive sweat approach? What may be the activity where you feel fully engaged, stretch yourself and do your best to achieve success?

How can you pursue this activity in the future? How can you keep improving when doing the activity? What may be the benefits of taking these steps – both for yourself and for other people?

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

The Positive Sweat Approach

The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of the positive sweat approach may be:

*

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

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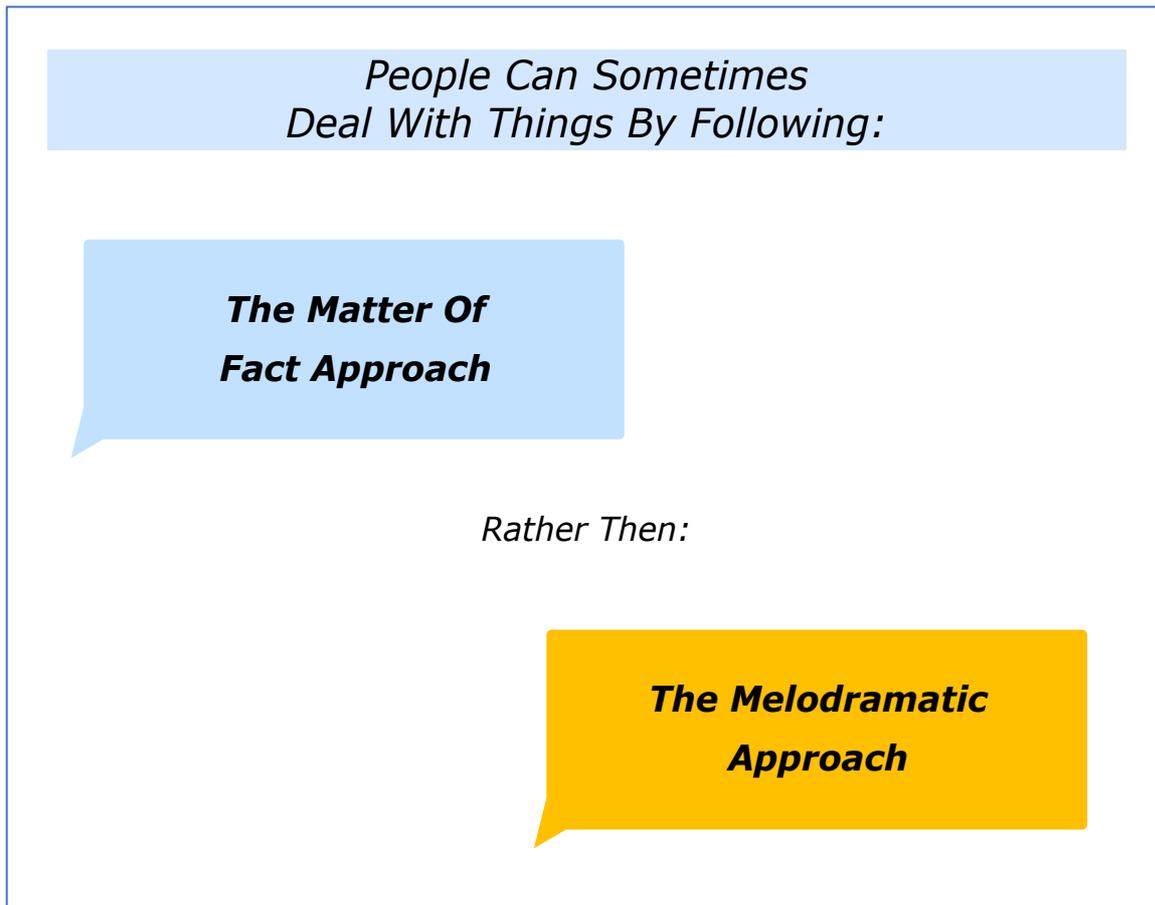
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Matter Of Fact Approach Rather Than The Melodramatic Approach



There are many ways to deal with situations in life. People can sometimes deal with them by following the matter of fact approach rather than the melodramatic approach.

People are emotional beings. Sometimes their first reaction to events is to have certain feelings. Sometimes they may feel up, sometimes they may feel down.

Many voices encourage people to feel strongly about issues. The media, politicians and campaigns often aim to stoke emotions. This can lead to people being polarised and focusing on opinions rather than facts.

Looking back, can you think of a situation when you acted in a matter of fact way rather than a melodramatic way? This could have been after experiencing a shock or getting bad news.

You may have initially reacted in an emotional way. After a while, however, you may have taken time to gather information, explore the ways forward and then pursue your chosen path.

Different people choose different ways to respond to challenging situations. Let's explore how they may pursue the following route.

The Matter Of Fact Approach

Good decision makers often feel strongly about certain issues. They recognise, however, that sometimes it is vital to approach challenging situations in a measured way.

They often buy time and do something that sounds counter intuitive. Bearing in mind the belief that 'What you focus on you become', they don't try to manage their feelings.

Such people choose instead to become quite cerebral. Bearing in mind the things they can control, they aim:

To clarify what is happening by gathering information about the topic – such as the facts and the potential things that could happen in the future;

To clarify the possible ways forward - together with the pluses and minuses of each option;

To clarify the route they want to take – such as the strategies they want to follow towards achieving their chosen picture of success.

The lead doctor in an Accident & Emergency team will oversee the first assessment of an incoming patient. After taking information from the paramedics, they will ask the team to do an initial assessment.

Bearing in mind what has been revealed, the doctor will decide on the next steps. This calls for being calm, considering the options and selecting the course most likely to help the patient.

A football coach may also need to become more cerebral when watching from the touchline. Football can be an emotional game, but it does not help for the manager to lose control of their feelings.

Some coaches therefore aim: a) to clarify what is happening in the game; b) to clarify the strategies they want their team to follow; c) to pass on these instructions in a way the players can use to achieve success.

Good mentors may also use elements of the matter of fact approach. They create a sanctuary where a person can take time to focus on their agenda, explore their options and chart their chosen way forwards.

Such mentors recognise that the person's feelings – whether they be happy, sad or experiencing another emotion – are a fact. They therefore help the person to feel at ease and, if appropriate, talk about their feelings. At a certain point, however, they will switch the focus.

The mentor will encourage the person to focus on a matter of fact approach towards tackling a challenge. They will start by helping the person to clarify the real results they want to achieve. They may then aim:

To help the person to clarify the potential options for going forwards;

To, if appropriate, pass on knowledge the person can use to achieve their picture of success;

To help the person to pursue their chosen route towards achieving their picture of success.

Good mentors acknowledge and respect a person's feelings. At the same time, however, they may help them to take a measured approach towards achieving their goals.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may aim to follow the matter of fact approach rather than the melodramatic approach? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

The Matter Of Fact Approach

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

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

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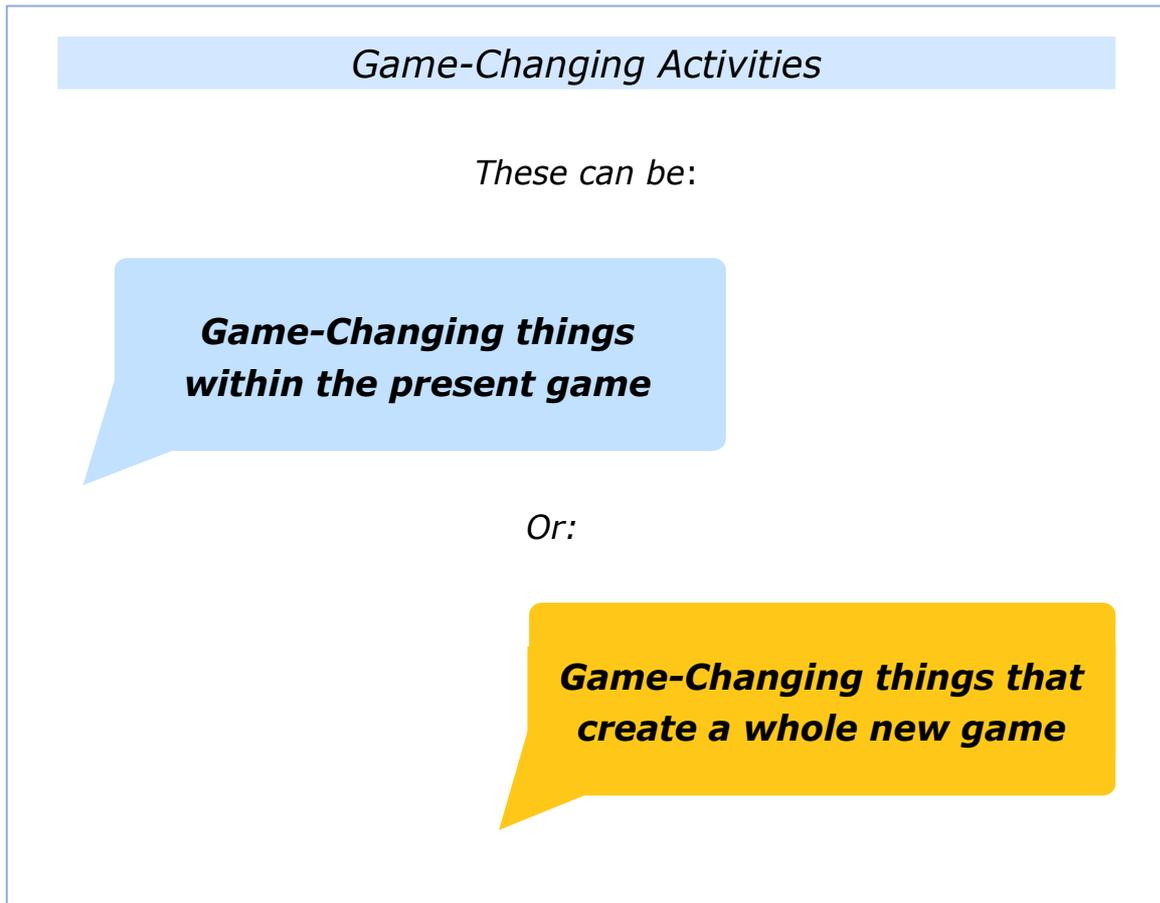
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Game-Changing Approach



Some individuals, teams and organisations do things or experience events that can be game-changing. These can have profound effects on aspects of their personal or professional lives.

There are several definitions for game-changing. These often refer to 'something that changes things in a big way'. Here are some definitions:

A person, idea, invention or process that has a profound effect on what is happening;

A new element or factor that changes an existing situation or activity in a significant way;

A paradigm that shows people a new way of looking at the world and can lead to positive results.

There are different kinds of game-changing activities. Some can have a more far-reaching effect than others. Let's explore these themes.

Game-Changing Activities Within The Present Game

The term game-changing is often used in the context of sport. It refers to a player who does something exceptional that changes the course of a game.

The term is now also used to describe a person, team or organisation that does certain kinds of work in a particular field. The work they do has a profound effect on the results that are achieved.

Some people do such work by following the normal rules of operating in a particular field. The work they do is exceptional, however, and enables them, their team or their organisation to deliver great results.

Some teams have people who do the following kinds of work. They may: a) do the groundwork; b) do good work; c) do game-changing work.

Such teams make sure everybody contributes to the groundwork and good work. They seldom employ people who just hang around to do the occasional game-changing work.

As mentioned earlier, such exceptional work often builds on the existing model. It moves the performance closer to 10/10 within the present approach to achieving results.

There may be some kinds of work or events, however, that move people into another dimension. Let's explore this approach.

Game-Changing Activities That Create A Whole New Game

Some people, teams or organisations may do exceptional work or experience events that follow fresh rules. These can create a whole new game.

This can happen on a personal front. A person may experience a life-changing event. This could be an illness, injury, divorce or other transition that can have a profound effect on their future.

This can happen on a professional front. A person, team or organisation may develop an invention, service or product that has a great effect. This can change people's way of operating or create a whole new game.

Some external events – such as pandemics, wars or climate change – can create new conditions. Some inventions – such as the internet – can create new rules for working in certain fields.

Some people, teams and organisations anticipate or respond well to such events. Some ignore what is happening and continue with their old ways of operating.

Some people help others to see or manage things that may be game-changing. Some educators, therapists or mentors, for example, may aim:

To offer people a new paradigm – a new way of looking at the world - and practical tools that enable them to achieve positive results.

Such an approach can offer people insights, knowledge and practical tools they can use in their lives and work. They can then, if they wish, apply these to achieve their picture of success.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific situation where you may apply some elements of the game-changing approach?

You may do this in your own life when dealing with a challenge or aiming to achieve success. You may do it when helping other people to deal with or maximise the challenges of a game-changing event.

What may be the specific situation? How could you apply elements of this approach in your own way? What may happen as a result of taking these steps? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

The Game-Changing Approach

*The specific situation where I
may apply elements of the
game-changing approach may be:*

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*The specific things I can do then to apply
elements of the 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 Artistic, Beautiful And Creative Approach

Some People Aim To Make Their Work:

***Artistic, Beautiful
And Creative***

Rather Than:

***Abstract, Boring
And Complicated***

There are many ways to do fine work. Some people try to make their work artistic, beautiful and creative. They take this approach rather than doing work that is abstract, boring and complicated.

They do this when running a workshop, writing an article, nurturing a garden, leading a team or doing another activity. They aim to do it when working as a teacher, chef, architect or another role.

They follow certain principles but are also pragmatic. They try to find solutions to challenges. They aim to do work that lifts people's spirit and gives them practical hope.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to do work that aims to be artistic, beautiful and creative? How can you do this in your own way? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme.

The Artistic, Beautiful And Creative Approach

*The specific situation where I may aim to do
work that is artistic, beautiful and creative may be:*

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

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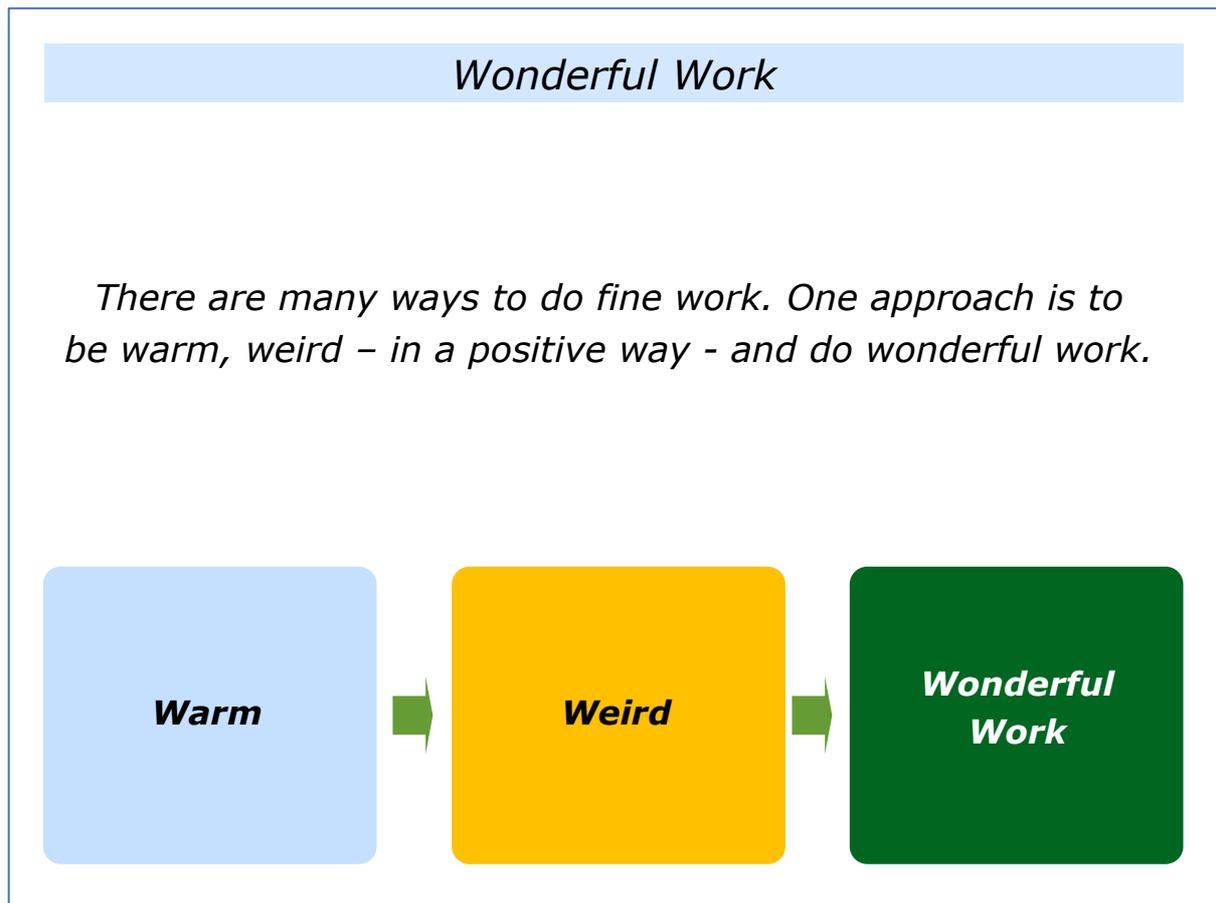
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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The Warm, Weird And Wonderful Work Approach



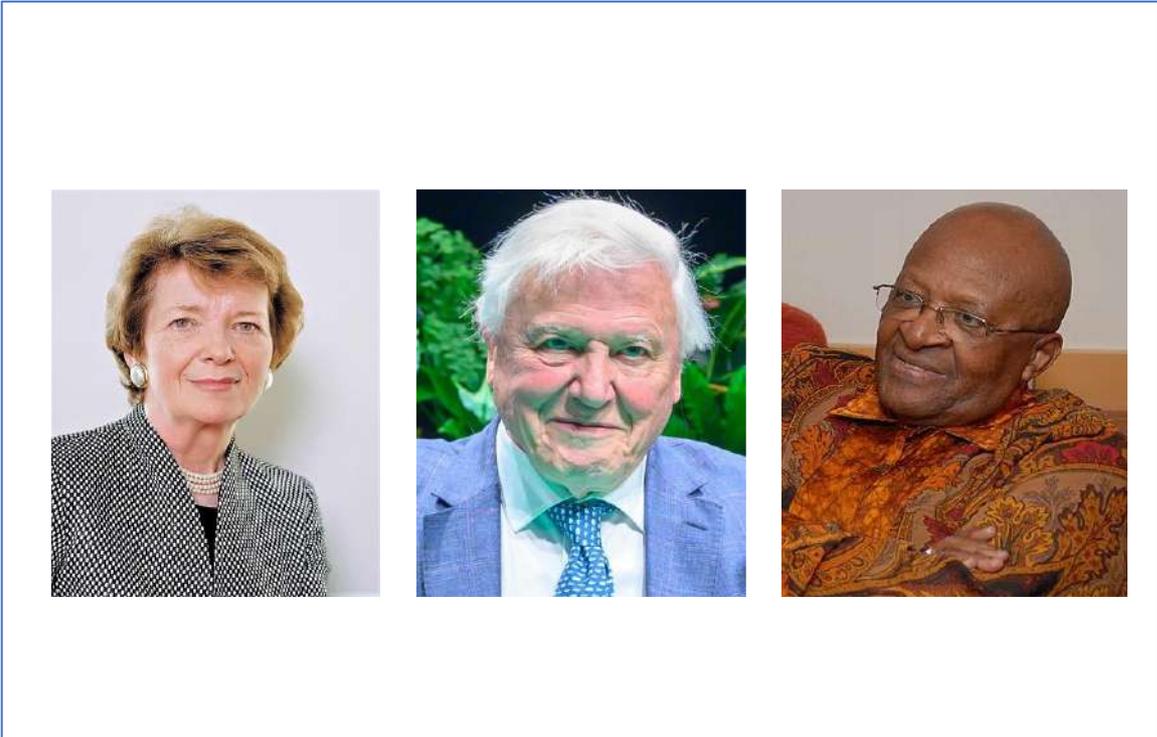
There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to be warm, weird – in a positive way – and do wonderful work.

The key is to be warm. It is to be kind and encourage people. This can give the licence to be different. The next step is to do wonderful work.

Different people follow these steps in different ways. Let's explore how they may translate these into action.

Warm

Some people transmit warmth. Mary Robinson, the former President of Ireland, David Attenborough and Desmond Tutu have each demonstrated this quality. They knew how to bring practical hope to a room.



Many individuals like to do work in their own way. As the saying goes, however:

If you are going to be a deviant, you have to over-deliver.

Being warm is a good start. Being positive, genuine and kind can go a long way. It can help to create the fertile ground in which things can grow. Being cold can alienate people.

Imagine that a person is warm in a genuine way. This can sometimes help to create the conditions where they may pursue the next step.

Weird

There are many definitions for the word weird. The one we are using here applies to the character of individuals who do wonderful work. It is:

A person being unique and different in a positive way.

Every person is different, of course, but some have certain qualities. First, they have special strengths. Second, they see things in a special way. Third, they combine these qualities to do special work.

Richard Feynman the physicist, for example, saw things from a certain angle. He then expressed this perception by thinking, behaving and doing things in a way that was both unique and uplifting.

Many people express their uniqueness as artists, designers, architects, problem solvers or in other roles. They apply their difference in a way that helps people or the planet.

Wonderful Work

Some people who appear a bit weird can get away with it by being both warm and doing wonderful work. They are seen as characters who are creative and sometimes deliver compelling results.

Anita Roddick was such a person. Charismatic and inspiring, many people saw her as caring. Being both spiritual and savvy, however, she sometimes spoke in a direct way that cut to the chase. Embodying certain caring values, she also believed in delivering commercial results.

Great organisations sometimes employ people who others may see as extremely different, as in their own worlds or as mad professors. Such people need to be professional and produce valuable work, however, in order to continue to be employed. Those that don't add value may one day find themselves off the payroll.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a specific activity where you may want to follow elements of this approach? This could be when performing superb work or doing a specific project.

How can you continue to be warm? How can you channel any of your quiriness or weirdness in a positive way? How can you do your best to produce wonderful work?

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

The Warm, Weird And Wonderful Work Approach

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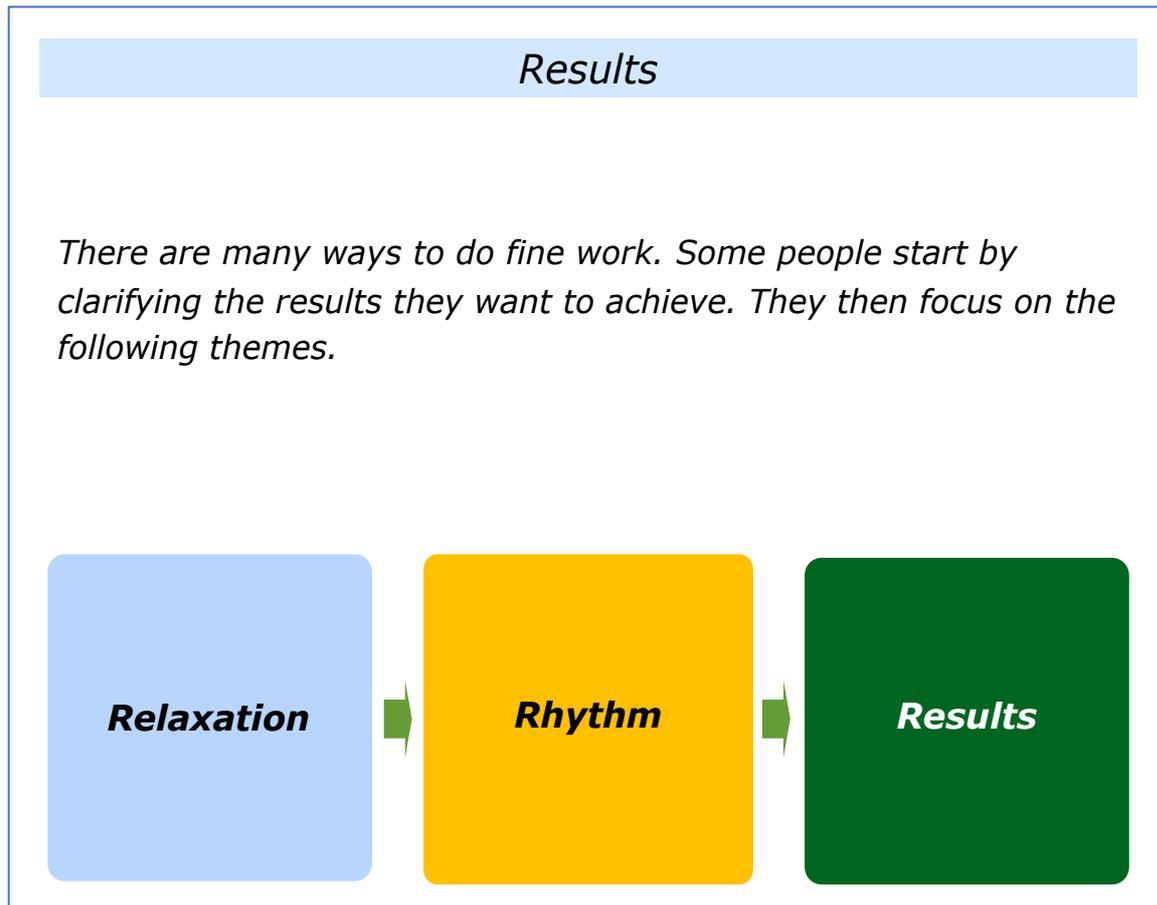
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Relaxation, Rhythm And Results Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. Some people aim to relax, follow their chosen rhythm and do their best to achieve the desired results. Let's explore these themes.

Results

A person may start by clarifying the results they want to achieve. Bearing in mind what they can control in a situation, different individuals will have different aims. They may say, for example:

I want to encourage my partner ... I want to do my best in a sporting event ... I want to help a team to achieve its picture of success ... etc.

Different people also clarify their actions plans in different ways. Some explore the following themes.

Bearing in mind what I can control in the situation, what are the real results I want to achieve? What is the picture of success? What will be the benefits of achieve these goals?

What are the key strategies I can follow to give myself the greatest chance of success? How can I translate these into a clear action plan? How can I translate these steps into following a certain rhythm?

How can I relax, click into action and follow this rhythm? How can I build on what is working and keep improving? How can I manage interruptions and regain my rhythm? How can I do my best to achieve the results?

Imagine that a person has explored these questions. They may then focus on the following step.

Relaxation

Different people relax in different ways before following their chosen rhythm. They may rest, relax or follow a ritual before clicking into action.

A footballer may breathe deeply before taking a penalty kick. An actor may pause, recentre and visualise what they are going to do before going on stage.

Some people aim to relax, rehearse and then focus on being fully present. They may also have a mantra they say to themselves before moving into action.

Peak performers often demonstrate a relaxed relentlessness. They aim to flow, focus and do fine work. This sometimes involves the next theme.

Rhythm

Great workers follow their chosen rhythm when doing their work. Different people do this in different ways. Some aim:

To clarify the key strategies they aim to follow and translate these into following certain steps;

To clarify how they can build on their strengths and follow their successful style when taking these steps;

To clarify the rhythm they want to follow when taking these steps on the way towards achieving their goals.

Such workers clarify how to start the work, follow their strategies and perform superbly. They also focus on how to make the best use of their energy, time and resources.

They then translate these factors into a rhythm they want to follow when doing their work. They also build in time for rest and recovery on the way towards achieving their goals.

Results

Great workers aim to achieve the desired results. They sometimes take the following steps.

They keep building on their strengths, following their chosen strategies and doing superb work.

They keep reading reality by building on what is working and finding solutions to challenges.

They keep doing the basics, add the brilliance and do their best to achieve the picture of success.

There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to relax, follow your chosen rhythm and do your best to achieve the desired results.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach? If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

The Relaxation, Rhythm And Results 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 then to follow this approach in my own way are:

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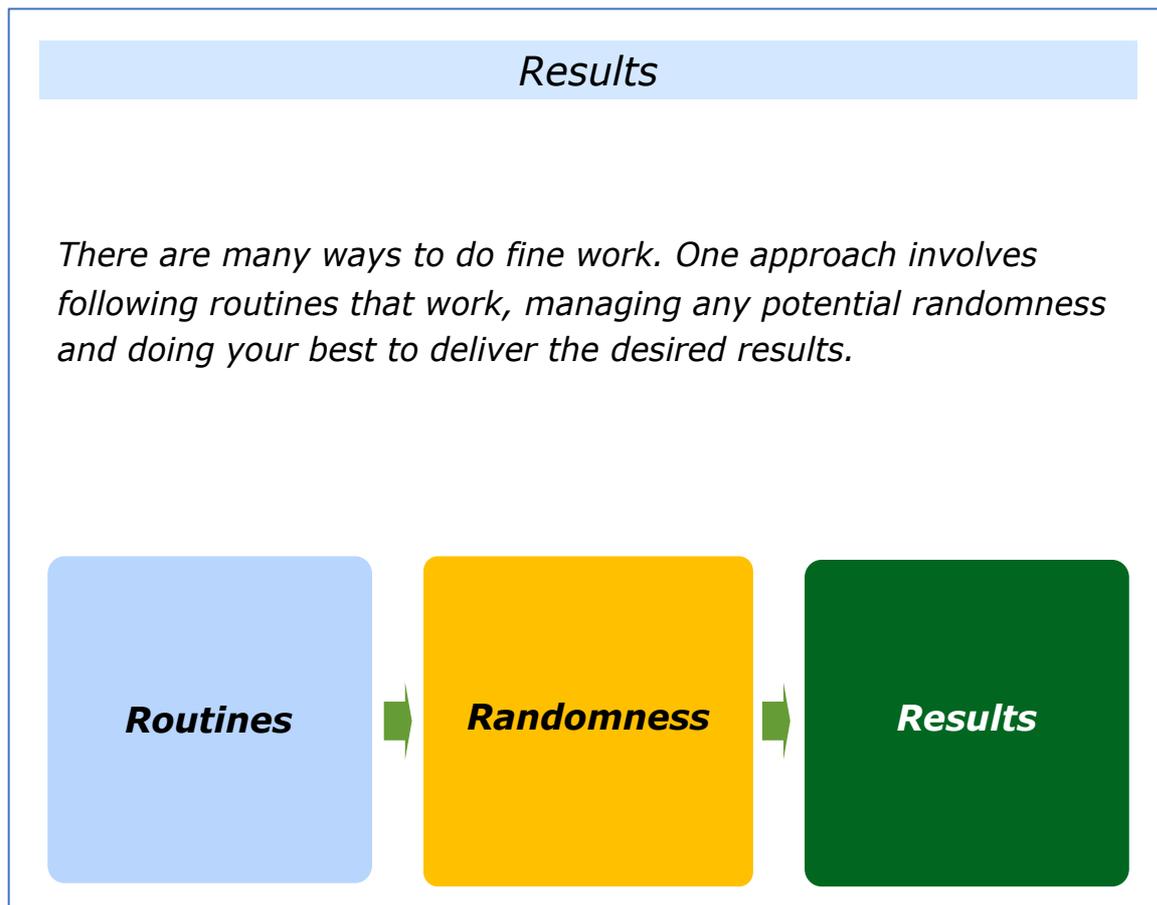
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Routines, Randomness And Results Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to follow routines that work, manage any potential randomness and do your best to deliver the desired results.

Imagine that you want to follow this approach in your own way. Let's explore how you can make this happen.

Routines

Great workers often follow routines that work. Sometimes it can take a person years for them to find and follow such routines. Here are some examples.

A writer may follow certain routines in their daily work. They may make good use of their prime times – the times when they have most creative energy.

They may also follow a certain structure when composing an article or a story. This frees the writer to use their imagination to fill the framework with powerful writing.

A mentor may follow a certain routine when helping mentees. They may start by anticipating what the topics the mentee may wish to explore and rehearsing the session.

They then make the person feel welcome, clarify their goals and focus on the first topic they want to explore. They then pass on knowledge in a way the person can use to achieve their goals.

A leader may follow routines to create a positive environment in which motivated people can perform at their best. They ensure that people are clear on the team's purpose, principles and picture of success.

Such a leader may coordinate people's strengths to do superb work. They will then encourage, educate and enable people to achieve the picture of success.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a situation where you may want to do your best? What are the results you want to achieve in the situation?

How can you do your best to achieve these results? What are the strategies you can follow to give yourself the greatest chance of success? What are those that are most likely to work?

What are the routines you can follow to translate these strategies into action? How can you use your strengths – and follow your successful style – to do superb work?

Imagine that you have clarified the routines you want to follow when doing a piece of work. Sometimes you may meet challenges along the way. Let's explore this theme.

Randomness

Great workers like to make things as predictable as possible. This creates the platform for delivering consistently high standards. It also gives them the strength to ride the roller coaster of managing challenges and random events.

Some of these challenges will be predictable but others may be unexpected. They may therefore also explore how to manage randomness that may occur on the journey.

Many people cite Harold Macmillan, a former British Prime Minister, describing what could upset his plans. The quote was never actually verified, but he was rumoured to say that his main concerns were:

"Events, Dear Boy, Events."

Some events are more predictable than others. Looking back at my early work in therapeutic communities, for example, it was often possible to see people's patterns and how they would behave in certain situations.

There were, however, many roller coaster ups and downs – plus random events - that occurred. It was then our job to manage these situations in ways that helped both the individuals and the whole community.

Imagine you are following your chosen routine when doing a piece of work. What are the potential challenges you may encounter on the way? How can you prevent some of these happening? How can you manage some of these challenges if, despite your best efforts, they still happen?

What are the random events that could occur? Looking at each of these events, how can you ride the roller coaster? How can you buy time to think and clarify the potential ways forward? How can you decide on your strategy and manage the event?

Imagine that you are doing good work and managing the potential events. You may then move on to the next stage.

Results

Great workers do their best to achieve the desired results. Delivering the goods can be more predictable when doing some activities, however, rather than when doing others.

Imagine that you lead a team that delivers marketing campaigns. Each project will call for clarifying the brief, conducting research and running a superb campaign. Providing you do these things properly, you are more likely to achieve the predicted results.

Imagine that you coach a football team. Bearing in mind the team's strengths, you will aim to implement the right strategy with the right people in the right way. Whilst you can enable people perform at their best, there may be factors beyond your control that affect results.

Great workers recognise they can only do their best. That is why in sports, for example, many coaches follow the advice given by Bill Walsh:

Keep delivering the standards of performance and the score takes care of itself.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow some of the steps we have explored?

Imagine you have clarified the results you want to achieve in the situation. How can you follow routines that work? How can you ride the roller coaster? How can you do your best to achieve the desired results?

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

The Routines, Randomness And Results 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 then 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 Focusing On The Goal Rather Than The Goalkeeper Approach



Great workers often focus on the goal rather than the goalkeeper. They then aim to hit the ball into their chosen part of the goal.

Such people focus on the possibilities and find solutions to problems. They also always aim to do their best. Sometimes that is actually the goal.

Looking back, can you think of a situation where you kept focusing on the goal? You may have been leading a project, producing a website, directing a play or doing another activity.

What did you do right then to reach your aim? You may have been doing something you felt passionately about. You may have planned ahead, set a positive goal and followed your chosen principles.

You may have got some early successes and done superb work. When faced by a challenge, you may have taken time to reflect, clarify the potential strategies and then did your best to achieve positive results.

Great workers put themselves into situations where they see opportunities rather than get bogged down by obstacles. They then aim to maximise the opportunities and, if necessary, find ways around the obstacles. One person expressed their approach in the following way.

"I love making wildlife films for television. Whilst I qualified as a vet, I prefer to create unusual films that raise awareness about wildlife.

"I love developing quirky projects, selling the ideas to television and filming the animals. I even enjoy digging toilets in the bush.

"Returning to the studio, I enjoy putting together the stories and doing the voice overs. Finally, I like presenting the programmes and, when appropriate, engaging with people using social media.

"My focus is always on the finished product, even if this may develop as we go along. I was once put in hospital after being attacked by an animal in the bush. We kept the cameras rolling, however, and the attack added colour to the film.

"Ten years ago I spent a year working in a big organisation. Most of my days were spent trying to get ideas past the gatekeepers rather than filming animals.

"I eventually left to resume freelance activities. Now I get on with making films that help others to appreciate wildlife."

What are the situations where you focus on the goal rather than the goalkeeper? How can you put yourself into more of these situations in the future? What may 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 Focusing On The Goal Rather Than The Goalkeeper Approach

The specific situation where I follow elements of this approach is:

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The specific things I can to put myself into more of these situations in the future are:

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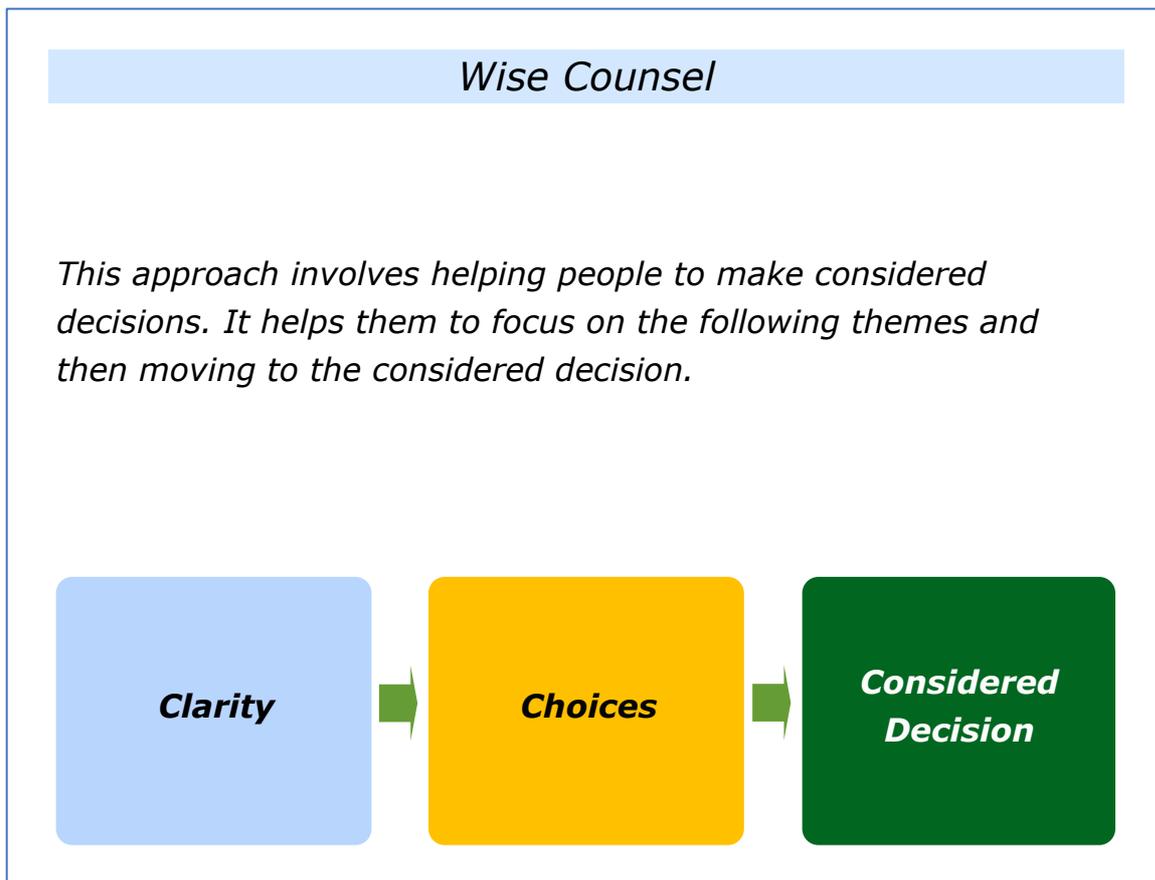
The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:

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The Wise Counsel In The Room Approach



Great workers are often good at making decisions. Some may also choose to seek wise counsel before pressing ahead with their chosen plans. One leader expressed this in the following way.

"The team I lead is full of positive people who have high professional standards. There are occasions, however, when we make sure that we have a wise counsel in the room.

"The team often gets to the stage of clarifying 80% of the way ahead. It is at that point we may call on the wise counsel to help us to do a reality check.

"We know the kinds of questions they will ask us – such as being clear on our goals. It is then good to get their input, however, to check we are focusing on our purpose and principles. They also help us to focus on the possible way forwards to get the desired positive results."

There are many definitions for wisdom. Wise counsellors often have the ability:

To draw on their experience and understanding to provide perspective, pass on knowledge and help people to make considered decisions.

Different people use wise counsellors in different situations. They may draw on their knowledge:

To help them to make personal or professional decisions;

To help their team or organisation to make decisions;

To help the decision makers in society to make decisions.

Wise counsellors often provide perspective and, when invited, are prepared to offer options. They recognise, however, that it is up to the person or the group of people to make the final decision.

Different counsellors follow different frameworks when helping people to make decisions. Some follow a version of the Three C approach. Bearing in mind the decision to be made, they focus on the following themes.

Clarity: They clarify the real results to achieve – the picture of success;

Choices: They clarify the possible choices, the consequences – the pluses and minuses - of each option and the potential creative solutions;

Considered Decision: They clarify the decision the person or the people want to pursue and the strategies they can follow to achieve success.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to use elements of this approach? You may do this by seeking help from such a person or even acting as a wise counsellor yourself.

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

The Wise Counsel In The Room 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 then 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 Earning Trust Approach

Earning Trust

Trust is an outcome. It is something you may earn by taking responsibility and doing some of the following things.

- *By agreeing with people about the goals to achieve;*
- *By making clear contracts about people's responsibilities in working to achieve the goals;*
- *By fulfilling your promises and doing what is required to achieve the goals.*

A pilot in an air force display team described an interesting view of trust. They explained this in the following way.

*"When the team needs to turn right, I do not trust that everybody has turned right. I **know** that everybody has turned right."*

Trust is something that we earn by keeping our promises. Sometimes can be done in the following ways.

By a person taking responsibility, keeping their promises and delivering the required results.

By a worker showing they understand what is required, making clear working contracts and performing superb work.

By a team showing they understand the employer's goals, proactively keeping their stakeholders informed and delivering the agreed picture of success.

Looking back on your life, can you think of somebody earned your trust? They may have been a friend, teacher, doctor, trusted advisor, leader or somebody providing a professional service.

They may have shown you respect, kept you informed and delivered the goods. As a result, you may have felt safer, more confident and reaped the fruits of success. If they provided a professional service, you may have recommended them to other people.

People like the feeling of predictability. They like to feel that if they make agreements, for example, then these will be met. This provides a greater sense of security in an unpredictable world.

People also like to feel that any professionals they hire are experts in their fields and will deliver success. This point was underlined in *The Trusted Advisor*, the book by David Maister, Charles Green and Robert Galford.

The authors say that a person needs to demonstrate three basic skills to become a trusted advisor to their clients. They need to earn trust, build relationships and give advice effectively.

Different people earn trust in different ways. Here are three themes that it can be useful to bear in mind when aiming to help people.

*You can show you understand
a person's picture of success*

Credibility is crucial. There are various ways to build credibility. One approach is to create an encouraging environment and go through the following steps:

To show respect for the person;

To show you are interested in them and their goals;

To show you understand their picture of success.

Good professionals often demonstrate such skills. They recognise that the interaction is about the other person and their agenda – it is not about them.

You can show you understand what is required to reach the goals and make clear contracts about working to achieve the picture of success

Good professionals use their knowledge to help the person to achieve success. They listen to what they client wants to achieve. They then play back their understanding to make sure that everybody has the same picture.

Such professionals are also good at explaining what they can do to help the client. Using their own words, they may cover the following areas with the client.

As far as I understand it, the specific goals you want to achieve are:

- *
- *
- *

The specific things I can help you with regarding achieving the goals are:

- *
- *
- *

The specific things you can expect to see happening - and by when - on the road to achieving the goals are:

- *
- *

*

If the person does want to go ahead, then the professional will make clear working contracts. Using their own words, they may cover the following areas with the client.

*The specific things I see as my responsibilities
in working towards achieving the goals are:*

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*The specific things that are other people's responsibilities – including
your own – in working towards achieving the goals are:*

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The other specific things that are worth mentioning are:

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Good professionals do something to get a quick success. This reassures the client and buys them time to get on with doing the other necessary work. They recognise that clients often worry. They therefore proactively keep people informed about the progress towards achieving the goals.

*You can fulfil the contract, do superb work
and deliver the agreed picture of success*

Good professionals meet their promises and deliver the goods. It is also important for all the parties to fulfil their parts of the contracts. This is especially important when working in teams.

Good leaders, for example, manage by outcomes rather than by tasks. They make clear contracts with their team members about the outcomes that must be delivered and by when.

They then expect people to use their expertise to deliver the agreed picture of success. One leader explained this in the following way.

"I am interested in what people are delivering rather than what they are doing. This is why I employ motivated and self-managing people.

"People are expected make clear contracts about their contributions. They are then expected to proactively keep others informed about their progress and to deliver on their promises.

"People must follow the team's agreed principles but it is up to them how they use their talents to deliver the goods. This also includes encouraging other team members and helping them to achieve the goals."

Many people talk about the importance of trust. Certainly individuals must be given opportunities to stretch themselves and develop. At the same time, it is their responsibility to keep others informed and deliver the goods.

Trust is an outcome. The more times we deliver on our promises, the greater the increase in trust. People will then give us more opportunities. They will do so because we have earned their trust.

Looking to the future, can you think of a situation when you may want to earn trust? This could be in a personal or professional situation.

How can you show respect for the person? How can you show you understand their goals? How can you show you know what is required? How can you make clear contracts, do superb work and deliver success?

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

Earning Trust

The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of the earning trust approach may be:

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

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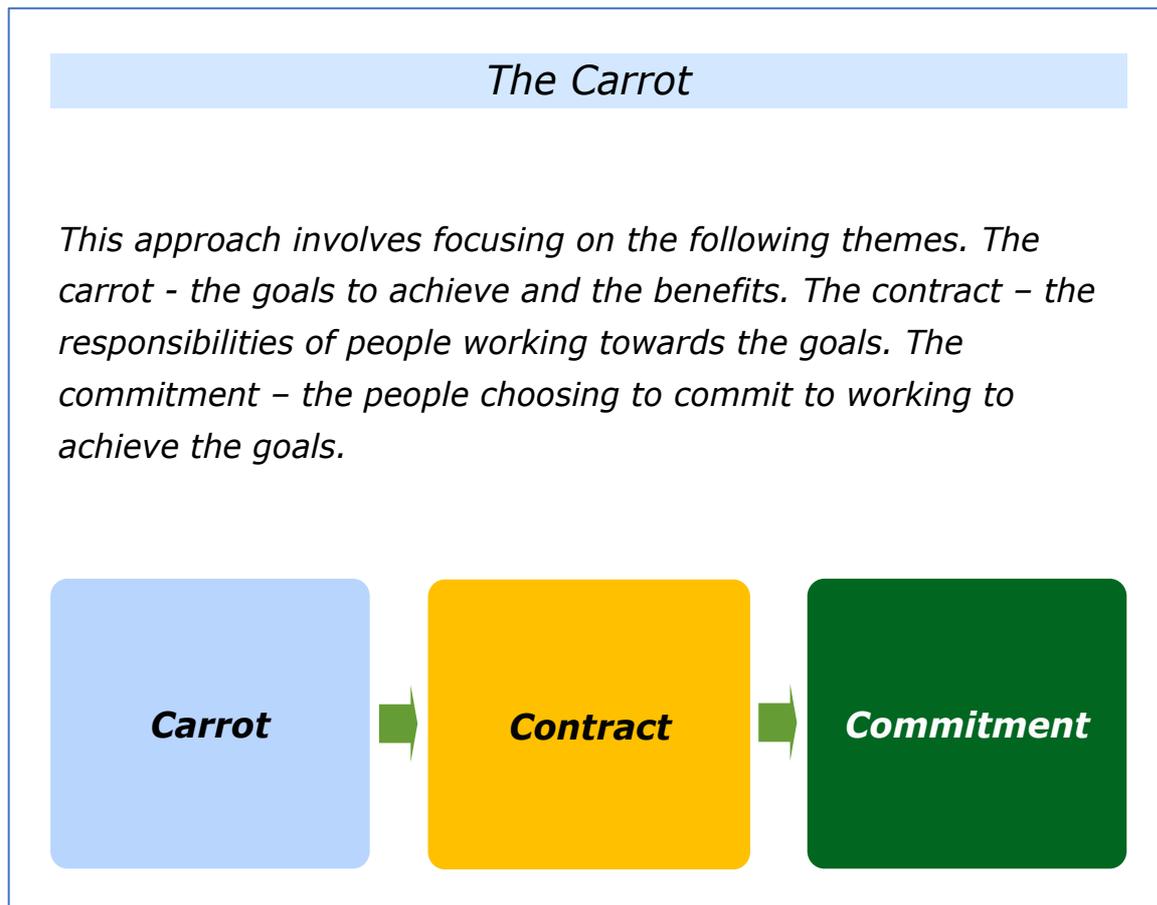
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

*

*

The Carrot, Contract And Commitment Approach



There are many ways to encourage people to achieve specific goals. This is an approach that I have seen used by therapists, educators, coaches, leaders and people in other roles. It sounds basic but, when used respectfully, it can be effective.

The approach involves describing the carrot and the working contract. It then involves inviting people to decide if they wish to commit to doing their best to achieve the goals. Let's explore how this works in action.

The Carrot

The first step involves describing the carrot - such as the goals to achieve and the benefits. Different people describe this in different ways in different situations. Let's consider some examples.

The Leader's Approach

Some leaders describe a vision that people find inspiring. They may talk about having a dream, doing things that are insanely great or creating an ethical business that shows a better way.

Some leaders describe the team's purpose, principles and picture of success. Bringing this to life with examples, they work through the following framework.

The Purpose

The purpose of our team – the specific thing we want to do - is:

*

The positive benefits of achieving this purpose will be:

*

*

*

The Principles

The principles we want to follow when pursuing this purpose are:

*

*

*

The Picture Of Success

The picture of success – the specific things we want to achieve by ... - are:

*

*

*

Different leaders describe this in different ways. Whatever method they choose, the aim is to show people the big picture, the key strategies and the benefits of achieving the goals.

The Contract

The second step is to explain the contract. This involves describing the responsibilities of various people in working to achieve the goals. The leader may say something along the following lines.

The leadership team's responsibilities in working towards achieving the goals are:

*

*

*

The managers' responsibilities in working towards achieving the goals are:

*

*

*

The team members' responsibilities in working towards achieving the goals are:

*

*

*

The aim is to describe the attitudes and actions that people are encouraged to follow to work towards achieving the goals. It is also important to explain the reasons for following these principles to achieve success.

The Commitment

The third step is to invite people to decide if they want to commit to working towards achieving the goals. Different leaders do this in different ways.

Some leaders invite people to take time to reflect on whether they really want to take this step. They make sure that people know the pluses and minuses involved in doing the work. One leader expressed this in the following way.

"I want people to know the full picture – the pluses and minuses involved - before they commit.

"Providing I give them this information, is not my job to get them to get them to commit.

"It is their job to decide if they want to commit."

Such leaders then meet with the individuals who want to work towards achieving the goals. Bearing in mind the person's strengths, they make clear contracts about:

The specific contribution – the specific outcomes – the person will deliver towards achieving the goals;

The specific strategies they will follow and the specific support they need to achieve their contribution;

The specific things they will proactively do to keep people informed about their progress towards achieving the goals.

The leader then meets with people on a regular basis. Bearing in mind the outcomes the team member aims to deliver, they encourage them to perform superb work and do their best to achieve the picture of success.

This is an approach I have seen work in teams. It is one that can also be used in other situations. Let's look at one example.

The Therapist's Approach

Imagine that you are a therapist and a client asks for your help. You will start by making them feel welcome and clarifying their goals. Different individuals will want to achieve different things. They may aim:

To give up drugs ... To take more control of their life ... To manage their emotions ... To feel more at peace ... To achieve other goals.

Bearing in mind their aims, it can be important to help them:

To set a positive goal;

To see the benefits of achieving the goal – this is the carrot;

It can also be useful for the person to recognise both: a) the upsides; b) the downsides involved in working towards achieving a goal. They can then decide if they are prepared to do what is required to achieve the prize.

Bearing these factors in mind, it can be good to spend a lot of time helping a person to see the benefits of achieving the goal. Some people

will only change their lifestyle, for example, if there is a big enough carrot.

Imagine that a person is prepared to accept the whole package involved in working to achieve the goal. You may then move on to making a clear working contract. This may involve you explaining the following things.

My responsibilities as a therapist in helping you to work towards achieving your goal are:

*

*

*

Your responsibilities in working towards achieving your goal are:

*

*

*

Clear contracting is important in many areas of life. This is especially so in professional relationships. Many therapists therefore make clear working contracts when helping a client.

Imagine you have go to this point. You can then move on to the next step – commitment. Sometimes this involves revisiting some of the earlier themes. One approach is to encourage the client:

To clarify the specific goal they want to achieve;

To clarify the pluses and minuses involved in working to achieve the goal;

To clarify their commitment to doing their best to achieve the goal.

Different therapists clarify a person's commitment in different ways. One approach is to invite them to do the following exercise.

My Commitment

*The extent to which I am motivated – on a scale
0-10 – to do what is required to achieve the goal is:*

_____ / 10

The person's rating needs to be at least 7+/10. If appropriate, you can also encourage the person to focus on the specific things they can do to maintain or improve the rating.

Imagine that you have worked through these steps with a client. You can then help them to follow the strategies most likely to achieve their picture of success.

There are many ways to encourage people to work towards achieving a goal. One approach is to focus on the carrot, contract and commitment. This can be used when working with teams, individuals or even organisations.

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? 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 Carrot, Contract And Commitment Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

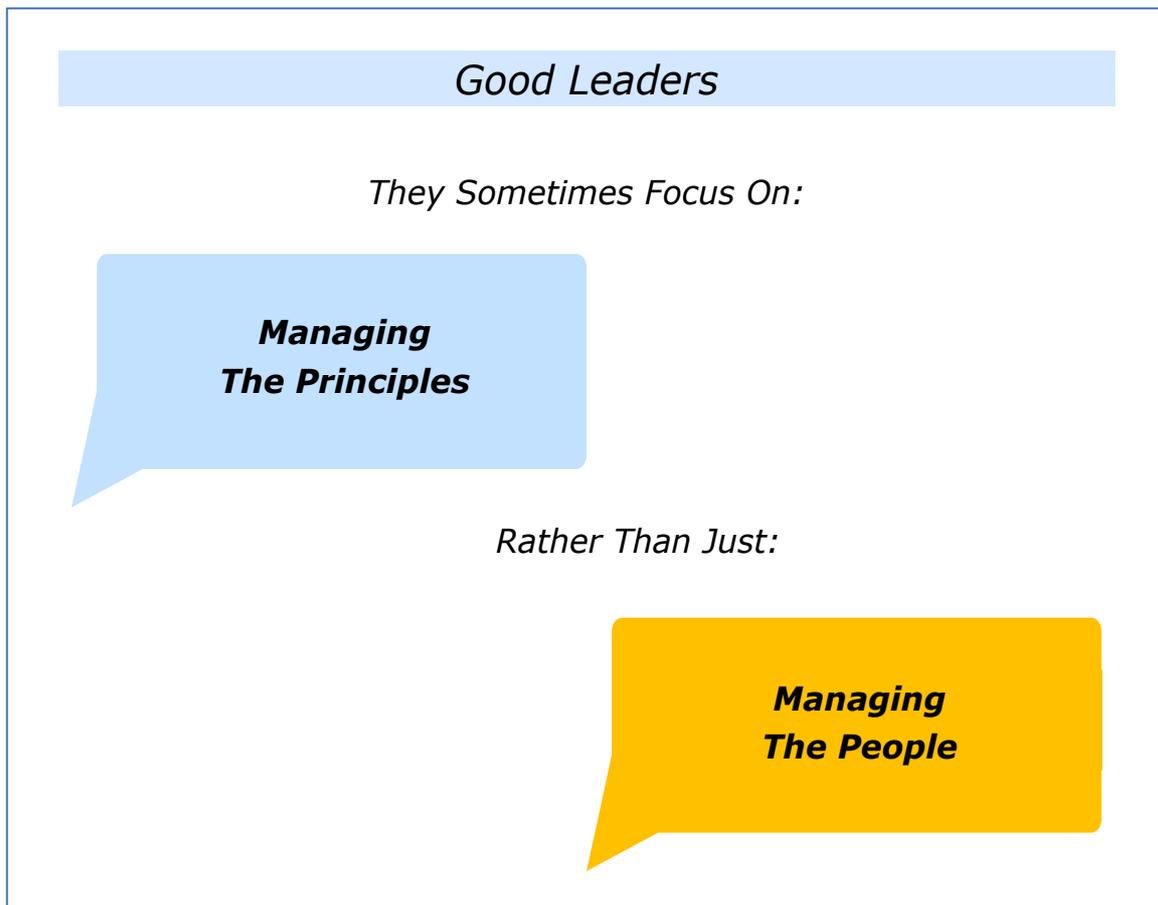
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

The Managing The Principles Rather Than Just Managing The People Approach



There are many ways to lead teams and organisations. One approach is to focus on managing the principles rather than just managing the people. Let's explore how this can work in practice.

Managing The Principles

Imagine that you lead an organisation. You want to build a principles driven organisation rather than a personality driven organisation. You want people to align their efforts by aiming:

To keep focusing on the principles and using these as a guiding compass in their daily work;

To keep translating the principles into action when working with customers, colleagues and other people;

To keep following the principles by applying their strengths and doing superb work on the way towards delivering success.

Different leaders follow this approach in different ways. One leader explained their approach in the following way.

"We as a leadership team find it helpful to keep going back to the principles when faced by challenging situations. We ask ourselves the following questions.

"What are the principles we want to follow in our work? How can we follow the principles in this specific situation? What are the possible routes we can follow? What are the pluses and minuses of each route?"

"What is the route that is closest to our principles? How can we translate this into action? How can we build on the pluses and minimise the minuses?"

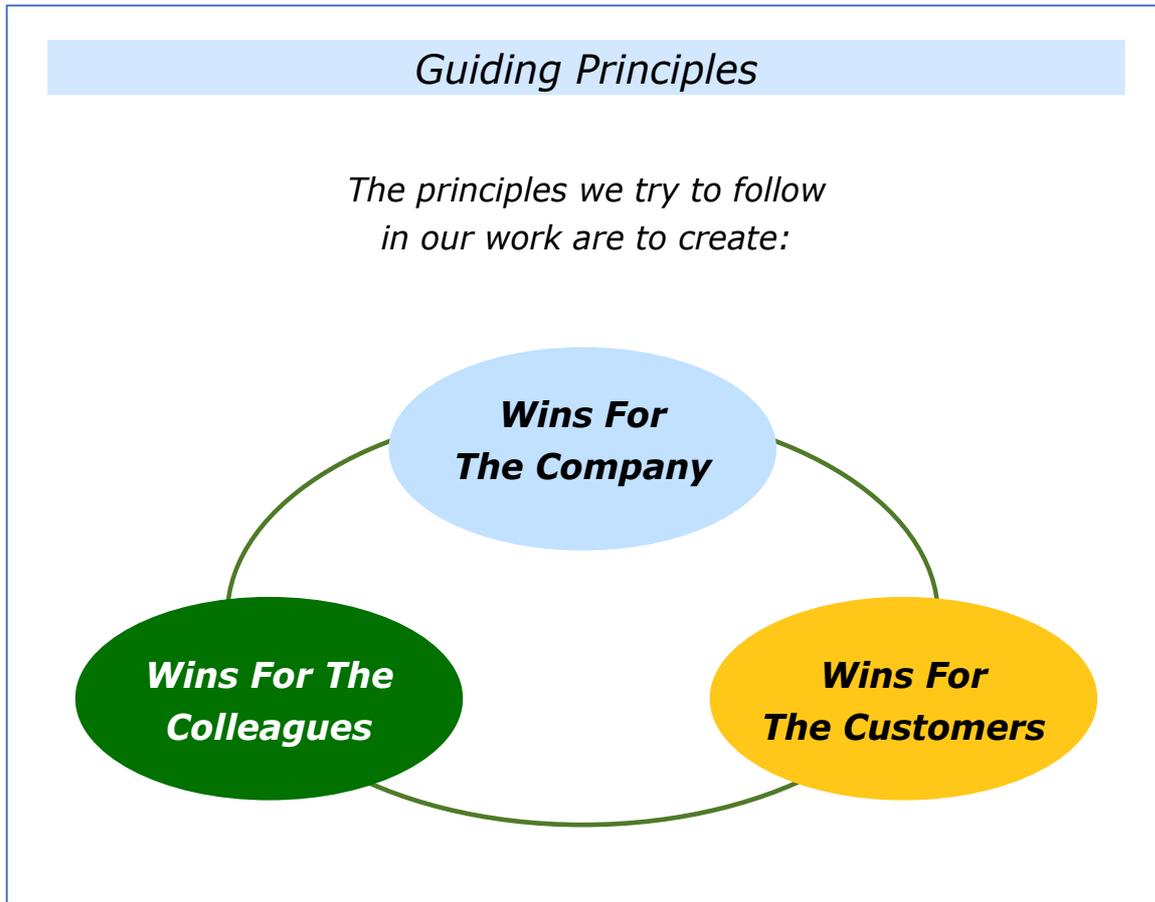
Some people may balk at this approach. They may argue that every person and every situation is different. Certainly that is true and certain extenuating circumstances can be taken into account.

Great leaders, teams and organisations, however, keep returning to their core principles. They use these as a framework when making decisions. They then translate these into action in the ways they work with customers, colleagues and other people.

Different people may follow different principles. One leader described their company's approach in the following way.

"We have guiding principles that we use as a compass. We aim to create wins for the company, wins for the customers and wins for the colleagues.

"We see these principles as interrelated. Whenever possible we try to create wins for all these stakeholders. Sometimes it can be challenging but it us helps to keep coming back to this compass."



Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a specific situation where you may want to follow the managing by principles approach?

What may be the principles you want to follow in the situation? How can you follow these in ways that create wins for as many stakeholders as possible? How can you translate these principles 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.

Managing By Principles

The specific situation where I want to manage by principles may be:

*

The specific principles I want to follow in the situation are:

*

*

*

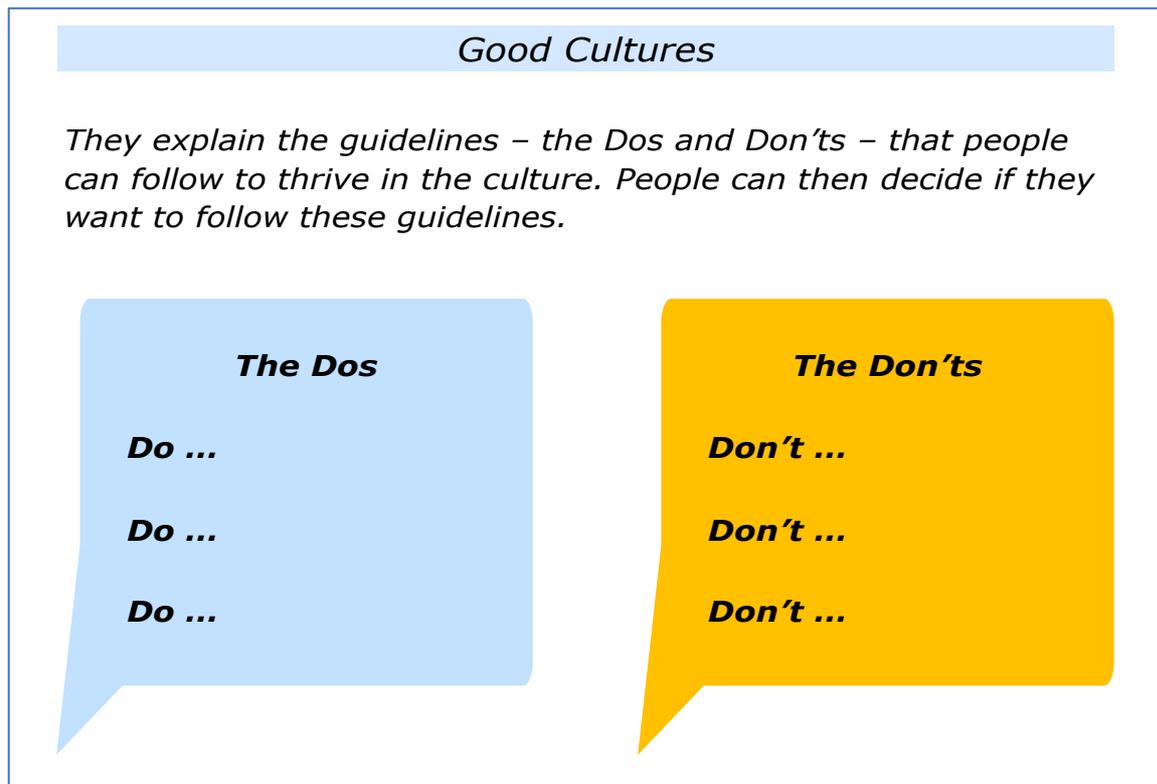
The specific things I can do to translate these principles into action in the situation are:

*

*

*

The Communicating The Guidelines For Thriving In A Culture Approach



Every system has rules. The system may be a family, work place or other culture. Sometimes these rules are spoken and made tangible. Sometimes they are not spoken and are less tangible.

People like clarity. They like to know the rules about how to behave in a certain system. They can then decide if they want to follow these in their own way. Bearing this in mind, it can sometimes be helpful

To explain to people the guidelines – the Dos and Don'ts – for being able to thrive in the culture.

Some systems have rules that are encouraging. They help people to develop and do their best. Some systems have rules that can be repressive or confusing.

Good cultures take the first approach. Before an employee arrives, they explain the Dos and Don'ts for doing good work. For example:

Do have a positive attitude ... Do take responsibility ... Do be proactive ... Do understand the company's goals ... Do make clear contracts about your contribution towards achieving the goals ... Do fulfil your promises ... Do help people to achieve success.

(The Don'ts may be the opposite of some of the Dos.)

Some cultures have rules that may not be so healthy. They may give people the following messages.

Do flatter your boss ... Do aim to win and make others lose ... Do burn yourself out ... Do expect to be fired at some point.

Good cultures also recognise that different leaders have different styles. They therefore sometimes explain the Dos and Don'ts for working with such leaders. For example:

Do make clear contracts with the leader about the specific outcomes to achieve ... Do check how they want you to keep them informed about the progress towards the outcomes.

Do prepare properly for meetings with the leader ... Do focus on the future – such as how to solve problems – rather than spend a long time explaining the past.

Different leaders have different mental models about how to get people to perform at their best. The model they use can have consequences – pluses and minuses – for both themselves and other people.

It can therefore be useful to educate a person about how to work with a leader. The person can then go into the situation with their eyes open. (It can be, of course, that they decide that they do not want to work with the leader.)

Let's return to your own life. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to explain to a person - or a group of people – the guidelines for thriving in a culture? How can you do this in your own way? If you wish, try tackling the following exercise on this theme.

Communicating The Guidelines For Thriving In A Culture

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

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Rule Of Three Approach

The Rule Of Three

Some people follow this rule in their lives and work.

- *They may focus on three goals;*
- *They may communicate three messages;*
- *They may create a model which has three steps.*

Some people follow the rule of three in their lives and work. They may do this when focusing on three goals, giving three messages to people or creating a model that has three steps.

Why take this approach? People look for patterns to make sense of information. According to brain scientists, three is the easiest number for people to remember in terms of looking for patterns.

The Masterclass website gives some reasons when it can be useful to remember the rule of three. It describes this in terms of giving tips to writers but the rule often applies in other situations. Here is an excerpt from the website.

What Is The Rule Of Three?

The rule of three is a writing principle based on the idea that humans process information through pattern recognition. As the smallest number that allows us to recognize a pattern in a set, three can help us craft memorable phrases.

The rule of three is also incredibly useful as a structural tool: comedians use the rule of three to craft three-part jokes (set up, build anticipation, punch line) and screenplays generally follow a three-act structure.

Here is a further explanation from The Rule of Three website.

When it comes to communicating ideas, human beings are programmed to process information through instinctive pattern recognition.

Of course, to communicate effectively, the pattern needs to be as small as possible. So what is the smallest number required to make a pattern? Three.

And there lies its power. In its many forms, the Rule of Three, at heart, utilises simple three-element patterns to communicate complex ideas effectively.

The pattern works because it is short. Memorable. Powerful. That's why the Rule of Three is so pervasive throughout history:

In physics – Newton's three rules of motion.

In music – musical triads: the three-note building blocks of musical harmony.

In religion – the concept of the triple deity, common throughout world mythology, such as the holy trinity.

In art and photography – principles of composition, such as the rule of thirds.

Of course, as copywriters, we're primarily interested in writing and rhetoric. That's where the Rule of Three really comes into play:

Aristotle's three unities – dramatic unity of time, place and action.

The three dramatic conflicts – internal, relational and external.

The three-act structure – beginning, middle and end, used throughout drama and in the modern cinematic trilogy.

The list goes on. The Rule of Three has also been used to encapsulate some of history's most powerful ideas. For example: 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity'.

Some of the most powerful speakers in in history fill their speeches with Rule of Three techniques.

The IQDoodle website expands on this theme. Here is an excerpt from the website.

The human mind actually enjoys thinking in patterns. In fact, we naturally look for and create patterns every day, in everything we do.

An example of this idea is within our language where adjectives are often grouped together in threes in order to emphasize an idea.

The Rule of Three is relevant because the number three is the lowest figure that can be used to form patterns in our mind.

This is important, because: The first instance of something occurring is considered as chance; The second instance is considered a coincidence; The third instance is perceived as a pattern.

Good leaders sometimes communicate their team's goals by following the rule of three. They may also add three points under each heading. This makes it easier to remember than a list of nine points. Different leaders do this in different ways. Here is one framework they use.

The Team's Goals

*The three key goals
we want to achieve are:*

1) *To ...*

For example:

To ...

To ...

To ...

2) *To ...*

For example:

To ...

To ...

To ...

3) *To ...*

For example:

To ...

To ...

To ...

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow the rule of three 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 Rule Of Three Approach

The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of the rule of three approach may be:

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Successful Prototypes Approach

Successful Prototypes

There are many ways to help people, organisations and societies to develop. One approach is:

To follow certain principles and build a successful prototype;

To share the principles by producing success stories;

To encourage people to follow these principles to scale the success.



There are many ways to help people, organisations and societies to develop. One approach is to remember that:

People buy success rather than the theory of success.

Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to demonstrate success. When appropriate, this can involve aiming:

To follow certain principles and build successful prototypes;

To share the principles by producing success stories;

To encourage people to follow the principles in order to scale the success.

This is an approach I was taught early in my career. At the time a lot of the work involved change programmes. The real aim, however, was:
To help people, teams or organisations to achieve their picture of success.

Bearing this in mind, we aimed: a) to study what worked; b) to show what worked; c) to share what worked. It was then up to people to decide whether they wanted:

To follow these principles in their own ways;

To work towards achieving their picture of success.

It was important to show people what worked and the benefits. They could then decide if they wanted to follow the principles.

When appropriate, we then worked alongside these people. The aim was to encourage, educate and enable them to achieve their picture of success.

Imagine that you want to follow the building prototypes approach in your own way. You may be aiming to show how it is possible for people:

*To have an inspiring education ... To provide great service to customers ...
To solve a specific problem ... To build a positive organisation ... To do
certain projects that show how people in society to achieve success.*

Let's assume you have chosen to build a certain kind of prototype. It can then be time to move into action.

*You can follow certain principles
and build a successful prototype*

People who build successful prototypes often follow certain rules. Here are some you may want to bear in mind when doing your chosen work.

You can clarify the principles you want to follow to build the successful prototype

People who build prototypes often want to demonstrate that it is possible to follow certain principles to deliver success. Here are some examples.

An educator may aim to show it is possible to follow certain principles to help students to learn.

A business person may aim to show it is possible to follow certain principles to create a new form of banking.

A leader may aim to show it is possible to follow certain principles to build a successful company.

Imagine that you have an idea about the kind of prototype you want to build. You can also begin to focus on:

The specific principles you want to follow when building the prototype;

The specific ways these can be translated into action to deliver success;

The specific benefits of building such a successful prototype.

Let's assume that you have done some initial work on these themes. It will then be time to focus on the next step.

You can clarify the picture of success

Imagine that you aim to build a prototype. You may aim to build a certain kind of school, shop, service, product or achieve another goal. Bearing in mind the principles you aim to follow, it can be useful:

To clarify the things you can control in the situation;

To clarify the real results you want to achieve – the picture of success;

To clarify the actual words that you would like the various stakeholders to be saying about the successful prototype.

These were the steps taken by Kate, a customer service director, that I worked with many years ago. Hired by a famous financial organisation, she was given a clear remit. This involved aiming:

To create the new kind of call centre on a green field site;

To employ people who had a good customer service ethic;

To create a positive environment in which they could do superb work;

To build a reputation for great customer service whilst also hitting its financial targets;

To create a model that could be followed by other parts of the business and enable the organisation to achieve ongoing success.

Imagine that you have clarified the results you want to achieve by building the successful prototype. It can then be useful to focus on the following step.

*You can do your best to
set things up to succeed*

Sometimes this it is relatively easy to take this step. Looking at the work done by Kate, for example, she had the following advantages:

She was hired to create the call centre and was given the required backing;

She made clear contracts with the key stakeholders about the results to achieve – the picture of success;

She had the authority to do what was required to deliver success.

Sometimes this process can be more challenging. Bearing this in mind, let's look at another approach to setting things up to succeed.

Imagine that you want to build a prototype to demonstrate a new way of working. This may aim to provide wins for the company, wins for the customers and wins for the colleagues. Let's explore how to make this happen.

You can start by getting backing from the key stakeholders. It will be important:

To show how the approach will benefit the company;

To make clear contracts about the agreed picture of success;

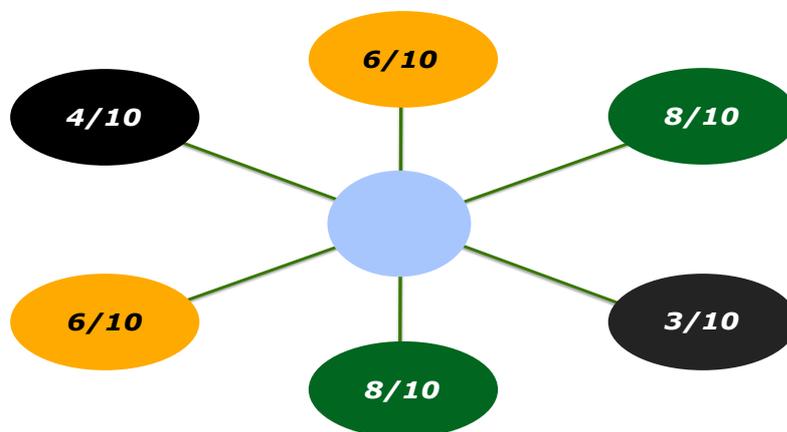
To set things up to increase the chances of delivering success.

This final point is crucial. Imagine you work for a global business. Looking around the organisation, identify where you would stand a good chance of building a successful prototype.

This could be a green field site, team, department or country where there is fertile ground. Make sure the rating is at least a 7+/10 chance of success. You can then focus on this particular area and do everything possible to set things up to succeed.

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.



Let's assume that you have gone through these steps. It will then be time to move on to the next stage.

You can build the successful prototype

You can do your best to build the successful prototype. Much will depend, of course, on the type of work you are doing. Looking at my own work, I have cooperated with people who have aimed:

To create a successful therapy programme ... To develop a wellbeing programme inside a company ... To build a superb call centre ... To build a pacesetting digital company ... To build many other kinds of prototypes.

You will build the prototype in your own way. Bearing this in mind, however, you may want to consider some of the following steps. You can aim:

To implement the right strategy with the right people in the right way;

To get some early wins, encourage people on the journey and do superb work;

To find solutions to challenges and do your best to deliver the desired picture of success.

Kate took these steps when creating the call centre. She communicated the call centre's purpose, principles and picture of success. She then recruited people who loved helping customers. They were positive, professional and problem solvers.

Kate made clear contracts with people about their best contributions towards achieving the goals. She then managed by outcomes rather than by tasks. She kept people informed about the progress being made.

Gathering the teams together every month, she encouraged them to focus on:

The Picture Of Success. The specific results we are aiming to deliver are:

*

*

*

Doing Well. The specific things that we are doing well – and how we can do more of these things – to deliver the results are:

*

*

*

Can Do Better. The specific things we can do better – and how – to deliver the results are:

*

*

*

Imagine that you have built a successful prototype. Some people finish at this point but others go further. Let's explore this next possible step.

You can share the principles by producing success stories

Great workers often pass on their knowledge to other people. They do this in education, medicine, science and many other fields. They aim to share what worked and what can be improved in the future.

Imagine that you want to do this in your own way. There are many ways to produce success stories. You may do this by writing an article, creating a video or using another media. Here is one approach.

Success Stories

You can produce a success story that highlights the principles that people followed to build the successful prototype. One approach is to describe:

- The specific situation where people built the successful prototype and the specific results that were delivered;*
- The specific principles that people followed - and how they translated these into action – to deliver success;*
- The specific things that went well and what could be improved to follow these principles and deliver success in the future.*

There are several points to bear in mind when producing such a story. But you can cover these in your own way.

First, it is important to set the scene and give the context. You may have been tackling a challenge, creating a product or do another activity that could help the organisation to shape a positive future.

Second, to focus on the principles that people followed to deliver success. This helps to increase the likelihood of others following these principles in their own ways.

Third, to be humble. This involves giving other people the credit for doing the work. It also involves focusing on what went well and what could be improved in the future.

Imagine that you have produced such a success story. If appropriate, you may want to move on to the next stage.

You can encourage people to follow these principles to scale success

Many leaders will support the idea of building successful prototypes. Some then ask the following question:

"How can you scale the approach? How can you get people to learn from the prototypes and apply the ideas to deliver ongoing success?"

Great organisations are often principles driven rather than personality driven. They may be founded by people who have strong personalities but this can be hard to scale.

Great organisations encourage their employees to follow certain principles. People can then use their personalities to translate the principles into action, scale the work and deliver success.

Different organisations take this steps in different ways. Some follow the three waves approach. This involves going through the following stages.

The First Wave

This is to follow certain principles to build successful prototypes and produce success stories.

The Second Wave

This is to encourage motivated people who want to follow the principles and to enable them to deliver success.

The Third Wave

This is to make the principles mandatory and provide people with the support they need to deliver ongoing success.

Different people build different kinds of prototypes. Sometimes the lessons they provide are followed by other people in an organisation. Sometimes the lessons are put aside and not used.

Sometimes the lessons are picked up by other people in other places. They follow the rule that sometimes it is better to go second. Such people then apply the learning in their own ways to deliver success.

Let's return to your own work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the building successful prototypes 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 Successful Prototype Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Game Plan Approach



Good leaders often focus on providing clarity. They recognise that their people like to know there is a positive and practical plan for achieving certain goals.

Such leaders sometimes use the game plan approach. They explain to their people: a) the goals to achieve; b) the guidelines to follow; c) the steps people can take to do great work.

They then invite people to decide if they want to follow this approach. If so, they make clear contracts with people about their contributions towards achieving the goals.

Good leaders may take this approach when focusing on how the team can achieve certain goals. They clarify the strategies the team can follow to give itself the greatest chance of success.

They then do their due diligence. They clarify how to translate the strategies into action and also stress test these to manage any potential challenges. They then translate the strategies into a clear action plan.

Good leaders communicate the game plan to their people. They make sure it is believable and bring it to life by giving concrete examples that resonate with people.

Different leaders communicate the game plan in different ways. Some adapt the following framework in their own way. They gather people together and describe the following themes.



The Game Plan

*The specific things we can do to follow the guidelines
and do great work to do our best to achieve the goals.*

Goals

*The specific goals we want
to do our best to achieve are:*

* *To ...*

For example: To ... To ... To ...

* *To ...*

For example: To ... To ... To ...

* *To ...*

For example: To ... To ... To ...

Guidelines

*The specific guidelines we want
to follow to achieve the goals are:*

* *To ...*

For example: To ... To ... To ...

* *To ...*

For example: To ... To ... To ...

* *To ...*

For example: To ... To ... To ...

Great Work

The specific steps we want to take to do great work and do our best to achieve the goals are:

* *To ...*

For example: To ... To ... To ...

* *To ...*

For example: To ... To ... To ...

* *To ...*

For example: To ... To ... To ...

Good leaders aim to give people the big picture and show there is a practical plan for achieving positive results. They then make clear contracts with people about their best contributions towards achieving 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 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 Game Plan Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Happy Players Rather Than Hostage Players Approach



There are many models for leading teams. Good leaders often aim to have happy players rather than players who feel like hostages. One football coach described their approach in the following way.

"We recruit motivated people who want to be here. We then create a positive environment in which they can perform at their best.

"We also aim to help them to develop as people and as professionals. We want happy players rather than hostages. Sometimes this means they may move on and that is okay."

This is an approach followed by some leaders in football – such as managers and coaches - but it can be applied in many situations. Here is the framework they sometimes follow when meeting prospective players.

Good Leaders In Football

They meet the prospective player and go through the following steps. They aim to make this a conversation and a dialogue, however, rather than it just being one way.

- They tell the player what they like about their strengths and also the areas where they may be able to develop*
- They ask about the player's aspirations – both as a person and as a professional – and describe how they may be able to help them.*
- They explain the team's aims and show how the player can contribute towards achieving the aims.*
- They explain the professional deal – the club's responsibilities and the individual responsibilities in working towards the goals.*
- They ask the player to take time to reflect and decide if they want to come to the club – because they want happy players not hostages.*

As mentioned earlier, this is an approach that can be applied in other situations. Some organisations adapt it and put more emphasis on the candidate showing they are motivated to join the organisation.

Some send their culture handbook to the candidate before the interview. This describes the organisation's purpose and principles – together with examples to bring these to life. They then ask the candidate to do some prework. This involves inviting the person:

To give an example of how they have followed some of the principles at some point in their own life or work;

To describe how they would aim to follow the principles when making their contribution to the company.

Such organisations also explain how they will aim to help the successful candidate:

To build on their strengths and make their best contribution;

To encourage them to keep developing as people and as professionals;

To know what to expect by explaining the professional deal – the organisation's responsibilities and the individual's responsibilities in working towards the organisation's goals.

They believe it vital to be encouraging but also to be honest. The potentially successful candidate can then consider whether they are likely to be happy making a contribution to that kind of culture.

Imagine that you want to follow some elements of the happy players rather than hostages approach. Can you think of a situation where you may want to apply this in your own way?

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

The Happy Players Rather Than Hostage Players 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 then to follow this approach in my own way are:

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

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The Building People's Confidence Approach Rather Than The Bullying Approach



Positive people often take a certain approach to helping people to perform at their best. They may do this when acting as a friend, educator, coach, leader or in another role. They take:

The Building People's Confidence Approach

They aim to encourage people to build on what they can do and their core strengths. They then help the person to set clear goals, expand their competence and deliver concrete results. This approach helps the person to build their own confidence.

Negative people may take a different route. This may work in the short term but seldom helps people to produce long-term results. They take:

The Bullying Approach

They aim to intimidate people and tell them what they should do. They criticise people and highlight their shortcomings. Sometimes this can get short-term results but it can also create lots of collateral damage.

Helping People To Build Their Confidence.

Imagine that you are in a situation where you aim to help a person to build their confidence. Before starting out, there are a few points that are worth underlining.

You can do your best to help a person but they must also play their part in taking this step. It can also be important to encourage the person:

To build on their strengths;

To set stimulating goals;

To ensure that, providing they do their best, they have a chance of achieving success.

Imagine that you have taken these things into account. You can then help the person by focusing on the following themes.

Clarity

The first step is to establish clarity about what the person wants to achieve. If appropriate, you can explore the following themes with them.

"As you know, we can work on any goals you want to achieve. We can focus on your short, medium or long-term aims.

"We can also look at any strategies, skills or other things you want to learn. It would be good to put these in 'how to ...' terms. For example:

"How to shape my career? How to build on my strengths? How to manage specific challenges? How to develop a particular skill? How to maintain my wellbeing? How to work towards my life goals? Or any other topics.

"Bearing these things in mind, what may be the topics or goals you want to explore?"

Imagine that the person has described some themes. It will then useful to explore the following themes with them.

"What is the first goal you want to explore? For example: How to ...?"

"Looking at this topic, can you give me some more background? What are the reasons you would like to explore this topic? Can you give some specific examples?"

"Let's move on to clarity. As far as I understand it, the goal you want to focus on is: How to ...? Is that right?"

"Looking at this goal, what are the real results you want to achieve? What is the picture of success? What will be happening that will show you have achieved the goal? What will be the benefits of achieving this goal?"

Imagine that the person has settled on their goal. As mentioned earlier, it is important:

To make sure that – providing they put in the effort – they have a chose of achieving the goal;

To make sure they can see the benefits of achieving the goal;

To make sure that their motivation to do the work involved in achieving the goal is at least 8+/10.

Let's assume you have explored these themes. It can then be time to move on to the next step.

Competence

The second step involves helping the person to develop the competence required to achieve the goal. There are many models for making this happen. One approach is to focus on the following theme.

Strengths

What are the person's strengths? What is their successful style of working? How can they build on their strengths and, if appropriate, follow their successful style to work toward the goal?

What are the person's potential weaknesses that may affect their ability to achieve the goal? What can they do to add to their repertoire or compensate for their weaknesses to help them achieve the goal?

Strategies

What are the key strategies the person can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success? How can they translate these strategies into action? How can they anticipate and manage any potential challenges?

Skills

What are the skills they may need to add to achieve the goal? What are the chances of them being able to develop these skills? What can they do to, if necessary, buy-in or find other ways to add these skills?

Imagine that you have explored these themes with the person. Bearing in mind their strengths, it will then be important to encourage them:

To focus on the key strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success;

To translate these into a clear action plan – including how to get some quick successes;

To rehearse following their action plan for achieving the goal;

Imagine the person has clarified the plan and moved into action. They may then work by themselves to learn their chosen skill or work towards their specific goal.

At a certain point, however, it may be good for them to give you an update. This can also provide a chance to add to their repertoire.

How to make this happen? One approach to invite them to work through the following framework.

My Development

*The Specific Goal I
Want To Achieve Is:*

* *To ...*

The Specific Things That Are Going Well

The specific things that are going well or that I am doing well as I work towards the goal are:

*

*

*

The specific steps I can take to keep doing these are:

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*

*

The Specific Things That Can Be Improved

The specific things that can be improved are:

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*

The specific steps I can take to improve these things are:

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*

The Specific Help

The specific kinds of help I would like – such as ideas, knowledge and tools – to help me to achieve the goals are:

*

*

*

Imagine the person has followed this framework and done a reality check regarding their development. You can then add any ideas or practical tools that will help them to achieve their goals.

Some individuals may have the ability to cover all the issues when doing this exercise. This can make it easier to pass on knowledge they can use to achieve their goals.

There may come a time, however, when you may move into coaching mode to help them develop. The aim will be to help them to expand their competence and deliver consistently high standards.

You will have your own way of helping a person to take this step. If appropriate, here is one framework that can be used.

Good Coaches

They try to pass on knowledge in a way that helps a person to achieve their goals.

This often involves watching the person in action or seeing a piece of their work. It then involves focusing the following themes.

- *What are the person's goals? What are real results they want to achieve? What will be the benefits of achieving these goals? 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 in the future and how?*
- *What are the positive models and practical tools that I can pass on to help them? What are the key messages I want to give them? How can I pass on this knowledge in a way they can accept and use to achieve their goals?*

Concrete Results

Many individuals ask: "How can I build my self-confidence?" There are many possible answers to this question. One is that:

Self-confidence is often an outcome of achieving success.

Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to help a person: a) to build on their strengths; b) to set a specific goal; c) to achieve success. They can then develop the confidence to set more stretching goals in the future.

What happens if the person does not reach their goal? One approach is to invite them to learn from the experiences. As one leader put it:

"Sometimes we do great work and reach the goal. Sometimes we don't reach the goal and aim to grow. We look at what we did well and what we could do better in the future.

"Sometimes we do great work, reach the goal and also keep growing. We build on the success by focusing on how we can improve. We are then more likely to continue to do great work."

People can often learn from not reaching the goals but they need to do this with a positive mindset. They can then focus on how they can keep doing what worked and also add to their repertoire.

There are many ways to help a person to reach their goals. One approach is to invite them to recall a time when they finished something successfully. What did they do right then? How can they follow these principles – plus maybe add other skills – to reach their present goal?

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to help a person to build their confidence? 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 Building People's Confidence 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 then 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 Managing Promotion Requests Approach

Promotion Requests

Imagine you are a manager. At some point you may have a team member who wants to know what they need to do to get promotion. If appropriate, you may aim:

- To describe the specific things that a person would need to do to be considered for such a role;*
- To invite the person to reflect and decide if they would like to work toward doing those things;*
- To underline those things are necessary to be considered for a role rather than guaranteeing they would get it.*

Imagine you are a manager and a team member is pressing you about their promotion prospects. The person may have certain strengths that mean they are a good candidate for a role. There may be other times when a person needs to up their game.

When appropriate, one approach is to describe what a person needs to do in order to be considered for a particular role. This does not, of course, guarantee they will get the role.

One manager I worked with used this approach after feeling under pressure from a particularly challenging team member. They explained this in the following way.

"The person is ambitious and at time does good work. But they can also cause problems. They are not good at managing upwards and they sometimes upset their colleagues.

"They keep asking about when they can get promoted. Sometimes they refer to how their friends in the same age group are getting promoted in other companies.

"The company is going through challenging times and I can't guarantee that anybody will get promoted. In the past I have also been caught out by people thinking they will get promotion if they achieve certain things."

Bearing these things in mind, we focused on the kind of script the manager could use to in the situation. Whilst the manager adapted this in their own way, here are the main messages they gave to the person.

"It is good that you are ambitious. In order to be considered for such a position, however, a person would need to do the following things.

"First, they would be good at managing their key stakeholders in the company – such as their manager and other senior managers. These stakeholders would be saying some of the following things.

'The person demonstrates strategic thinking. They see things from the company's point of view rather than just their own. They also proactively keep us informed about their progress towards achieving their part of the company's goals.'

"Second, they would be good at helping their customers to achieve success. These customers would be saying some of the following things.

'The person acts as a true partner and understands our business goals. They provide great service and practical help that enables us to achieve success.'

"Third, they would be well regarded by their colleagues in the company. These colleagues would be saying some of the following things.

'The person is positive and encourages other people in the company. They are good at helping their colleagues and the whole team to achieve success.'

"Let me know if you would like to work towards demonstrating some of these things. This would increase the chances of at some point being considered for such a role."

This is an approach that aims to give a person clear messages about what they need to do to be considered for promotion. There can be several outcomes.

The person reflects and decides to work towards demonstrating these qualities.

If appropriate, the manager and others can help them to work towards achieving these aims. As mentioned, however, this does not guarantee they will get promotion.

The person may choose not to work towards demonstrating these qualities.

It may well be that they choose to make a good contribution in their present role. If they do not perform, however, then there may be the need for another type of conversation.

Another Use Of The 'In Order To Be Considered' Approach

One person applied elements of this approach in reverse. They did this when exploring what they would need to do to be considered for promotion.

At the time they were delivering great work and also doing elements of a more senior role. They wanted to explore the future possibilities.

At the same time, they did not want to back their boss into a corner. Bearing this in mind, they said something along the following lines.

"Looking ahead, I wonder if at some point we could have a chat about my future contribution to the company. As you know, I want to continue to contribute to help us to achieve success.

"Whilst you may not be able to answer, I would like to explore the specific things I need to do to be considered for a particular role in the future.

"Again, this may not be the opportune time. But, if possible, I would like to explore this sometime in the future."

Different people would obviously position such a conversation in different ways. If possible, however, the aim would be to get some indication of the desired behaviours but not to back the boss into a corner.

Let's return to your own work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific situation where you may want to use elements of the managing promotion requests approach?

What may be the specific situation? How can you follow this approach in your own way in the situation? 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.

Managing Promotion Requests

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 then to follow this approach in my own way are:

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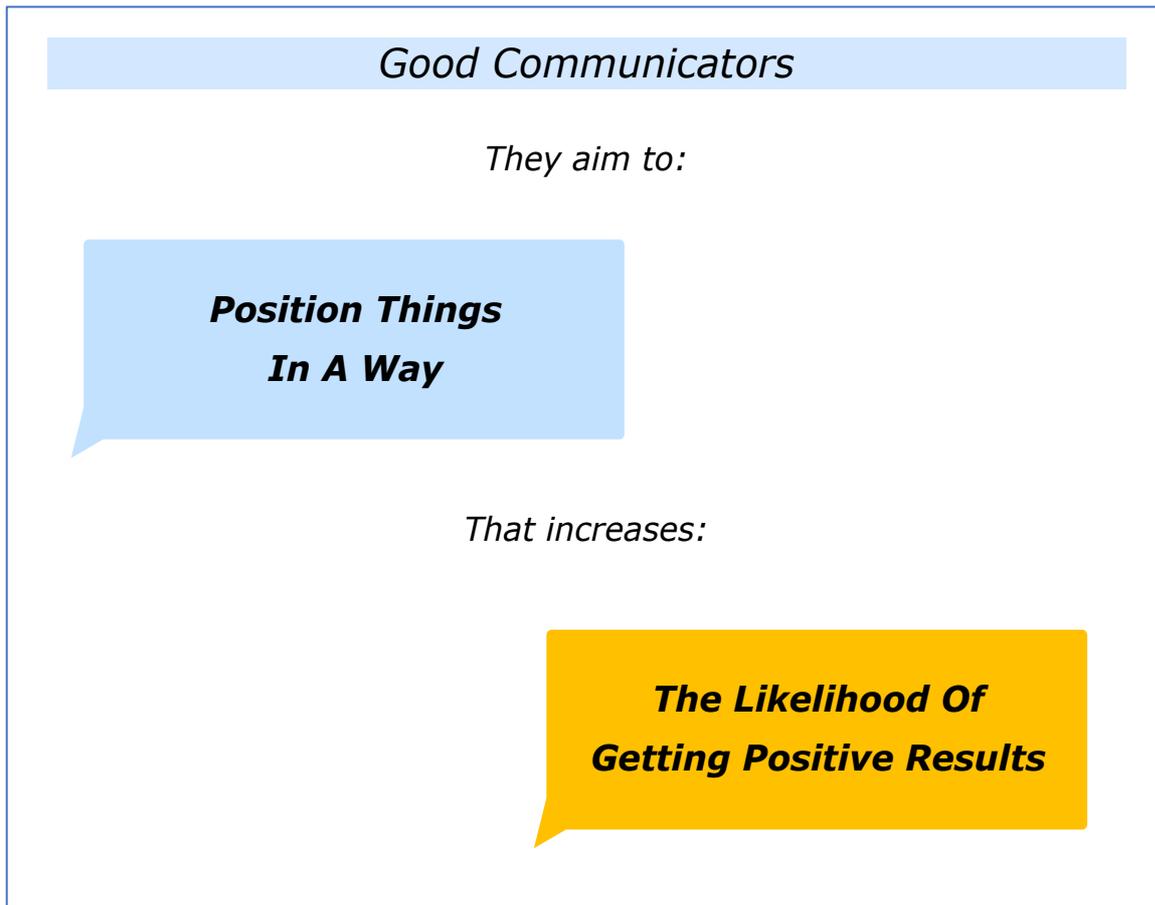
The specific things that may happen as a result may be:

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The Positioning Things To Get Positive Results Approach



Good communicators position their messages in a way that increases the chances of getting positive results. They may aim to do this when communicating with another person, a group of people or a specific target audience.

There are many books written on how to position an idea, service or product in ways that are attractive to certain people. Some of these ideas can also be applied to communicating and connecting with people in many settings.

Different communicators follow different models for making this happen. One approach is for them to explore the following themes.

The People

Who are the people that I want to reach? What is happening in their world? What may be the specific challenges they face? What may be their personal or professional goals? What may be their pictures of success?

The Positive Results

What may be the idea, service or product that I want to communicate to these people? What may be the benefits for them if they adopt the idea, service or product?

What may the key messages I therefore want to give people? What are the positive results I want to achieve? What would I like them to be saying, feeling, thinking or doing after the communication?

The Positioning

How can I prepare the ground properly before communicating with the people? How can I set things up to succeed? How can I make sure the messages connect with the audience? How can I bring the ideas to life? How can I show people the positive benefits?

Let's revisit what I want to do. What are the key messages I want to give to people? How can I communicate these in a way that people can accept and use to achieve their goals? What else can I do to increase the likelihood of achieving the desired positive results?

Good communicators aim to connect with their audience. Some say that: "Positioning is all." This is not completely the case. It is also vital to have a message that resonates with the audience and achieves the desired positive results.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the positioning 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 Positioning Things To Get Positive Results Approach

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

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

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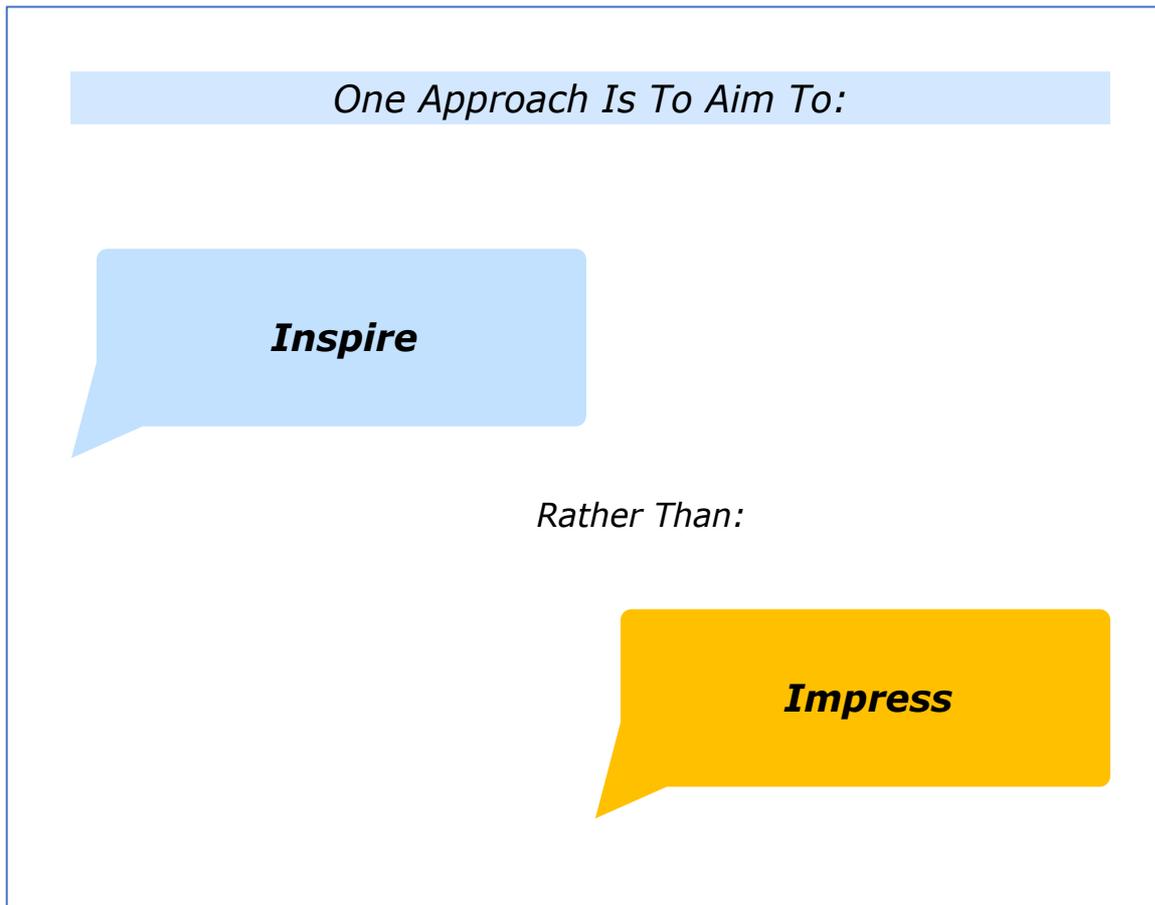
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Aiming To Inspire Rather Than Impress Approach



There are many ways to do fine work. One approach is to aim to inspire other people rather than to impress. This can have an interesting side-effect. Aiming to inspire people – rather than trying to impress – can sometimes be impressive. Let's explore how it can work in practice.

Going For An Interview

Person A was preparing to attend an interview for a role in a famous football club. He called me before the session and described their approach to the interview. He expressed this in the following way.

"I want to really impress them. As you know, I have a good CV and also post a lot on social media. I want to stand out from the other candidates."

This is a route taken by many people who apply for jobs. They focus on self-promotion and make the interview about them as an individual. The interviewers, however, are asking:

"What are you going to do for us? What are you going to help us to achieve success?"

After some discussion. Person A switched his approach and aimed to inspire the interviewers. He aimed:

To show he understood the club's DNA – the principles it wanted to follow – and its picture of success;

To show how he would use his strengths to help the club to achieve success;

To show how he would pass on knowledge that would enable people in the club to achieve sustainable success.

The interview went well. He described what happened during the session in the following way.

"The session was more like a conversation. I started by describing what I saw as the Club's DNA – its strengths and when it had performed at its best.

"I then described how I would like to help the club to follow these principles and deliver future success. This involved giving specific examples of how I would do this in practice.

"At this point the interviewers began asking questions. They wanted to know what I do would in specific situations. This was challenging but they seemed happy with the answers.

"This was when the interview turned into more of a conversation and I never got to finish my slide presentation. Two days later they called to say I had got the job."

Such an approach is not guaranteed to work, of course, because different interviewers may be looking for different things. On this occasion it did succeed and led the Person A joining the club.

Giving A Keynote Speech

Person B was due to give a keynote speech to conference. She described her approach to this in the following way.

"I sometimes get nervous speaking to audiences in live situations. Maybe it is because I am an introvert, but I actually prefer to give presentations over the web.

"Even though I am sure of my subject, I can get distracted by focusing on the audience reactions. Maybe it is my desire to not to disappoint people, but I can get thrown off-course by the body language of some people.

"Giving the session virtually means I can concentrate on the key messages I want to give. This is preferable to trying to impress people when I am on stage."

We explored how she could feel at ease when speaking to the conference audience. Bearing in mind her strengths, we aimed:

To clarify what was happening in the audience's world – such as their challenges and goals;

To clarify the knowledge that she could share that would help people to succeed;

To clarify how she could share this knowledge in a way in which she would feel at ease.

She could share knowledge in ways that played to her strengths. She could also bring the ideas to life by giving lots of examples. It was about helping people to succeed. It was not about self-promotion.

She did the presentation and reported that: a) she felt comfortable sharing the ideas in this way; b) several sought her out afterwards to explore the ideas and ask if they could stay in touch.

There are many ways to do fine work. As described here, one approach is to follow the principle that:

It is about aiming to inspire other people, it is not about trying to impress. It is about them, it is not about you.

It is about helping people to succeed and, when appropriate, trying to get a win-win. It is not about becoming a victim.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to try to inspire people? This could be in your personal or professional life.

You may want to do this when encouraging a person, writing an article, giving a presentation or in another situation. How can you follow this approach 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.

The Aiming To Inspire Rather Than Impress 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 then to follow this approach in my own way are:

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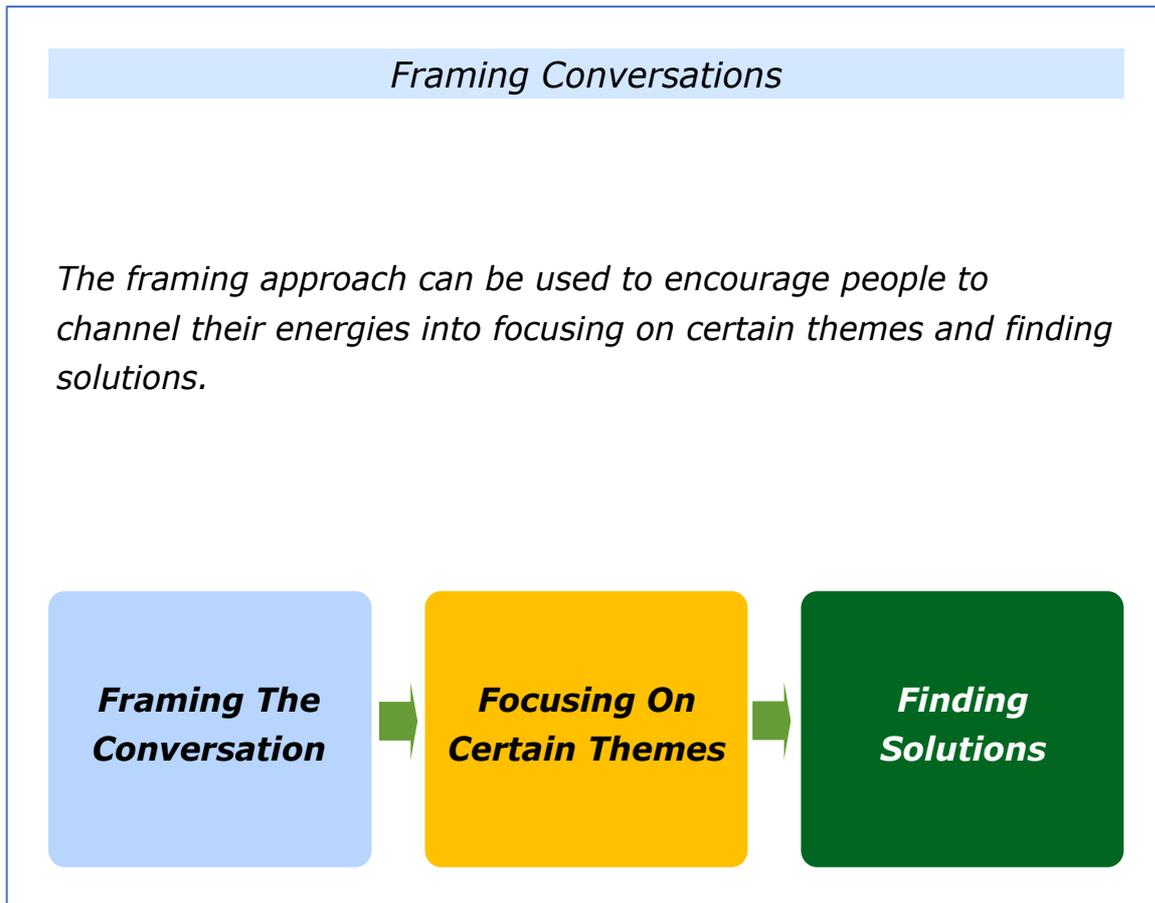
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Framing Conversations Approach



This approach involves setting the framework for focusing on certain themes in a conversation. It encourages people to channel their energies in a certain direction and achieve certain results. When appropriate, it can be used to encourage them to find solutions.

The approach is sometimes used by leaders, facilitators and others who bring people together explore specific topics. They recognise that the way they frame the conversation can have a profound on the process and the outcome.

Let's look at one huge issue in the UK – Brexit. The way this controversial topic has been framed as evolved since the referendum.

Before the June 2016 vote many people framed the conversation in terms of sovereignty. Rightly or wrongly, it focused on the UK having the right to control its own economy and laws.

During the subsequent years the framework for the conversation began to change. Professor Anand Menon pointed out that from 2022 onwards it focused more on economic issues. The conversation began to focus on whether the UK was financially better or worse off since leaving the EU.

The framework for each of these discussions produced different kinds of responses. Ardent Brexiteers maintained that Brexit not been implemented properly. Many other people began to look at the economic case for having better relations with the EU.

*Frameworks Can Encourage People To
Channel Their Energy In A Certain Way*

The frameworks approach is one I was introduced to early in my work with people. Different conversations ensued if you asked, for example:

"What are your personal goals?" rather than "What are your problems?"

"When have overcome challenges successfully?" rather than "When have you failed?"

"How can we try to find – as far as possible – win-win solutions?" rather than "Who is to blame?"

The framework you use in a conversation can have a profound effect on the way people channel their energy. It can encourage them to focus on certain topics and, when appropriate, achieve certain results.

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 frameworks approach?

What may be the specific situation? What may be the framework you want to use? How can you use this in a way that, if appropriate, increases the likelihood of getting certain results?

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

Framing Conversations

The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of the framing conversations approach may be:

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

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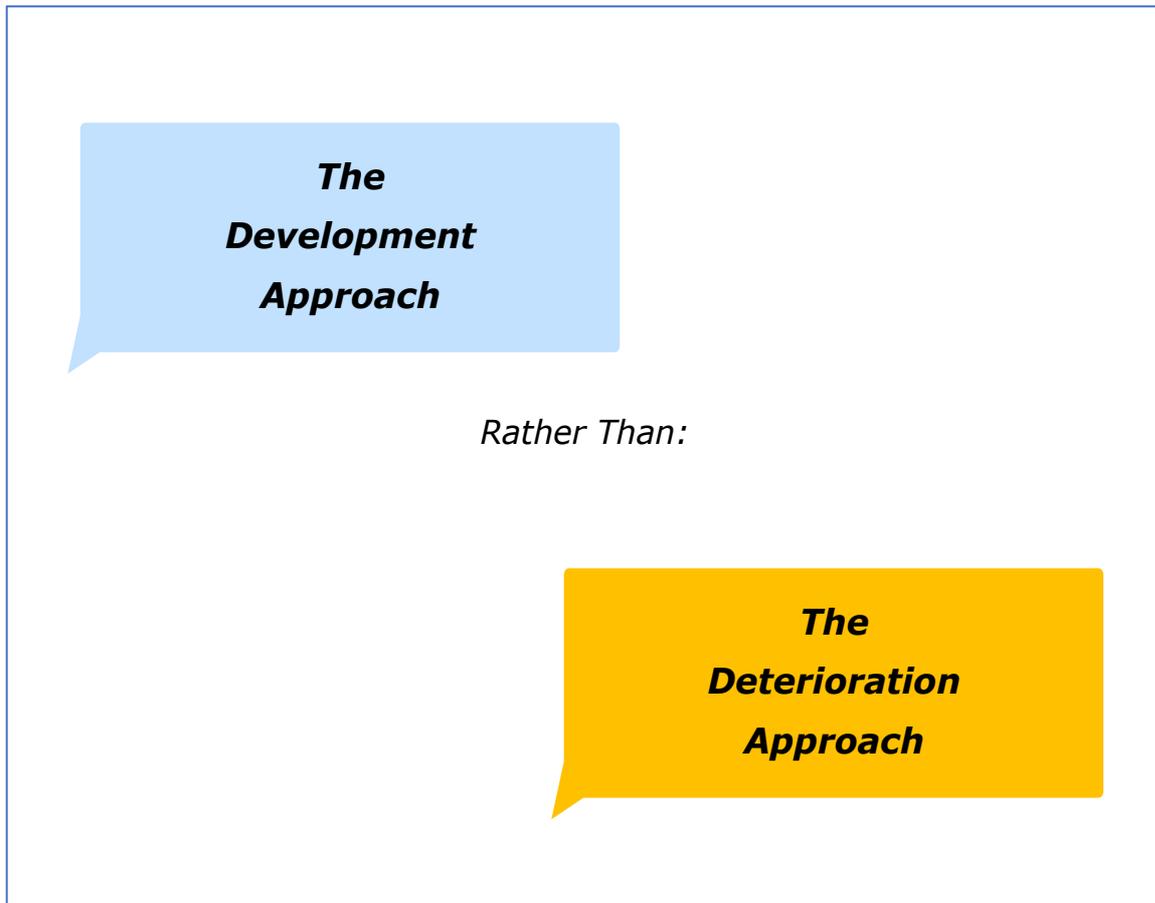
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Development Approach Rather Than The Deterioration Approach



There are many ways to live life. Some people choose to follow the development approach rather than the deterioration approach. They aim to keep developing as people and as professionals.

Great workers who follow this route recognise that some things – such as their bodies – are bound to deteriorate. They aim to develop other parts of their personality, however, to compensate for these things.

Great organisations also aim to keep developing. They focus on maintaining stability but also improving their staff, service and systems to achieve ongoing success. Standing still can lead to deterioration.

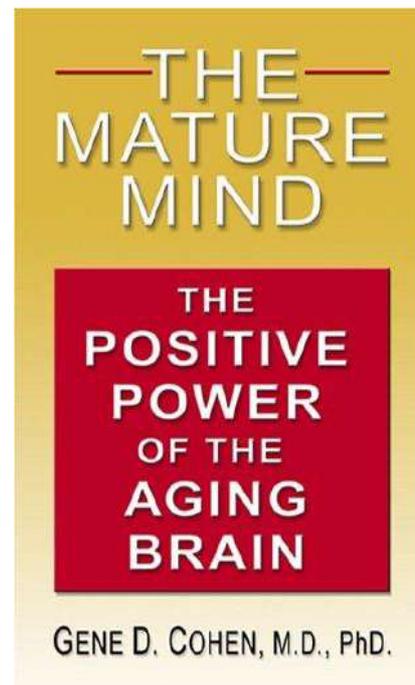
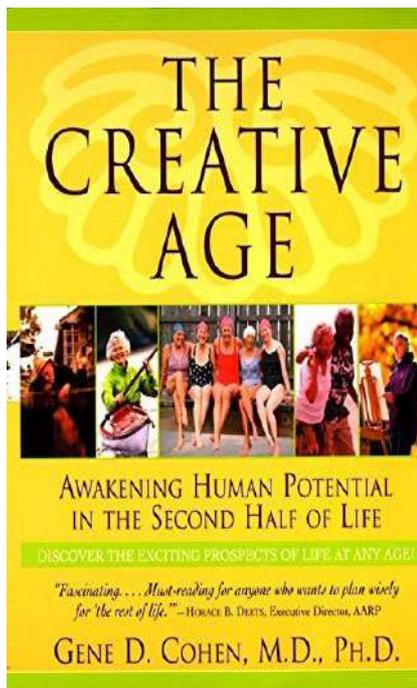
Different people choose to develop in different ways. Maggie Smith and Judi Dench, for example, continued to develop as actresses and add to

their repertoires. J.R.R. Tolkien, A.S. Neil – the educator – and Buckminster Fuller are examples of people who continued to explore, share ideas and leave a positive legacy.

Every person has passions that they can translate into doing stimulating projects. These can keep them alive and alert. If appropriate, they can also pass on knowledge that can help people or the planet.

Gene Cohen focused on how people continue to be creative in their later years. He was the founding director of the Center on Aging, Health & Humanities at George Washington University.

Gene also published many books and articles on the topic. These included *The Creative Age* and *The Mature Mind*. Below is an excerpt from a presentation he made in 2000.



The definition I use for creativity in aging is deceptively simple. It is: Bringing something into existence that is valued.

Two aspects of creativity are important to appreciate. One is to look at creativity with a capital "C". This is the typical way we look at it, the type of creativity that can influence the course of a community or culture.

Equally important is creativity with a little "c". These are the creative acts that can change the course for individuals or their families. It is to bring something new into existence in terms of how they deal with their jobs, a hobby, a new career, interpersonal relationships, family life, and community and volunteer work. These are ripe opportunities for creativity with a little "c."

Building on Howard Gardener's ideas of multiple intelligences involves the importance of looking at diverse forms of creativity. These are not just in the artistic realm, but also in the social realm.

Across the history of civilization, older people have been keepers of the culture and shown remarkable social creativity. We see this in many roles today — older university professors, judges, and diplomats — where age and the accumulation of wisdom, emotion, and intelligence is important.

Here are excerpts from a review of Gene's book *The Mature Mind*. This is from the website *Changing Minds*.

Tradition says that as you get older, you gradually lose your marbles as dottiness and dementia take over from the acuity of younger days.

In this cogent book, Gene Cohen, director of the Center on Aging, Health and Humanities at George Washington University, shows that this is just another myth. Quite the reverse, as we get older we actually get better at thinking.

The rule of the mind is the same as with the body: use it or lose it. If you keep your mind active then it will reward you by staying active and increasing in capability. This can be done by focusing on the following themes.

Staying Alert

Gene Cohen believes it is vital to stay alert. This can be done through focusing on the following themes.

- *Stimulation - This can be done through doing physical, mental or other activities.*
- *Seeking New Challenges - This can be done through continuing to explore, learn and develop.*
- *Success – This can be done through setting new goals, improving mastery and achieving success.*

Improved Thinking

George Cohen describes developmental intelligence in terms of three forms of thinking that actually improve with age.

- *Relativistic thinking – This is where understanding is based on a synthesized combination of disparate views. Absolute truth is abandoned in favor of more realistic relative truths.*
- *Dualist thinking – This is where contradictions in opposing views are uncovered and opposites are held in mind at the same time without judgment. In this way, opposing views can both be accepted as valid.*
- *Systematic Thinking - This is what allows the person to see the forest as well as the trees, helicoptering up to understand the bigger picture. The thinker is thus not trapped in personal and petty issues.*

Age Stages

Gene Cohen sees the common final old age stage in four phases:

- *Re-evaluation - This is from mid-thirties to mid-sixties, where we realize our mortality and reconsider our lives.*
- *Liberation - This is from mid-fifties to mid-seventies, where the question is 'If not now, when?' as people experiment with new ways.*
- *Summing Up - This is from late sixties through eighties, where people seek to share, give something back and complete unfinished business.*
- *Encore - This is from late seventies onwards, where major life themes are re-stated and re-affirmed.*

There are many ways to live life. As was mentioned earlier, some people aim to follow the development approach. They also try to find ways to compensate for any deterioration.

Let's return to your own life. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific activity where you may want to follow elements of the development 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 Development Approach

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

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

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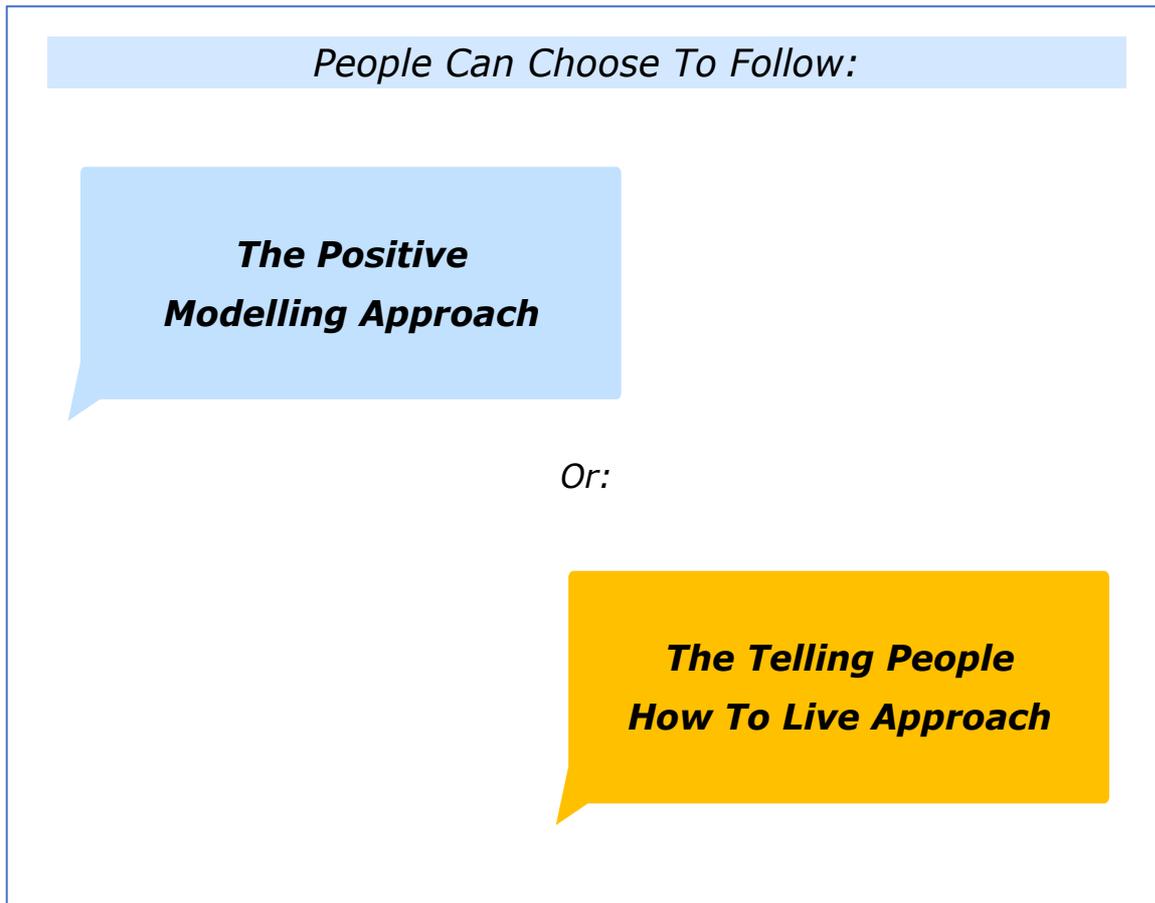
The specific benefits of follow this approach may be:

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The Positive Modelling Approach Rather Than The Telling People How To Live Approach



Some people follow the positive modelling approach in life. They aim to follow their life philosophy and translate their principles into action.

Such people have strong beliefs but believe it is important to start by demonstrating these in their own lives and work. They may then act as positive models for other people.

Some people choose another route. They spend a lot of time telling other people how to live. Some may promote certain views but not demonstrate these in their own lives.

The following section looks at people who tried to follow the positive modelling approach. Sometimes they aimed to share this approach but they did this in a humble way.

Positive Modelling In Action

Henry Pluckrose was a remarkable teacher who I met in the 1970s. Together with a dedicated staff, he made Prior Weston Primary School one that attracted attention around the world. The school helped children to learn the basic skills and also build on their strengths.

Henry was invited to share the approach with educators in many countries. A modest person, he was generous with his ideas. Frequently he took along examples of the superb work done by the children. At the same time, however, he gave people the following messages.

"This is one approach to education. Take the ideas and use them in your own way. It is important that you follow your approach to helping children to develop."

Jo Berry and Patrick Magee now pass on models that people can use to find solutions to conflicts. Sir Anthony Berry, Jo's father, was killed in the 1984 Brighton Bombing. The bomb was planted by Patrick. Jo described how she chose to react to the situation.

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.

Sixteen years elapsed and in 2000 Jo chose to meet Patrick. He had been released from prison as part of the Good Friday Agreement. The meeting was nervous but they began to see each other as human beings. They began to build on what they had in common and to work together.

Jo then created an organisation called Building Bridges For Peace. As part of the work, she and Patrick visited areas where people were in conflict. Whilst sharing their approach, they explained that each situation was unique. People could apply the ideas in their own ways to build peace.

Penny Brohn created a remarkable legacy. She helped to give birth to The Bristol Cancer Help Centre. Its work has helped many people to develop their inner strength and the quality of their lives.

Penny discovered a cancerous lump on her left breast in the autumn of 1979. Doctors advised an immediate mastectomy, but she felt that full recovery depended on more than amputating her breast.

This led to her working with Pat Pilkington, Canon Chris Pilkington and Alec Forbes, a physician. They combined their talents to open the Bristol Centre in 1980.

Now called Penny Brohn Cancer Care, it provides a complementary approach to helping people with cancer. Far from ruling out conventional medicine, the staff encourage people to participate in choosing their own particular treatment.

The Centre offers a positive model in health care. Whilst inviting patients to adopt a healthy lifestyle, diet and attitude, it does not rule out the benefits of radiotherapy and chemotherapy. Penny described this in the following way.

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 Ajax Football Club in Amsterdam has developed a positive model for running its academy. The approach began in the 1970s. Since then it has shared its model with many clubs around the world.

This has led to it setting up the Ajax Coaching Academy. Here is an introduction from the club's website.

We strongly believe that the youth academy should be the foundation of every club.

Therefore, we have founded the Ajax Coaching Academy, to share the Ajax philosophy with you: clubs, coaches and players from all over the

world.

We give talent a chance to flourish, and always strive to be the best. We partner with clubs all over the world who recognise and share our values, to do just that.

Depending on your specific needs, we offer tailor-made programmes. We will share our philosophy and our expertise, implemented by our Ajax staff.

Finland has one of the best educational systems in the world. The approach is enjoyed by children, parents and employers. Children start school at the age of seven and many go on to graduate from higher education.

The nation's students score highly on the Programme for International Student Assessment tests. This is an OECD worldwide study in nearly 80 nations of 15-year-old students' scholastic performance in mathematics, science and reading.

Finland's educators believe in encouraging lifelong learning, however, and see the high scores as a by-product. Here is an excerpt from The Smithsonian Magazine that gives a flavour of the approach.

Ninety-three percent of Finns graduate from academic or vocational high schools, 17.5 percentage points higher than the United States, and 66 percent go on to higher education, the highest rate in the European Union.

Yet Finland spends about 30 percent less per student than the United States.

Still, there is a distinct absence of chest-thumping among the famously reticent Finns. They are eager to celebrate their recent world hockey championship, but PISA scores, not so much.

"We prepare children to learn how to learn, not how to take a test," said Pasi Sahlberg, a former math and physics teacher who is now in Finland's Ministry of Education and Culture.

Finland is happy to share its positive model of education. But it does not tell others how to run their own systems.

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 positive modelling approach? How can you do this in your own way?

What may be the kind of model you want to create? It could be in education, health, therapy, sport, business or another field. How can you do your best to create the positive model? If appropriate, how can you then share it with other people?

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

The Positive Modelling Approach

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

*

The specific things I can do then 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 People Buy Success Rather Than Change Approach

People Buy Success Rather Than Change

This is an approach that enables people to achieve success. It is to show the benefits of achieving a goal rather than focus on change. You can aim:

- To show people the potential options for going forwards and the benefits of achieving a certain picture of success;*
- To show people the principles they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of achieving the picture of success;*
- To invite people to decide if they want to follow these principles and, if so, to help them to achieve the picture of success.*

This is an approach that I have used many times with individuals, teams and organisations. It involves helping people to focus on the benefits of achieving a goal rather than saying they have to change.

So-called change programmes seldom work. They also run the risk of telling people: a) that what they have done so far in their lives has little value; b) that people will find it challenging to change.

Another approach is to encourage people to focus on the goals to achieve. The paradox is that, if people achieve their aims, sometimes others consider that people have changed.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach in your own way. You may aim to do this when working with an individual, team or organisation. If appropriate, you can aim:

To show people the potential options for going forwards and the benefits of achieving a certain picture of success;

To show people the principles they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of achieving the picture of success;

To invite people to decide if they want to follow these principles and, if so, to help them to achieve the picture of success.

The aim is to focus on the carrot – the benefits to achieve – rather than talk about the difficulty of change. People are then more likely to do their best to achieve the picture of success.

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

How could you encourage a person, team or organisation to clarify the benefits of achieving a goal? How could you help them to focus on the principles they could follow? If appropriate, how could you help them to achieve the benefits of achieving success?

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

The People Buy Success Rather Than Change Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Catching People Doing Something Right Approach

Catching People Doing Something Right

This is an approach that has often been used by encouragers. It is also now used in education, sports, business and other professions. It involves going through the following steps.

- *You can catch people doing something right;*

- *You can clarify the principles people followed to do something right;*

- *You can encourage people to follow these principles to keep doing things right.*

There are many ways to support people. One approach is to catch people doing something right. It is an approach that has been used by encouragers throughout the ages. It is now used more often in education, sports, business and other fields.

The approach involves aiming: a) to give specific examples of what the person did right; b) to clarify the principles they followed; c) to encourage them to follow these principles in the future.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach in your own way. Let's explore how you can translate this into action.

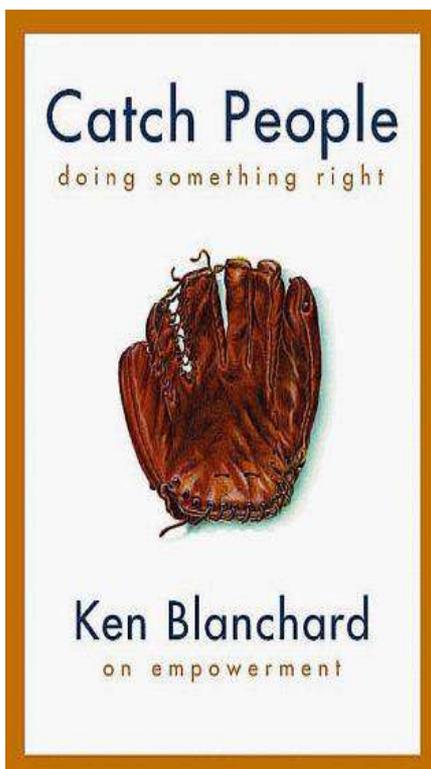
You can catch people doing something right

One of my mentors emphasised this theme when we met during the late 1960s. They expressed this in the following way.

"When looking at people, try to have positive eyes. Look for when they are doing things right. Anybody can tell you what people do wrong. The key is to look for what people do right."

"Try to focus on their specific actions – the specific things they do and say – to get the right results. It is then to encourage them to do more of these things in the future."

Ken Blanchard, the author of many books on leadership, underlined the value of this approach. He explained this in the following way.



Catching people doing something right is a powerful management concept to use with direct reports.

You can create, nurture, and repair relationships by catching people doing things right.

Give specific examples of the things they did right – such as what you saw them do and say - to make a positive impact.

The next time you see great performance from a team member, a colleague, or even your boss, let them know that you noticed.

You can clarify the principles people followed to do something right

Encouragers sometimes going deeper than highlighting when people do things right. They encourage people to focus on: a) the principles they followed; b) the specific things they did to translate these into action.

Why take this approach? Great workers and organisations are often principles driven. They keep following certain principles in order to do great work.

Some organisations are started by charismatic founders. They have strong personalities and inspire people to reach compelling goals. This approach works for a while but it is hard to scale.

Such organisations then need to become principles driven. They need to keep reminding people of the principles they can follow to do superb work and help the organisation to achieve success.

Different organisations do this in different ways. Some produce success stories that highlight when people do fine work. When doing so, they sometimes use the following framework.

The Success Story

The specific example of when a person or a team did superb work was:

*

The specific principles they followed – and how they translated these into action – were:

*

*

*

*The specific results
that were achieved were:*

*

*

*

*The specific ways we can follow
these principles in the future are:*

*

*

*

This final point highlights a key aspect of catching people doing something right. Let's explore this theme.

*You can encourage people to follow these
principles to continue doing things right*

Great workers keep following the principles that work. They may believe, for example, in aiming: a) to build on their strengths; b) to provide great service to customers; c) to help customers to achieve success.

Such workers keep following these principles. The ways they translate these into action, however, may develop over the years. Bearing this in mind, they keep asking themselves the following questions.

What are the principles we want to follow in our work? What are the reasons why we want to follow these principles? What are the benefits to the various stakeholders?

What are we doing right to follow these principles? How can we keep doing these things in the future? What can we do better and how?

What else can we do to perform superb work and help our customers to achieve success?

Great educators encourage people: a) to clarify the principles that work; b) to clarify how they can translate these into action in the future. People then have a framework they follow to achieve future success.

They also encourage people to keep doing reality checks to ensure that what they are doing is working. Why take this approach? This is because the principles for doing great work often remain the same. The ways these are applied, however, can evolve over the years.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the catching people doing something right approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

What may be the specific situation? How can you follow this approach 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.

Catching People Doing Something Right

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

*

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

*

*

*

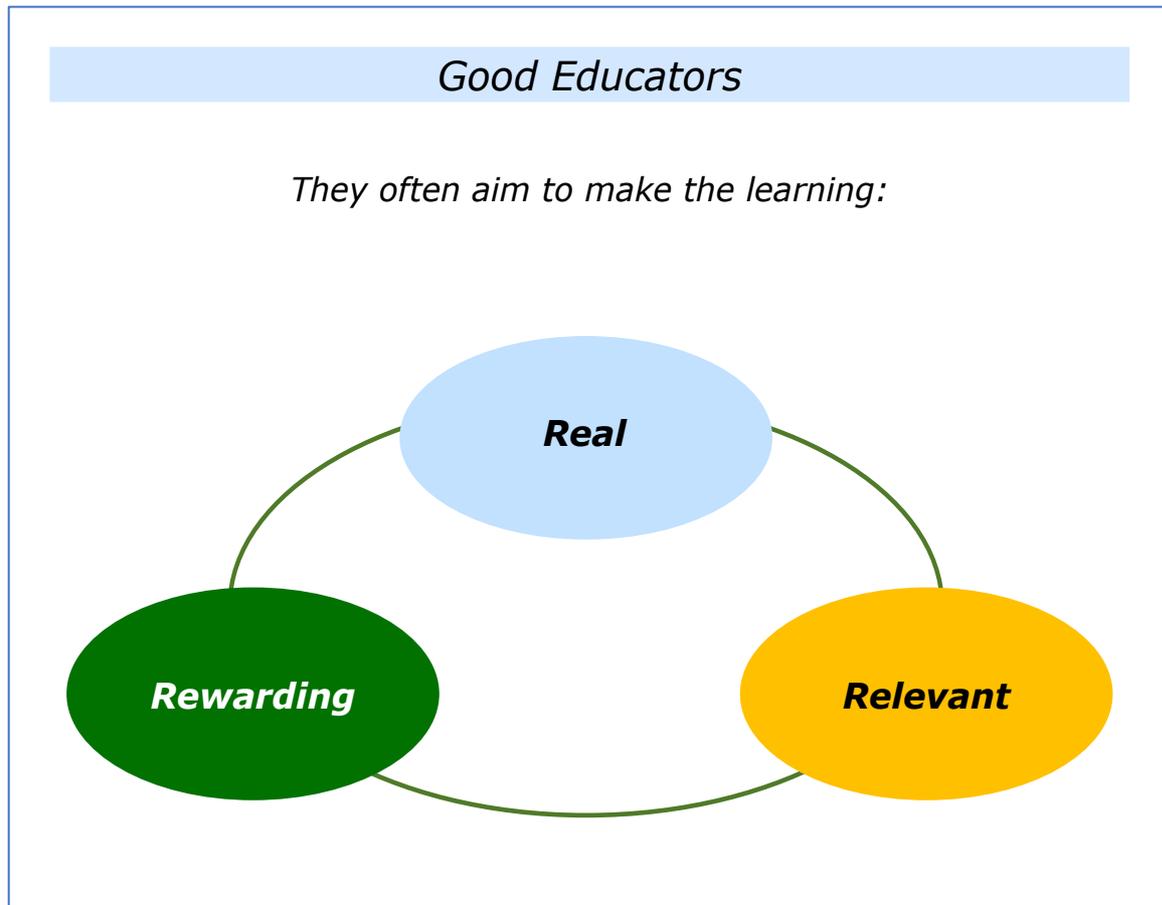
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Real, Relevant And Rewarding Approach



There are many models for helping people to grow. One approach is to make the learning real, relevant and rewarding. Let's explore these themes.

Making Learning Real

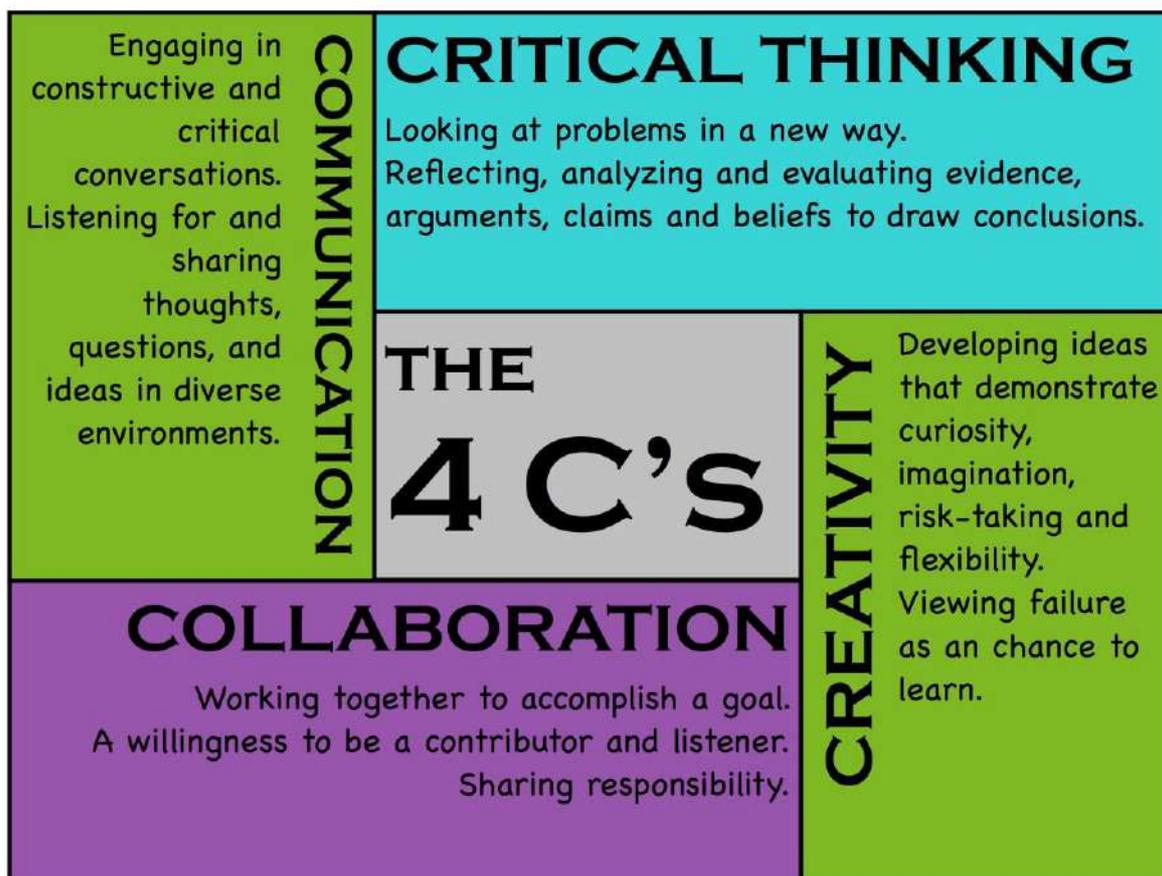
People want to learn things that resonate with them and relate to their agendas. Good educators often follow these rules. They aim to focus on a person's real experience and real goals. They then help the person to negotiate reality and achieve success.

This approach can be applied in many situations. It can be followed when working with students, adult learners, executives or other people. People are more likely to learn if they feel it will help them to succeed in the real world.

Such an approach has a long tradition in education. It became well-established in Europe by thinkers such as Pestalozzi, Froebel and Montessori.

John Dewey was one of the first to promote it in the United States and his influence remains to this day. Many of his ideas are embodied in what are now sometimes called the Four Cs of 21st Century Skills.

These are eternal skills, of course, that have featured in many educational approaches. Here is an overview of the skills.



Many educational organisations and companies now promote these skills. Below is excerpt from the website of *The Partnership For 21st Century Skills*.

We have a clear mission. We aim:

To serve as a catalyst to position 21st century readiness at the center of US K12 education by building collaborative partnerships among education, business, community and government leaders.

Twenty-First Century Children

Every child in the U.S. needs 21st century knowledge and skills to succeed as effective citizens, workers and leaders. This can be accomplished by fusing the 3Rs and 4Cs.

There is a profound gap between the knowledge and skills most students learn in school and the knowledge and skills they need in typical 21st century communities and workplaces.

To successfully face rigorous higher education coursework, career challenges and a globally competitive workforce, U.S. schools must align classroom environments with real world environments by fusing the 3Rs and 4Cs:

The 3Rs include: English, reading or language arts; mathematics; science; foreign languages; civics; government; economics; arts; history; and geography.

The 4Cs include: critical thinking and problem solving; communication, collaboration; and creativity and innovation.

As the 3Rs serve as an umbrella for other subjects and core content, the 4Cs are a shorthand for all the skills needed for success in college, career, and life.

Imagine that you are following elements of this approach when helping a person to group of people to learn. You may then move on to the next step.

Making Learning Relevant

Good educators recognise that many people are pragmatists. People want the learning to be relevant. They also want to know how to apply it in a practical situation.

Bearing this in mind, it is vital to invite a person to describe the specific things they want to learn. Here are some themes they may mention.

I want to learn ...

How to take the next step in my career ... How manage my anger in a specific situation ... How to manage a talented but challenging person in my team ... How to deal with my boss who is a micromanager.

How to recover my zest for life ... How to get more satisfaction from my work ... How to ensure my great team stays ahead of the game ... How to give an effective keynote speech ... How to feel more at peace.

Imagine that a person has described the topic they want to explore. It can then important to focus on a specific example or situation. Bearing this in mind, you may say something along the following lines.

As far as I understand it, you want to focus on how to ...? Looking at what you want to achieve, can we look at a specific example?

What is happening in that situation? What would you like to happen? What are the real results you would like to achieve? What is your picture of success? What would be the benefits of achieving these goals?

Bearing these things in mind, as far as I understand it, the real results you want to achieve are:

** To ...*

** To ...*

** To ...*

Are there any other things you want to achieve? Is it okay for me to share some ideas and practical tools you may be able to use? These are based on what works but you will, of course, use these in your own way.

Imagine that you have clarified the results the person wants to achieve. You can then aim to pass on practical tools that the person can use to achieve their goals. This takes us to the next step.

Making Learning Rewarding

People like to do what works. They like to feel they have learned something valuable and have also achieved success. Educators therefore sometimes take the following steps to make the learning real, relevant and rewarding. They aim:

To clarify what the person wants to learn and the real results they want to achieve;

To pass on relevant knowledge and tools that the person can use to achieve these results;

To enable the person to achieve these results and find the experience to be rewarding.

A teacher may follow this approach to help a student to develop a skill. A sports coach may follow it to help an athlete improve. A consultant may follow it to help a managing director tackle a challenge in their company.

This approach has a long tradition in education. Maria Montessori, for example, encouraged children to focus on things they wanted to learn and continue until they had achieved what she called their 'inner goal'.

Imagine that you are visiting a Montessori class for the youngest children. You will probably see over 30 children spanning a three-year age range.

The room has a prepared environment in which children can follow their natural tendency to work.

It will embody the characteristics of beauty, simplicity, order, accessibility and reality. Children will have many enticing materials that are designed to help them explore their world and develop their skills.

The children will be 'working'.

Some will be totally concentrated on their activity; some will be co-operating with others; some will be tidying up after their last activity and moving onto the next. Some may be preparing food. Some may be engaged in other activities.

The children will be given freedom to work and move around within suitable guidelines that enable them to act as part of a social group.

They can pursue their own interests – though they must also respect others.

The educator will be watching the children.

They will see when they become enraptured, follow their flow and, when appropriate, encourage and guide them to further exploration on this theme.

The children will continue to develop their skills, repeating an activity until it satisfies an 'inner goal'.

They will then move onto the next activity they want to explore. when working with people.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to make the learning real, relevant and rewarding? 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 Real, Relevant And Rewarding Approach

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

*

The specific things I can do then to follow elements of this approach in my way are:

*

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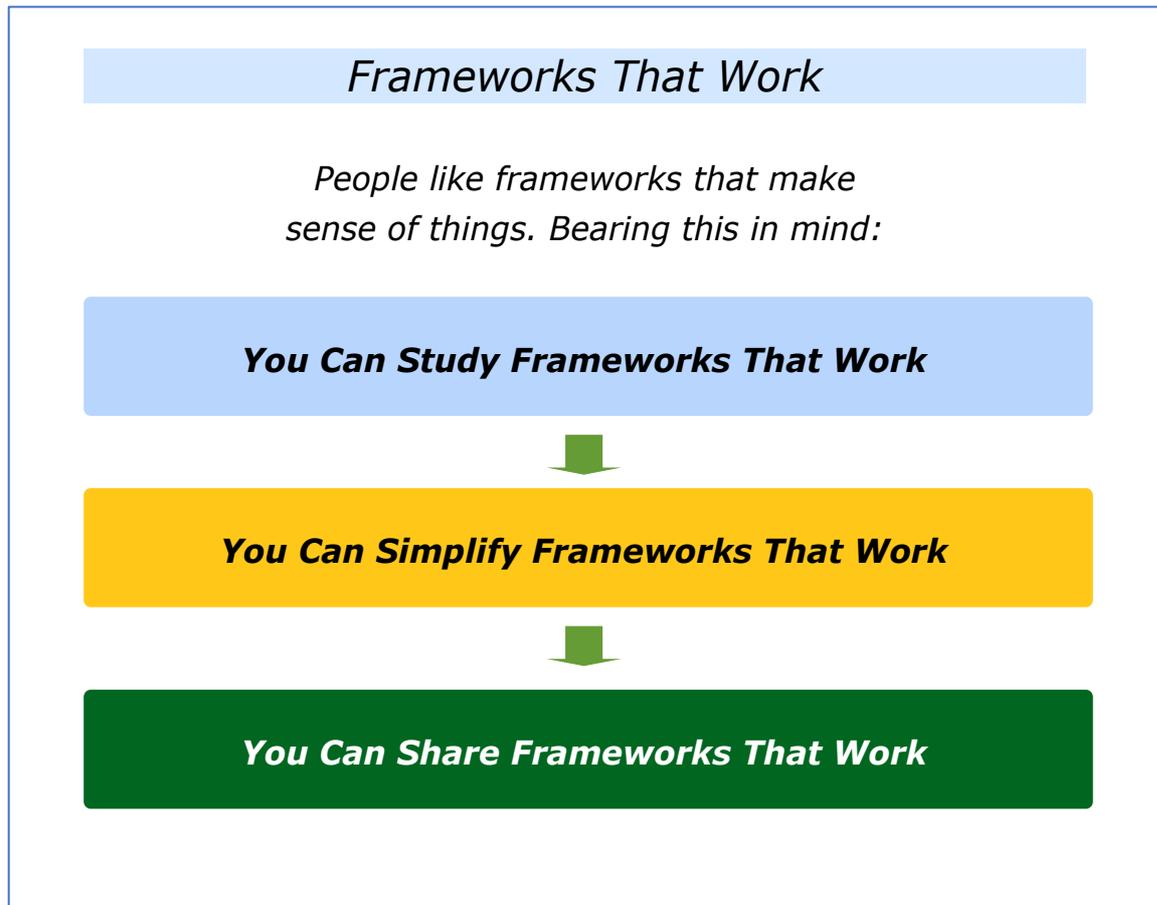
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

*

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The Sharing Frameworks That Work Approach



People like frameworks that help them to succeed. Bearing this in mind, you can study and share frameworks that work. People can then follow these frameworks in their own way to continue to shape a positive future.

There are several definitions for the term frameworks. These include the following:

A framework provides a structure that enables people to make sense of things and achieve success

Imagine that you want to use this approach to pass on knowledge to people. This can involve focusing on the following themes.

You Can Study Frameworks That Work

The first step is to study a specific topic where you would like to find a framework that works. Let's look at some examples of people who have followed this route.

Abraham Maslow chose to study healthy people. This resulted in him producing a framework of human needs which has since been used by people in all walks of life.

Maria Montessori studied how children learned. This resulted in her producing a framework that educators have followed and adapted to help young people to develop.

Willian Strunk Jr. and E.B. White focused on how writers could communicate successfully. This resulted in them producing *The Elements of Style* that many people still use to this day.

Imagine that you want to study what works in a specific activity. If appropriate, you can frame this as a question in 'How to ...?' terms. For example:

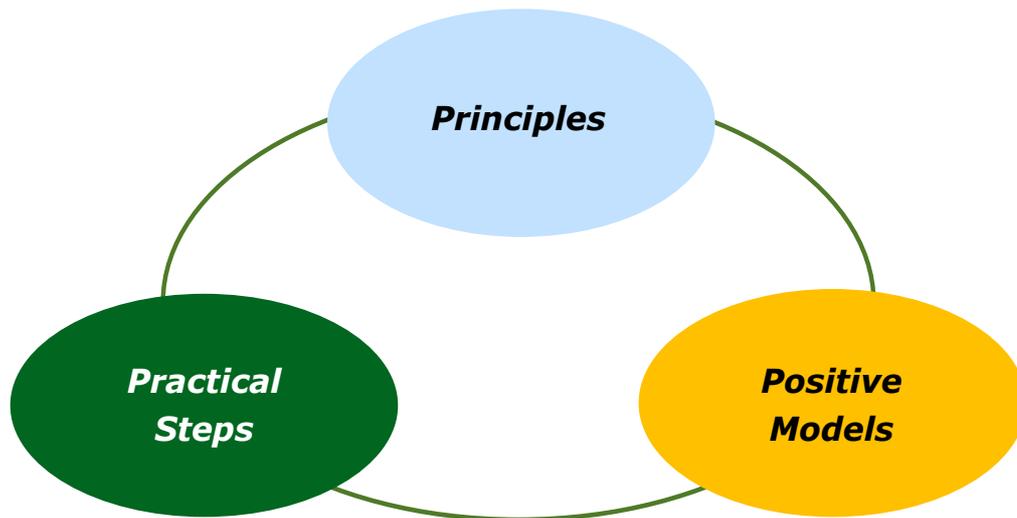
How to encourage people ... How to help people to build on their strengths ... How to help dyslexic children to learn ... How to write articles that have an impact ... How to make successful transitions.

How to tackle specific challenges ... How to do satisfying work ... How to build successful teams ... How to transform an organisation ... How to help people to shape a positive future.

Let's assume that you have settled on a topic you want to study. You may then want to explore the following themes to clarify what works when studying success.

Studying Success

One approach is to look for successful patterns. It is to focus on the principles, positive models and practical steps that people take to achieve success.



Some Themes To Explore

Looking at the specific activity, what are the examples of success? What do people do right to achieve success? What are the principles they follow? How do they translate these into action? What else do they do to make things work and achieve success?

Looking at this information, can I see any recurring patterns? What are some of the principles, positive models and practical steps that people follow? How can I translate this information into a framework that people can follow to achieve success?

Imagine that you have gathered this information. You may then want to begin putting together a provisional framework. There are many ways to take this step. One approach is to complete the following sentences.

Studying Frameworks That Work

*The specific activity I
want to focus on is:*

** How to ...*

*The specific things that work
when doing this activity are:*

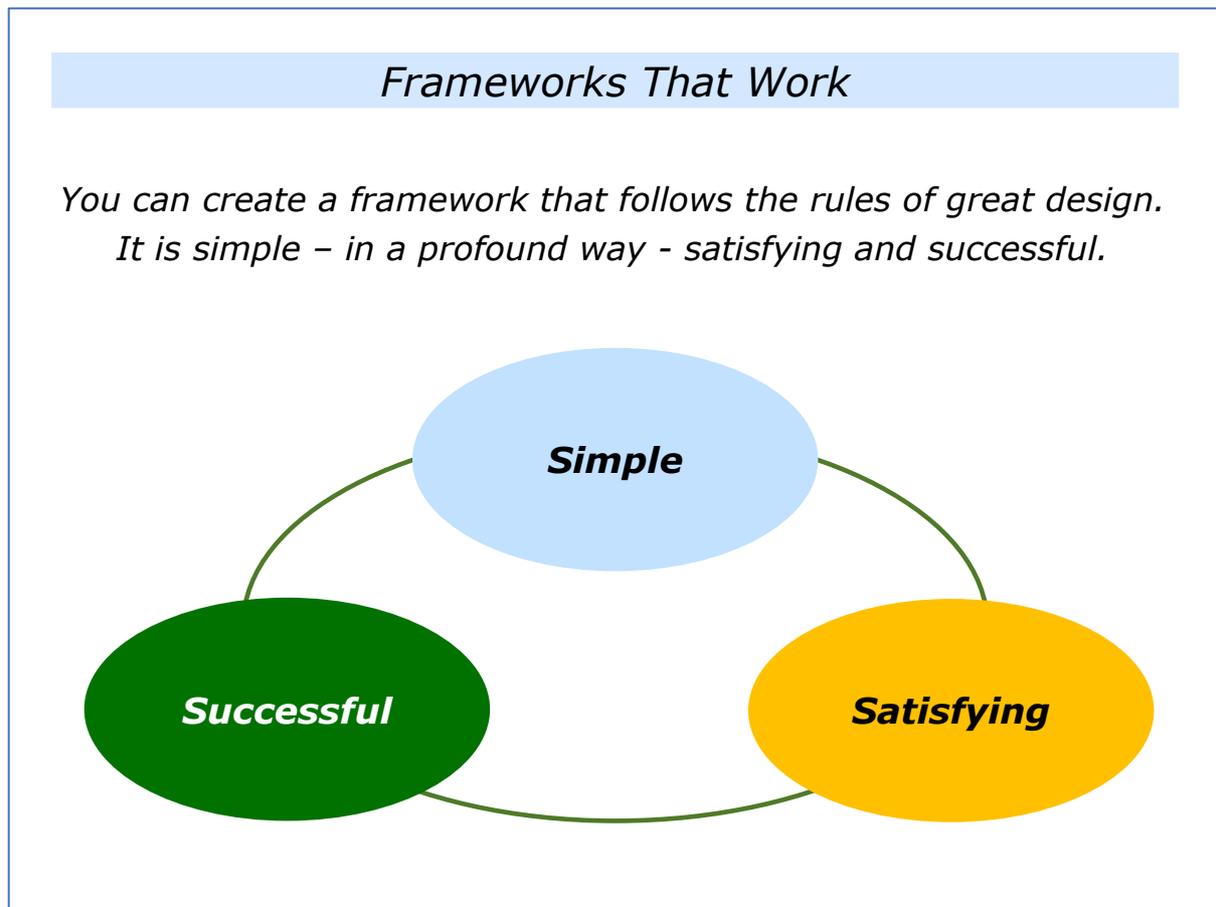
** To ...*

** To ...*

** To ...*

*The specific examples of people following
these principles and making things work are:*

You Can Simplify Frameworks That Work



Imagine that you have settled on the framework you want to share. Bearing in mind the messages you want to give to people, you can create a framework that follows the rules of design.

Simple

Great design is simple but in a profound way. One approach is: a) to make the framework easy to remember; b) to be able to bring it to life with examples that show the depth of the thinking.

Satisfying

Great design is satisfying on a number of levels. Physically it looks and feels good. Practically it works and is user-friendly. You can follow these guidelines to make the framework satisfying.

Successful

Great design is successful. It works and does the job it is supposed to do. You can aim to create a framework that people can follow in their own way to achieve success.

Imagine you know the key points or messages you want to give people in the framework you create. You may summarise these in the following way.

The Framework

*The specific activity
I want to focus on is:*

** How to ...*

*The key points or messages
I want to give people when
offering them this framework are:*

You Can Make The Framework Memorable

Imagine that you want to share the framework in a way that is useful to people. One approach is to simply write about the framework and pass on the information.

Another approach is to try to make it memorable. Different people use this different approaches to making this happen. Here are some of the most common methods.

Frameworks That Work

You can pass on your chosen messages to people by using either:

- *A picture, model, illustration or other visual device;*
- *A mnemonic, alliteration or other literary device;*
- *A framework that follows the rule of three (or other number).*

You can use a visual device – such as a picture, model or illustration. Many people find it easier to remember information when it is presented in a visual way. It can be useful to create a visual that brings the framework to life.

You can use a literary device – such as a mnemonic, alliteration or simply a list of points. These tools can help to make the framework memorable.

You may need to give concrete examples, however, to show the depth of the thinking.

You can use a numerical device – such as following the rule of three or another number. Some keynote speakers, for example, build their presentations around three key points.

Some presenters prefer to create illustrations around four, five, six, seven or even more points. George Miller wrote a famous article in 1956 called:

*The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two:
Some Limits on Our Capacity for Processing Information*

Some consultancy organisations, for example, use Seven Step Models which they advise their clients to follow. They then aim to guide people through these steps.

You will have your own approach to bringing your chosen framework to life in a memorable way. This may then lead to the next step.

You Can Share Frameworks That Work

Imagine that you want to share the framework with a particular person or group of people. How to make this happen?

One approach is to focus on the *What, Who, Why, How* and *When*. Here are some steps you may wish to consider regarding sharing the information with people.

Sharing The Framework With People

- *The What* *The specific framework I would like to share with people is ...*
- *The Who* *The specific people I would like to share this framework with are ...*
- *The Why* *The specific benefits of sharing this framework with people may be ...*
- *The How* *The specific ways I would like to share this framework with people are ...*
- *The When* *The specific situations where I would like to share this framework with people are ...*

Imagine that you have gone through the previous steps. You have been able:

To focus on a specific topic and study success;

To settle on a framework that works in this specific activity;

To simplify this framework in a way that people will find useful.

The final step will be to share this framework. It will be important: a) to use your strengths as writer, facilitator, mentor or in another role; b) to clarify the specific people you want to reach; c) to share the knowledge in a way that resonates with these people.

Imagine that you want to take this step. If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on this theme. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

Sharing Frameworks That Work

*The specific framework I
want to share with people is:*

*

*The specific things I can do to
share this framework with people are:*

*

*

*

*The specific benefits of sharing
this framework with people may be:*

*

*

*

The Act As If Approach

The Act As If Approach

*Act as if you are the
person you want to be.*

- *If you want to be responsible, act as if you are responsible.*
- *If you want to be kind, act as if you are kind.*
- *If you want to achieve a goal, act as if you are doing your best to achieve that goal.*

My first contact with the act as if approach was during the late 1960s. This was just before I opened a therapeutic community for drug addicts.

As part of my education, I visited an existing treatment centre based in Portsmouth. During the days there I became one of the community members, often being on the receiving end of the therapeutic programme.

Part of the programme was the act as if approach. This involved giving the recovering addicts the following messages.

You got into trouble because you developed irresponsible ways of satisfying your needs. This often involved hurting other people.

You say that you want to take responsibility and be more caring towards other people. This will initially be difficult because you have not learned how to do this in your life – nor has it been rewarded.

You can develop these new habits by acting as if you are responsible and caring. This may seem unnatural at first. But continuing to behave in this way will develop a new script and patterns.

You can put these into practice every day and develop healthier ways of satisfying your needs and living a fulfilling life.

This approach focused on developing new behaviours that would bring greater rewards than the old behaviours. William James, the American philosopher and psychologist, described this in the following way.



If you want a quality, act as if you already had it.

Human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.

By regulating the action, which is under the more direct control of the will, we can indirectly regulate the feeling, which is not.

This became a guiding principle for many people who wanted to make changes in their lives. It also became the basis for many therapy programmes.

William believed that doing things differently – rather than just talking – leads to changes in feelings. He described this in the following way.

If you believe that feeling bad or worrying long enough will change a past or future event, then you are residing on another planet with a different reality system.

In the dim background of mind we know what we ought to be doing but somehow we cannot start. Action may not bring happiness, but there is no happiness without action. Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.

The Act As If Approach Is Similar To Going Into Role

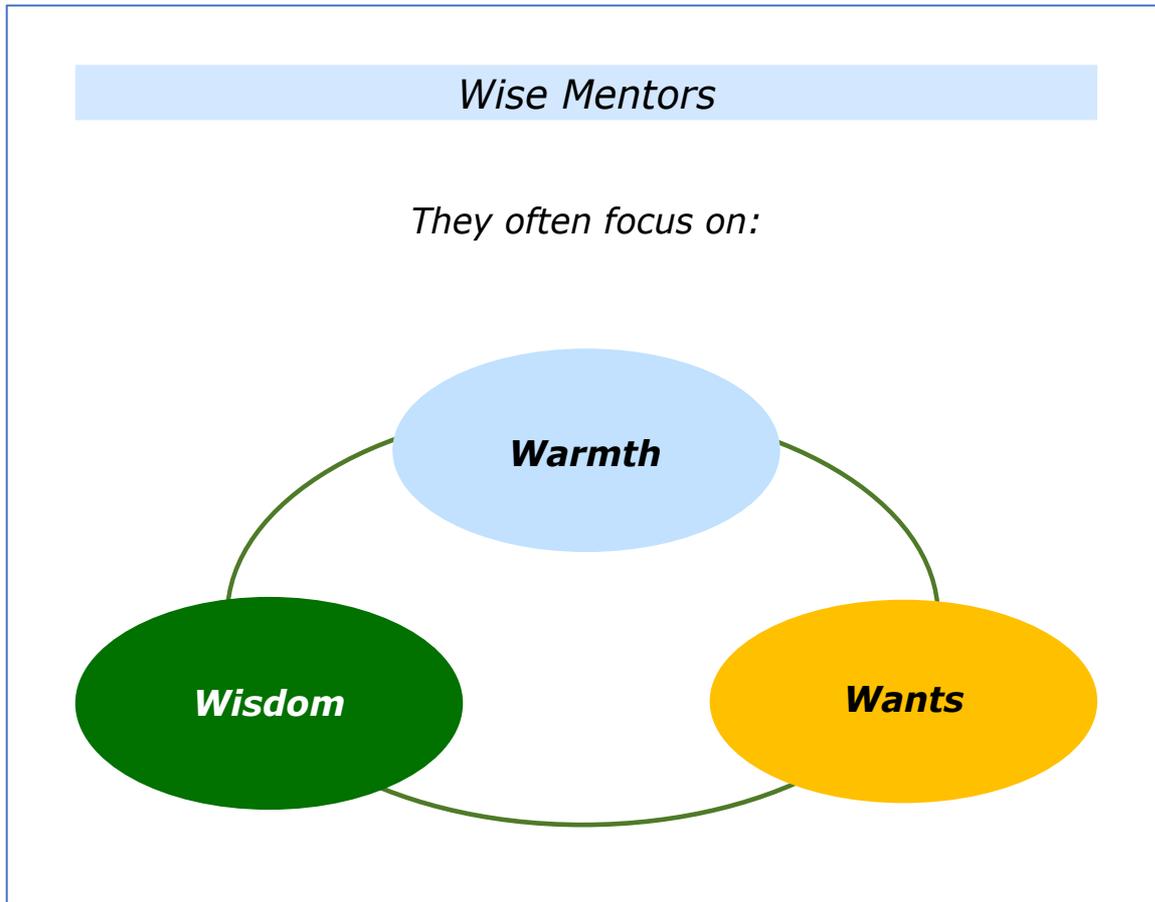
Some people may have reservations about this approach. They may express some of the following feelings.

"What about authenticity? Shouldn't you be honest and true to your feelings? Acting as if sounds like you are doing something that isn't honest."

Certainly there can be drawbacks to the act as if approach. Initially there may be a yawning chasm between who you feel you are and who you are aiming to become. But we act as if every day of our professional lives.

You may go into role when working as a nurse, doctor, trusted advisors or in another person. Pursuing that role properly – and following certain principles – can produce success for everybody.

The Wise Mentor's Approach



There are ways to help people. One approach is to follow the steps taken by some wise mentors.

They create a warm atmosphere in which a person can feel at ease and able to explore. They clarify what the person wants to achieve. They then pass on wisdom that the person can use to achieve their goals.

Such people don't consider themselves to be wise. They see themselves as lifetime students who have a lot to learn. They recognise that they may have expertise in a certain area, however, that can help people to succeed..

Let's explore some of the steps taken by such mentors. You will, of course, follow these in your own way.

Warmth

Good mentors often create a stimulating sanctuary. They help people to feel valued and the centre of their world. They create an environment in which people feel able to talk about their hopes.

Good workshop facilitators, for example, also create an environment in which people feel at ease. The physical things – such as room, chairs and food - have to be right. They then open the workshop in an inspiring way.

Why? Creating a warm environment encourages the participants to explore and work hard to reach their goals. Warmth – rather than sternness – is more likely to deliver great results.

Good professionals in any field prepare properly and mentally rehearse the session. They focus on how to build on people's positive energy and help them to achieve success.

Imagine that a person has asked for your help. Here are some ideas that you can use to set up the session to succeed.

Warmth

Here are some ideas you may wish to consider for creating an encouraging environment and preparing properly for running a session.

- *You can clarify how to create an encouraging atmosphere and also mentally rehearse how to run a successful session.*
- *You can clarify what is happening in the person's world - such as the challenges they may face and what they may want to achieve in their life or work.*
- *You can anticipate the topics they may want to explore - plus clarify the knowledge and practical tools you can pass on to help them to achieve their goals.*
- *You can clarify what you would like them to be saying, thinking and feeling at the end of the session – plus what you can do to increase the likelihood of them saying those things.*
- *You can then start the session, make the person feel welcome and, in your own way, maintain a positive and encouraging atmosphere.*

Wants

Good mentors focus on what people want to explore. They recognise that individuals have specific challenges and goals. So it is important to clarify their agendas and help them to achieve their pictures of success.

This approach was reinforced for me during my early days in social work. At the time I wanted to learn from best practice in therapeutic communities and apply these lessons in my work.

Bearing this in mind, I wrote to some of the leading practitioners in psychology. Would it be possible to visit them and learn from their approaches?

Several said I would be welcome, providing I was prepared to make the long journey to their home or community. Generous with their time, they wanted to pass on knowledge and help others to succeed.

One practical thing they did early on, sometimes even before our meeting, was to clarify my aims. They asked questions such as:

"What are the topics you would like to explore? What for you would make it a successful session? What are the practical ideas and tools you would like to take away for the meeting?"

The people I met were able to quickly tune into people's agendas. They followed the old educational maxim that:

The learner learns what the learner wants to learn.

Professionals in many fields often take a similar approach. They each have their own sets of questions for uncovering: a) the specific things people want to explore in the session; b) the specific things people want to achieve in their lives or work.

Such professionals start by establishing clarity. Bearing in mind what the person can control in the situation, they ask questions like:

"Looking at the first topic you want to explore, what is your goal? What are the real results you want to achieve? What is your picture of success?"

They then play back their understanding of the aim. Such professionals make sure people are crystal clear on the 'What' before moving on to the 'How'.

Imagine that a person has asked for your help. You will have your own questions for clarifying their aims. Here are some ideas, however, that you may wish to consider to clarify their aims.

Wants

Here are some questions for clarifying the topics a person may want to explore in the session and what they may want to achieve in their life and work.

- *"What are the topics you would like to explore? What do you want to take away from the session?"*
- *"Let's move on to the first topic you want to explore. Can you tell me a bit more about the situation and what is actually happening? Can you give me some examples? What can you control in the situation?"*
- *"Let's focus on clarity. What are your goals? What are the real results you want to achieve? What is your picture of success?"*
- *"What are the specific things that will be happening that will show you have achieved the goals? What will be the benefits of achieving the picture of success?"*
- *"So, as far as I understand it, the real results you want to achieve are: 1) To ... 2) To ... 3) To ... Is that right? Is that your picture of success?"*

Wisdom

Good mentors are wise and trusted advisors. They pass on positive models and practical tools that work. They see which ideas resonate with people and then enable them to reach their goals.

There are many definitions of wisdom. The Oxford English Dictionary gives one definition as:

"Wisdom is capacity for judging rightly in matters relating to life and conduct; soundness of judgment in the choice of means and ends."

Some of the wise people I have met do not consider themselves wise. They instead talk about focusing on what works. They aimed to study, simplify and share what works. They then offer positive models and practical tools that people could use in their daily lives and work.

Good trusted advisors sometimes follow this path. They are warm, clarify what people want to explore and pass on knowledge that can help people to achieve their goals. People can then decide whether they want to use this information in their own ways.

Different mentors ask themselves different questions before sharing knowledge. Here are some they may ask.

"What are The person's goals? What are the real results they want to achieve? What is their picture of success?"

"What are the routes they have tried before to reach these goals? What have been the consequences of pursuing these routes?"

"What are their strengths and successful patterns? What are they doing well that can help them to reach their goals? How can they do more of these things in the future? What can they do better and how?"

"What are the positive models and practical tools I can share that can help them to reach their goals? How can I bring these to life by giving

concrete examples? How can I share this knowledge in a way they can accept and use?

Good mentors have the ability to sit alongside people – their patients, clients or others – and show they understand their goals. When appropriate, they may say something like the following.

"As far as I understand it, the real results you want to achieve are:

"1) To ...

"2) To ...

"3) To ...

"Bearing these things in mind, is it okay if I share some ideas and practical tools? If so, here are some possible ways forwards.

"Option A is to ... The pluses are ... The minuses are ...

"Option B is to ... The pluses are ... The minuses are ...

"Option C is to ... The pluses are ... The minuses are ...

"Looking at these options, are there any that resonate with you? If so, we can explore how you can pursue these in your own way."

Different people have different ways of helping others. One approach is to be warm, create an encouraging environment and clarify what people want to explore. It is then to pass on wisdom in a way that people can use in their daily lives and work.

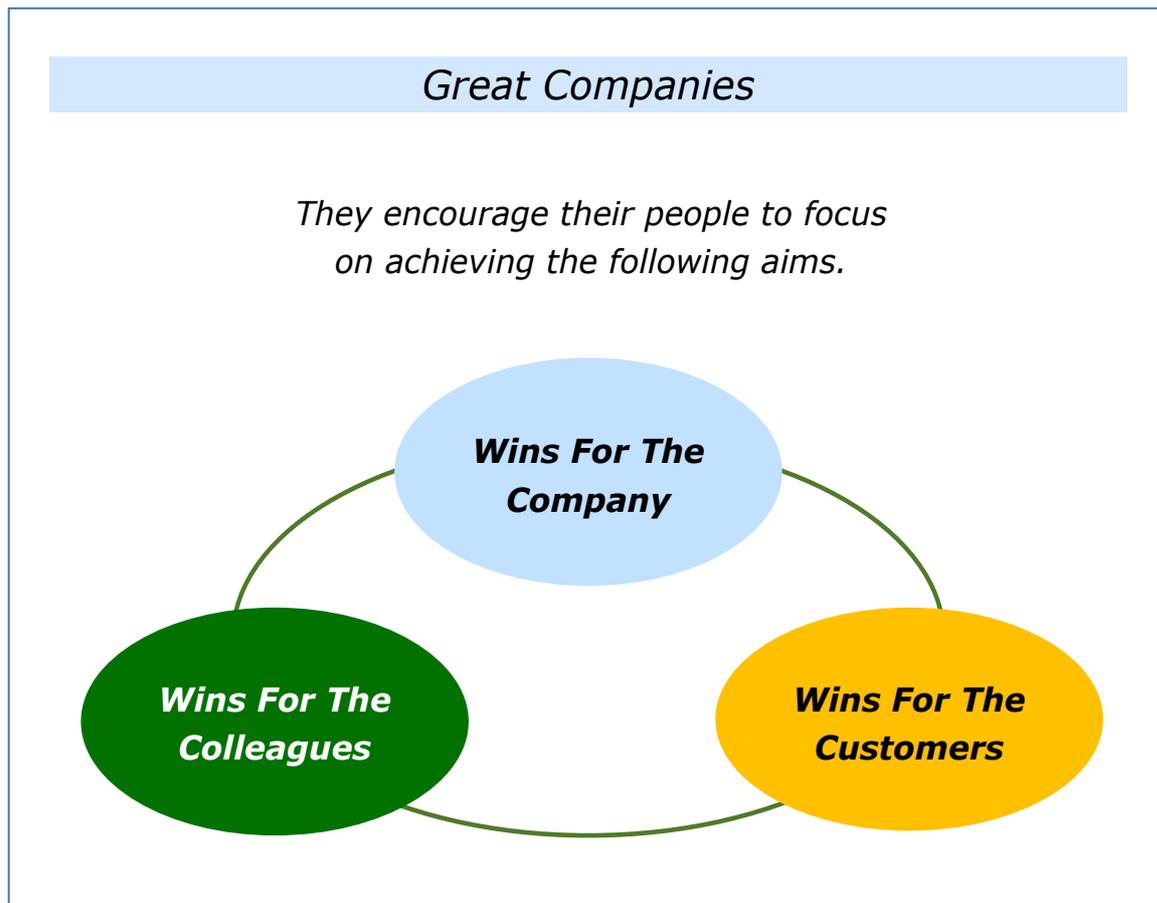
You will, of course, have your own approach to sharing what works. Here are some themes that it may be useful to consider, however, when helping people to reach their goals.

Wisdom

Here are some ideas for sharing knowledge and practical tools that people can use to achieve what they want in their lives or work.

- You can clarify the options that the person has already pursued to try to achieve their goals.*
- You can ask if it is okay to share knowledge, positive models and practical tools they may wish to consider. If so, you can say the following things.*
 - "Some of the possible options for moving forwards are:*
 - "Option A is to ... The potential pluses and minuses are ...*
 - "Option B is to ... The potential pluses and minuses are ...*
 - "Option C is to ... The potential pluses and minuses are ...*
- You can share these ideas in a way the person can accept and use. You can bring these to life with concrete examples.*
- You can ask which of these ideas resonate with the person and then enable them to apply these in their own way.*

The Wins For The Company, Customers And Colleagues Approach



There are many ways to build successful companies. Some aim to get wins for the company, wins for the customers and wins for the colleagues.

Sometimes it is necessary to concentrate on one of these areas, but it is vital to recognise the circular nature of this approach. Over the long haul it is important to get wins for all these groups of stakeholders.

This approach is more likely to build a sustainable and successful company. Let's explore these themes.

Wins For Company

Imagine that you are running a company. It will be important to make enough profit:

To keep the company going and deliver high professional standards;

To pay its stakeholders – its employees, backers and suppliers;

To build a good reputation and invest in shaping a positive future.

You can encourage your people to bear these things in mind when working with customers. This leads to the next step.

Wins For Customers

Great companies build on their strengths and do superb work that helps their stakeholders to achieve success. Bearing this in mind, it is important to encourage they people:

To understand the customer's goals;

To provide great service and do superb work;

To help the customer to achieve their goals.

It is important to do this in a way provides wins for the company and protects the wellbeing of its people. This leads to the next step.

Wins For Colleagues

Great companies create a positive environment in which motivated people can perform at their best. One approach they take is to encourage and enable them:

To build on their strengths and do satisfying work;

To deliver success for themselves, their colleagues, their customers and the company;

To continue to develop so that they can shape their future careers inside outside the company.

The latter point may sound counter-intuitive, but it is one that has been practiced by many of the companies with whom I have worked.

They recognise that people want to keep developing. Whenever possible, they aim to provide those opportunities within their company. There may come a time, however, when a person wants to move on.

Such companies find that helping people to develop leads to them becoming a preferred employer. This helps to attract people who want to perform at their best.

Great companies continue to get wins for the company, wins for the customers and wins for the employees. As mentioned earlier, it is important to focus on all three areas.

Companies that focus only on wins for their shareholders may alienate their customers and colleagues. Focusing only on wins for the customers may build a good reputation but not produce profits. Focusing only on wins for the employees may build a happy work place but the company may go bankrupt.

Can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of the win-win-win approach? How can you do this 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.

Wins For The Company, Customers And Colleagues

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

*

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

*

*

*

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

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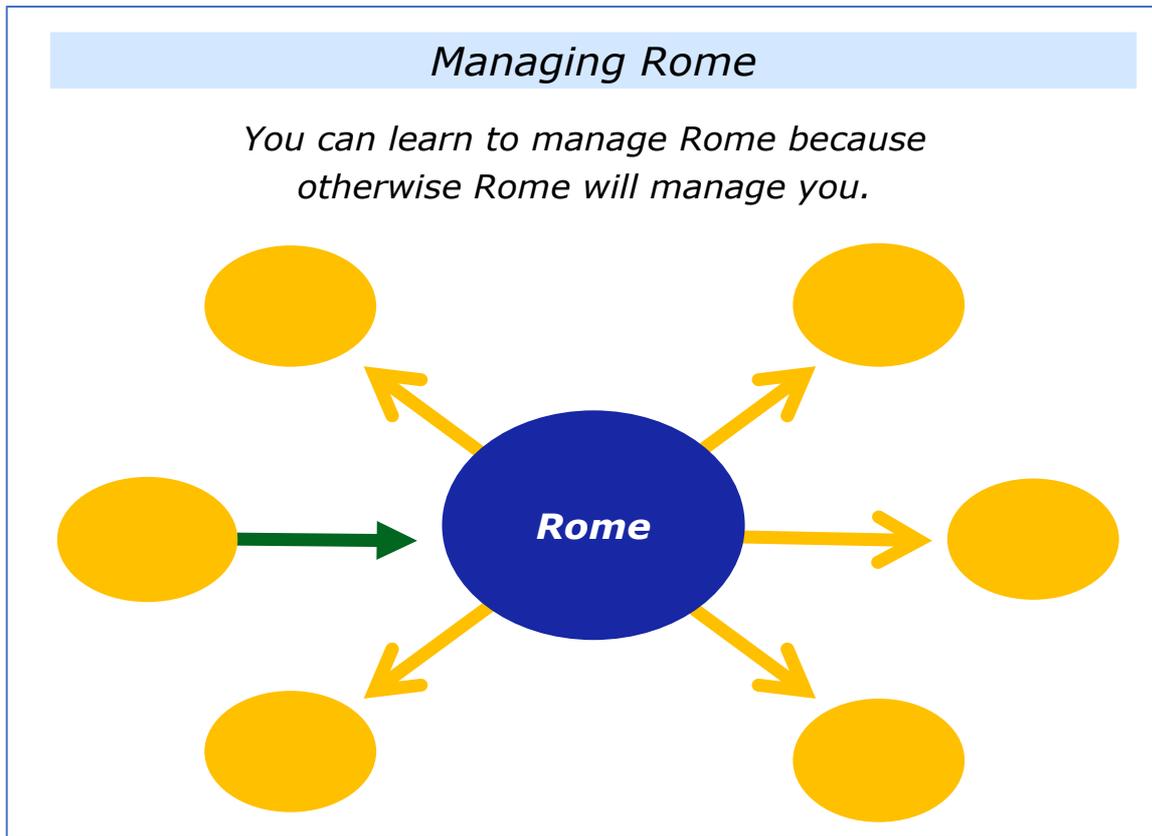
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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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. It is followed by an pieces on a related theme.

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:*

*

*

*

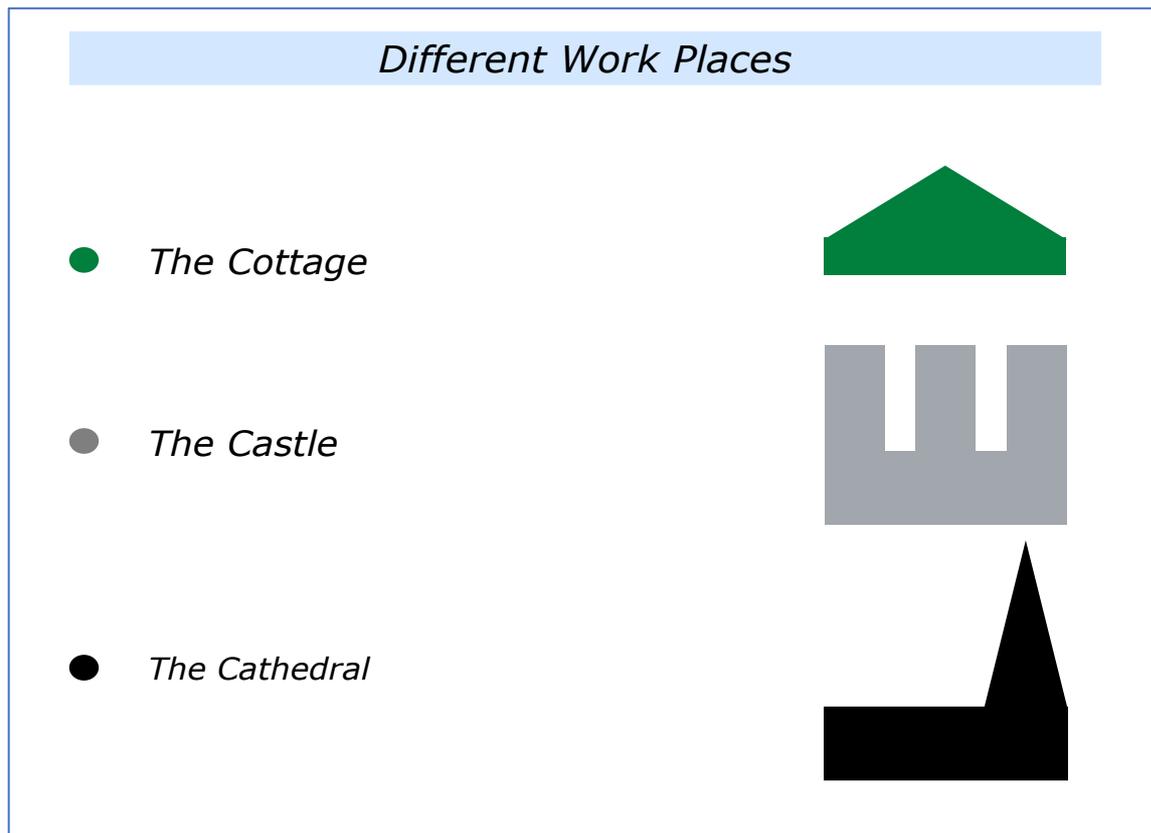
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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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:

*

*

*

The specific things I felt when working there were:

*

*

*

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:

*

The specific things I did when working there were:

*

*

*

The specific things I felt when working there were:

*

*

*

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:

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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:

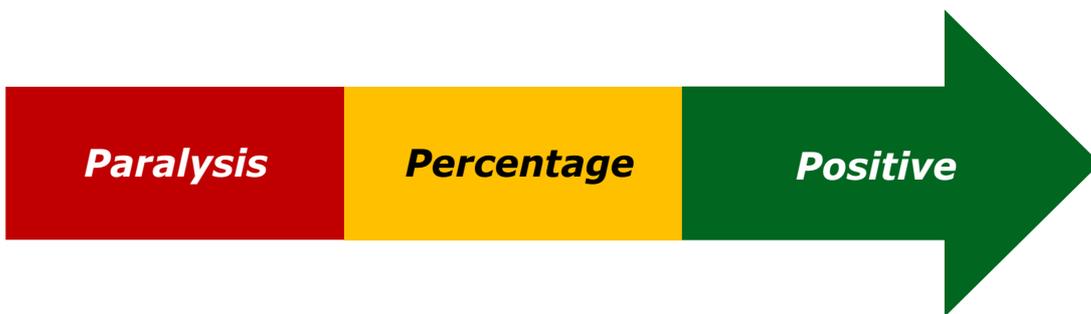
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The Positive, Percentage And Paralysis Approaches

*People Can Choose To Follow The
Positive, Percentage Or Paralysis Approaches*



There are many ways to live life. This is a model that is used in sports but it can be applied in many other areas. People can choose to follow the positive, percentage or paralysis approaches in life.

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:

*

The specific things I can do then to follow elements of the positive approach are:

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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:

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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:

*

The specific things I can do to avoid falling into the paralysis approach and do my best to achieve positive results are:

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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:*

*

*

*

*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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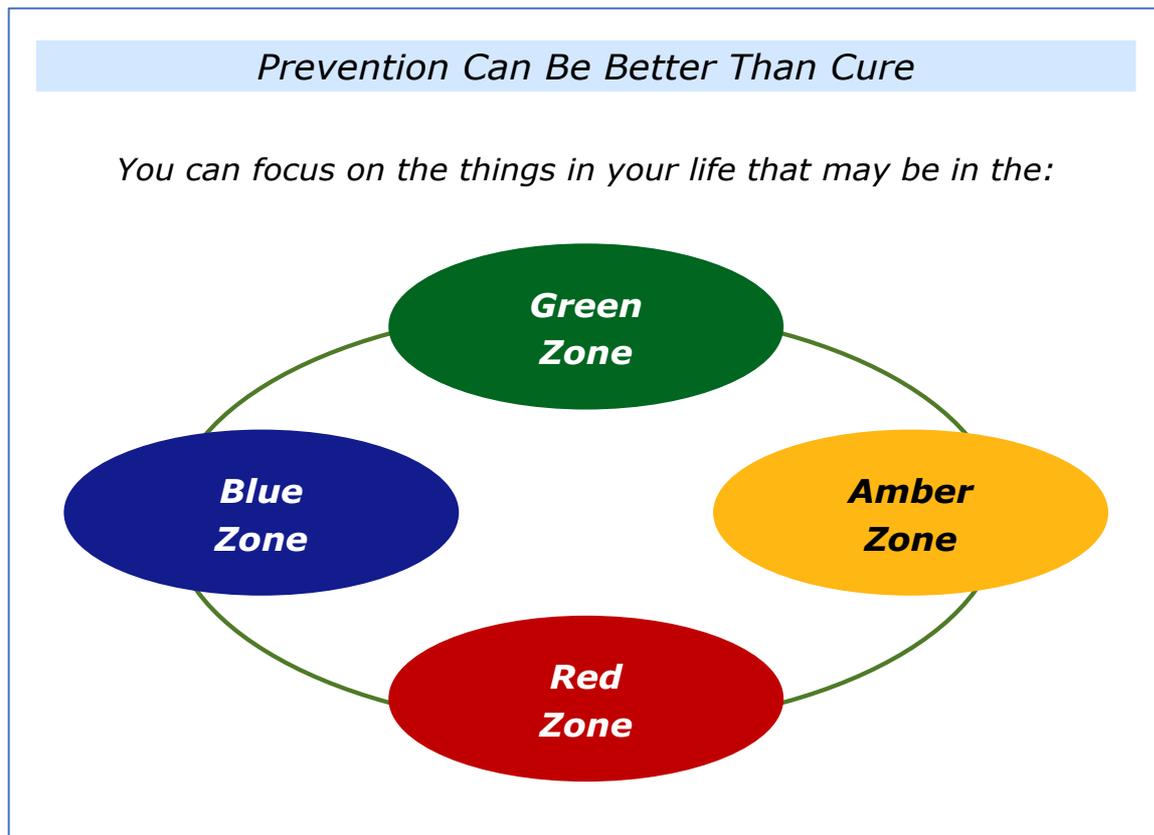
*The specific things I can do to
take heed of the warning signs are:*

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*

*

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:*

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*

*

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

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*

*

The Amber Zone

*The things were there
are warning signs are:*

*

*

*

*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:*

*

*

*

The Red Zone

The things that are not going well are:

*

*

*

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:

*

*

*

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:

*

*

*

The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:

*

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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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*

The specific things I can do to take more care of myself in the future are:

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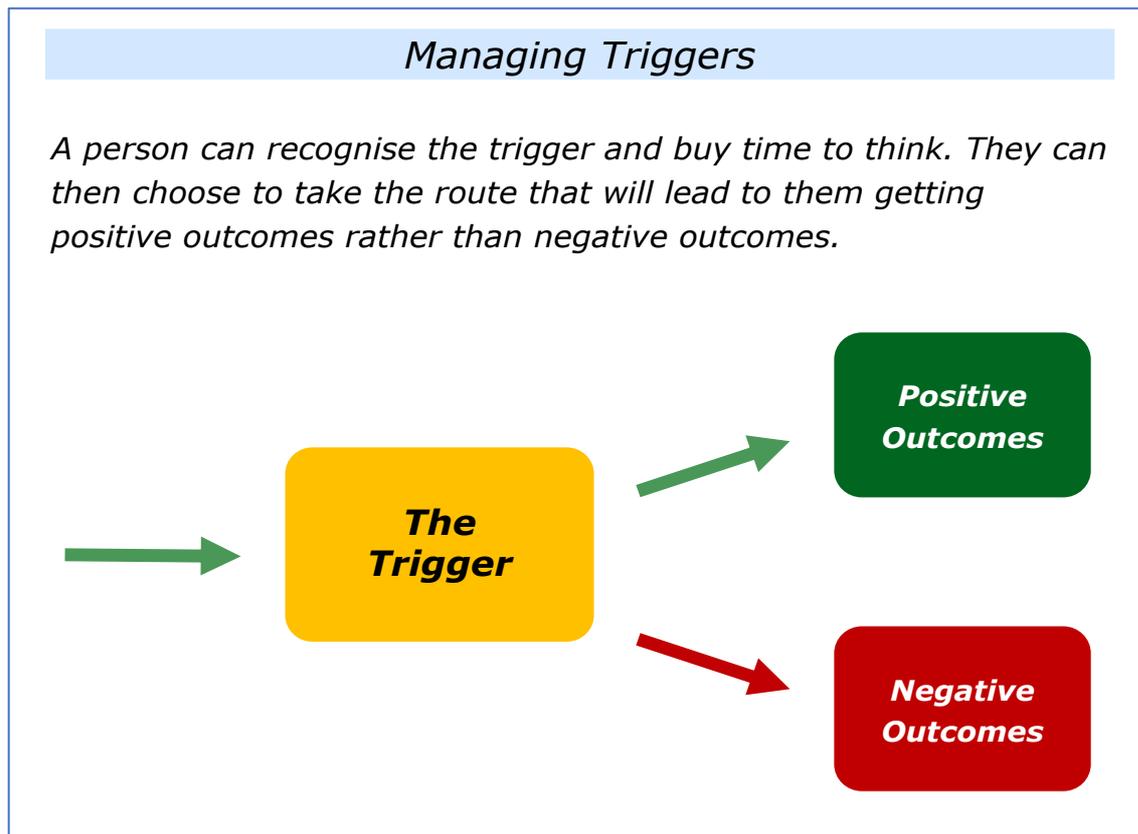
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The 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

- **Stop** *Recognise the warning signs and stop what you are doing.*
- **Think** *Breathe, buy time to think and see the big picture.*
- **Options** *Ask: "What are my possible options going forward? What are pluses and minuses of each option?"*
- **Positive Results** *Pursue the option most likely to get the desired positive results.*

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 ...

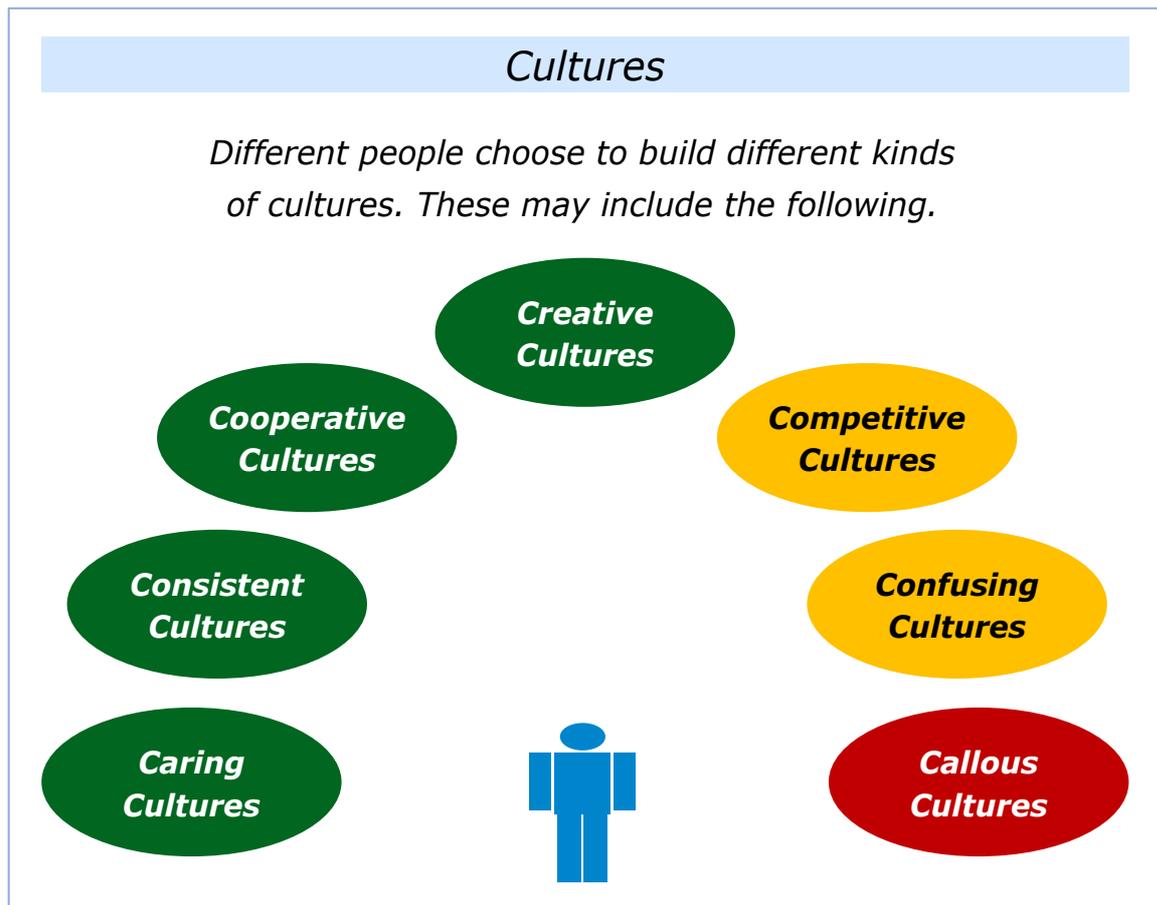
The specific things I can do to do my best to beat the double bind are:

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The Caring To Callous Cultures Approaches



Different people choose to build different kinds of cultures. Each of these have 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:*

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*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:*

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*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:

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The specific things I can do to help to build such are culture are:

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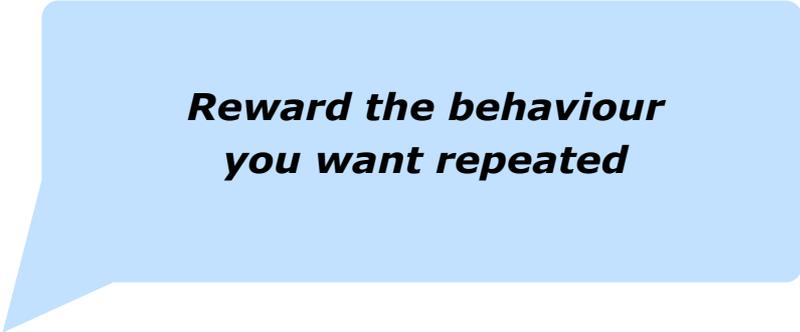
The specific benefits of building such a culture would be:

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The 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 the help the 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:

*

*

*

*

*

The reasons why we would like people to follow these guidelines are:

*

*

*

*

*

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 practice 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:*

*

*

*

*The specific things I can do to deal with
behaviour we don't want repeated are:*

*

*

*

*The specific benefits of taking
each of these steps will be:*

*

*

*

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 role 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:

*

*

*

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.

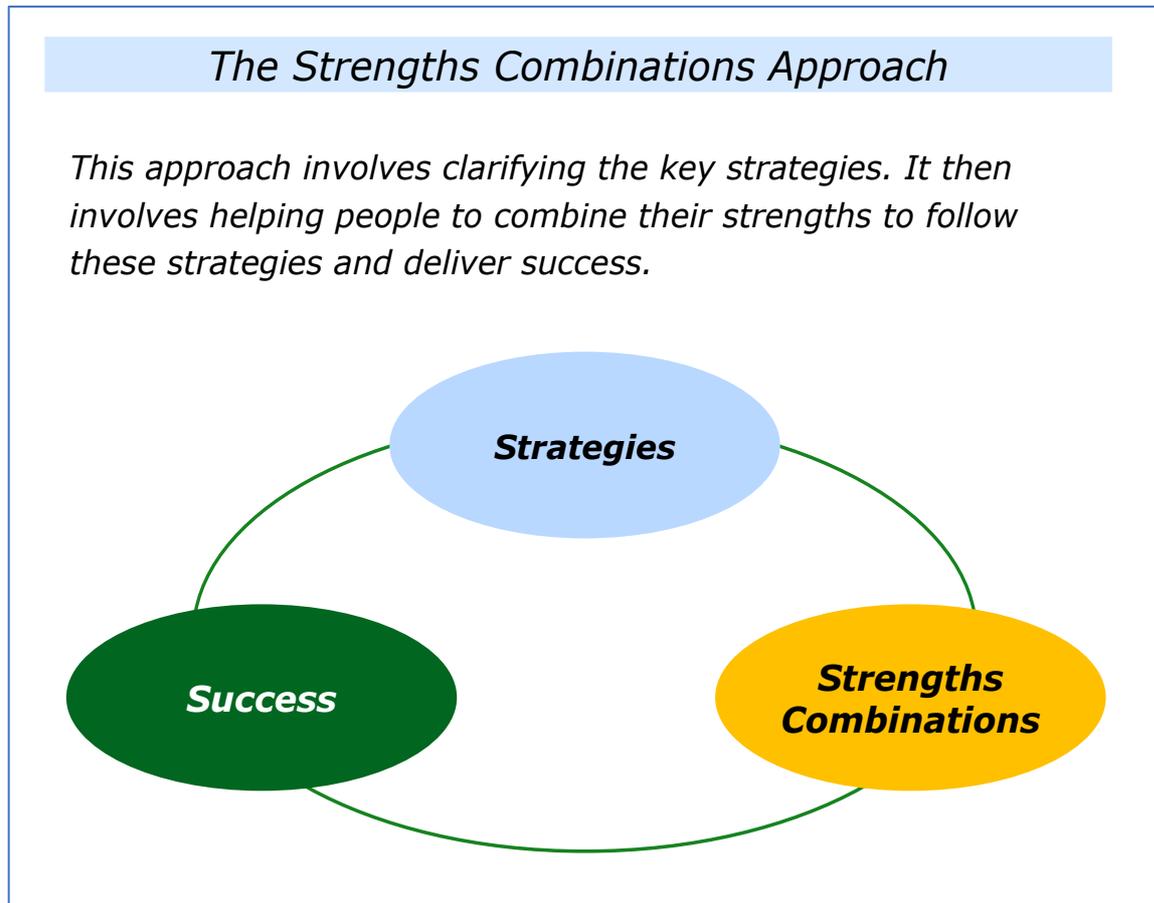
Leaders also have a limited amount of energy. Much of this should go on encouraging the positive people in the team. These are the people who will continue to play a huge part in helping the team to achieve its goals.

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



Great teams clarify the strategies they want to follow. They then 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 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 people about how they can use their strengths to make their best contributions;

They sometimes 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 are going to meeting with people to clarify their contributions. In this case you may be focusing on how people can combine their strengths to achieve success. Here are some themes to bear in mind when taking these steps.

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

You can clarify the real results to achieve - the picture of success

Responsibilities

You can work with people to clarify each person's strengths and, bearing these in mind, the responsibilities they want to take towards achieving the picture of success.

Roles

You can agree on the role that each person and each combination will play. You can 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 results they will aim to deliver will be:

** To ...*

** To ...*

** To ...*

The responsibilities they will aim to cover will be:

** To ...*

** To ...*

** To ...*

Person B

The role they will play in working towards achieving the picture of success will be:

* To ...

The results they will aim to deliver will be:

* To ...

* To ...

* To ...

The responsibilities they will aim to cover 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 results they will aim to deliver will be:

* To ...

* To ...

* To ...

The responsibilities they will aim to cover 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 results they will aim to deliver will be:

* To ...

* To ...

* To ...

The responsibilities they will aim to cover 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 results they will aim to deliver will be:

* To ...

* To ...

* To ...

The responsibilities they will aim to cover 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.

Great workers often follow their successful pattern for finishing. They also bear in mind the following principle.

The Delivering The Goods Rather Than Declaring Victory Too Early Approach

Good finishers finish properly. They do this whether they are running a counselling session, playing a sport, performing in a play, leading a team, vaccinating people against a virus or doing another activity.

Sometimes individuals, teams and organisations are tempted to declare victory too early. They become complacent, lose their sense of urgency or fall into bad habits. This can have negative consequences of themselves and other people.



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:*

*

*

*

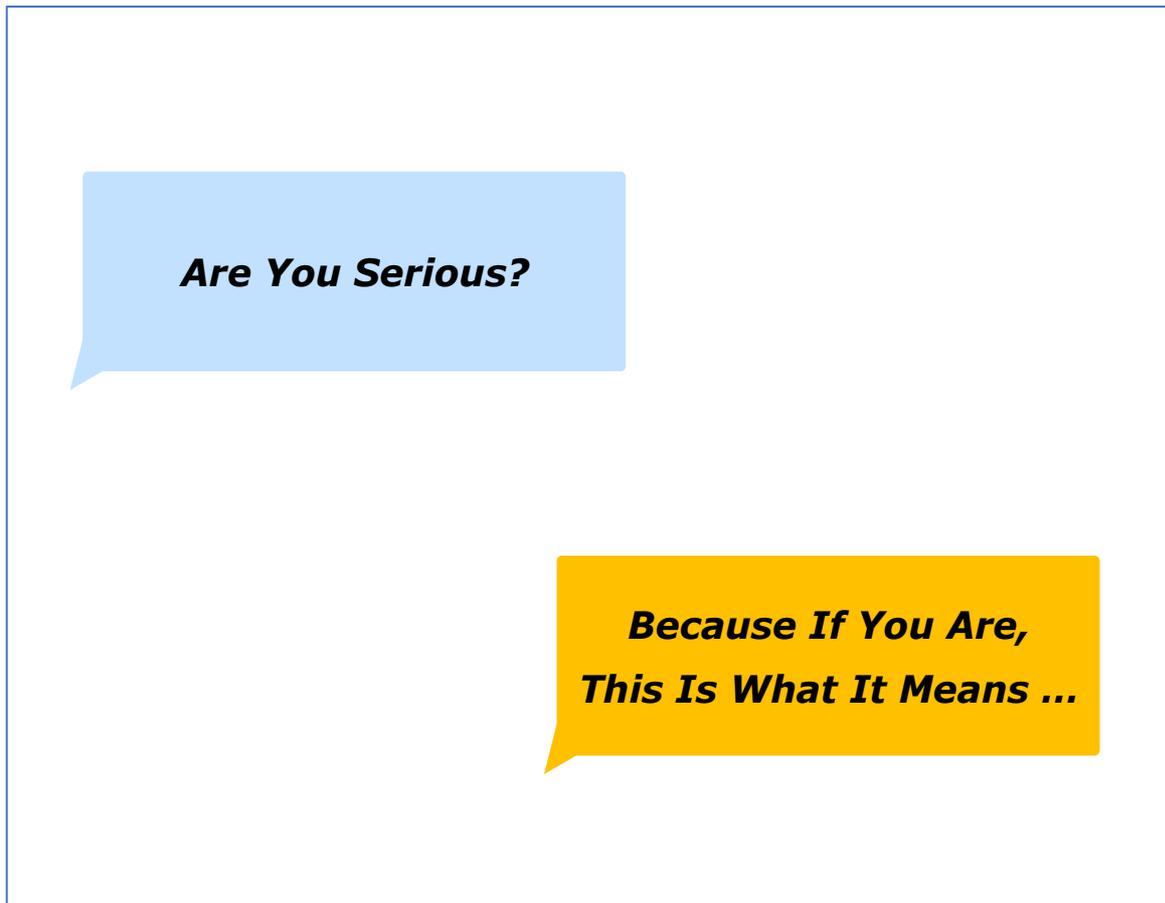
*The specific things that may happen
as a result of taking these steps are:*

*

*

*

The Are You Serious? Approach



This is an approach that can be used by individuals, teams or organisations. It can be particularly useful when deciding whether or not to follow a particular strategy. When doing so, it can be useful:

To clarify the specific strategy that people say they want to follow;

To clarify the pluses and minuses of following the strategy;

To clarify whether they are really serious and prepared to accept the pluses and minuses of following the strategy.

This is an approach I often used I used with leadership teams towards the end of values workshops. Let's consider one example.

The leadership team I was working with had clarified the values they believed it would be important for people in the company to follow in the future. These were:

Take Responsibility ... Encourage People ... Deliver Results ... Keep Developing

The team planned to introduce these values to their people in the following ways.

By aiming to live their values themselves;

By sharing successes stories of when people in the company had lived the values in the past;

By involving their people in sessions where they could share ideas about how the values could be lived;

By producing some quick wins that showed they would translate the values into action;

By giving people the support they needed to live the values and deliver success.

The leadership team was all set to press the button. Before they went ahead, however, I asked them to consider the following themes.

*First: To explore the pluses
and minuses of living the values*

It was important to clarify the pluses and minuses of living the values: a) for the company – including themselves as a leadership team; b) for the customers; c) for the colleagues; d) for any other stakeholders.

*Second: To explore if they were
really serious about living the values*

This called for inviting the leadership team members to explore the following themes.

"Bearing in mind the pluses and minuses involved, are you really serious?"

"Do you really want to aim to live the values? Because if you are, these are the implications ..."

"For example, it means you: Aiming to be good models; Rewarding the behaviour you want repeated; Never walking past a quality problem."

"Bearing these things in mind, on a scale 0-10 how serious are you about aiming to really live the values?"

Are You Serious?

Because if you are:

- *It means you being good models and doing what you say you are going to do;*
- *It means rewarding the behaviour you want repeated;*
- *It means never walking past a quality problem.*

The leadership team explored all these themes. They did this in the following way.

They began by focusing on their own behaviour. They listed the Dos and Don'ts they needed to bear in mind – both as individuals and as a whole team – to translate the values into action.

They then explore how to encourage people to live the values. This included having a mission holder who to responsibility for finding and publicising success stories about how people in the company were living the values.

They finally focused on making tough decisions. This included never walking past a quality problem – whether this was poor service quality or people behaving in an unprofessional way – because this would be saying that such behaviour was okay.

The leadership team looked at how to offer people positive alternatives in such situations. They needed to be able to show people:

The professional standards that could be followed to do such things in the future;

The benefits of following these professional standards;

The leaders needed to give individuals the opportunity of decide if they wanted to follow the professional standards. Sometimes a person may need help to follow these standards in their own way.

If a person chose to continuing behaving in an unprofessional way, however, this would call for making a tough decision. It would mean hiring somebody who wanted to deliver the required professional standards.

The leadership team explored how they could aim: a) to build on the positive aspects of living the values; b) to manage any of the potential minuses. The latter called for rehearsing how to deal with several challenging scenarios.

The leadership team then rated their seriousness in terms of living the values. Bearing in mind the pluses and minuses involved, they rated their seriousness as 8+/10.

A postscript. I worked with this company for the next five years. During this time the feedback from the employees was that the leaders and most people in the company did live the values.

Individuals Can Also Ask Themselves: Am I Serious?

The Are You Serious? approach is one that is sometimes used by individuals. Such a person may aim:

To clarify the goal they want to achieve – the picture of success;

To clarify the strategies they can follow to achieve the picture of success;

To clarify the pluses and minuses involved in working towards achieving their picture of success.

Such an individual does their due diligence. After exploring the work involved, they may then ask themselves the following questions.

"Bearing in mind the pluses and minuses, how serious am I about doing what is required to reach the goals? Rate this on a scale 0-10."

Such a person makes sure the rating is at least 8+/10. They then commit themselves to doing their best to achieve the specific goal.

Looking ahead, can you think of a situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach? You may aim to do it when helping a team to live their values, clarify their future strategy or take other steps. You may do it when helping a person to decide if they want to work towards achieving a specific goal.

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

The Are You Serious? Approach

The specific situation where 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:

*

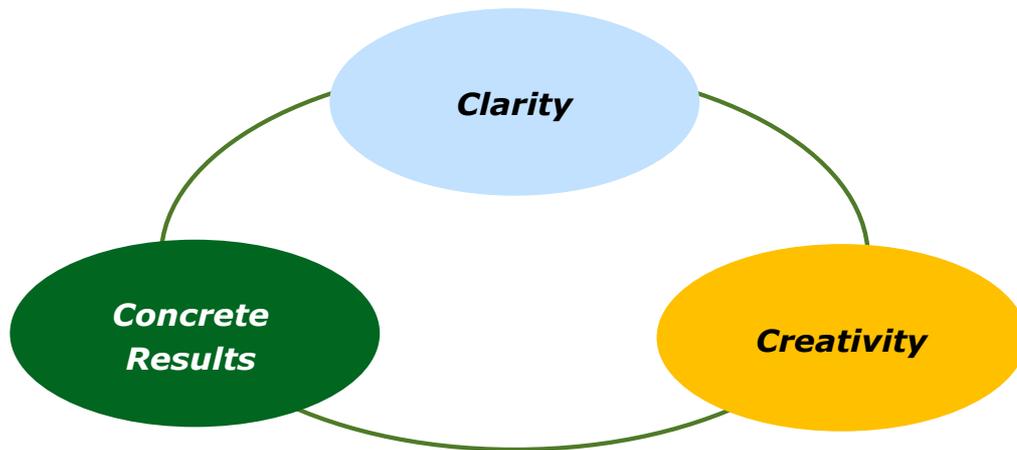
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The Mentoring Approach

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.

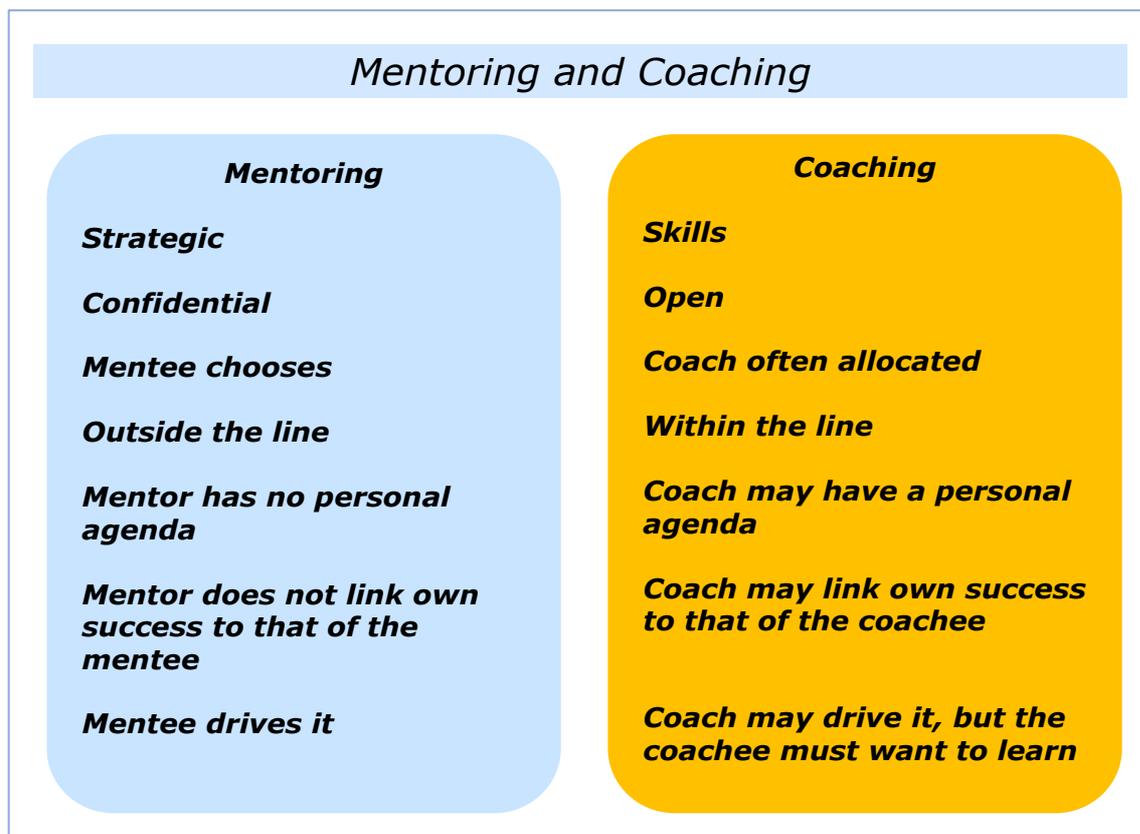
What is the difference between mentoring and coaching?

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.

Great educators follow the rule that: 'The learner learns what the learner wants to learn'. Bearing this in mind, good mentors spend a lot of time thinking about:

How to make the person feel welcome;

How to find and focus on the themes the person wants to explore;

How to pass on knowledge in a way that helps the person succeed.

The following pages describe some of the areas 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 they 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 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:

*

*

*

Contacting The Person Before A First Session.

Imagine that you have done your preparation. If appropriate, you may want to send an email before the first session.

This can help to set the scene for the person. It can also give them the chance to reflect and think about what they want to explore in the session.

Looking at my own work, here is an example of the kind of email I may send to a person before the first session. You will, of course, have your own approach.

Hello ...

Looking forward to our session on ... As you know, we can explore any topics you wish.

For example:

How to build on your strengths ... How to do satisfying work ... How to build superb teams ... How to manage various stakeholders ... How to find solutions to specific challenges ... How to keep developing as a person and as a professional ... How to achieve your picture of success.

We can, of course, explore any other topics. The aim will be to focus on what is most relevant for you. We can then look at some of the practical tools you can use to achieve your goals.

If you get chance before the session, let me know if there are any particular themes or challenges it would be good to explore. Otherwise we can settle on these at the start of the session.

We will focus on each of the topics in turn and clarify the real results you want to achieve. If appropriate, I will then share some positive models and practical tools that you can use in your own way to achieve your goals.

These tools will be based on what works. You can then decide which route you want to follow towards achieving your aims.

We will keep going in the session until you feel you have enough ideas you can use in your own way to achieve your goals.

Looking forward to our session together.

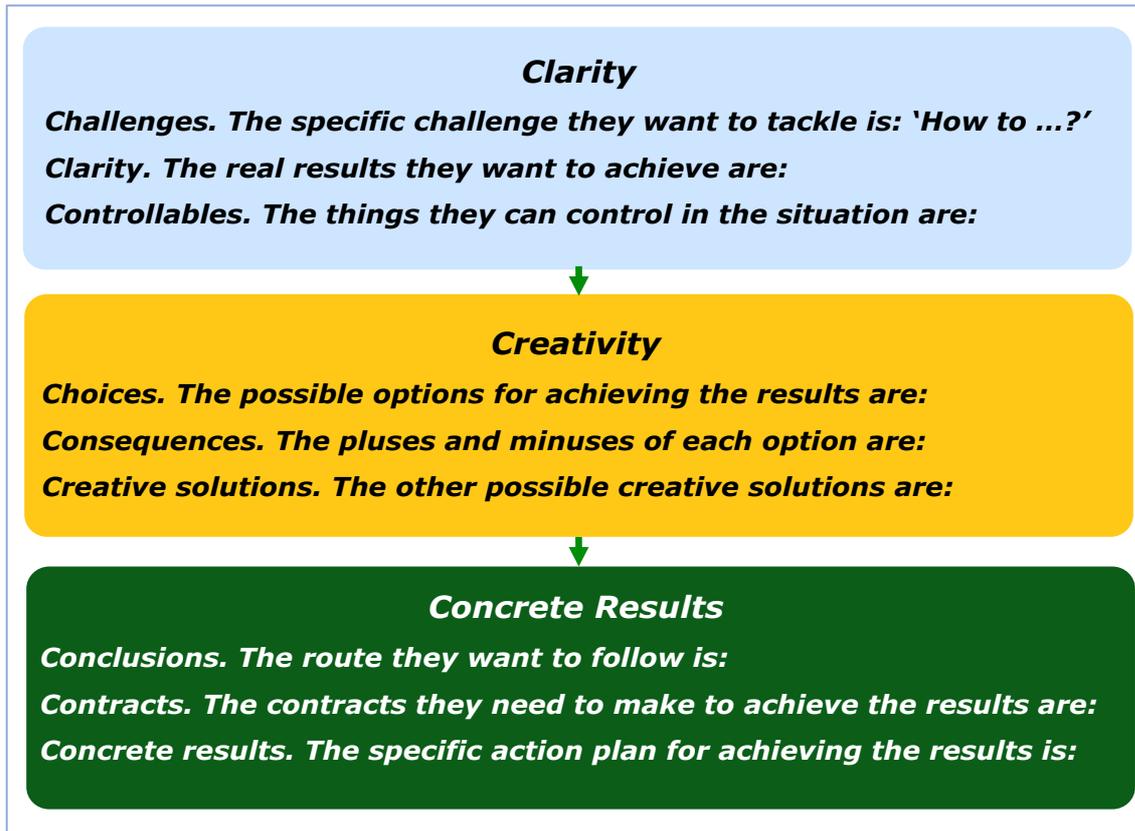
The Mentoring Session

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*



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 ...

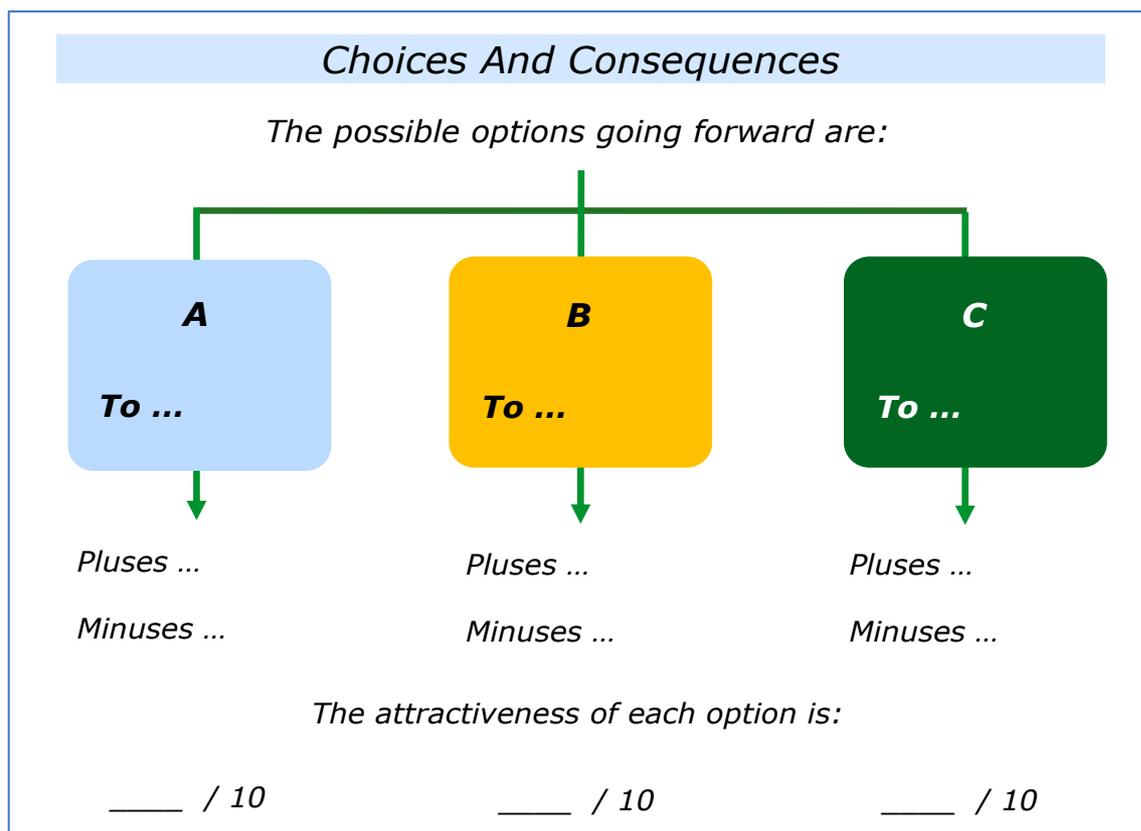
Option C is: To ...

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.

<i>Concrete Results</i>
<i>The specific action plan for achieving the results - including getting some early successes - is:</i>
* <i>To ...</i>
* <i>To ...</i>
* <i>To ...</i>

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:*

*

*

*

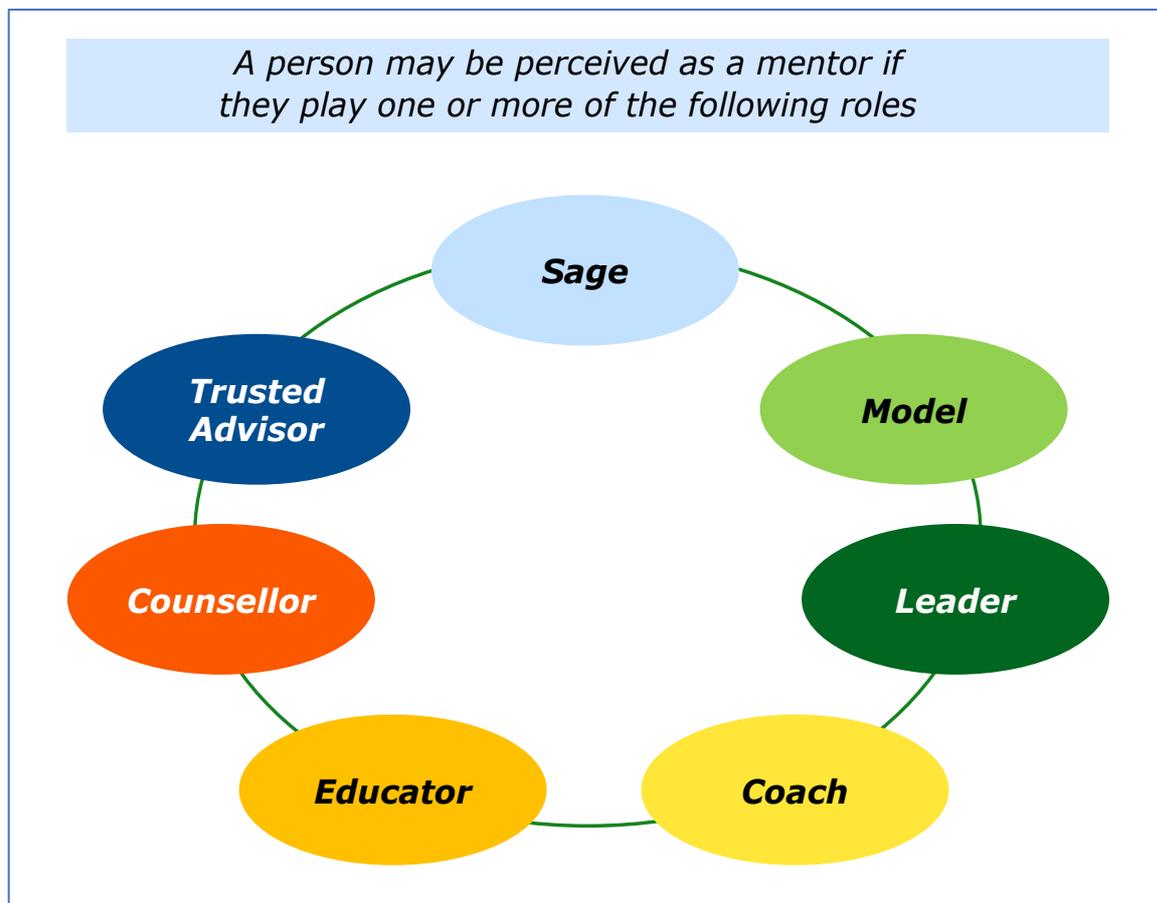
The Mentor's Many Roles – An Overview

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:

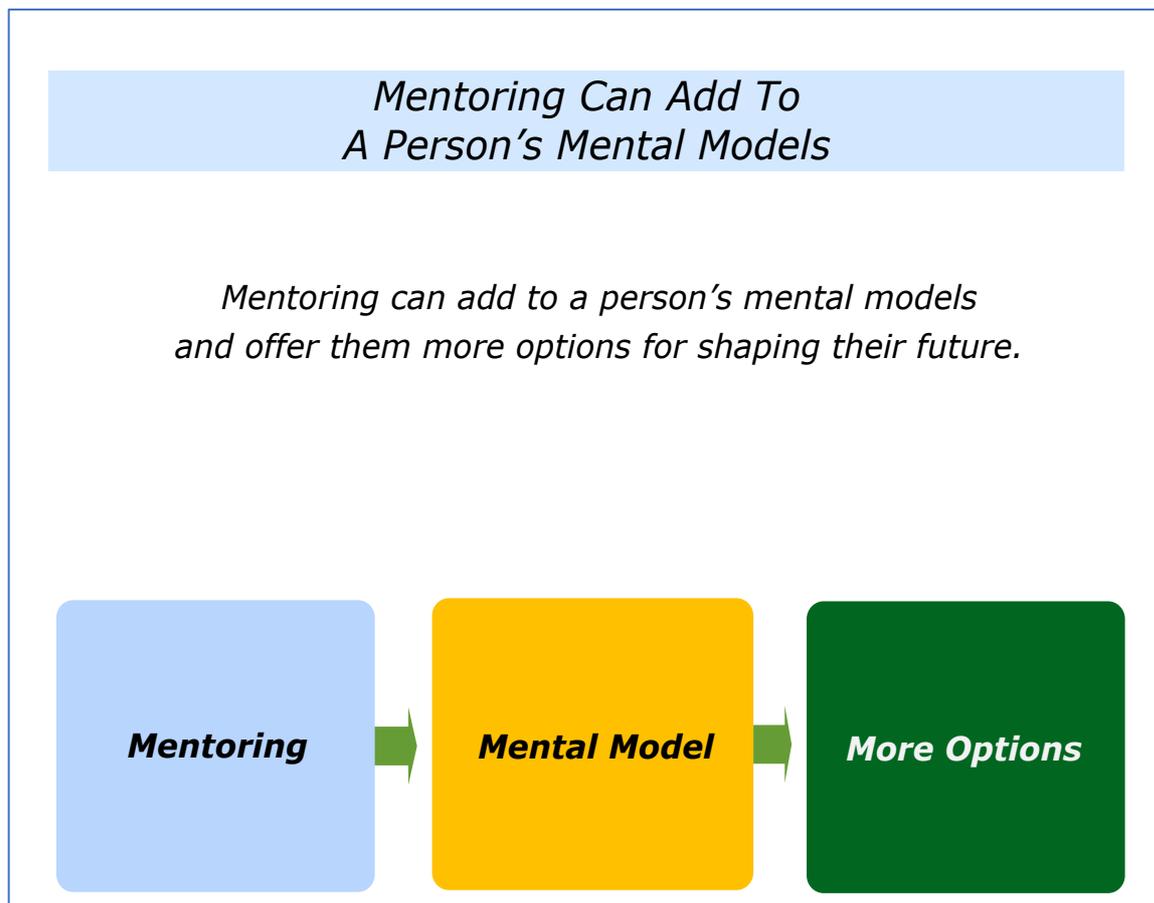
"Would it be okay if I put on my coaching hat? If so, there are a couple of practical skills that it may be useful to cover that may help you to reach your goals?"

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.



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:

*

*

*

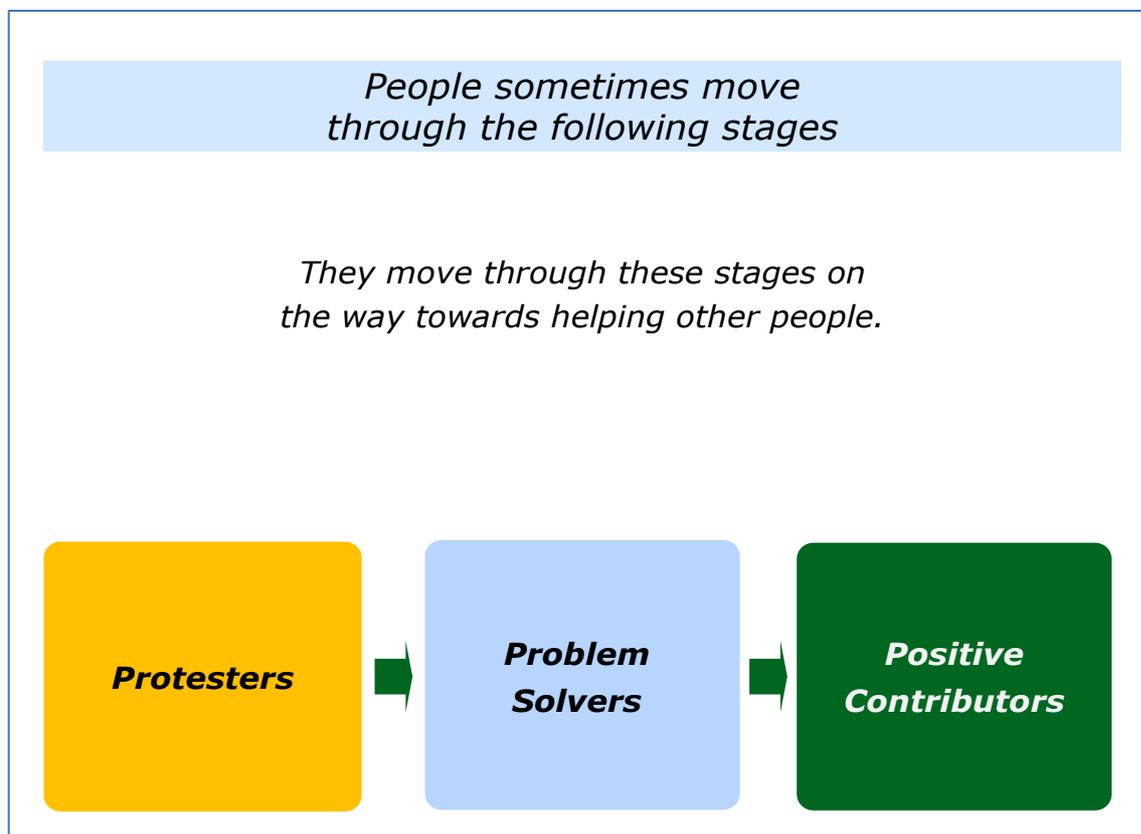
*Continuing To
Build A
Positive Planet*

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 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.

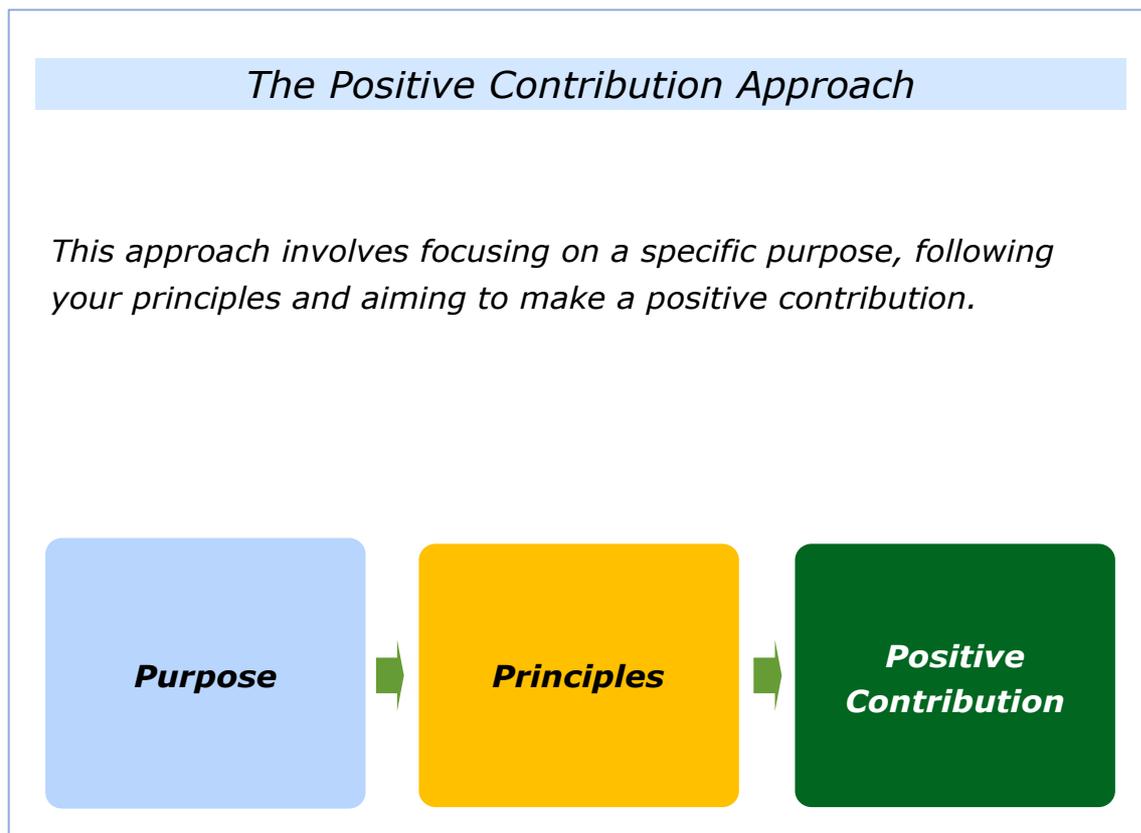
Positive Contributors

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 ...*

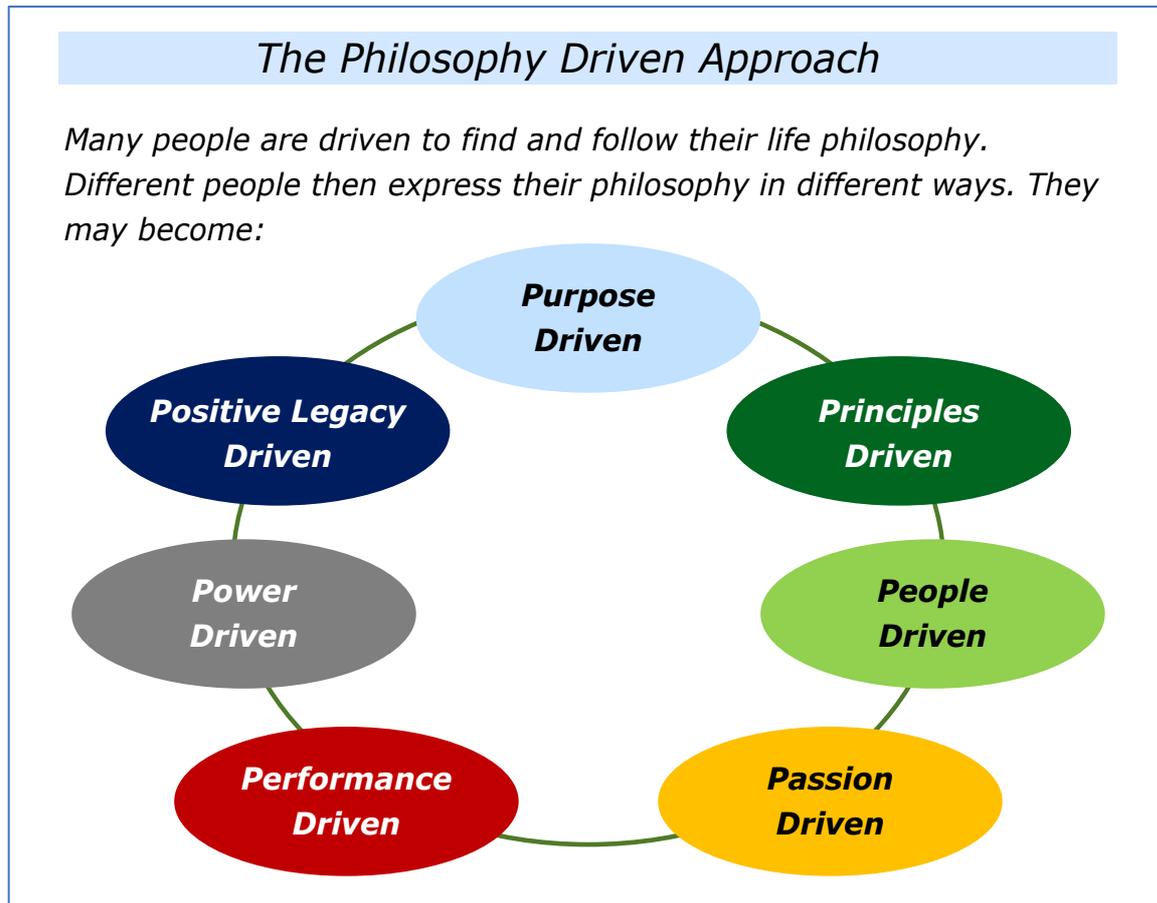
- * *To ...*

- * *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.

The Philosophy Driven Approach



Different people are driven by different things in life. Many start by aiming to satisfy their physical and psychological needs. They may then aim to find and follow their life philosophy.

Different people express their philosophy in different ways. They may then do their best to follow it and, in some cases, find a sense of peace. They may be driven in some of the following ways.

Purpose Driven

Some people develop a sense of purpose and keep focusing on what they believe in. They may aim to pursue a spiritual faith, follow their vocation or work towards achieving a picture of success.

Principles Driven

Some people believe in following certain principles. These principles act as a guiding compass that provide a framework for making decisions in their life and work. They then they aim translate these principles into action.

People Driven

Some people love to help other people. They love to give them encouragement and help them to succeed. They want to give positive things to people during their time on the planet.

Passion Driven

Some people focus on what they feel passionately about. They then translate this into action by working towards certain goals in their personal and professional lives.

Performance Driven

Some people focus on being the best they can be. They may aim to build on their strengths, follow strategies that work and achieve success by delivering peak performances.

Power Driven

Some people want to get power. They focus on getting money, status or positions that enable them to control other people. This approach can become addictive.

Positive Legacy Driven

Some people are driven to leave a positive legacy. They may want to pass on money, knowledge, philosophies or other practical things. They aim to do this to encourage both present and future generations.

As mentioned earlier, some people a focus on peace. They may aim to follow their philosophy and find peace in their own lives. Some may aim

to show other people how it is possible to live together and build a peaceful planet.

You will have your own life philosophy and express this in different ways. The following section explores how you may take this approach.

Clarifying Your Life Philosophy

My Life Philosophy

The philosophy I want to follow in my life is that I want:

* *To ...*

For example ...

* *To ...*

For example ...

* *To ...*

For example ...

Different people choose different ways to clarify their life philosophy. One approach is to clarify what you believe are the most important things in life. You may say, for example:

The things that I believe are important in life are:

To care for my loved ones ... To encourage other people ... To do work that helps to make the world a better place.

If appropriate, you may then want to clarify the specific things you can do to keep focusing on these important things in life.

The Important Things In Life

The specific things that I believe are important in life are:

* *To ...*

For example ...

* *To ...*

For example ...

* *To ...*

For example ...

Another approach is to simply brainstorm the philosophy you want to follow in life. You can then aim to follow these principles in your daily life.

This is a theme we will return to later in the book. If you wish, however, you may want to tackle the exercise on beginning to clarify your life philosophy. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

My Life Philosophy

The philosophy that I want to follow in my life is that I want:

* *To ...*

For example:

*

* *To ...*

For example:

*

* *To ...*

For example:

*

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 do 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 write 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:

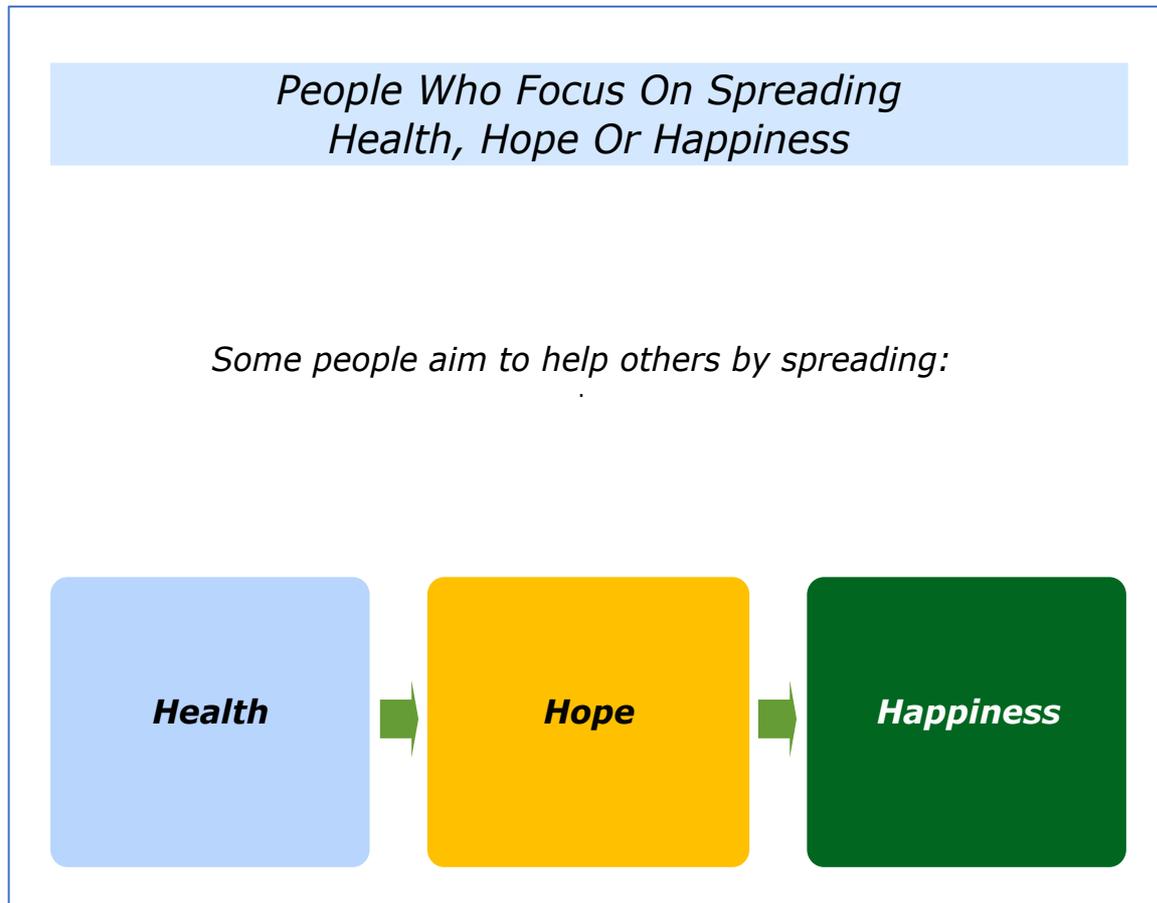
2) I have ...

For example:

3) I have ...

For example:

Different people have different motivations for pursuing a purpose. They also do this in different ways. The next sections looks at people who may do this by taking the following routes.



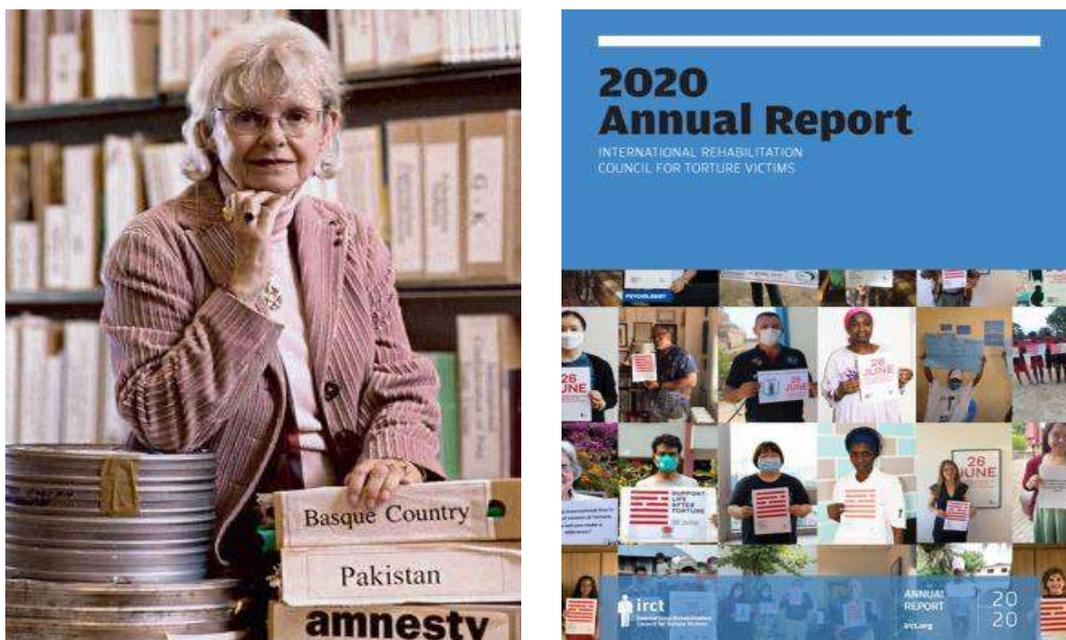
Many people aim to help others in their lives. Some aim to do this by using their strengths to focus on spreading health, hope or happiness. Let's explore these themes.

People Who Aim To Spread Health

They may provide people with food, shelter and an environment that improves their chances of staying healthy. They may work as a carer, medic or other kind of health professional. They may do work that helps people to take care of their physical or psychological health.

Different people aim to spread health in different ways. Let's look at one example.

*Inge Genefke - Caring
For The Victims Of Torture*



Some people try to crush the human spirit. Others try to maintain or revive it.

Inge Genefke, a Danish doctor, founded the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims in 1985. It aimed to do three things.

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.

Since then the IRCT has grown and has groups all over the world. Here is the present mission that you can find on its web site.

The IRCT is a health-based umbrella organisation that supports the rehabilitation of torture victims and the prevention of torture worldwide. Our members comprise more than 140 independent organisations in over 70 countries. Our work is governed by these member organisations.

Today, we are the largest membership-based civil society organisation to work in the field of torture rehabilitation and

Here is some background on Inge and the work of the IRCT. You can find this on the web site and is based on Thomas Larsen's book: *The Meeting with Evil - Inge Genefke's Fight Against Torture*.

Dr Genefke became aware of the existence of torture while still a child during Germany's occupation of Denmark in World War II.

With a father who was active in the Danish resistance movement there was a very real risk that torture would have a direct impact on her life. Fortunately, that risk never materialised. But it had set a young girl on the path of remarkable journey.

In 1974, after training as a neurologist, Dr Genefke, together with three fellow doctors, responded to a call by Amnesty International (AI) to help diagnose torture victims and produce forensic evidence that could help hold torturers to account in a court of law.

Forming AI's first medical group focusing on the question of torture, the doctors began to see torture survivors who had fled the cruel regimes then in place in Latin America, notably Chile, Argentina and Uruguay, as well as in Greece.

"After examining just the first 15 victims, we concluded they suffered horrible psychological sequelae. Of course we found physical sequelae.

"But the worst sequelae were psychological: depression and anxiety, the inability to concentrate and the terrible guilt", says Dr Genefke, who has personally provided direct treatment to hundreds of torture survivors.

In 1982 she founded one of the world's first clinics specialised in torture rehabilitation, the Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (now the Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims).

Three years later, she founded the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT).

Ever since she has worked incessantly and with fierce energy to garner support for the fight against torture, countless times addressing politicians and loudly criticising those in power in a wide-range of countries- democracies as well as dictatorships.

Commenting on the so-called "War on Terror" she has time and again refuted the notion that torture can be a safeguard against terrorism:

"Torture is not about extracting vital information to make the world a safer place, but rather to break the spirit of dissidents.

"It does not prevent terror; it creates terrorists. When you torture, you create violent hatred.

"If my father had been tortured by the Germans during their occupation I'm sure I would have become violent" says Dr Genefke.

The key to her remarkable achievements and dedication lies in her insistence that indifference and ignorance are the greatest foes of a world without torture:

"Often I am asked how I can stand being involved in this field. I also find it painful hearing about torture, but rather than be left in ignorance. With knowledge, I can fight it."

The knowledge and attention that her work has helped create plays no small role in the fact that across the world there is an ever-growing number of citizens who refuse to turn their backs on the mention of torture, let alone on its victims and those working against torture.



The IRCT continues with its necessary work around the world.

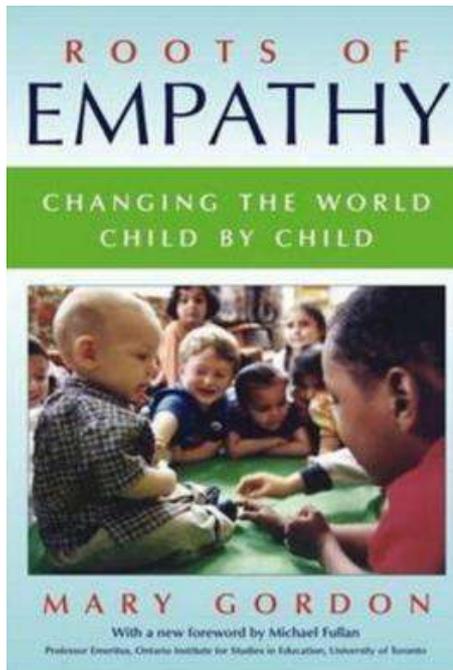
It keeps the human spirit alive and has drawn the following response from the Dalai Lama:

"Your organisation is actually compassion implemented."

*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.

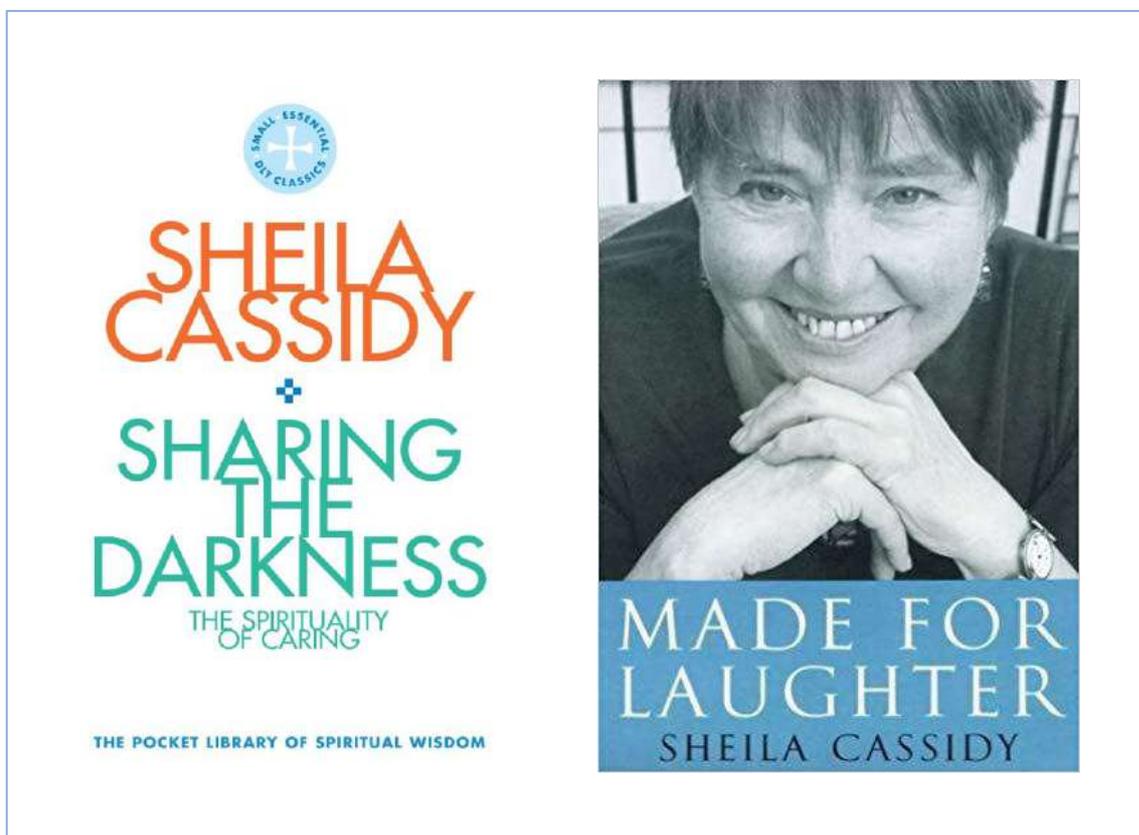
In the program, the baby is the "Teacher." With each family visit, the instructor leads the children in noticing how the baby is growing and changing over the course of his or her first year of life.

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.

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."

People Who Aim To Spread Hope

Different people spread hope in different ways. Some offer people practical encouragement. Some show how to find solutions to challenge. Some offer positive models and practical tools that people can use to shape their futures.

Some show it is possible to create hope in even the most difficult circumstances. Let's look at one example.

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.

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.



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.

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.

*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:

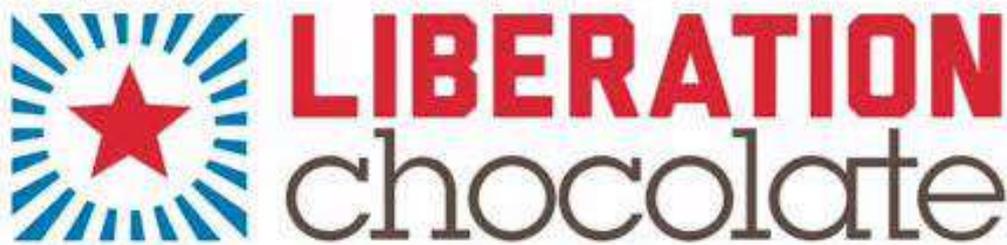
 <p>GAMES</p> <p>Ignite a passion for learning by providing resources that make learning and life-skills development active, engaging and fun.</p>	 <p>SPORT</p> <p>Transcends boundaries, inspires, instills positive values, and develops healthy behavior.</p>	 <p>CREATIVE PLAY</p> <p>Enables self-expression and creates a space for dialogue through art, drama, role-playing and performance.</p>	 <p>FREE PLAY</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.

People Who Aim To Spread Happiness

Different people spread happiness in different ways. Some aim to create encouraging environments that offer people positive experiences. Some pass on knowledge about the well-known principles that people can follow to increase their chances of happiness.

Many artists, writers and thinkers do work that aims to lift people's spirits. Let's look at some examples.

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.

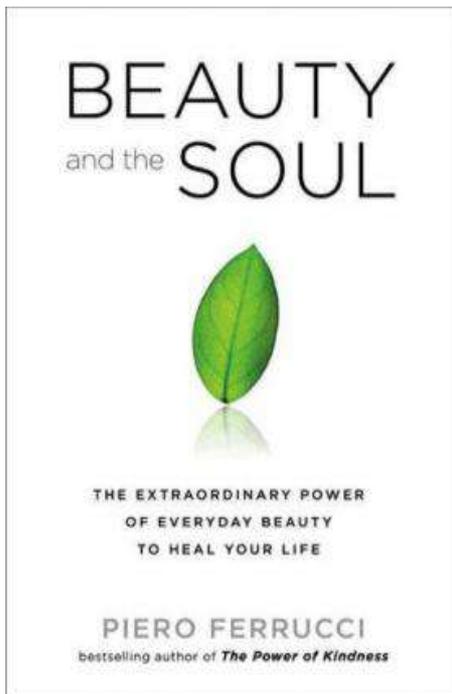
Piero believes that many people feel better when they are kind. He explains this in the following way.

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 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.

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."

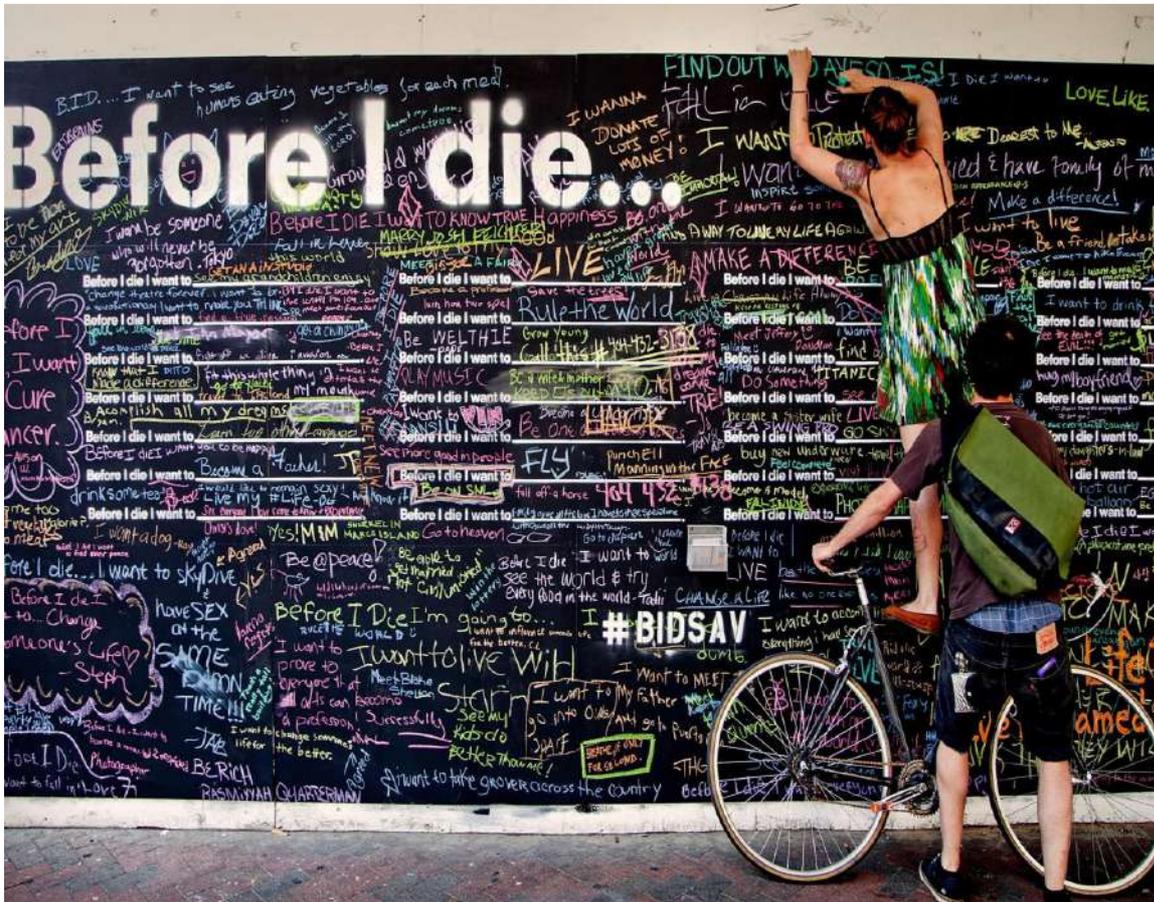
The gamut of humanity was on full display, and the wall became an honest mess of the longing, fear, insecurity, gratitude, humor, pain, and grace you find in every community.

Seeing some private corner of your psyche reflected in someone else's handwriting on a public wall can be incredibly reassuring on an individual level, and it's a step towards seeing ourselves in one another.

I received hundreds of messages from people around the world who wanted to make walls with their communities. I made resources and a step-by-step guide, and today, thanks to passionate people around the world, over 5,000 Before I Die walls have been created in over 75 countries and over 35 languages.

It has been one of the greatest experiences of my life to see this little experiment grow into a global project. I am continuously inspired by everyone's walls, which have revealed just how much we are the same.

From China to Iran, from Brazil to South Africa, the same themes emerge: We want to love and be loved. We want to do meaningful work. We want to travel the world. We want to see our loved ones thrive. We want to be at peace with ourselves.



*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.



Photograph by Terrence McCarthy

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.

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 bequeathed 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.*

There are many ways to live life. Some people aim to spread health, hope or happiness. Sometimes they combine all three elements when aiming to encourage people on the planet.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific activity 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 Health, Hope Or Happiness Approach

*The specific activity where I may
want to focus on spreading
health, hope or happiness may be:*

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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 Pursuing Your Purpose Approach

Pursuing My Purpose

My Purpose Is:

* *To ...*

The specific things I want to do to pursue my purpose today are:

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

* *To ...*

Imagine that you have clarified your purpose and how to translate this into action. The next step will be to keep pursuing your purpose. How to make this happen?

One approach is to translate your purpose into achieving certain long-term goals. You may aim: a) to achieve specific things in your personal or professional life; b) to pass on a positive legacy; c) to achieve a picture of success.

Another approach is to pursue your purpose each day. Depending on their long-term aims, different people will do this in different ways. They can then translate their aims into daily actions.

Looking at my own life, for example, I aim to be a positive encourager. The work I do as a mentor makes it relatively simple to translate this into

daily action. It provides the opportunity to encourage the mentees I work with around the world.

There are other situations where it can be important to focus on how to be a positive encourager. Looking at one example, there are times when I have medical treatment. This means that the whole day is occupied with travel, being in the medical centre and getting superb treatment.

Looking ahead, I think about how to encourage people during this day. Sometimes this can involve aiming:

To encourage people close to me before setting out for the day;

To use the train travel time to write an encouraging piece on social media;

To encourage the medical workers and other people I meet during the day.

While these are obvious things to do, they help to provide a sense of purpose and joy during the day. Then, when returning home, I aim to follow my purpose in other ways in my personal and professional life.

You will have your own way of pursuing your purpose. When appropriate, however, it can be useful to look ahead and focus on how you can translate this into action each day. This can help to provide meaning to the day.

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

Pursuing My Purpose

My Purpose Is:

*

The specific things I can do to pursue my purpose today are:

*

*

*

The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps 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.

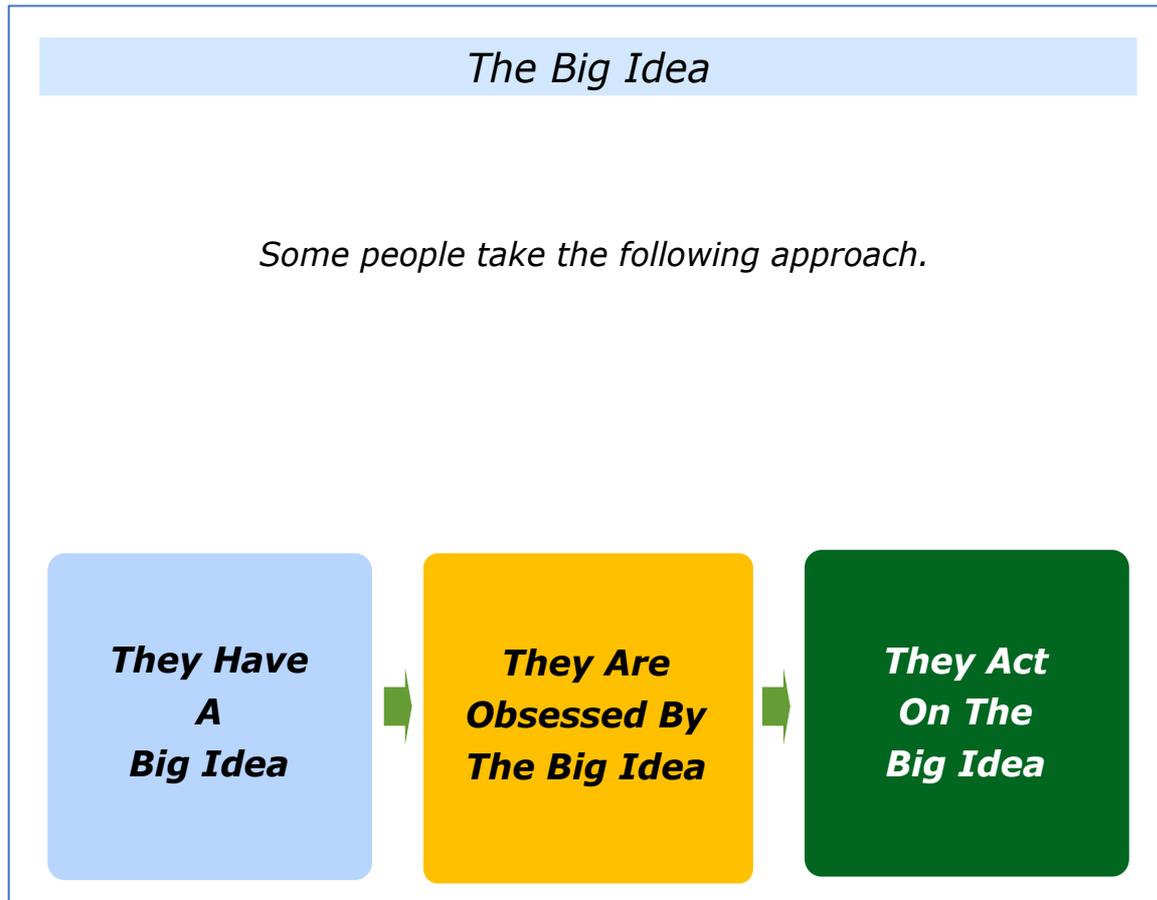
Positive Traits

The six human virtues and the 24 character strengths that are admired across cultures

- *Wisdom and Knowledge* *Creativity, curiosity, judgment, love of learning, perspective.*
- *Courage* *Bravery, persistence, honesty, zest.*
- *Humanity* *Love, kindness, social intelligence.*
- *Justice* *Teamwork (citizenship, loyalty, social responsibility), fairness, leadership.*
- *Temperance* *Forgiveness, humility, prudence, self-regulation.*
- *Transcendence* *Appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humour, spirituality.*

Different people choose different ways to embody the positive traits. Let's explore some of these approaches.

The Big Idea Approach



Some people follow elements of this approach in their lives and work. Such individuals focus on the following themes.

They Have A Big Idea

This can be a big idea about following a certain philosophy, pursuing certain principles or living in a certain way. It can be about doing a creative project, performing satisfying work, passing on knowledge or doing another activity.

Such a person will believe in following the big idea. They may or may not have invented the idea, but they want to pursue it in their daily lives or

work. They may believe in encouraging people, doing high quality work, building a better world or another activity.

They Are Obsessed By The Big Idea

Some individuals are obsessed by a big idea. They are single-minded and cut out other things happening around them. They may be training for the Olympics, writing a book, finding a medical cure or doing another activity.

Some people manage their obsession in positive ways. They may be able to balance caring for their loved ones with crafting their big idea. Whilst encouraging other people, they may also encourage themselves by setting aside blocks of time to pursue their compelling passion.

They Act On The Big Idea

Some individuals want to translate their big idea into action. They may do this by helping people, running a pioneering education programme, doing creative work, building a pacesetting company or pursuing another activity.

Such people may work through the stages of innovation, implementation and making an impact. They may make a contribution to people's lives or their profession. Some may aim to translate their paradigm into action and help to build a more positive planet.

Let's return to your own life and work. What may be the big idea you want to pursue? This could be a philosophy, principle or project you would like to explore. Looking ahead, how can you pursue this in your own way?

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

The Big Idea Approach

*The big idea that I
would like to pursue is:*

*

*The specific things I can do to pursue
this big idea in my own way are:*

*

*

*

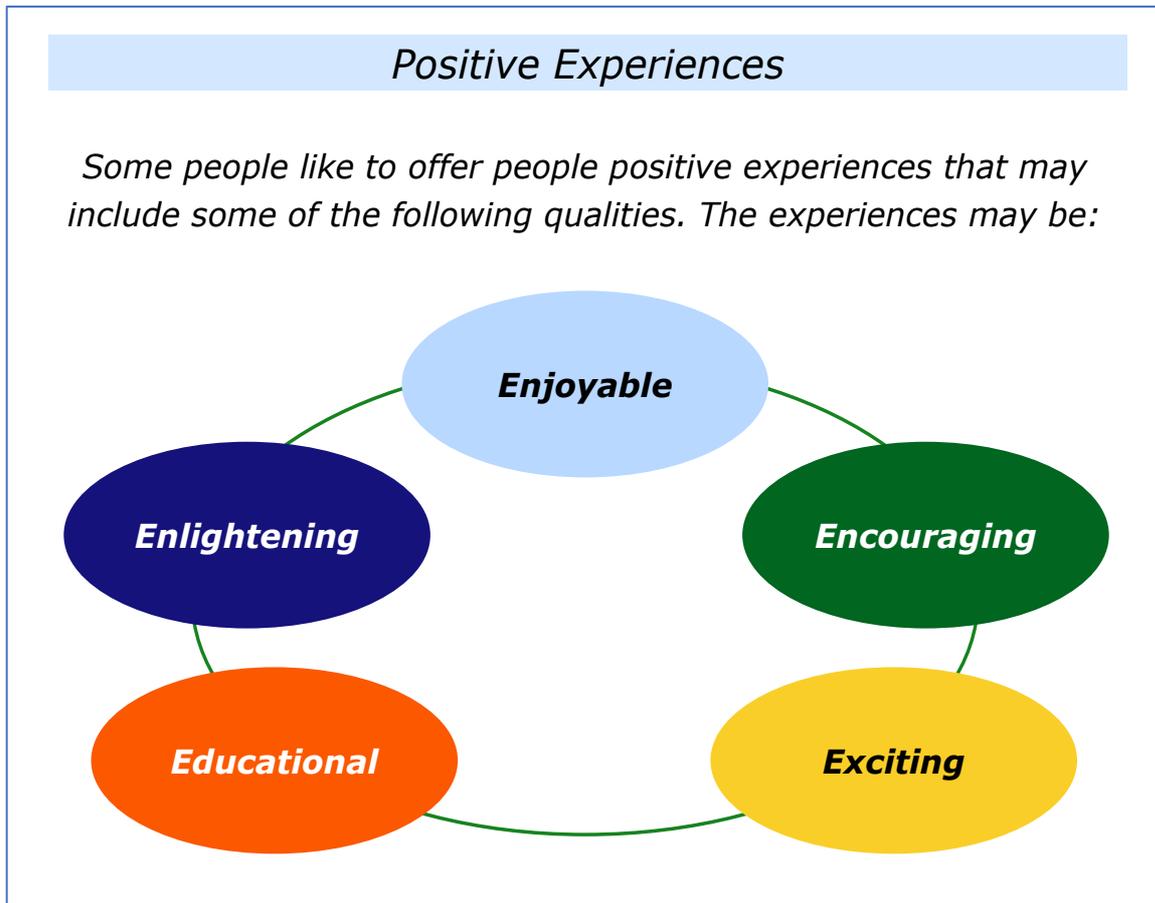
*The specific things that may happen
as a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

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.

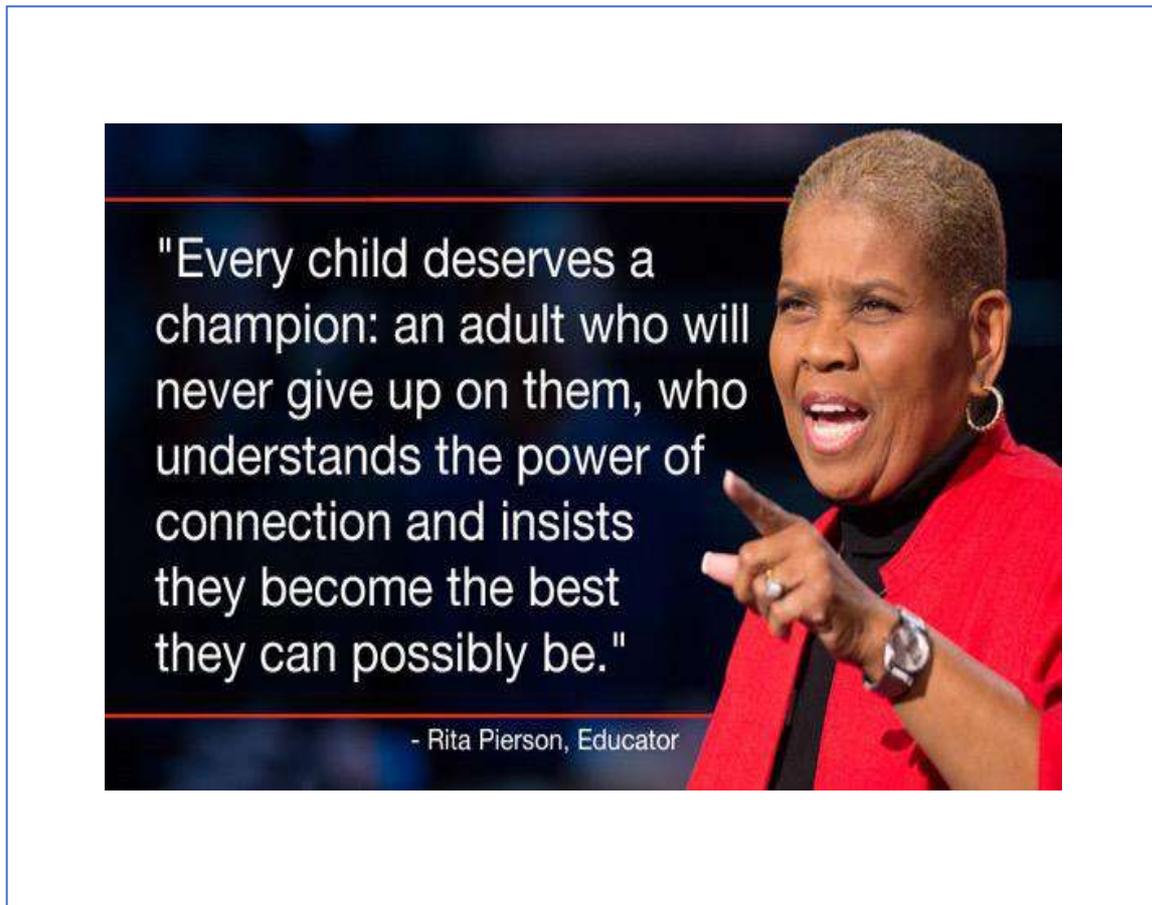
Some people do this in a school, college or other formal setting. Some do it in a workshop, on the training ground or during the working day. Some do it in more informal settings.

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:*

*

*

*

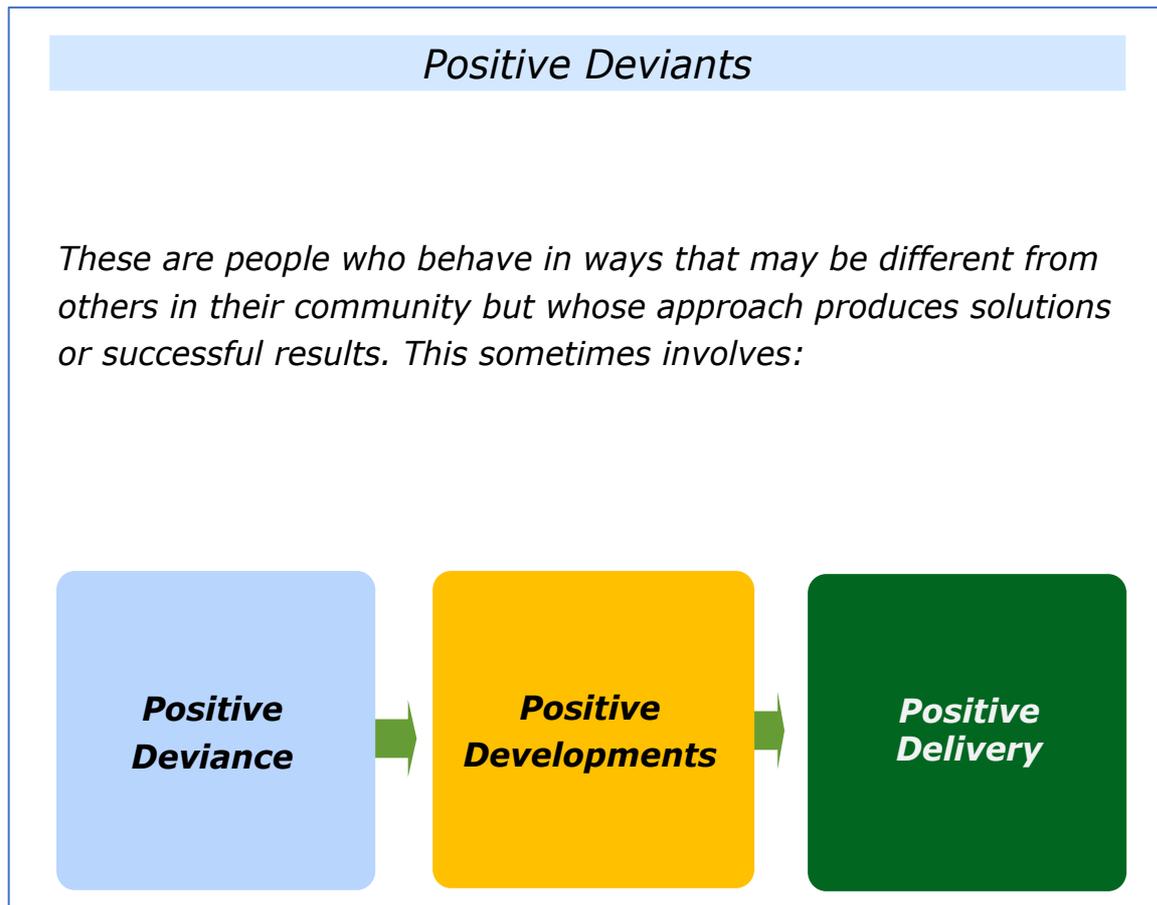
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

The Positive Deviance Approach



Positive deviants behave in ways that are different from others in their community. They experience similar circumstances but the strategies they follow provide solutions to challenges. If appropriate, others can follow these strategies to achieve successful results.

The following section provides an introduction to this approach. It is based on excerpts from the Positive Deviance Collaborative website. Here is the piece.

Positive Deviance (PD) is based on the observation that in every community there are certain individuals or groups whose uncommon behaviors and strategies enable them to find better solutions to problems than their peers, while having access to the same resources and facing similar or worse challenges.

The Positive Deviance approach is an asset-based, problem-solving, and community-driven approach that enables the community to discover these successful behaviors and strategies and develop a plan of action to promote their adoption by all concerned.

The PD approach does not treat such people as heroes. Instead it focuses on the strategies they use to achieve success. The Positive Deviance website explains one of the first examples of this approach.

The term "Positive Deviance" initially appeared in the nutrition research literature in the 1960s.

*The concept of Positive Deviance (PD) in nutrition was further refined in the book *Positive Deviance in Child Nutrition* by Tufts University professor, Marian Zeitlin, her colleagues Hossein Ghassemi and Mohamed Mansour, published by the United Nations University Press in 1990.*

Based on solid research, the book documented the existence of healthy children or "Positive Deviant" children in very poor families living in communities with high level of childhood malnutrition.

Zeitlin and her colleagues advocated the use of this concept to address childhood malnutrition issues at the community level by identifying what was going right in the community in order to amplify it, as opposed to focusing on what was going wrong in the community and fixing it.

In the early 1990's in Vietnam, Jerry Sternin and his wife, Monique Sternin, working for the US NGO Save the Children, supported by Save the Children Health Advisor Dr. Gretchen Berggren, experimented with Zeitlin's PD concept and operationalized it to eradicate childhood malnutrition in a sustainable way as mandated by the Vietnamese government.

Thanks to the dedicated work of the local organizations working together for the first time (Women's Union, People's Committee and Health Services), the community based and owned pilot project was successful in rehabilitating 93% of children and was subsequently scaled up to reach 5 million families in Vietnam.

The PDs who helped raised healthier children tended to do things that broke with tradition. These included the following:

They fed their children even when they had diarrhoea;

They gave them multiple smaller meals rather than two big ones;

They added 'leftover' sweet potato greens to meals. Though loaded with micronutrients, they were traditionally thought unsuitable for young children and thrown away;

They collected small shrimp and crabs found in the paddy fields – rich in protein and minerals – and including them in their family's diet;

They avoided food waste by actively feeding their children rather than setting the food down in front of them.

Jeremy Sutton described this and other examples in an article called *Positive Deviance: 5 Examples Of The Power*. He introduced the approach in the following way.

Like positive psychology, positive deviance focuses on what is right rather than what is wrong.

If we are to address humanity's greatest threats – overpopulation, famine, poverty, climate change, loss of jobs due to automation, pandemics, and mental health problems – we need to search for those pockets of people, the positive deviants, who are doing things right.

We must understand them, learn what they do well, and share their knowledge beyond their community.

The PD approach has since been used to tackle many issues regarding health, wellbeing, work and business. Jeremy provides a framework that can be used to apply it in different fields. Here is an introduction to the steps he suggests.

The Steps Of Positive Deviance

Positive deviance is perhaps better thought of as a positive mindset rather than a model or theory.

Its strengths are its simplicity, widespread applicability, and brevity.

The approach is ideal for facing an intractable problem requiring a solution that includes social and behavioral change.

The four Ds – define, determine, discover, and design – are central to delivering a positive deviance outcome (Pascale et al., 2010).

Step 1 – Define the problem and the necessary outcome

The community itself (rather than a set of outsiders) defines, refines, and reframes the issue.

Actions:

Engage with the community to understand the data that measures the problem.

*Create a view of how an improved or ideal future would look.
Explore the issues and barriers associated with the problem.*

Identify the stakeholders.

Be open, and share the findings in community forums.

Step 2 – Determine common practices

The community is most qualified to determine commonplace practices and behaviors.

Actions:

Set up meetings to include different groups across the community.

Involve the community in identifying activities, learnings, and prioritization.

Step 3 – Discover uncommon, successful behaviors

The community identifies positive deviants.

Actions:

Identify who in the community faces the same challenges, with the same resources, yet tackles the problem successfully.

Interview individuals displaying deviant behavior.

Identify the uncommon practices that lead to improved outcomes. Share the lessons learned with the community.

Step 4 – Design an initiative using the learnings

The community comes up with the design and the activities to expand the reach of the solution.

Actions:

Apply the learned positive deviance behaviors. Begin small, then expand the roll-out.

Connect people who were not previously connected. Create opportunities for learning to take place.

The community itself will monitor the overall effectiveness of the initiative. If successful, document the insights gained and suggested behavior, and share beyond the original community to others facing similar challenges.

During the past fifty years many people have applied the PD approach in different fields. One of the keys is to focus on positive deviants within a community.

This shows how it is possible for people who experience similar circumstances to follow successful strategies. This shows that:

'It is possible here,' rather than, 'It is not possible here.'

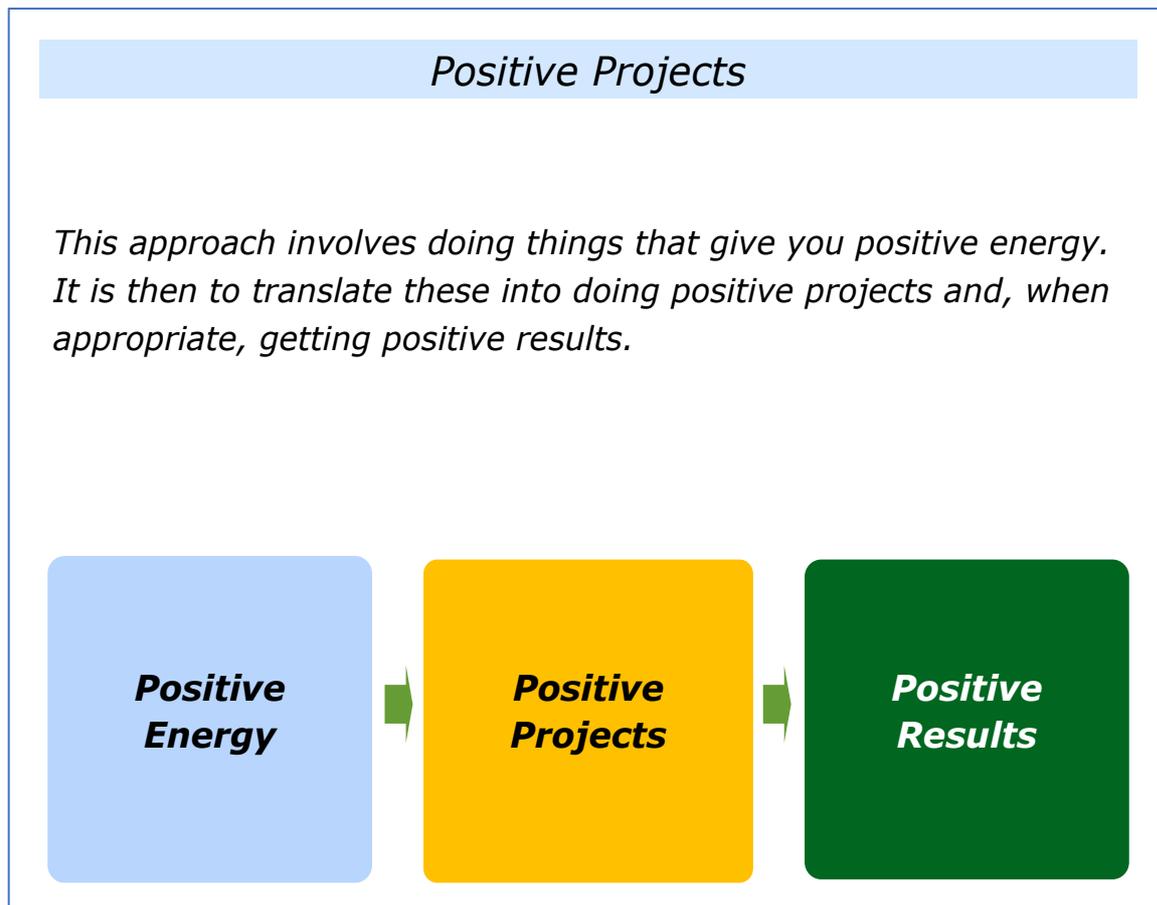
William Seidman and Michael McCauley, for example, studied how it could be used in the commercial sector. Here is a summary of what they discovered. You will, of course, apply these ideas in your own way.

The Power Of Positive Deviants

William Seidman and Michael McCauley focused on how the positive deviant approach could be applied in different fields. Their work provided ideas that could be used:

- To quickly identify the positive deviants;*
- To efficiently gather and organise the positive deviant knowledge;*
- To motivate a willingness in others to adopt the positive deviant approaches*
- To sustain the change by others by integrating it into their pre-existing emotional and cognitive functions;*
- To scale the positive deviant knowledge to large numbers of people simultaneously.*

The Positive Projects Approach



There are many ways to live life. One approach is to do things that you positive energy. It is then to translate these into doing positive projects and, when appropriate, getting positive results.

This is an approach that people can follow in both their personal and professional lives. It is one that can have benefits for both themselves and other people.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of this approach. It involves focusing on the following themes.

Positive Energy

Energy is life. So what gives you positive energy? How can you do more of the things that give you positive energy? Let's explore some steps to making this happen.

One approach is to start by clarifying the things that give you positive energy in your personal and professional life. This is an exercise that I gave people when running workshops. Here are some of the things they wrote.

Personal Life

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

Being with our children ... Gardening ... Listening to the sound of our waterfall ... Singing in the choir ... Taking walks by myself ... Playing the guitar ... Cooking for our family ... Caring for our horse.

Professional Life

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

Encouraging people in my work ... Playing to my strengths ... Doing satisfying projects ... Solving technical problems ... Leading pioneering teams ... Caring for animals ... Acting as a trusted advisor.

People who are givers sometimes find it hard to take care of themselves. It can be important to encourage themselves, however, and they may then have more energy to give to others.

Sheila Cassidy is such a giver. During the 1970s she was imprisoned in Chile for providing medical care to opponents of the Pinochet regime. Returning to the UK after being tortured, she went on to become Medical Director of St Luke's Hospice in Plymouth.

Sheila gave to others but sometimes starved herself of pleasures. Hard work took its toll, however, and she began taking more care of herself. Writing in her book *Sharing The Darkness*, Sheila explains what happened.

"Perhaps the final fall from my self-styled perch of grace came at the beginning of the winter season when Brideshead Revisited was serialised for television.

"Until then I had stalwartly refused to have more than a transistor radio and tape recorder, but now I could bear it no longer and rushed into town to buy myself a TV."

Sheila found that, far from corrupting her contribution, she gave even more to people.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe the things that give you positive energy.

Positive Energy

*The things that give me positive energy
in my personal and professional life.*

Personal Life

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

*

*

*

*

*

Professional Life

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

*

*

*

*

*

Positive Projects

Imagine that you have clarified the thing that give you positive energy. If you wish, you can then translate one or more of these into doing a positive project.

People love doing projects. They enjoy going on a trip, designing a garden, writing an article, renovating a classic car, organising a charity or working to achieve a compelling goal.

People who take this approach often follow their passions. They may then go through the stages of planning, performing the work and getting positive results.

This is an approach taken by many pioneers and peak performers. It is also taken by people who may think differently or be considered to be different.

Such individuals may have a different way of operating that is not always recognised by traditional systems. They may be dyslexic, for example, or be wired in other ways.

These people may sometimes encounter difficulties but, if they get the right support, they can do superb work. They may also develop their self-esteem by building on their strengths rather than looking for rewards from the system.

Imagine that you have focused on the things that give you positive energy. If appropriate, you may want to explore the following themes.

What is the specific activity I want to focus on that gives me positive energy? Bearing this in mind, what is the kind of project I could do that would also give me positive energy?

What would be the goals of the project? What would be the real results I would aim to achieve? What would be the picture of success? What would be the benefits of doing such a project?

What are the key strategies I could follow to give myself the greatest chance of success? How could I follow these strategies? How could I encourage myself on the journey?

What would be the pluses involved in doing the project? What would be the potential minuses? How could I build on the pluses and manage the consequences of the minuses.

Bearing these things in mind, on a scale 0-10 how would I rate my motivation to do the project? What could I do to maintain or improve the rating?

Imagine that you have worked through some of these themes. You also feel motivated and ready to embark on a project. If you wish, try tackling the following exercise. This invites you to complete the following sentences.

Positive Projects

The specific project I would like to do that builds on what gives me positive energy.

Positive Projects

*Bearing in mind what gives me positive energy,
the specific project I would like to do would be:*

*

*The specific benefits of
doing this project would be:*

*

*

*

Positive Results

Imagine that you have embarked on doing the project. If appropriate, you may aim to achieve certain positive results. The results you aim to achieve will depend on your chosen project. You may, for example, be aiming to do something that focuses on people, products or the planet.

People

You may aiming to help people to be healthy, hopeful or happy. You may be aiming to help them to learn a skill, add to their repertoires or more able to shape their futures. You may be focusing on yourself and aiming to achieve peak performance.

Products

You may aim to do work that falls under the general category of improving or developing products. You may be aiming to build or

renovate a machine, a house or a building. You may be aiming to design a product or service that improves life for yourself or other people.

Planet

You may be aiming to care for a garden, grow food or clear up a polluted site. You may be aiming to care for the land, animals or other parts of the eco-system. You may be aiming to show how to build sustainable systems that provide wins for people and wins the planet.

Different people follow their preferred styles of operating when doing a project. Some take the following approach.

They play to their strengths, follow their chosen strategies and aim to do superb work;

They embody the ethic of continuous improvement by building on what is working and tackling areas for improvement;

They do their best to deliver the desired results and add that touch of class to achieve the picture of success.

Let's return to the project that you may already be working on. Looking at the aims you want to achieve, how can you do your best to achieve the desired positive results? Reaching this goal can lead to a feeling of satisfaction and even a sense of peace.

There may come a time, however, when you want to refocus on doing things that give you positive energy. You may then translate these into doing another positive project.

If you wish, try tackling the final exercise on your chosen project. This invites you to focus on how you can do your best to achieve positive results. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

Positive Results

The specific things I can do to, if appropriate, do my best to get positive results when doing the project.

Positive Results

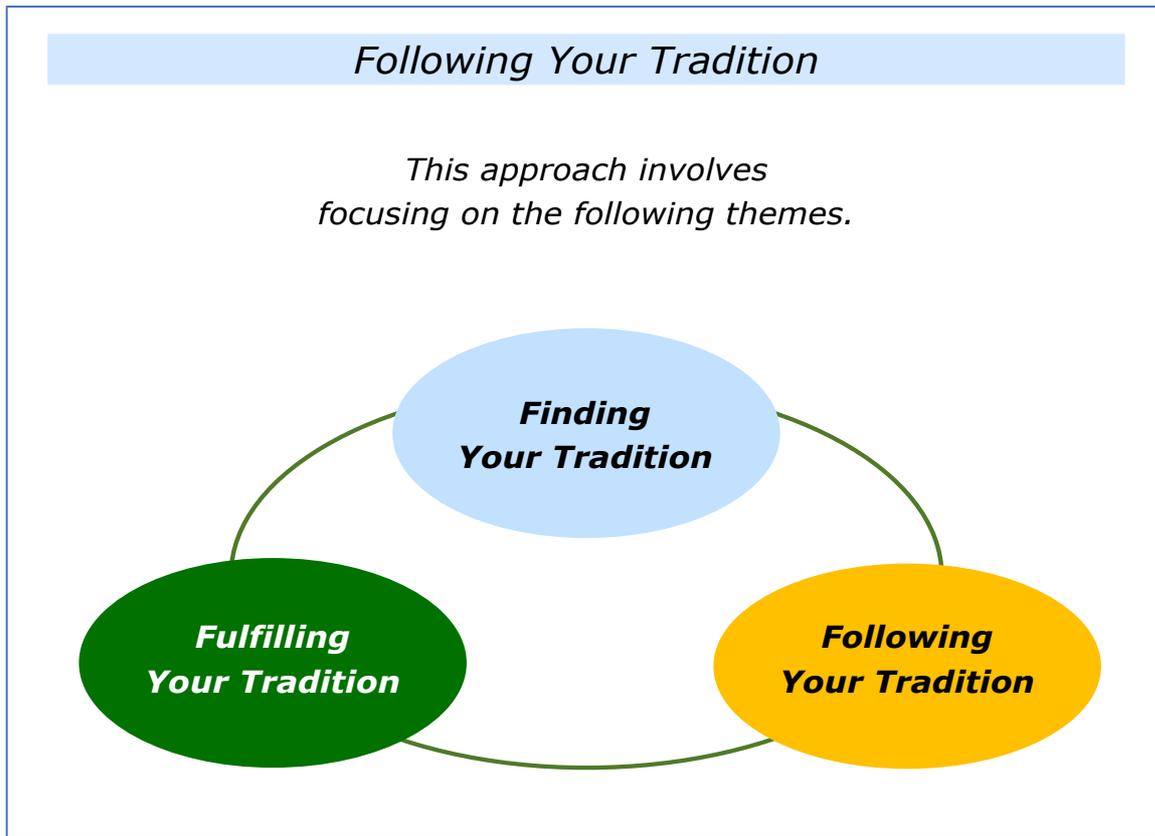
The specific things I can do to, if appropriate, do my best to get positive results when doing the project are:

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*

The Following Your Tradition Approach



There are many models for translating your principles into action. One approach is to focus on finding, following and fulfilling 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 tradition
 and 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. For example, my own models have been people such as Abraham Maslow, Virginia Satir and Viktor Frankl.

Why? 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, Sheila Cassidy 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 on the web, you may be following the path taken by Tim Berners-Lee. Alternatively, you may be pursuing a path taken by other people.

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 doing work you admire?

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

Finding My Tradition

The names of the people I admire whose path I would like to follow in my way are:

*

*

*

The specific principles they followed to do things I admire were:

*

*

*

The specific things that happened as a result of some of them following these principles were:

*

*

*

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?

Bernard Haldane and Richard Bolles, for example, helped many people to shape their future careers. They pioneered a path that has been followed by many others who help people to follow their vocation.

Barrie Hopson and Mike Scally did similar work in the UK and published their book *Build Your Own Rainbow*. Today there are many people who dedicate themselves to helping people do fulfilling work.

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.

Let's return to your own life and work. What do you think may be your tradition? Try to think of a name for what you do. This may not be a perfect summary of what you do but it may point you in a certain direction.

You may follow in the tradition of being an encourager, educator, healer, coach or mentor. You may be a pioneer, problem solver, social entrepreneur, leader, orchestrator or play another role.

How can you follow your tradition? The key is to follow your principles 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 kind of
tradition I want to follow is:*

*

*The specific principles I want to
follow when pursuing this tradition are:*

*

*

*

*The specific things I can do to
translate these principles into action are:*

*

*

*

Fulfilling Your Part Of Your Tradition

How can you contribute to your tradition? One approach is to focus on the following themes.

You can start by identifying your tradition.

You may be working as an encourager, counsellor, healer, artist, athlete, scientist, leader or in another role. If appropriate, you can focus on how you can continue to develop in this role.

You can do positive work by following the principles associated with the tradition.

This is a path taken by many people who serve something greater than themselves. They aim keep translating their principles into action and do positive work each day.

You can add to the knowledge base of the tradition.

You may can do this by building on your strengths and making a contribution. You may do this by performing pioneering work, producing a book, building prototypes or passing on knowledge.

You will, of course, find your own way of contributing to your tradition. Taking these steps can sometimes lead to a sense of fulfilment.

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

Fulfilling My Tradition

The specific kind of tradition I want to follow is:

*

The specific things I can do to contribute to this tradition and maybe get a sense of fulfilment are:

*

*

*

The specific benefits of doing these things may be:

*

*

*

The Last Lecture Approach

The Last Lecture

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: ...

Let's look at another approach to clarifying your principles. This is based on the academic tradition of giving a Last Lecture.

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:*

*

*

*

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:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to pass on these things to people are:

*

*

*

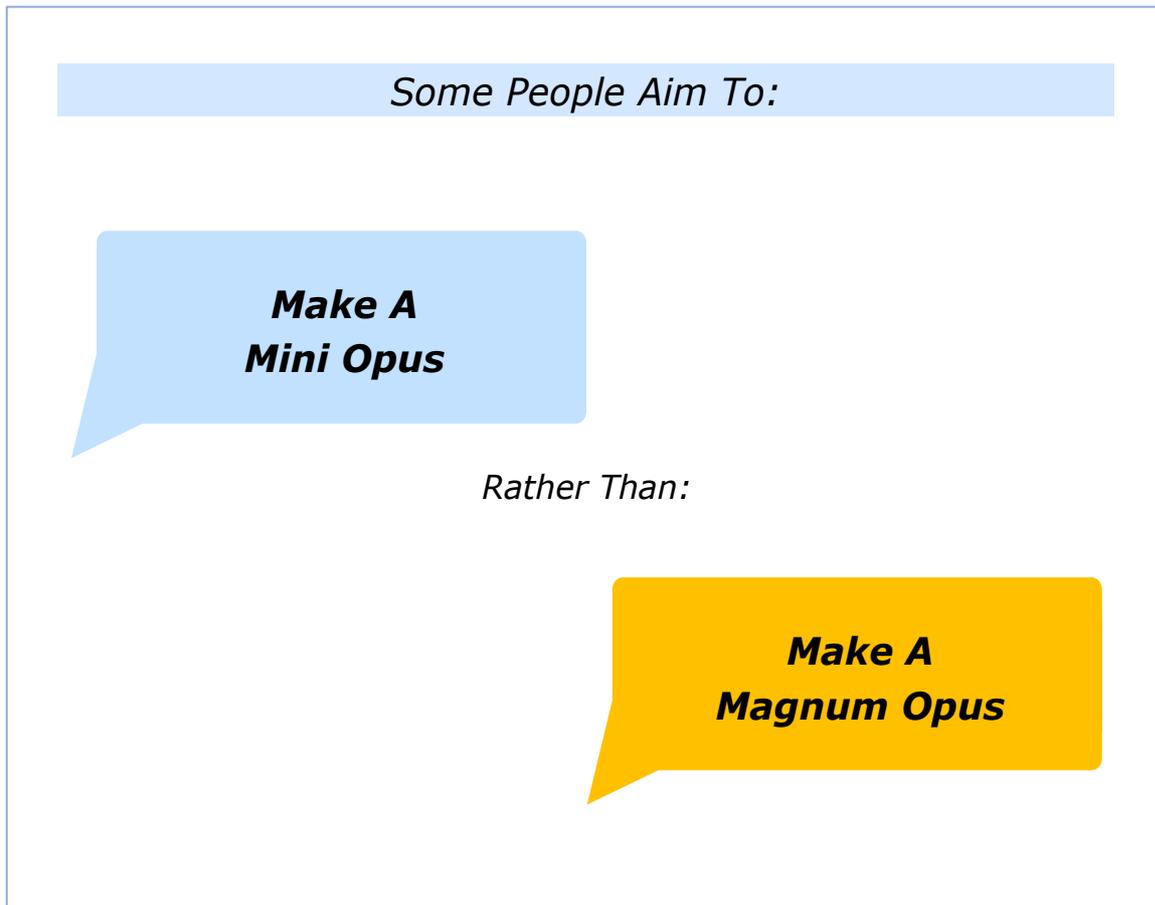
The specific things that may happen as a result of passing on these things may be:

*

*

*

The Making A Mini Opus Approach



This is an approach that is followed by some people at a certain stage in their lives. They aim to make a mini opus rather than a magnum opus.

As we know, these are several definitions for a magnum opus. Here is one view.

A piece of work, art, music, literature or other contribution that is regarded as the best or most important work that the individual, artist, writer, composer, philosopher or other influential figure has produced.

Some people are humble and do not see themselves as producing a great work. They may have learned many lessons in life, however, and can pass on ideas that other people can use in their own ways.

Such individuals may share what they have learned by creating some kind of mini opus. One person expressed this in the following way.

"I see what I am putting together as a collection of what I have learned and the knowledge I want to pass on to people."

"There are some themes in the material. But I do not see it as some kind of grand work."

Different people put together their lessons, ideas and knowledge in different ways. They may do this in a way where they are able:

To build on their personal or professional strengths;

To make use of the media that best fits their style – such as writing, broadcasting or another creative activity;

To pass on knowledge in a way that may help people.

As mentioned earlier, such people do not see themselves as having wisdom. They may recognise, however, that they have gathered knowledge about what works in certain areas of life. Bearing this in mind, they aim share this information with people.

Such individuals often look forward working on their mini opus. It becomes a place where they can play and do a series of mini projects. One person expressed this in the following way.

"I become absorbed in putting together the ideas. It is my equivalent of going into a potting shed, studio or laboratory. I hope it contributes to helping to leave a positive legacy."

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of how you may want to follow elements of the mini opus approach? How can you take this steps? 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 Making A Mini Opus Approach

*The specific way that 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:*

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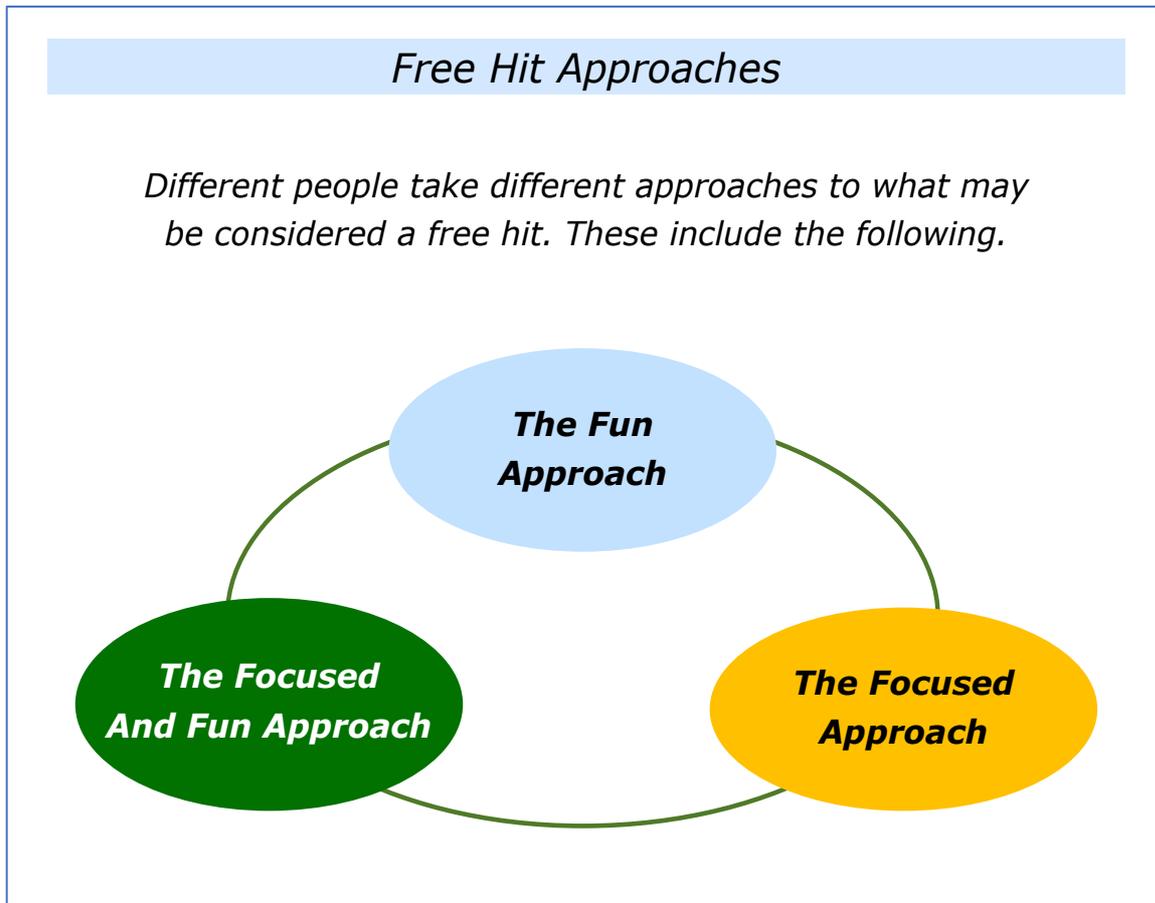
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

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*

The Free Hit Approach



There are several definitions of the term free hit. Some apply to sports whilst some apply to other activities. Here is one definition.

You have the opportunity of doing something without the possibility of being penalised or losing anything

Looking at your own life, there may be different experiences that you see as a free hit. Here are some of the possible situations.

You may be doing an activity where you can only gain and have nothing to lose.

You may be playing a sport against a top class opponent where there is little expectation you will win.

You may be an outsider pitching for a piece of business that you have little chance of winning.

You may have recovered from a life-threatening illness and see the rest of your life as a bonus.

You may be embarking on your retirement years with enough money in the bank to keep you going.

Different people have different approaches to such situations. Let's explore some of these approaches.

The Fun Approach

People who take this approach see the situation as an opportunity. A person may say something along the following lines.

"This is a great opportunity and I am just going to enjoy myself. Anything else I get as a result will be a bonus."

Such an approach frees them up to be themselves and enjoy the experience. This may - in some situations - also enable them to do their best. Sometimes this can result in them reaping even more benefits.

The Focused Approach

People who take this approach prepare for the free hit in a determined and focused way. Such a person may aim:

To clarify what they aim to achieve in the situation;

To clarify and rehearse strategies they aim to follow in the situation;

To clarify how they can deal with any challenges in the situation.

Such a person will then click into action. They will focus fully and do their best to get the desired results in the situation.

The Focused And Fun Approach

People who take this approach will aim to be focused but also enjoy the situation. This can also enable them to do their best and sometimes enter a state of flow.

Such a person may aim to prepare properly, follow their principles and achieve peak performance. When appropriate, they may introduce a sense of play in their work.

They may also have a sense in perspective. They see how the specific activity may be important but there are many more important things in the world. Paradoxically, this can enable them to perform at their best.

Some people take the following steps when going into a situation. As mentioned, they prepare properly. They may then aim:

To flow – to set things up so they can flow;

To focus – to click into action and focus fully;

To find fulfilment – to do fine work, have fun and find fulfilment.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a situation that you may define as a free hit? This could be in your personal or professional life.

How do you want to behave in the situation? You may aim to have fun, to focus or to combine being focused and having fun. How can you follow your chosen path in the situation? 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 Free Hit Approach

The specific situation that I may define as a free hit may be:

*

The specific things I want to do in this situation that I define as a free hit are:

*

*

*

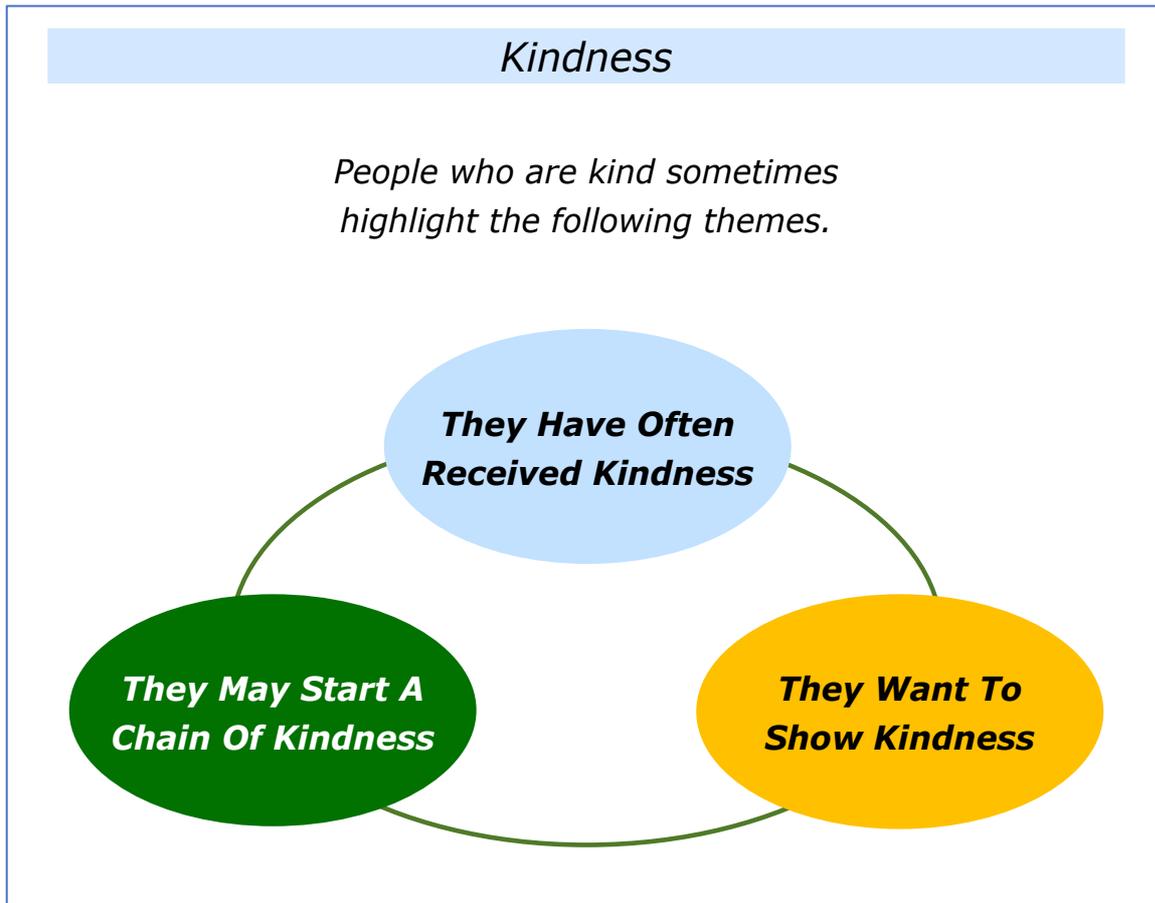
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Kindness Approach



There are many ways to help people. One of the simplest is to show kindness. There are different views on how people learn to be kind.

One view is that human beings are naturally kind. They love to care for others and help people to grow. Being kind can also lead to them experiencing the helper's high.

Another view is that people who are kind may be part of a chain of kindness. Let's explore this approach.

People Who Are Kind

They have often received kindness. They may have had parents or other people in their lives who showed them kindness. They remember this feeling and how it has helped them to grow.

They want to show kindness. They believe that being kind can help people to feel safe and appreciated. They also believe that kindness can help to build a better world.

They may help to start a chain of kindness. By passing on kindness, they make it more likely that those receiving it will show kindness to others. This is not guaranteed, but it is a good start.

Looking at your own life, who have been the people who have shown kindness to you? How did they show this kindness? Different people give different answers to these questions, but they often mention common themes. Here is one example.

People Who Showed Me Kindness

My Parents

They provided me with love, a safe home and encouragement. They helped me to believe in myself. They recognised I was good at sports but not very academic.

A Teacher At One School

They focused on the things I was good at - such as being the captain of the girl's football team. They told me that I had fighting spirit and could inspire people. I still remember that message.

A Football Coach

They built on my strengths – which were to be a good leader and organiser of the defence. They also suggested that I begin taking coaching badges. This led to my present role as coach for a women's team.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe one person who showed you kindness. Try complete the following sentences.

Kindness In The Past

The name of the person who showed me kindness was:

*

The specific things they did to show me kindness were:

*

*

*

The specific things that happened as a result of them showing me kindness were:

*

*

*

Many people go on personal journeys where they explore different philosophies and ways of life. Sometimes they have Eureka moments when they make remarkable breakthroughs. Sometimes they return to the simple things in life.

Aldous Huxley was such a person. During his life he experimented with many methods of developing human potential. These included drugs, meditation, bodywork, Zen and other activities. 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."

Kindness and cruelty create their own circles. People who are given kindness early in life are more likely to pass on kindness to others. People who experience cruelty may find it harder to be kind.

Today there are many psychometric tests and other methods that can be used to explore the personality of an individual, leader, politician or someone in another role.

These may be helpful, but there still remains one of the most interesting questions. This is:

"Are they kind?"

Later in the book we will explore how people express kindness through compassion and other activities. Before then, however, let's return to your own life and work.

Looking ahead, what are the specific ways that you would like to continue to be kind? How can you translate these ideas into action? What may 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.

Kindness In The Future

The specific ways that I would like to be kind in the future are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to translate these ideas into action are:

*

*

*

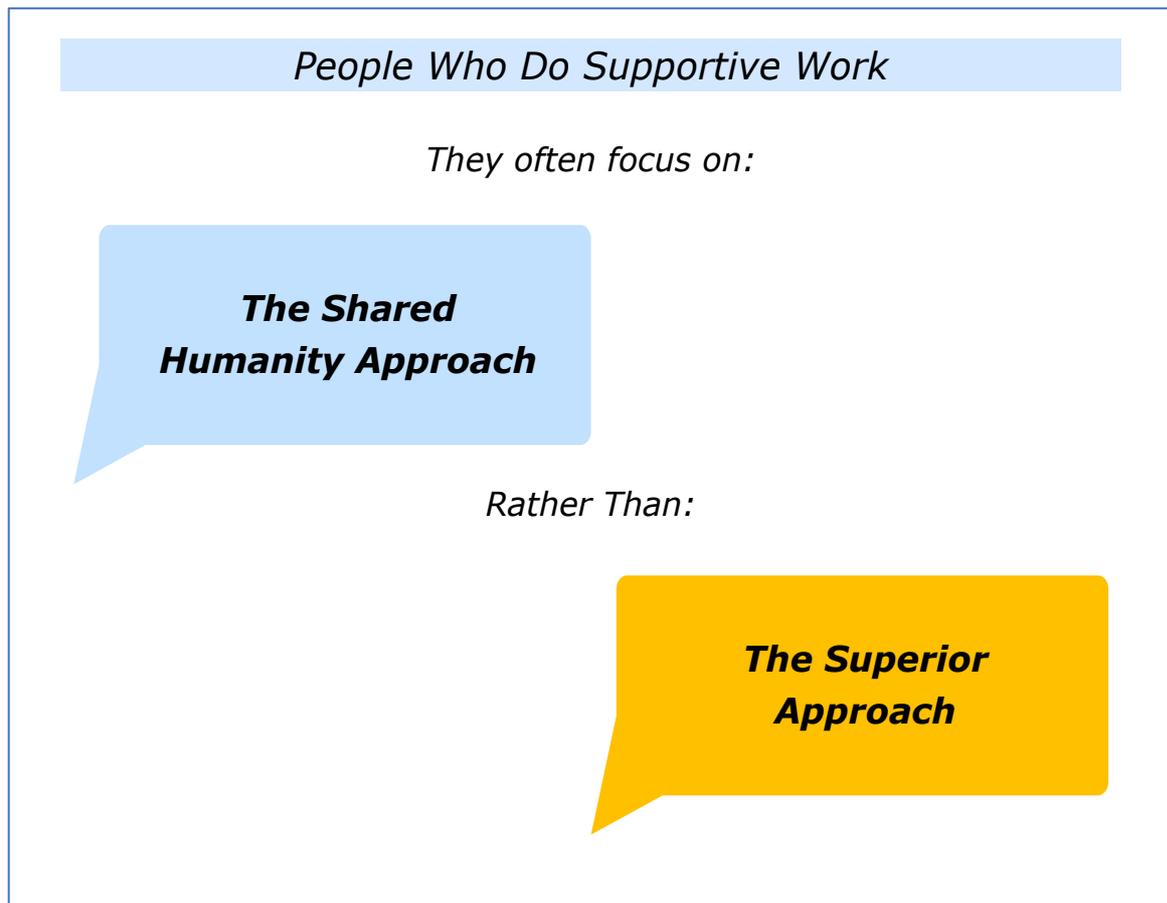
The specific benefits of doing these things may be:

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The Shared Humanity Approach Rather Than The Superior Approach



People who do supportive work often follow the shared humanity approach. They believe that people have many common needs and aspirations. Bearing this in mind, they may aim:

To provide people with support;

To focus on people's specific goals;

To help people to achieve success.

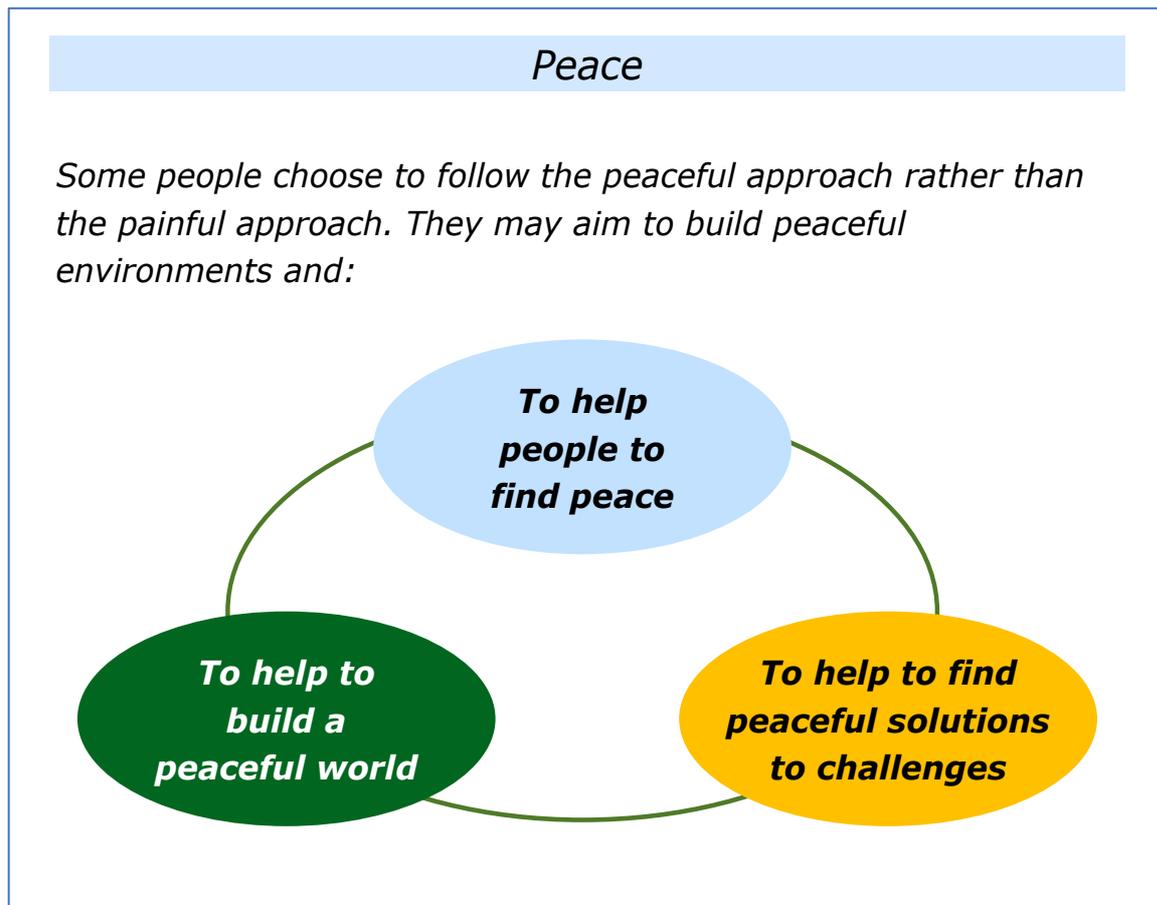
Such people believe it is important for human beings to build on what they have in common. People can then combine their strengths to work together to achieve success.

Such people recognise that human beings face many challenges. They believe that it is possible for people: a) to focus on common goals; b) to find, as far as possible, win-wins solutions. This can help us to care for people and the planet.

Some people follow the superior approach. They see themselves as superior to others and aim to suppress people. This can create lots of collateral damage.

People who follow the shared humanity approach express this in different ways. The following pages describe some of the people who have taken this approach.

The Peaceful Approach Rather Than The Painful Approach



Some people aim to follow the peaceful approach rather than the painful approach. They see the first step as them behaving in peaceful way. They may then aim to help people to find peace, help to find peaceful solutions to challenges and help to build a peaceful world.

There are many views about what constitutes peace in different situations. These can relate:

To personal peace – such as having sense of calm and contentment;

To peace between people – such as having a sense of harmony and helping each other to develop;

To peace between groups of people or nations – such as having friendly relations and helping each other to succeed..

Different people follow different paths towards focusing on peace. Here are some of the reasons why people arrive at this point.

Some people may have been influenced by peaceful models

Adam Curle, who chaired the department of peace studies at Bradford University, was influenced in this way. Writing Adam's obituary for the Guardian, Tom Woodhouse described what happened in the following way.

His mother planted the seed that led to his pacifism and his decision to become a Quaker. As Adam recalled:

"She hated war, to which she had lost three of her beloved brothers, and was determined that she would instil her loathing of it in me as well."

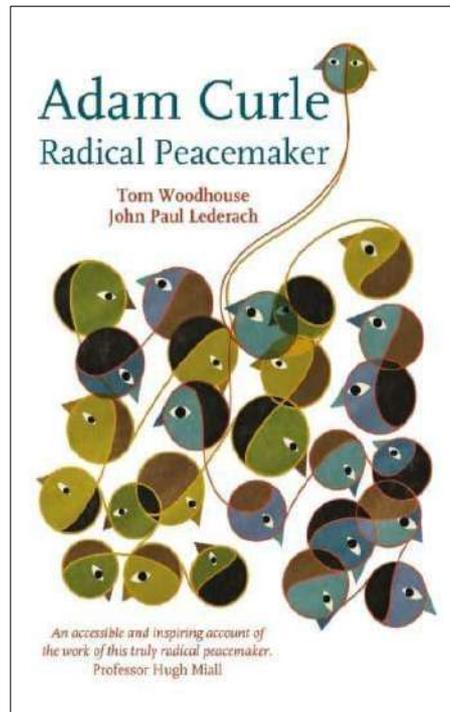
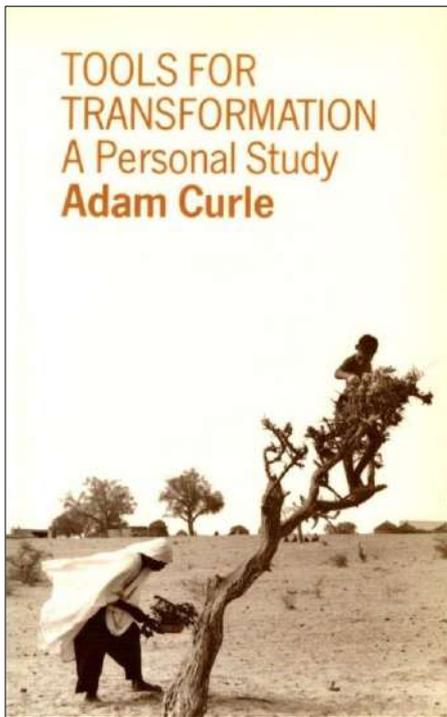
Problems of conflict and violence featured in his work, particularly because of his direct experience as a mediator during the Nigerian civil war (1967-70) and the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war.

Adam retired from Bradford in 1978 but worked on as a peacemaker, often under Quaker auspices, putting into practice the idea that education was concerned with emancipation.

The techniques of peacemaking (whether mediation, problem solving, negotiation, policy analysis, advocacy, or non-violent activism) are what he called "tools for transformation".

He worked to bring people together in conflict-torn areas, including India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka and the Balkans.

In Croatia, when in his late 70s, he was the inspiration behind the Osijek Peace Centre, which symbolised resistance to the war and inspired a prolific peace network. He was awarded the Gandhi peace prize in 2000 in recognition of his long commitment to peace work.



Some people may have been through painful experiences

Adam's mother committed to peace after losing loved ones during war. Other people have other painful experiences that motivate them to try to find more peaceful solutions.

Some may have been abused or seen their loved ones abused. Going beyond their anger and pain, they aim to create sanctuaries where people can heal. They then help people to reshape their lives.

Some may have lost a child. Whilst they may never get over the feeling of emptiness, they may learn how to manage these emotions. They may then pass on this knowledge to others who go through similar experiences.

Some may have experienced a life-changing illness or injury. After a period of reflection, they may decide to build on what they still have and see every day as a bonus. This can lead to them having a sense of peace.

Some people may have a philosophy that encourages them to behave in a peaceful way and help to build a peaceful world

They may have a philosophy that encourages them work towards creating harmony. They may aim to do this in their personal life and professional lives. They may also aim to create harmony between living things on the planet.

Some people aim to create peaceful environments in which people can feel at ease and grow. They may do this in the family, school, work place or other situations.

Some people encourage others to find peace. They do this an appropriate way, however, rather than trying to impose it on people. They may have a professional role, for example, where they help people to work towards their goals and perhaps find peace.

They may be providing end of life care in a hospice. They may be helping somebody to recover from an addiction. They may be helping a person to develop a new purpose and work towards enjoying a sense of peace.

Some people commit themselves to helping to build a more peaceful world. Let's look at some examples.

The Peacebuilding Approach

There are many approaches to peacebuilding. This section explores one approach that is taken by people who help others to find solutions and work towards achieving peace.

Brigadier Michael Harbottle had a distinguished military career which evolved into him focusing on peacebuilding. He co-wrote *The Thin Blue*

Line: International Peacekeeping and Its Future. He also founded *Generals For Peace.*

Michael and his wife Eirwen contributed to the organisation Peace Child International. Below are excerpts from a piece they wrote called *The Peace Building Role of United Nations' Operations.*

Peace

There are often three dimensions to the peaceful settlement of disputes:

Peacemaking is the diplomatic resolution of the politics of conflict.

Peacekeeping is the military intervention and peaceful resolution of violence in a conflict, by non-enforcement means.

Peacebuilding is a set of physical, social and structural initiatives which can help to prevent and resolve the consequences of conflict, and provide post-hostility structural reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Peacebuilding Has To Be Paramount

Peacemaking and peacekeeping can only be transitory measures. They have no long-term or lasting effect as long as the peacebuilding factor is missing.

Peacebuilding is the healing agent which ensures that the structural roots to a conflict are removed.

Unless this happens, the conflict is not resolved. It will only repeat itself and the peacemakers and peacekeepers will be required to return.

We need to understand clearly that conflict resolution is not just the successful defeat of the enemy and an end to the fighting (e.g., the Falkland Islands and the Gulf Wars). It needs more.

Peacebuilding Calls For:

The restoration of law and order, social and economic stability;

The guarantee of peoples' human rights;

The rehabilitation of the structures of society and government,

The reestablishment of peaceful relations (interstate, intrastate, inter-ethnic) and the ending of the structural violence which prefaced the manifest violence.

Peacebuilding indeed!

Above all, it is good to remind ourselves that the essence of all conflict resolution is peacebuilding.

There are many definitions for peacebuilding. Here is one view from the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies.

What Is Strategic Peacebuilding?

Peacebuilding can include conflict prevention; conflict management; conflict resolution and transformation, and post-conflict reconciliation.

*Peacebuilding becomes **strategic** when it works over the long run and at **all levels of society** to establish and sustain relationships among people locally and globally.*

It aims not only to resolve conflicts, but to build societies, institutions, policies, and relationships that are better able to sustain peace and justice.

While it engages immediate crises, strategic peacebuilding recognizes that peacemaking is a long-term vocation that requires the building of cross-group networks and alliances that will survive intermittent conflicts and create a platform for sustainable human development and security.

Peacebuilding In Action

There are many approaches to peacebuilding. The following sections describe steps that people take to help others to achieve ongoing peace.

Peacebuilding

*There are many approaches to peacebuilding.
One approach is to go through the following steps.*

- *To clarify whether all the parties are prepared to work towards achieving peace;*
- *To clarify what each party wants and build on what they have in common;*
- *To clarify and work towards some agreed common goals;*
- *To get successes and find solutions on the way towards achieving the common goals;*
- *To clarify and put in place the conditions most likely to achieve ongoing peace.*

They clarify whether all the parties are prepared to work towards achieving peace

Different peacebuilders take different approaches at this stage. Some believe that certain conditions must be in place for there to be a chance of success. They believe that:

People must be at a point where they want to solve the issues and work towards achieving peace;

People must be prepared to work to find, as far as possible, win-win solutions on the way towards achieving peace.

Some peacebuilders take a more flexible approach. They are prepared to spend time connecting with the various parties and building good relationships.

They aim to listen to people, see the world from their points of view and clarify what they want. They may also, at some point, begin to explore what might be people's pictures of success.

Some peacebuilders take a more proactive approach. They believe people may be open to development if they see how achieving peace will help them. Bearing this in mind, they begin to share scenarios that show people how they may benefit.

Peacebuilders focus on creating the conditions that are most likely to produce success. They do this when helping individuals, families, groups or countries to build a better future.

There comes a point, however, where they need to take stock and reflect on the chances of success. Bearing in mind what they know about the situation, they may ask themselves the following questions.

Are people ready to work together?

Do they really want to solve the problem? Some people get tired of the negative energy. They are then more willing to sit down and find positive solutions.

This is not always the case. Some people may be addicted to conflict so they may not want to solve the problem. They want to use their power and create win-lose situations.

*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.

This calls for people being prepared to focus on finding positive solutions rather than scoring points. Those who are prepared to take this approach are more likely to build relationships and get positive results.

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.

Bearing these things in mind, it can be useful to explore the following questions. Providing people want to solve the problem, it may then be possible to move on to the next step.

Peacebuilding – Some Questions To Ask When Embarking On The Process

- *What is the present situation? Are people ready to work together? Are they prepared to focus on how things can be better in the future?*
- *What may be possible? Are people prepared to work towards finding, as far as possible, win-win solutions? Are they able to see the benefits of taking this approach?*
- *What are the present chances of success? Rate this on a scale 0-10. What needs to happen – or what can we do – to improve the chances of success?*

They clarify what each party wants and build on what they have in common

Peacebuilders may spend a lot of time on doing what some call shuttle diplomacy. They devote time to meeting each party and aim:

To show respect and build good working relationships;

To clarify the challenges people face and their goals for the future;

To clarify what for them may be a possible solution and the potential benefits.

Peacebuilders see this as a listening exercise aim and clarify what each party really wants. They do this without judgement and do not yet begin to come up with suggestions.

They aim find what each party wants: a) on a practical level; b) on a psychological level. People may want, for example, to feel valued, respected and able to shape their futures.

There are many ways to clarify such aims. As mentioned earlier, however, whilst people may have resentments about the past it is important to clarify what they want in the future.

Bearing this in mind, it is then possible to produce something like the following picture. This illustration involves just two parties. It can be more challenging when there are more parties involved, but it can still be worth doing a similar exercise.

*Clarifying What
Each Party Wants*

This approach involves encouraging each party to focus on what they want in the future.

Party A

*The specific things they
want in the future are:*

- *
*
*

*The specific benefits of having
these things in the future will be:*

- *
*
*

Party B

*The specific things they
want in the future are:*

- *
*
*

*The specific benefits of having
these things in the future will be:*

- *
*
*

People are more likely to find solutions when they focus on what they have in common rather than their differences. Peacebuilders therefore sometimes take the following steps before going back to people. They aim:

To clarify what each party wants;

To clarify what may be some potential achievable common goals;

To clarify the benefits of achieving those common goals.

Different peacebuilders clarify these things in different ways. One approach is for them to focus on the following themes. This can then lead to the next step.

Clarifying The Common Goals

This involves focusing on what each party wants and building on common ground. It then involves clarifying and agreeing on certain specific common goals.

Common Goals

Bearing in mind what each party wants, the specific common goals it may be possible for people to work towards are these:

- **
- **
- **

*The specific benefits of
achieving these goals will be:*

- **
- **
- **

*They clarify and work towards
some agreed common goals*

This can be a delicate but important step. The aim is to encourage people to build on what they have in common rather than focus on the differences.

Different peacebuilders use different styles and skills when taking this step. One approach is for them:

To meet with the different parties - either individually or together – and focus on some of the things they have in common;

To help them to clarify and work towards some specific achievable common goals;

To help them to create an action plan and keep focusing on the benefits of achieving the common goals.

The goals that people agree on will differ depending on the situation. The key is to set some achievable goals that will bring benefits to the various parties.

Divorcing parents may agree on how they want to behave towards their children. Groups that are normally antagonists may put aside their differences to cooperate when tackling a specific crisis. Warring factions may agree on a ceasefire and the exchanging of prisoners.

Peacebuilders spend a lot of time exploring such potential common goals. They then work with the various parties to make sure: a) they want to achieve the goals; b) they see the benefits; c) they can follow an action plan that leads to success. Peacebuilders then move on to the next step.

*They help people to get successes
and find solutions on the way
towards achieving the common goals*

Peacebuilders often work alongside the various parties to help them take the following steps:

To set achievable goals, get successes and build confidence;

To move on to the next set of specific common goals and get successes;

To find solutions to challenges on the way towards achieving the common goals.

This final point is crucial. Peacebuilders play a vital part in helping to calm things down and buy time to find solutions to potential challenges. One such person expressed this in the following way.

"I encourage people to work towards common goals. There are times, however, when they may get into conflict about how to deal with certain situations or manage differences.

"I then aim to encourage people to deescalate the situation and buy time to think. I aim:

To clarify what each party wants;

To clarify the potential options going forward together with the consequences of each option;

To clarify the potential ways forward that are most likely to provide win-win solutions.

"My role is then to do two things. First, to clarify with the parties if they would like me to continue working with them. If so, it is then to help them to pursue solutions that provide the best chance of achieving success."

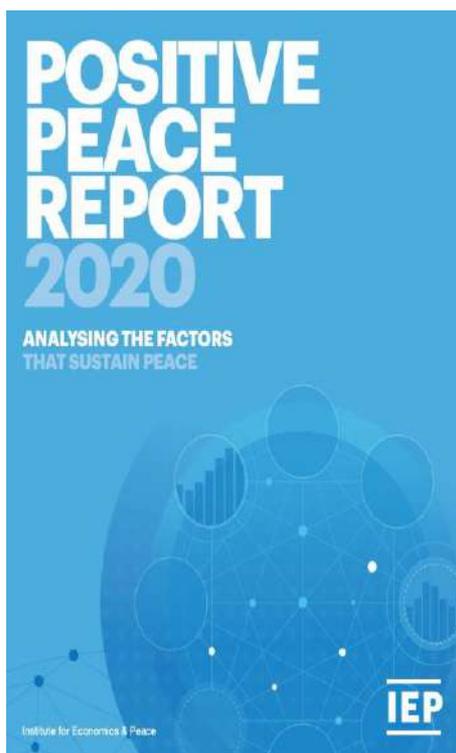
Peacebuilders are often skilled at managing such challenges. They aim to deescalate the situation and buy time. They do their best to find solutions and help people to work towards their long-term picture of success. This sometimes involves moving on to the next step.

They clarify and put in place the conditions most likely to achieve ongoing peace

The majority of people want to live in peace. They want to build on what they have in common and find creative solutions to challenges. They want to encourage both present and future generations on the planet.

Bearing this in mind, many organisations focus on the concept of creating positive peace. They believe it is vital to put in place the conditions that enable individuals, communities and societies to flourish.

There are many definitions of such peace. Here is one that was published by the Institute for Economics & Peace in 2020.



Positive Peace is defined as the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies.

The same factors that create lasting peace also lead to many other positive outcomes that societies aspire to, including:

Thriving economies ... Better performance on ecological measures ... High levels of resilience and adaptability to change.

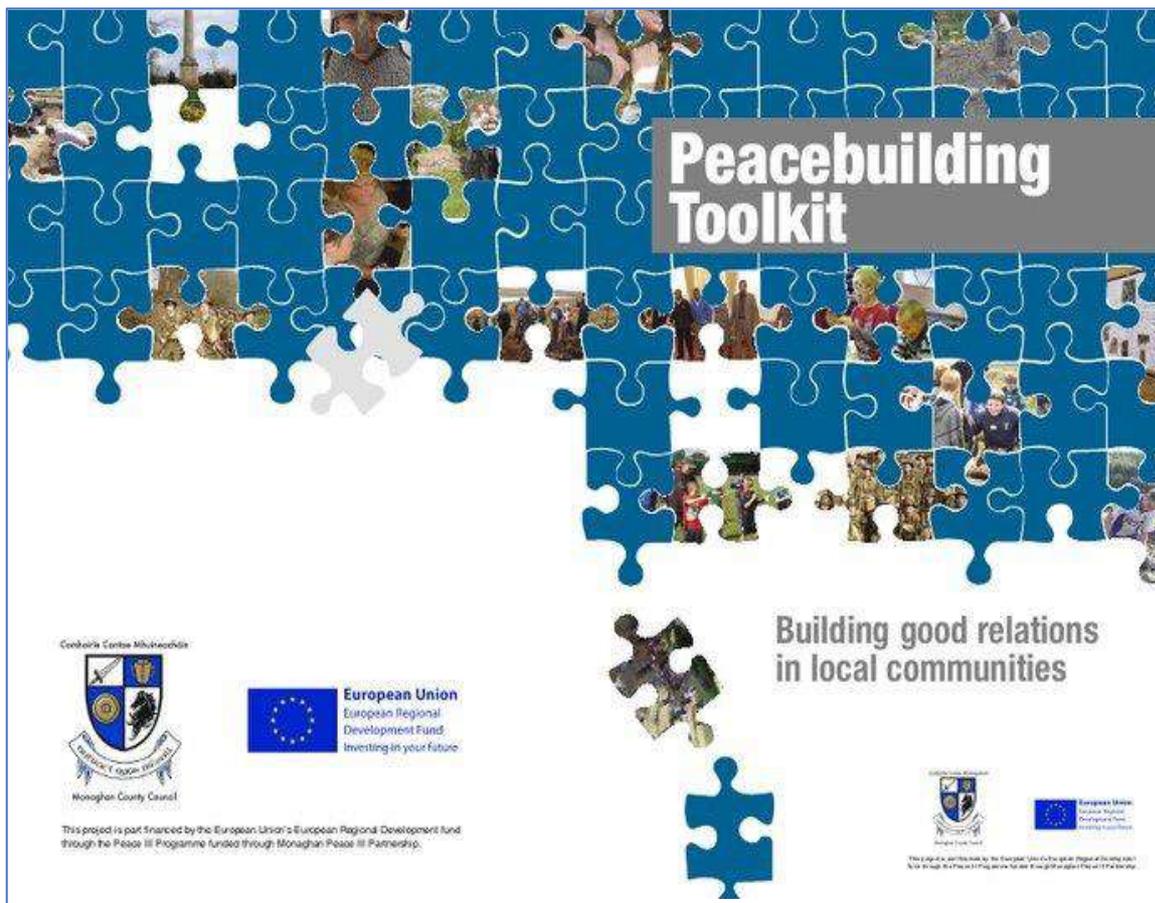
Other factors that improve with Positive Peace are measures of inclusiveness, wellbeing and happiness.

Therefore, Positive Peace can be described as creating an optimal environment for human potential to flourish.

There are also many organisations that work to make this happen. Some support peacebuilders and others who want to help their communities to thrive. The European Union, for example, therefore invited specialists to produce a toolkit that could be used by communities.

The kit provided people with models and tools they could use in their own ways to build on what they have in common and manage differences.

Here is an introduction that defined the aims of the kit on peacebuilding.



Definition

Peacebuilding is a term used to describe the processes and activities involved in resolving violent conflict and establishing a sustainable peace.

It is an overarching concept that includes conflict transformation, restorative justice, trauma healing, reconciliation, development and leadership.

It is similar in meaning to conflict resolution but highlights the difficult reality that the end of a conflict does not automatically lead to peaceful, stable, social economic development.

The goal of peacebuilding is for people to accept each other and be reconciled to living together peacefully.

Different people choose to follow the peaceful approach in different ways. Some see the first step as them behaving in peaceful way. They may then aim to help people to find peace, help to find peaceful solutions to challenges and help to build a peaceful world.

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 peaceful approach? How can 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 Peaceful Approach

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

*

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

*

*

*

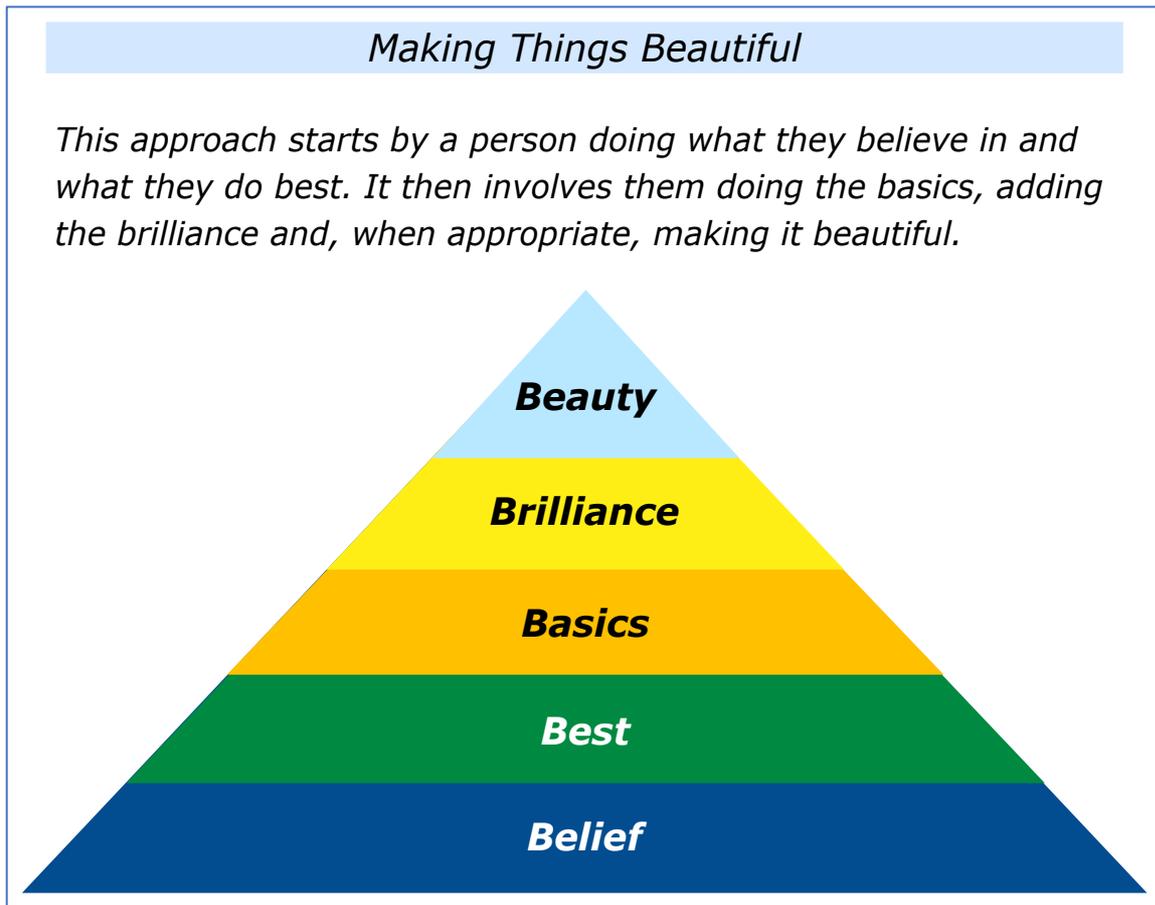
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Making Things Beautiful Approach



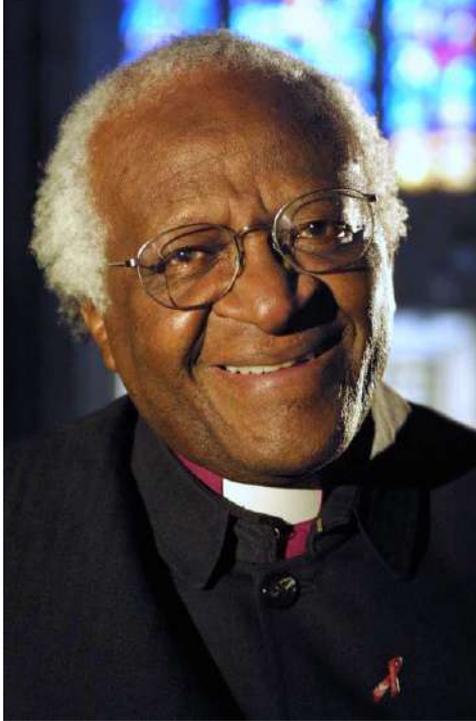
There are many ways to live life. Some people aim to encourage others by spreading hope and beauty. Different people do this in different ways.

Some take this approach by doing what they believe and what they do best. They translate this into doing a piece of work. They then aim to do the basics, add the brilliance and, when appropriate, make it beautiful.

Later we will return to this model. Before then, let's look at how some people have aimed to spread hope. They have also tried to spread beauty rather than give in to barbarism.

Desmond Tutu believed it was important to do small things – as well as big things – that lift the spirit. Writing in *The Impossible Will Take A Little While*, Paul Rogat Loeb, describes how Tutu laughs and loves life.

Tutu, like other social and political activists who haven't forgotten the importance of enjoyment, passionately embraces the gifts placed before him.



If it's a gift of music, he will dance. If a gift of food, he will eat. If in the company of friends, he will converse, laugh, and share stories.

Such are the small but necessary pleasures that enable him to look evil in the eye and be confident that the fight must be fought.

For only someone who knows how good life can be is in a position to appreciate what's at stake when life is degraded or destroyed.

During the 1970s and 80s I visited many people who were planting seeds of hope during challenging times. These included educators, social entrepreneurs and ethical business people.

They aimed to create inspiring classrooms, pioneering organisations, beautiful books or other things. Different people chose different ways to take this route, but virtually all of followed the principle described by Martin Luther King. He described this in the following way.

Anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.

Maria Popova aims to encourage the positive spirit in people. She grew up in Bulgaria before leaving for the United States and creating the website *Brain Pickings*. This aims to pass on knowledge that enables people to be creative and shape their future lives.

In one article Maria reflected on the lessons she had learned during her time writing the blog. These included the following tips for maintaining your own spirit during challenging times.

Be generous

Be generous with your time and your resources and with giving credit and, especially, with your words. It's so much easier to be a critic than a celebrator.

Always remember there is a human being on the other end of every exchange and behind every cultural artifact being critiqued.

To understand and be understood, those are among life's greatest gifts, and every interaction is an opportunity to exchange them.

Build pockets of stillness into your life

Meditate. Go for walks. Ride your bike going nowhere in particular. There is a creative purpose to daydreaming and even boredom.

The best ideas come to us when we stop actively trying to coax the muse into manifesting and let the fragments of experience float around our unconscious mind in order to click into new combinations.

Most important, sleep. Besides being the greatest creative aphrodisiac, sleep also affects our every waking moment, dictates our social rhythm and even mediates our negative moods.

*Presence is far more intricate and
rewarding an art than productivity*

Ours is a culture that measures our worth as human beings by our efficiency, our earnings, our ability to perform this or that.

The cult of productivity has its place, but worshipping at its altar daily robs us of the very capacity for joy and wonder that makes life worth living — for, as Annie Dillard memorably put it, “how we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.”

*Expect anything worthwhile
to take a long time*

This is borrowed from the wise and wonderful Debbie Millman, for it’s hard to better capture something so fundamental yet so impatiently overlooked in our culture of immediacy.

The myth of the overnight success is just that — a myth — as well as a reminder that our present definition of success needs serious retuning.

The flower doesn’t go from bud to blossom in one spritely burst and yet, as a culture, we’re disinterested in the tedium of the blossoming. But that’s where all the real magic unfolds in the making of one’s character and destiny.

Don’t be afraid to be an idealist

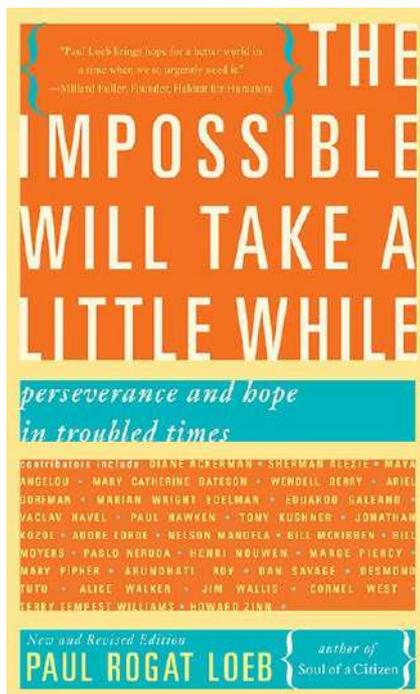
E.B. White, one of our last great idealists, was eternally right when he asserted half a century ago that the role of the writer is “to lift people up, not lower them down” - a role each of us is called to with increasing urgency, whatever cog we may be in the machinery of society.

Seek out what magnifies your spirit

Patti Smith, in discussing William Blake and her creative influences, talks about writers and artists who magnified her spirit - it's a beautiful phrase and a beautiful notion.

Who are the people, ideas, and books that magnify your spirit? Find them, hold on to them, and visit them often. Use them not only as a remedy once spiritual malaise has already infected your vitality but as a vaccine administered while you are healthy to protect your radiance.

Paul Rogat Loeb says: "Hope is a way of looking at the world." Writing in *The Impossible Will Take A Little While*, he says that one person's actions can inspire others. He describes this in the following way.



Even in a seemingly futile moment or losing cause, one person may unknowingly inspire another, and that person yet a third, who could go on and change the world, or at least a corner of it.

Mandela called this process:

The multiplication of courage.

We live in a contradictory world. Dispiriting events coincide with progress for human dignity. But when change occurs, it's because people persist, whatever the nature of their causes.

"The world gets worse. It also gets better," writes Rebecca Solnit in her wonderful essay **Acts of Hope**. Change comes, Solnit argues:

"Not by magic, but by the incremental effects of countless acts of courage, love, and commitment, the small drops that wear away stones and carve new landscapes, and sometimes by torrents of popular will that change the world suddenly."

Making Things Beautiful

Let's return to this theme. You will have your own way of encouraging people. One approach is to try to create beautiful things. Different people take this step in different ways.

Some people aim to do what believe in and what they do best. It is then to do the basics, add the brilliance and, when appropriate, aim to make things beautiful. Let's explore these themes.

Belief

Great workers often aim to do what they believe in. Different people obviously believe in different things. A person may believe in aiming:

To follow their philosophy ... To focus on a specific purpose ... To follow their principles ... To deliver high professional standards ... To do work that helps people or the planet.

Belief is a great motivator. Bearing this in mind, a person may translate their belief into doing a specific piece of work. The kind of work they choose to do, however, may be influenced by the next theme.

Best

Great workers aim to do what they do best and do their best. As mentioned elsewhere, there are many ways to identify such an activity.

They may build on their strengths – the activities where they have the ability to deliver As rather than Bs or Cs;

They may do work where they are in their element – the activities where they are at ease and yet able to excel;

They may do something they feel passionately about where they have the ability to deliver peak performances.

Imagine that a person has embarked on doing a particular piece of work. They may then move on to the next stage.

Basics

Great workers keep doing the basics that are required to provide the platform for doing brilliant work. They often take the following steps.

They clarify the real results to achieve and translate these into a clear picture of success;

They clarify the key strategies they can follow to give themselves the greatest chance of success;

They keep delivering high standards on the way towards achieving the picture of success.

Great workers translate the strategies into action. The actions that each professional takes will depend 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. This creates the platform for moving on to the next step.

Brilliance

Great workers sometimes add the brilliance. A footballer may use their skills to make a defence-splitting pass or score a remarkable goal. A surgeon may use their gifts to perform a life-saving operation in difficult circumstances.

Different people add the brilliance in their own ways. One approach is for them to keep delivering high standards. It is then to use their strengths to do something special to achieve the picture of success.

Beauty

Great workers may go beyond doing brilliant work. They may also aim to make it beautiful. There are many definitions of beauty. Some people follow the principles of great design.

They create something that is simple, satisfying and successful. It is simple but in a profound way. It is satisfying both an aesthetic and practical level. It is successful. It works and helps people to get positive results.

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a specific piece of work 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 Making Things Beautiful Approach

The specific piece of work where I may want to follow elements of this approach may be:

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Encouraging The Encouragers Approach

Encouraging The Encouragers

This approach involves aiming to do:

- *Work to encourage the encouragers;*
- *Who then continue to encourage other people;*
- *Which is more likely to spread encouragement across the planet.*

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 reenergise 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:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to encourage some of these encouragers are:

*

*

*

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

*

*

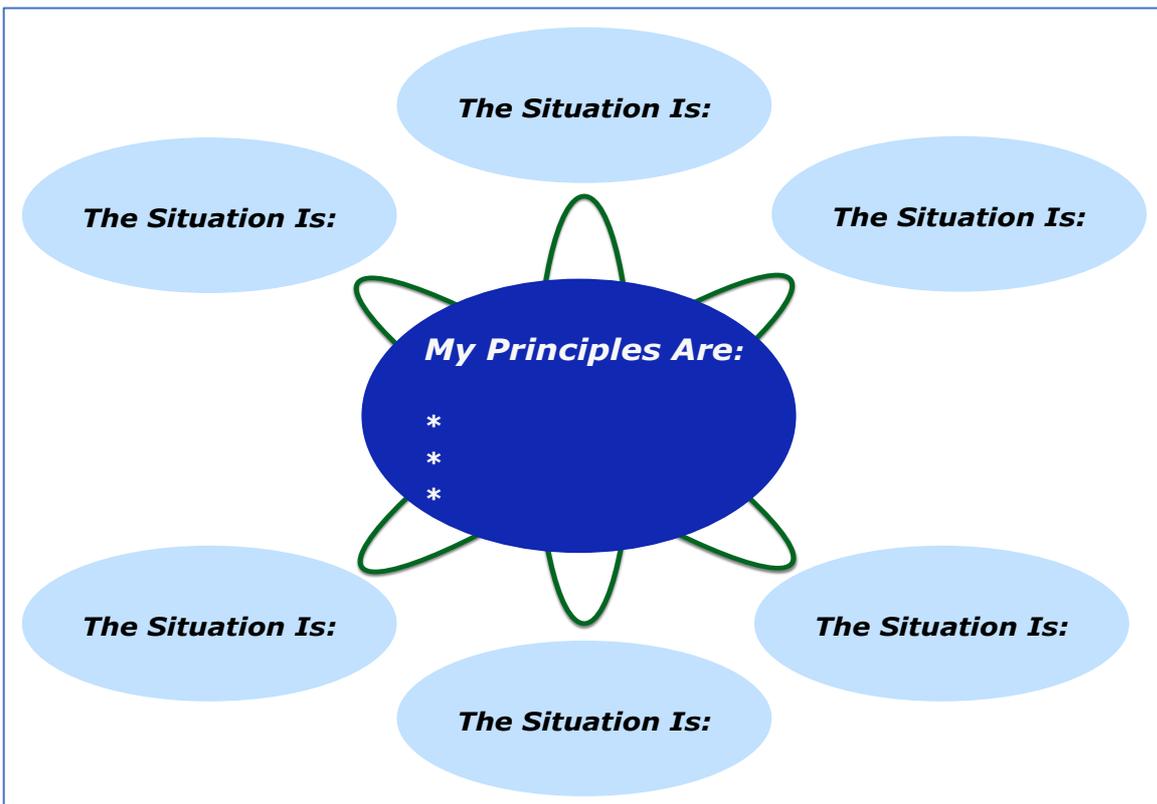
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The Clarifying Your Principles Approach

The Principles Approach

This approach starts by clarifying the principles you want to follow in your life and work. You can then follow these principles in particular situations.

When appropriate, you can return to your centre to remind yourself of your principles. You can then focus on how to follow these in the next situation.



You can start by clarifying your principles

Imagine that you have begun to clarify your purpose. How can you translate this into action? One approach is to focus on the principles you want to follow in your life. 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.

How to clarify your principles? You can start by brainstorming and then settling on, for example, the three principles you want to follow in your life.

Different people will obviously focus on different principles. Here are some of the things that people write when exploring these themes.

"I want to encourage people in my life and work ... I want to continue to have a sense of gratitude ... I want to care for my loved ones ... I want to create enriching environments in which people grow."

"I want to use my strengths to help people to succeed ... I want to build pioneering things that show people a better way ... I want to pass on knowledge that people can use to shape a positive future."

"I want to make full use of the talents I have been given ... I want to do my best during my time on the planet ... I want to give people positive memories for life ... I want to die feeling at peace."

You will, of course, have your own set of principles. Here is the exercise on this theme.

My Principles

*The specific principles I
want to follow in my life are:*

** To ...*

For example ...

** To ...*

For example ...

** To ...*

For example ...

You can clarify how to follow your principles in particular situations

Imagine you have settled on the principle you want to follow. You may then aim to pursue these in various situations.

These are like different boxes you go into during your daily life. You may go into a situation such as encouraging a person, meeting a customer or doing other things.

Looking ahead, you can clarify the positive results to achieve in the specific situation. You can aim to clarify:

The positive results you want to achieve in the situation;

The positive results the other parties – the person or the group of people – want to achieve in the situation;

The specific things you can do to follow your principles and do your best to achieve the desired positive results in the situation.

One key point can be worth bearing in mind. It can be useful to clarify your expectations about the possible things that can happen in the situation.

Sometimes you can expect positive things and responses from people. Other times the people, organisation or customers may give other responses.

Whilst you may always aim to do your best, there will be some situations where you can expect certain responses. Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to explore:

The specific things you can expect to happen in the situation;

The specific things you can't expect to happen in the situation.

Imagine you are looking ahead to a specific situation. It can be useful to explore the following themes before moving into action.

What are the real results I want to achieve in the situation? What may be the results that other people want to achieve? What is the desired picture of success?

How can I follow my principles in the situation? What are the things I can and cannot expect in the situation? How can I do my best to achieve the desired positive results?

Imagine that you have rehearsed what you want to do. You can go into the situation, click into action and be fully present. You can then aim to follow your principles and do your best to achieve the desired positive results.

Sometimes things will work well but other times you may get thrown off-course. If so, buy time to think. You can then ask yourself some of the following questions.

What is happening in the situation? What do I want to happen? What are the real results to achieve? How can I do my best to achieve these results?

Imagine that you have settled on the strategy you want to pursue. It can be useful to rehearse what you are going to do. You can then move into action and do your best to achieve the desired picture of success.

The next step will be return to your centre. You can relax, recentre and refocus on your principles. When appropriate, you can then look ahead and rehearse how you can follow your 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.

People who 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.

There are, of course, both pluses and minuses to following principles. These include the following.

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 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.

You can follow your principles in a particular situation

The previous pages have invited you to clarify the principles you want to follow. Imagine that you want to translate these into action in a specific situation.

This could be a personal or professional situation. You may be meeting your manager, helping a customer, talking with your parents, encouraging a person or doing another activity.

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

Describe a particular situation you may go into in the future.

Describe the specific things you can do to follow your principles and do your best to get positive results in the situation.

Describe the possible things you probably can and can't expect to happen in the situation.

This is an approach that you can apply in many situations. It calls for continually returning to your centre. You can then aim to follow your principles in certain situations and do your best to get positive results. Here is the exercise on this theme.

The Particular Situation

The specific situation I am going to go into is:

*

The Principles

The specific things I can do to follow my principles and do my best to get positive results in the situation are:

*

*

*

The Possible Results

The specific things I can and can't expect to happen in the situation are:

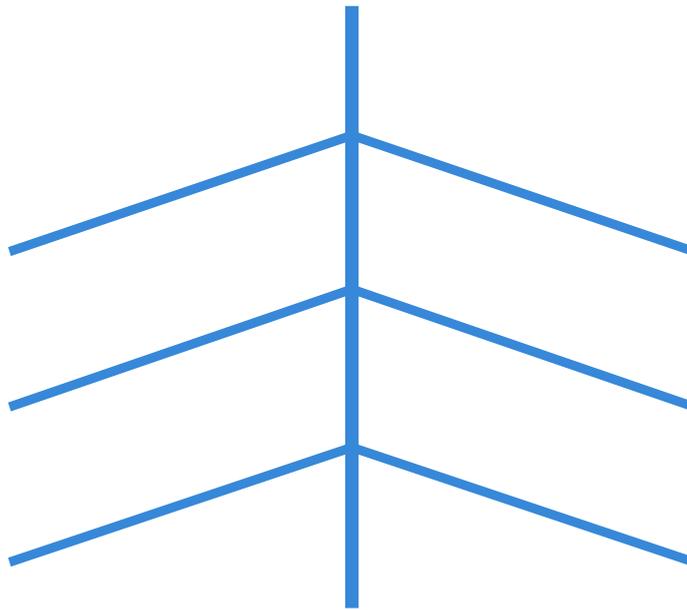
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The Strong Spine Approach

*Great Workers And Teams
Often Have A Strong Spine*



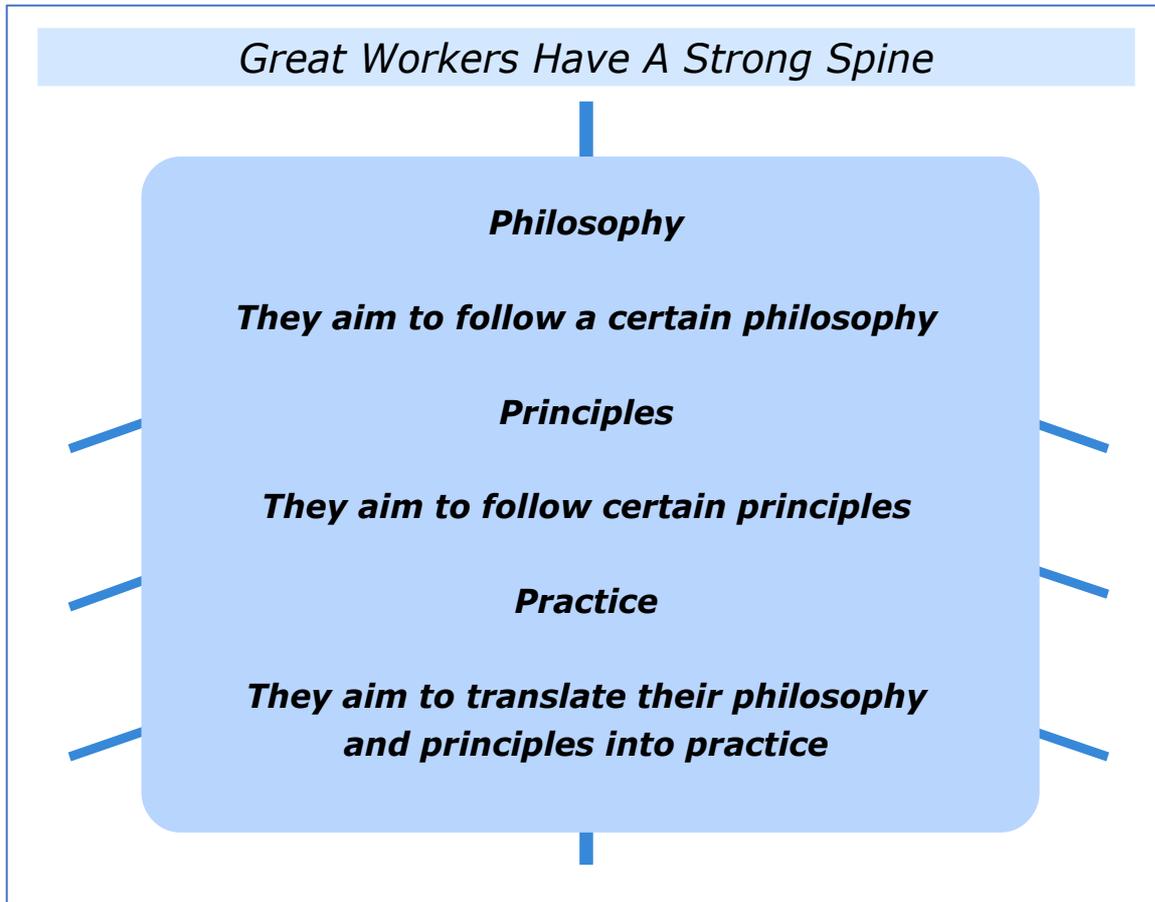
This approach mirrors some of the themes described in the previous section. Great workers often have a strong spine. This may be a philosophical, psychological or, in some cases, a physical spine that provides the backbone for their work.

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.

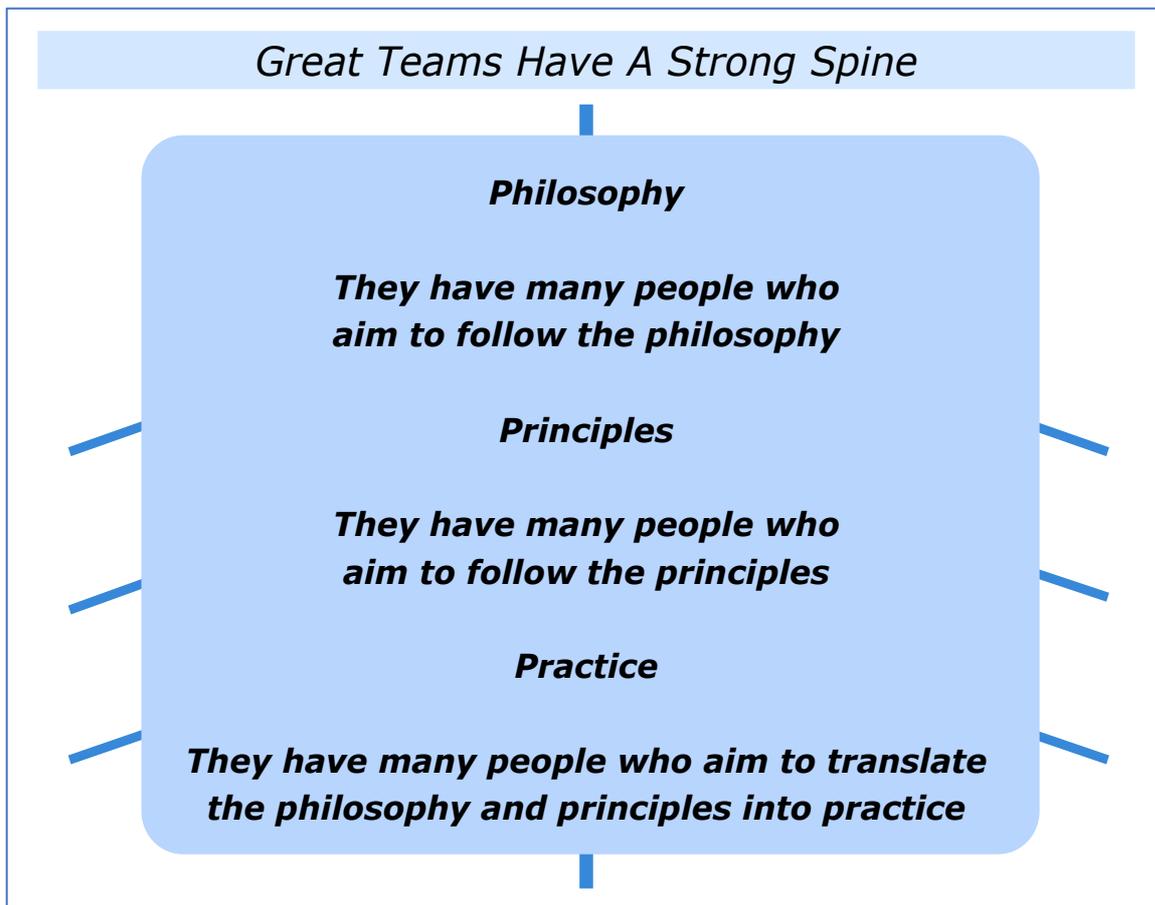
Such individuals have backbone. They show strength in both the positive and not-so positive times.



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:*

*

*

*

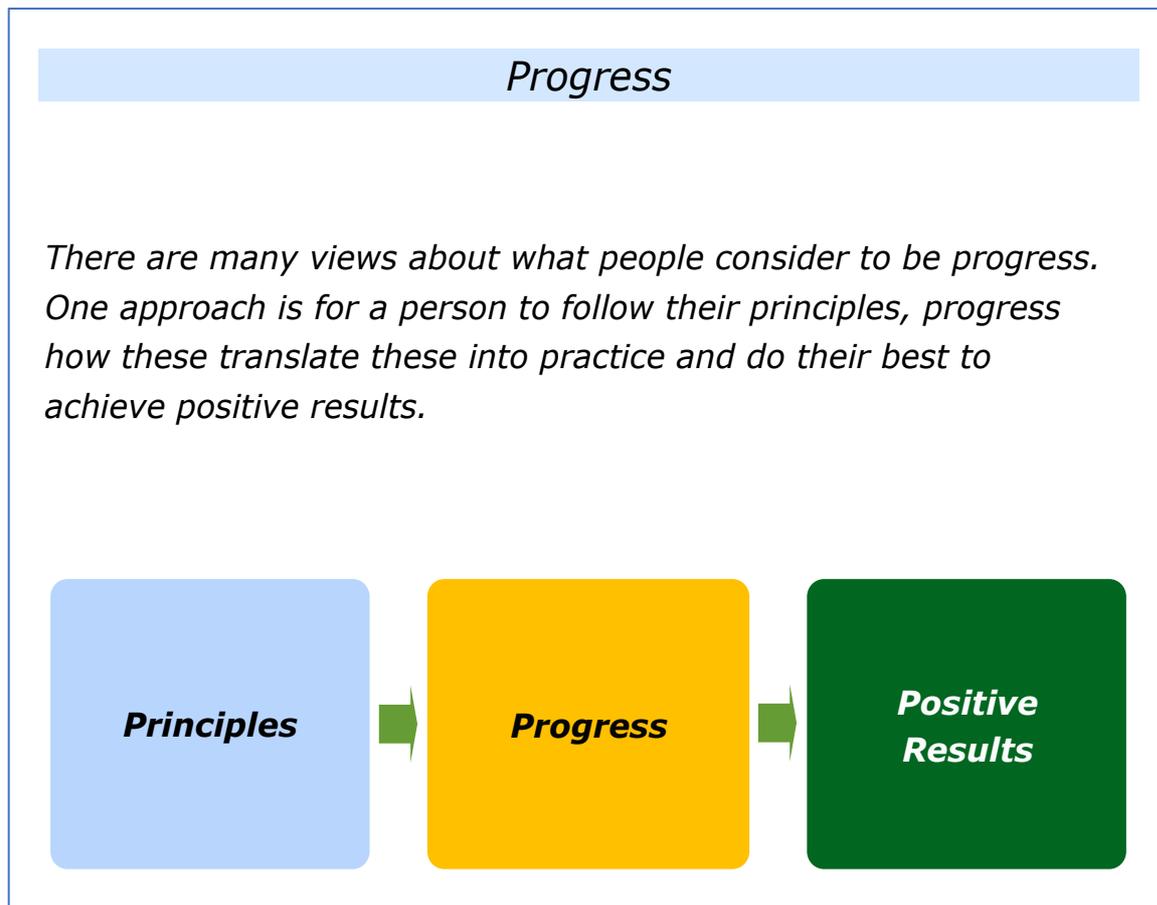
*Practice. The specific things I want to do to
translate these principles into practice are:*

*

*

*

The Progress Approach



There are many views about what people see as progress. Here are some of the most common views.

Some see it as gaining money, recognition, promotion or other definitions of success. They may also compare themselves to others in terms of achieving certain kinds of prizes or status.

Some see it following their vocation, expressing this through various vehicles and aiming to do valuable work. They may aim to build on their strengths, do superb work and achieve their picture of success.

Some see it as following their principles and progressing in the way they translate these into practice. They may aim to serve something greater than themselves and do positive things during their time on the planet.

The following section explores the principles approach to continuing to develop. This is an approach followed by people in many different fields.

A spiritual person may aim to follow the principles embodied in pursuing a certain path - such as being grateful, being kind and serving their faith during their life.

A recovering addict may aim to follow the principles embodied in a recovery programme – such as taking responsibility, helping others and staying healthy one day at a time.

An athlete may aim to follow the principles embodied in being competitive when it matters – such as preparing properly, doing their best and achieving peak performance.

Imagine you want to follow this approach in your own way. Let's explore how you can focus on the principles, practice and positive results.

Principles

The first step is to clarify the principles you want to follow in your life or work. Different people will aim to follow different principles. They may aim, for example:

To be grateful ... To be kind ... To encourage people ... To enjoy life ... To work for social justice ... To create beauty ... To do work that inspires people ... To pass on knowledge ... To help people to succeed ... To care for the planet.

Imagine that you have clarified some of the principles you want to follow. Bearing these in mind, it can be useful:

To focus on one of the principles that you want to follow;

To clarify how you want to translate this principle into practice in a specific situation;

To clarify how you can improve the way you translate this principle into practice and continue to progress.

Imagine that you have chosen a specific situation where you want to follow one of your principles. You can then move on to the next step.

Progress

People like to feel they are progressing in their lives and work. As mentioned earlier, different people have different views about what constitutes progress.

Some see it as improving the way they translate their personal principles into practice.

Some see it as improving the way they follow their professional principles and perform superb work.

Some see it as improving their personal status, public recognition or achievements in terms of gaining prizes.

Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer described how many knowledge workers saw progress in their book *The Progress Principle*. They researched over 12,000 people to explore what individuals found motivating in their daily work.

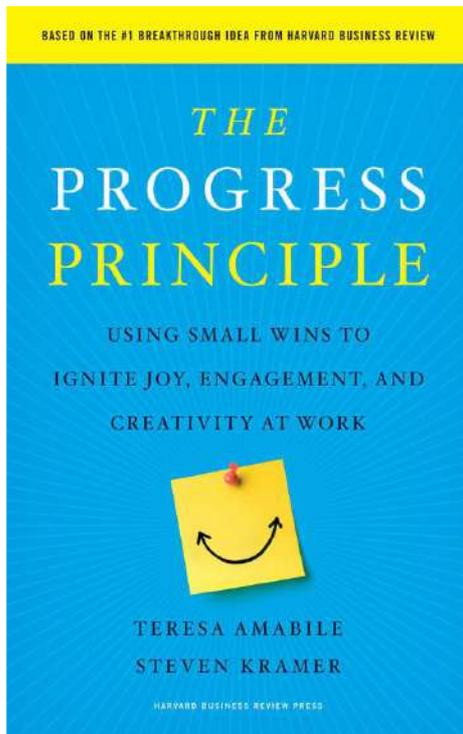
Below is an excerpt from a piece they wrote for the Harvard Business Review.

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.

Imagine that you have clarified the principle you want to follow. It can be useful to explore the following questions.

What is the specific situation where I want to translate this principle in practice? What are the positive results I want to achieve in the situation? What will be the benefits of achieving these results?

How can I translate the principle into practice? How can I perform superbly? How can I keep improving when translating this principle into practice?

Great workers rehearse properly before going into a situation. You will do this in your own way. Moving into action, you will then aim to be fully present, follow your principles and perform superb work.

You may also aim to embody Kaizen – the concept of continuous improvement. Bearing this in mind, it will be important to keep reading reality and aiming:

To keep focusing on the results to achieve;

To keep building on what is working;

To keep tackling areas for improvement.

People who take these steps are more likely to make progress. Sometimes this involves them making small improvements. Sometimes it involves making bigger transformational improvements.

Imagine that you have taking some of these steps. These may then lead to the next stage.

Positive Results

Different people produce different kinds of positive results. Here is a summary of what two individuals said when describing what they saw as progress.

Person A

"I have been sober now for 365 days. It was a year ago that I stopped drinking. Since then I have been able to rebuild a good relationship with my former partner.

"This has resulted in being able to spend more time with my eight-year-old daughter. I am finding life more rewarding – though sometimes I need help to deal with some of the struggles."

Person B

"I gave up my job in the C-Suite and took another role in my present organisation. This meant going back to the kind of work I love - helping customers to solve problems and achieve success.

"I now spend 80% of my time doing stimulating work with customers. Previously I was told to spend that amount of time on internal matters. I now feel more alive and have also returned to playing music in a band."

Imagine that you are translating one of your principles into practice and aiming to make progress. You will have your own definition of what constitutes positive results.

You may aim to enjoy life, be better at your craft, write articles that inspire people, raise money for charity or overcome certain challenges. You may aim to improve the way you help people, complete a creative project, achieve certain personal goals or enjoy a sense of peace.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe how you may want to follow the principles approach in your way.

Looking ahead, what may be the principle you want to follow? How can you translate this into practice and continue to progress? What may happen as a result of taking these steps?

Here is the exercise on this theme. It invites you to complete the following sentences.

The Progress Approach

*The specific principle
I want to follow is:*

*

*The specific things I can do to
translate this principle into
practice and continue to progress are:*

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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?"

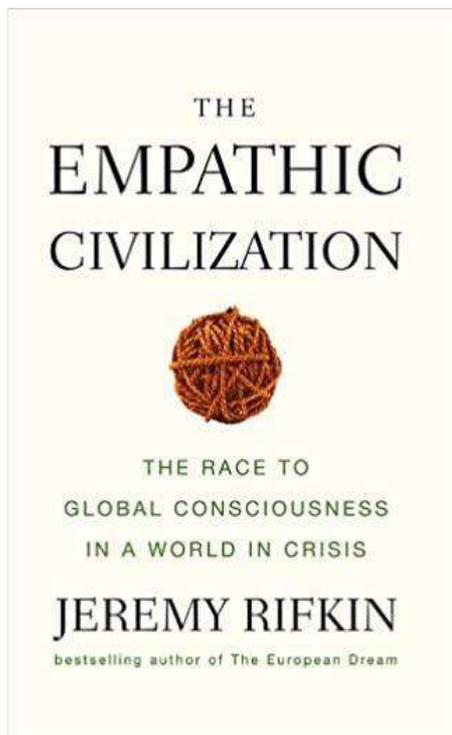
"What is it that needs doing, that I know something about, that probably won't happen unless I take responsibility for it?"

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 Positive Pollination Approach



The Positive Paradigm Approach



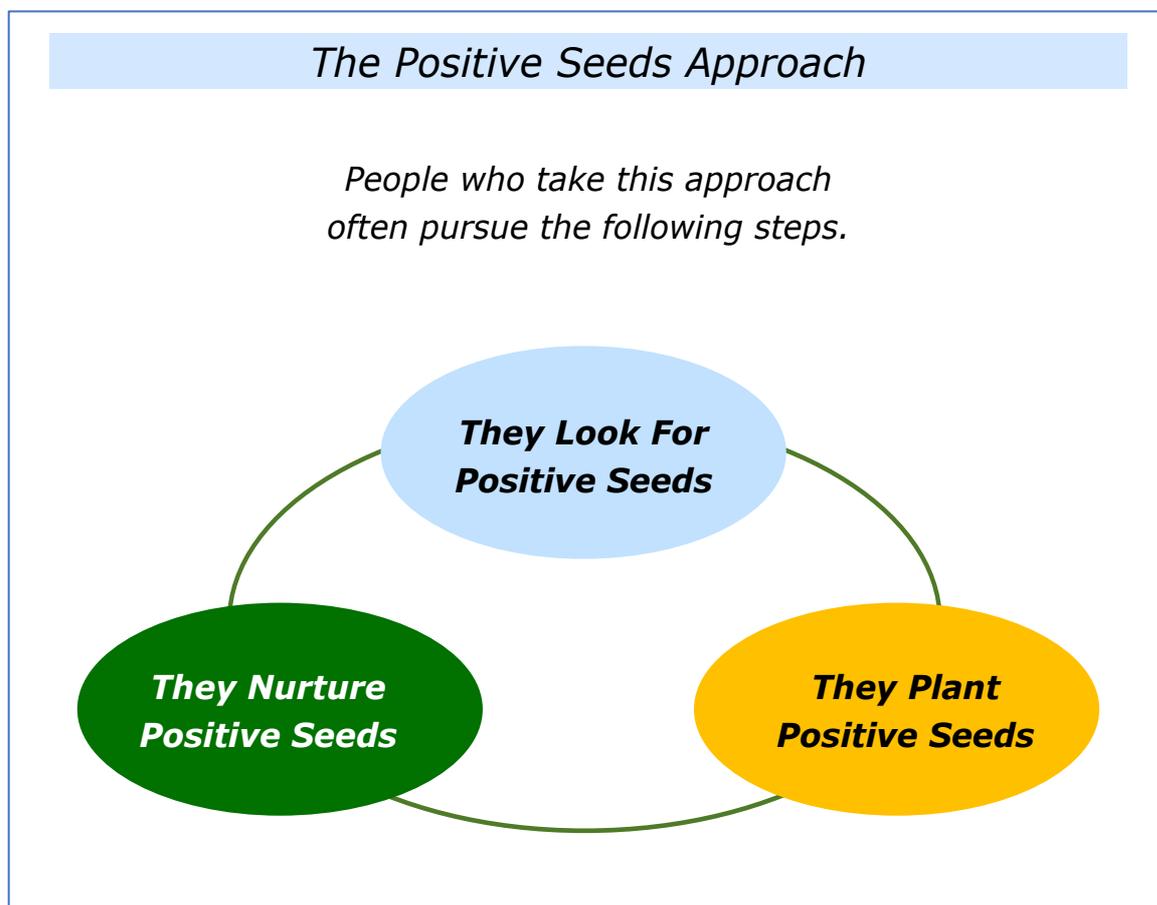
The Positive Knowledge Approach



The Positive 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.



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 Positive Paradigm Approach

The Positive Paradigm

A paradigm is a way of looking at the world. Imagine you are helping a person or group of people who want to develop. It can be important to recognise their paradigm and take the following steps.

- *To show people a positive paradigm;*
- *To show people how it may be profitable – in the widest sense – for them to follow that positive paradigm;*
- *To show people how they can follow certain principles - and translate these into practice - to achieve success by following the positive paradigm.*

A paradigm is a way of looking at the world. The paradigm that we have often influences our daily actions.

Imagine that you are working with a person or a group of people who may want to develop. It can be important to recognise their present paradigm and then to take the following steps.

To show them a positive paradigm;

To show how it may be profitable – in the widest sense – for them to follow that positive paradigm;

To show how they can follow certain principles – and translate these into practice – to achieve success by following the positive paradigm.

If appropriate, you can then encourage and enable people to follow this approach successfully. This may mean that people are happier, healthier, wealthier or leave a positive legacy.

The pluses of the paradigm 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.

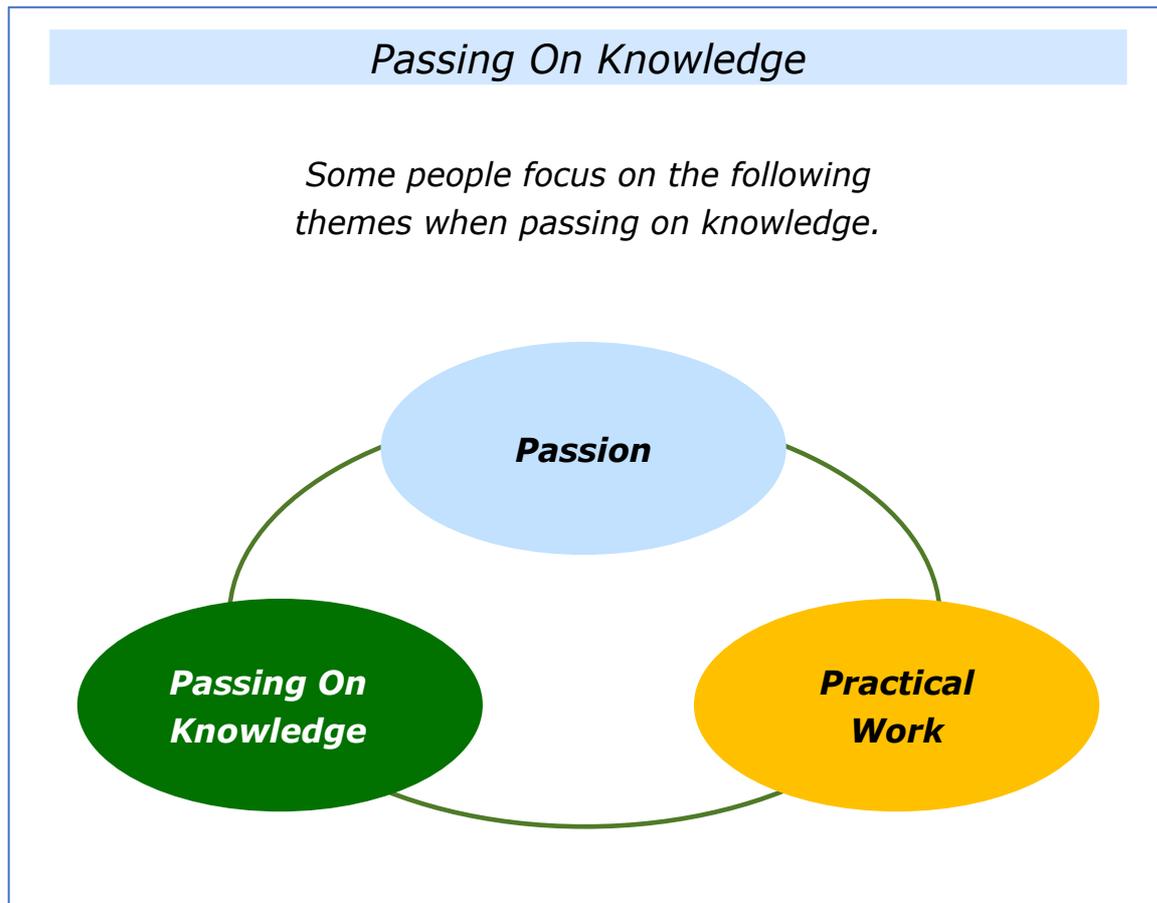
The Positive Knowledge Approach

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.



Different people choose to pass on knowledge in different ways. Some people work through the following stages.

Passion

They focus on an activity they feel passionately about and do what works.

Practical Work

They throw themselves into doing practical work and do their best to deliver success.

Passing On Knowledge

They want to pass on knowledge about what works in this activity and help other people to succeed.

Imagine you want to pass on knowledge in your own way. One approach is to focus on the *What, Who, Why, How* and *When*.

<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?

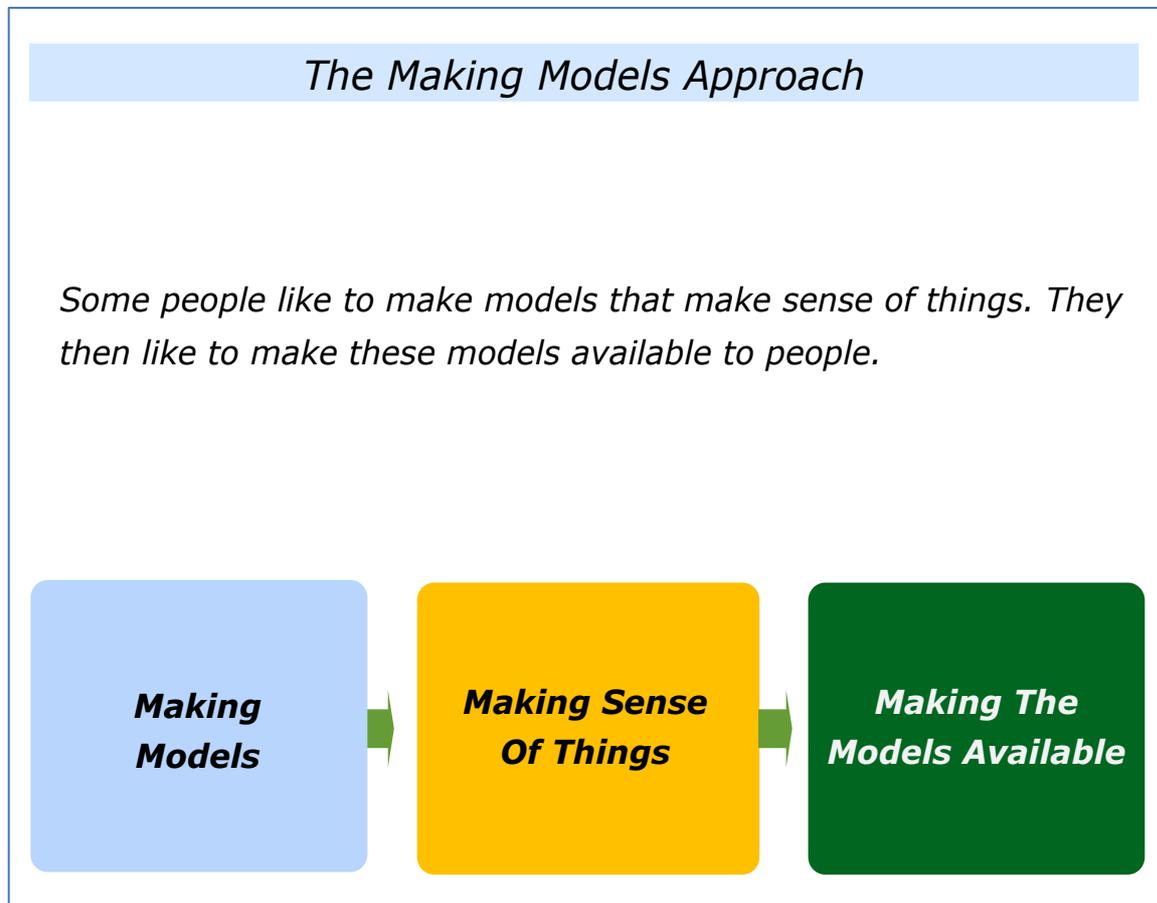
As mentioned above, different people pass on knowledge in different ways. Let's look at one approach.

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.

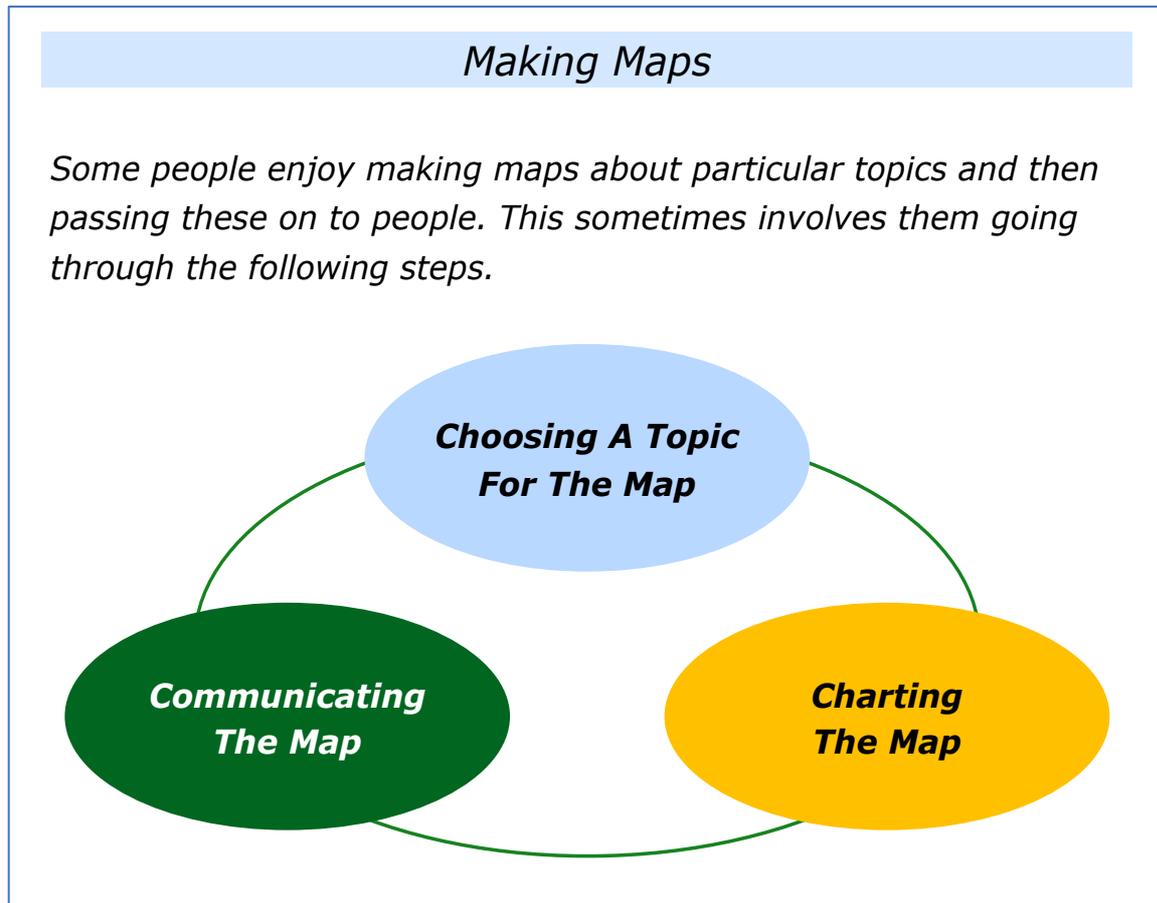


People often want more than models, so it can be useful to move onto providing practical tools that work. They can then apply these in their own lives and work.

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 Making Maps 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.

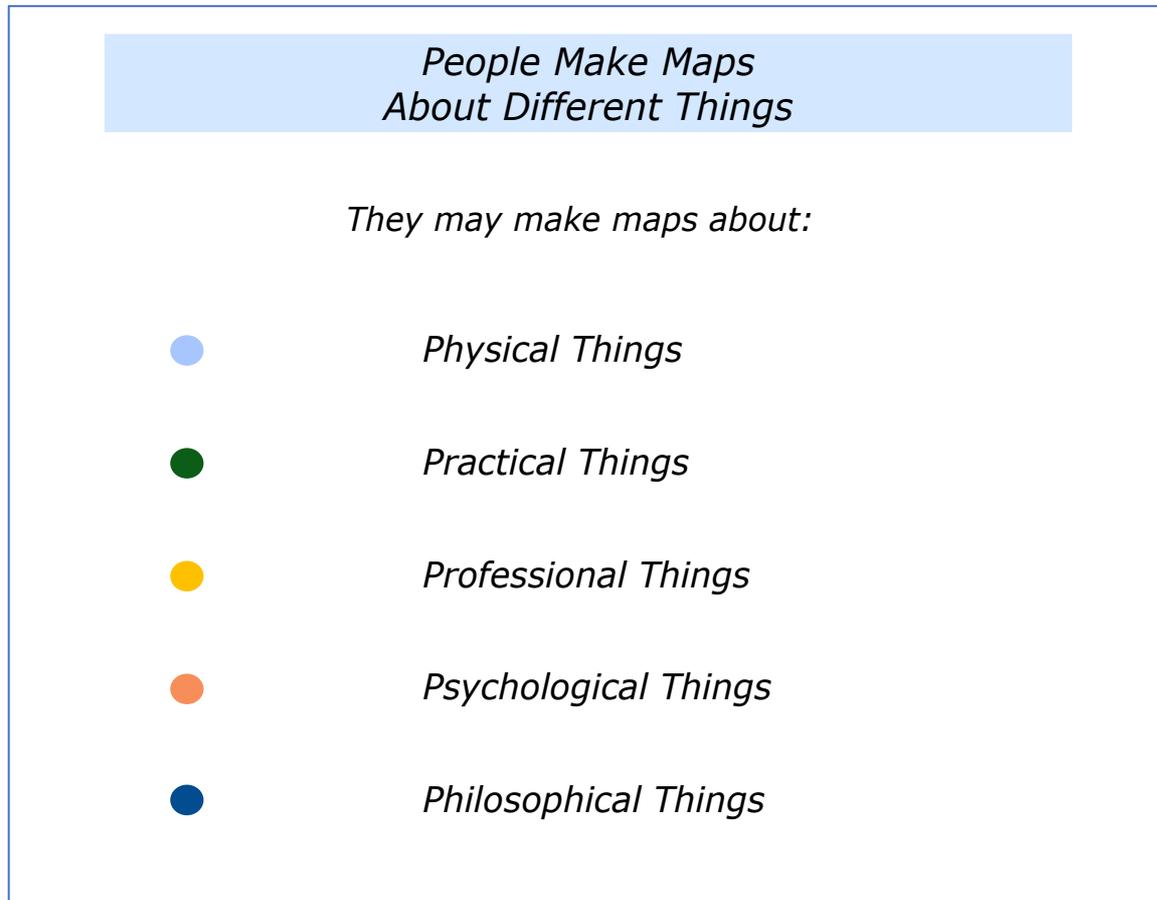
Some people make maps of physical things. These may include towns, countries and planets. They may chart journeys across land, sea or space. Some may create diagrams of the body, brain or other physical objects.

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 about professional things. They may describe principles, guidelines or other approaches that people can follow to perform excellent work in their chosen profession.

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.

Making Maps In The Past

*The specific situation in the past
when I followed some elements
of the making maps 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 of taking these steps were:*

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*

Imagine that you want to follow some elements of this approach in the future. If appropriate, you may take the following steps. 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 particular 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.

Charting The Map

This part often involves three stages. First, collecting information for the map. Second, charting the map. Third, checking the map to ensure it is accurate.

You may start by collecting 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.

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 professional, psychological or philosophical theory. The key is to provide people with a map they can use to understand and apply the information.

You will then go on to checking the map. Cartographers continually 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.

Imagine that you have taken these steps. You may then want to move on to the next stage.

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.

Making Maps In The Future

*The specific situation in the future when
I may want to follow some elements
of the making maps approach may be:*

*

*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:*

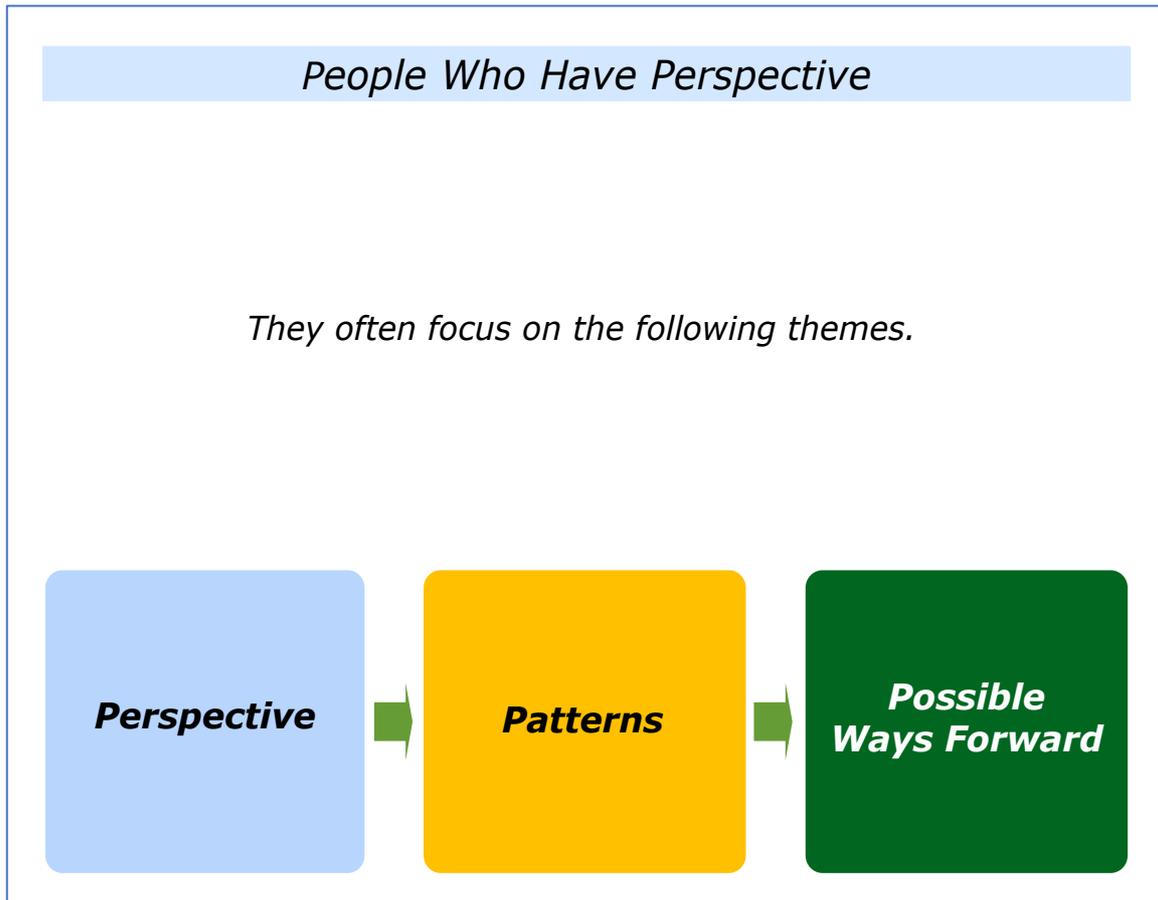
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Different people experience different journeys on the way to making their best contribution in life. Let's explore some approaches they may take.

The 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.

Perspective

Such people see the big picture. They clarify what is important in life and focus on these priorities. They then aim to do their best during their time on the planet.

Patterns

Such individuals sometimes focus on a particular topic. They gather information and see patterns. They may then see the consequences of both the successful and unsuccessful patterns.

Possible Ways Forward

Some people move on to the next step. Bearing in mind what they can control, they may then aim:

To clarify the possible ways forward;

To clarify the consequences of each option;

To clarify the route they want to follow.

Bearing in mind the big picture and the consequences of their chosen route, they move into action. They then do their best to focus on what is important in life and get positive results.

Such people are sometimes asked to share knowledge when acting as mentors, trusted advisors or in other roles. They may then listen to the person and, when appropriate, help them to see the big picture. They may then go through the following steps with the person.

They invite the person to pause, explain the topic 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.*

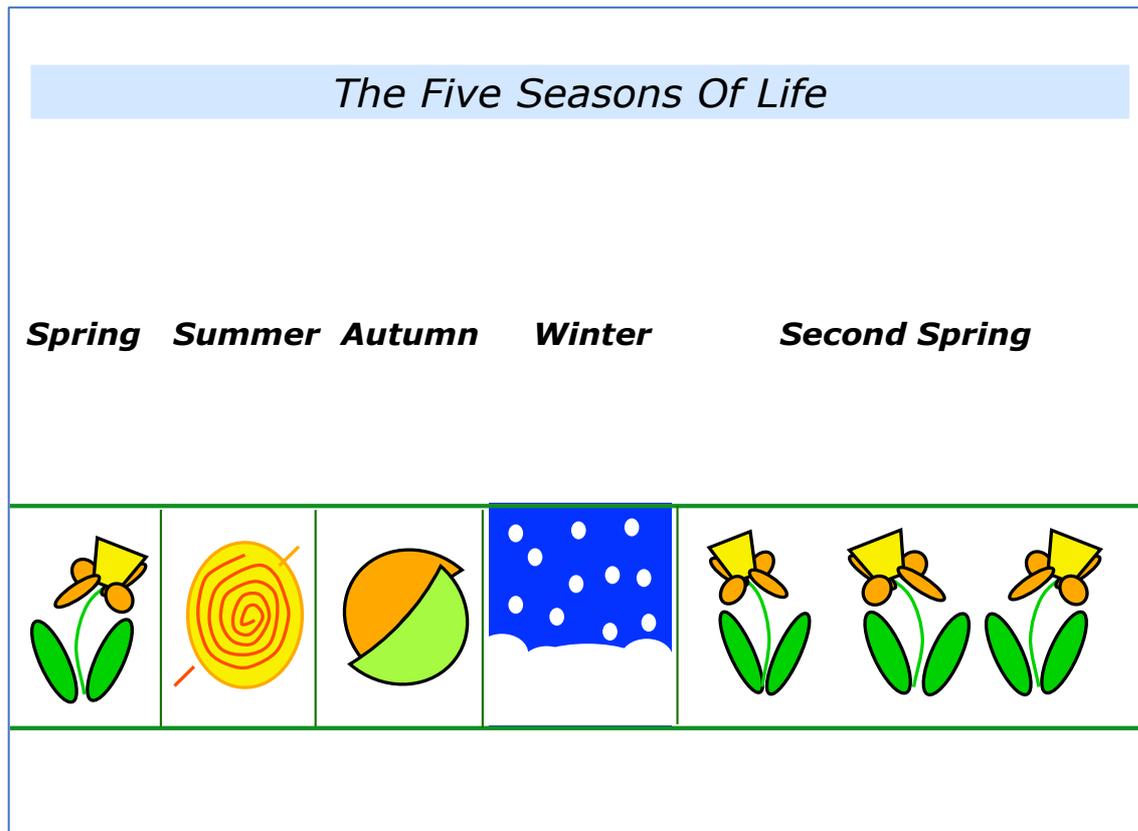
- *They may focus on what human beings have in common - such as wanting to be healthy, hopeful and happy - and how people can work together to achieve these common goals.*
- *They may have chosen to serve something greater than themselves - such as a spiritual faith, purpose or sense of vocation.*
- *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.

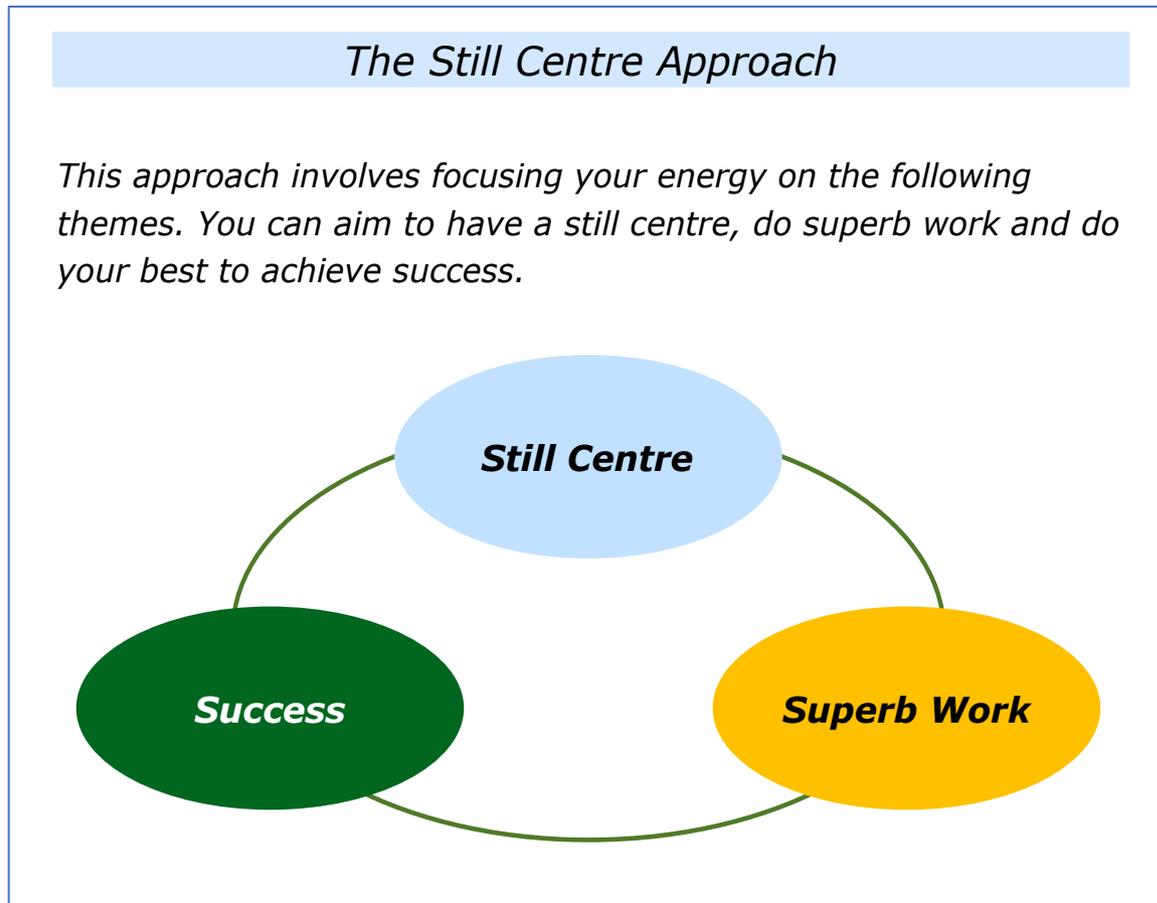
Second Spring

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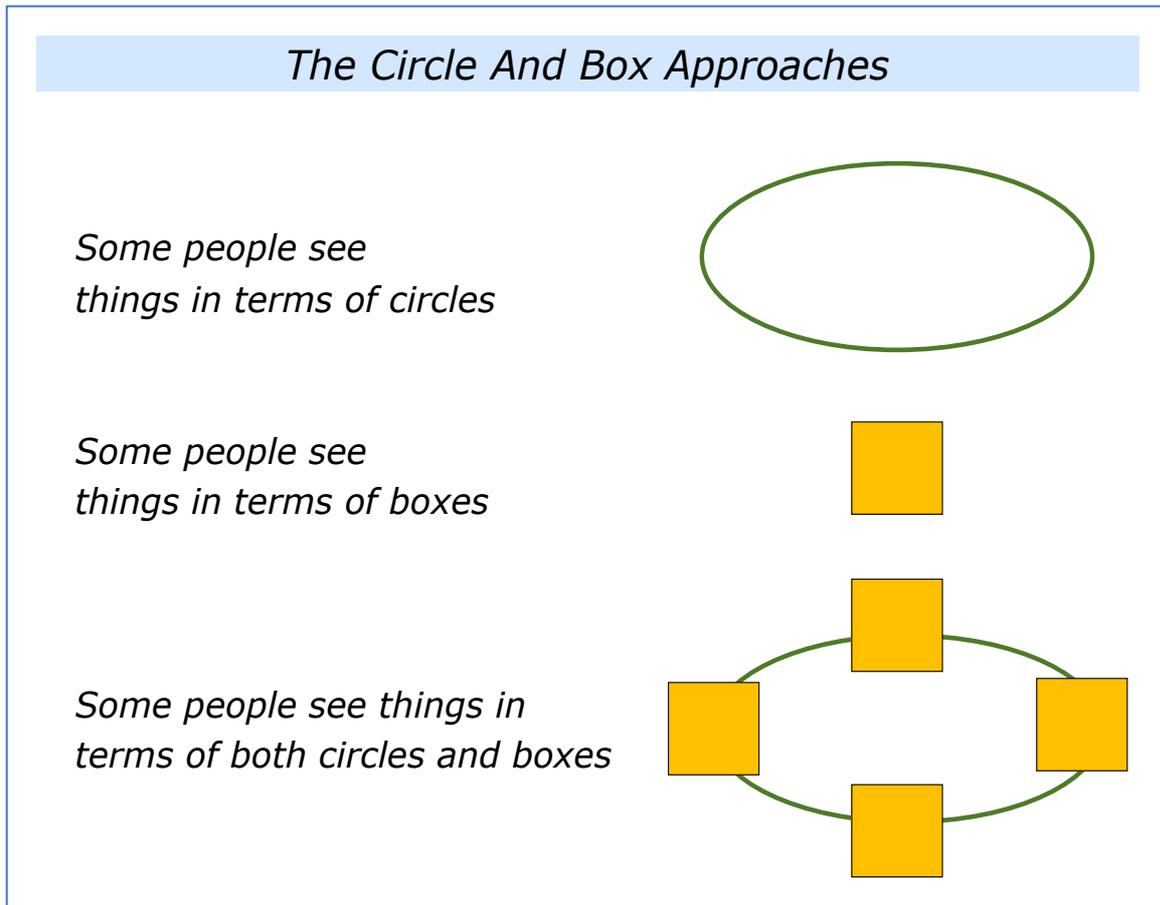
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Seeing Circles And Boxes Approach



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.

Seeing Circles

Some people 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.

Seeing Boxes

Some people 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.

Seeing Both Circles And Boxes

Some people 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.

Let's return to your own life and work. What are the situations where: a) you are able to see circles and how things are connected; b) you are able to do good work within a certain box; c) you are able to see circles and also do good work in a certain box?

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

Some people make breakthroughs in other ways. Sometimes this can happen by chance. Let's look at one way this can happen.

The Circles And Boxes Approach

The situations where I see circles and how things are connected are:

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The situations where go into certain boxes and do good work are:

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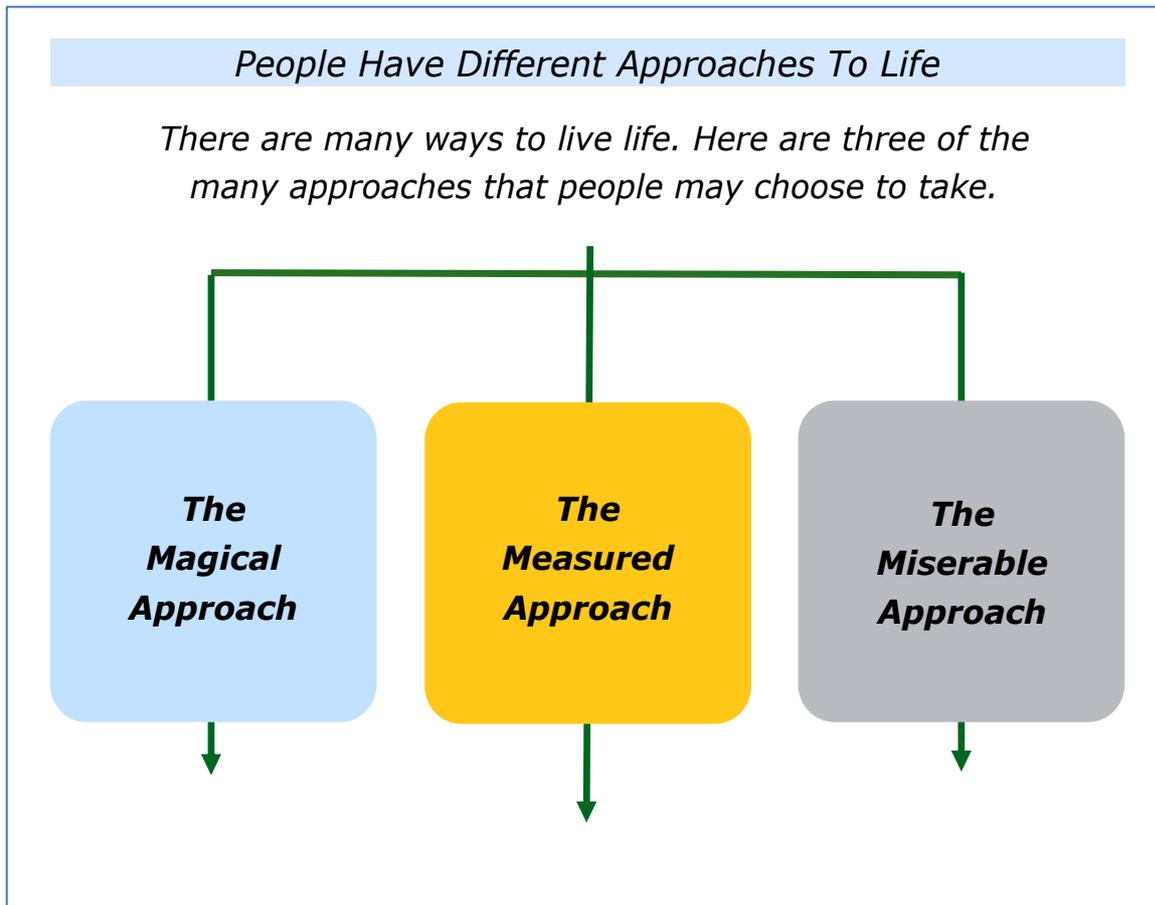
The situations where I see circles and go into a certain box and do good work are:

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The Magical, Measured And Miserable Approaches



There are many ways to live life. Some people choose to follow the magical, measured or miserable approaches. Some may combine elements of the magical and measured approaches. Let's explore these themes.

The Magical Approach

Some people aim to follow the magical approach. They appreciate life and have a sense of gratitude. They often want to encourage people and be generous. Some also want to do things that give people positive memories for life.

Different people follow this approach in different ways. They may do this as parents, educators, writers, artists, mentors, decision makers, leaders or in other roles.

This is an approach I explored during my early work with people. It involved visiting sages, educators and communities that provided people with such experiences. Some of these demonstrated the following characteristics.

They made people feel welcome and helped them to see positive ways forward;

They created stimulating environments that encouraged people to explore their possibilities;

They provided people with knowledge they could use to achieve their personal or professional goals.

Some people create magic by being generous and magnanimous. They also aim to be gracious and behave in ways that help other people. Here are some of the dictionary definitions about being magnanimous.

A magnanimous person has a generous spirit ... Magnanimous comes from Latin magnus "great" and animus "soul," so it literally describes someone who is big-hearted ... Aristotle defines a magnanimous person as having a great soul – they have a great spirit and a great heart.

Nelson Mandela is often quoted as an example of somebody who demonstrated this quality. Recalling what he felt when being released after twenty-seven years in prison, he said:

"As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison."

Here is an excerpt from a piece that Desmond Tutu wrote about Mandela's generosity of spirit after his release.

Mandela - A Practitioner Of The Most Incredible Acts Of Magnanimity

For 27 years, I knew Nelson Mandela by reputation only. I had seen him once, in the early 1950s, when he came to my teacher-training college to judge a debating contest. The next time I saw him was in 1990.

When he came out of prison, many people feared he would turn out to have feet of clay. The idea that he might live up to his reputation seemed too good to be true. A whisper went around that some in the ANC said he was a lot more useful in jail than outside.

When he did come out, the most extraordinary thing happened. Even though many in the white community in South Africa were still dismissing him as a terrorist, he tried to understand their position.

His gestures communicated more eloquently than words. For example, he invited his white jailer as a VIP guest to his inauguration as president, and he invited the prosecutor in the Rivonia trial to lunch.

What incredible acts of magnanimity these were. His prosecutor had been quite zealous in pushing for the death penalty.

Mandela also invited the widows of the Afrikaner political leaders to come to the president's residence. Betsie Verwoerd, whose husband, HF Verwoerd, was assassinated in 1966, was unable to come because she was unwell.

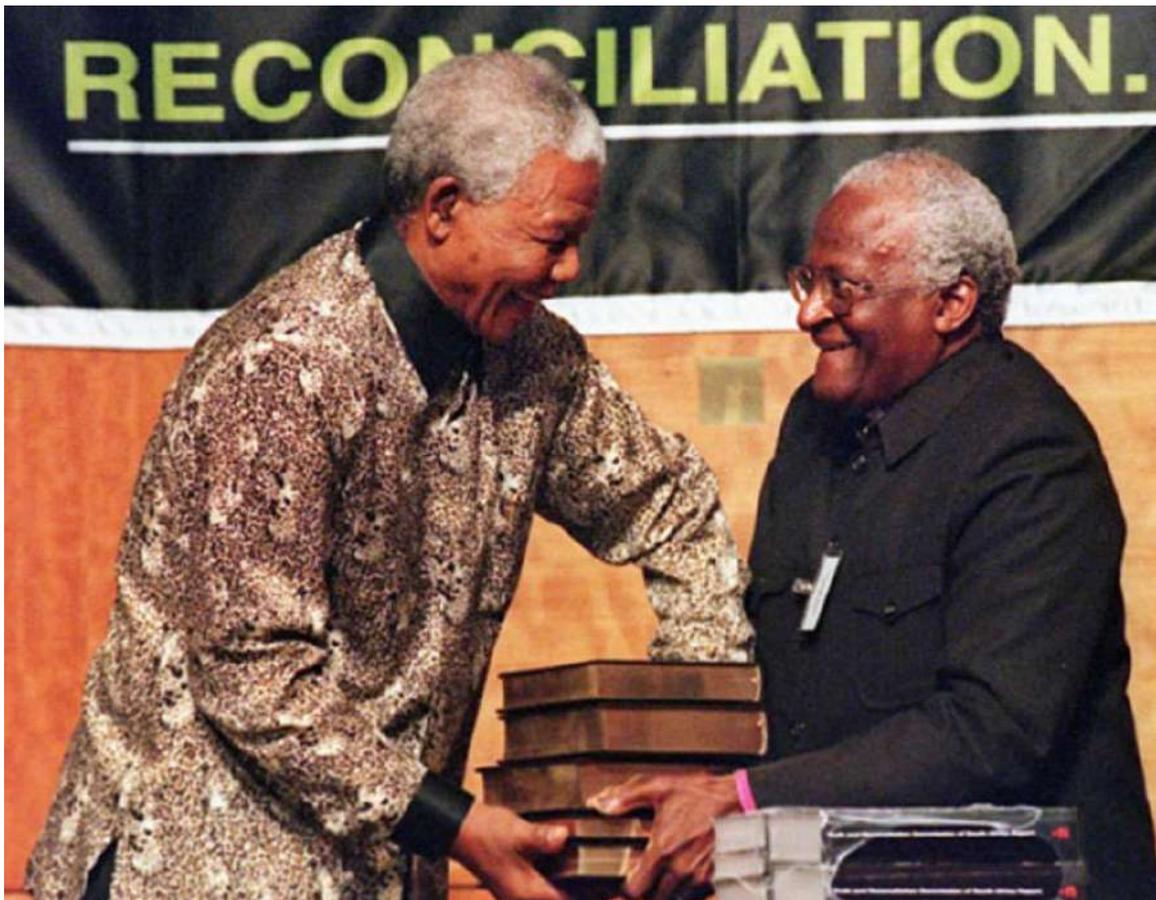
She lived in Oranje, where Afrikaners congregated to live, exclusively. And Mandela dropped everything and went to have tea with her, there, in that place.

He said of the Afrikaners: you can very well understand how they must be feeling. He reached out to them using the symbol of the South African rugby team, the springbok, which was excoriated by many black people as a symbol of Afrikaner power.

Rugby was the white man's sport, especially for Afrikaners, and Mandela's master stroke at the World Cup final was when he strode on to the turf wearing his Springbok jersey.

Almost any other political leader would have seemed gauche, but he carried it off with aplomb. The whole arena, which was probably 99% white, mostly Afrikaner, erupted into cries of "Nelson! Nelson!"

The times in jail was crucial. Of course, suffering embitters some people, but it ennobles others. Prison became a crucial that burned away the dross.



The Measured Approach

Some people follow the measured approach. Such people may demonstrate this when making decisions or tackling a particular challenge. They may then work through the following steps.

*They make sense
of what is happening*

Staying calm, they aim to gather information. They aim to see the big picture, recognise patterns and clarify what will happen if these patterns continue.

*They make
considered decisions*

They follow their chosen approach to making decisions. They may aim to clarify the results to achieve, the possible ways forward and the consequences of each option. They then settle on their chosen strategy.

*They make things
work successfully*

Some individuals go further. They aim to translate the strategy into action, get some quick wins and keep improving. They then do their best to make sure things work successfully.

Looking back, can you think of a person who followed the measured approach? They may have done this when making a decision or tackling a challenge. What did they do then to be measured? What happened as a result of them taking these steps?

Some people combine elements of the magical and measured approaches. They appreciate life, encourage people and sometimes do things that give people positive memories for life.

Such people can also be measured. Staying calm and clear, they make considered decisions during crises. They may also find creative solutions to challenges.

The Miserable Approach

Some people choose to follow the miserable approach. They choose to complain, be angry or spread misery to other people. They sometimes get high by blaming others.

Such people could choose to have a positive attitude or to seek solutions. But they would then have to take responsibility rather than look for excuses. Some get a bigger pay-off by seeking others who keep them company in their misery.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific situation where you want to follow elements of the magical or measured approaches?

You may want to do this when encouraging a person, teaching a class, running a workshop, doing a creative project or doing another activity. You may want to do it when acting as a parent, writer, singer, educator, mentor, leader or when playing another role.

What can you do then to follow elements of these approaches in your own way? How can you appreciate life, encourage others or be measured? 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 Magical And Measured Approaches

The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of these approaches may be:

*

The specific things I can do then to follow this elements of these approaches in my own way are:

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*

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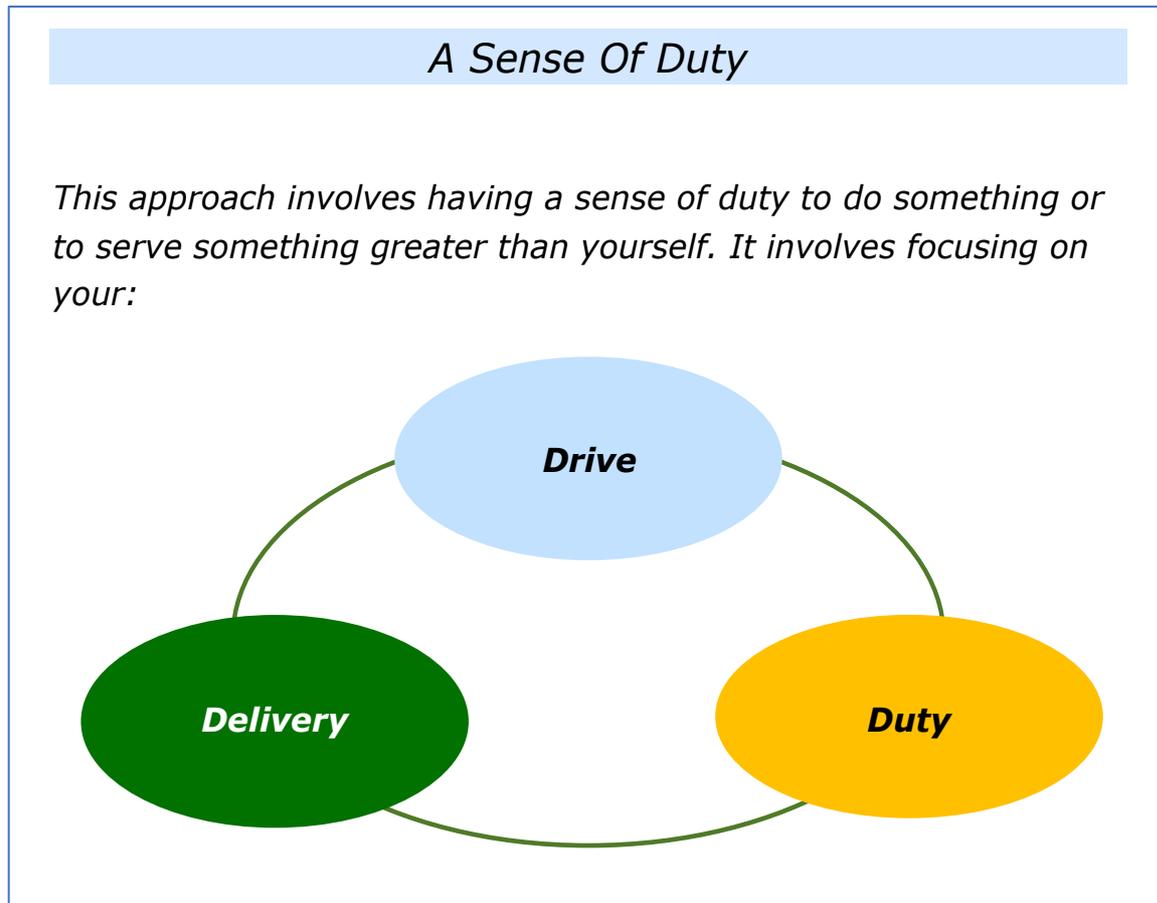
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Sense Of Duty Approach



There are many ways to live life. One model is to follow elements of the sense of duty approach. This often starts by feeling you have a drive to do something or to serve something greater than yourself.

Such a drive can turn into feeling you have a duty to pursue a certain activity. You can then aim to do your best and deliver what is required when following your sense of duty. Let's explore these themes.

Drive

Different people feel driven to do different things. You may feel driven to raise a family, follow a spiritual faith or follow a vocation. You may aim to make full use of your talents, pursue a mission or do another activity.

Some people feel driven to pursue certain activities early in their lives. Some explore many activities during their teens and twenties before

focusing on a particular theme. Some feel freer to take this approach later in their lives.

Duty

Some people find that the drive they want to pursue translates into a sense of duty. This can take different forms.

One person may feel compelled to make use of their natural talent. They may focus on participating in a sport, playing an instrument or performing certain kinds of work.

One person may feel compelled to follow their vocation. They may aim to help others by becoming a nurse, doctor, counsellor, scientist, architect or by playing another role.

One person may feel compelled to pursue a mission. They may aim to free political prisoners, improve people's quality of life, care for the planet or achieve a specific goal.

People who have a sense of duty may aim to pursue this every day. They think about how to follow it as soon as they wake up. Looking ahead, they focus on what they can do that day to be diligent in following their duty.

Looking at your own life, when have you followed this approach? You may have done this as a parent, educator, therapist, crisis manager, leader or in another role.

What did you do then to follow your sense of duty? What were kinds of satisfaction you got from following it? How did you build on the pluses and manage any minuses? What did you learn about yourself from pursuing your duty?

Delivery

Different people follow their chosen activity in different ways in their personal or professional lives. Many aim to do their best to deliver what is required when following their sense of duty.

You may do this as a parent, a carer or in another role with your loved ones. You may do it by focusing on a spiritual faith, a vocation or a mission. You may do it by aiming to achieve a specific goal.

Many people feel compelled to do follow a sense of duty. One question is: Do they choose their duty or does their duty choose them? Maybe it does not matter as long as doing so proves satisfying for both themselves and other people.

Many medical workers followed their duty when caring for people during the Covid pandemic. They aimed to follow their medical oath rather than be judgemental towards the unvaccinated patients who got ill.

Many people workers, artists, athletes, researchers, scientists and others see each day as an opportunity. They feel excited to pursue something greater than themselves. They then get great satisfaction from delivering what is required that day.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific activity where you may want to follow elements of this approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

What may be the activity where you may have a sense of duty? How can you follow this drive? How can you do your best to deliver what is required? What may 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 Sense Of Duty Approach

*The specific activity where I
can follow elements of this
approach in my own way is:*

*

*The specific things I can do to
follow elements of this approach are:*

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*

*

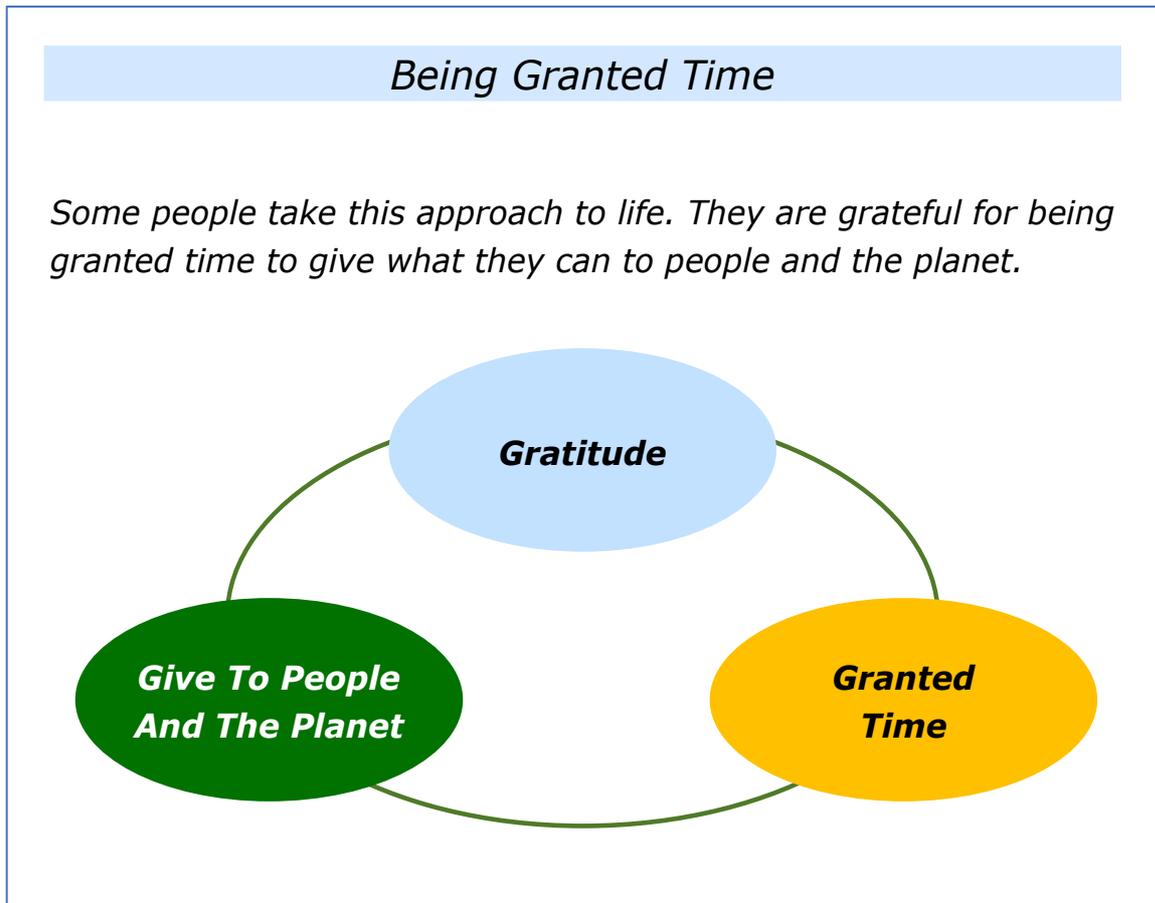
*The specific benefits of
taking these steps will be:*

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The Being Granted Time Approach

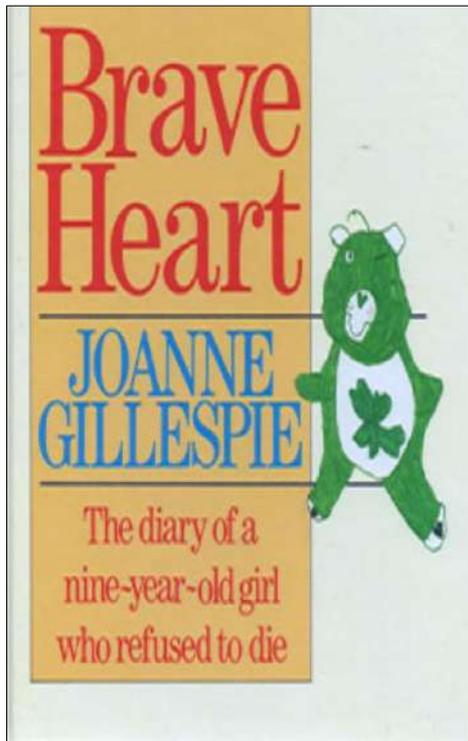


Some people appreciate life and see every day as an opportunity to help others. Many people embrace this approach as they get older. Some learn it much earlier in life.

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.

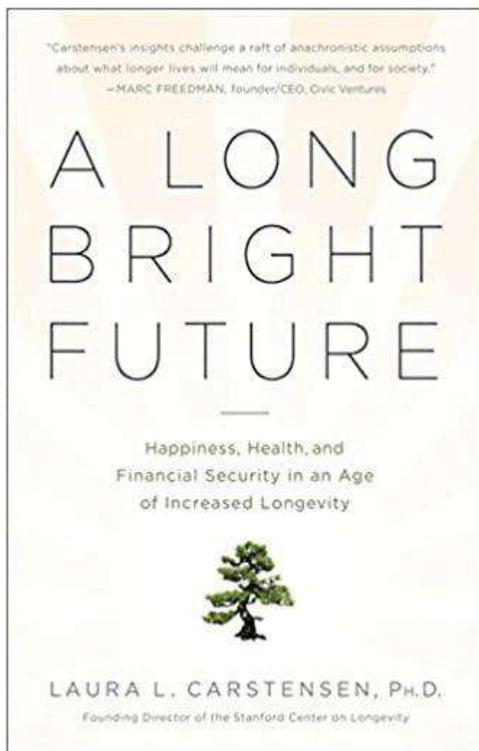
There were books for grown-ups but there were none for children.

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:

*

*

*

The specific benefits – both for myself and for other people – of doing these things may be:

*

*

*

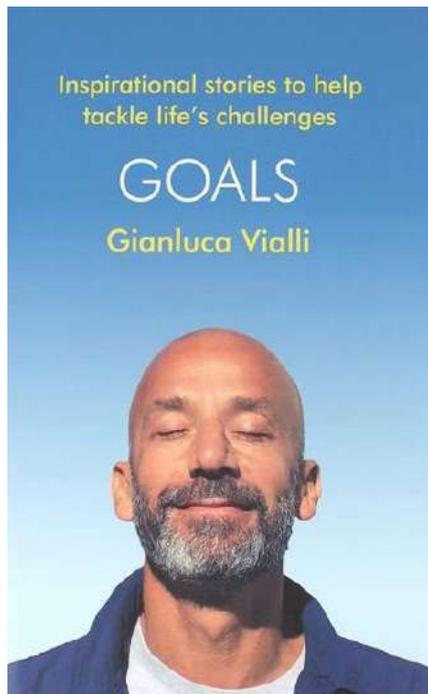
The Companions On The Creative Journey Approach



There are many ways to view our experiences. One approach is to see successes, setbacks and specific challenges as companions on our creative journey in life.

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.

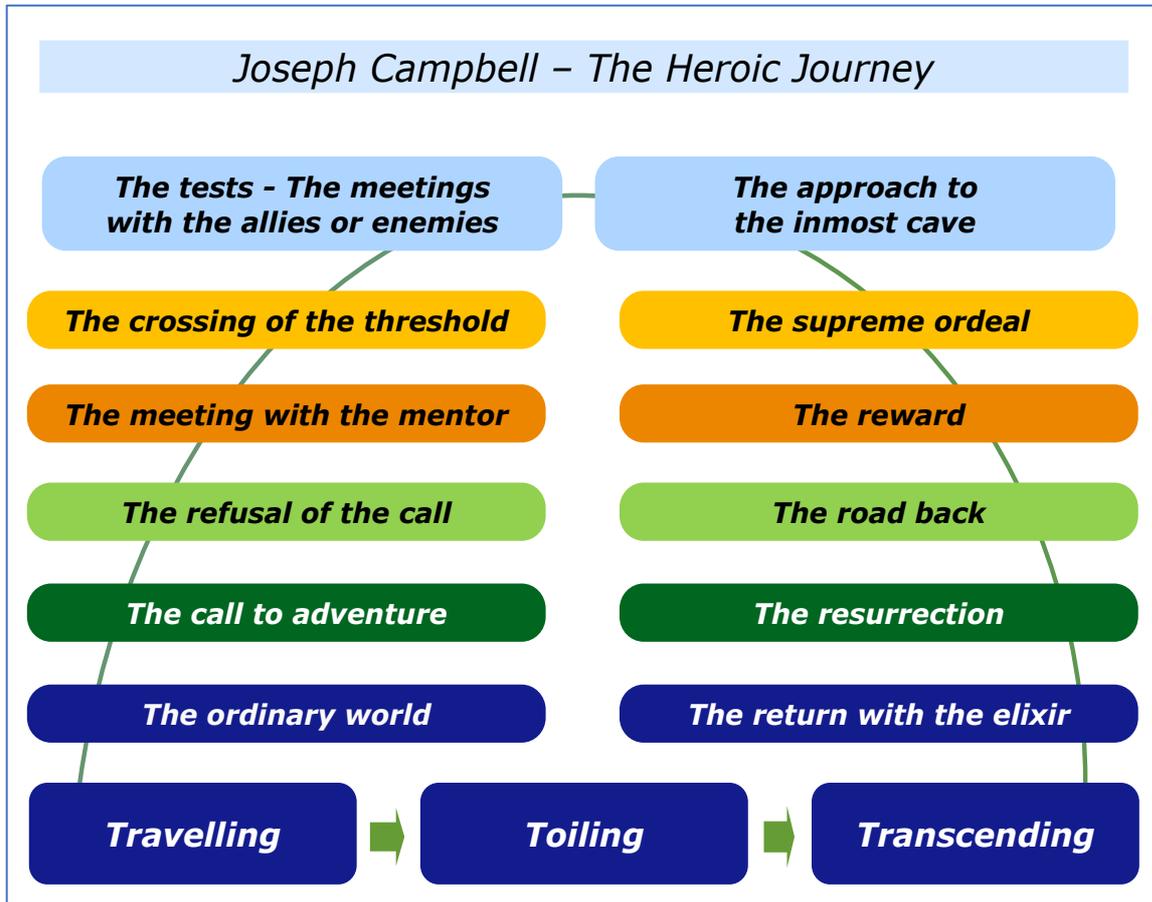
"If you look at climate change we have a chance to do something about it. We are now saying health is the most important thing.

"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 difference. Women gather knowledge and wisdom from the tribe earlier, whilst some men may only ask for help at the last moment.)

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.

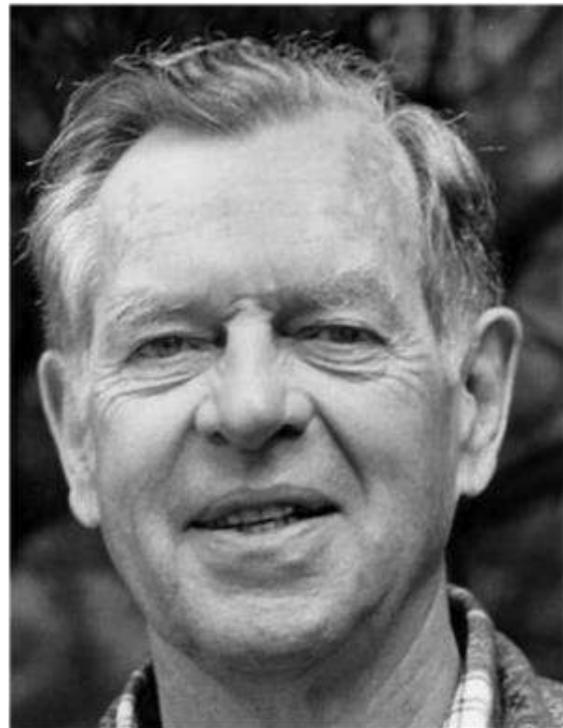
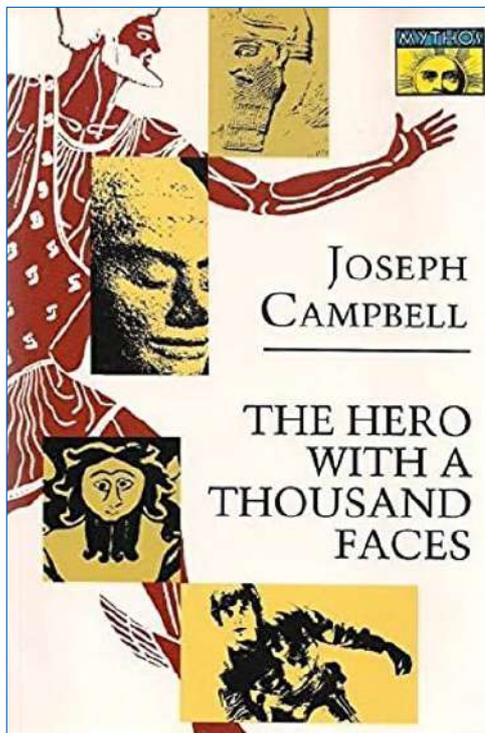
Joseph Campbell says people take one of three routes after returning to the world.

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? 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:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to – as far possible, use these in a positive way are:

*

*

*

The specific things that may happen as a result of taking this approach may be:

*

*

*

The Giving Every Day Approach

Giving Every Day

Some people take the following approach.

- *They make a decision that they want to give to people;*
- *They start each day by clarifying what they want to give to people;*
- *They do their best to make a positive contribution and continue to give to people.*

Some people seem to be natural givers. Some decide to be givers as a certain point of their lives – such as when having children. Some take this approach as they grow older. They aim to give to people every day.

Different people choose different ways to translate this into action. Some ask themselves the following questions.

What are the things I can give to people? What do I want to give to them today? How can I do my best to make positive contribution? How can I continue to give to people?

You will have your own approach to making this happen. If you wish, however, try tackling the following exercise.

Giving Every Day

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

*

*

*

*The specific things I can do to
give these things to people are:*

*

*

*

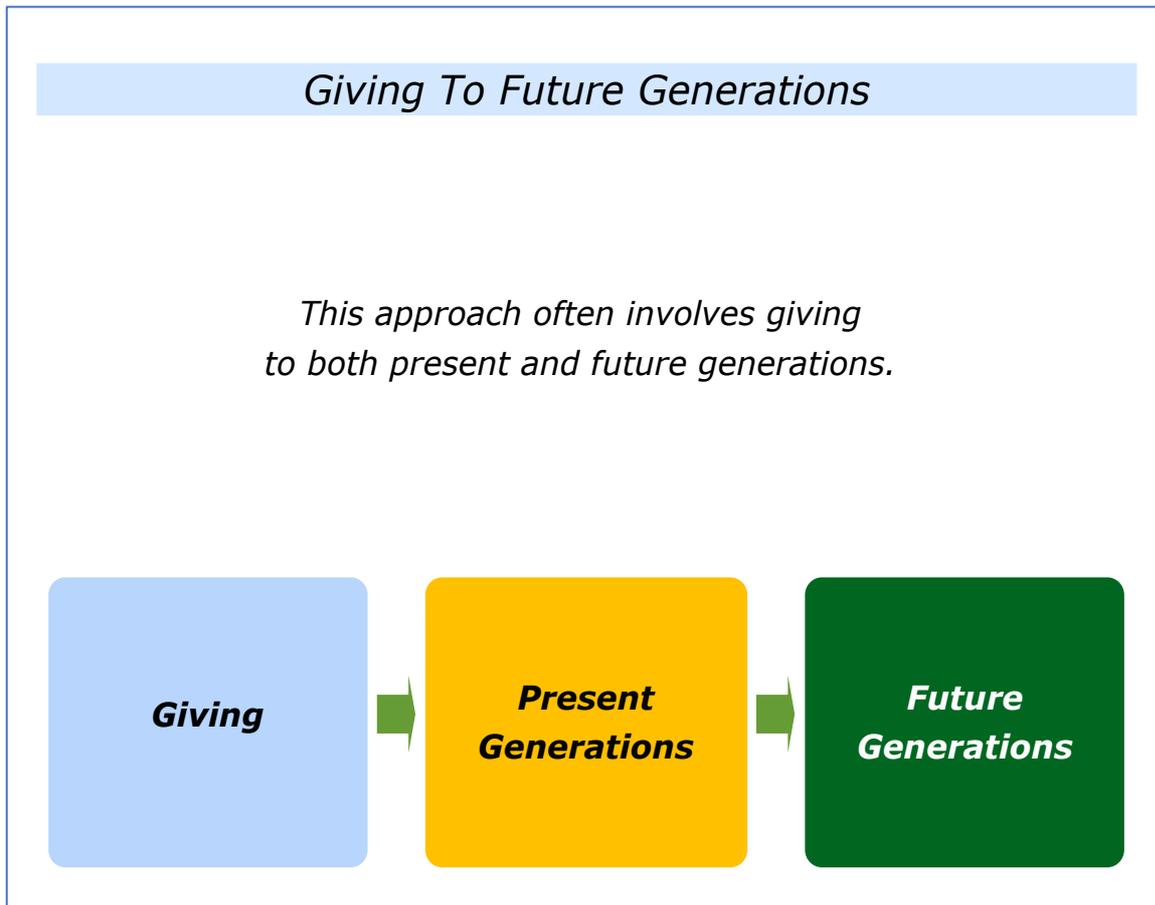
*The specific things that may happen as a
result of giving these things to people may be:*

*

*

*

The Giving To Future Generations Approach



Many people want to give to future generations. Different people do this in different ways.

Some encourage their children to live fulfilling lives. Some pass on knowledge that enables people to shape a positive future. Some do practical work that helps people or the planet.

There are now many organisations that help people to encourage both present and future generations. The following pages describe one such organisation.

The Centre For Effective Altruism

Toby Ord and William MacAskill co-founded the Centre in 2011. It built on the work done by two movements. These were:

Giving What You Can – a community of effective givers founded in Oxford, UK.

80,000 hours – an organisation that enables people to pursue high-impact careers that help people and the planet.

Here is an introduction to the Centre's work. We explore some aspects of this in the following pages.



**CENTRE FOR
EFFECTIVE
ALTRUISM**

What is effective altruism?

Effective altruism is about using evidence and reason to figure out how to benefit others as much as possible, and taking action on that basis.

What is the effective altruism community?

The effective altruism community is a global community of people who care deeply about the world, make helping others a significant part of their lives, and use evidence and reason to figure out how best to do so.

The Guiding Principles Of Effective Altruism

Commitment to Others

We take the well-being of others very seriously, and are willing to take significant personal action in order to benefit others.

What this entails can vary from person to person, and it's ultimately up to individuals to figure out what significant personal action looks like for them.

In each case, however, the most essential commitment of effective altruism is to actively try to make the world a better place.

Scientific Mindset

We strive to base our actions on the best available evidence and reasoning about how the world works.

We recognize how difficult it is to know how to do the most good, and therefore try to avoid overconfidence, to seek out informed critiques of our own views, to be open to unusual ideas, and to take alternative points of view seriously.

Openness

We are a community united by our commitment to these principles, not to a specific cause.

Our goal is to do as much good as we can, and we evaluate ways to do that without committing ourselves at the outset to any particular cause.

We are open to focusing our efforts on any group of beneficiaries, and to using any reasonable methods to help them.

If good arguments or evidence show that our current plans are not the best way of helping, we will change our beliefs and actions.

Integrity

Because we believe that trust, cooperation, and accurate information are essential to doing good, we strive to be honest and trustworthy.

More broadly, we strive to follow those rules of good conduct that allow communities (and the people within them) to thrive.

We also value the reputation of effective altruism, and recognize that our actions reflect on it.

Collaborative Spirit

We affirm a commitment to building a friendly, open, and welcoming environment in which many different approaches can flourish, and in which a wide range of perspectives can be evaluated on their merits.

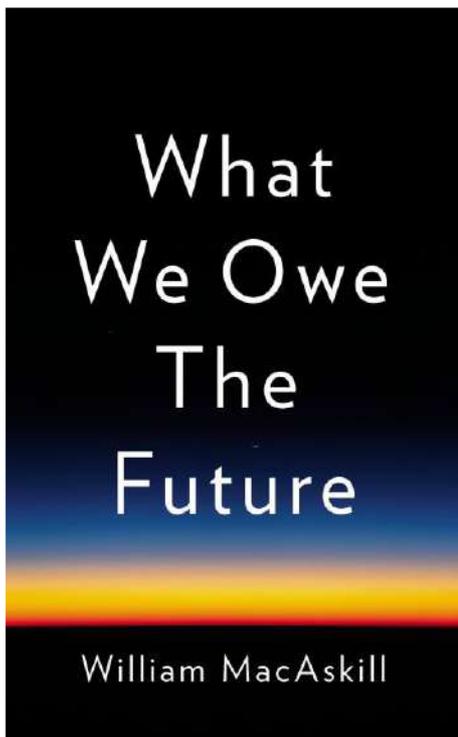
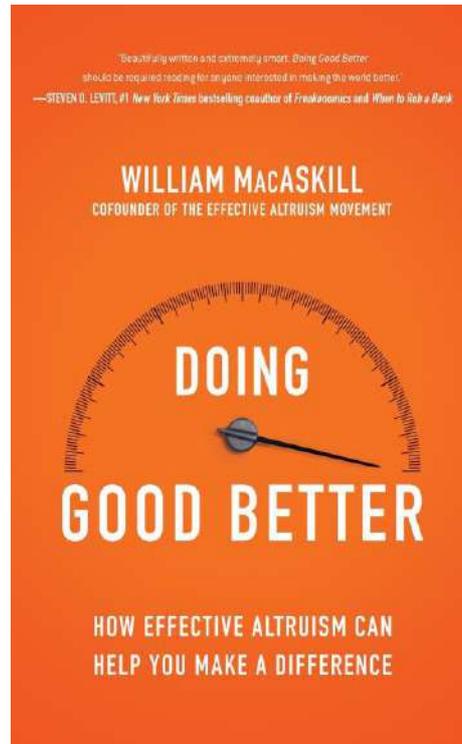
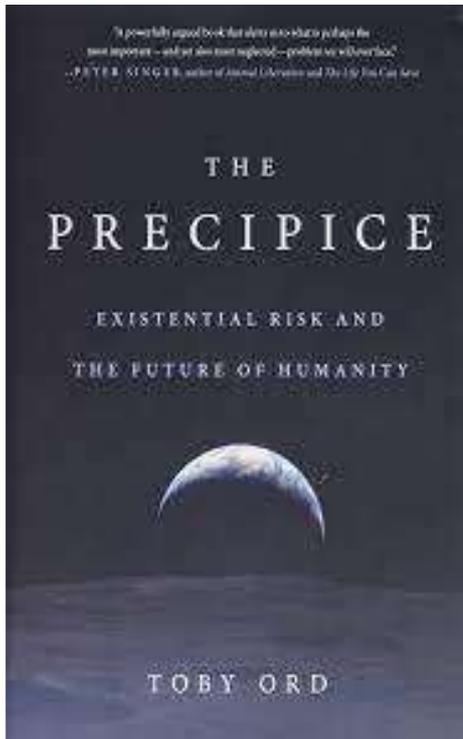
In order to encourage cooperation and collaboration between people with widely varying circumstances and ways of thinking, we resolve to treat people of different worldviews, values, backgrounds, and identities kindly and respectfully.

CEA's overall aim is to do the most we can to solve pressing global problems and prepare to face the challenges of tomorrow.

The EA community is a place where people can learn about and discuss which ways of doing good are most effective, based on impartially altruistic, truth-seeking principles.

Toby and William have published books on the how people can contribute to tackling some of the existential challenges facing humanity. These include *The Precipice*, *Doing Good Better* and *What We Owe The Future*.

The Centre also provides practical tools that people can use to pursue careers that help people and the planet. Many of these are described in Benjamin Todd's book *80,000 hours*. The following pages provide excerpts from the book.



80,000 Hours – Find A Fulfilling Career That Does Good

For most of us, a significant amount of our productive waking life - over 80,000 hours on average - is spent working. This is an enormous resource that can be used to make the world better.

80,000 Hours - named after the time you spend in your career - is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping people figure out in which careers they can do the most good.

First, you need to consider which problem you should focus on. 80,000 Hours has many suggestions for problems where one person can make a substantial impact.

Next, you need to consider the most effective way to address the problem. At this point, it is useful to consider multiple approaches. Here is one approach.

Personal Fit

Why being good at your job is even more important than people think

"Find work you're good at" is a truism, but we think many people still don't take it seriously enough.

Finding the option where you have the best chance of excelling over the course of your career - where you have your greatest 'personal fit' - is one of the key determinants of your career's impact.

In fact, after initially identifying some promising paths, we think it's often the most important factor.

Being good at your job is also one of the main ingredients of a satisfying job, which helps you stay motivated in addition to being important in itself.

It could easily be more satisfying to be in the top 20% of a profession, even if it's perhaps lower paid or less glamorous than an alternative where you'd be average.

This means that we often advise people to first identify some high-impact paths, and then choose between them based on their degree of fit with them - especially focusing on those where they might excel.

It also means that it can be worth taking a job that you think is, say, in your second tier for impact, but is a better fit for you.

Making Predictions

Here are some questions you can use to make some initial assessments of your fit from several different angles:

** What do you think are your chances of success?*

To do this, look at your track record in similar work and try to project it forward.

** What drives performance in the field, and how do you stack up?*

The first step gives you a starting point, but you can try to improve your estimates by asking yourself what most drives success in the field, and whether you have those traits, as well as looking for other predictors of performance.

* *What do experts say?*

If you can, ask people experienced in the field for their assessment of your prospects.

Just be careful not to put too much weight on a single person's view.

Aim to ask people who have had experience selecting people for that job in question, and are likely to be honest with you.

* *Does it match your strengths?*

One way to gauge this is to look for activities that don't feel like work to you, but do for most people.

* *Do you feel excited to pursue it?*

Gut-level motivation isn't a reliable predictor of success, but if you don't feel motivated, it'll be challenging to exert yourself at the level required for high performance in most jobs.

So a lack of excitement should give you pause.

* *Will you enjoy it?*

To stick with it long term, the path would ideally be reasonably enjoyable.

It should fit with the rest of your life (e.g. if you want a family, you may want a job without extreme working hours).

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of ways you may wish to give to both present and future generations?

How can you continue to encourage other people? How can you build on your strengths and do positive work? How can you do plant seeds of hope? How can you do things that help people or the planet?

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

Giving To Future Generations

The specific things I would like to give to present and future generations are:

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The specific steps I can take to give these things to present and future generations are:

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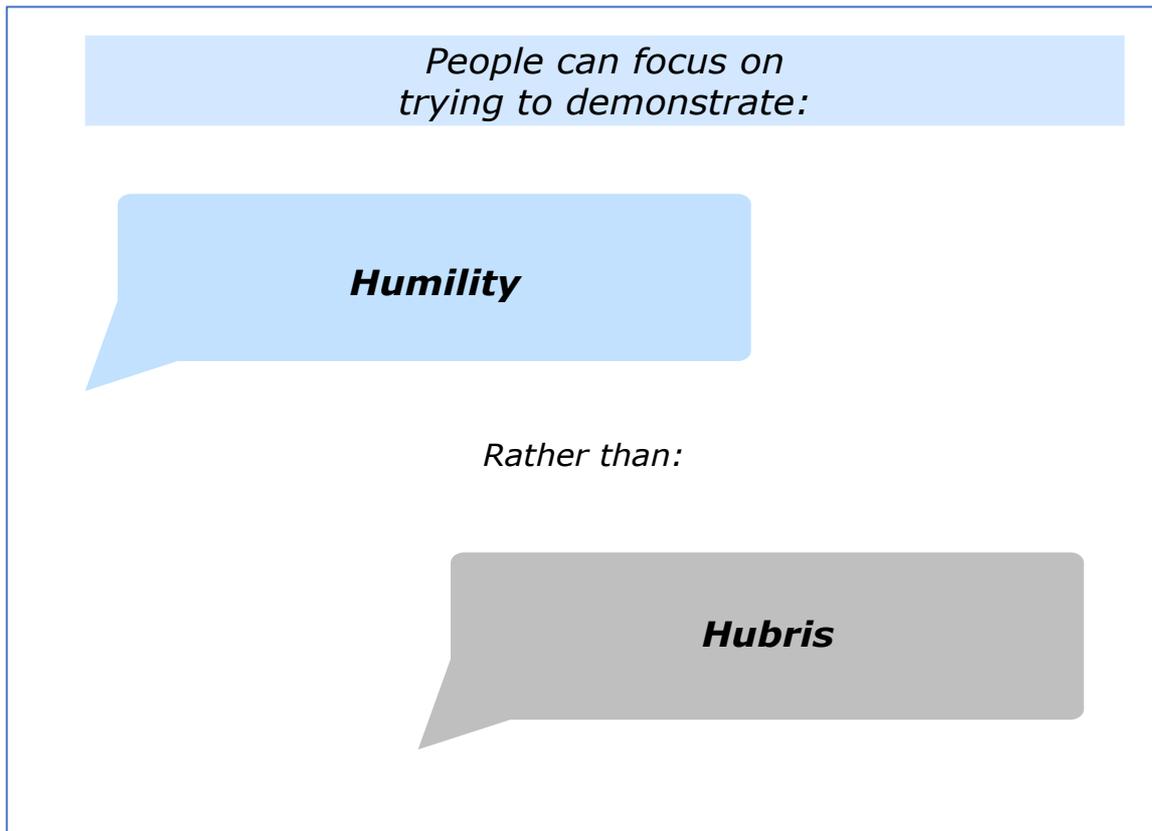
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The 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.

Anthony Sher, the actor, describes an example of serving something greater than himself. He was doing a one-man show called *Promo* based on Primo Levi's book about Auschwitz.

Before the performance Anthony was concerned about his own contribution and how it may be received. Bearing in mind the profoundness of the book, however, he saw his own feelings in perspective. He explained this in the following way.

"There was something about the material that was so sacred and that had to be delivered with care and properly that so much bigger than my own ego.

"That whenever I got frightened on the journey all I would have to think of was Primo Levi himself and there was no space for my petty feelings."

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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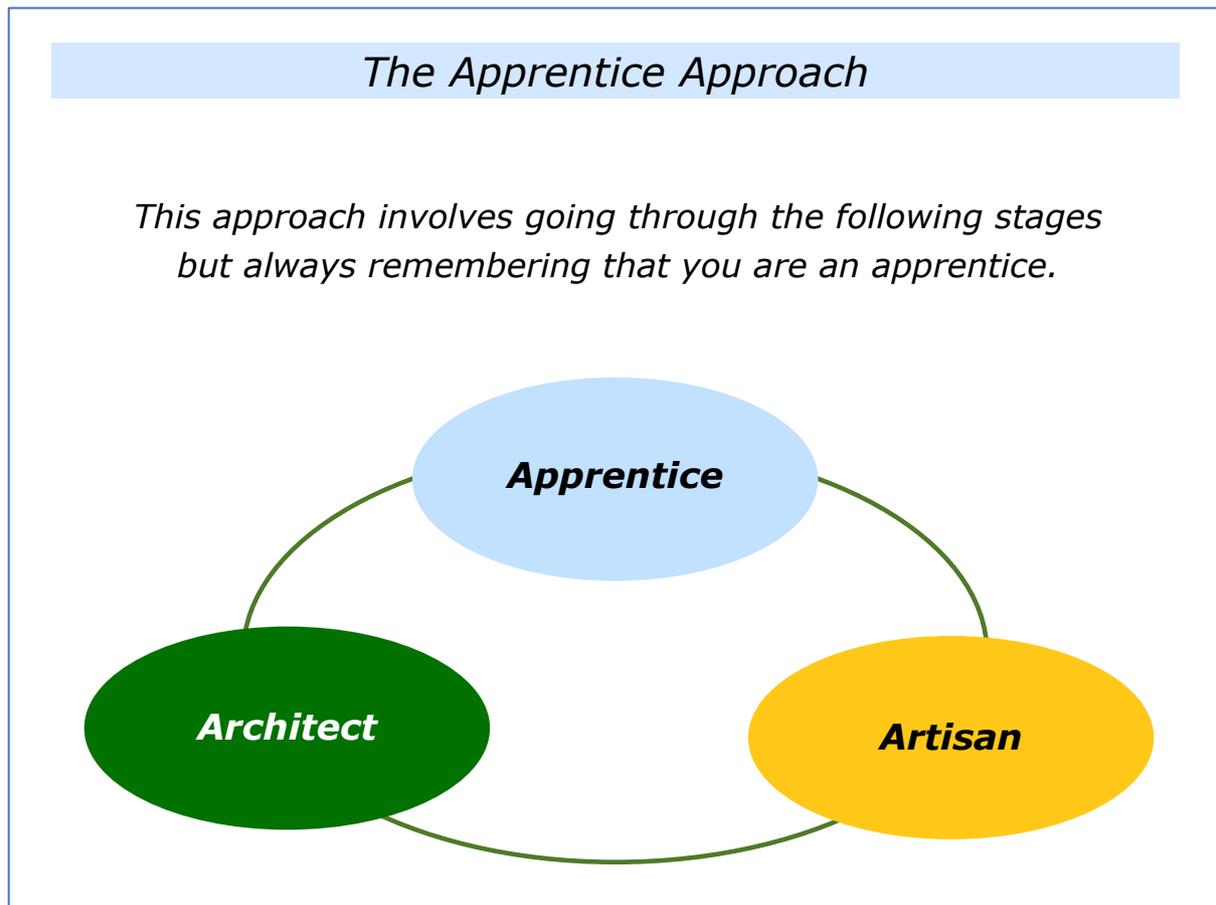
Hubris. The specific things I can do try to avoid hubris in the future are:

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The Apprentice Approach



There are many models for doing fine work. One approach involves going through the stages of being an apprentice, artisan and an architect. This also involves always remembering that you are still an apprentice. Let's explore these themes.

Apprentice

Imagine that you want to build on your strengths and do superb work. The first step may be to become an apprentice and learn from positive models.

There are many definitions for being an apprentice. These include the following:

To be a learner ... To learn a trade, job or art ... To learn from those who demonstrate great skill in the craft.

Looking at my own life, I worked for six years in a factory and was called an apprentice. My real apprenticeship began, however, when I moved to working with people.

The good fortune I had was to be mentored by several great people workers. They gave me the opportunity to work with troubled teenagers, addicts and people readjusting to life after leaving psychiatric hospitals.

These mentors acted as positive models. They passed on knowledge and practical tools that worked. They also encouraged me to develop ways that helped people to achieve their goals.

Looking back, when have you embarked on a kind of apprenticeship? What was the activity you pursued? Who were the people you studied? What did you learn from these people?

Imagine that you have learned and certain skills during your apprenticeship. You may then practice these in specific situations. This may involve moving on to the next stage.

Artisan

The original definition of an artisan was a person who did skilled work with their hands. Here we are using a wider definition.

This is doing authentic work that involves your heart, head and – in the broadest sense – your hands. It is to use your whole being to do superb work. (This is a topic we have explored elsewhere in the book.)

After serving their apprenticeship, great workers often aim to get a good grounding. They throw themselves into doing different kinds of work in their chosen field.

Many choose to work at the grass roots. A people worker, for example, may gather experience by working in a care home, school, youth club, hospital, addiction clinic, hospice or other work place.

Such people aim to do good work and get the learning into their bones. They are then able to expand their repertoire for dealing with different situations.

They aim to always do their best and continually improve in their chosen craft. They measure success by whether the work they do helps other people in their lives and work.

Such individuals get into the pattern of delivering consistently high standards. Some continue to be specialists, whilst some may move into managerial or leadership roles. This can then involve moving on to the next stage.

Architect

Great workers sometimes become architects. They like to feel in charge and shape things. They may aim to design a project, team, organisation or system.

Such people reach this stage in a proactive way. They take initiatives and create things that work. They may use their strengths to create environments, write books, invent products, shape culture or do other activities.

Some people reach this stage in a reactive way. They may get frustrated after trying convince others about how things can be done in a better way. Feeling angry, they may find a way to do it themselves.

Some people who want to do architectural reach a stage where they are given certain titles. They may become a chief executive, chief technology officer or minister in government. They may become a composer, innovator, director or take another role.

Such prestigious titles come with a health warning. Some do allow a person to be an architect, but some involve implementing plans that have been made elsewhere.

There is another health warning. Some individuals fall in love with the title and forget to remain humble. This highlights a key point.

Some great workers reach a stage where - even though they are architects - they still see themselves as apprentices. Such an individual may say things like:

"I will always be an apprentice ... Being a master implies that I have mastered the subject and I will never do that ... I will always aim to keep improving."

Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of a specific activity where you will always be an apprentice?

You may have strengths in this specific activity. Learning from positive models, you have been an apprentice and artisan. You may also be an architect who shapes things and have a track record of success.

How can you continue to do superb work in this activity? How can you continue to be a learner? How can you maintain the mindset of being an apprentice?

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

The Apprentice Approach

The specific activity where I have strengths but always want to see myself as an apprentice is:

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The specific things I can do to continue to do superb work in this activity but always see myself as an apprentice are:

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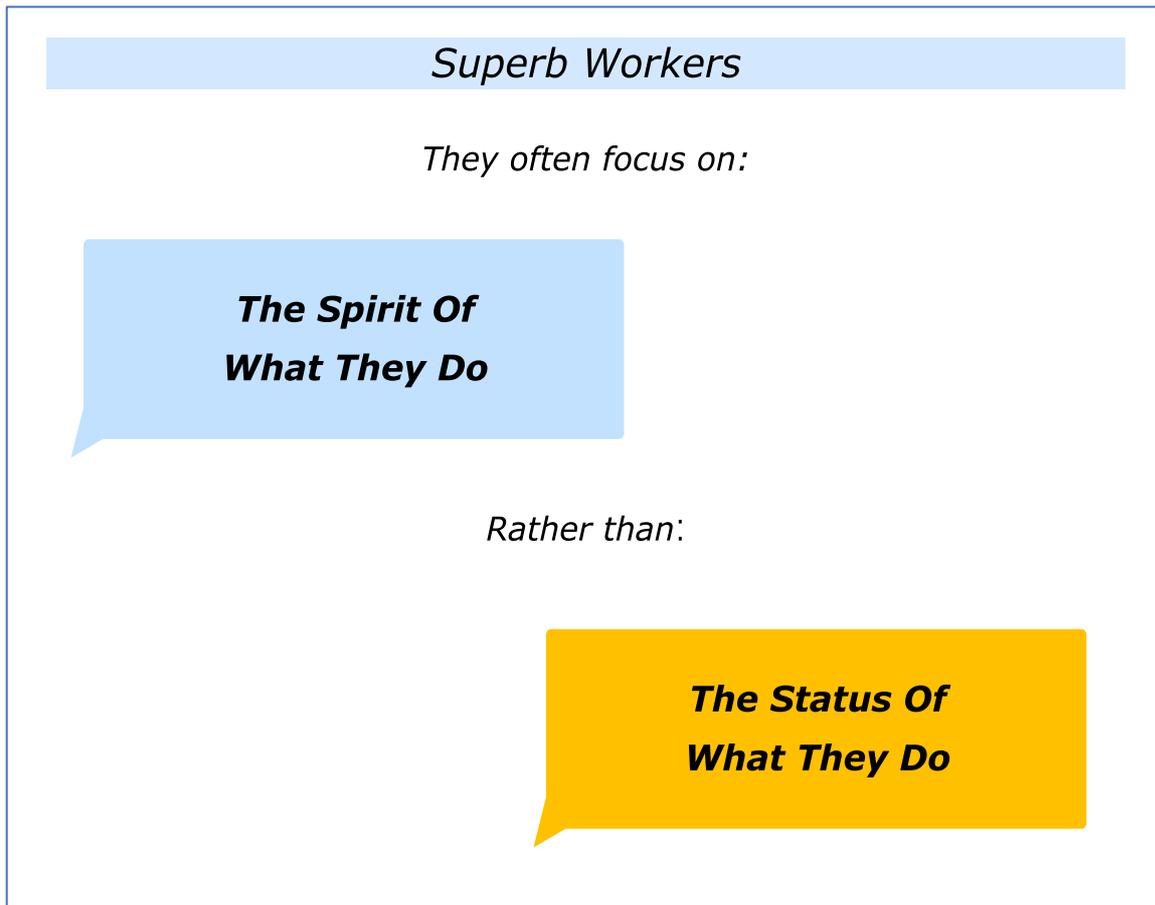
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Spirit Approach Rather Than The Status Approach



This is an approach demonstrated by many superb workers. They get satisfaction by serving the spirit of what they do rather the status of what they do. Let's look at some examples.

Caroline Moore and Mark Emberton are two wonderful surgeons who treated me for prostate cancer. Both have received high honours. They always demonstrate kindness and humanity when working with hundreds of patients from all walks of life.

Henry Pluckrose was a pioneering headteacher whose work at Prior Weston school was lauded. The thousands of visitors included famous people from around the world. Henry gave as much attention to a five-year-old from the inner city as to a visiting dignitary.

Such people embody the spirit I was taught regarding mentoring people. The key messages were:

It is about the spirit not the status

Your role is to help people to succeed.

You need to prepare properly and always do your best.

You need to do this whether you are working with a young person, a professional or a peak performer.

Many workers love the spirit of what they do. They love the journey as well as reaching the goal. They believe in doing their best whether they are working at the village hall or the Carnegie Hall.

The medical worker loves to care for people. The educator loves to pass on knowledge. The craft worker loves to pursue their craft. The football coach loves to help players to perform at their best. The mentor loves to help people to achieve their picture of success.

Let's return to your own life and work. When do you care about the spirit of what you do rather than the status? It is always good to get positive feedback and sometimes to even get recognition. But the key may be to serve something greater than yourself.

What is the spirit you want to follow? What may be your vocation? When do you aim to build on your strengths, follow strategies that work and achieve specific goals?

Looking ahead, how can you follow this spirit in the future? How can you 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.

The Spirit Approach

The spirit I would like to follow in the future is:

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The specific things I can do to follow this spirit and aim to do superb work are:

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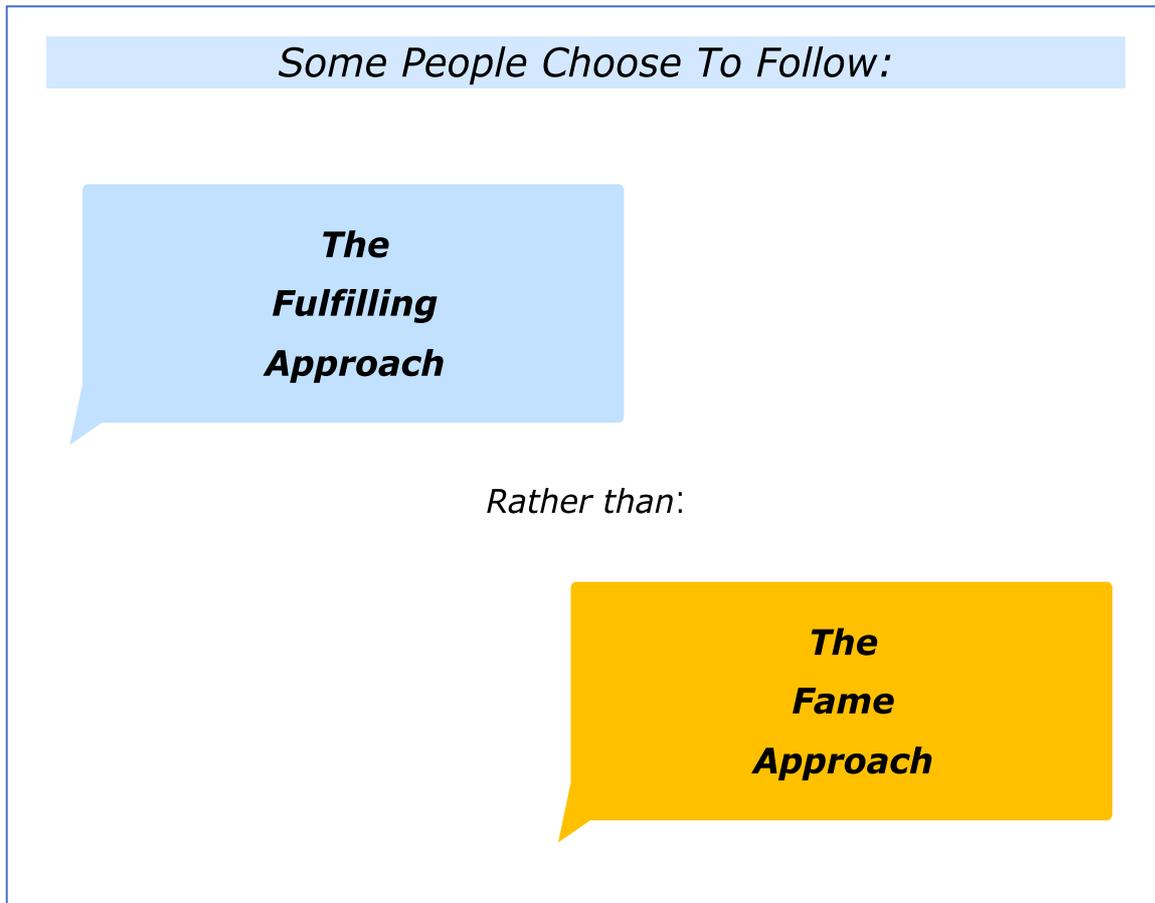
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Fulfilling Approach Rather Than The Fame Approach



Some people follow the fulfilling approach in their lives and work. Some people aim to achieve fame. Some people may find that taking the fulfilling approach can sometimes lead to fame.

Some individuals may start by doing work they love but, at a certain point, become addicted to applause or winning prizes. Some may then return to doing fulfilling work. They may say things like:

"It is the work that is important. I am not important."

Let's explore how individuals may pursue these different routes. This also involves them learning how to build on the pluses and manage the minuses of their chosen route.

The Fulfilling Approach

Some individuals aim to do fine work but stay out of the limelight. They love to do work where they can flow, focus, finish and, as a by-product, find fulfilment.

Such individuals may serve something greater than themselves. They may use their strengths to serve a philosophy, a vocation or a craft. They aim to serve this fully in their lives or work.

Some also develop the ability to make a living doing work they love. They build on their strengths, do superb work and help their employers or customers to achieve success.

Sometimes their work may gain recognition. Such individuals see this as a recognition of the value of the work, however, rather than as a personal plaudit. They have simply done their best to bring the work to fruition.

People who follow the fulfilling approach sometimes recognise it involves both pluses and minuses. They may also learn how to enjoy the upsides and manage the potential downsides.

The pluses may include the following. They are true to themselves, build on their strengths, have a sense of purpose, follow their principles, continue to develop and feel fulfilled.

The minuses may include the following. They may feel alone, find it hard to get funding, find their work is not valued, may need to take less fulfilling work to pay the bills and wonder if they can keep developing.

The Fame Approach

Some people aim to become well-known or famous. Some do it to spread their work. Some do it to get noticed or feel important. Some do it to gain status or win prizes.

Some people focus on self-promotion in their professional careers. They believe in personal branding or similar activities. They aim to climb the corporate ladder, get more money or reach the C-Suite.

People who strive to be famous may or may not feel fulfilled. They may also experience the potential pluses and minuses of taking this route.

The potential pluses may include the following. They may gain fame, make money, get affirmation, be seen as successful and get other fringe benefits.

The potential minuses may include the following. They may pay a heavy price, strive to stay in the limelight, fear it will all go away, give up their privacy and feel a failure if they no longer get affirmation.

The Fulfilling And Fame Approach

Some people follow the fulfilling approach and, as a by-product, gain fame. Such people may feel humble, however, and grateful for what they have been given.

Some of the sages I have met found their careers took this route. These have included educators, therapists, medical consultants and people in other fields.

Success was a key factor. The work they did became well-known through books – written by themselves or others – radio, television or other media.

Such an approach can have both upsides and downside. 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."

Some individuals have an ambivalent feeling towards doing fulfilling work and gaining fame. It calls for managing both the pluses and minuses.

The pluses may include the following. The work may become well-known, reach many people, provide more work opportunities and lead to more funding.

The minuses may include the following. The person may find themselves in the limelight - which was not always a comfortable position - and the work may sometimes be unfairly criticised by others.

Imagine that you want to follow elements of the fulfilling approach. How can you do this in your own way? How can you build on the pluses and manage any minuses?

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

The Fulfilling Approach

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

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The potential pluses and minuses of follow this approach may be:

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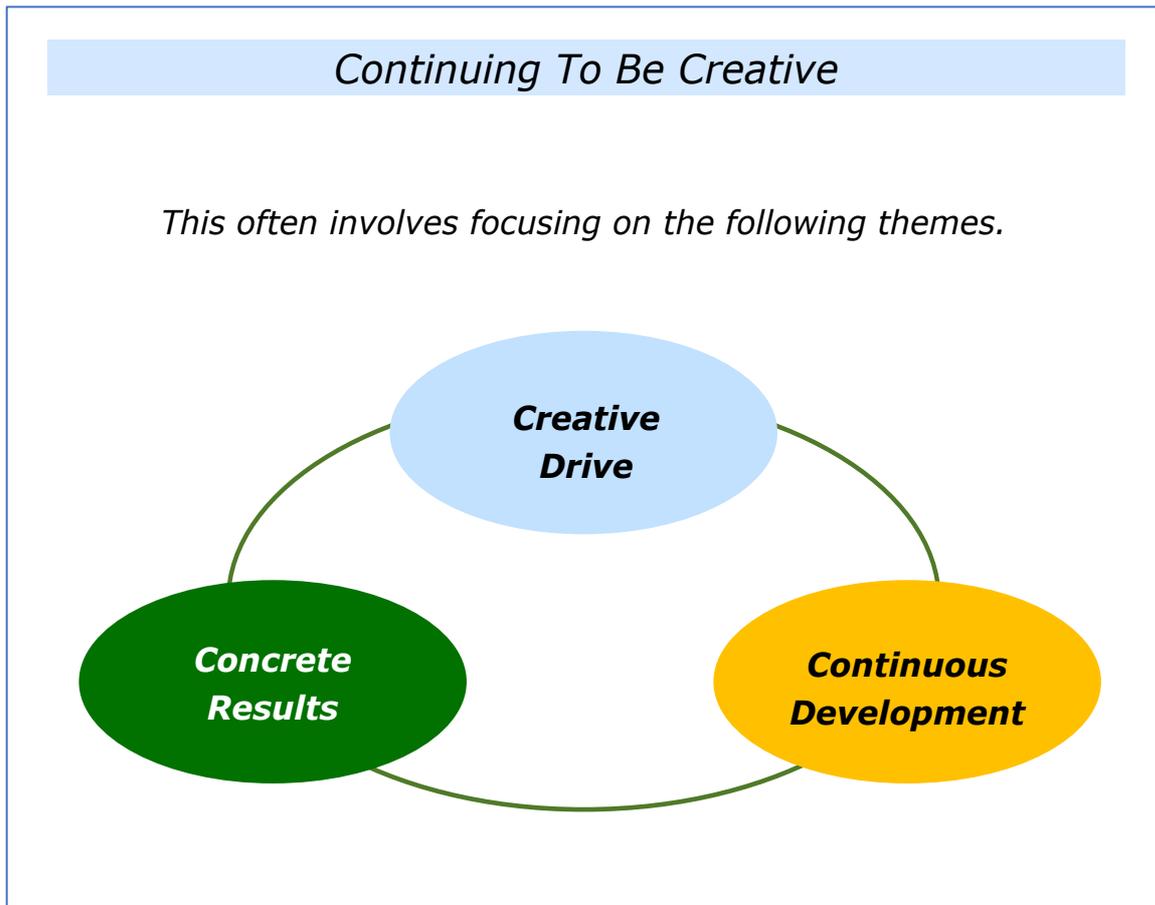
The specific things I can do to build on the pluses and manage the minuses are:

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The Continuing To Be Creative Approach



How can you continue to be creative? One approach is to pursue the creative drive you love to follow. You may love to encourage people, cook, nurture your garden, write stories or do other activities.

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.

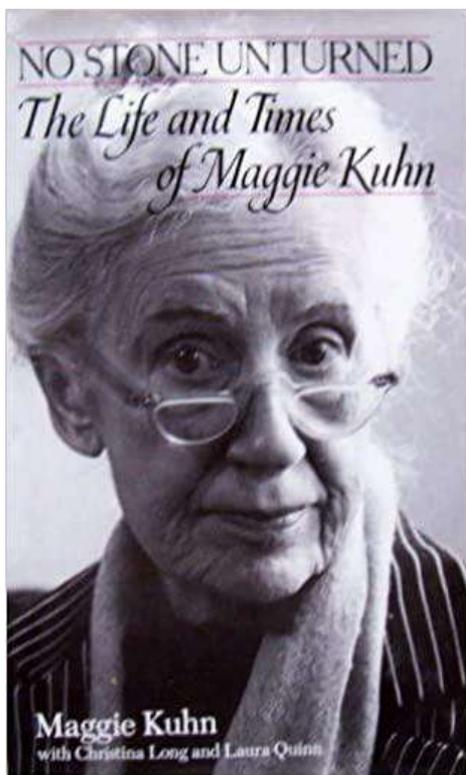
The organization was created to work on issues of concern to the elderly, such as pension rights and age discrimination, but also to concern itself

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.

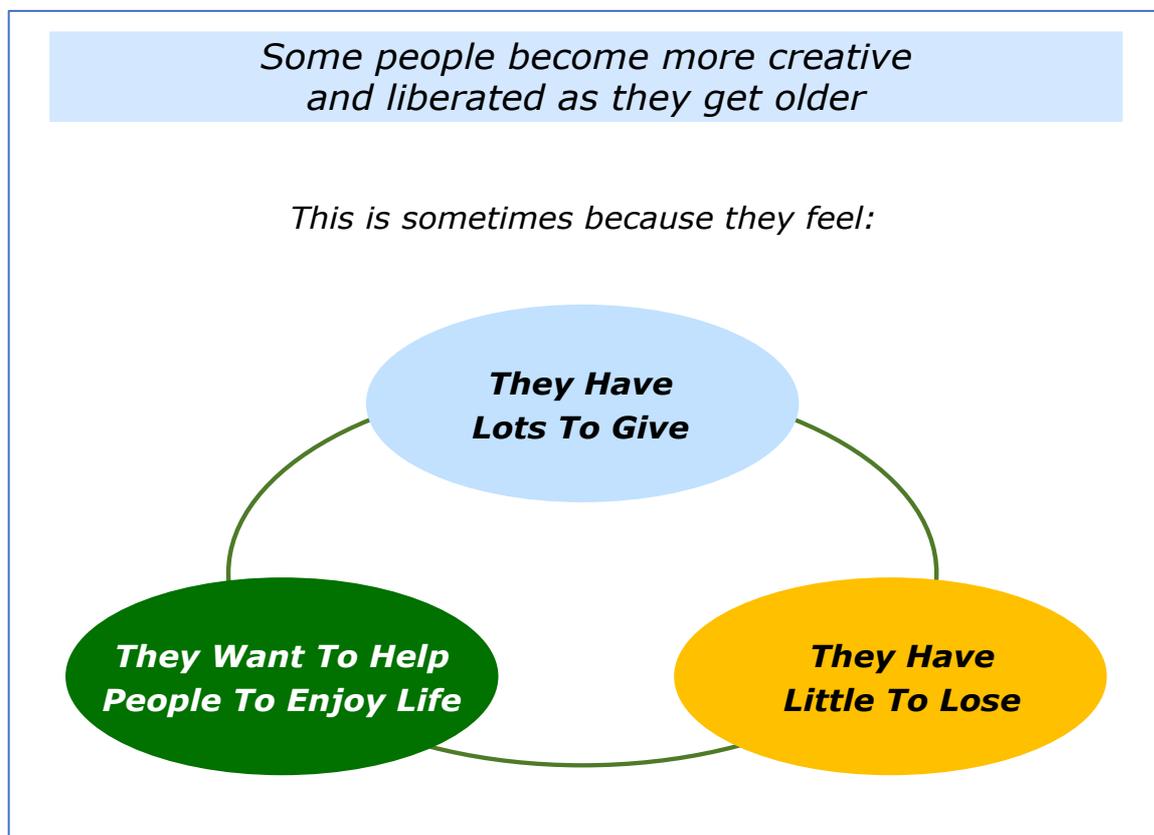
There must be a goal at every stage of life! There must be a goal!

"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.

Continuing To Be Creative 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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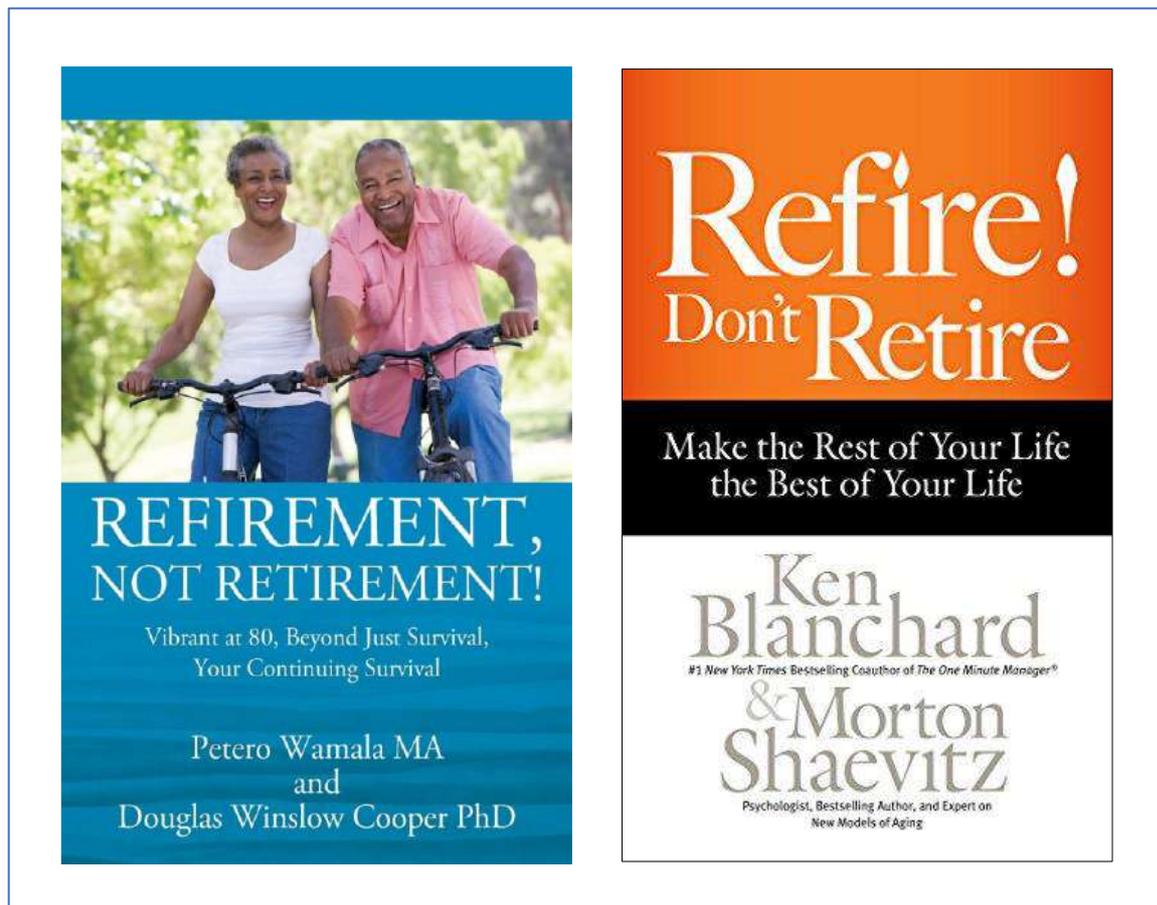
*The specific concrete results I
would like to deliver when
following this creative drive are:*

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The Refirement Rather Than Retirement Approach



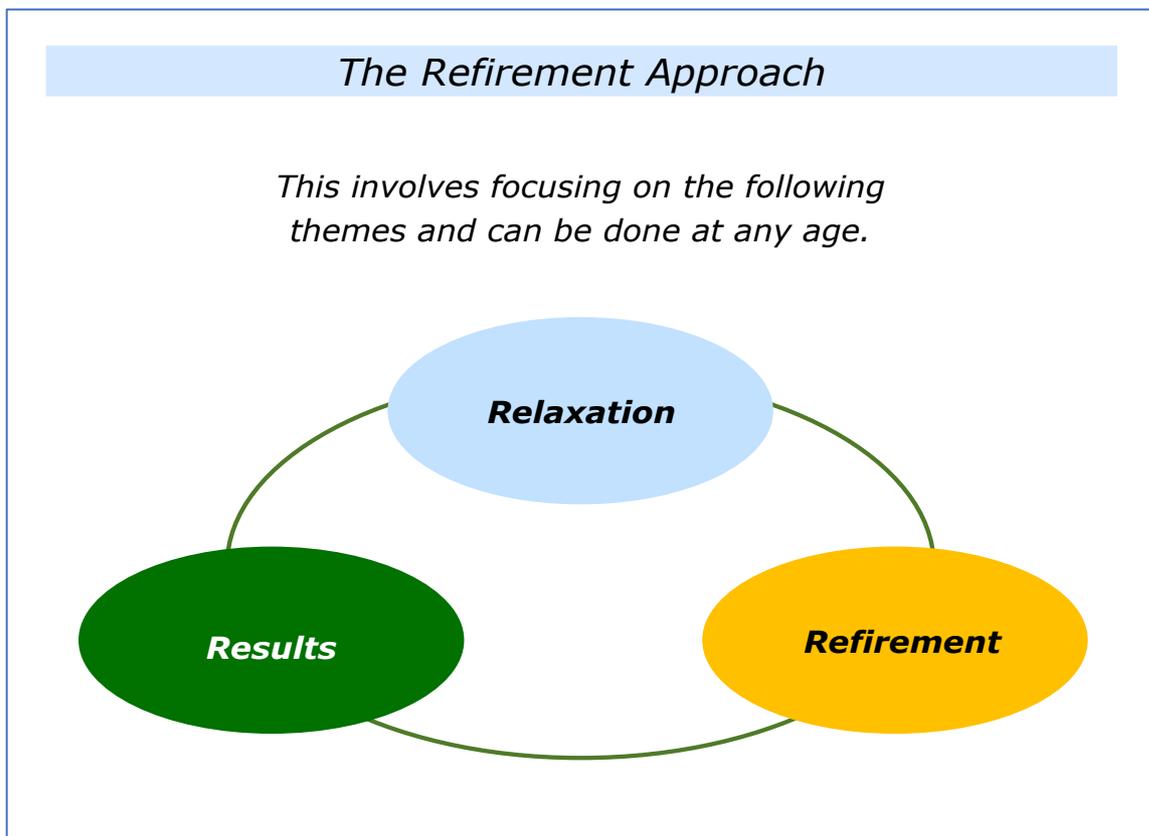
This is an approach that can be used by people at any age. It has gained popularity by focusing on seniors, but I have seen it applied by people at other stages of their lives. Here are some examples.

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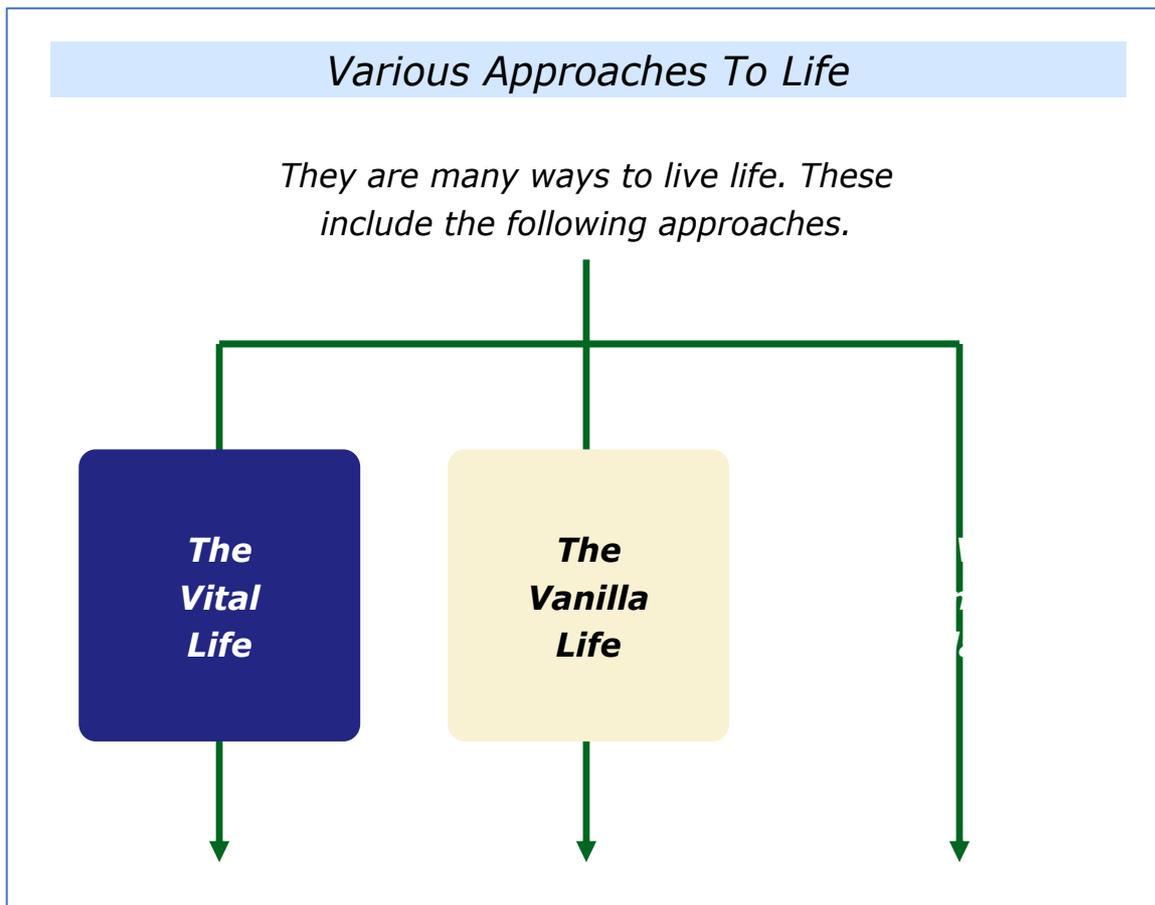
The specific things that may happen as a result may be:

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The Vital Life Rather Than The Vanilla Life Approach



There are many ways to live life. Let's explore some of these approaches.

The Vital Life

Some people love the vital life. They love to do things where they feel alive and creative. It is not possible to do this all the time, but it is an approach they try to follow. What is the vital life for you? Here are some things that people mention when exploring this theme.

The vital life for me is:

Helping other people ... Being with my family ... Being curious and learning ... Being creative ... Listening to music ... Working in my garden ... Getting enough sleep ... Doing satisfying work.

Some people find the vital life involves doing simple things each day. They enjoy caring for others, cooking food, being with their dogs, walking in their garden or doing other activities.

Some people find the vital life involves doing special things. They feel alive when travelling, mountain biking, performing on stage, playing sports or doing other exciting activities.

The Vanilla Life

Different people have different versions of this life. Sometimes living the vanilla life can be beneficial. Sometimes it can be boring or 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.

What is the vanilla life for you? Here are some of the things that people mention when exploring this theme. (These were described before the pandemic.)

The vanilla life for me is:

Sitting in boring meetings ... Staying in soulless hotels ... Eating tasteless hotel food ... Spending more than three nights a week away from home ... Listening to negative people ... Flying on business trips ... Spending a day without music.

Sometimes vanilla is just fine. We all need stability and predictability in our lives. This call for getting the right blend between the vital life and the vanilla life.

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

The Vital Life

The specific things I can do to continue to live the vital life are:

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The specific things I can do to, when appropriate, add aspects of the vanilla life are:

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The specific benefits of taking these steps may be:

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The Paradise Approach



There are several definitions for the word paradise. The one we are going to focus on here is the following.

Paradise - a state of happiness or bliss

People love to create their own versions of paradise. They may aim to do this by creating a garden, room, book, relationship, community, work environment or another place.

Different people also have different time frames regarding paradise. These include the following.

Some see it as a place they experienced in the past – such having a wonderful childhood.

Some see it as the things they are able to do and experience in the present – such as the activities that give them positive energy.

Some see it as a place they aim to reach in the future – such as a promised land or a specific picture of success.

This section explores the second approach. Looking at the present, what are the activities when you experience a feeling of bliss? When do you get positive energy or a feeling of paradise?

Different people give different answers when exploring this theme. Here are some they mention.

Paradise for me is being able:

To feel in charge of my day ... To spend time with our children ... To encourage people ... To do satisfying work ... To design beautiful things ... To do things I believe in ... To pass on knowledge to people.

There are many views on how to appreciate life and help others. Sometimes such ideas are misunderstood or become cliches.

Joseph Campbell shared such an idea that has helped many people but also been misunderstood by others. He was often approached by individuals who wanted to feel more alive. He sometimes suggested that aim to:

Follow Your Bliss

Here is an excerpt from the Joseph Campbell Foundation website that explains this idea.

Joseph Campbell was a life-long student and teacher of the human spirit and mythology - not just the mythology of cultures long dead, but of living myth, as it made itself known in the work of modern artists and philosophers - individuals who searched within themselves and their societies to identify the need about which they were passionate.

*He called this burning need that they sought to fulfill their **bliss**.*

*When Campbell died, just months after recording the interviews with Bill Moyers that were to become the PBS series **The Power of Myth**, he had no idea how these interviews, and, in particular, this idea of following one's bliss would resonate with the public.*

Within months of airing on PBS in the United States, the phrase "Follow Your Bliss" had become a catchphrase.

In 1990, the Joseph Campbell Foundation was created by Campbell's colleagues and his widow, choreographer Jean Erdman.

Its mission was (and is) to keep Campbell's work moving forward, helping people learn about myth, and its relationship to religion, art and psychology, and trying to help them follow their bliss.

Yet it is important to note that following one's bliss, as Campbell saw it, isn't merely a matter of doing whatever you like, and certainly not doing simply as you are told.

It is a matter of identifying that pursuit which you are truly passionate about and attempting to give yourself absolutely to it.

In so doing, you will find your fullest potential and serve your community to the greatest possible extent. Joseph explained this in the following way.

"If you follow your bliss, you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for you, and the life that you ought to be living is the one you are living.

"Wherever you are - if you are following your bliss, you are enjoying that refreshment, that life within you, all the time."

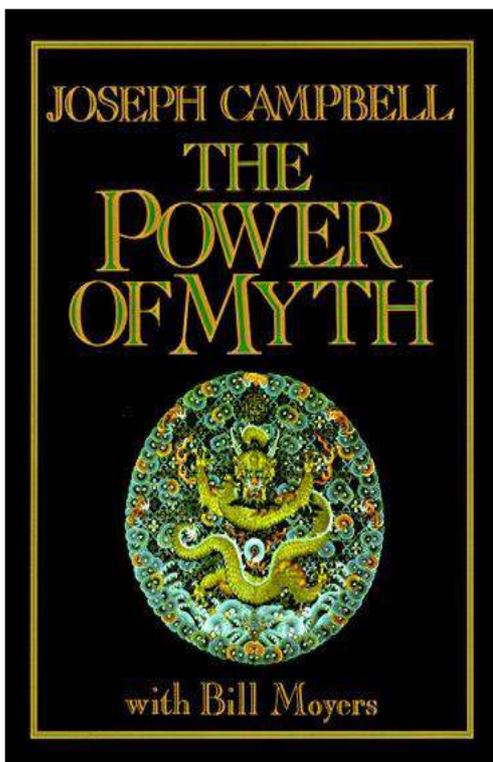
Maria Popova adds to this theme on her website *The Marginalian*. Here are excerpts from her piece on the topic.

How To Find Your Bliss: Joseph Campbell On What It Takes To Have A Fulfilling Life

Discerning one's bliss, Campbell argues, requires what he calls 'sacred space' - a space for uninterrupted reflection and unrushed creative work.

Far from a mystical idea, this is something that many artists and writers have put into practice by way of their peculiar work rituals as well as something cognitive science has illuminated in exploring the psychology of the perfect daily routine.

But Campbell sees past the practical rituals of creativity and into the deeper psychic and spiritual drivers - that profound need for a 'bliss station' into which to root ourselves.



"Sacred space is an absolute necessity for anybody today.

"This is a place where you can simply experience and bring forth what you are and what you might be. This is the place of creative incubation.

"At first you may find that nothing happens there. But if you have a sacred place and use it, something eventually will happen."

Looking back on how he arrived at this notion of finding one's bliss, Campbell touches on the crucial difference between religious faith and secular spirituality:

"The religious people tell us we really won't experience bliss until we die and go to heaven. But I believe in having as much as you can of this experience while you are still alive.

"There's something inside you that knows when you're in the center, that knows when you're on the beam or off the beam.

"And if you get off the beam to earn money, you've lost your life. And if you stay in the center and don't get any money, you still have your bliss."

Some people interpreted Campbell's words as giving them permission to do whatever they wanted, whatever the cost. But another view of his message was:

Follow your bliss in a way that helps people and the planet.

Let's return to your own life and a question we explored earlier. Looking at your present life, what are the activities where you may experience a sense of paradise?

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to build on the sentence:

Paradise for me is when I am able to ...

How can you continue and maybe even add to these things in future? What may happen as a result of taking these steps? What may be the pluses and minuses – for you and for other people? How can you build on the pluses and minimise any minuses? Here is the exercise.

The Paradise Approach

Paradise for me is when I am able:

*

*

*

*The specific steps I can take to continue
and maybe add to these things are:*

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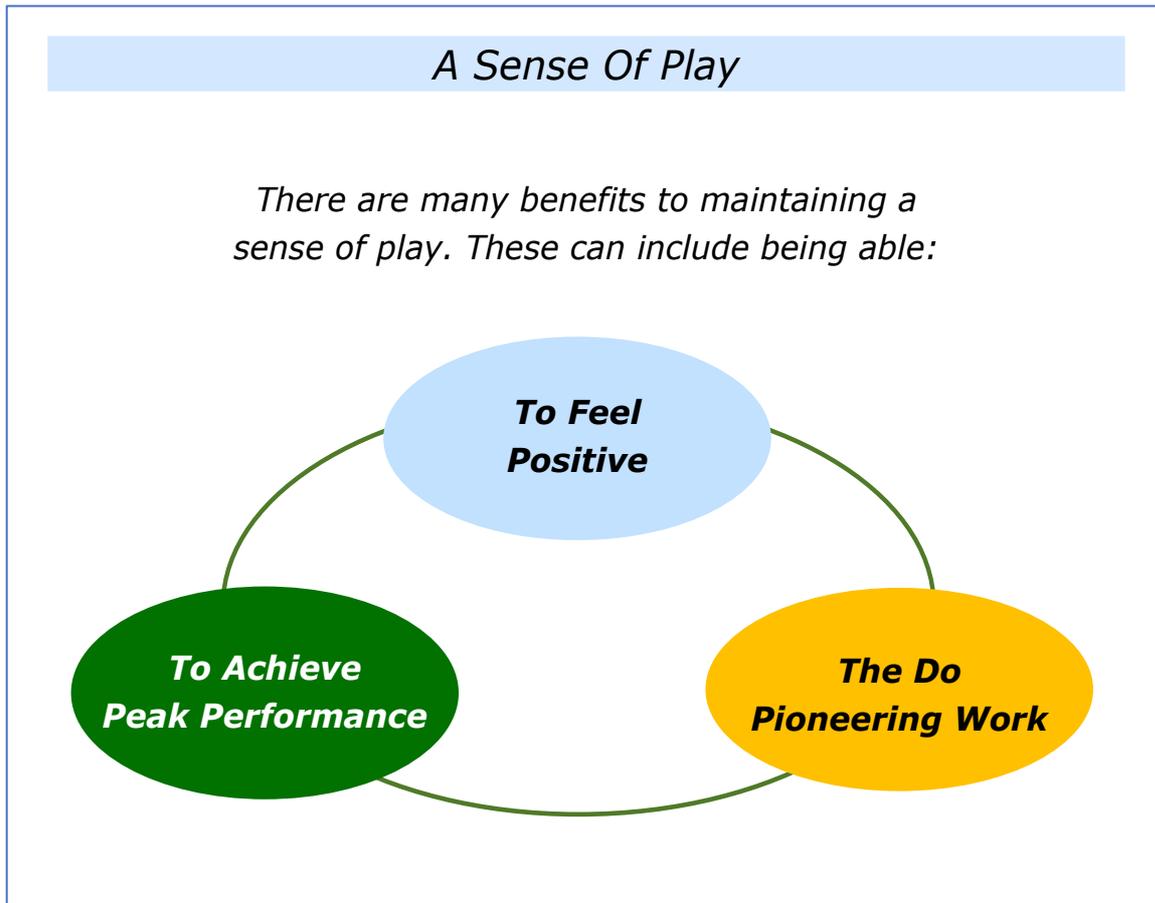
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

*

*

*

The Sense Of Play Approach



There are many benefits to maintaining a sense of play. These can include being able to feel positive, do pioneering work and achieve peak performance. Let's explore these themes.

Being Able To Feel Positive

People often feel positive when they are doing things where they enjoy a sense of play. 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."

This is an approach that some people return to later in life. 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 sometimes help us to develop on both a primary level and a secondary level. Let's explore this approach.

*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.

Secondary Level	Intellectualising	Thinking	Talking
Primary Level	Playing	Doing	Feeling

The Primary 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.

The Secondary Level

This 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.

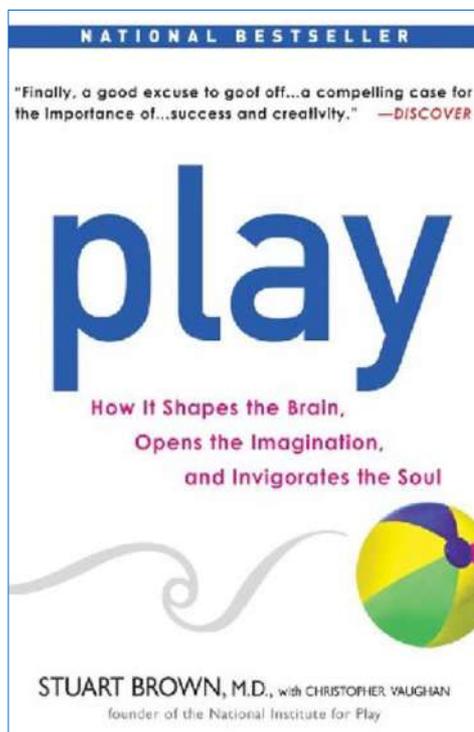
Sometimes it can be useful to do something on a primary level and then clarify the learning on a secondary level. This can be more effective than

simply intellectualising about a topic. It can also sometimes led to creative breakthroughs.

This is an approach that I sometimes used on creativity workshops. The aims were to help people to recapture the joy of exploring, learning and developing. Sometimes this also led to the next theme.

Being Able To Do Pioneering Work

Many people recognise the link between play, creativity and pioneering work. 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.

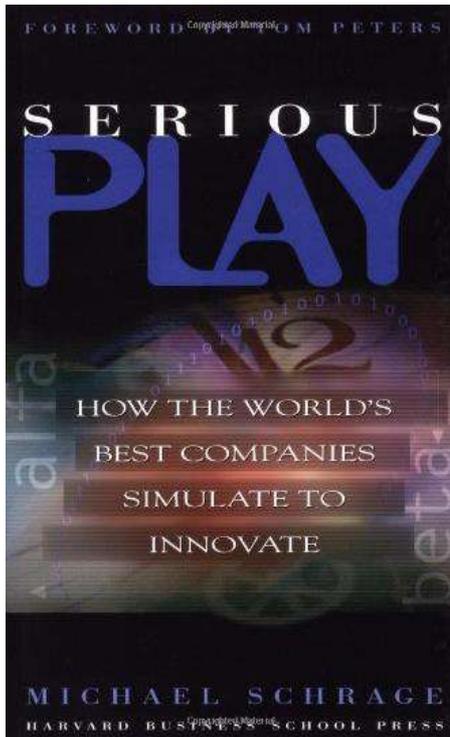
*Fun is your North Star, but you
don't always have to head North*

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.

Play can help us to experience joy, wonderment and curiosity. It enables us to feel relaxed and able to use our imagination. This can help to nourish our souls and shape a positive future. It can also feed the next theme.

Being Able To Achieve Peak Performance

People can sometimes get to the stage where they forget why they began to pursue a passion, play a sport or go into a certain profession. They may have pursued a particular activity because:

It felt like play ... It gave them a sense of joy and pleasure ... It gave them positive energy.

During the past fifty years I have worked with many people who wanted to recapture that feeling. At the same time, they wanted to perform at their best. Bearing this in mind, we focused on the practical steps they could take:

To recapture a sense of play;

To follow their principles;

To achieve peak performance.

This is an approach that was followed when working with a senior leader in a famous high tech company. They expressed their situation in the following way.

"I went into this business because I loved helping people to use technology to simplify their lives and do superb work. I particularly liked working with entrepreneurs who were building pioneering businesses.

"The time I enjoyed best was leading a part of company that was devoted to helping such leaders. This helped me to stay at the leading edge of businesses and help them succeed. It also ensured I kept up with thought leadership.

"During the past five years I have been a member of the C-Suite in the European arm of our company. The pay is great but, paradoxically, I seem to have less freedom than I did before.

"Our C-Suite seems to act as a go-between that is asked to implement the orders from our headquarters. This can be frustrating and time-consuming.

"We seem to be acting as a supplier to our company and have only limited freedom to shape things on our own patch. Bearing this in mind, I am thinking of doing several things.

"First, to return to my previous role leading the department that focuses on helping pioneering businesses. Second, to mentor budding entrepreneurs in our local incubator. Third, to refocus on my passion for song writing and playing music."

The senior leader decided to take these steps. This resulted in him feeling happier, healthier and more alive. Some of his colleagues said they wished they had the courage to do something similar but they did not want to give up their perks.

There are many ways to live life. One approach is to maintain a sense of play. If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to explore how you may wish to follow this approach in your own way.

The Sense Of Play Approach

The specific activity where 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:

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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.

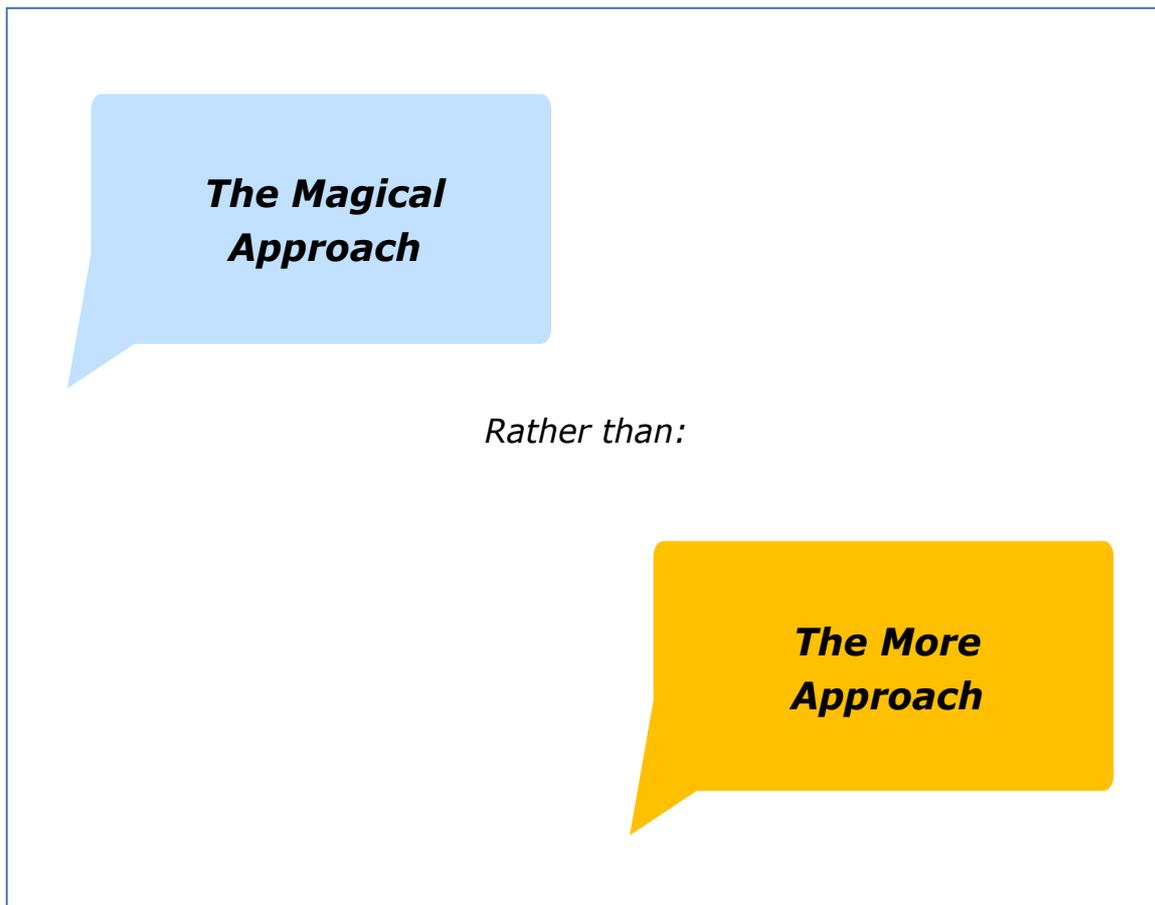
By drawing us out of ourselves, wonder reconnects us with something much greater than our daily grind. It is the ultimate homecoming, returning us to the world that we came from and were in danger of taking for granted.

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 individuals get to a point where they take stock. They may then ask themselves the following questions.

"What do I want to do with the rest of my life? Why do I want to do these things? How can I use my life experience to help other people? How can I pass on a positive legacy?"

They take the magical approach rather than the more approach. They forgo the addiction to getting more of everything.



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 magical life.

Let's return to your own life. 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?

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:

*

The specific things I learned or relearned from the experience were:

*

*

*

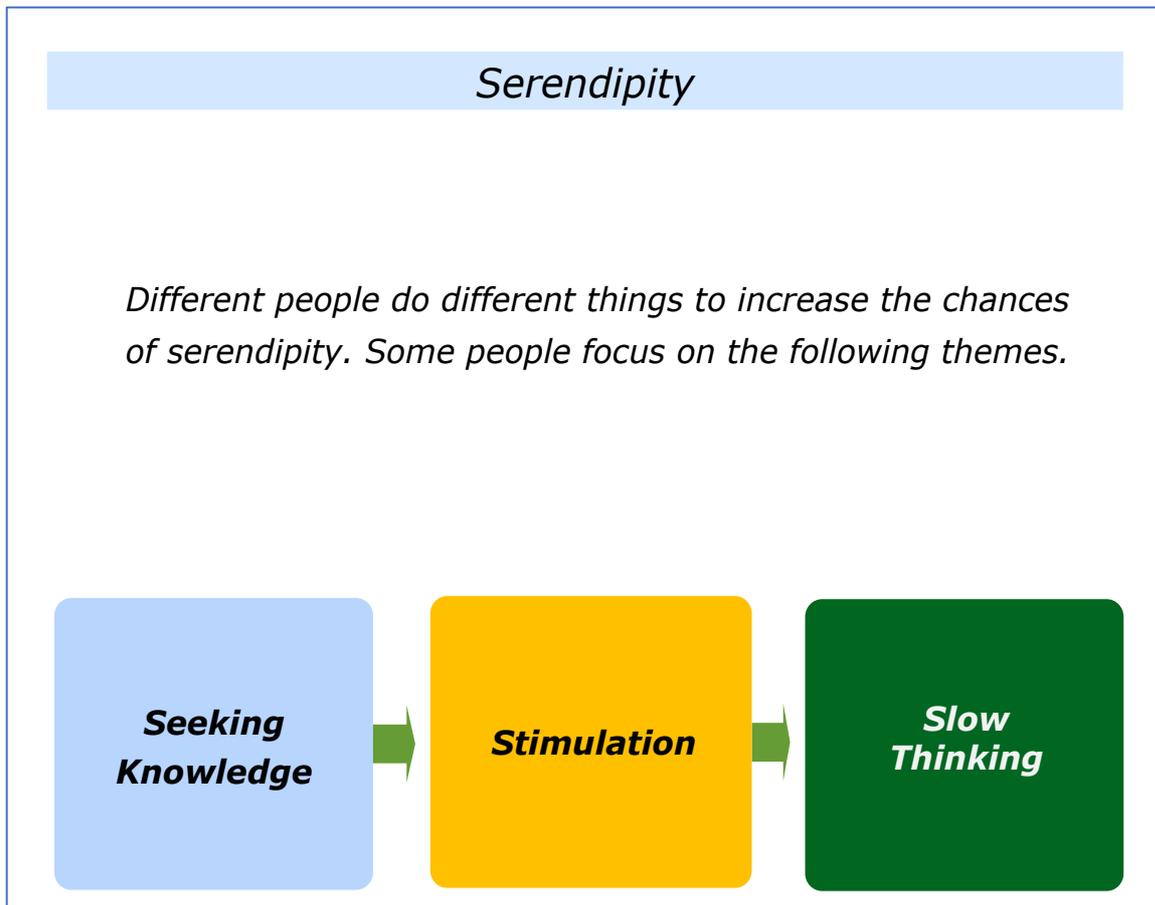
The specific things I can do to pass on what I learned from the experience are:

*

*

*

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.

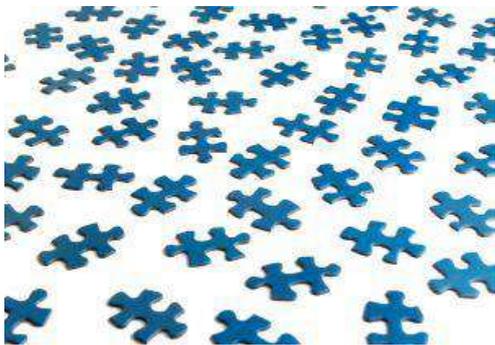
Slow Thinking

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*

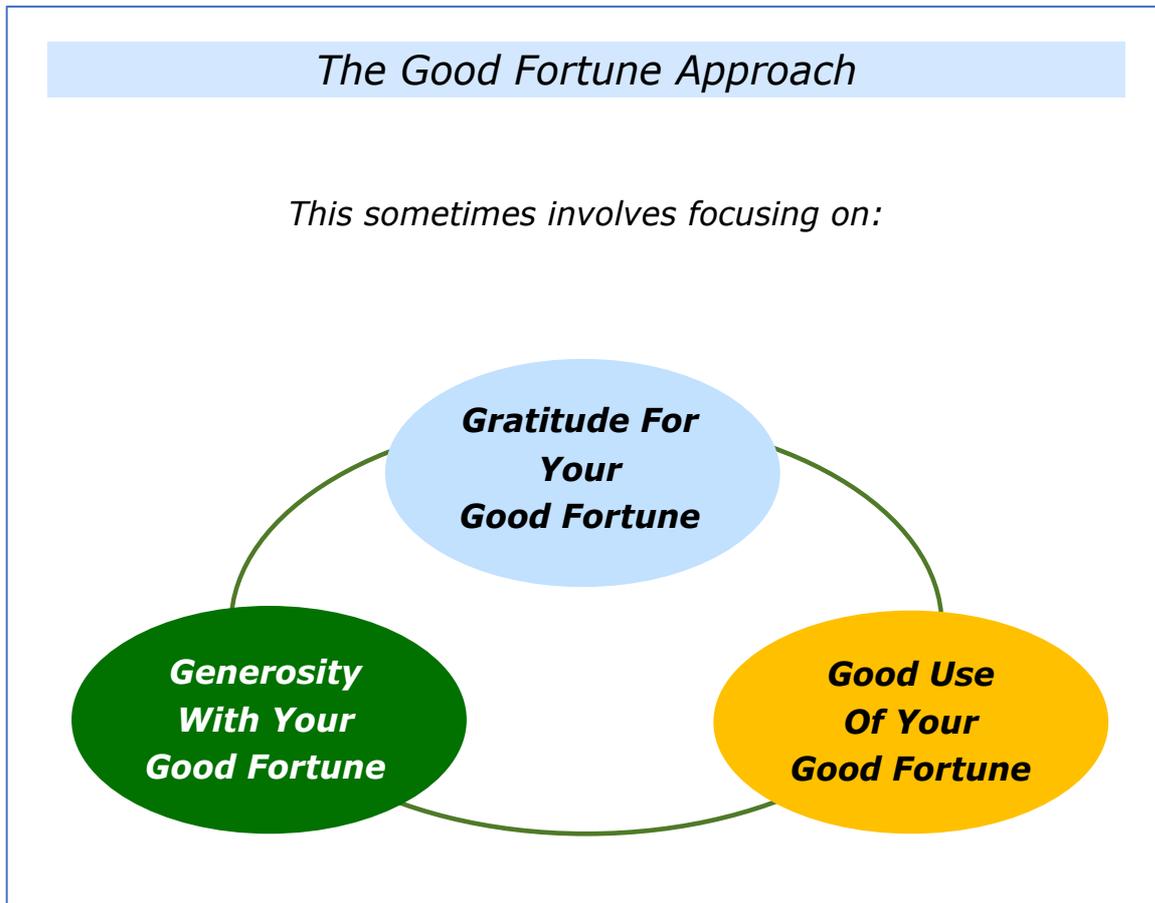


Slow Thinking

*is sometimes needed
to make sense of
the whole picture*



The Good Fortune Approach



Not everybody has good fortune, but those who do may be grateful for what they have been given. They may aim to make good use of these gifts and also be generous. Let's explore these themes.

Gratitude For Good Fortune

Some financially rich people appreciate where they come from and the advantages they have been given. They may have been born into a relatively fair society, had supportive parents and had access to good health care.

They may have enjoyed a stimulating education and encouraged to use their talents. Great mentors may have provided them with knowledge and, in some cases, may have opened doors. Such people recognise that, whilst they applied themselves, they have had many advantages in life.

Some people who are born into wealth may not appreciate the start they were given. Instead of being grateful, they may come across as grumpy or resentful. Despite their riches, they may not seem happy.

Looking at your own life, what are the things that you are grateful for having been given? You may have had loving parents, a happy childhood and lived in different cultures.

You may also have been given certain abilities. Perhaps you experienced setbacks but, through your fighting spirit, you turned these into opportunities.

Looking at my own life, I had the good fortune to be raised by supportive foster parents. I had the opportunity to learn through pursuing certain interests rather than by being good at school exams.

Since my early twenties I have also been able to earn a living by encouraging people. This has led to learning from loved ones, colleagues, customers, writers, thinkers and others.

Many other people have given encouragement, opportunities and practical help. They have massively increased this good fortune.

If you wish, try tackling the exercise on this theme. This invites you to describe the good fortune you have had in your life. Try completing the following sentence.

Gratitude

*The good fortune I have
had in my life has been:*

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*

Good Use Of Your Good Fortune

Some people make good use of their good fortune. They build on what they have rather than worry about what they don't have. They may then use these assets to help other people or to do superb work.

Different people do this in different ways. Here are some ways that people may use their life-experiences, strengths or knowledge.

A person who had difficulties at school may help children to find their own ways to learn and develop ... A recovering addict may help others to take this step ... An inventor may create products that help people to improve the quality of their lives.

A footballer may use their fame to raise money for people who are hungry or homeless ... A journalist may use their storytelling skills to describe practical solutions to pressing problems across the world ... A singer-songwriter may use their talents to produce songs that inspire people.

Let's return to your life and work. How can you continue to make good use of your good fortune?

How can you use your life-experiences? How can you use the abilities you have been given? How can you build on your strengths and do satisfying work? How can you help other people to succeed? What may be the benefits of taking these steps?

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

Good Use

*The specific things I can do to
make good use of the good
fortune I have been given are:*

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*

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

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*

*

Generosity With Your Good Fortune

Different people are generous in different ways. Sometimes this depends on what they have been given. They may have had financial, emotional or other kinds of good fortune.

Some people are generous with their money. They may give financial support to good causes, budding entrepreneurs or fund other ways to build a fairer world.

Some people are generous with their spirit. Given encouragement in their own lives, they love to help people. They may do this as parents, educators, mentors or in other roles.

Some people are generous with their knowledge. They love to pass on ideas, models and practical tools. Grateful for what they have been given, they see this as natural. They want to share knowledge that helps people to succeed.

Many people recognise that, whilst they worked hard, they also enjoyed good fortune in their lives. Building on these assets, they want to encourage both present and future generations.

Let's return to your own life and work. How can you continue to be generous? How can you share your experiences? How can you build on your strengths? How can you do satisfying work and help other people to succeed?

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

Generosity

*The specific things I can do to
continue to be generous with the
good fortune I have been given are:*

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Sense Of Peace Approach

Peace

*The things I do where I
have a sense of peace are:*

** When I am ...*

** When I am ...*

** When I am ...*

Many people want similar things in life. They want to be loved, happy, successful and feel at peace. What are the things you do that sometimes lead to you having a sense of peace? Here are some answers that people give when exploring this theme.

Peace

*The things I do where I
have a sense of peace are:*

*When I am giving to people ... When I am doing something I believe in ...
When I am gardening ... When I am walking ... When I breathe deeply ...
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 by the end of my life that may lead to having a sense of peace are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to work towards doing some of these things are:

*

*

*

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

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*

The Purpose, Principles And Peace Approach



There are many models for finding a sense of peace. This approach involves focusing on a purpose, following your principles and finding peace.

Imagine that you want to follow this approach in your own way. Let's explore these themes.

Purpose

People love to have a sense of purpose. Different people take this step in different ways.

Some people look within to develop a purpose. They may start by focusing on their life philosophy, passions or principles. They then translate these into working towards this picture of success.

Some people look outside themselves to develop a purpose. They may aim to solve a particular problem, achieve a certain position or gain a prize. They then do their best to achieve this outer goal.

Some people combine elements of both. They may align their personal philosophy to pursuing a spiritual path, vocation or mission. They translate this into achieving certain goals on their chosen path.

Looking ahead, can you think of something you would like to do that would mean focusing on a specific purpose? This could be something small or big.

It may be as simple as encouraging a person, running a workshop, renovating a house or doing another activity. It may involve doing something on a larger scale. You may aim to produce a book, make a film, invent a product, build a company or achieve a big goal.

How to develop such a project? One approach is to create or choose one where:

You can get positive energy – even when you think about it;

You can follow principles that you believe in;

You can work towards achieve a clear picture of success.

Imagine that you are focusing on an activity that provides a sense of purpose. It can then be time to move on the next theme.

Principles

Many people aim to principles they believe in when pursuing an activity. They may do this when encouraging a person, practicing a craft, tackling a challenge or working towards a goal.

Some people gain strength from following such principles. They may also find that following these enables them to flow, focus and find fulfilment.

Imagine that you are going to do a piece of work. It may be important :

To clarify the principles you want to follow;

To translate these into action and perform superb work;

To find solutions to challenges when working towards the picture of success.

Some people simply love to follow their principles. One person expressed this in the following way.

"I enjoy the journey as much as reaching the goal. Every day that I get the chance to follow the principles is a win. It is a joy to be able to do what I believe in and work towards a compelling goal."

You will have your own view on the principles you want to follow. This may sometimes lead to the following stage.

Peace

People who pursue a purpose sometimes experience a sense of peace. Different people achieve this in different ways. One approach is for them:

To follow their principles;

To perform superb work;

To do their best to achieve their picture of success.

Sometimes this will involve them reaching a specific goal but sometimes they may not be in control of achieving the outcome. One person described their approach in such situations.

"My aim in life is to make a positive contribution. The main thing is to feel that I have done my best. Providing I have done that, I sometimes feel a sense of peace."

As mentioned earlier in the book, some individuals also aim to pass on their knowledge. They may do this when acting as leader, mentor, coach or in another role.

They want to share what they have learned and help other people to succeed. Some find that that passing on this knowledge can also lead to a sense of peace.

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? How can you do this in your own way?

How can you create or find a purpose? How can you follow your chosen principles? How can you do your best and maybe experience a sense of peace?

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

The Purpose, Principles And Peace Approach

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

*

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

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*

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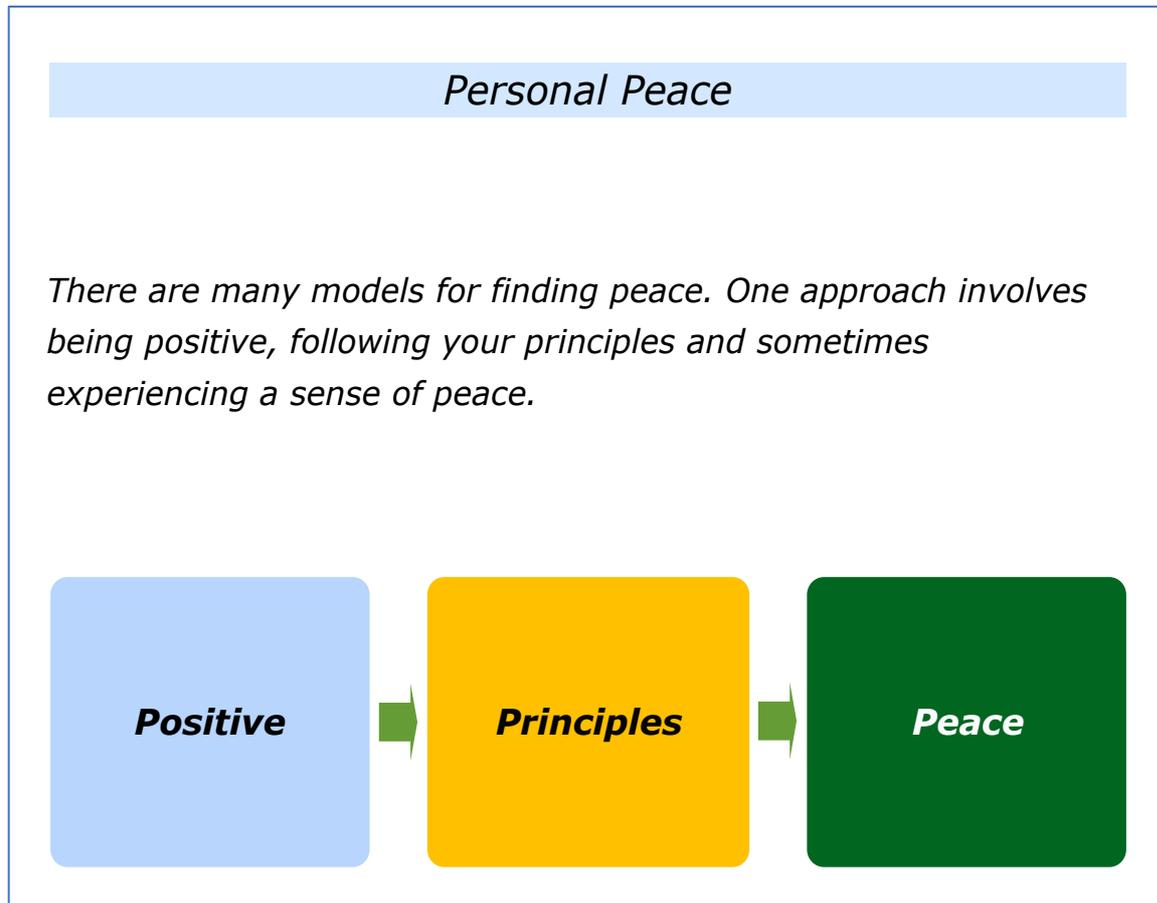
*The specific things that may happen as
a result of taking these steps may be:*

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*

The Personal Peace Approach



There are many models for finding peace. One approach involves being positive, following your principles and sometimes experiencing a sense of peace.

Looking at your life, what are the specific situations when you follow this approach in your own way? Here are some answers that people give when exploring this theme.

Personal Peace

The specific situation where I have a positive attitude, follow my principles and sometimes experience a sense of peace are:

*When I am encouraging people ... When I am walking in my garden ...
When I am playing music ... When I am cooking for people ... When I am
working in the hospice.*

When I am working as a counsellor .. When I am working as a carpenter ... When I am on stage and being healed by Doctor Theatre ... When I am working as a crisis manager ... When I am passing on knowledge.

Let's return to the situations where you sometimes experience a sense of peace. What do you do then to have a positive attitude? You may be aiming:

To do something that gives you positive energy ... To focus on the positive possibilities ... To set positive goals.

Looking at a specific situation, what are the principles you follow that sometimes result in you experiencing a sense of peace? Much will depend on the activity you are doing.

Sometimes you may be relaxing – such as walking, listening to music or relaxing in another way. Sometimes you may be doing an activity where you are follow your rhythm – such as pursuing a passion, performing stimulating work or doing another activity.

Different people give different answers when describing their chosen principles. Here are some themes they mention.

Principles

The principles I follow that sometimes result in experiencing a sense of peace are:

To be grateful, give to people and keep growing;

To encourage, educate and enable people to shape their futures;

To pursue a specific purpose, deliver high professional standards and achieve peak performance.

Imagine that you are following your principles. Sometimes this can result in experiencing a sense of peace. One person expressed this in the following way.

"The approach I take has developed over the years. When I was younger, I saw progress as striving to work hard and gain prizes. I now see progress as continuing to follow my principles and trying to improve.

"This is something I learned from sages who follow spiritual practices. They showed there are certain eternal principles that people follow to live generous lives.

"The approach I now take is to try to follow certain principles each day. I aim to encourage and help other people. This is enjoyable and also sometimes results in experiencing a sense of peace."

Different people give different answers regarding when they have such experiences. One common factor that does emerge, however, is the following theme.

People who have a positive attitude and follow their principles are more likely to sometimes enjoy sense of peace. This happens as an outcome, however, rather than setting out to experience that feeling.

Let's return to your own life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific situation where you may want to follow elements of this approach?

How can you do this in your own way? How can you be positive? How can you follow your chosen principles? How can you maybe sometimes experience a sense of peace?

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

Personal Peace In The Future

The specific situation where I may aim to have a positive attitude, follow my principles and sometimes experience a sense of peace may be:

*

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

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*

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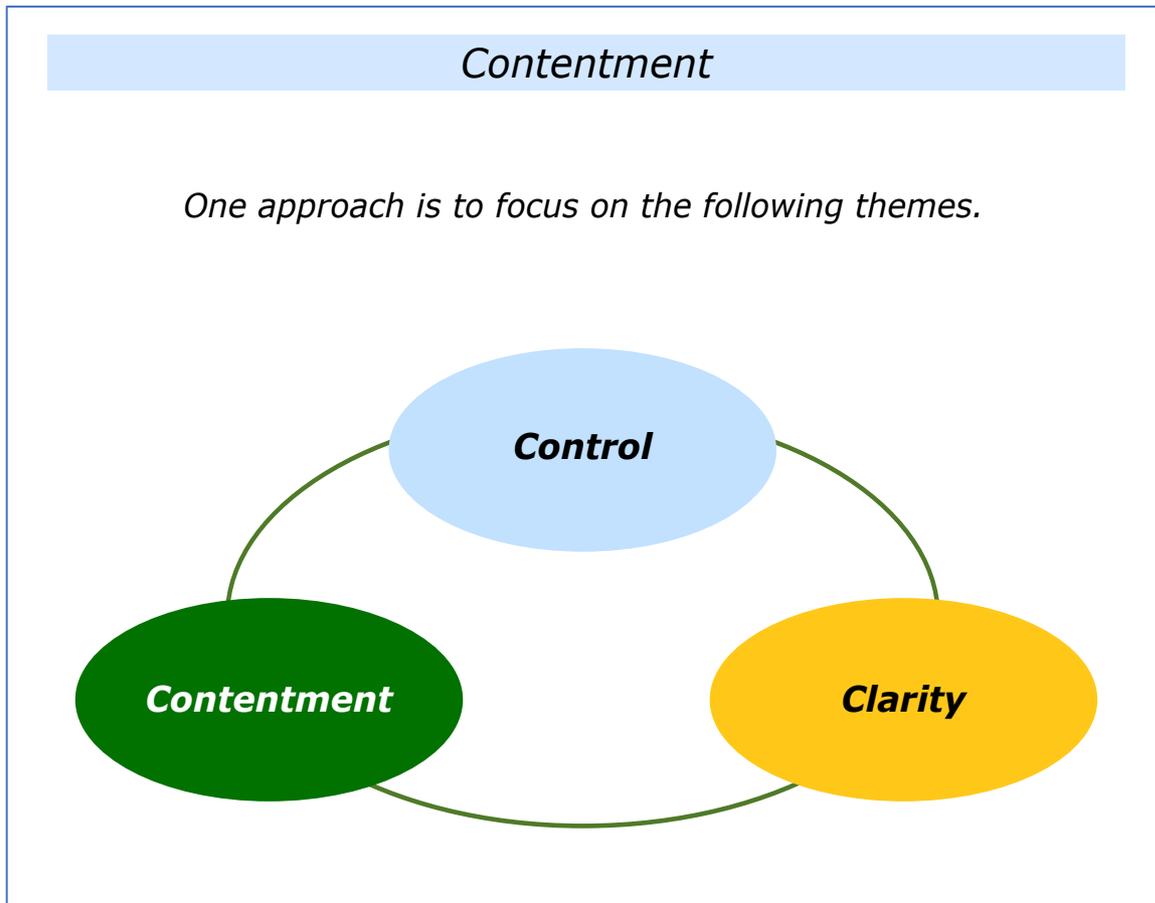
The specific things that may happen as a result of taking these steps may be:

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The Contentment Approach



There are also several definitions of contentment. These include the following.

A feeling of quiet happiness ... A feeling of deep satisfaction ... A feeling of having done your best ... A peaceful ease of mind.

Different people achieve this feeling in different ways. Some develop a sense of gratitude. Some do fulfilling work. Some appreciate life and have a sense of perspective.

You will have your own way of finding contentment. The following section explores one approach.

Control

The first step is to focus on the things you can control. Depending on the situation, you may be able to control the usual A, B, C.

Attitude *You can choose your attitude.*

Behaviour *You can choose how you behave.*

Consequences *You can choose how to do your best
to achieve certain consequences.*

People like to feel in control. They like to feel free, able to breathe and able to shape their future.

Looking back, can you think of a time when you took this approach? This could have been in your personal or professional life. What did you do then to take control? You may have chosen:

To breathe ... To buy time to think ... To clarify your potential options ... To choose the route you wanted to follow ... To move into action ... To get some quick successes.

Imagine that you have clarified what you can control in a situation. You may then want to move on to the next stage.

Clarity

The second step is to clarify the things that give you contentment. Different people describe different experiences when exploring this theme. Here are some examples.

*The Things That Give
Me Contentment Are:*

To encourage people ... To do my best ... To do things that give me positive energy ... To listen to certain kinds of music ... To sleep ... To be

with my dogs ... To support my partner ... To watch good quality television ... To be a good host ... To keep developing ... To pass on knowledge.

Imagine that you have clarified the things that create such feelings. You may then want to move on to the next stage.

Contentment

The third step is to actually do the things that give contentment. Much will depend on the situation, of course, but let's look at some examples.

If you feel out of control, you may want to pause, breathe and clarify the possible options for going forwards. You may then want to follow the route which is most likely to lead to feeling you are shaping your future.

If you are feeling down, you may want to count your blessings. You may then want to clarify how to build on these assets in your personal or professional life.

If you want to do satisfying work, you may want to focus on a project that gives you positive energy. You may then want to follow your chosen principles and work towards achieving your picture of success.

Contentment, like happiness, is sometimes the by-product of doing certain things. You can follow your way to increase the likelihood of experiencing this feeling.

Let's return to your life and work. Looking ahead, can you think of a specific situation where you would like to follow elements of this approach? How can you do this in your own way?

How can you clarify what you can control in the situation? How can you do the things will increase the chances of contentment? 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.

Contentment

The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of the contentment approach may be:

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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."

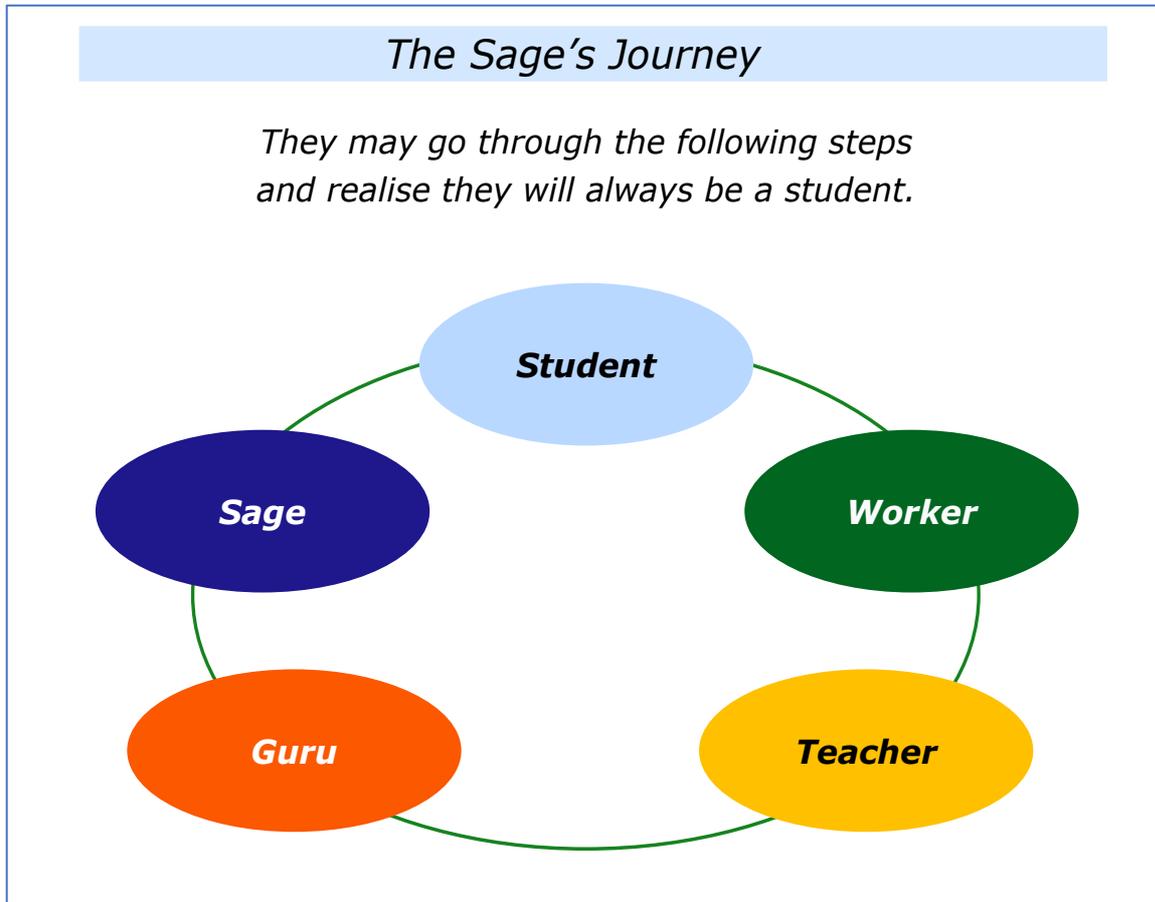
"Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope."

"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 of life.

Sages are sometimes approached by people who want to explore certain themes. When appropriate, sages then share knowledge in a way that helps people to achieve success. Here is an introduction to one approach that sages take in such situations.

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.

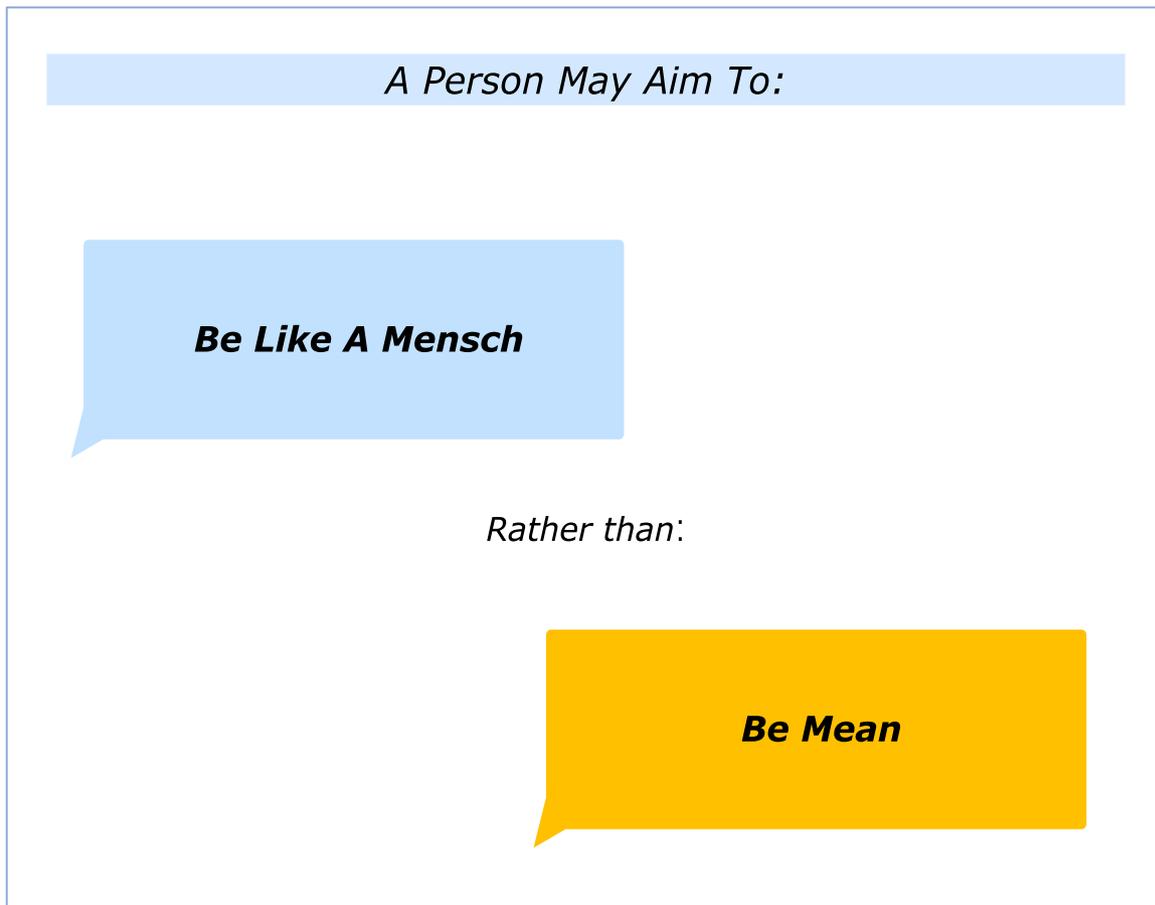
Checking which ideas resonate with the person, they explore these further. If appropriate, they move on to how the person wants to apply these to achieve their picture of success.

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.

Sages love to help people and share knowledge. They do this because they believe that the caring for others approach is not a copyrighted approach. They want to pass on knowledge that can help both present and future generations.

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 Roker 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:

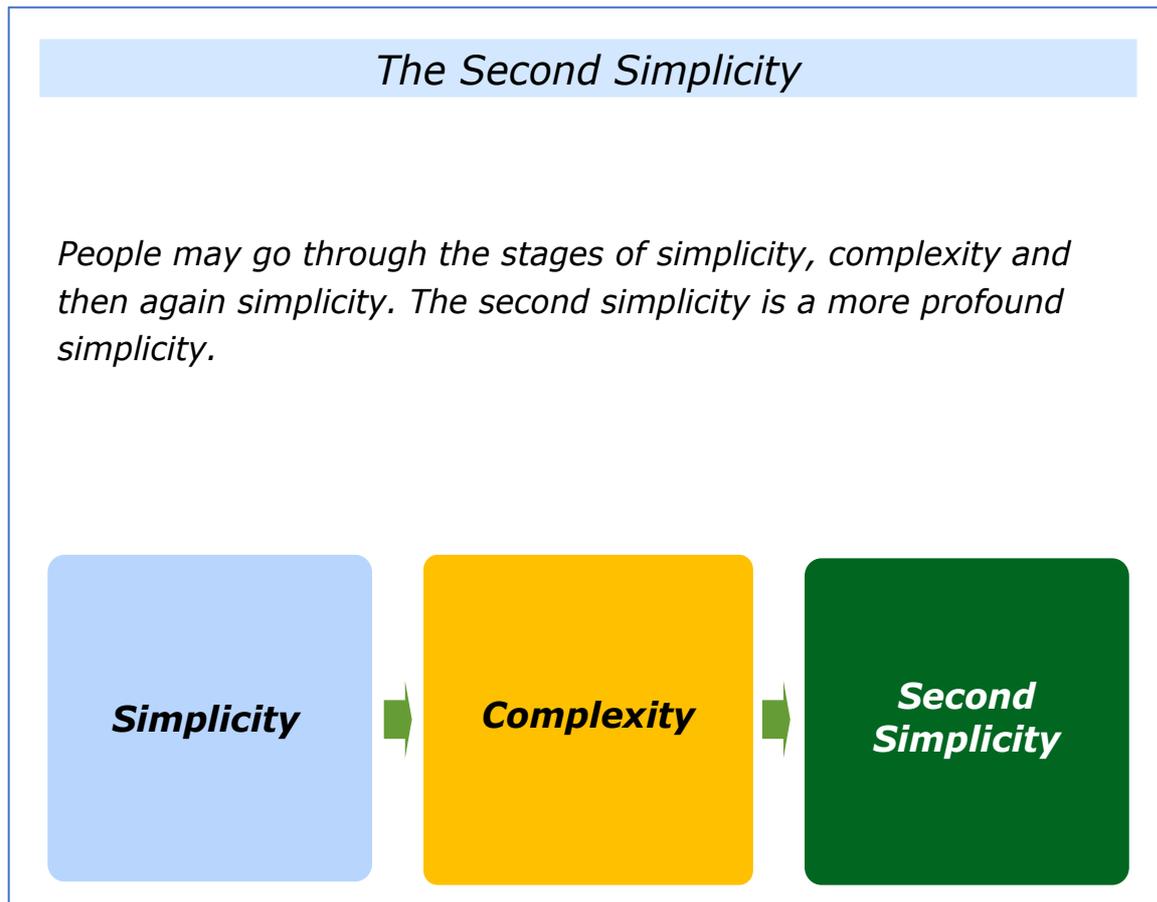
"Responsibility fused with compassion, a sense that one's own personal needs and desires are limited by the needs and desires of other people. A mensch acts with self-restraint and humility, always sensitive to the feelings and thoughts of others".

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 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. Oliver Wendell Holmes summed this up when he said:

"I would not give a fig for the simplicity this side of complexity, but I would give my life for the simplicity on the other side of complexity."

Let's explore how people who get to this stage go through the years of simplicity, complexity and then the profound simplicity.

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

Some people then encounter complexity. They 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 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.

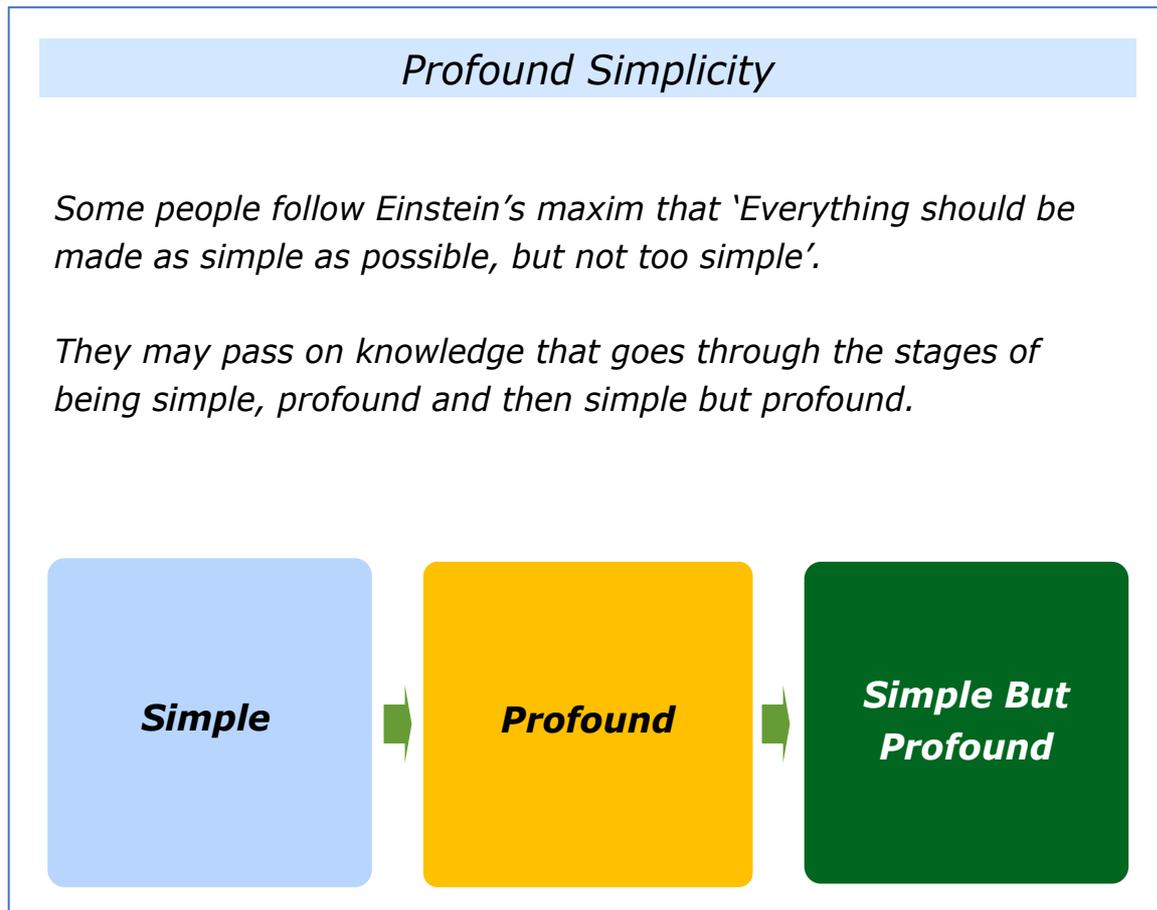
Second Simplicity

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.

They have wisdom in their bones. Demonstrating humility rather than hubris, they make sense experience and make complicated things simple.

Such people focus on the eternal themes and pass on knowledge that people can use in their own ways. They share lessons from the second simplicity. Some call this profound simplicity.



Let's return to your own life and work. Can you think of an activity where you follow elements of the second simplicity approach?

You may do this when pursuing a craft, doing a certain piece of work, leading a team or doing another activity. What are the principles you follow when doing this activity? How do you translate these into action?

Imagine that you were asked to explain these principles to people. How could you pass on this knowledge in a way that people can use? How could you do this in a simple yet profound way?

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

The Second Simplicity

*The specific activity where
I may follow elements of the
second simplicity approach is:*

*

*The specific principles I follow
when doing this activity are:*

*

*

*

*The specific things I can do to
pass on this knowledge in a way
that is simple yet profound are:*

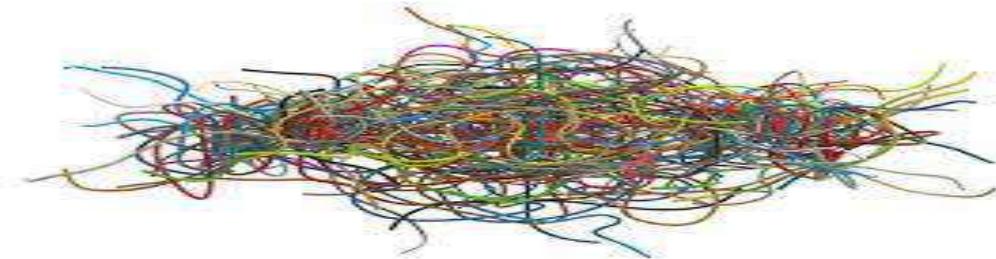
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The Making Complicated Things Simple Approach

Making Complicated Things Simple



- *Step 1 is ...*
- *Step 2 is ...*
- *Step 3 is ...*

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 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:

*

*

*

The Looking Forward To Each Day In Older Age Approach

Carl Jung On Living As We Get Older



Life behaves as if it were going on, and so I think it is better for an old person to live on, to look forward to the next day, as if he had to spend centuries, and then he lives properly.

But when he is afraid, he gets stiff and he dies before his time. But when he's living and looking forward to the great adventure that is ahead, then he lives, and that is about what the unconscious is intending to do.

There are many views on how people can behave as they move towards the end of their lives. Carl Jung gave an insight into one approach when interviewed in 1959 by John Freeman for the BBC programme *Face-To-Face*.

Carl believed that a person could make the most of life by looking forward to each day. Here is a longer excerpt from answer he gave when asked about how people could live with the awareness of death.

I have treated many old people and it's quite interesting to watch what the unconscious is doing with the fact that it is apparently threatened with a complete end. It disregards it.

Life behaves as if it were going on, and so I think it is better for an old person to live on, to look forward to the next day, as if he had to spend centuries, and then he lives properly.

But when he is afraid, he gets stiff and he dies before his time. But when he's living and looking forward to the great adventure that is ahead, then he lives, and that is about what the unconscious is intending to do.

Of course, it's quite obvious that we're all going to die, and this is the sad finale of everything; but nevertheless, there is something in us that doesn't believe it apparently. It is simply so.

And so when you think in a certain way you may feel considerably better, and I think if you think along the lines of nature you can think properly.

Different people demonstrate this love of life in different ways as they get older. Maya Angelou expressed it in the following way.



Photograph by Elon University

I love living. I love that I'm alive to love my age.

There are many people who went to bed just as I did yesterday evening and didn't wake this morning.

I love and feel very blessed that I did.

I love, too, that I know a little more today than I did yesterday, or I simply know it more profoundly.

Some people experience an interesting feeling in their later years. This involves them blending the following qualities.

They feel at ease with themselves as individuals and also part of something greater than themselves.

Bertrand Russell described elements of this approach in his short essay he wrote at the age of eighty-one called *How To Grow Old*. Here are excerpts from the essay.

How To Grow Old

Some old people are oppressed by the fear of death. In the young there is a justification for this feeling.

But in an old man who has known human joys and sorrows, and has achieved whatever work it was in him to do, the fear of death is somewhat abject and ignoble.

The best way to overcome it - so at least it seems to me - is to make your interests gradually wider and more impersonal, until bit by bit the walls of the ego recede, and your life becomes increasingly merged in the universal life.

An individual human existence should be like a river: small at first, narrowly contained within its banks, and rushing passionately past rocks and over waterfalls.

Gradually the river grows wider, the banks recede, the waters flow more quietly, and in the end, without any visible break, they become merged in the sea, and painlessly lose their individual being.

The man who, in old age, can see his life in this way, will not suffer from the fear of death, since the things he cares for will continue.

And if, with the decay of vitality, weariness increases, the thought of rest will not be unwelcome.

I should wish to die while still at work, knowing that others will carry on what I can no longer do and content in the thought that what was possible has been done.

Different people focus on different things during their later years. Their top priority is often to have the basic materials for life and to care for their health.

Some then choose to look forward to each day. They may focus on some of the following themes.

They may aim to encourage their loved ones and other people.

They may aim to appreciate and enjoy every day.

They may aim to create and add to their portfolio work or their equivalent of a magnum opus.

They may aim to pass on knowledge that can help both present and future generations.

They may aim to pass on another form of positive legacy.

Imagine that you want to look forward to each day as you get older. What are the specific things you can do to take this approach? How can you translate these ideas 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.

The Looking Forward To Each Day Approach

The specific things I can do to look forward to each day as I get older are:

*

*

*

The specific things I can do to translate these ideas into action are:

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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***

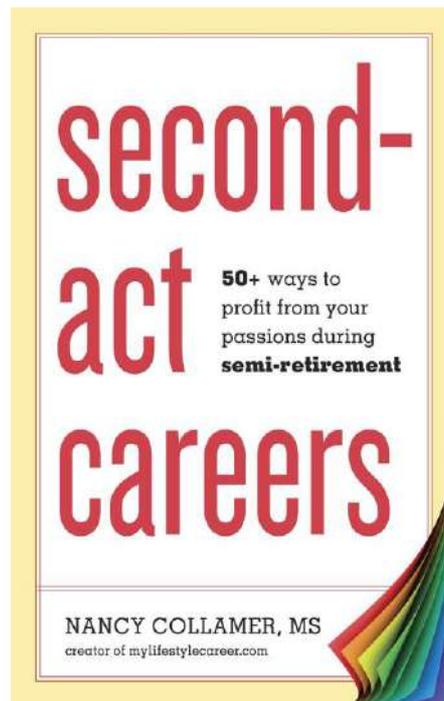
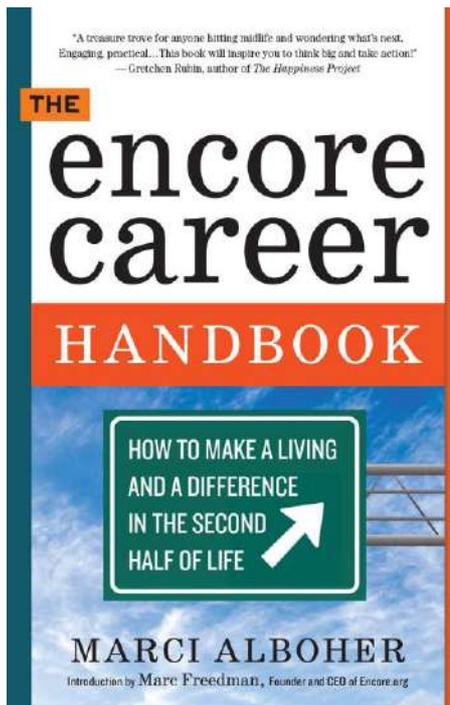
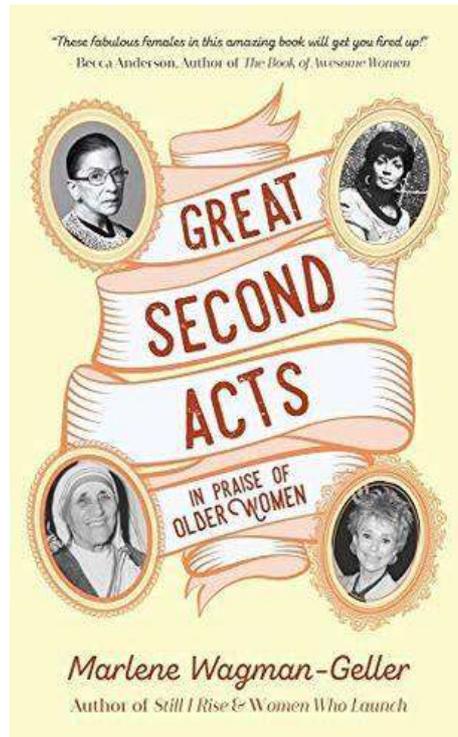
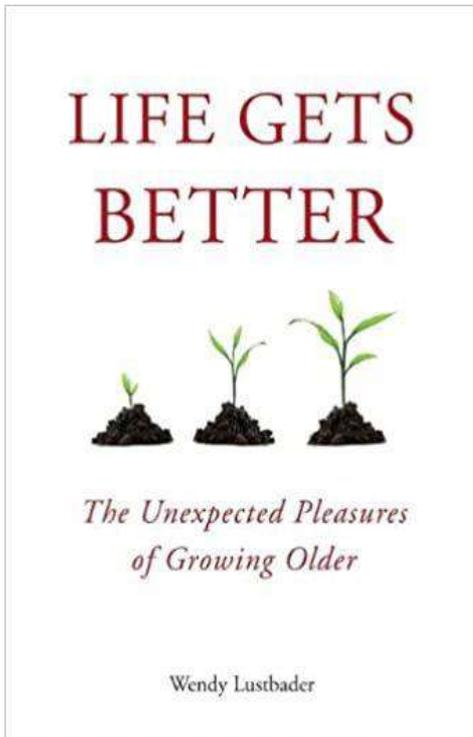
To pass on a positive legacy

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.*

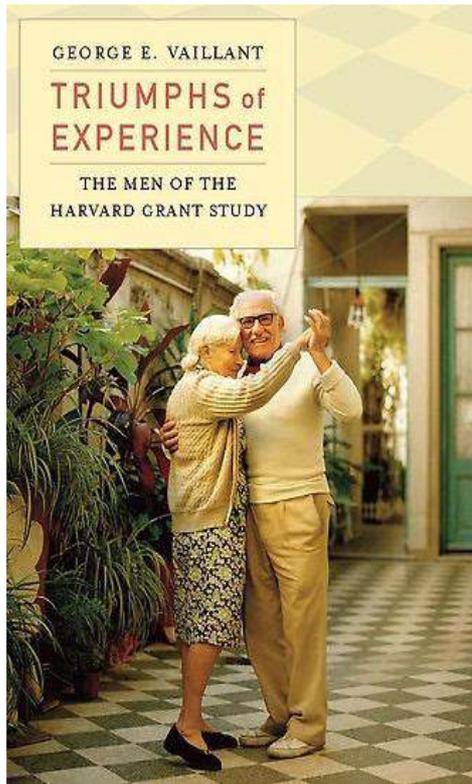
For example, the people who do well in old age did not necessarily do so well in midlife, and vice versa.

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.*

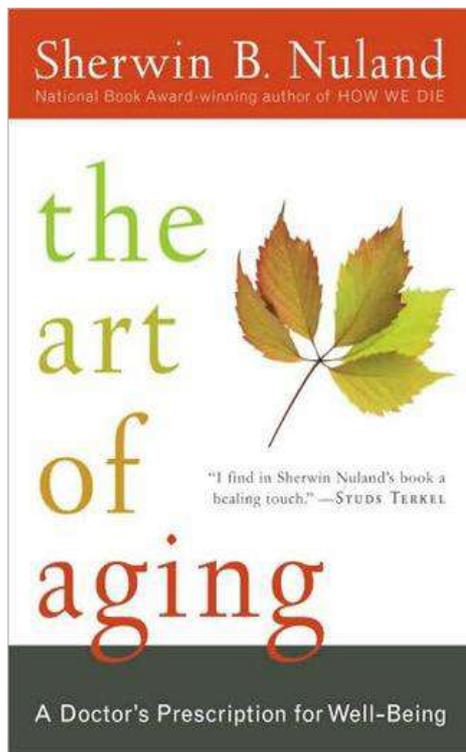
*Pursue education as far as your
intelligence permits ... After
retirement, stay creative, do new
things, learn how to play again.*

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.

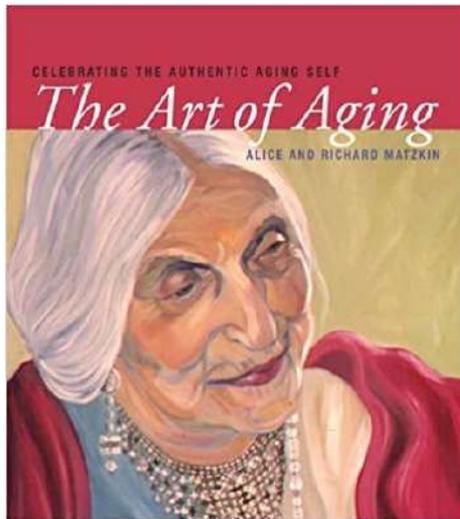
Alice and Richard Matzki are both artists and wrote *The Art Of Aging: Celebrating The Authentic Aging Self*. In it they explore physical changes, sensuality and relationships, aging parents, spirituality and death.

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?

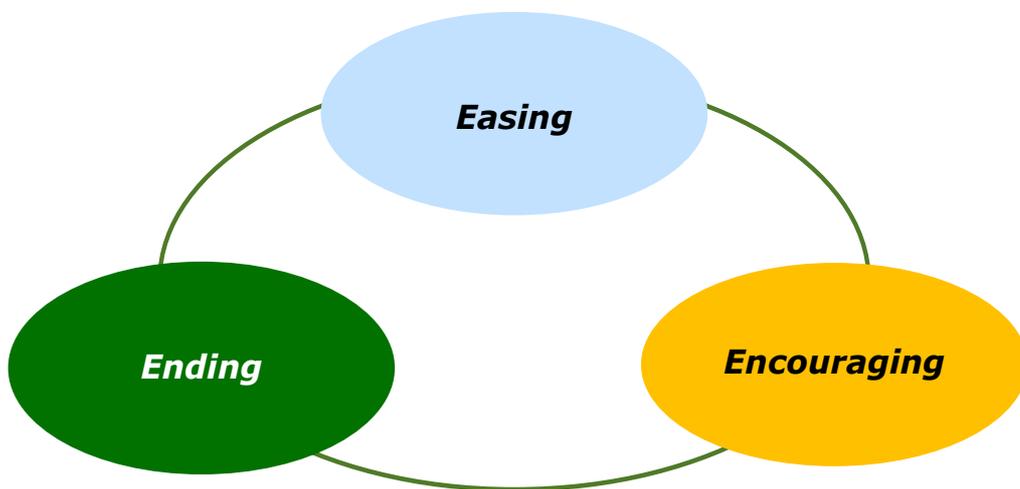
A passionate sense of purpose, generosity of spirit, present focus and physical appeal are qualities we found in the vital women we interviewed. Do you have a passion that would provide you with a sense of purpose that you can carry through old age? How can generosity of spirit play a role in living 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.

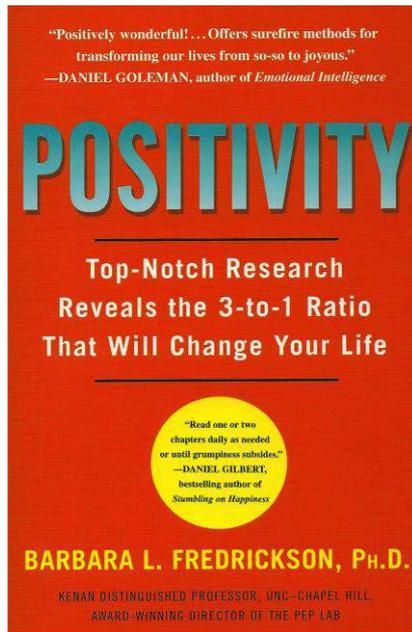
And, though trickier, dying people should be allowed to decide how much consciousness they want. Some people want to sleep all of the time; others want to be alert as much as possible. Once these wishes are known, an advocate can help make that happen.

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.*

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.

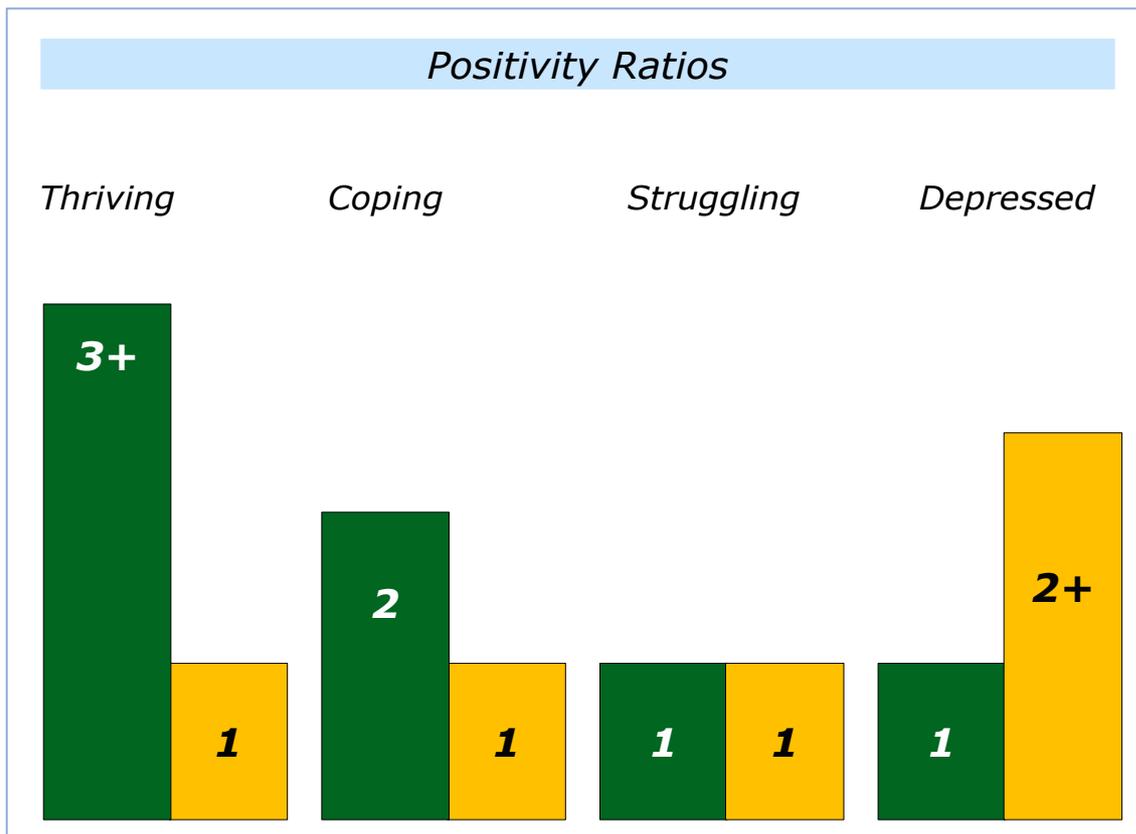
Individuals who don't overcome their depression, couples who fail in their marriages, and business teams that are unpopular and unprofitable each have ratios in the gutter, below 1 to 1.

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.

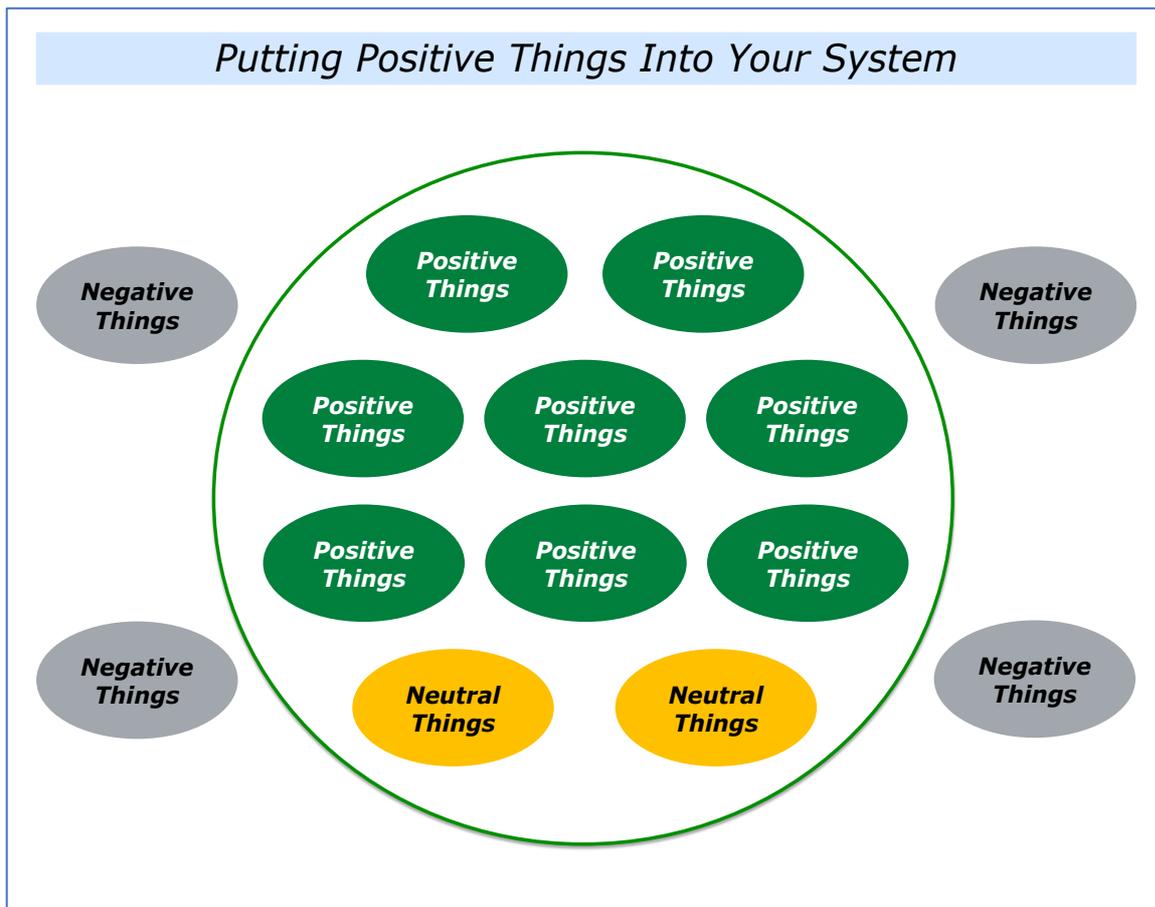
*Gratitude ... Joy ... Love ... Hope ... Inspiration ... Amusement ... Awe ...
Interest ... Pride ... Serenity.*

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.

The following pages provide several exercises on this theme. You can, of course, adapt these in your own way.

The Putting Positive Things Into Your System Approach



Imagine that your being is a system. The things you put into your system can affect how you feel and what you do. Bearing this in mind, it can be useful to explore the following themes.

Positive Things

What are the positive things you put into your system? You may eat nourishing food, spend time with encouraging people, do satisfying work or do activities that support your system.

You may seek experiences that stimulate your system. These may include being in nature, exercising, listening to music, studying success or other activities. How can you continue to put positive things into your system?

Neutral Things

Sometimes you may put in or allow neutral things into your system. These may include everyday activities in your life and work. These may help to maintain the status quo and enable you to stay in control of your life.

What may be these activities for you? You may use some energy to make sure the daily practical tasks get done. You do these as a matter of routine and they do not cause any harm.

Negative Things

How do you spot the potential negative things and stop them getting into your system? These may include meeting people who keep complaining or create conflicts. You may also experience situations where you get depressed or hurt.

How can you stop putting yourself into situations? What may be the warning signs that your system is being affected by such events? If appropriate, how can you protect yourself and avoid poison getting into your system?

Looking ahead, how can you put positive things into your system? How can you prevent negative things getting into your system? 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 explore several ways to encourage people.

Putting Things Into My System

*Positive Things. The specific steps
I can take to continue putting
positive things into my system are:*

*

*

*

*Negative Things. The specific steps
I can take to prevent putting
negative things into my system are:*

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

The Passing On Positive Things To People Approach

Passing On Positive Things

There are many ways to help people. One approach is help them to enjoy positive experiences. It can also be to pass on positive knowledge and practical tools they can use to get positive results.



There are many ways to help people. One approach is to pass on positive things that can encourage people or help them to achieve their personal or professional goals.

Different people follow this approach in different ways. You may aim to doing this by helping people to enjoy positive experiences. You may also pass on positive knowledge or practical tools that they can use to get positive results. Let's explore these themes.

Positive Experiences

People are more likely to thrive in caring environments that help them to grow. Bearing this in mind, you may aim to offer people love, support or encouragement.

There are many ways to take this approach. You may aim to be kind, give them nurturing food, play inspiring music, create beauty or do other things that give people pleasure. Such positive experiences can help people to enjoy life and grow.

Positive Knowledge

People like to know what works. Bearing this in mind, you may aim to study what works. You can then pass on this positive knowledge by offering positive models and practical tools that people use to achieve their aims.

Different people do this in different ways. Some do it in their work as counsellors, educators, craft workers, writers, film makers, leaders, mentors or in other roles. It can be useful to find a way that works for you and other people.

Positive Results

People often want more than theory. They want practical tools they can use in their daily lives. You can aim to pass on tools, techniques or other things that people can use to get positive results.

People can then apply these in their own ways to achieve their aims. They may aim to stay healthy, do satisfying work, build superb teams or achieve their picture of success.

Imagine that you want to pass on positive things to a person. Sometimes this may simply mean being kind or providing encouraging experience. Sometimes it may involve helping a person to achieve their aims.

Imagine that you are going to take the latter approach in a professional situation. This will involve making the person feel welcome and clarifying what they want to explore. When appropriate, it may then involve passing on positive things they can use to achieve their goals.

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

Passing On Positive Things

The name of the person is:

*

The person's personal or professional goals may be:

*

*

*

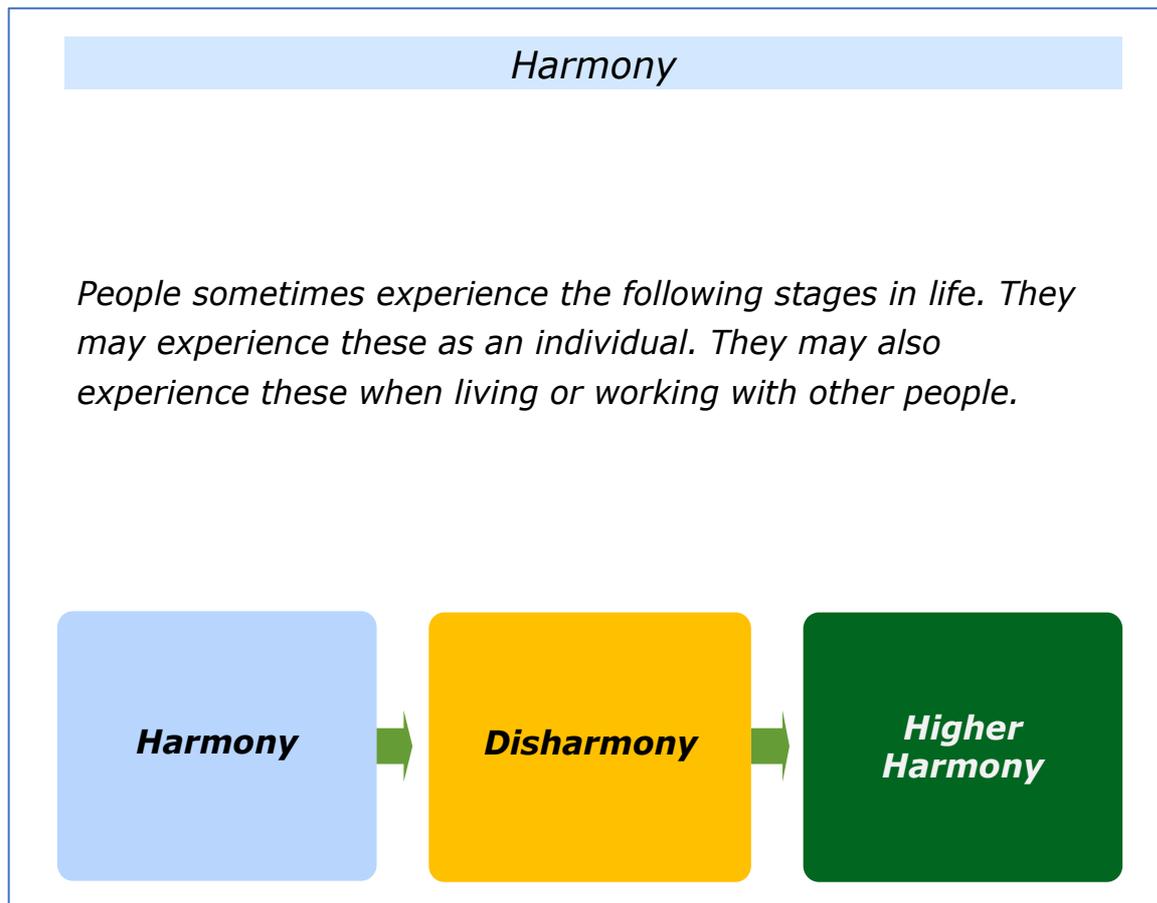
The positive things I can pass on that they may be able to use to achieve their desired positive results are:

*

*

*

The Harmony, Disharmony And Higher Harmony Approaches



People sometimes experience the following stages in life - harmony, disharmony and a higher harmony. They may experience these as an individual or when living or working with other people.

There are several definitions of the word harmony. Many of these refer to music. Here are some other definitions.

The alignment of feelings, ideas or actions ... The alignment of people's efforts to achieve something special ... The alignment of different parts to get positive results.

People who take this approach may feel in harmony with their own values. They may aim to help other people or follow a higher purpose. They may some work with others, for example, to achieve a positive goal.

As mentioned earlier, people may also experience disharmony. This can lead to hurting each other. It can also lead to despair and destruction.

Some people learn from this situations, however, and emerge feeling they want to do something better. Sometimes this can lead to them doing things that lead to a higher harmony. Let's explore these themes.

Harmony

Looking back, when have you been in harmony with yourself? When have you been in harmony with other people? When you have been in harmony with the work you are doing – either by yourself or other people?

Here are some of the themes that people may mention when they exploring these questions. You will, of course, have your own approach to creating such experiences.

*A person may feel in harmony
with themselves when:*

They are doing what they love ... They have a sense of purpose ... They are following their principles ... They are positively engaged ... They are working towards achieving positive results.

*A person may feel in harmony
with other people when:*

They are able to be themselves ... They are accepted ... They are encouraged ... They are with kindred spirits ... They are not judged ... They are sharing common activities ... They are creating positive memories.

*A person may feel in harmony with their work
– either by themselves or with other people - when:*

They are following their vocation ... They are building on their strengths ... They are following strategies that work ... They are cooperating with others by focusing on clarity, creativity and compelling goals.

Let's return to your own life and work. When you have had some of these experiences? What were you doing right then? How can you follow similar principles in the future? What may be the benefits?

Some people feel a sense of harmony early in their lives. Feeling loved, they are given the space to grow. They may have parents who encourage them to follow their passions, explore and develop.

They may then go on to do work they love. They may pursue the work that gives them positive energy and gets positive results. That way they win every day.

Feeling alive, they do satisfying work. This can provide a sense of affirmation and encourages them to keep developing. They feel a sense of harmony and want to do their best during their time on the planet.

Some people may experience these feelings. There may come a time, however, when they encounter a certain kind of difficult challenge.

Disharmony

Looking back, when have you felt a sense of disharmony? This could have led to a feeling of distress or dislocation. It could also have affected parts of your being.

A person may experience disharmony within themselves, with others or in their work when:

They are feeling out of control ... They are not following their values ... They are in painful relationships ... They are doing things that give them negative energy ... They are not able to manage the triggers that send them into a downward spiral.

They are focusing on what they can't control ... They are working in a toxic culture ... They are seeking affirmation from others when it will not be forthcoming ... They are not able to see a way forward to improve their health, hope or happiness.

Some people do not feel in harmony with themselves. They ignore their strengths and focus on their shortcomings. They neglect their assets and focus on their angst.

They may find it hard to follow their principles. They may instead aim for status by gaining certain kinds of prizes. They may reach their goals but then feel empty in their centre.

Such people may have negative conversations with themselves. This may include focusing on some of the following themes.

"Why can't I be content? What do I want to change in my life? Why do I keep criticising myself? How can I get myself out of negative cycles? What can I do to feel more at peace?"

Some people in relationships, teams and organisations may begin their journey together by focusing on common goals. They may also coordinate their strengths to achieve success.

They may reach a stage where they find it difficult to align their efforts, however, and fall into disharmony. They may blame each other or fall into negative cycles.

Some people stay this way forever. Some find it tiring but do not know how to get into a more virtuous circle. Some move on to the following stage.

Higher Harmony

Some people reach a stage in their lives when they move into a state of higher harmony. They may focus on pursuing this path within themselves, with other people or in relation to the life forces on the planet. Different people do this in different ways.

Some emerge from exhausting experiences. They then start to feel that there must be a better way of living or working.

Some embark on various kinds of inner or outer journeys. These can take them into territories that bring enlightening experiences.

Some explore and add to their educational experiences. These may show ways they can follow during the rest of their time on the planet.

A person may apply these lessons to live more in harmony with themselves. They have a sense of gratitude and accept who they are. They aim to become the best kind of person or professional they can be.

Such person may begin to feel more at peace. This can come from having a sense of perspective. They recognise they are small in the great sweep of history. They also realise, however, that it is be important to be kind to others and plant seeds of hope during their time on the planet.

They may aim to do work where they feel in their element – at ease and yet able to excel. They may focus on using their strengths and aim to do superb work that helps others to achieve success.

They may find ways to manage differences and solve conflict. They aim to go beyond blame and focus on common ground. They may then develop the skills to – as far as possible – find win-win solutions.

Such a person may aim to serve something greater than themselves. They may do this when working by themselves or with others. They may then coordinate their talents to do creative work that involves a higher harmony.

An individual or a team may do this by going into a state of flow. They then aim to focus, do fine work and finish. Some go into their equivalent of the zone. Some combine their strengths and capitalise on their synergy to deliver success.

A person may become more at ease as they get older. They may find themselves merging with the forces that bring life to the planet. They enjoy life and see every day as a bonus.

Such a person may count their blessings and consider how they have tried to help people to be happy. They may reflect on how, for much of their life, they tried to do their best. This may bring a sense of peace and perhaps a higher sense of harmony.

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 harmony approach? This could be in your personal or professional life.

You may aim to live more in harmony with yourself or other people. You may aim to experience a higher harmony in your work or with the planet. 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.

The Harmony Approach

The specific situation where I may want to follow elements of the harmony or higher harmony approach may be:

*

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

*

*

*

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

*

*

*

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.

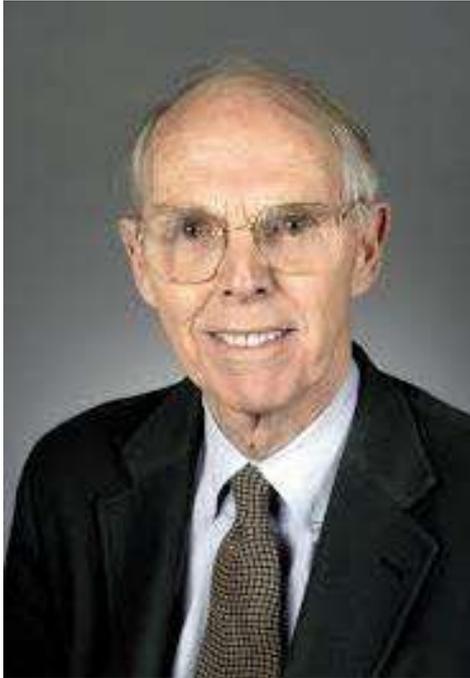
Then we did a second one on fast-moving consumer goods, which was 700 billion US dollars [of savings], and a third one looking at global supply chains, which was over a trillion US dollars.

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.

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.

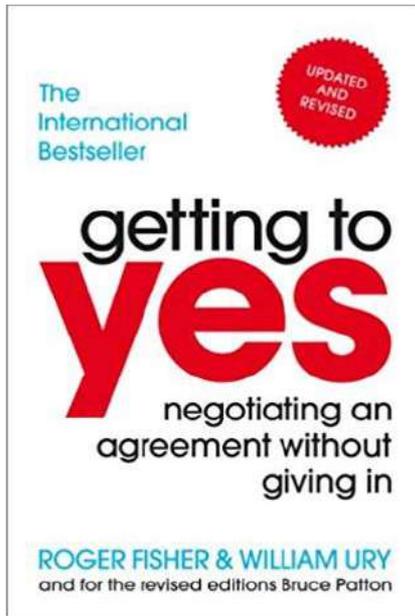
During his service he also flew morning flights over Japan. This was before the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. According to people who knew him, the memory of these flights – and the unnecessary deaths of many people in war – weighed on him.

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 3rd 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*.

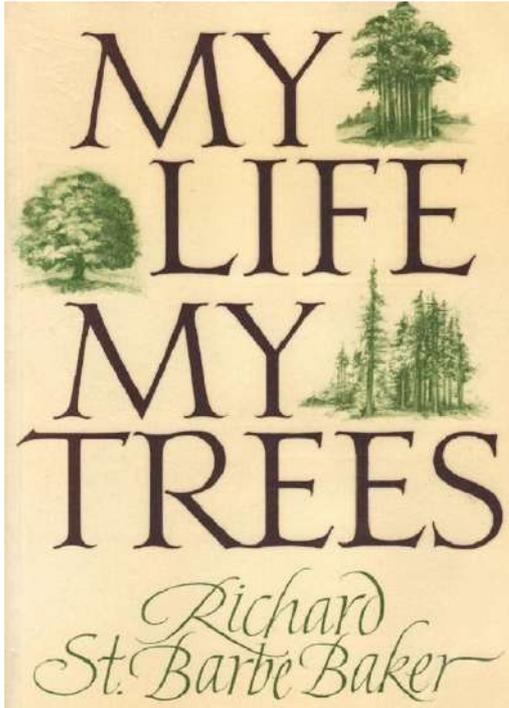
I have never doubted that we are serving the most powerful and most hopeful historical force of our era. Or that we are positioned to play a truly important role. We are, after all, a community of most of the world's leading social entrepreneurs.

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 that 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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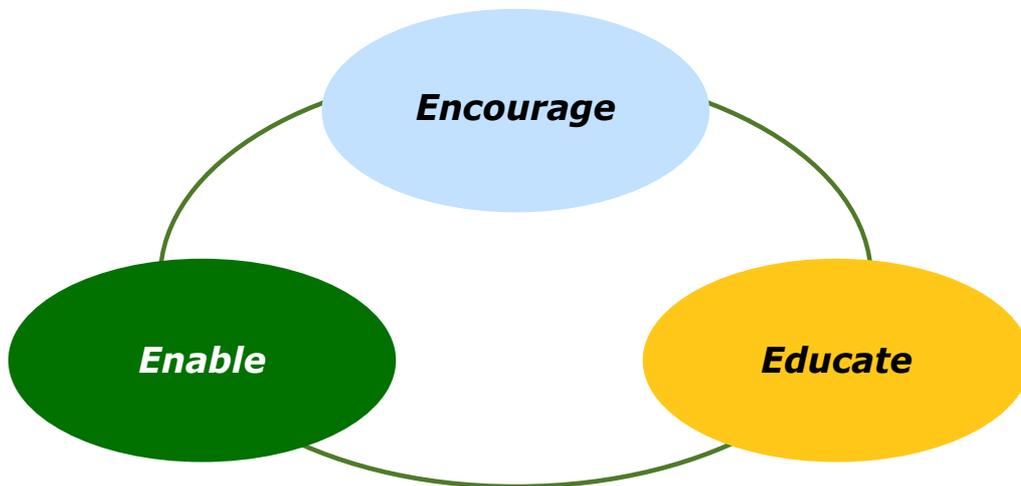
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Conclusion

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.

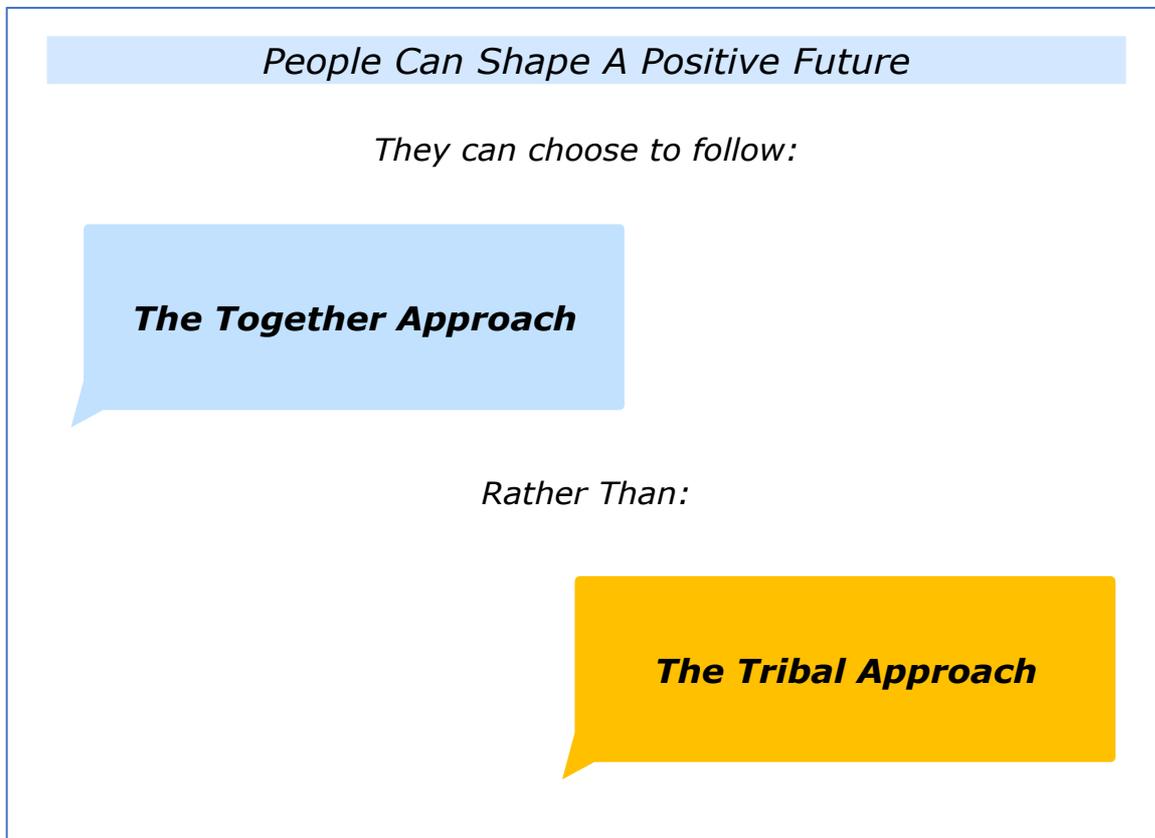
Encouragers then aim to pass on knowledge, models and practical tools that work. The person can take the ideas they like and use these in their own way.

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:

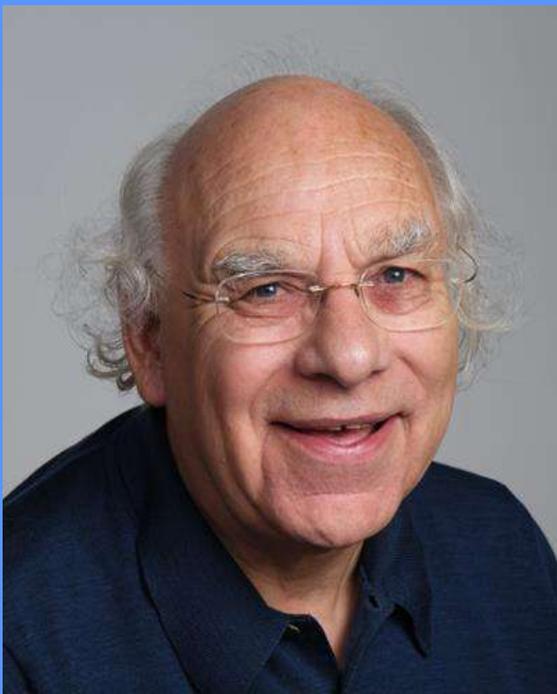
To encourage people in their personal and professional lives;

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