

FALL & WINTER 2013

ISSUE

# Solutions

PRACTICAL PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES TO HELP DEVELOP THE BEST IN YOURSELF AND OTHERS  
FROM THE CENTER FOR MANAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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## FEATURE ARTICLE

By **SETH GODIN**  
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# Brainwashed: *7 Ways to Reinvent Yourself*

Years ago, when you were about four years old, the system set out to persuade you of something that isn't true. Not just persuade, but drill, practice, reinforce and, yes, brainwash. The mission: to teach you that you're average; that compliant work is the best way to a reliable living; that creating average stuff for average people, again and again, is a safe and easy way to get what you want.

Step out of line and the system would nudge (or push) you back to the center. Show signs of real creativity and originality, and well-meaning parents, teachers and others would eagerly line up to get you back in line. Our culture needed compliant workers, people who would contribute without complaint, and we set out to create as many of them as we could.

And so generations of people were brainwashed into fitting in, and then discovered that the economy wanted people who stood out instead. When exactly were we brainwashed into believing that the best way to earn a living is to simply have a job? I think each one of us needs to start with that.

We just lived through a few generations of huge companies that got bigger, giant bureaucracies that got fatter and white-collar jobs that got farther and farther away from actually making something that a customer might buy. And then, suddenly, unemployment went up, downsizing happened, and those jobs were gone.

So is that it? Are we done? Is this the end of the road, the best it's going to get, the beginning of the end? Same industry, but less growth and no challenges. Same path, fewer options.

Possibly...but I don't believe it. Why? Because there's more leverage, more degrees of freedom and more opportunity today than ever before—if **you're up for the choice.**

This article continues on the next page.

# Brainwashed: 7 Ways to Reinvent Yourself

Continued from Page 1

The new industrial revolution (the one we're living through, the one that's changing everything) has opened doors for anyone (or certainly anyone with enough resources and education to be able to read this document). If you've got the time, the intellect and the access to get your hands on an idea that spreads as this article might, then you have the ability to reinvent yourself, regardless of what you do, who you do it with, or what the people around you expect.

The pillars we grew up with (things like General Motors, TV, the postal service, top down media and commodities) are disappearing, and are being replaced with entirely new ways of interacting, making a living and making a difference. Not just for organizations, but for individuals—**people like you.**

Look around you. Who are the successful people in our world today? It's not the Jack Welch, captain-of-industry type, nor is it necessarily the go-to-work-every-day-for-fifty-years factory guy. A fundamental shift has happened, right under our feet. The system that nurtured our parents and even our grandparents—has changed.

## This is an opportunity to completely reinvent your role in the system.

You've been brainwashed to believe that you're stuck with what you've got. But now, as the power shifts, so does your opportunity. Are you serious about transformation? I'm not talking about polishing yourself, improving yourself, or making things a bit better. I'm talking about the reset button, a reinvention that changes the game.

That means an overhaul in what you believe and how you do your job. If you're up for that, then you can start, right here, right now.



**There are four words available to anyone. They're here if you want them.**

### Do work that matters.

More people have more leverage to change the world than at any other time in history. What are you going to do about it?

Here are **SEVEN LEVERS** available for anyone (like you) in search of reinvention:

1. **CONNECT**
2. **BE GENEROUS**
3. **MAKE ART**
4. **ACKNOWLEDGE THE LIZARD**
5. **SHIP**
6. **FAIL**
7. **LEARN**

## CONNECT

Social media is either a big waste of effort or, perhaps, just maybe, it's a crack in the wall between you and the rest of the world. If you're keeping score of how many followers you have, how many comments you get or how big your online footprint is, then you're measuring the wrong thing, and probably distracting yourself from what really matters.

On the other hand, digital media can offer you a chance to make real connections, and gain insights from people you'd never have a chance to interact with any other way.

We were isolated, now we're connected. The typical person didn't have the time, the money or the connections to be heard just a few years ago. Today, the door is wide open... but only the people who can touch us will step over the threshold. If you can reach and (far more importantly) touch or change people, you will gain in influence, authority and power.

Shepard Fairey made a poster of Barack Obama. The Internet helped it spread. The poster connected one supporter to another and became an icon, a freely shared ID badge (and ultimately a parody). And in the center of the spread was the artist. It doesn't matter that Fairey didn't make a penny selling the image. What matters is that he connected, and that connection gave his art leverage. He'll never need to look for work or revenue again. It will find him.

We grew up isolated. The future is connected. We grew up unable to have substantial interactions with anyone except a small circle of family and co-workers. Now, we can interact with just about anyone. I think this changes everything, if we let it.

## BE GENEROUS

The new economy often involves trading in things that don't cost money. There's no incremental cost in writing an essay, composing a song or making an introduction. Since it doesn't cost money to play, we have the ability to give before we get.

The generosity economy rewards people who create and participate in circles of gifts. Not the direct I-gave-you-this-you-give-me-that giving and get of a traditional economy, but instead the tribal economy of individuals supporting one another.

Tribes of talented individuals who are connected, mutually trustful and supported by one another are in a position to deliver items of value, to move ideas forward faster than any individual ever could.

Derek Sivers built CDBaby.com from a bedroom startup into a multimillion-dollar seller of independent music. Under his watch, he was selling more music from more artists than anyone before in history. The secret—He spent virtually all of his time supporting the artists. The software he developed, the posts he wrote, the systems he instituted—they were gifts, generous contributions from Derek to the artists he worked with. In return, the artists built a thriving community, one that couldn't help but turn a profit.

*This article concludes on the next page.*

# Brainwashed: 7 Ways to Reinvent Yourself

Continued from Page 2

## MAKE ART

Art is an original gift, a connection that changes the recipient, a human ability to make a difference. Art isn't a painting or even a poem—it's something that any of us can do. If you interact with others, you have the platform to create something new—something that changes everything. I call that art.

Art is the opposite of trigonometry. Art doesn't follow instructions or a manual or a command. Instead, art is the very human act of creating the uncreated, of connecting with another person at a human level.

Kathy Sierra does art when she teaches us about user interfaces, and Mary Ann Davis does art when she pushes the edges of what pottery can become. Art feels risky because it is. The risk the artist takes is that you might not like it, might not be touched, and that you might actually laugh at the effort. And it's taking these risks that lead us to get rewarded.

## ACKNOWLEDGE THE LIZARD

The lizard brain—that prehistoric brainstem that all of us must contend with—doesn't like being laughed at. It's the part of our brain that worries about safety and dishes out anger. Being laughed at is the lizard brain's worst nightmare. And so it shuts down our art.

Steven Pressfield calls this shutdown, "the resistance." The resistance is the little voice in your head that doesn't hesitate to shut us down at the first sign of possible derision or the first hint of being shunned by the group.

What artists over time have figured out is that the resistance is the sole barrier between today and their art. That the act of genius required to produce important work is crippled by the resistance, and ignoring the voice of skepticism is critical in doing the work.

And so, we acknowledge it. We stand up and we hear the voice of the lizard brain and we recognize that it's there, and then we walk to the podium and do the work. We acknowledge the lizard so we can ignore it.

**"If your ship doesn't come in, swim out to meet it."**

Jonathan Winters, actor and comedian

## SHIP

Scarcity creates value. People pay extra for things that are hard to get, while things that have a surplus go cheap. That's basic economics. So, what's scarce? **The ability to ship.**

If you can get something out the door while your competitors cringe in fear, you win. If you're the team member that makes things happen, you become indispensable. If you and your organization are the ones (the only ones) that can get things done, close the sale, ship the product and make a difference, you're the linchpins—the ones we can't live without.

Shipping is difficult because of the lizard brain. The resistance doesn't want you to ship, because if you ship, you might fail. If you ship, we might laugh at you. If you ship, you may be held accountable for the decisions you made.

The key to the reinvention of who you are, then, is to become someone who ships. The goal is to have the rare skill of actually getting things done, making them happen and creating outcomes that people seek out.

## FAIL

A key part of shipping is the ability to fail. The reinvention of the marketplace demands that one have the ability to fail—often and with grace—and in public!

The old economy was based on factories and institutions, things that took a long time to build. No one at Buick or the Metropolitan Opera was interested in failure. It took too long to create these institutions for them to relish the idea of growth through failure.

Today, though, the only way for organizations to grow is to ship risky things, to create change, to make art, to change people. And yet—shipping risks failure.

And so we demand you fail.

I hope you're up for that.

For generations, artists tried to feign nonchalance. There's even a word for it: *Sprezzatura*. It's an Italian word, defined as "a certain nonchalance, so as to conceal all art and make whatever one does or says appear to be without effort and almost without any thought about it."

We need a new word now, one that means the opposite. It's the obvious and supreme effort that goes into creating art, challenging the lizard and fighting the resistance.

## LEARN

The seventh pillar is the key to the other six. School used to exist to learn a trade. You apprenticed, and then you worked the rest of your life in the same job, in the same town, in the same factory, doing the same work.

Ha. Dream on. Only lighthouse operators have that "luxury" today, and when was the last time you met a lighthouse operator?

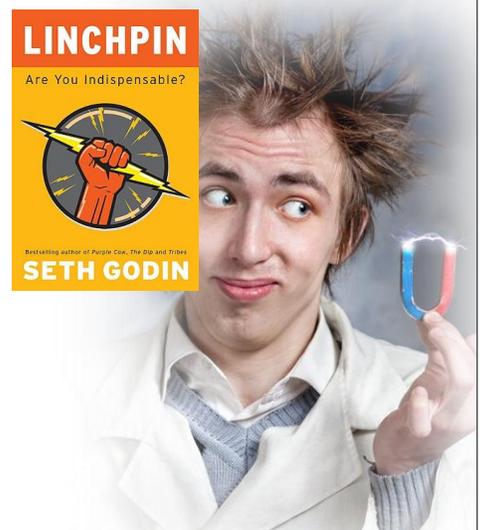
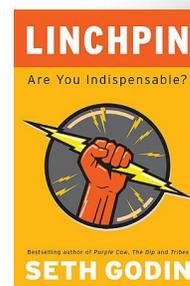
School isn't over. School is now. School is connecting and experiments and experiences, and the constant failure of shipping and learning.

You already took a first step. You just read something that challenged you to think differently. The path to reinvention, though, is just that—a path. The opportunity of our time is to discard what you think you know, and instead learn what you need to learn.

**Every single day.**

## About the Author

**SETH GODIN** is the author of *Linchpin: Are You Indispensable?* He's written a dozen other books, started a few Internet companies and writes a blog. He's pleased to have a two-word biography: **Seth ships**. The copyright of this work belongs to the author, who is solely responsible for the content.





Just a thought...

# Delegation: A Call to Action!

Over the years, countless action movies have provided us with great entertainment, and a chance to escape the complexities of life if only for a brief time. It's important to remember however, that in some cases, the "hero's" approach to leadership (at least in the movies) may not be the best example to follow when building our own team. Here's why...

Some movies reinforce the idea that you can succeed alone if you're big enough, tough enough, or have a superpower. But that's not the case when you lead in the "unscripted" real world.

**The truth is that few of us can go it alone if we hope to do something remarkable as a leader. We need help and assistance from others. To build a strong team of people who can work together to accomplish great things, we need to delegate.**

If you want to be good at delegating, give it your best effort with the following points in mind.

**Share responsibility.** Think about it this way. When do you get the most satisfaction from your work—when you are given responsibility and ownership for a task, project or outcome, or when you are watched and constantly being questioned? Do you think the people you lead feel the same way you do? Probably, so give them that opportunity. Give them a picture of success, support them as best you can, and then get out of their way.

**Be careful with the red pen.** Reflecting about his experiences with delegating, Jonathan Klein, chief executive of Getty Images, a distributor and creator of photographs and other media, came to an important realization early in his career.

As he recalled, "Anytime someone came to me to show me their work, I would critique it. I would almost behave like a schoolteacher — and bring out the metaphorical red pen. And what I didn't appreciate at the time is that before you mess around the edges, you've got to say to yourself—am I going to make this significantly better, or am I going to make it only 5 or 10 percent better? Because in fiddling over the small stuff, you take away all the empowerment. Basically it no longer becomes that person's work. And after a while, those people get into the habit of giving you incomplete work, and then you have to do it for them."

Klein also recalled that he used to debate and argue whatever point was under discussion. Then as he put it, "Someone whose opinion I valued frankly told me to just stop. You've got to pause, and think, are you debating the point to get a better outcome, or because you just like getting the last word and you like winning?" If you're debating to get a better outcome, absolutely do it. If you're debating because of the latter, don't.

**Allow for mistakes.** On the journey to learning something new, it's likely that people will stumble and even become a little frustrated at times. It happened to you, and it will happen to them. If you want anyone's best effort, you have to allow space for errors and mistakes. When people understand the big picture and know where they need to be, the mistakes will be honest ones and can (and will) be corrected. Your job is to provide the safety net, and to help make sure they learn from (and consequently, don't repeat) the mistakes. If you want more productivity and engagement, this is how you achieve it.

So enjoy your favorite action movie. Just don't necessarily take all the lessons to work.

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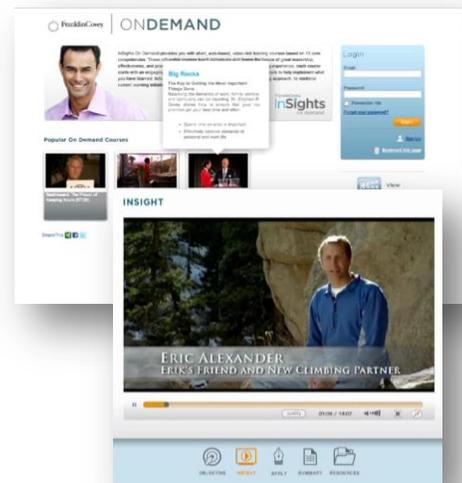


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# Building Emotional Intelligence

When Daniel Goleman first brought the term “emotional intelligence” to a wide audience with his 1995 book of that name, he suggested that while the qualities traditionally associated with leadership—such as intelligence, toughness, determination, and vision—are required for success, they are often insufficient. He asserted that truly effective leaders are also distinguished by a high degree of emotional intelligence, which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill.

These qualities may sound “soft,” but Goleman found direct ties between emotional intelligence and measurable business results. Almost anyone at work today can tell you a story about a highly intelligent, highly skilled executive who was promoted into a leadership position only to fail at the job. And they also know a story about someone with solid—but not extraordinary—intellectual abilities and technical skills who was promoted into a similar position and then soared.

These accounts support the belief that identifying individuals with the “right stuff” to be leaders is more art than science. After all, the personal styles of great leaders vary. Some leaders are subdued and analytical; others shout their ideals from the mountaintops. And just as important, different situations call for different types of leadership.

Today, many experts contend that the most effective leaders are alike in one crucial way:

**They all have a high degree of what has come to be known as emotional intelligence.**

It’s not that IQ and technical skills are irrelevant. They do matter, but mainly as “threshold capabilities,” or entry-level requirements for leadership positions. In the end, it is believed that without emotional intelligence, a person can have the best training in the world, an incisive, analytical mind, and an endless supply of smart ideas—but that person still won’t make a great leader.

Many experts spend a great deal of time observing how emotional intelligence operates at work by examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and effective performance, especially in leaders.

Over time, they have observed how emotional intelligence shows itself on the job. And through their research, five critical components of emotional intelligence have emerged—self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill. The chart below describes each component in greater detail.

How would you rate your emotional intelligence?



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## Working Out A Smarter Heart Exercising Your Emotional Intelligence

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Learners who attend this 1-day program will discover that productive relationships can either flourish or wither as a result of their ability, or inability, to exert control over their behavior. The essential premise of EI is that true, sustainable, success requires an honest awareness, control, and management of one’s own emotions, and an understanding of the emotions of others—so that by first understanding how emotions influence our behavior, we can prevent negative emotions from driving us to behaviors we later regret. Only then are we able to influence others. Only then can a team work together with increased cooperation, collaboration, and communication toward a common purpose.

**Numerous studies identify EI as the number one core competency for effective leadership, regardless of rank or title.**

**Learners who attend this program will**

- Gauge their current level of Emotional Intelligence and identify how to increase their *Emotional Quotient (EQ)*
- Gain the ability to accurately assess their own emotional responses—and the consequences of those responses
- Practice choosing a response that is aligned with their desired goals when faced with adverse circumstances
- Exercise Emotional Intelligence to create positive outcomes in spite of negative emotions
- and much more...

### The 5 Components of Emotional Intelligence at Work

|                        | DEFINITION  | HALLMARKS  |
|------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Self-Awareness</b>  | The ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions, and drives, as well as their effect on others                       | Self-confidence<br>Realistic self-assessment<br>Self-deprecating sense of humor                              |
| <b>Self-Regulation</b> | The ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods<br>The propensity to suspend judgment—to think before acting     | Trustworthiness and integrity<br>Comfort with ambiguity<br>Openness to change                                |
| <b>Motivation</b>      | A passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status<br>A drive to pursue goals with energy and persistence               | Strong drive to achieve<br>Optimism, even in the face of failure<br>Organizational commitment                |
| <b>Empathy</b>         | The ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people<br>Skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions | Expertise in building and retaining talent<br>Cross-cultural sensitivity<br>Service to clients and customers |
| <b>Social Skill</b>    | Proficiency in managing relationships and building support networks<br>Ability to find common ground and build rapport            | Effectiveness in leading change<br>Persuasiveness<br>Expertise in building and leading teams                 |

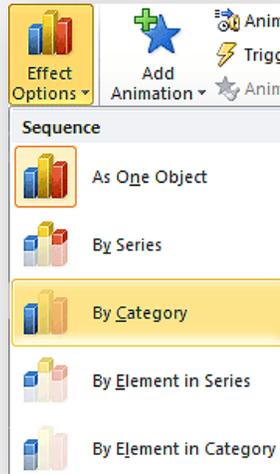
## Office 2007 Tips

From the Center for Management and Professional Development's Computer and Technical Skills Training Team

### Animate an Excel Chart in PowerPoint

The next time you have to prepare for a presentation using PowerPoint, and want to include an Excel chart in your presentation, you can animate the chart in PowerPoint to make each column or point appear separately and in order with these simple steps.

1. Copy a column chart from Excel.
2. Paste it onto a blank PowerPoint slide.
3. Select the Chart.
4. Click the Animation Tab.
5. Select the Fade In effect or any other desired entrance.
6. Click on the Effects Options drop-down menu and choose By Series, By Category, By Element in Series, or By Element in Category.



### Create a PDF from a Word Document

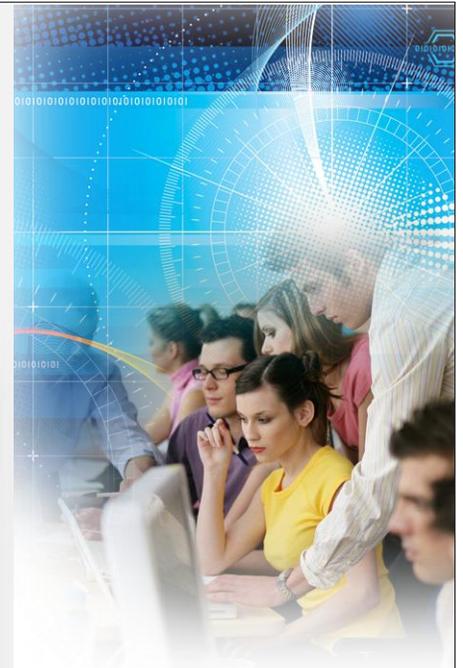
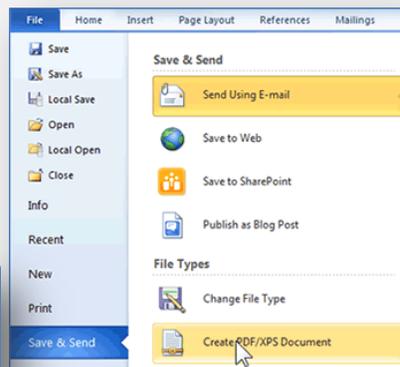
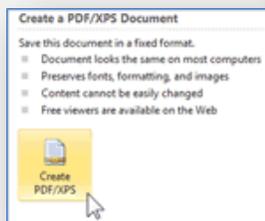
Just to make sure you know, there are at least two reasons you would want to create a pdf from a Word document.

First, the recipient of the file does not have to have Word installed to view the document. A pdf viewer can be downloaded for free. And second, a static document is a read-only snapshot of your file. Nothing in the document can be changed or altered, thus preserving the original look or information you want people to see and have. There are 2 static document file formats available in Microsoft Word:

- .xps files can be viewed using Internet Explorer.
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## DR. ZIMMERMAN'S COMMENT

### Employees will forgive and forget a leader's errors in judgment, but they will never forget his lack of integrity.

I don't get angry very often, but I'm angry. I'm angry at the huge amount of fraud and deceit that has gone on in so many places the last few years. I'm angry at all the so-called "leaders" who intentionally misled their employees and customers. And I'm angry because people are losing their retirement savings; senior citizens are being forced back to work, and a whole nation is paying for the greed of a few "leaders."

In my book, those people weren't "leaders" because the very first attribute of a "true" leader is integrity.

Of course, most leaders think vision, communication, or problem-solving skills come first. And they are an important part of the mix. But think about it. What difference do those qualities make if the employees and the public can't trust you?

Does it matter how exciting your vision is if people don't believe it's good for them? Does it matter how well you communicate if people can't trust what you say? And does it matter how good your problem-solving skills are if you only solve problems that benefit you? When you sacrifice your integrity, you sacrifice your most precious leadership tool.

I think that some "leaders" think they can hide their lack of integrity. They forget that people are always watching them. But employees notice everything. That's the price a person pays for occupying a position of leadership—whether the person is a "true leader" or not.

There is never a time when a "leader" is not "leading." If the "leader" chooses to ignore an issue rather than deal with it, he is leading. If the "leader" shows up late for meetings, she is leading. She's leading her team members into thinking their time isn't valuable. If the leader doesn't return phone calls in a timely manner, he's leading his people to do the same.

Quite simply, everything you do as a leader counts. Everything! You can't ever remove yourself from the leadership role.

That being said, how could you as a leader inadvertently sacrifice your integrity? How could you lose the trust of your employees? Criticizing one of your coworkers in public will do it. So will stretching the truth. When you say you're out of the office when you're there, or say you didn't receive a message when you did, you sacrifice your integrity.

So what can you do to earn the trust of your employees and protect your integrity?

First, **KEEP YOUR PROMISES.** Avoid the temptation of merely saying what will make your employees feel good. Avoid mush language, phrases like "I'll think about" and "I'll get back to you" when you have no intention of doing so. Those are implied promises that people expect you to keep.

And a broken promise cuts deeply into your integrity. In fact, the Center for Creative Leadership found that the number one block to a successful executive career was not following through on commitments.

By contrast, those who made it all the way to the top in their careers were those who kept their promises. They said, in effect, "I'm going to do what I say I'm going to do when I say I'm going to do it."

Second, **TALK AND WALK YOUR VALUES.** Don't make your employees read your mind. Don't make them guess your values. Tell them how you feel and why you feel that way. And then let them see you make decisions and choose behaviors that are consistent with your spoken values.

When you walk your talk, your employees may not always agree with you. They might not even like some of the things you say and do, but you can sure bet they will respect you for it.

Two examples come to mind. The whole world respected Mother Teresa, even people who did not agree with her theological positions. The world respected her because she made it exceedingly clear what she believed, and every part of her life was consistent with those beliefs.

On a much more limited scale, many in this nation respected the late Senator Paul Wellstone. Even though I never voted for him, I always had the utmost respect for him. Nicknamed the "conscience of the Senate," Senator Wellstone was never afraid to say what he really thought and never seemed to be swayed by what was "politically correct" or popular.

Third, to earn the trust of your employees, and protect your integrity, **DEMONSTRATE FAIRNESS.** It's not easy. Things at work aren't always black and white, or right and wrong. And people are constantly complaining, "That's not fair."

Still, as a leader, you've got to do your best to demonstrate fairness, not partiality or favoritism. It will earn you lots of points with your employees.

When change happens in an organization, such as re-engineering or downsizing, employees always ask how it will affect them. Will they be "winners" or "losers" in the change? The good news from George Washington University is that even the "losers" will tend to accept the change if they see it as fair. It's your job to be fair and demonstrate that fairness.

Don't take your employees' trust for granted. Don't do anything that will make your employees question your integrity. Do the three things I've outlined and you'll have a more dedicated workforce.

### Action:

I discussed 3 integrity-building behaviors:

1. **Keep your promises**
2. **Talk and walk your values**
3. **Demonstrate fairness**

Rank those three behaviors from 1 to 3 with "1" being the best. Which one are you best at? Which one are you the poorest at?

Take your number 3 behavior and write down two action steps you can take this week to improve that behavior.

### Now do it!

Leveraging Individual Contributions:

# The Art of Collaboration



What is collaboration, really? Is it being physically close to one another? Is it about creating situations that encourage interaction? What about all the organizations that have people sitting side by side in open or semi-open office environments? Are they the reigning kings of collaboration? The answer is probably no. So let's look at what collaboration is—or should be.

Collaboration at its core is harnessing the differences that each person brings and leveraging the contributions of individuals to create a greater sum. This is the fastest, most efficient way for organizations to accelerate growth. The greater sum is an exponential factor that moves companies forward at a rate that can never be achieved by singular individuals.

## Different Like Me

There is a difference between the idea of embracing differences and the reality of living it. In concept, "you're different than me" is exciting and refreshing, but in the reality of the workplace, do individual differences just get in my way? Biologists suggest we're wired to resist difference as a survival mechanism, because difference can mean death.

The key is getting beyond people's innate resistance to difference. This requires tremendous discipline so as to not slip back into a "different = bad" mindset when the chips are down. Organizations who succeed at this are the ones winning in their respective marketplaces.

There is a simple approach that is so powerful that even when people engage it reluctantly, results immediately improve. It is so effective that people with incredibly large differences — nations at war, couples in crisis — have found success. Here's how it works:

### Step ONE: Understand them

We typically listen to be understood, meaning, we want the other person to understand us. Many times we are so focused on being understood that even as the other person is talking, we're already crafting rebuttals in our mind. In this step, the listener can only clarify or confirm understanding. Only when the speaker says "you got it" can you move to the next step. Both parties do this until they feel understood. It may seem to take extra time, but the investment pays off later.

### Step TWO: Focus on the similarities

Often two sides share more similarities than differences. Yet, because the differences are the emotional hotspots, they command all the attention. That's why it's a good idea to focus on all the similarities. What is common? Is it important? Do both sides agree? What is missing? If there is agreement on eight or nine out of 10 things, the differences stop feeling so overwhelming and people shift into the next step: problem-solving.

### Step THREE: Problem-solve

Most people thrive in problem-solving mode. It allows for their creativity and resourcefulness to shine. By the time people enter this step, the heated or charged emotion has been erased. People are building from a platform of similarity and are focused on the specific problem at hand. They are listening to understand other's suggestions while building on the ideas. The process typically moves quickly toward agreements. When glitches occur, the recommended recourse is to go back to step one and "listen to understand." This will diffuse tensions and ensure shared comprehension.

At its core, collaboration is about listening in a different way. We rationally understand that our collective differences make organizations stronger, but the unwieldy reality of what this imposes often renders it impractical. As humans, we want to be understood and this is how we typically listen. We want the other person to understand us. However, for collaboration to work, we must temporarily suspend our needs, remain emotionally present, focus on the similarities and then move into problem-solving mode.

## How to be more productive than *a lot* of other people

Maintaining high energy reserves to stay on top of your game isn't difficult, but does take some effort. Here are a few effective steps you can take each day to recharge your batteries:

**Take breaks throughout the day.** Take a 15 minute break about every two hours to recharge and rejuvenate. Experiment with what works best for you during breaks too. Don't just sit at your desk—go for a walk, get something to eat, listen to music, etc.

**Eat strategically.** Eat 5 – 6 times a day, and make sure to balance protein, carbohydrates and fats. Eating strategically boosts your physical and mental reserves. Stay away from sugars and heavy starches if you don't want a "carb crash" later. To help stay the course, bring snacks or small meals from home.

**Maintain your attitude.** If you don't decide what goes into your head, someone else will. Eliminate negative input from the news and negative people. Introduce positive input from books and developmental or motivational programs, and surround yourself with positive people.

**Get some sleep.** Getting restful sleep boosts your energy reserves and is essential. Avoid caffeine late in the day. It really does keep you awake. You should also avoid eating a big meal late in the evening, since your body can't relax if it's working hard to digest food.

Don't be fooled by the simplicity of these strategies. Managing your energy reserves combined with prioritization of tasks will make you a productivity superstar.

# Dealing with a fiasco fallout

In the *unlikely* event that you ever need to apologize for not delivering on the expectations of your boss, your staff, a customer or anyone else, here are a few tips to tips to prevent a major meltdown.

- Deliver the bad news quickly.** If you don't, resentment will grow and you'll look like you can't handle the situation. Describe the problem fully, concisely and with no "sugar-coating."
- Take personal responsibility.** The problem may have had many causes, but excessive attention to them might imply you're ducking responsibility.
- Explain your feelings about the issue.** If you're angry about it too, say so. Don't dwell on your feelings, though, because you might give the impression that you're sorrier for yourself than for the others who were affected. Commenting on the Gulf Coast oil spill, BP CEO Tony Hayward properly said, "We're sorry for the massive disruption it's caused their lives. There is no one who wants this over more than I do." But then he added an unnecessary and ultimately self-damaging, "I would like my life back."
- Describe what you're doing about the problem**—but be careful not to make promises you can't keep.
- If you're making a one-on-one apology, look the other person in the eye.** And if you're apologizing to a group, meet the eyes of every person. You can't make an effective apology when you're angry. Let your anger subside before you attempt it. And, of course, you should never apologize with e-mail.
- If someone has a complaint about you, let them speak.** Resist the temptation to defend yourself until the other party has finished. Show that you're listening with nods and other facial expressions and by paraphrasing what you're hearing. If you don't understand completely, ask for clarification.
- There's a BIG difference between "I'm sorry" and "I apologize."** The former describes your feelings about what happened, but it may not be enough if the other party is really angry or very disappointed and expects a sincere apology. Saying "I'm sorry you feel that way" won't cut it either because it might imply that you feel the other person isn't justified in feeling angry. There's also a difference between "mistakes were made," which is often used by people trying to avoid responsibility, and "I made a mistake." Don't be afraid to apologize or admit a mistake. Don't begin the discussion by saying something like "I understand from (a third party) that you have an issue." Don't bring someone else into the equation. That's not fair to the other person. Just acknowledge that there is a problem (which you may have caused) and do what is needed to address it.
- Give the other person a chance to ask questions about your explanation.** Your boss or a customer might think it's just fine to ask questions but your staff might not. Make it clear to them that you welcome questions. Don't count on the power of your position to help you resolve the problem either. You might get angry questions from those you offended, but be sure to maintain your composure. Anticipate the questions that might be asked and prepare concise, persuasive answers to them.

An effective apology can do more than make amends. It can strengthen a relationship because it gives the other person a sense of satisfaction and closure. Handling a disappointment correctly can demonstrate to others that you take responsibility for your actions—and that you can handle problems.

**Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him."**

Aldous Huxley, British writer

# Putting the WE in TEAM

Earlier this year, *SmartBrief on Leadership* conducted an online survey of their readers and obtained some interesting—and alarming results with the question:

## How well do your employees function as an integrated, cohesive team?

We're reasonably tight, but occasionally teamwork suffers



We have challenges working as a team



We're a horrible team -- it's a group of individuals



We're a great team -- everyone moves in sync



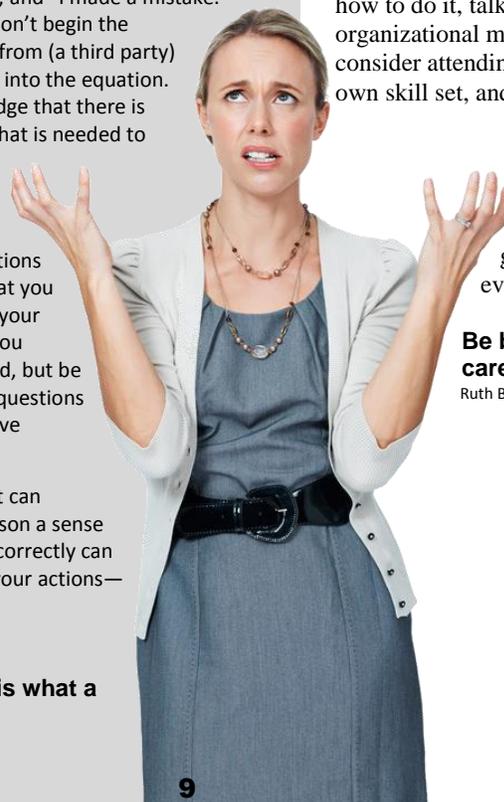
The results indicated above were surprising. Apparently more of their readers saw trouble with teamwork than see it working. If that's even close to the way you feel about your work team right now, it means that you as a leader are likely spending more time and effort solving dysfunctional team behavior and mediating conflicts than you are on achieving a goal. Without going into the obvious problems with that allocation of time and energy, the bottom line is there's TROUBLE in River City.

If you think your work team is struggling, hit pause, get everyone together, define a shared set of goals and operating principles for how you'll interact with each other and start holding people accountable for better behavior. If you're not entirely sure what to do, or how to do it, talk to your boss, other peers, or organizational mentors about possible action steps, consider attending training programs to enhance your own skill set, and then get started.

Once you've made your the team more cohesive, then you can refocus everyone's energy on setting and achieving those bigger goals that are at the heart of what everyone should be accountable for.

**Be bold in what you stand for and careful what you fall for."**

Ruth Boorstin, writer and poet





# Are You Putting Off A Difficult Conversation?

By Margie Warrell

*Used with Permission*

If you think about the people you are closest to - whether in your job, family or friends - you'll notice they are the same people you have the best quality conversations with. Conversations that are open yet respectful, candid but caring. You may not always like what the other person has to say, but you always know where they stand and that they've got your best interests at heart.

The fact is, the quality of your relationships is determined by the quality of the conversations you have in them—for better or worse. Too often though, the things we most need to say are left unsaid. Afraid of causing offence, inciting criticism, igniting confrontation, or any ensuing awkwardness, we play it safe in silence or tip toe around issues. "Hopefully it will just sort itself out," we tell ourselves.

Unfortunately, it rarely does. Rather issues that aren't talked out get acted upon. As frustration, hurt or resentment festers, it exacts a steep toll on our relationships and even more on our success (however you define it!) - personal and professional.

If there is something you genuinely want to say, chances are there is someone who genuinely needs to hear it. Not in a way that puts someone down or makes them wrong. Not in a way that feeds your ego or intentionally hurts theirs. But in a way that respects dignity while creating dialogue that can ultimately serve and improve outcomes for all involved.

As I wrote in *Stop Playing Safe*, only when you are willing to lay your vulnerability on the line can you build the rewarding relationships, career or business, and life that you want. No matter how averse you've been to sharing what you think, feel or want in the past, if you can speak (and I'm assuming you can), then you have what it takes to speak up about any issue, with any person - however sensitive, emotional, difficult, or awkward it may be.

Truly! You just need to find your courage.

You owe it to yourself.

**BE BRAVE!**



An intrepid Australian, [Margie Warrell](#) draws on her background in business, psychology, and executive coaching to help people live and lead with greater courage. The bestselling author of [Stop Playing Safe](#) (Wiley 2013), and [Find Your Courage](#) (McGraw-Hill 2009), Margie is also a keynote speaker and the mother of four noisy children.

Connect with Margie on [Twitter](#), [Linked In](#), [You Tube](#), or join her Courage Community on [Facebook](#). For more 'courage-building' resources and information, please visit [www.margiewarrell.com](http://www.margiewarrell.com)