

Infinite Influence



**Getting it Done without
Ownership, Authority or Celebrity**

Rayne Wordsmith

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Introduction

Influence starts by accepting that others like you are greedy, selfish, and lazy. Consciousness is the effort we apply to be better than this before it becomes ingrained and demonstrated.

You navigate change as a leader or allow it to happen as a follower. This is not against followers—when you want people to follow you, the trick is to make the easy way the new way and make the old ways harder than the new ones.

You have to make corrections all the time. You have to see the truth of what works and what doesn't, and you don't have eyes in the back of your head. You need the awareness, desire, knowledge, and abilities of others who can help you, stop you, and help make it easier.

People must choose for themselves. They don't do it out of obligation; they don't because it's their job or proper for the company. They do it because they see that the pain of staying the same is much bigger than the benefit of changing and the effort of doing so. You must understand their psychology, not just the emotion and logic of why the change is the best. It's the best in your eyes, maybe, but everyone is entitled to their reality.

Influence is all about considering how you define “winning” and knowing that we all do it differently, as we should.

From Charisma to Curiosity

Navigation is required because it's a constant negotiation. We did an exercise when I learned negotiation from the negotiation guru Frank Acuff. My team was going to cure cancer, and we needed this specific crop of oranges.

We were motivated to win. The other side was doing something important, so we split the yield equally. We thought we'd done our best and created a mutually beneficial relationship. However, we later learned that they only needed the pulp. We always knew we needed the juice, but we didn't process that we only needed the juice. We both could have got 100 percent.

Always remember the power of asking questions and learning as much as possible. Remember that there is never enough time, and you will always think you know everything. Approach negotiations from the perspective that everyone can get everything they want. You have to get curious and creative while you learn what is genuinely on that list of wants, not the things you assume are there.

1: The Nature of Change

The term change management can be ambiguous. The change affects three things: people, processes, and technology. These three things are usually interdependent, so changing one impacts the others. Deciding on the scope introduces ambiguity.

Many Types of Changes

We manage change by doing lofty, permanent, sweeping things like transforming an organization's culture. Change can also be small and contained, like tweaking a project's budget, scope, or timeline.

This is not about changes we control or minor improvements to existing processes, features, or benefits. It is not about change because you are innovating and must navigate affordances.

This is about change and when you need other people to join you. If you can do it alone, get productive and get it done. When you lack autonomy, you need influence.

Changes happen all the time. Some require management, some we must respond to, and some we don't even notice. Some we try not to see and hope to be insulated from. When change is happening, whether you like it or not—and in fact, there are parts of it that you don't want—there is always something you can do about how it might turn out.

The Influence Objective

You are in a position to influence change. While you may have a leadership position within it, you have to work with others to get it done. Some of these others are your peers. They may be your customers, leaders, peers, suppliers, etc. You have stakeholders, and it is their stake in it that matters.

Think of yourself as a champion of change rather than the leader or manager. A champion is someone everyone wants to rally behind. The overarching principle of successful influence is that you will be successful in bringing them along rather than forcing them along.

Studies have proven that command and control causes lasting, long-term damage. There is a time and a place for those skills. If the building is burning, you need to get people out. Presumably, you have more of a runway than that, and as long as there is still some runway left, better outcomes are possible.

Cooperation for Better Change

More and more, influence is a set of skills we all need, no matter our role in business or even if we are in business for ourselves.

We need to lead, influence, communicate, negotiate, and collaborate. These five foundations are fundamental for working with others. In the face of change, you can create change for the better, with the bar for better raised as high as possible.

You know the alternatives: politics, conflict, frustration, strife, and possible permanent damage to relationships, reputation, and business. Leading from within is about bringing your best and helping others do the same when emotions run high.

Change brings potential pain, fear and loss to the surface. When those three emotions are present, you have ripe conditions for irrationality. Irrationality tanks change efforts faster than anything.

The Way of the Crab

Evan Solomon wrote about Trump's failure to repeal Obamacare in Maclean's, despite having his party in the House and the Senate. He offers up two animals to think about when you think about leading change: Crows and Crabs.

Solomon offers excellent insight into progress in politics, which is the way of the crab - wide swings to the right and left but eventually moving forward, incorporating negotiations and trade-offs. In contrast, Trump's measure of progress is that of a crow - the fastest and shortest way to get to the finishing line, and the only way forward is straight.

Business, politics, and getting ahead in life are like the way of the crab. It's a constant game of maneuvering, tweaking, and redefining how you will get there – without losing sight of the destination.

With your vision fixated on better outcomes, you are not fixated on serving your ego, going for status, or other such trappings that *will* undermine outcomes. When we expect it to look and feel like the crow's journey, we get it wrong.

Change management by way of the crowd is typical. The Crows take the change order from the C-Suite and execute. Crows attempt to make the pill of change easier to swallow. They ensure employees are trained and able to work in new ways. They let people know what's happening. Sometimes, they even listen to suggestions; rarely, they might incorporate them. Crows herd troops through the gates, and when people leave, they shrug it off as inevitable.

Unfortunately, the talented contributors leave. When that happens, the process repeats because there is less capability to participate.

Aim for Alignment

Just as there are people who could hotly debate whether or not Trump is succeeding, the farther you get from concrete, measurable things, the deeper you get into the smoke and mirrors of personal agendas, spin, and politics. The more you need the way of the Crab.

Inside the walls of the business, it is a political arena with no such aids as party affiliations or even the simplicity of two poles. It's where values posted on the walls aren't proclamations of facts but ideals no one embodies. It's where the mission statement is so vague that everyone can agree to it, but not all agree on what it means to achieve it. It's where raises come from a fixed bucket, and an extra dollar for me means one less for you. It's a place where perception is the thing you have to manage.

No matter where you work, if you want to be effective, you need to use the way of the crab. The way of the crab requires negotiation. Look for mutually beneficial solutions, and you will build bridges and win support.

For that, you need to get precise about what you find non-negotiable. You may want to influence the future state, how you are getting to that future state or both. The more flexible you can be, the more likely you will gain alignment where needed.

The outcome you seek is not as impossible as you may think. You don't have to get everyone 100 percent enthusiastically on board. All you have to get is non-negative support. Aim for alignment, but settle for accompaniment. If a person is resisting but can go along with it, and you can go along with it, you've got a dual winner.

Fine Tune the Radio

The Crabs hone in on the truth of what makes it hard – the personal agenda.

If there's one truth about change, it's not that no one likes it, but rather that no one likes it when it happens to them. We love change when we can control it. When we can't control it, or when it happens to us without permission, warning, or input, we immediately go on high alert. Something might be at risk. And we respond appropriately.

All change managers learn in WIIFM. Or, Wii FM. Everyone wants to know "what's in it for me." The answers to those questions are not "better profits," "more customers," or even "working smarter." The answer has to link to their agenda.

Crabs undertake the hard work of deciphering agendas and linking them to the change at hand. Sometimes, it's one person at a time. When people leave, it is a deliberate decision that is well-understood and often the best for both parties.

Maslow's hierarchy tells us where to look to find personal agendas. Our primary concerns are our basic needs. We didn't need the Phoenix pay system fiasco to show us the importance of paycheck constancy and reliability. We didn't need Sears to show us that decisions must be fair and equitable if job loss is a real threat. Reputations, autonomy, and social circles also rank high on the things that inform agendas.

We all need a sense of connection. When we feel change thrust upon us, we disconnect from its success. Whether it succeeds or fails doesn't matter. If it's true that strategy falls apart in the face of the enemy, I would say that C-Suite change initiatives fall apart in the hearts of the staff, especially the staff that has a valid objection (or thinks that they do).

The humane way of change management is to realize you are dealing with humans—human beings who have hearts, heads, and hands. You can rally hearts. Heads can rationalize, and hands can help make light work of the whole thing. Make change management a participative process and amplify your success.

The Strategy of Success

To succeed in any challenging endeavour, you need a strategy. Since strategy is a loaded word, it is simply the plan and decision points you will make to move from making your first move to celebrating better outcomes.

By this point, you've decided to influence the outcome of something according to your perspective. The very nature of that decision has determined who you need to involve. You don't need everyone on your side and don't have to do it all yourself.

Fifty-one percent gives you the tipping point. Other people will rally your cause, and you will be on your way. Once it becomes a norm, different people merely adapt to the social norm. Success is not about the quality of the solution but the number of people invested in the initial introduction.

To increase your success rate, you need to engage people to care. The easiest way to do that is to incorporate their feedback. Change is rarely so specific or rigid that creativity and common sense can't find a way to tweak it in response to valid objections.

When you allow people to help contribute, they become invested, a solid part of the 51 percent you need. It's their baby. Who wants to see their baby fail? Incorporate feedback to improve your chances of success, even if it's a moot point. Let them, get them, make them contribute, and build your army of change agents by incorporating their perspectives and opinions.

The Call to Navigate Change

People have reasons why they do what they do that are both logical and emotional. You don't have to tell people to get out of a burning building, get away from rising waters, or get out of the way of cars.

You may have to help people find a way out when the floors below them are engulfed. You may have to give people another place to go and the assurance that their stuff will be protected. You must explain to people what motion looks like from different angles because our visual interpretation of speed could get us in trouble.

When you lead others into change, you must accept that you lead logical and emotional human beings. You are also leading a group that is not that much different from animals or yourself. They have the exact basic needs and responses you probably would in similar situations. Simply realizing that fact helps eliminate much wishful thinking, explains away much conflict, and informs excellent change management plans.

The capacity for self-denial and the ability to tell and believe our own stories are underappreciated. Instead of tuning into contradictory information, we use intuition to convince ourselves that things are going right. When contradictory information is front and center, it's unbelievable how easily it can be explained away.

As a change leader, your gift may be in the ability to be the one who speaks up. Your job might be giving voice to people who don't have one. As a Black Belt, it was my job to find appropriate data to provide an opinion with a suitable weight – not to form an opinion from the data.

You have a reason to navigate change your way, but counterintuitive wisdom is letting the data be the master, not the servant.

Protect Against Emotional Decisions

We worry about broken bones when there are worse outcomes to avoid.

For Brian Stevenson, avoiding a painful future cost him his entire future. The 33-year-old Brit was watching a hot air balloon launch in California. The ground crew untethered the inflated balloon when

he grabbed hold of the basket, likely in an attempt to help. The basket rose, and both his feet left the ground. The crowd urged him to let go. At first, Stevenson would have contemplated the broken bones and thought, 'I'll just hold on a little longer.' But the balloon didn't lower; at 300 meters, he couldn't hold on longer. Instead of a few bones, it cost him his life.

This runaway balloon problem is one of the five common irrationalities that result in tragic outcomes. Balloon crews have a rule of never letting both feet leave the ground. "When trying to solve a problem, or troubleshoot a problem, we get fixated on a solution or a hypothesis and ignore contradictory evidence," explains Jason Kring, president of The Society for Human Performance in Extreme Environments¹.

To navigate change successfully, you have to make some decisions within it while knowing those decisions will be fraught with unreliable emotions. Courage, confidence, and plans can undo pain, fear, and loss.

As the champion of better outcomes, part of your role will be helping others keep their feet on the ground.

The Willingness to Listen

The businesses that succeed and win long-term have one thing in common: a relentless focus on their customers and what they want. Follow your customers to lead in business; follow the people you love and support to lead in life.

You may not agree with the perspective or the person, but the best thing you can do is listen as intently as possible. You might miss the chance if you wait too long or ignore the signs.

Detroit is famous for its belief in its immunity to change. In 2008, car manufacturers continued to produce vast parking lots full of cars no one wanted. Mitt Romney, a son of Detroit and chief executive of American Motors, took to the New York Times with his plea to let Detroit go bankrupt.

In his view, this would force a massive restructuring. Instead, General Motors and Chrysler received their bailout. Michael Capuano stated, "My fear is you're going to take this money and continue making the same stupid decisions you've made for 25 years." Detroit still carries the legacy of the most significant urban bankruptcy and the departure of half its peak population.

The Likely Probabilities

The Space Shuttle Challenger disaster stands as another example. Roger Boisjoly raised strenuous objections to the launch. The booster rocket engineer authored a memo to his managers predicting "a catastrophe of the highest order" based on disturbing data from the O-rings.

On the morning of the launch, 15 engineers agreed unanimously to postpone the launch. The O-ring performance at that morning's low temperatures hadn't been tested. Footage shows the failure immediately; despite the fears, no contingency plans were implemented. The astronauts died, not in the explosion but when they hit the water minutes later.

Ignoring piles of evidence calling for change or proceeding when you don't have the proof you need are both situations when someone needs to hit the brakes and have a fresh think about where things are headed.

As a champion for change, you want to say, "Just a minute, now." You do that by being present with your attention at all times. Past investment and future embarrassments are not where your attention can do anything helpful. As pressures mount, it's easy to understand how poorly thought-out actions are made. Even if we can understand them, we can't rationalize them, but again, the data shines a light.

You might think that the public backlash against the manufacturer of the O-rings would have started in 1986, but instead, they were up for an award from NASA.

United breaks guitars, airlines overbook, and physically drags passengers who bump off planes. The potential exposure of actions and decisions has to weigh on the minds of today's leaders. When the public has the data, they control the story, so make sure it's one you can stand behind.

With the introduction and widespread use of social media, citizens have a voice and a platform should they decide to use it. In the past, perceptions and reputations could be tightly controlled. Now, the reality of customer experiences and the responses by executives are anyone's story to find and share.

Why You Love Change (And Won't Admit It)

No one would want to live in a salt shaker. Not knowing when the environment will change, getting shaken around without warning, having no control over circumstances, and having no way to diminish the effects without even a handle to grab. With every flip, something is lost for good, permanently beyond retrieval. The frustration and stress of it all! Why is it often said that no one likes change?

This past year, thanks to the salt-shaker world of software updates, had me in another situation. Scheduled to present to a packed audience, I arrived thirty minutes early and powered up my laptop. That morning was a chosen update morning for Windows 10.

After 10 minutes, when the progress bar had moved from 0 percent to 1 percent, I needed a Plan B. Thankfully, I could borrow a laptop from someone else, download my file from the cloud, and be up and running on time. I have a new to-do list: changing my default settings for software updates.

The Lure of Novelty

Outfits are changed quite willingly every day, channels are changed more frequently, and when it comes to dinner, "We had that last night" translates as a desire for a change. Seasons change while we all look forward to the arrival of our favourite, or we can move to a locale that is roughly the same every day.

Responding to fresh competition from Pepsi, Coke introduced a new formulation of Coke, with a result that might win the award for the worst business change ever.

Same old, same old gets boring. When we say we don't like change, we aren't yet bored. Whether we want a specific change or not, sometimes, it's all about timing. There's much pressure to keep up with a

frantic pace of change, which is also not fun. However, change brings fun stuff, and without novelty, life gets boring.

Target quietly exposed their policy of letting customers use the washroom of the gender with which they identified, only to result in a call for boycotts from customers fearing for the safety of children. That created an impact that lasted a year.

The Work of it All

Our love/hate relationship with change also explains why we set New Year's resolutions and why they fail.

Out of a desire for positive change, we set resolutions, seeing only the positive aspects. For example, we resolve to lose weight, seeing the positive impact of achieving it.

We see and want the result, but results are effects of causes. We get excited about the future impact but not about the causes. To achieve weight loss, we will have to eat and move differently. There's no other way. The problem is that we don't want the discomfort; we only want the reward.

Change takes work. The brain seeks to conserve energy, and avoiding the work of change is one way our ingrained laziness takes the work out of it. Tomorrow, our brain says, and procrastination becomes our best friend.

The Promise of Possibility

But wouldn't it be great if every day could be sunny and glorious? Events would flow as smoothly as a dream. The truth is that the ability is closer than what may be perceived, but it involves that pesky little thing – change.

So, what is it really about change? Change can result in loss, and of course, that is not good. Change can be a total waste of effort if, before too long, everything is the same as the starting point. Change can be difficult, requiring mental and physical effort. Change can merely be for the sake of change, as one problem is swapped for another. Change can be inflicted, as opposed to chosen.

Ultimately, we don't like change because we aren't good at controlling it to do what we want it to do. We don't like change because we've learned it will extract unexpected costs. We don't trust change and are highly skeptical of any change manager who will try to pretend to include our opinions.

People love change when it's for the better. It's the loss they can't stand. Make change for the better, and you'll be lifelong friends with change and make friends with those you bring along.

2: The Mindset of Success

As a champion of change, you need to craft a mindset different from the one you are used to or have ever seen in action.

No matter what change, resolution or transformation you are about to pursue, you need to prepare mentally for the journey, just as you would any other.

Collaborate with Clear Minds

When we all get to lead by bringing our unique perspectives, contributions, and questions to the table, better solutions can be found. Excellent execution requires everyone to operate as a leader. Some of us need to follow David Marquette's lead and turn followers into leaders, and some need to find our inner Rosa Parks, our intuition of resistance, and our insight better. Will we find a rational solution together? It might be the only way.

If others' motivations, intents, and reasons are unclear, ask for clarity and be sure to provide this clarity to minimize misperceptions. In 2017, Sears faced mounting criticism as it cut staff and benefits to workers to save the company, only to give retention bonuses to executives in a move that sparked consumer backlash.

It is human nature to be led by emotion, not fact. We are not, nor will we ever be, Vulcans capable of operating from pure logic and fact. Emotion will always have a place in the business world: gut feelings, enthusiasm, and passion are irreplaceable. Putting these ideas to work will help create a fact-based environment that will allow these positive emotions to flourish. Stick with just the facts for an incredible, worthwhile journey on your quest for the better.

Have a Personal Conviction

Objects stay in motion with the same speed and direction until an unbalanced force impacts them. That unbalanced force is your emotional reason why and your logical justification.

Why do you need to get involved and redirect efforts? What's going to happen if you don't?

The logic of the justification is almost irrelevant, as psychologist Ellen Langer found in an experiment of people budding in line and offering "because" with a ridiculous excuse worked practically as often as a rational one, at 93 and 94 percent rates. But without one, it dropped to 60 percent.

When you are excited about a specific change, and your logical side serves up reasons why it's a good idea as the merry servant it is, have you stopped and deliberately looked for the downside? Change efforts fail when we start by looking only at one side, and the drawbacks will come into view as we get going. We can mitigate the risks, save time, and get it right when we foresee them.

Emotions are mutable, fleeting, and unreliable. A conscious intervention only takes seconds to set in and derail an emotional reaction. Logical justification is ammunition for conscious intervention, reminding your emotions that you've decided and looked at all sides of the issue.

The Art of Assertion

In chemistry, there is the notion of the activation energy, the energy applied to get the reaction going, like the big push needed before the car begins to roll. The more committed you are, the more successful you can be. Commitment helps you through the hard stuff.

To increase emotional commitment, visualize all the positive things that will happen once you've achieved them. To improve logical rationalization, devise new and fun ways to solve, avoid or minimize the unpleasantness you think you may encounter.

If you think being moderately convicted is ok, your success will also be moderate. Do you have a compelling emotional feeling and a logical reason for your change goal that is sizeable enough to overcome the obstacles, friction, and discomfort this unpredictable work entails? In short, is your rationale strong enough?

To be assertive is to walk the line between aggression and passivity. While this line can be very narrow, you can make it as wide as you want. Knowing what you wish to do makes it wider.

Do you know what you want?

Some people make assertion look easy. They state what they want with such fluidity, expression, and vivid detail that before they have stopped talking, you want it, too. You can learn this. It's the skill of selling and simply the transfer of enthusiasm.

Know What You Want

To be assertive is to state what you want. Before that happens, you have to know what you want. You may have an opinion about how things could be better for yourself, your family or your team. There may be many steps in the future about how to tell them, what they will say, and all that stuff that can be scary and overwhelming. We will get to that.

First, congratulations on seeing it differently. That's the first step toward asserting yourself. Merely having a different opinion and realizing it is the first step. The ability makes you different from the pack, but no one has to know it yet.

Knowing what you want sometimes starts only with knowing what you don't want. When you know enough of what you don't wish to, so little remains that it's enough to clarify what you want. This is not true with most things in life; choices are embarrassing.

I use the word embarrassment deliberately. Studies prove that the more choices we have, the less likely we are to choose and the less likely we will be happy. More choices leave room for regret, which should be embarrassing when we say we value freedom and diversity.

When you say what you don't want, you merely take one piece of hay out of the stack. Your want doesn't have to be needle-like precise, but the closer you can get, the more likely you are to succeed. Know what actions you want others to take, what agreements you want clarified, and what follow-up you expect.

Mind Your Emotions

We've all said and done things to regret them later. What you will find common to all those experiences is the preceding emotion that hijacked logical behaviour. Anger, fear or stress drove us to do something we wouldn't normally do.

Change can bring up some deep emotions. As other people get hooked by theirs, you mustn't so you can help them through theirs. Take the information, and leave the stigma. The ability to be self-aware is to know what emotion you are experiencing and the point of the information it is attempting to convey.

Anger is a motivating emotion designed to show us injustice. Frustration is almost the opposite, asking you to slow down and notice what you are missing. Excitement is a contagious emotion that wins everyone over. Worry is a fear for the future, and as a champion of change, those worries will help you avoid them, and you might have to articulate them for others to realize.

This knowledge is something we can all get wrong sometimes. In the summer, when we are hot and bothered by the heat, we are sweaty, red-faced and panting. Bothered like that, we are far more likely to lose our tempers. The same confusion can be said for boys talking to pretty co-eds after a pulse-racing walk over a rickety bridge and feeling attraction.

Take Your Ninety Seconds

Jill Bolte-Taylor, the brain scientist who observed her stroke and wrote about it in **MY STROKE OF INSIGHT**, says if you allow the emotion to exist for 90 seconds without judging, it will disappear.

She says, "Once triggered, the chemical released by my brain surges through my body, and I have a physiological experience. Within 90 seconds from the initial trigger, the chemical component of my anger has completely dissipated from my blood, and my automatic response is over. If, however, I remain angry after those 90 seconds have passed, then it is because I have chosen to let that circuit continue to run."

Chemicals of emotions last seconds, and thoughts that ruminate can last for lifetimes. There is a story of a monk who offered to carry a woman across a river. They are not permitted to touch a woman, and his companion broiled over this transgression. When the companion burst with his confrontation, the monk replied, "I only carried her across the river; you've been carrying her ever since."

Let the emotions go, and the thoughts they trigger will also eventually subside. Be the calm, cool cucumber in the room. Later, when you have time, you can ask yourself what was going on when you got triggered. Use your emotions as just another information channel.

Know Your Why

Always remember that when your opinion is different, asserting that difference of opinion is a choice. It's well within your options to choose to do nothing or to take your opinion elsewhere. What opposes one group or situation may be utterly mainstream in another. It may not be the best use of your efforts to use all your tools to get to a place where you could have started if you went somewhere else.

Suppressing your dissent should only be used as a short-term solution. Don't forget the wisdom of your gut instinct. Please keep it to yourself until you realize what your gut knows. We don't always immediately know how to say what needs to be said. That's one of the reasons we get upset. Not knowing the words is frustrating.

Evidence has been found to show that suppressed anger can be a precursor to cancer. Stress is also a factor in five out of six leading causes of death. Personal costs can be pretty high if you have to do and say things you disagree with.

Leading change and influencing others can be challenging, but it becomes one you can't shirk away from when you have a reason. When that reason is more significant than you, its size is like a giant in your corner, giving you confidence and courage you didn't realize you had.

Commitment also prevents us from wavering when that's precisely what we should do. Sometimes, continuing down the current path is the exact wrong thing to do, and you might have to be the one to point it out.

Sunk costs refer to the investments we make in pursuit of something. After investing in one direction, it's tough to stop and go a different way because all you can see is what you've already put into the initiative. Good money gets thrown after bad, even when it's clear that's precisely what's happening.

As the champion for better outcomes, be aware of when the other side is in blind pursuit of sunk costs, and watch out to ensure it doesn't get you too. To achieve the optimal thinking state of flow, immediate feedback is required. You absorb what is working and what isn't and make the necessary adjustments without calculation.

Play the Long Game

Change is not a case of flipping a switch. It's an ongoing process where you should not expect performance to be an ever-increasing climb toward success. Instead, you need to prepare for a journey that will look more like the NASDAQ. Long-term will show an increasing trend, but there are gains and losses over the short term.

Feedback helps you learn continuously. When you champion change, feedback is about what is working and what isn't. Where is there time and space to negotiate something better, and what fires need your attention so they don't get out of control?

Outcome-dependent feedback is widely available. Think of a room's thermostat. The room's temperature is an outcome of the setting on the thermostat. You enter a room, find it too cold, and turn up the heat. You don't know this system, and soon, you are overheated. In response, you turn the dial down. If you've ever got sucked into this loop, you know how it can go on all day. In email land, these are the conversations you don't need and don't end.

Helpful Information

Instead, what you need is process feedback. You need information on where to put the dial to get the outcome (the room's temperature) where you want it. Sometimes, dials are marked with somewhat accurate temperature indicators, and if you happen to know you are happily comfortable at 22.5 degrees Celsius, you set the dial and forget it. You have assured the outcome you want because you have mastered achieving it. Mastery only comes with feedback against your targets.

Successful perseverance comes from knowing how to stay on top of the issues and what issues matter. In short, do you have the process feedback you need? Thinking of solutions where everyone can win stands a far better chance of success than competition.

When it comes to self-awareness, we can all use some help. We don't know why we do things and are gifted storytellers. Other people can see with transparency the truths we think we are doing a great job masking and denying.

Quentin Crisp has said, "The very purpose of existence is to reconcile the glowing opinion we have of ourselves with the appalling things that other people think about us." Most of us will never learn those appalling things because we can do an excellent job of avoiding that information, discrediting it when we hear it, and denying any truth to the rumours. It's just so much more energy-efficient than dealing with it.

Do you want your stakeholders to share their choices with you for better outcomes? How do they define 'better'? The more perspectives and opinions you can get, the better your chances for creating something genuinely better where it matters.

Diversity as Opportunity

Appreciating and leveraging the diversity of the human race requires us to know and use that information: what is universal for everyone and what is different. This information is productive for individuals as we decide how to invest our lives and businesses, build our teams and societies, and tackle our problems.

Deciding what to do is a struggle because it requires a good understanding of our inner worlds and external realities – external realities dependent on other people and what might be going on in their inner worlds. You don't know other people's inner worlds, just as they do not know yours.

When we forget that we don't know what it's like on the inside for someone else, much bad stuff happens. We judge others and create divisions between groups, which seeds conflict, strife and ill will. We aren't fully aware of the universality of human experience, which can make us frustrated, isolated, and unsure of how to proceed.

Today's best practice seems to be to become well-rounded. The best thing you can do is work on what you don't do as well as everyone else to become the same. We lose touch with what makes us unique as we try to transform into what we think is ideal according to the evaluations of outsiders of our external expressions.

I say well-rounded is for tires. Counterintuitive wisdom results from understanding your thought processes and everyone around you to leverage differences. It's becoming the best you can be, not the most common you can be.

Partnering Strengths

Leveraging differences means using each other's strengths and skills like puzzle pieces. Instead of the lowest possible products from groups, committees, and organizations, alignment is catalyzed. It's "using" people in a way that has zero exploitation at the core.

The idea is to discover what you do naturally and then put you where that's exactly what everyone would want. You have covered something that the rest of us wouldn't be as equipped, skilled, or, frankly, as interested in handling.

Sometimes, it is as simple as knowing if you'd want an introvert or an extrovert for the job. Or critically, which one you are yourself. Extroverts get energy from people, whereas introverts get it from ideas.

Diversification for Awareness

People learn the theory of mind around age three to four. It is knowing that your thoughts are not transparent or shared. You can read in your head, not out loud, and realize that no one else learned the story. Between stigmas and labels, we can arrive at a personality and a preference that defines a comfort zone while not necessarily being comfortable.

Knowing where you get your energy from, whether people or ideas, can be highly adulterated by people and your experiences with them. Introverts who have never met another might feel frustrated, confused, and drained by the teaching and training to be outgoing, bubbly, and playful when they are naturally ingoing, deep, and thoughtful. Extroverts exiled for poor social manners may have convinced themselves that they prefer it on the outside. You have the chance for honesty, adaptability, and recovery in adulthood, should you recognize it.

Balancing Energy

To an introvert, an extrovert is an energy vampire. Extroverts prefer charming conversations over quiet contemplation, social convention over solo pursuits, and quick and easy answers over protracted introspection. The extrovert wants a frivolous, fun conversation, and the introvert is drained by avoiding all the available triggers to have a more interesting chat.

When I am finally exhausted, I can only smile and nod, and the extroverts say, "Nothing goes on in your head, does it?" Oh, the irony is when one person sacrifices, and the other benefits, especially when they make it far in life without anyone telling them how they've been coddled. It's counterintuitively wise to know when you should be grateful for the accommodation from the other person and when your self-sacrifice isn't doing you, or anyone, any favours.

As an employee, managers have placed me in roles they've decided I would love, only to express genuine surprise when I quit instead. A matching game needed to be played in one organization with more than a dozen people and options.

Assigning Players

Somehow, I ended up assigned to a travelling team of four others. As I felt this was the worst possible assignment for me, I challenged the decision with the evidence they had collected from me.

There, they tested my Myers-Briggs personality type and discovered I was a 1 out of 20 on the scale of introversion to extroversion. During the training and onboarding program, in one particular game, I dominated discussions and led my team to their pretend deaths because it was the fastest way to end the game and get some time alone. In the interview, I'd also told them I was applying for the job because of a desire to live in the location, yet I racked up hundreds of dollars of parking tickets because I wasn't even there long enough to register with City Hall.

If you've ever travelled professionally, it's being with your peers from dawn until sometime after dinner. Sometimes, I skipped dinner; often, I skipped breakfast. After six months and no relief, I quit out of sheer survival – mine or theirs, who can be sure? For someone with a strength in strategy, I knew my survival would result in some way, somehow, and as horrible as it was. Unfortunately, it could have been far less pretty.

In whatever way this detrimental and irreparable decision came to be, it seemed to me to be the shoemaker rule – expect someone to be shockingly bad at whatever they do for a living. When you use data to make decisions, hope that the most relevant facts are ignored.

Managing Shoemakers

They say not to trust a skinny chef, and I distrust all overweight nurses. In my case, I was there to deliver savings, and I did nothing but rack up costs and expenses. I was there to convince people to change, and I couldn't even do it with my managers. The imposter syndrome might be knowing that you are a shoemaker in some aspect but haven't entirely defined the weakness with adequate accuracy and precision. Right now, it's just an ambiguous sense of inability.

The shoemaker rule occurs when we try to be someone on the outside that we are not on the inside. Inauthenticity sets in as we try to make our actions look right, but we miss the critical step—the intention, the desire, or the clarity required to be effective.

Constantly editing yourself is exhausting and time-consuming, making you unreliable in a crisis. People don't know what to trust, but they quickly figure out that it's not you, whether it is you personally, your business, or your brand. Trust is having both competence and character; authenticity is knowing what is your best and what is best left to others.

Introversion and extroversion are but one scale of difference. When you realize that your theory of mind depends on your personal preferences, individual exposure, and how you perceive them, you start to conceptualize what it means to be open-minded, to what degree your mind has been opened, and to what degree it has been converted.

Diversity is an opportunity when you leverage it, not when you dilute it away.

3: The Individuality of Perception

We all live in our worlds, informed by our perception of it, which can completely change how we act.

When you can, remember that two people have three consensuses to make: one, that there are facts and evidence, two that there is your truth, and you are the one who defines it; and third, that I also have mine, and like you, I get to say what it is. Conflict flies out the window. With that agreement, we can find better outcomes together.

Teamwork isn't just about the work product; it's about the personal growth of the individual team members. For some individuals, their skills naturally lend themselves to being effective team members. For others, these skills will not come as quickly.

People need skills when working with others that they don't require when working alone. Visual thinkers don't have to learn how to describe their thoughts, people-pleasers don't have to learn how to be assertive, and closed thinkers don't have to absorb new ideas. Teams put us in situations and with people that help us grow.

Geniuses approach teamwork with the perspective of continually learning. They learn more about themselves, their colleagues, and coworkers while gaining a higher-level perspective. Interdependency, where talent relies on other talent, is an experience everyone should be able to say was a part of their day. Everyone has a different appetite for feedback and growth – make sure you meet your needs while respecting our differences, and your successful outcomes will be assured.

Noah and His Adaptability

Simon Sinek, leadership author and TED speaker, tells the story of Noah, a barista in Las Vegas. So enamoured is Sinek with his service that he leaves him a huge tip and asks Noah if he likes his job. If you think Noah said yes, you'd be correct, but then Noah gives Sinek the shattering insight.

Noah has two jobs. He loves this job, which is where Sinek met him. But the second job he goes to, he tries to stay under the radar, as Sinek points out, the same person, environment, and completely different behaviour.

You may not realize how much like Noah you are—one person here and another person there. The people around you influence your behaviour to the point where you may not even recognize yourself, even if you aren't worried about getting fired.

Failure in negotiation is to persevere without precision. Consider two teams preparing to undergo a negotiation exercise. Both teams read compelling arguments that end with the start of a negotiation over the fate of an orange crop. The winning teams realize that one side needs the skin and the other needs the pulp. The teams that lose are the ones that see only one solution, one winner and one loser. One crop. It's not a crop that can be divided in many different ways.

Be curious. Adopt an attitude of curiosity when you are at a stalemate or even just getting started. It will help you explore the content and options. Your creativity will bloom. Many solutions will come to light, and you drastically increase your odds of success.

You can find mutually beneficial solutions when you know what you cannot give up. When you focus on that, you will find that much else can fall. Find common ground, and everyone can win.

The Power of Expectation

Studies have shown that we fall into that behaviour when people hold a confident expectation of us. Girls who are told that math is for boys suddenly stop being able to perform as well as they were before the misinformation. Reducing scores on math tests for girls is as easy as asking them to check the corresponding box of their gender.

The message that girls are bad at math hits them as early as grade school, not later in high school, as earlier suspected. It's not an actual loss of ability; it's following through on what the environment creates, whether from school, parents, or the media.

One interesting experiment in conformity involved Israeli soldiers in training. Before the training, each soldier was assigned a category of potential. Researchers gave the trainers this list with the categories.

Weeks later, at the close of the training, each soldier scored within their predetermined category. Not surprising, right? It is when you learn that the initial categorizations were completely random.

When Experts Are Wrong

Researchers have found that we seek to behave by someone else's expectations of us, even when they are not authentic. This is another way we willingly conform, even when it's not in our best interest.

However, the most potent form encouragement can take is the opposite. Studies have shown that as many as 20 encouragements are required to undo one discouragement.

If an expert dismisses your idea or tells you that you won't be successful, would you be inclined to believe him? Sure, we say, an expert would know.

The truth is, in that specific context, they can be wrong. Clarke's first law states, "When a distinguished but elderly scientist states that when something is possible, he is almost certainly right. When he states that something is impossible, he is very probably wrong."

When experts want to encourage you, listen. It might be a sign you are onto something when they want to discourage you. It happens because of the progression of learning.

The Progression of Learning

Experts are unconsciously competent. That is, they don't know what they know. Learning something new involves progressing through four stages.

First, you have no idea what you don't know. As you learn a little, you realize what you don't know. Next, you gain comfort until you can say you've got that down. In the last stage, as this becomes ingrained and natural, you don't know what you know. This is the stage of unconscious competence.

When you have this level of unconscious competence, you can no longer question it. Questioning it is what moves knowledge forward. So much so that inventors of ground-breaking advances often come from outside the field. They aren't held back by the standard assumptions, status quo, and accepted so-called truths.

The foundation of an expert's knowledge can shift with time, and they've long since forgotten the foundation. As one expert told the amateur, "I've forgotten more than you'll ever know."

The Wisdom of the Amateur

Amateurs pull that invisible process to the surface. If you are an expert, you must find yourself an amateur. You will find yourself explaining things you didn't know you knew, identifying shortcuts you made and seeing the better solution for yourself.

While amateurs may be new to the situation, they have a different wealth of knowledge and their own set of assumptions. That difference is their value.

Amateurs drive you to become more of an expert as you seek to explain what you know and prove why it's the way it is. As children do for adults, progression moves forward naturally.

As George Bernard Shaw has been quoted, "No question is so difficult to answer as that to which the answer is obvious." Just like you need an amateur to draw out your expertise, you need them to expose and slow down the automatic thinking that makes you an expert. Two complimentary perspectives help complete the whole picture.

Creating Leaders out of Followers

Giving the audience, the children, and the rebels permission to speak up will save you from much irrationality. In a team, admitting you don't know becomes an invitation to adventure with people happy to step up to the bar.

This means that followers need to develop their leadership abilities, and leaders need to learn how David Marquette turned followers into leaders.

David Marquette, author of **TURN THE SHIP AROUND**, learned this hard in the US military, one of the most extreme command and control environments.

A captain in the Navy, Marquette was assigned to a ship with new technology. Because of the latest technology, the crew literally couldn't execute his commands. In a short span, he had to go from giving orders to allowing his crew to tell him what needed to be done.

When Marquette says to turn the ship around, he means eliminating the command-and-obey culture and replacing it with one where everyone is a leader. People have the authority to make decisions they know how to make and are in the best place to make them. Red tape and bureaucracy are cut.

It sounds like an uncommon way to create ultimate productivity, as he echoes the teachings inherent in the leading methodologies for helping companies cut costs and save money: Lean, Six Sigma, Re-engineering, and others all hold at their core the idea of employee empowerment.

Metrics for Assurance

There are varying reports on how successful change initiatives are; most are bleak. As you can see, there are massive ways to improve outcomes when the baseline is about making the bitter pill of change easier to swallow.

With knowledge work, you can't use sweat as an indicator that you are working hard, and you have to remember that it is valid for everyone – you don't know when they are working hard or how hard someone is working. Quality isn't quantity. With knowledge work, quality doesn't show up in time, whether you can see it or not.

Managers ask me to prove that their employees are working hard enough. When the data is collected and analysis is complete, the employees work at least twice as hard as management expected and targeted. If that's not bad, they also know you don't trust them.

In my experience, the employees who talk endlessly about all the work they will do are the ones you want to suspect. People only create smoke and mirrors when there is something to hide, or so I've learned. They pick and choose their actions based on your response; most are forgotten, dropped, or tossed.

Much Like a Parent

Management is much like parenting, with the ability to choose sometimes. Sometimes, a manager inherits someone they wouldn't have picked, and like a parent, the job doesn't change even if the personalities don't jive. It's their job to discover nature, nurture strengths and align to opportunities using the benefit of their increased exposure and experience.

That is the hard work of knowledge work – aligning roles with not just skills but personalities and helping people grow and develop when conflict will always result. At least, with good management, it always pays back, and unlike the parenting situation, the unappreciated personality can get up and leave. At least when it's your career and life, you can manage yourself.

Investing in someone with the potential of zero return on that investment is difficult, even when that person is you. It requires embracing ambiguity, tolerating risk, and accepting accountability. Information is power because it gives you the insight, direction, and support to tip the scales to assure success.

The truth of the knowledge worker is that they must take accountability for their learning. They read and expose themselves to new ideas. That can seem like an insignificant risk to some, but to others, they

have bad experiences with school, books, and trying new things. Here, you don't have to try it; you only have to read and consider how it might apply.

Excellence pairs with laziness when you realize that the activities include eliminating all the rework, the waste, and the work that was never yours to do. It's knowing that hard work pays off and that when you do what you love and do well, it's not work at all.

Different Conversion Factors

We all have different natural abilities and levels of interest in converting them. In the documentary *Too Sane for This World*, Gregory Yates explains why he has a degree in brain science but makes his living as a home renovator. He says he could devote some of his brain to learning social rules and behaviours or solving problems. As an activist for autism, he's solving the problem instead of learning the rules.

Susan Cain did a lot for introversion. It is not shyness. While it may look the same, the former is courageous, and the latter is fearful. Confuse the two labels, and not only are you instigating conflict by calling people names that don't apply, you are setting yourself up to be blindsided with your incorrect estimation of their propensity to act.

Some people tell me they are introverts and point to their fear of public speaking, networking, and parties as evidence. When all they have to talk about is other people and their latest activities, I know they aren't introverts – they are shy, socially anxious or well-trained in society's preference for conversation. Introverts discuss ideas, not people, but gossip is the currency of relationships, with many of those 'ships' drowning in the ambiguity of what you are and are not allowed to say behind someone's back and how and when you get caught.

Never allow your perceptions to be replaced by what you can measure, the labels everyone else uses, or the usual reports. Seeing and thinking differently might require slowing down and considering; sometimes, that's precisely what is needed.

The Creation of Personality

Our unconscious and automatic programs are based on our emotional reactions to historical experiences. We call them personalities. When you realize you are dealing with different personalities, it helps to understand that everyone reacts to emotional events; the question is how long we react.

Humans can hold on to emotions and even create them through thought alone. We do that by imagining things; our bodies don't know the difference. We think of sad things, and we feel sadness. We can be in moods for days or weeks.

When we don't know how to control our emotional reactions to events, we hold on to the emotion and drag it out. We focus on the memory; we continue to experience the feeling. When we do that, the emotion becomes a mood. When we let our moods continue longer, it becomes a personality trait.

Your Reality

Personalities inform our perceptions. When we don't know this, we get into conflicts about which version of reality is correct. The argument could go on forever with so many different versions of reality.

Instead, you can recognize that there are three versions of reality: one is the Truth—truth with a capital T—which is the facts and evidence that can be proved, validated, and replicated. This is to say there is no room for argument. When you understand the scientific process and the reality of what is required for something to become a solid fact, you realize there is so little of it that the other two parts matter far more.

The other two parts are your truth and my truth. We have beliefs. There is concrete proof for things, and then there are things we believe are true because they have happened to us so many times; there is little room to believe in anything else.

Dr. Wayne Dyer says, “When you change how you see things, the things you see change.” To see a new reality, remember it's your brain painting the image with the brush of your attention and personality.

The Reality of Imagination

We also can create the emotion through the power of imagination. Imagine a disaster, and your heart races with fear. If your imagination isn't good enough, you can watch a movie, but one thing you know for sure is that you can feel something when it's not happening.

When you do that, you induce a state of stress. Fear and the whole cocktail of emotions are supposed to disappear in a short amount of time, but they don't. They start to add up until we are in a constant state of stress.

For all the power your consciousness has to intervene in the process, you are essentially not paying attention. Your mind is occupied by replaying the past or anticipating the future instead of being present, and your unconscious automatic decisions fly right past you without any modification or correction.

Sometimes, you've eaten half a bag of chips before realizing you aren't even hungry. You are harried and frantic because you are thinking about your big day ahead and are about to create more significant problems by losing your attention and being absent.

All your stress is caused by fear, and there are only two instinctual fears: sudden loud noises and falling. Everything else is learned.

What is learned can be unlearned.

Persuade in Order by Type

According to Miller, Williams, and Hayashi's work, published in **THE 5 PATHS TO PERSUASION**, people tend to be one of five decision makers: followers, controllers, charismatic thinkers, and skeptics.

Followers rely on the opinion of trusted people, who are well-addressed in this increasingly connected and transparent world. If people in your path of influence already trust you, this is where to start.

Your followers will help you assess the benefits and impacts as you compare the status quo with your vision of change. They are the first group to help you understand what kind of reactions you will face.

If your followers don't want to follow, there is likely a logical reason. This group can help reveal problematic reasoning or other flaws. Communication should be free and open since there is a basis of trust. This group can help refine your idea, and you will be happy to recruit their contributions as you recruit their support.

Along with this same vein, the next group to recruit are the controllers. Controllers need idea ownership. Think of the Windows 7 advertisements, where average people describe their ideas and state, "Windows 7 was my idea."

Tap this group early as you tweak, refine, and modify your idea to win supporters. If you wait too long, it may be too late to incorporate their contributions and allow them to feel ownership.

If you can give them something, anything, to control, you will provide them with the stable reference point they need to navigate the change.

With your idea polished, approach the Charismatic people next. Charismatic people enthrall easily with new ideas. Like Oprah, they are at the forefront of change.

Converting charismatic people to your cause requires capturing their attention, imagination, and excitement. For this group, communicate with that energy and illustrate the novelty of this group. Make your idea bright and shiny, and you will be able to win over the people who know how to win over people.

With followers and charismatic people won over, you can turn your attention to the more complex types.

Skeptics are suspicious of new information. Like Ted Turner, they separate fact from fiction and provide this benefit to their audience. Have your facts ready and checked. As this group takes this information to their audiences, offer to be on hand to answer any new questions.

With a skeptic on board, testimonials are powerful. They increase the power of persuasion. "At first I was skeptical..." is a powerful way anyone finds hard to ignore. When one converts, use that target as a poster child for the others.

Thinkers like Bill Gates evaluate each pro and con. They do not fall for partial information, smooth or sexy slants, or descriptors that aren't factual. Ensure that "unique" really is, that "fast" is quantified, and that "quality" is specific. Win over-thinkers with solid benefits and few drawbacks. Do not diminish or hide the disadvantages – they will find them, which won't reflect in your favour.

4: The Way Through Objections

No matter your audience or goal, there is likely at least one difficult person to win over.

You know you've won them over when they finally ask, "But how?" Success! The underlying objection means they agree that there is a problem; now, you must convince them that the solution will work.

But don't do that. Gain support for the approach instead of describing the solution.

Stick with your vision for a better way, but steer clear of specifics. Specifics turn the discussion toward whether or not those are the correct details. Those details are a Pandora's Box of possibilities and pointless disagreements.

If you already have it, keep it up your sleeve. One, it might not be perfect, and keeping it to yourself will allow you to continue tweaking it. Two, they might surprise you with something different and better than you didn't think of. Third, success is about a collaborative solution, not the one you have up your sleeve.

Share the belief that for every problem, there is a solution and that you can find the solution together with enough time, effort, and the right people on board.

Deal with Difficult People

Dealing with difficult people is a skill everyone needs to have, for no organization is immune.

Even companies who adopt Robert I. Sutton's *The No Asshole Rule* will require some time to identify and deal with them, and in the meantime, you may have to work with them on your quest for change.

Assholes usually know that's what they are, whereas difficult people might find themselves surprised to be labelled as such. With difficult people, the resolution is possible with a bit of flexibility.

The problem arises from different perspectives, personalities, and working styles. When that's the case, you can usually make accommodations, arrange alternatives and even find common ground. Over time, you may even begin to appreciate and leverage the difference.

If any of these types ring too close to home, first become aware of your behaviour. Consider how you might have contributed to the situation. It only takes one to change it. With difficult people, changing your perspective changes your experience.

Oprah has often repeated advice she got from Maya Angelou: "When people show you who they are, believe them the first time." Instead, we fall for any number of other alternatives.

We listen to what they say instead. People share their intentions with you; as you've learned, a lot happens between intention and action. When assessing others, be careful not to fall for wishful thinking, blind ignorance, or bald-faced trickery.

Accept the information people tell you about themselves through what they do, and consider their words. When you treat people as facts, you are less likely to fall for drama, get caught up in agendas not your own, and are far better able to increase your self-awareness.

The Grizzly

The grizzly is the type who always needs to be correct, be in charge and make direct attacks. You see them as hostile and aggressive.

They see someone who is driven to get things done, willing to take the lead, and doesn't shy away from confrontation. You will want to be prepared for this, and remember it's not about you.

Avoid a war with them, but don't run in the other direction. Show that you are not intimidated, be assertive, and stick to the facts.

The Complainer

Complainers seem to find fault with everything. They take no blame for the problem and no responsibility for the solution. Playing the role of victim is comfortable for them.

They see themselves as insightful, helpful, or pivotal to achieving top performance. They aren't doers. They may have legitimate insights that help draw attention to real problems but are challenged to identify their intuition, articulate their intelligence, or take risks.

With complainers, take their complaints seriously. Ask them to put it in writing. Maintain neutrality and open-mindedness.

The Wallflower

Since they aren't drawing attention to themselves, it is easy to miss the difficulty wallflowers can cause as they withhold information, enthusiasm, and their ability to bring others on board.

They may fear what will happen if they speak up and may have given up trying to get a word in.

Meet with them one-on-one if they aren't expressing opinions, adding comments, or making commitments. Ask pointed, open-ended questions and use encouraging body language, like titling your head forward and raising your eyebrows. Allow silence to marinate; don't feel obliged to fill it. Once they speak, avoid interrupting or changing the topic.

The Bobble-Head

Yes, men might feel good, but they are ultimately unhelpful as they do too much work and can't deliver or have nothing to add to discussions.

They agree because they dread conflict and think it's the best way to get on your good side.

Instead of accepting the automatic yes, push for reasons why they hold their opinions until you get new information. Let them know you value honesty and new perspectives, and disagreements will not jeopardize the relationship.

The Cynic

Dissent is to help; constantly pointing out the negative is to be infectious. This person may not realize that emotions control them, and their state may have nothing to do with you.

Avoid arguing with them by pointing out possibilities. Instead, ask them for specific facts and examples. Maintain calm, as it is difficult not to get caught up in negativity. Remind them of past successes. Try turning them into a sounding board for new ideas and challenging them to bring solutions, not just problems, to the table.

Everyone's perspective has value. The trick is to find it, as you will discover on your productivity journey.

Get the Facts

Fact is truth. Truth can be brutal.

Daniel J. Boorstin has said, "The greatest obstacle to discovery is not ignorance – it is the illusion of knowledge."

Like Jack Nicholson said, "You can't handle the truth!" The first step to tap into the power of fact is to be courageous. You want to know what other people genuinely think, feel, and behave instead of your wishful thinking, opinions and assumptions of their reality.

We find facts by getting to know their hiding places. Here's where your facts are hiding.

Opinion Obstructions

The problem with opinion is that everyone has one, and they rank it high above fact. Rank, popularity, and charisma will add weight where weight may not be deserved. Opinions disguise belief as a fact, best revealed by the statement "I think." This statement has the potential to shut down any contribution from a subordinate.

Holding the team's survey results, the CEO addresses each team member. "I don't think we have a communication problem. What do you think, Joe?" Joe shakes his head. The CEO addresses the next team member. Each shakes their head, and I turn. "Well, then, this survey is garbage because it says we do," the CEO says as he tosses it in the trash. This CEO is not interested in the facts and uses his opinion to obstruct them.

Stating an opinion covers up missing facts. One example is using "I think" instead of "I don't know." We would rather imply a lack of knowledge, capability, or preparation than remove all doubt by saying, "I don't know." Allowing "I don't know" leads to the opportunity to find new knowledge and make better decisions.

Facts lend weight to an idea when trying to sell it to a superior. The more opposable the idea, the more weight is required.

Assumption Lures

Assumptions are created through past experiences and learned rules. A typical example is, “Well, that won’t work because it didn’t work before.”

Assumptions lure us into believing we already know, but do we?

The assumption that was formed or learned may not be entirely applicable. Assumptions lure us into behaving out of the past and down predetermined paths instead of evaluating the present. The current situation may be different from the situation that created the assumption.

In addition to being irrelevant, assumptions can be wrong. For example, assumptions can lead to the belief that it is okay to swear around someone because they didn’t say anything when you did. By getting the facts, we can minimize mistakes in the rules we create.

Not all assumptions are apparent. Individual assumptions have accumulated since our first days in this world that have become so familiar that they go unnoticed. Corporate assumptions are embedded and incorporated into the unwritten rules defining corporate culture.

We may assume that hard work means long hours at the office when, in fact, someone may be working long hours in the evening and on weekends at home. This conflict is familiar to baby boomers and Generation Y. The awareness of the belief may not be there, but the aggravation of watching the employee show up late and leave early would be hard to ignore.

When we examine our assumptions at their root, we can become open to our differences and discover our similarities.

Illusion Delusion

Illusions are misleading representations of reality, with or without the intent to deceive. Inaccurate data and filtered information are typical culprits. Overcoming the illusion delusion requires awareness of the source of numbers and information.

One organization relies on people reporting their defect numbers, for which they are the subject of unwanted negative attention. This has led to a situation where the reported numbers are intentionally misleading.

Filtered information is the business equivalent of the telephone game. Information will transform as it is transferred from one person to another, intentionally or unintentionally. Managers prize brevity, forcing the sifting of information down to what is considered necessary. Sherlock Holmes was famous for solving a case based on a bit of detail that was thought unimportant. Are any seemingly unimportant tidbits getting eliminated? Go as close to the source of the information as possible, even seeing it with your own eyes, to remove as much filtering as possible.

Prejudice Traps

Prejudice means attacking the person, not the idea. Facts allow us to attack the facts, not the person. Not limited to the visible group stereotype prejudices of the past, we still tend to label, categorize and otherwise short-circuit truly listening and evaluating ideas.

These subtler cues are more challenging to identify. For instance, engineers are categorized as left-brain thinkers without any creativity. What about arguably one of the most outstanding engineers, Leonardo da Vinci, who also painted the famed Mona Lisa?

On an individual level, someone's lack of experience, seniority or background may colour an idea. When confronted with the awareness that you might be dismissing an idea because of the person, not the idea, ask yourself: what if this was coming out of a black box?

Perception Deception

Perception deception describes the experience of what is thought to be there but is not there. It is an extrapolation of the self onto others, such that the other person must feel the same, want the same, and be motivated in the same way, all of which may not be factual.

One manager circulated an article to his peers, thinking they might find it as helpful as he did. One recipient responded venomously, "Who does he think he is? Does he think he knows more than we do? Well, I hope he knows he will not get an office before I do!" It turns out that the manager had no interest in an office, a promotion or in making anyone feel inferior, regardless of the perception that was left.

Perception management is a reality, but that reality can be changed individually. We can clarify with intent, motivation and background information to avoid misperceptions. If we remain open to not knowing what we don't know, instead of filling in the gaps ourselves, we can avoid being deceived by perceptions. When in doubt, ask.

Have your Responses Ready

You must decode potential fears, losses, and pain points to convert objections into agreements.

Fact is disguised by knowledge, which is itself fluid. Historical knowledge included such facts as the world is flat, women are incapable voters, and no one would want a personal computer. Now, in the days of seeing our spherical planet from space, with a woman in a presidential candidate race, and homes with more than one computer, we know these statements were not truth, not fact.

First and foremost, dare to befriend the brutal truth. Start with known facts. Build opinions from shared facts, knowing where fact ends and opinion begins. Assess differences of opinions by identifying background reasoning. Present relevant facts to add weight to an opinion. Lead discussions to an evaluation of the facts. Replace "I think" with "I don't know, but I will find out."

Don't accept less than the truth when asking questions, but you might have to get crafty to find it.

What problem?

Remember the power of denial if you hear responses that try to redirect your attention or challenge your perspective. When we are in their grip, we don't always know it.

Denial is powerful. It's easy to ignore or avoid seeing reasons for change, just as it is to rush right past identifying the actual problem and take inappropriate action.

When we feel threatened, like Coke might have when Pepsi first started marketing its wins in taste tests, we rush into action. The risk of market loss was massive.

A slower urge to rush into action might have exposed the fact that the taste tests were based on a few sips. Pepsi is sweeter than Coke, which is more pleasurable with only a few sips. Yet, when the whole can is consumed, it's overpowering. Nothing changed about how consumers responded to Pepsi; only the message was marketed. People don't want a whole can of sweet pop; markets are about quantity. When we rush into action, we target the wrong problems and usually make things worse.

Patience is a virtue because it pays off, and it takes courage to identify and get everyone to agree on the problem the change will solve.

Other times, the problem might be the elephant in the room, something everyone knows about, but the topic is strictly off the table. When that's the case, you will likely be aware of the taboo nature of the problem, but even when you think the problem is obvious, don't be surprised when you face denial.

Sometimes, the question is innocent. It's hard for people to identify something as a problem until they have a vision of something better. Other times, they've been infected by leaders who've stated they only want to know about solutions, not problems. However, solutions are complex things that require skill, time, and collaboration. So, we stop seeing problems. "What problem?" we say, tripping over it.

If the problem is not big enough to be a priority, the real cause might be a flaw in perception. Know the person and fine-tune the problem to their pain or opportunity for growth.

Identify where it hurts. Illustrate the world without that pain. Describe how it is impacting something that matters deeply to them. Explain how long this has been going on and how long you anticipate it to continue if nothing goes unchanged and if it will get worse.

If they don't see it as a priority as you do, it may be that they don't appreciate its full impact or are not personally impacted by it.

A Doubtful Vision

If you hear that they disagree with your ideas for an improved future, they may distrust character, competence, or both.

Once you've established that there is a problem, you now face a disagreement of opinion on whether the room for improvement is attainable. If arguments are about how things didn't work, you face an unresolved historical issue.

Each failed experiment cemented the notion that things are better left alone or created the opinion that they can do nothing about it. Learned helplessness can be overcome by learning to be successful in a new approach through available training, coaching, and support.

If nothing has ever been tried, they may think there's nothing they can do about it; no one can, and hence, there is no other way. Humans are the only species able to realize how insignificant one person is and believe in the imperative to try. One person is the one who causes change.

Have you noticed how much more you need to learn, year over year? When faced with these demands, adding another is too much for some people to bear. Remember that what you think is a small thing to learn can differ from someone else. We all have our own experiences with learning that skew our baseline acceptance. We have our ways of learning that we need to know will be addressed.

Any expert who is faced with the possibility of looking like a moron in front of his peers will be understandably resistant. Make sure learners' needs are well represented. Please include them in the process. Resist the urge to provide more information and access to resources. This can be overwhelming—the more straightforward the training, the more the learner's ease. Encourage them and build on small successes as you go. Ensure that time is incorporated to learn in the transition period.

If arguments are about how things didn't work before, realize that time and everything else has changed, too. It's a different world with different tools, perspectives on the past, and people we can include. Try again, as success is just one more step after failure.

With experts, ensure their competence is required and pivotal, give them the safety of reputation, and respect wisdom.

Insufficient Payback

Change is hard, and no one wants to invest in something without getting some return. However, when we lose good things due to the change, it can be hard to tell if it is worth it. With a low chance of success, you need your inner Ernest Shackleton, your inner Cortes, or your speech of a dream to convince people.

There may be no reward for them at all. Some people want to go to work and do the same thing every day. Changing job roles is the most significant source of stress, and it takes the longest to recover from. Not everyone in every organization will want to be included in change or forced to do it. You might find agreeable, mutually beneficial solutions for everyone when you recognize that. If you can't negotiate to improve the final result or the joy in the journey, recognize that not everyone may want to go with you, while most everyone requires a day job.

What I don't like about change is when it's for the sake of it. You might have lived through these changes in the corporate world, where they tell you something is coming, roll it out, and months later, you are coping with the same number of problems – just different ones.

When we finish the effort and get to where we are going, we reflect on our journey and assess how far we've come. When we do this, universally, we all judge our past performance as more complicated than it was or in a way that justifies the effort that we've spent.

If everyone judges past performance as more complicated than it was, use that to your advantage. Remind them of what they were able to do in the past. You would be more intelligent, wiser, and experienced if you could do it. Imagine what you could do. Imagine how you will justify it looking back. With those two perceptions adjusted, all objections might have evaporated.

Confrontation

Sometimes, what sounds like complaining is bragging. Everyone strives for significance. If they don't get it constructively, they call it having something about which to complain. These are not the most functional ways to meet our needs, but our behavioural programs were created before we had this type of awareness. The predictability is comforting. You know the devil better than the one you haven't met yet.

When you hear, "You're only doing this because...", whatever motive you are accused of, realize the other person may be projecting. You cannot do anything about projection because it is not about you. Avoid getting tangled up in it by respectfully disengaging. Listen fully because everyone wants to be heard. That may be enough to diffuse the objection. Aim for alignment if you can't achieve agreement. Can they go along anyway?

When confronted, do not feel the need to meet your match. Hold your ground instead and wait it out. Show respect, maintain eye contact, and give your best impression of rubber. Let it bounce right off of you. This isn't to say ignore the points. They may be good and valid points worth considering. When confronted, maintain your composure; it will be over before you know it.

Not everyone wants to learn new things, challenge their skills or add to their value, especially not all the time. Things may be chaotic at home, and they need to be able to show up, do their jobs and go home. Not everyone comes along, and sometimes, 100 percent isn't required.

Deflection

Your target would like you to go away. They might even list problems that don't impact them and seem worse.

The perception is that if you have a problem, you haven't been doing a good job. We use words like an opportunity instead of a problem to avoid implying that someone deliberately did something wrong or that we might be in an uncomfortable situation.

Instead of the common acronym WWR/WWW for 'what went right and what went wrong' for retrospectives, we say 'what could have gone better.' When people are deflecting, you may need to minimize the problem to get people on board.

Deflections can also manifest as delays. Pointing out more significant problems elsewhere, better times, or efforts to minimize the problem are also tactics with roots elsewhere that require more digging. Ask more questions and try to get details.

5: The Math of Collaboration

Margaret Mead said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

You need a group of people around you to help you influence change.

However, to find that group of thoughtful, committed citizens who can help you change the world, you need to know the realities of collaboration.

In a ground-breaking HBR article called **WHY TEAMS DON’T WORK**, J. Richard Hackman describes some ways to set teams up better for success, and the one principle to take away from his work is that the notion that two heads are better than one is not the correct math.

Whenever minds come together, yes, they bring two brains to the table, but losses are always more significant than the combined potential. His equation attempts to quantify what gets lost in communication, conformity, and the human experience of coming together—how we edit ourselves in the company of others.

The idea is to minimize the losses of collaboration as much as possible.

The Creation of Echo Chambers

It is human nature to surround ourselves with people who validate our view of the world. We seek information that confirms our ideas, a tendency known as confirmation bias. We prefer the status quo, even while professing the desire to change. For these reasons, we can all hold sternly onto a skewed perspective and populate our teams with like-minded people.

They agree with us, and that’s comforting. They conform willingly, and that’s energy-conserving. There are no alternative views or contrary opinions. Isn’t that efficient? As you’ve learned, efficiency is something to distrust.

We need others to point out the truths that we can’t see. While Abraham Lincoln is one of the few presidents who intentionally surrounded himself with people willing to disagree, this act is contrary to human nature.

Instead, we create echo chambers, choosing others who agree with us, confirm what we already believe, and share similar backgrounds and perspectives. We need a few trusted naysayers to yank us back to reality occasionally, and that takes embracing some discomfort.

Leverage Diversity

With seven billion people on the planet, I fear for our future if there’s no one willing or able to help, considering Musk’s ample resources and notoriety. You may not be rich, famous or trying to get to Mars, and I bet there are things other people can do faster, cheaper and more efficiently than you can. Your job is to determine what you can’t outsource.

What are you uniquely good at, the stuff you should never and can never outsource? This list should continuously get shorter and more specific, even if the body it describes gets larger and broader. Do this and surround yourself with people who can do everything else. Teams help you hone your edge when you know how to avoid the otherwise lazy behaviour they can cause. Leverage diversity to get more of what matters done and sharpen your edge.

The best way to progress is to involve diverse people with diverse experiences.

You've chosen to master things in your life that others have not. You've followed your interests and strengths, just as they have with their own.

The wonderful thing about diversity is that we all choose our problems, have our perspectives, and do it in our ways. The idea is to pick the issues you want to master and know everyone picks differently. Those different choices are precisely what help us solve problems together. We each know our part of the solution and must bring the pieces together.

Personality Differences

Putting those pieces together adds extra difficulty to the puzzle when personalities differ vastly. Many models describe how personalities interact, and the point is that it matters. When selecting team members, prioritize fit, attitude, and competence for teams that work.

Psychologists use a model that includes five dimensions of personality in addition to extroversion and introversion. Conscientiousness includes competence, self-discipline, and goal-driven behaviour. On the other end of this dimension are rushing into action and hyper-efficiency.

Openness is the willingness to embrace new experiences, whereas, on the other end, there will be laggards of change.

Agreeableness is the tendency to be good-natured and cooperative; even naysayers can still be agreeable.

Neuroticism tends toward unstable emotions, whereas masterful responsiveness will score at the other end.

Teams benefit from a diversity in background and experience but not with personalities. When personalities are different, unhealthy conflict can quickly be produced. In addition to simply understanding an idea, a team member must also try to extract and flex into other ways of looking at the world, valuing goals and communicating.

One of the most noticeable differences is in where people get their energy. Extroverts get it from other people, and introverts get it from ideas. Introverts can protect themselves by thinking of extroverts as ideas, but make no mistake: At the end of the day, the introvert goes home drained, and the extrovert is energized. It's not a stretch for the introvert to start thinking of extroverts as vampires.

Instead, when you choose between two candidates, select team members who get energy from similar sources and rate similarly on other personality scales.

Empower Decisions

When we talk about empowerment, we mean making their circle of control more considerable.

We can't do everything ourselves, but when we require other people to do something, we attempt to get that person to do it precisely as we would if we were to take the time to do it ourselves. We find ways to retain control instead of giving it.

That's not effective or productive. In business, it's the old, kicked-around word, empowerment. Empowerment is the gift of control and the assignment of accountability. Many studies prove the financial benefit of empowerment; many more companies invest in empowerment surveys and concrete goals to improve it.

The problem is that once you have control, it is hard to give it up, and asking managers to improve empowerment is asking them to give up the power they already have.

Maybe you want to create a plan of gradually stepping back; perhaps they are already prepared. Make a list of three things that can get along without you and start the process of empowering others.

Maybe you can give someone a gift of empowerment. If someone regularly seeks your leadership or guidance, what's the next step to grow their leadership ability? David Marquette has a stepped process you can borrow to create leaders out of followers.

If you spend time on things that don't require your full capability, consider offloading that work. When you ask more people than you currently demand, they are usually happy and able to deliver. We all want opportunities to prove that we have more potential yet to realize, and when you give someone a chance, they are keen to overdeliver.

When it comes to credentials, authority, or experience, is there someone at a lower level who will do a good enough job? Not only will it be more affordable, but they might knock your socks off.

Secure Permission

Decisions are handed to the person in the right place at the right time, with coaching and guidance on how to make them, if possible. It's not always the case that you can take your hands off the wheel and expect someone else to be able to take over immediately. They might need some warning, some training, or some practice.

If you feel you must seek permission to do things you can do yourself, you can make a case to ask for that permission permanently. We are all growing and learning daily; sometimes, we must point out our progress to our leaders.

We must show our willingness to test our new skills to our teachers and mentors.

While negotiating more responsibility can be difficult, it is possible with the proper preparation. Remember that there's something in it for them, too. Do your homework and make your case for emotional and logical change; you will likely get the nod.

Hone Your Edge

Elon Musk said he works 120 hours per week, and it's an insane thing to do. He describes his behaviour that way. HuffPost ran an open letter explaining why it's self-destructive and asking him to stop doing that. According to studies, a 50-hour workweek is the most productive you can be.

Musk responded, "You are acting like I have a choice."

Implying that he doesn't have a choice means that he doesn't know what work he can delegate, or to put it another way, he believes there's no one in the world but him who can do it to an acceptable level of performance.

You can't hone your edge by trying to do everything yourself. The world is your oyster; with these insights, tactics, and strategies, you can accomplish anything when you put your effort into the right places.

Your maximum productivity comes when you keep getting more focused, precise, narrow, and honest about what that is. You can't do everything and will burn out when you try.

The same goes for doing what others want you to do instead of bringing your talents and skills. It's not productive for the team or you if they expect or want you to contribute in a way that doesn't match your best self.

You always have a choice with your time. Getting stuff done doesn't mean that you are the one who has to do it. Staying in your circle of control, we want to ensure we are delegating with clarity, hiring with confidence and outsourcing with solid agreements.

If managing these things isn't your thing, maybe it's a personal assistant you need. You never know what help is available until you go looking for it. More and more, freelancers and subcontractors are available for piecemeal work and spend their careers in the gig economy.

When you lead teams, demonstrate self-leadership, and stick to what you do well, you will get the most done and lead change toward the most successful conclusions.

Meet Effectively

Meetings are unavoidable for group discussions, leading change and problem-solving, but they are also the bane of high productivity. Here are six ways to make getting together a more productive use of everyone's time.

First, you want to make them routine so everyone knows when to expect them. Second, your meetings are effective because you plan the agenda. Third, you ensure you have the right attendees, and fourth, you provide them with adequate information so they come prepared.

During the meeting, you silence groupthink by gaining agreement for the silence-is-compliance norm. That is, get everyone to agree not to speak up unless they have something new to add. If they agree, the norm is to stay silent.

Post-meeting, ensure everyone has a copy of who agreed to do what and by when. Minutes that are vague and responsibility-free are not worth the time it takes to produce them.

Don't attend meetings just because you are invited; ensure your contribution is needed. If you only need information, ask for it or to be copied on the minutes. Consider attending digitally if it will save you time and travel and still serve the meeting's objective.

Pull in Experts

It can be hard to admit you aren't the best at something and stop muddling through on your own. Reach out for help. It's hard to do, and that's what makes this a secret of successfully productive people.

Experts and experts are available in many formats. It isn't exclusive to face-to-face communication. You can read books they write, take courses they've created, and attend talks they give. When help has been received, don't forget to be grateful for the time, effort, and expense it has saved you.

As you learn what you aren't great at or don't like to do, it's your opportunity to pull in experts; as you do that, language becomes critical. Experts tend to bring their jargon and meaning to each of their own.

Your communication skills depend on your ability to get more done, especially on teams. Aim for precision in your language to reduce the risk of misinterpretation. Avoid using jargon and industry-specific language to help people better understand your message.

If they don't know what the words mean, they don't ask and risk looking stupid – they pretend they understand and then walk away.

When you use relative words like fast, cheap, or quick, quantify them. Keep your message plainer and shorter.

The rule of thumb is that the shorter and more effective the message, the longer it takes to craft it. When your message is critical, invest the time to make it world-class.

Enforce Equality and Dependence

The objective of the investigation into the Challenger disaster was to get the best result possible. It had nothing to do with ensuring the equality and dependence of the appointed people. Different parties might also have individual interests to protect.

In comes Richard Feynman, without bias. As his behaviour is frowned upon by other appointed representatives and he runs into conflicts with the commissioner, he also arrives at the truth. What might look like a team to the untrained eye is individual talent at work.

Contrast a retrospective analysis such as that with the business situations played out on The Apprentice. Teams are given a complex problem, appoint a leader and are required to align and cooperate to accomplish the task. No one person can do this alone. These are the situations in which we want to use a team.

If there is no need for interdependence, there is no team. Instead, you've got work to assign to individuals.

Starting with the knowledge of the type of work to be accomplished, genius knowledge workers first determine if independence is involved. If so, you need the right experts with the right personalities. If not, you need the right experts. When the work is that of a team, personality makes all the difference in collaboration.

Prevent Responsibility Dilution

To minimize the losses of collaboration, watch out for these traps.

As human beings, we are oriented socially instead of logically. This predisposition leads to relationship-protecting biases. If there's a reliable way to protect relationships, it's when we pick what's popular. We jump on the bandwagon and cave to social pressure. It's conformity, but how does it happen?

Familiar-minded people coming together will result in solidification and a move toward a more extreme pointⁱⁱ. As the group's opinion becomes clear, group members become more reluctant to bring up items of contradictory information. Instead, only additional supporting information comes to light.

Albert Einstein said, "If A is a success in life, then $A = x + y + z$. Work is x, y is play, and z is keeping your mouth shut." In 1974, Noelle-Neumann postulated the spiral of silence theory. Our willingness to express our opinion openly depends on how we perceive the public. If we don't express our views, we hope others assume compliance.

During the O.J. Simpson trial, reporters triggered this effect. When minority (black) reporters interviewed majority (white) members, they were significantly more willing to share their opinions than the reverse situationⁱⁱⁱ.

Herding behaviour happens when we look to our peers to figure out what to do instead of independently seeking information and making an informed decision. We act like someone else did that analysis and can copy their answer.

When we unthinkingly follow, bubbles form and markets crash. The housing bubble happened because few looked into what a subprime mortgage meant.

The Problem of Thinking Alike

Groupthink occurs when popularity itself gives an idea weight. To break groupthink, simply calling them "people in a group" instead of "a group of people" liberates people to be just as bright as they would be on their own^{iv}.

Marketers use social proof to project trustworthiness and make you feel like you are being left out. If everyone else says it's a good idea, that's enough evidence for many people to follow.

An orientation that protects relationships might seem best for the community, but it also makes everyone believe someone else will take action when no one will. The bystander effect is the tendency for the presence of other people to absolve us of responsibility.

Introductory psychology textbooks eternalize the headline announcing the murder of Kitty Genovese. “37 Who Saw Murder Didn’t Call the Police. Apathy at Stabbing of Queens Woman Shocks Inspector.” Her attack lasted more than half an hour, and no one intervened^v.

This story, published in 1980, founded the idea of the bystander effect, which was repeated in laboratory experiments in 1964. If other people are available to help, we don’t act.

When smoke enters the room we are sitting in, the effect of other people induces passivity. When alone, researchers found we report it 75 percent of the time. With three others, only 38 percent of the time. If those others don’t seem to share our concern regarding the smoke, reporting drops to 10 percent^{vi}.

Real or imagined persons induce the effect. Participants primed with the presence of groups showed more significant affiliation to words such as “unaccountable.” Even when the others cannot possibly help, researchers observed the dilution of responsibility^{vii}.

In teams, there is a need to create individual and personal accountability deliberately.

The Submission to Bureaucracy

We are happy to have rules, white coats and bureaucracy to follow.

Centralia, Pennsylvania, is still burning after over 50 years, the town that was. While many factors could have prevented it from starting or spreading, bureaucracy prevented swift resolution when it was identified as a crisis.

They adhered to the standard three-bid process when procuring contracts to do the necessary work. The competitive bid process took three precious months while this fire spread uncontrolled. Sometimes, going rogue is the right move.

Unwieldy processes and over-governance are kept in place and followed when rationality calls for rebellion. We say “they” instead of finding out the names of the people who have the accountability and ability to navigate the change.

The Vacillation of Authority

At Google, Eric Schmidt exemplifies the idea of team leadership.

Larry Page and Sergey Brin promised their venture capitalists that they would hire an experienced CEO once the company began to take off. After two years of searching, they insisted they could scale Google themselves. Then, they met Eric Schmidt.

In 2001, Schmidt became Google's CEO. He stepped down in 2018 after 17 years of successfully balancing providing leadership expertise without levelling authority over the founders' brilliance. He determined early on that exercising authority over Page and Brin would lead to disaster.

Notably, he didn't put his mark on the company but valued the culture already created. "It would have been foolish of me to try to change them much because it wouldn't have worked, and it would've been bad. It's a given that this is how the company works now. If you changed it, you'd lose all its great things."

Schmidt operates in support but doesn't overstep.

With teamwork, authority is often granted at the onset, but when things get concerning for the hierarchy or sponsors, they tend to step in and take over for the crisis, only to hand things back again when the stickiness has passed. Teams need clear and consistent authority while being recognized for the team's contribution as a whole. Authority that vacillates will only erode the team's performance over time.

They say that luck happens when preparation meets opportunity. You have the chance and have everything you need to face it fully prepared. Influence change for more successful outcomes.

ⁱ (Wise, 2012)

ⁱⁱ (Sunstein, 2002)

ⁱⁱⁱ (Jeffres, Neuendorf, & Atkin, 1999)

^{iv} (Cooley, 2017)

^v (Manning, Levine, & Collins, 2007)

^{vi} (Latane & Darley, 1968)

^{vii} (Garcia, 2002)